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Coffee & Tea Marketing Journal (C&TMJ) is a peer-reviewed, professional scientific journal dedicated to the advancement of best practices and the latest thinking in the coffee and tea market, including the results of basic and applied scientific research by international authors in the English language.

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COFFEE AND TEA MARKETING JOURNAL

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COFFEE AND TEA MARKET RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Editorial

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Dear Readers

Out of passion for coffee and tea, but above all out of passion for learning, we have prepared the first issue of **Coffee & Tea Marketing Journal** (C&TMJ). We would like this London based, English-language journal, created by scientists and practitioners, to become an international platform for the exchange of ideas, knowledge, information and experiences in the area of management, marketing and behavioural economics amongst scientists, researchers, experts and entrepreneurs associated with the coffee and tea market.

We want to ensure the high substantive quality of published texts through a system of double-blind reviews performed by recognised specialists in given fields of science. The entire publishing process will be supervised by the Scientific Board, to which outstanding scientists from renowned academic centres around the world will be invited.

In C&TMJ, we will publish the results of the latest research, case studies, reviews of existing theories, book reviews and articles referring to important research areas related to the coffee, tea and yerba mate market as well as other food products available on the consumer goods and services market.

The scope of the journal includes interdisciplinary topics falling within such scientific disciplines and sub-disciplines as:

- **Management and quality sciences** (marketing and marketing management; marketing research and consumer behavior; distribution and sales; innovation management in production, trade and services; commodity science in quality and product management).
- **Economics and finance** (behavioral economics, behavior of market actors, consumer protection and education, consumer ecosystem and sustainability, research of industry markets especially in the area of coffee, tea and yerba mate).
- **Psychology** (economic psychology, psychology of consumer behavior).
- **Socio-economic geography and spatial management.**
- **Environmental engineering** (environmental engineering; environmental protection and shaping)
- **Agriculture and horticulture** (biotechnology and crops especially in the area of coffee, tea and yerba mate).
- **Food and nutrition technology** (agricultural biotechnology, food commodity science especially in the area of coffee, tea and yerba mate).
- **Biological sciences** (biotechnology, ecology, environmental protection).

In this issue:

The issue opens with an article by Agnieszka Baruk titled *Expectations of Young Consumers Regarding Coffee Shops' Marketing Activities on Social Media*. In the article, the author identifies the expectations of young consumers regarding the activities undertaken in social media by coffee

shops. This original manuscript, based on primary sources, develops the concept of H2H marketing, enriches the current state of knowledge on the use of social media in coffee shop marketing, and also contains important managerial implications.

The second of the texts proposed in this issue was prepared by Anna Olejniczuk-Merta and is titled *The Influence of Culture on Coffee Consumption. Evolutionary Perspective*. The Author uses an original research approach based on two assumptions. The first elaborates on the assumption that consumption, including coffee consumption, is not a purely economic phenomenon resulting from the production process. Consumption has its roots in culture, which results from the fact that culture, through the values it creates, influences and shapes consumption. The second assumption indicates the two-dimensional nature of consumption: demand and investment. The background to the considerations undertaken by the author is an approximation of evolutionary changes in culture and consumption, occurring over the centuries. The geographical scope of the analysis of coffee consumption includes Poland and other countries of the world, due to the global dimension of coffee consumption.

The next article was prepared by Michael Jansek and Przemysław Luberdą. The aim of the article is to identify the significance of stereotypes about teas when consumers make purchasing decisions. This is also the title of this manuscript. The considerations presented in the article are based on both secondary and primary sources of information. Research has shown that stereotypes are often the only information that the consumer has about the tea they buy. Only after the purchase, some of the respondents expressed a desire to explore the properties of the tea which they had purchased. The results described in the article and the conclusions presented therein may constitute an incentive to undertake international quantitative research in this area.

The text by Filip Szymczak titled *Influencer Marketing in Building Coffee Communication: a Case Study of GBS Coffee* is our fourth proposal. In his article, the author presents an analysis of key elements of brand strategy, such as product personalisation, influencer selection and the use of non-standard communication platforms, including social media and online platforms. The manuscript fills the gap in knowledge regarding the use of influencer marketing in the Polish coffee market, while providing practical tips for other companies planning similar activities.

In the section devoted to published scientific monographs from the coffee and tea market, we include a review prepared by Jarosław Korpys. The author recommends the book titled *Quality Determinants in Coffee Production* by Lucas Louzada Pereira and Taís Rizzo Moreira published in 2021 by Springer.

We hope that you will find the articles in the journal an interesting read, that they inspire new research, and that the results will find use in practice. We wish you a good read, and also encourage you to participate in the preparation of subsequent issues of Coffee & Tea Marketing Journal.

Grzegorz Maciejewski
Editor in Chief

Expectations of Young Consumers Regarding Coffee Shops' Marketing Activities on Social Media

DOI: 10.69102/CTMJ.2024.010201

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to identify the expectations of the representatives of Polish young adult users regarding coffee shops' marketing activities on social media. The review of literature shows the presence of a cognitive gap and a research gap in this area. These issues have not been studied yet in the context proposed in the article. This fits the concept of H2H marketing. While striving to reduce both of the discovered gaps, empirical studies were prepared and conducted with the use of the survey method to collect original data. The studies covered 340 Polish adult representatives from the 18-30 age group. The collected data were subject to a quantitative analysis. Its results helped to answer four research questions formulated on the basis of the results of analysis of the literature on the subject. The identified issues included, among other issues, the expectations of the respondents regarding the marketing activities undertaken by coffee shops in social media. These expectations were also structured by creating a clear hierarchical order. The results of the research were the basis for drawing important conclusions. They enrich the previous state of knowledge on social media marketing, and may also be implemented for use.

Keywords: expectations, young consumer, social media, marketing activities, coffee shops, coffee market

JEL Classification: D12, D81 M31

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Introduction

Communication in the modern consumption market is the foundation for building relations between market entities. It is particularly important in the case of starting and strengthening relations between the offerors and the end buyers. They are the key participants in marketing activities as their creators and

recipients (in the traditional approach) or as their co-creators (in the modern approach - Azzari, Mainardes, Cristo-Andrade, Durans, Vale & Macedo, 2024; Kao, Yang, Wu & Cheng, 2016). Due to the dynamic changes taking place on the market, including technological, social and cultural changes (Shanmugasundaram &

Tamilarasu, 2023; Wróblewski, Mokrysz, Kwilinski, Merritt, 2024), it is clearly necessary to use social media in such activities (Appel, Grewal, Hadi & Stephen, 2020).

The common use of social media, particularly by users representing younger age groups (Mude & Undale, 2023), is, on the one hand, a sign of the above-mentioned changes and, on the other hand, it is actually a social and marketing trend (Dwivedi, et al., 2021) to which the offerors need to adapt, regardless of the specific nature of their market activities. This obviously also applies to entities from the catering industry which includes coffee shops. Such adaptations should be based on the marketing approach starting with the identification of the recipients' expectations and the creation of solutions corresponding to the identified expectations.

Therefore, the considerations presented in this article fit the concept of H2H marketing (Kotler, Pfoertsch, Sponholz, 2020) which is an elaboration on the classic marketing concept taking into account the challenges of the modern market. The results of the analysis of the literature on the subject that are presented in the theoretical section of this study clearly show the presence of a cognitive gap and a research gap with regard to the issues and approach presented in this article. In the studies known to the author, the marketing activities undertaken in social media have not been analysed from the perspective of the recipients' expectations in that regard. Even

more so, no such studies have been conducted in the case of coffee shops.

For this reason this article aims at resolving a research problem formulated with the help of the following question: what are the expectations of Polish young adult users regarding coffee shops' marketing activities on social media? In order to resolve this research problem an attempt was made to achieve the following purpose: to identify the expectations of the representatives of Polish young adult users regarding coffee shops' marketing activities on social media. While striving to achieve this purpose, the author searched for answers to four research questions formulated on the basis of the results of analysis of global literature on the subject.

The structure of the article is governed by the attempts to solve the research problem, achieve the purpose of the article and find answers to the research questions. Therefore, the article includes a theoretical section where the results of a review of literature are presented, and an empirical section which presents the results of original studies conducted in order to empirically verify the theoretical assumptions. Further in the article, the author presents the results of scientific discussion based on the comparison of the results of conducted studies with the results of studies of other authors, and identifies key final conclusions, theoretical and practical implications, limitations to the research conducted and directions for future research.

Literature review

Social media

The increasing role of social media in marketing is due to the rapid transformations

taking place in the modes of communication, including changes related to engaging in

interactions between the offerors and the buyers (Khan, Geng, Larsari & Sain, 2023). These changes are related, among other things, to the intensive digitalisation of various areas of modern human activity. They create new opportunities to reach individual recipients, but also involve many threats, which require certain safeguard measures (Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2023).

From the perspective of marketing, one of the key characteristics of social media is their interactivity. It allows for a virtually unlimited activity which involves sharing various contents, including knowledge, and consequently for building a community based on cooperation between individual users, as well as between such users and offerors, in various configurations. Individual users in virtual communities that function on social media do not focus only on the search for products that are interesting to them, but they also search (sometimes predominantly) for certain experiences and emotions, striving to create certain experiences (Wibowo, Chen, Wiangin, Ma & Ruangkanjanases, 2021) and share them with other users. One might even say that they transfer a considerable part of their activity to

The concept of H2H marketing

The concept of 'Human-to-Human Marketing' (H2H Marketing) is based on redefining the assumptions of the classic concept of marketing towards marketing oriented at a human being as the subject of marketing activities. As can be found in Kotler, Pfoertsch and Sponholz (2020), its foundations are:

1. Openness and willingness to ask still new questions.
2. In-depth thinking.
3. Discovery of one's own humanity and its externalisation.

the virtual world. This is particularly evident for those representing relatively younger age groups, including Generation Z (Dąbrowski & Środa-Murawska, 2022).

The relocation of activity from the real world to the virtual world obviously has positive and negative consequences. From the point of view of marketing, the clearly beneficial effects include the occurrence of diverse non-shopping behaviour, particularly communication behaviour, which involves sharing opinions and forwarding suggestions with regard to products, brands, etc. Furthermore, one may speak not only of loyalty to a specific brand, product or offeror, but also to a given virtual community (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). This is the best proof of the extremely major role of the underlining connections and the satisfaction felt from being involved in the functioning of such community (Jamil et al., 2022). To meet the expectations of its participants, it should apply a subject-oriented approach to one another and avoid the dehumanisation of mutual relations (Haslam, 2022) which might be one of the main negative effects of the intensification of activity on social media.

It is based on the theoretical foundations of the service-dominant logic (S-DL) concept (Chou, Huang & Tu, 2023) which is also focused on the human being. It additionally takes into consideration the dynamic digitalisation treating it justly as the opportunity to take up courageous and unconventional marketing activities which correspond to the growing expectations of modern man.

In the strategic dimension, the H2H marketing is based on building and strengthening mutual trust (Kotler, Pfoertsch & Sponholz,

2021), which requires the effective management of this intangible asset, e.g. by reducing the potential risk (Vos, Marinagi, Trivellas, Eberhagen, Skourlas & Gianna, 2014). The importance of trust grows dynamically in relations that are more and more virtual, which stems, among other things, from the lack of direct control of the offeror over a considerable part of marketing activities or from the specific nature of online contacts and related threats (Aïmeur & Sahnoune, 2019). After all, trust is the basis of every interpersonal relation, and its

Social media in the marketing activities of offerors on the food market

The use of social media in the food consumption market is analysed in the literature from two perspectives: 1/ the recipient's; 2/ the offeror's. In the case of studies reflecting the former perspective, the analysis referred mainly to such aspects as:

1. Intentions of buying food products in general or with reference to a certain group of products. For example, the impact of social media activities on the readiness to buy food per se was studied by Misra, Dinh & Ewe (2024) as well as Russo & Simeone (2017); whereas the correlations between social media activity and the purchase intentions to buy 'green food products' was analysed by Armutcu, Ramadani, Zeqiri & Dana (2023);
2. The perception of certain attributes of food products. For example, the perceived influence of coffee on the users' well-being was studied by Samoggia, Riedel & Ruggeri (2020) by an analysis of the contents of posts shared in social media.

level determines the quality of mutual ties (Park, Gunn & Han, 2012). From the marketing perspective it is practically impossible to achieve the basic market goal of raising the buyer's satisfaction without the buyer trusting the offeror.

Therefore, it is clear that research concerning expectations regarding the use of social media in the marketing activities undertaken by coffee shops fits into the theoretical framework of this theory and fully corresponds to its objective and subjective scope.

In turn, in studies depicting the point of view of the offeror, the analysed issues included, e.g.:

1. Correlations between undertaking marketing activities in social media and the economic effectiveness of the enterprise. For example, with regard to wine offerors, such studies were conducted by Martínez-Falcó, Sánchez-García, Marco-Lajara & Fuentes-Fernández (2024); whereas with regard to the whole food industry, such studies were conducted by Attar, Amidi & Hajli (2022);
2. Conducting market actions, including marketing ones, in social media in crisis situations, e.g. Covid-19 pandemic. For example, the undertaking of actions which aimed to increase the users' involvement during the pandemic was studied by Tajvidi & Tajvidi (2020).

With regard to enterprises from the catering industry, the research which has been carried out so far has been primarily concerned with issues related to the influence of social media marketing activities focussed on the intention to buy or revisit. For example, in the

case of restaurants, such studies were conducted by Ibrahim (2023); whereas in the case of online coffee shops by Ibrahim, Aljarah & Sawaftah (2021). However, these studies referred not only to a different use of social media, but also a different group of offerors than coffee shops. When it comes to coffee shops, the use of social media was studied more from the perspective of coffee shop owners and the managers of such catering places. For example, Aleganad et al. (2024) analysed the correlations between marketing strategies used on social media and the achieved market results to conclude that such correlations did not exist.

It is clear that the above-mentioned studies did not cover the use of social media in the marketing activities of entities such as coffee shops. This is no coincidence since there are actually few studies of this kind. However, they do include studies based on secondary data published by Kurniawan, Kittynanda, Marwan, Wirawan, Anwar & Johan (2021) in which the emphasis is placed on the importance of the use of social media by coffee shops in the process of attracting customers. Of the few studies conducted among the recipients who are social media users, it is worth mentioning the studies conducted by Begum, Yavuz & Kwiatek (2020) in the Middle Eastern countries. One of the aspects analysed was selected customer expectations in relation to the social media

activity of coffee shops. The objective and geographical scope of these studies was quite different, which will be shown later in the article in the section on discussion.

On the basis of the results of the literature analysis, it may be stated that there is a cognitive gap and a research gap within the scope of considerations regarding the expectations related to the use of social media by coffee shops in their marketing activities. Therefore, while striving to reduce both of the discovered gaps, the article attempts to achieve the goal of identifying the expectations of representatives of Polish young adult users regarding social media marketing activities undertaken by coffee shops. In the process of its completion, the author tried to find answers to the following four research questions:

RQ1: What importance do the respondents attach to the social media marketing activities conducted by coffee shops?

RQ2: According to the respondents, what social media marketing activities should be undertaken by coffee shops?

RQ3: What is the hierarchy of social media marketing activities that should be undertaken by coffee shops according to the respondents?

RQ4: How do the respondents evaluate the level of their activity to date in the social media profiles of coffee shops?

Research methodology

In order to achieve the purpose of this article and to find answers to the formulated research questions, empirical studies were prepared and conducted. The original data were collected with the use of the survey method. The remote

contact method was used. The respondents were sent a link to an online questionnaire prepared specifically for the purposes of the research process. The stage of collecting data was completed in the third quarter of 2024

among a group of 340 adults representing Polish social media users aged 18 - 30. The representatives of this age group were the subject of the studies for two major reasons:

1. Their relatively high activity on social media (Dąbrowski & Środa-Murawska, 2022; Mude & Undale, 2023), and the common use of such media (in many countries the percentage of social media users in this age group exceeds 90% (OECD Society at a Glance, 2024);
2. Their importance for the economic and social development (it is exhibited in many demographic studies [*Social and professional situation of persons aged 18-24 in the last 30 years*]).

The geographical scope of studies covered the whole of Poland. The quota sampling method was applied. Its demographic structure was proportionate to the structure of the overall population as stated by GUS (Central Statistical Office Poland) (*Structure of the population*). 50.8% of the respondents were women.

The studies were fully anonymous and confidential in accordance with the stipulated rules for conducting quantitative studies (Podsakoff, Podsakoff, Williams, Huang & Yang, 2024). While conducting the research process, the following variables were analysed, reflecting the objective scope of the studies: level of

general social media activity to date; opinions on the importance of social media in the marketing activities of coffee shops; expectations regarding the marketing activities that coffee shops should undertake on social media; level of activity on the social media profiles of coffee shops to date.

In order to identify the expectations regarding social media marketing activities, the respondents were presented with 12 such forms of offerers activity. These activities were selected on the basis of the results of unstructured interviews. They were conducted prior to the survey studies during direct research carried out in a group of 20 people belonging to the 18-30 age group. This helped to develop the research instrument in the form of a questionnaire.

In the case of every marketing activity the respondents were to specify their expectations with the Likert scale which is the psychometric tool most often used in social sciences (Joshi, Kale, Chandel & Pal, 2015). The conducted studies made use of the five-level variant ('definitely yes'; 'rather yes'; 'neither yes nor no'; 'rather no'; 'definitely no'). The collected primary data were subjected to quantitative analysis with the use, among other things, of the comparative analysis method and the mean value analysis method.

Research results

the aim of the first stage of the research process was to identify the specific nature of the respondents' activity on social media. To reflect this, the time spent there by the respondents and the type of such media were adopted. As

shown in table 1, the smallest proportion of the respondents surveyed spent, on average, less than an hour a day on social media, while the largest percentage of persons spent 3 to 4 hours on such activity. In total, as much as 70.0%

of the respondents spent 3 to 6 hours on such activity, that is relatively up to half of the average person's daily activity time (Study on labour: safety, hygiene and ergonomics, 2022).

It may be thus stated that the respondents assigned a very large part of their activity to the virtual world.

Table 1. Number of hours respondents spent on average per day using social media (in %)

| Number of hours spent on social media | Indications in % | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------|
| Less than 1 hour | 3.3 | 20.8 |
| 1 - 2 hours | 17.5 | |
| 3 - 4 hours | 39.2 | 70.0 |
| 5 - 6 hours | 30.8 | |
| More than 6 hours | 9.2 | 9.2 |

Source: own compilation on the basis of the results of conducted studies.

The social media most often used by the respondents were Instagram, Facebook (Meta) and TikTok (table 2). Each of them was listed by more than 10.0% of the respondents, where the absolute leader in this list was Instagram which got nearly half of the indications. Some of the social media were not indicated by any of the respondents. It needs to be emphasised that this was not about using a given medium,

but about indicating the one that was used most often. Therefore, the lack of indications for a given social medium does not mean that it is not used at all. The determination how much time the respondents spend on social media activity and which media are used most often is an important guideline for entrepreneurs who should focus their marketing activities precisely at those media.

Table 2. Social media most often used by the respondents (in %)

| Social media most often used by the respondents (in %) | Indications in % | No. |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----|
| Facebook (Meta) | 19.2 | 2 |
| Instagram | 47.5 | 1 |
| Twitter (X) | 7.5 | 4 |
| YouTube | 4.2 | 5 |
| Wykop | 0.0 | - |
| Goldenline | 0.0 | - |
| LinkedIn | 0.0 | - |
| Pinterest | 0.8 | 7 |
| TikTok | 18.3 | 3 |
| Whatsapp | 1.7 | 6 |
| Snapchat | 0.8 | 7 |

Source: own compilation on the basis of the results of conducted studies.

This statement is confirmed by the results depicting the importance assigned by the respondents to the undertaking of social media-marketing activities by enterprises (table 3) which were identified in the next stage of the research process. With regard to all the offerors, all respondents thought that the importance of conducting marketing activities in such media was at least high, where more than

60.0% of the people considered it to be very high. The percentage of such indications was relatively lower with reference to coffee shops, but in total, also in this context, more than 92.0% of people assigned a big or very big role to marketing activities in social media. It is worth noting that there were some respondents who believed that the undertaking of such activities was of little importance.

Table 3. Importance attached by the respondents to conducting social media marketing activities by the offerors (in %)

| Importance attached to conducting social media marketing activities | Indications in % | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|------|
| | In the case of all offerors | | In the case of coffee shops | |
| Very high | 63.3 | 100.0 | 50.0 | 92.5 |
| High | 36.7 | | 42.5 | |
| Little | 0.0 | 0.0 | 7.5 | 7.5 |
| Very little | 0.0 | | 0.0 | |
| None | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

Source: own compilation on the basis of the results of conducted studies.

Furthermore, the undertaking of active marketing activities on social media is of key importance to catering enterprises than for other service enterprises, according to a much greater part of the respondents (table 4). In this

ranking, coffee shops came in second after restaurants. Both of these groups of offerors were listed by nearly three times more people than banks which ranked third.

Table 4. Opinions of the respondents about the group of service enterprises for which active presence in social media is the most important (in %)

| Group of indicated service enterprises | Indications in % | No. |
|----------------------------------------|------------------|-----|
| Banks | 10.8 | 3 |
| Restaurants | 30.0 | 1 |
| Coffee shops | 29.2 | 2 |
| Beauty parlours | 6.7 | 6 |
| Fitness centres | 10.0 | 4 |
| Travel agencies | 7.5 | 5 |
| Insurance offices | 0.8 | 8 |
| Clinics | 0.8 | 8 |
| Educational establishments | 4.2 | 7 |

Source: own compilation on the basis of the results of conducted studies.

To apply the marketing approach according to which the starting point for all market decisions should be the identification of the recipients' expectations, in the next stage of the research process it was attempted to discover the respondents' expectations regarding the social media marketing activities that should be

carried out by coffee shops. As shown in table 5, all of the 12 analysed activities scored, on average, more than 4.00. The first place was taken, ex aequo, by two activities related to attracting new customers and strengthening the relations with the existing customers, with the mean score value amounting to 4.80.

Table 5. Marketing activities that should be undertaken by coffee shops on social media according to respondents (in %)

| Marketing activities listed by respondents | Indications in % | | | | | Mean score value | No. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------|------|------|-----|------------------|-----|
| | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | |
| Attracting new customers | 83.4 | 15.0 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 0.8 | 4.80 | 1 |
| Strengthening relations with existing customers | 83.4 | 15.0 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 0.8 | 4.80 | 1 |
| Promoting the coffee shop | 73.3 | 22.5 | 1.7 | 2.5 | 0.0 | 4.66 | 2 |
| Promoting specific items on the menu | 57.5 | 37.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 0.0 | 4.50 | 4 |
| Promoting interesting events, e.g. a concert in a given place | 45.8 | 36.7 | 3.3 | 13.4 | 0.8 | 4.13 | 11 |
| Promoting proper behaviour, e.g. care for animals during heat waves | 45.0 | 41.7 | 9.1 | 4.2 | 0.0 | 4.28 | 8 |
| Promoting specific attitudes and trends, e.g. ecology | 45.0 | 35.8 | 11.7 | 6.7 | 0.8 | 4.18 | 10 |
| Informion about changes in the mode of operation of the coffee shop | 55.8 | 39.2 | 4.2 | 0.0 | 0.8 | 4.49 | 5 |
| Informion about new menu | 64.2 | 32.5 | 2.5 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 4.60 | 3 |
| Offering the possibility to order take-out drinks, dishes, etc. | 55.0 | 32.5 | 11.7 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 4.42 | 6 |
| Informion about contests, e.g. for the name of a dish | 44.2 | 40.0 | 11.7 | 4.1 | 0.0 | 4.24 | 9 |
| Informion about the coffee shop looking for employees | 49.1 | 36.7 | 10.0 | 2.5 | 1.7 | 4.29 | 7 |

where: 5 - 'definitely yes'; 4 - 'rather yes'; 3 - 'neither yes nor no'; 2 - 'rather no' 1 - 'definitely no'

Source: own compilation on the basis of the results of conducted studies.

In order to structure the analysed activities in a hierarchic order, they were divided into three groups, with consideration given to their mean scores (table 6). Each of these three groups was conventionally marked with the following symbols:

1. 'A' - group including activities that received the mean scores above 4.50 (4 activities);
2. 'B' - group including activities that received the mean scores ranging from 4.25 - 4.50 (5 activities);

3. 'C' - group including activities that received the mean scores ranging from 4.00 - 4.24 (3 activities).

It is worth noting that the last of the created groups is comprised of communication activities, where two activities are not related to the functioning of coffee shops, and one activity refers to the initiation of presumption behaviours among the customers. The identified hierarchy of activities expected by the respondents shows the areas of social media marketing activity on which the coffee shops should focus.

Table 6. Hierarchy of marketing activities that the coffee shops should undertake on social media according to the respondents

| Marketing activities listed by the respondents | Mean score value |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Attracting new customers | 4.80 |
| Strengthening relations with existing customers | 4.80 |
| Promoting the coffee shop | 4.66 |
| Informion about new menu | 4.60 |
| Promoting specific items on the menu | 4.50 |
| Informion about changes in the mode of operation of the coffee shop | 4.49 |
| Offering the possibility to order take-out drinks, dishes, etc. | 4.42 |
| Informion about the coffee shop looking for employees | 4.29 |
| Promoting proper behaviour, e.g. care for animals during heat waves | 4.28 |
| Informion about contests, e.g. for the name of a dish | 4.24 |
| Promoting specific attitudes and trends, e.g. ecology | 4.18 |
| Promoting interesting events, e.g. a concert in a given place | 4.13 |

Source: own compilation on the basis of the results of conducted studies.

It is worth noting that when making a self-assessment of their activity on the social media profiles of coffee shops to date, nearly half of the respondents described them as average (table 7). No one assessed their level as very

high. This is another indication for entrepreneurs running coffee shops that the marketing activities should include activities which involve the activation of social media users.

Table 7. Respondents' self-assessment of the level of activity on social media profiles of coffee shops to date (in %)

| Self-assessment of the level of activity on social media profiles of the coffee shops | Indications in % | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------|
| Very high | 0.0 | 13.3 |
| High | 13.3 | |
| Average | 47.5 | 47.5 |
| Low | 24.2 | 39.2 |
| Very low | 15.0 | |

Source: own compilation on the basis of the results of conducted studies.

Discussion

The results of the conducted studies, particularly those referring to the respondents' expectations of the marketing activities that coffee shops should undertake on social media, may be considered in various contexts, including, among others, in the context of consumer

trends. For example, the promotion of specific behaviour related to the care for animals fits the eco-marketing trend. Trends on the coffee market were studied, e.g. by Maciejewski & Mokrysz (2019). However, in their considerations they focused precisely on trends, and

not on social media marketing activities from the recipients' point of view, which was the main subject of the research presented in this article. They also did not analyse the coffee shops, but the coffee market as such.

With regard to enterprises in the catering industry, the research which has been carried out so far has been primarily concerned with issues related to the influence of social media marketing activities focussed on the intention to buy or revisit. For example, Ibrahim (2023) analysed these issues with regard to restaurants. He conducted his research among students, that is people belonging to the same age group, as the representatives subjected to the research presented for the purposes of this article. This was the only similarity to the studies presented here. The correlations between the use of social media in marketing activities and revisit declarations were, in turn, studied by Ibrahim, Aljarah & Sawaftah (2021). However, these studies focused not only on a different use of social media, but also a different group of offerors, as they dealt with online coffee shops.

One of the few studies concerning the use of social media by coffee shops is the article by Aleganad et al. (2024). However, they conducted their studies from the perspective of coffee shops owners and managers, analysing the correlations between marketing strategies used on social media and the market results. They concluded that such correlations did not exist.

As mentioned before, one of the few studies on the use of social media by coffee shops in their marketing activities that also presents the point of view of the customers is the paper drafted by Begum, Yavuz & Kwiatek (2020). However, their studies covered the customers from Middle Eastern countries. The geogra-

phical scope of studies was thus different. What is more, although one of the analysed aspects was the customers' selected expectations of the coffee shops and their particular social media activities, they studied different expectations with a different approach. They formulated two hypotheses regarding the impact of the customers' expectations of the social media profiles of coffee shops:

1. Behaviour which involves following a profile (quote: "Customers' social media expectations from the coffee house has a positive impact on the customers' behaviour of joining/following coffee house's social media account").
2. Loyalty to the brand of a given coffee shop (quote: "customers' service expectations from the coffee house have a positive impact on the customers' perceived loyalty to the coffee house brand").

As shown in the questionnaire attached to their article, apart from many other aspects, these studies considered the following three expectations: a coffee shop should conduct social media activities; a coffee shop should create interesting contents for its profile in order to attract and maintain customers; a coffee shop should encourage the customers to use its profile with additional offers. As it can be seen, these expectations are more general than most expectations analysed in this article, and there are only three of them, which is much less than 12. When looking for some analogies between these studies and the studies presented in this article, one may say that only the second expectation analysed there corresponds to the two expectations that won the top places in the hierarchy identified herein. Furthermore, in the quoted studies the focus was on the identification of correlations, while the hierarchy of expectations was not examined.

Conclusions

The conducted studies strive to reduce the identified cognitive gap and research gap, and respond to the postulates made in the literature to undertake studies on social media as such, without focusing on any specific platform

Theoretical implications

The results of the conducted studies and the conclusions drawn on their basis make a significant contribution to theory, particularly the concept of H2H marketing. They help to reduce the cognitive gap which was discovered, and thus enrich contemporary knowledge about social media marketing and the recipients of such activities.

The key issues discovered thanks to these studies include:

1. Identification of the importance attached by the respondents to the social media marketing activities conducted by coffee shops (answer to research question No. Q1).

Management implications

The results of the conducted studies are also highly applicable for use. Knowledge about the aspects identified during the research may help the entrepreneurs and managers of coffee shops to effectively use social media in the process of communication with young adult recipients. The awareness of their point of view as active users of such media may also enable coffee shops to achieve their tactical and strategic marketing goals.

The key recommendations for coffee shop owners and managers include:

(Gaber, Wright & Kooli, 2019). The results of these studies helped to draw important conclusions of great cognitive and application value, thus enriching theory and becoming an inspiration for economic practices.

2. Identification of social media marketing activities that the coffee shops should undertake according to the respondents (answer to research question No. Q2).
3. Hierarchical order of social media marketing activities that the coffee shops should undertake according to the respondents (answer to research question No. Q3).
4. Identification of the respondents' opinions reflecting their self-assessment of the level of social media activities to date in general and on the social media profiles of coffee shops (answer to research question No. Q4).

1. the need to adapt marketing activities to the specific nature of user activity on social media;
2. the need to create a composition of marketing activities which takes into account the expectations of users in that regard;
3. the need to inspire marketing activity of users on social media, including communicative and creative behaviours;
4. the need to thoughtfully stimulate the users' involvement in order to direct it to the achievement of mutual benefits.

Limitations and directions of future studies

Obviously, the fact that the conducted research has some limitations cannot be overlooked. The author is aware of their presence. However, they result from the adopted research approach. This approach set a specific objective, subjective and geographical scope of the conducted studies. It also resulted in the selection of the research methods used at the stage of collecting and analysing data. Being aware of the limitations associated with this approach, it may be stated that the studies on social media and expectations of young adult users regarding marketing activities undertaken in this environment should be continued

in the future. It would be worth increasing the scope and the level of the detail of the studies by including statistical methods and tests in the analysis stage to check for the existence of correlations between the examined variables. It would also be worth carrying out analogous studies periodically and conducting them with regard to various enterprises, including catering enterprises (other than coffee shops). This would allow comparative analyses to be performed and conclusions to be drawn about potential changes happening over time and differences between individual types of enterprises.

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The Impact of Culture on Coffee Consumption: Evolutionary Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The subject of the considerations in the following article is the impact of culture on coffee consumption. The aim is to find the answer to the question whether and how the evolutionary development of culture and consumption affects coffee consumption in the 21st century. Questions are asked about new cultural values and their impact on changes in consumer behaviour. Do consumers remain faithful to existing values and to what extent? An original research approach is used, including two assumptions. According to the first assumption, consumption in general, including coffee consumption, is not a purely economic phenomenon, being the effect of the production process. Consumption has its roots in culture, which results from the fact that culture, through the values it creates, influences and shapes consumption. The second assumption indicates the two-dimensional nature of consumption: the demand dimension (occurring on the market) and the investment dimension (occurring in the sphere of consumption) (Olejniczuk-Merta, Noga, 2020). The background for the considerations is an approximation of evolutionary changes in culture and consumption, occurring over the centuries. The geographical scope of the analysis of coffee consumption includes Poland and other countries of the world, because coffee consumption has a global dimension. The evolutionary nature of changes in culture and consumption presented in the article illustrates the process of arriving at their perception in the 21st century. The cognitive emphasis is placed on approximating the features of contemporary culture and consumption. In the considerations of contemporary culture, the focus is on its values: freedom and diversity. The part devoted to consumption shows the extension of its previous demand dimension to the investment dimension, which makes the consumption of many different goods, services and ideas result in condition, competence and creativity, valuable attributes of the modern man. The theoretical considerations undertaken are based on secondary sources of information.

Keywords: culture, consumption, coffee

JEL Classification: D11, E21

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Introduction

For almost twenty centuries, culture was based on the Platonic triad of values: truth, goodness, beauty. Since the 20th century, these values have begun to become outdated. In the 2020s, new cultural values crystallised, reflecting the nature of socio-cultural changes. These are: freedom and diversity. They express the essence of 21st-century culture.

Consumption, accompanying man from the dawn of time, like culture, has slowly changed over the centuries. Researchers, especially economists, paid attention to it as recently as in the 17th and 18th centuries. The intensification of research on the phenomenon of consumption by economists in the 20th century, sup-

ported by e.g. psychological, sociological and philosophical knowledge, has allowed us to notice many characteristic elements of this development and define it as “from cognitive nothingness to the investment dimension of consumption” (Olejniczuk-Merta, Noga, 2020).

In order to better understand the changes taking place in culture and consumption, it is reasonable to present a historical outline of their development. Then it becomes possible to better understand the perception of the place and role of culture in social life and the shaping of the consumption of a specific good, which is coffee.

The evolutionary path of culture development

The path of “reaching” culture from its Platonic expression of truth-goodness-beauty to the modern, pragmatized freedom and diversity was a long-term one.

In reference to man, the word *culture* was first used by Cicero at the end of the 1st century BC and referred to the capabilities of the human mind and the intellectual effort for the purpose of self-improvement and education. Cicero wrote: *in order to bear good fruit, the soul must be both susceptible and properly cultivated, neither susceptibility nor cultivation alone is enough. Susceptibility flows from nature, while cultivation comes from man, and this is culture* (Jaroszyński, Cycleron, Rozmowy Tuskułanskie). From then on, culture expressed human effort, not natural environment or nature in a broader sense. However, it was not every effort, only that which was associated with self-improvement and education. Also in

ancient times, in the Greek Platonic School, the triad of truth-good-beauty was formulated, expressing the values of the culture of that time. For centuries, it was a signpost of ethical, moral and aesthetic human behaviour. It symbolised culture and its basic values, and in this philosophical understanding it survived until the 20th century.

In the Middle Ages, from the sixth to the fourteenth century, the contents of culture were expanded and were the subject of considerations in various scientific disciplines. In the 13th century, religious worship was added to the scope of culture (Florczak, 2020, p. 20).

Four centuries later, during the period of Enlightenment, whose maxim was “*Sapere aude*”, i.e. *dare to use your own mind*, culture already included such areas as: art, science, morality and the broadly understood mind

(Kant, 2012, p. 44). The culture of the Enlightenment rejected prejudice and shaped good manners. In Poland, J. G. Herder wrote about culture as follows: "humanity is shaped in the process of upbringing, passing on values and traditions" (Urbanek, 2002, p. 8). In 1688, Samuel von Pufendorf, in his work titled "De iure naturae et gentium", showed the wide scope of the concept of culture and related it to all human activities, starting from language, clothing, through customs, and ending with social institutions and morality guided by reason (Klimczak, 2020, p. 58).

Since then, culture has been increasingly widely and intensively studied and described, and for the first time it was defined. This was done by anthropologist Edward Tylor in 1871, who presented the following definition: "Culture or civilisation is a complex whole encompassing knowledge, beliefs, art, law, morality, customs, abilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Karwińska 2017, in: Hausner, Karwińska, Purchla, 2017, p. 61). However, civilisation was commonly referred to as material achievements, while culture was attributed to its entirety, i.e. material and immaterial achievements.

Since the mid-19th century, universal slogans have been revived in considerations on culture. They indicate the justification for popularising the highest culture (religion, science, philosophy, art, morality), serving the universal achievement of the ideal that is inherent in human nature. It was assumed that achieving this goal would occur through shaping politics that implemented the highest possible culture. At the same time, this was the period of emerging positivism. The positivists believed that the world was governed by scientific laws and promoted modern economic solutions. Literature, on the other hand, was

supposed to carry positive, progressive and educational content.

At the turn of the 20th century, the first signs of the development of another trend appeared, i.e. modernism. It was understood as a set of avant-garde trends in art and literature that opposed the ideals of the positivists. The beginning of the development of mass and popular culture was also noted in this period. This concerned countries with a high level of economic development and was associated with the industrial revolution, or more precisely, the invention of the printing press and mass printing of newspapers. In the second stage of the mass culture development, radio and television appeared. Television became a tool for unifying the mass communication apparatus of the late 19th century. This period was called the shaping of popular culture, which was the result of the broad development of media. In Poland, this phenomenon developed several decades later (Wiszniewska-Majchrzyk, 2013).

Both mass culture and popular culture were the result of social, educational and technological changes. They resulted from systemic changes and led to the depopulation of villages and the development of industry. Migrations resulted in the reduction of illiteracy and the development of industry, cheap press and other publications of a low intellectual level. The transition to an industrial economy system involved the creation of a new, universal culture by people themselves, not imposed from above (Williams, 1958, pp. 13-19).

The development of mass culture was accompanied by voices heralding a "living" culture, i.e. expressing modernity at a given time, in a given generation (Storey, 1993, pp. 131-153; Sadowski, 2020). These were the beginnings of postmodern culture, focusing on

new human-media relations. In retrospect, they can be assessed as a phenomenon conducive to the loosening of interpersonal bonds and the development of a new type of relationship (Poleszczuk, 2020). They were the foreground for the shaping of contemporary culture, i.e. culture with a wide share of media social

communication and a large diversity of values recognised by society. The basic, key values recognised by people in the 21st century are freedom and diversity. We refer to this as the culture of the 21st century. Currently, it is the last stage on the path of cultural development approximated above.

Development of consumption and changes in its functions over the centuries

Consumption is closely linked to the social and natural environment, the economy and technologies. It is also linked to culture through the values it creates and which are recognised by man. However, this has not always been the case, or at least there was no knowledge about these relationships.

For many centuries, consumption was neither the subject of scientific research nor the interest of economic practitioners. It was a blank spot in the research field, and in the economy it remained outside the scope of interest. Why did this happen? At first, probably for social and religious reasons. There was a conviction that the most important thing for humans is spiritual and eternal life, and caring for material goods interferes with achieving this goal. Other reasons, such as perceiving humans for many centuries as a source of labour, two industrial revolutions, focusing attention on the modernisation of production and products, and the lack of a scientific discipline that would deal with consumption, meant that it was not a subject of interest. It was understood as human activity aimed at satisfying the basic needs of the individual and family – essential for life and work.

Along with technical and technological development, the importance of production grew. On the other hand, consumption as a source of labour power decreased. It was replaced by technological progress. The “reins” of economic development were taken over by financial capital for the next few centuries. It gained importance from the beginnings of geographical discoveries and the development of mercantilism and was supported by material capital.

In addition, the lack of a scientific discipline studying the issue of consumption until the 17th century influenced the mediocre interest in it. Bernard Mandeville, a representative of the “underconsumption” school, a mercantilist living at the turn of the 18th century, saw the benefits of low consumption in the following way: “the most certain treasure for a country is a large crowd of working poor people” (Landreth and Colander, 2005, p. 67). This was the first period in the development of consumption, which lasted until the mid-18th century and was called the cognitive non-existence of consumption.

The second period of the development of consumption was marked by the influence of Jean Baptiste Say. Jean Baptiste Say (1767-1832), the forerunner of consumption econo-

mics, pointed out that man consumes value that can be reproduced in another form, within the process of reproduction. He called this phenomenon reproductive consumption, as a result of which one utility is destroyed, giving rise to a new one. This idea was the seed of the phenomenon defined many years later as investment in man. Say considered man's ability to work, just like nature, as a potential that can be used. In this way, Say gave rise to a new perception of consumption that lasted for about a century.

In the third stage of the development of consumption, there was a discrepancy between theoretical knowledge and its practical use. The French economist and social activist Charles Gide (1847–1932), recognising the potential of consumption, pointed out its role and significance in economic life. He expressed his assessment of the role and significance of consumption as follows: “consumption is the ultimate cause of the entire economic process, and its significance is much greater than it would seem in view of the modest space that is most often devoted to it. It is a field that has not been explored so far, and which will probably serve one day to renew the entire science” (Gide, 1900, p. 553). His perception of consumption was not widely shared. This was a period of investment in the development of industry. It was the last period of underestimating consumption as a factor influencing economic development.

The correctness of C Gide's thought was confirmed in the 19th century, when Alfred Marshall (1842–1924) indicated consumption as a demand (market) factor of development, constituting support for such development factors as: land, human labour, and financial and material capital. It was at this point that a

breakthrough occurred in the low valuation of consumption as a development factor.

In the mid-20th century, or more precisely in 1963, Theodor W. Schultz called consumption an investment in man, thus starting a new era in valuing and emphasising the importance of consumption for man and the economy. The distinguishing feature of this, the fourth stage in the development of consumption, was the indication of the investment dimension of consumption as the second, next to the already existing and recognised demand dimension. However, its importance was not immediately appreciated. The leading factor of development was still the demand dimension of consumption, the effects of which were quickly visible on the market and then in the sphere of consumption. Since the mid-20th century, this has contributed to the growth of the problem of consumerism. Hence, the fifth stage of the development of consumption has been referred to as consumerism. Its negative effects on humans and the natural environment were indicated as early as in the 1960s (Patrzalek, 2019).

Since the turn of the 21st century, there has been an understanding of the purposefulness and justification for investing in man, including consumer awareness. Research into the issues initiated by T.W. Schultz is being revived (Patrzalek, 2019).

Consumption is being redefined as “the process of satisfying diverse and permanently changing (due to technological progress, globalisation and internalisation processes) human needs, encompassing all forms of individual behaviour, related to the acquisition and use of goods and economic, cultural, social and psychological determinants. Contemporary consumption, although it is marked by materialistic overtones by definition, also has a meta-

phorical overtone that refers to the spiritual sphere, which cannot be described in purely economic categories" (Zalega, 2012, p. 21). The emphasis in the definition of material and non-material consumption indicates the perception of its broad, interdisciplinary nature, which has its source in the multitude of determinants of consumption. It indicates the validity of moving away from a narrow and incomplete, exclusively economic perception. Thanks to this, it reflects the depth of understanding of consumption and its wide scope.

Currently, we are entering the next stage of consumption development, in which its previously noticed, but insufficiently appreciated investment dimension, begins to function together with the demand dimension. It means investment in a human being, thanks to the appropriate quality, quantity, structure of the consumption of goods and services, the idea, which consumption gives effects analogously to financial and material capital in production processes. This means that the investment dimension of consumption creates new product(s) in the form of human competence and condition. Competences consist of: creativity,

communication, critical thinking and cooperation. Human condition takes the form of physical, mental and intellectual condition. At the same time, it is known that when purchasing specific goods and services, people are guided by values that they recognise and that are close to them. These, in turn, are a product of culture, which results from its understanding. Therefore, consumption has its source in culture, which, through the products it creates, i.e. values, influences the purchase and consumption of various goods, services and ideas by consumers. In this way, culture influences and co-determines human behaviour, also in relation to coffee consumption. Coffee is a particularly interesting product in terms of its connection with the culture of the 21st century. Therefore, questions arise: when did the consumption of this particular product, coffee beans, appear? To what do coffee beans owe their great and constantly growing popularity among its consumers from different continents, with very different incomes, ages, even taste preferences and the aesthetic values of the places where they consume?

Historical outline of the development of consumption and coffee

Coffee, as a drink, has an interesting history. It was discovered in the 15th century in Yemen. Its properties were first noticed by a shepherd.

At first, it was used for Yemeni religious ceremonies. It was prepared as an infusion of coffee leaves and fruits.

From Yemen, coffee made its way to the northern part of Africa, and then to the areas of present-day Turkey. There, coffee was brewed in hot sand fireplaces with cardamom. The drink accompanied the conversations of the

Turkish community. As it can be seen, from the beginning, drinking coffee accompanied the establishment and maintenance of relationships.

The second stage of the development of coffee consumption was associated with a new technique of its preparation - roasting coffee beans. At that time, energy bars appeared, i.e. a mixture of coffee beans with fat and various spices. They provided shepherds with the necessary energy and nutrients. On the other

hand, Muslim ascetics and mystics made the so-called quishr based on coffee, an equivalent of Arabian wine. This indicates the diversity of coffee use in the early period of its discovery. It was due to its nutritional, energetic and relaxing properties.

The emergence of coffee shops is the next stage in the development of coffee consumption. The first coffee shops were established in the Middle East, including in Mecca and Medina. The strong influence of coffee and coffee shops on social, community and political life is evidenced by the fact that as early as 1511, the governor of Mecca banned the drinking of coffee. The reason was fear of the behaviour of his political opponents, who could criticise him over coffee and create opposition.

In the 16th century, coffee gained popularity in Europe: from Italy, through Austria to the Netherlands. From there, the fashion for "black gold" reached India. Information about the energy-giving drink spread quickly, especially among traders, and contributed to the export of coffee to many countries, including America. In Europe, the pioneer was Italy, or more precisely Venice. The first European café Florian was established there, which is still in operation today. Coffeeshouses were established very quickly in England, where by the end of the 16th century there were already over 3,000 places to enjoy coffee.

Over the following centuries, the fame of coffee spread all over the world, and the coffeehouse culture in Europe developed. Coffeeshouses became places to sit and discuss. They were among the favourite places of educated people and artists. Townspeople and traders also met in coffeeshouses to discuss current and important topics over coffee.

In Poland, the first coffeehouse was established at the beginning of the 18th century in

Gdańsk, and in 1724 in Warsaw, although coffee had been imported since the 17th century.

Coffee and coffeehouses played a significant role in family and social life as well as in politics and business. Currently, there are few countries in the world where drinking coffee is not a daily ritual or where there is a balance of drinking coffee and tea.

A big step forward in drinking coffee was taken with the development of chain coffee shops. The first such coffee shops were established in the USA. They gave rise to new global trends in the functioning of business, which became designing coffee shops "for the needs" of business, i.e. taking into account the possibility of working with a computer or holding work meetings, so-called coffee desks. It is also not competitive with buying coffee in cups - to take away, and it is evidence of the expansion of the diversity of coffee offering, clearly promoting the growth of coffee consumption.

Currently, in the 21st century, coffee can be ordered to the home, office and many other places. There is also the possibility of preparing coffee yourself in many different places specially designed for this purpose. Hence, as statistics show, the demand for coffee is high and still growing (Maciejewski, Mokrysz, 2019, Wróblewski, Mokrysz, 2018). This is confirmed by the selected characteristics below.

Coffee is grown in over 70 countries in the intertropical zone, i.e. in about half of all countries in the world, and consumed all over the world. The world leaders in coffee production are Brazil, Vietnam and Colombia. China is also highly ranked. The coffee market is global. Its value is still growing. The global coffee market in 2021 was valued at USD 107.93 billion, and in the period 2022-27 its

CAGR growth is expected to be 7.6% (Global Coffee Bean Trends in 2022). These calculations are based on the observation of the growth in the population of coffee consumers in coffee shops, rapid urbanisation and growing retail sales in e-commerce. In addition, the growth in the value of the coffee market is the result of factors such as the increasing quality of the coffee offered and social awareness of this fact, as well as innovations introduced to the market and the growing, also for that reason, demand for coffee (Coffee consumption in the world, in Europe and in Poland).

The biggest “coffee lovers” are Europeans, contrary to what is attributed to the USA in common and unofficial information. In terms of coffee consumption per capita, the USA is clearly behind European countries. At the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century, Finland is the leader in the world coffee consumption ranking, with the highest average consumption per person per year of 10 kg of coffee, or an average of almost four cups per person per day. Norway, Iceland, Denmark, and the Netherlands are next in line. Poland is in 11th place in this global ranking, with a result of just over 2 kg of coffee per person per year. Over 80% of Poles drink coffee regularly, and 60% consume it daily. This shows that the

coffee market in the world, Europe, and Poland is developing and absorbent. Further growth requires a creative approach (Coffee Trends for 2022). It is also worth adding that most Poles prepare classic ground coffee in boiling water or instant coffee at home. At the same time, the number of home coffee machine users is still growing, and the Polish coffee machine market is third in Europe, behind Germany and France. This in turn translates into an annual increase in the sale of coffee beans. Interest in the highest quality coffees is also clearly accelerating, resulting in the rapid growth of the so-called third-wave coffee shops – specialty (Coffee Trends for 2022).

Hence, we can say that coffee has become the “queen of drinks” and at the same time a “must-have” in many situations. It owes this to its energy, health, nutritional properties and the social functions it performs. There are many situations that encourage and even induce drinking coffee. Therefore, further questions arise: Is coffee consumption a kind of ritual, willingly organised and experienced by people? Or maybe it gives people something more: maybe it is an investment in man, conducive to fulfilling duties and at the same time beneficially affecting their satisfaction and health?

Can coffee consumption be an “investment in man”?

Both the theoretical knowledge we have about coffee today and the knowledge derived from many years of experience in its cultivation, collection, preparation and consumption, allow us to see the beneficial effects that drinking coffee brings to humans. At the same time, it allows us to deny the harmful effects of coffee on humans, but on one condition: not exce-

eding 3-4 cups a day. Coffee provides humans primarily with motor strength, concentration, eliminates the feeling of fatigue and drowsiness. It is helpful in improving well-being, increasing motivation for activity. It improves a person's physical, mental and intellectual condition. It has a beneficial effect on health, e.g. thanks to accelerating metabolism and

burning fat, as well as controlling appetite and promoting a good mood. It also has a pharmacotherapeutic effect, e.g. reducing the risk of liver cirrhosis. It is used in some painkillers. In addition, it is helpful in the treatment of bronchial asthma, reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes, as well as the development of cancer and Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease (How does coffee affect health?).

The myths about the adverse effects of coffee on the circulatory system, magnesium leaching, or dehydration of the body are also being debunked (Facts and myths about coffee).

The indicated effects of coffee consumption constitute a sufficient basis to perceive its investment character. How does it happen? Well, analogously to investments in the production process, in which the resources involved bring effects in the form of new products. Here, consumed coffee brings beneficial health and pro-social effects. It also has a preventive effect on human health.

Therefore, we can say that coffee consumption, by destroying one utility (coffee beans), creates a new one. This new utility is the condition and competences of a person, including creativity, communication, critical thinking and mood, which is important for health, although not always appreciated. All this is conducive to and serves human health and their efficiency at work. Therefore, it can be stated that reasonable coffee consumption, i.e. in reasonable quantities, is part of the investment in man, created thanks to the consumption of many different goods, giving the aforementioned results for a person as an individual, a member of a social group and the entire society.

To sum up, we can say that coffee, the discovery of a shepherd, thanks to its investment properties, has evolved over the centuries and transformed from a herb growing in a pasture into the queen of soft drinks in the global world, reigning in homes, cafes and also accompanying people on their morning commute to work.

21st century culture and its impact on coffee consumption

The beginnings of shaping contemporary culture, referred to as 21st century culture, were noted as early as in the 20th century. It is a heterogeneous culture wherein three trends can be distinguished: mass culture, popular culture (pop culture) and postmodern culture (post culture) (Majchrzak, 2015). This constitutes a significant change in culture, expressed in the recognition of diversity and thus abandoning the adoption of a single definition of "culture" for the entire way of life of an entire nation. The distinguishing feature of postmodernity is the pluralism of cultural realities (Bauman, 2004, pp. 13–39).

Mass culture expresses contemporary phenomena of transmitting identical or analogous content from different sources to recipients, who are usually more or less diverse (Kłoskowska, 2005, p. 95). Mass culture is created consciously and intentionally for the masses. However, it was previously a response to internal human needs. It is no longer a spontaneous product of human activity, but a product triggered by the need to consume and generate profit (Kłoskowska, 2005). Popular culture, or pop culture, whose name comes from the word *populus*, or common people, is close to mass culture. The third trend of cul-

ture, postmodern culture, also known as the culture of liquid postmodernity, avoids the hierarchy of culture and its division into better and worse. Zygmunt Bauman, the author of the third concept of culture, believes that the problem lies in its structures, not in hierarchy. Hence, he points to the validity of understanding the structural changes in culture and the societies which are shaped by it. This means moving away from the hierarchy of culture, which, nevertheless, still remains heterogeneous and ambiguous (Burszta, 2004, p. 10). This results from the creation of new ideas and content of the culture of the 21st century. Within these trends, existing cultural elements are modified or combined with new ones. Contemporary culture is therefore non-heterogeneous. The tendencies of its development, as shown in the literature, are heading in three different directions: fragmentation and recomposition, universalisation, homogenisation:

1. Fragmentation and recomposition of culture mean that previously uniform behaviours, including consumption, are being dispersed into many smaller ones (Mikułowski-Pomorski, 2006). This means that what was previously uniform in consumer behaviour is being divided into smaller and more diverse fragments of previous behaviour. Elements which are released from the whole take on a life of their own or can become part of a recomposing whole (Mikułowski-Pomorski, 2008). This also applies to drinking coffee and expresses the release and independent functioning of certain fragments of the previous whole. Considering drinking coffee at a table in a café with service as a whole, within the framework of fragmentation, the café is eliminated, and the place of consumption becomes the car, e.g. on the way to work. Fragmentation and recomposition also mean that certain components of the coffee drinking ritual cease to belong to the previous whole and create a new composition. In South Korea, there are small self-service cafés. The premises have 8-10 chairs with tables for guests, and the prepared coffee stands in a large jug in the middle of the room. Visitors to such a café are required to serve themselves. We can also talk about the fluidity of the behaviour of coffee consumers. This indicates the fragmentation of consumption patterns and, consequently, the functioning of many smaller and more diverse ones. Fragmentation, as we can see, is not associated with the disappearance of the coffee drinking ritual, but expresses the survival and persistence of selected elements from the old ritual, which are still recognisable by consumers and can function independently (Mikułowski-Pomorski 2006).
2. Universalisation shows the direction of changes in which the culture of the 21st century is becoming more and more common and uniform. This applies to both behaviour and symbolism, ethical and aesthetic norms. This phenomenon is described by Tadeusz Paleczny (2007). The author shows that the result of these changes is the expansion of the meaning of the concept of culture and the accompanying lack of a leading value that could unite existing cultures (Paleczny, 2007, pp. 46-47). The consequence of this is the development of an internally heterogeneous culture, often constituting a combination of opposing cultural resources. The popularisation of universalisation simultaneously

means the removal of a hierarchical culture that was previously dominant. In relation to coffee, this means the disappearance of exclusivity (available not only to wealthy and educated people spending time in coffee shops) and universal availability. At the same time, the culture of drinking coffee remains diverse (in relation to the place of consumption, the way, the time, the type of coffee).

3. Homogenisation of culture. This direction of development of contemporary culture consists in the chaotic combination of elements of culture from its various levels and presenting them as a uniform mass, identically perceived by everyone. In this way, the effects of homogenisation express

the blurring of the differences between low and high culture, elite and widely accessible, and sacred and profane. This view is expressed by D. Macdonald, commenting briefly but eloquently: “the elite used to have their high culture, and the masses – kitsch. Currently, the boundary line is blurred” (Majchrzyk 2015, p. 19). This means that the impact of these changes translated into coffee consumption in various social groups will result in the hidden functioning of unlimited diversity and even the creation of further modifications of coffee drinking culture resulting from individual consumer behaviour.

Conclusions

To sum up the foregoing considerations, it can be said that the rich spectrum of behaviour of contemporary consumers, including coffee lovers, is the effect of values created by 21st century culture (freedom and diversity). It can also be added that the functioning of market economies, the globalisation of markets, consumption and society confirm that the indicated values give direction and shape to social and economic development, including consumption in general and coffee consumption. The direction of the changes taking place regarding coffee drinking is consistent with the transfor-

mations in the culture of the 21st century and its leading values. At the same time, some old habits and rituals regarding coffee drinking are still in place, one of the important characteristic features of which is community – valuable, but less noticed and appreciated today.

However, there is a lack of detailed, systematic empirical research that would help to identify the changes taking place and, consumer expectations on an ongoing basis, and then use them for the efficient and satisfactory functioning of the market and coffee consumption sphere.

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The Importance of Stereotypes about Teas in Consumers' Purchasing Decisions

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ABSTRACT

As a common beverage, tea has accompanied consumers for hundreds of years. It used to perform only a medicinal function, while now its application is becoming wider and wider. These circumstances could lead to stereotypes about tea that may encourage or discourage from purchase. The purpose of the article is to identify the importance of stereotypes about teas in consumers' purchasing decisions. The article uses information from secondary sources, but original studies were also conducted. To this end the technique of individual in-depth interviews was used. The research covered eight people who declared that they consumed tea regularly (purposive sampling). In qualitative research the size of the sample and the impossibility of result generalisation are actually always a problem, but the undisputed advantage here is the presentation of the result of the research in a creative way, as the respondents talk about their personal experiences. The employed type of research may prompt the undertaking of quantitative research. Various opinions may often be heard about different types of teas, which leads to the assumption that some consumers may be guided by them. The subject of stereotypes about teas is rarely seen in literature. The identified research gap and professional experience of one of the authors prompted the undertaking of scientific considerations.

Keywords: stereotypes, tea market, purchasing decisions, consumer behaviour, preferences, qualitative research

JEL Classification: D12, D91

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Introduction

Tea is one of the most common beverages in Poland, as well as all over the world (Moore et al., 2009, p. 1790). It is an infusion of leaves

harvested from the evergreen plant (Dmowski, Śmiechowska & Dąbrowska, 2015, p. 221) from the *Camellia* species which distinguishes two

basic varieties: *Camellia sinensis* growing in a temperate climate and *Camellia assamica* growing in a tropical climate (Parveen et al., 2023, p. 1). Initially, when tea came to Poland (this event dates back to 1662; History of Tea, 2024), it was treated exclusively as a medicinal product and only in the 19th century the custom of drinking tea became widespread (Zajączkowska, 1997, p. 75). The fact that tea used to be treated exclusively as a medicinal product may have caused the first stereotypes to arise even back then, as templates were created to simplify the ambiguous information coming from the surroundings (Nelson, 2003). As emphasised by Rybowska (2013a, p. 465), the use of stereotypes is a negative phenomenon, since the consumer may show prejudice against products or other people, or issue judgements that may often be harmful.

Stereotypes are hard to change and they are passed from one generation to the next (Rybowska, 2018, p. 56). However, stereotypes may not be treated as exclusively negative, as some of them may have a positive character and synthetically explain some circumstances, phenomena or behaviours of consumers, and they give the feeling of security due to their unmodified structure (Rybowska, 2018, p. 55). Furthermore, stereotypes are “established” and “reinforced” in the media messages (Rybowska, 2013b, p. 92) or in social media.

Even though the tea leaves are harvested from one species of the plant, with various production processes, e.g. wilting and/or oxidation, one may obtain various types of tea, that is black, green, red, white, turquoise (oolong) and yellow teas. Some properties are identical for each type of tea, while some vary due to differences in production. The diversity of types of tea may cause the consumer to create some sort of stereotype about a given

type in their own mind. An established “image” of tea may, in turn, affect their purchasing decisions, because they may be guided by the view that a given type of tea has a better effect on their health than any other.

In view of the determined research problems, the following research questions were formulated:

RQ1. What stereotypes about teas do the consumers know and why did they adopt these notions?

RQ2. How important are the stereotypes to the consumer?

RQ3. How do the stereotypes about teas affect purchasing decisions regarding these goods?

The main purpose of this academic study is to identify the importance of stereotypes about teas in the consumers’ purchasing decisions. The article is comprised of two parts. The first part is based on information from secondary sources where the scientific literature (compact and continuous works), industry reports on the tea market and websites were used. In this part the methods of critical analysis of the literature and logical deduction were employed. The second part presents the results of our own primary research which was conducted using the technique of individual in-depth interviews (IDI).

The reason for taking up the topic was, on the one hand, the desire to determine how stereotypes about tea shape purchasing decisions of the consumers, whereas, on the other hand, one of the authors used to work in a company selling various tea varieties. The author’s professional experience suggests that the clients often identified a given type of tea with specific stereotypes, however, the empirical verification of such assumptions is missing. Therefore, it was deemed necessary to fill

in this knowledge gap, as the previously available literature does not allow for the explanation of this phenomenon. What is more,

Literature review

Definition and features of stereotypes

In literature the notion of a stereotype is often presented in a similar fashion. There are many publications which refer to stereotypes about people but, as pointed out by Bartmiński (2011), there are no indications that one should limit oneself only to them. The stereotypes may also refer to objects, various phenomena and elements in the individual's closest surroundings (Szlachta, 2011). In order to properly define the notion of a stereotype in the context of tea, one could use the description by Rybowska (2013a, p. 465) who writes that a stereotype is a "common view functioning in society, which is not always consistent with the latest knowledge." Due to its various types and numerous properties, tea may often be treated stereotypically by the consumer, hence this description seems to be correct. However, it is worth taking note of other definitions presented in literature. Chattalas, Kramer & Takada (2008, p. 55) add that stereotypes represent cognitive associations and the expectations of individuals. Other researchers claim that it is a commonly held set of views or impressions (Augoustinos et al., 2014). Another important feature of stereotypes is discussed by Aaker, Vohs & Mogilner (2010, p. 225). They characterise this notion as a brief and general judgement which includes assessment ingredients. The above-mentioned descriptions show the vast semantic capacity of a stereotype, as it is possible to specify various factors characterising this notion. A stereotype is not

the subject of stereotypes is not discussed in the context of the tea itself.

difficult to understand and is not comprised of complex words. It is intended as a facilitation for the consumer, a kind of mental short-cut, to express his or her attitude more quickly (be it positive or negative) towards a given person, brand, situation or product, and enables interpersonal communication that is efficient and not intellectually demanding (Rybowska, 2018, p. 55). Although a stereotype sometimes is an oversimplification, it may contain a "grain of truth" which shows that some impressions have not appeared out of nowhere (Czapka, 2011). What is important is that the stereotypes are judgemental, which does not always have to be good. Quite the contrary, it is sometimes harmful. A stereotype that has once been established, introduced to a given environment and/or culture and considered as relatively valid is permanent and hard to modify. An interesting comparison was also used in the article by Diamantopoulos, Szócs, Florack, Kolbl & Egger (2021, p. 1145). These researchers claim that stereotypes are an *energy-saving appliance* which performs an important cognitive function of simplifying the processing of information and building responses.

At present, the consumer is surrounded by a large quantity of information, and thus is not able to absorb all the messages that reach them, and they may have doubts as to the quality of such information, depending on the source from which they received it (Dąbrowski, 2018, p. 93). It may, therefore, be stated that in

the situation when the consumer cannot make a decision on the basis of their knowledge, it is possible that they will use a functioning stereotype, because it will be an important factor facilitating the purchase (Solomon, 2006, p. 333) of foodstuffs.

Stereotypes in food purchasing decisions

Stereotypes play an important part in the perception of food by the consumer, including health aspects, nutritious values and calorie content. They also play a motivational, as well as demotivational, function with regard to the selection of foodstuffs (Rybowska, 2018, p. 60). Thanks to them, the consumer may be more inclined to purchase a given food product, or discouraged from it by making the goods disgusting to them and causing the purchase to be rejected. Rybowska (2018, p. 60) presents five component effects of stereotyping that affect the consumers' attitude and eating behaviours. These are generalisation, categorisation, automatic behaviour, imitation and communication.

Categorising and generalising too quickly can cause the consumer to make a premature, negative judgement about a given food product. Thus, at the very start, they will be somehow prejudiced, which will lead to categorisation (Devine, 1989, p. 5). Apart from that, if the stereotype is often used and is accompanied by certain circumstances, it becomes automatic (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996, p. 254) so the consumer who regularly buys a specific food product may not even reflect on the impact of its health properties on their organism. Therefore, they may buy a given product "because they always buy it," regardless of the health benefits of other goods.

Stereotypes also allow for building the semantic integration of a message, that is they

create a contextual background and constitute interpersonal communication (Grochowski, 2003, p. 57). They also have different sources of their origin (Rybowska, 2016, p. 46):

- cultural – arising from intergeneration transfers, resulting from folk knowledge,
- scientific – arising from empirical research results, although, in their case, they are innovative for a while, and later are confronted with new research results which correct the previous findings,
- mass media – understood as social media with a wide reach, such as television, radio, press, Internet and even books,
- social media – Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, etc.

At the stage of growing up, the consumer shapes their behaviours, attitudes and views and starts to carefully analyse them and value them in some way. This also applies to the purchase of foodstuffs. Those who are prejudiced against certain types of food are less willing to change their position. Whereas those who are not "closed" in various stereotypes will learn how to stifle them, and thus will prevent the automatic behaviour in perceiving certain types of food (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996, p. 255).

The last effect of the stereotypes is imitation, which is understood as following trends and a willingness to identify with major communities. Fashion, advertisements and environment impact are important factors shaping eating behaviours (Dąbrowska & Babicz-Zielińska, 2011, p. 41). It may seem that making decisions about purchasing specific foodstuffs is more individual, because every consumer likes something different and, in theory, they should choose food that is the tastiest or healthiest for them, but these are not the only aspects influencing the consumer, and many

other factors may affect their purchasing decisions.

In the case of tea, the right purchasing decision will also not be easy, because this product has many different types, and every tea variety has different properties. However, to discuss the stereotypes about tea, which is a common beverage in the whole world, it is worth characterising the global and domestic tea market, as well as individual types of teas.

Tea market

Tea is a beverage prevalent in almost every corner of the world. According to the data of Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (2024), 6.7 million tonnes of tea was produced globally in 2022, where more than 3 million tonnes was accounted for by black tea, and more than 2 million tonnes by green tea. This volume of production translates into the global consumption of tea. 6.5 million tonnes of tea was consumed in 2022, and it is estimated that the demand for tea will become even greater (Volume of tea consumption worldwide from 2012 to 2025). In 2022, the annual tea consumption per capita in Poland amounted to 0.47 kg, resulting in a consumption of nearly 18,000 tonnes on a national scale. Polish consumers per capita consume more dried tea than, for example, Germans, Czechs, French, Spanish or Italians (World Population Review, 2024). In 2021, a considerable part of Polish consumers bought bagged teas (85%) which are available in nearly all types of grocery stores. The advantages of the bagged teas definitely include the facts that they can be made much more quickly, the bags are disposable, so the consumer saves time by not washing the teapot or strainer which need to be cleaned when using tea leaves (which accounted for 11% in the structure of tea sales

in Poland in 2021 – MarketHub, 2022). The import of tea in 2022 amounted to more than USD 141.5 million (Statistics Poland [Polish abbreviation: GUS], 2023, p. 228), while the export amounted to USD 256 million (The Observatory of Economic Complexity [OEC], 2024).

The infusion of tea leaves is so often drunk by consumers of various nationalities, because it has many ingredients that have an effect on people (e.g. polyphenols or caffeine – although in tea one can speak of theanine) and some minerals (Wierzejska, 2014, p. 595). However, the type of tea is also important in terms of the occurrence of some properties.

Characteristics of various types of teas

Tea is a fully natural product which does not contain aromas or artificial colourings. Its ingredients have a positive effect on reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases (Michalak-Majewska, 2011, p. 6), the polyphenols reduce the transfer of cholesterol to the blood stream and prevent the occurrence of blood clots. Tea is also rich in fluorine and vitamins A, B, C and P. Furthermore, the consumption of tea moisturises the skin, increases concentration (Piszcz et al., 2017, p. 37) and reduces blood pressure (Kudelka & Łobaza, 2007, p. 113). Each type of tea may have greater or lesser antioxidant properties and various compositions of polyphenol compounds (Fik & Zawislak, 2004, p. 99). It is clear that the presented properties apply to all teas, but each type of tea has its own characteristic properties. Why are they so different then, if all the types of teas come from the same shrub species?

The answer may be found in the process of fermentation which has a vital impact on the colour and taste of tea, and they depend on the degree of oxidation of tea phenols (Alasalvar et

al., 2012, p. 6323). While making a basic classification of the types of teas, six types can be distinguished: black, green, red, white, turquoise (oolong) and yellow tea. These may be, in turn, divided into three groups in terms of the process of fermentation: fermented (black), partially fermented (red, turquoise and yellow) and unfermented (green and white) (Almajano et al., 2008, p. 56).

As the only fully fermented type, black tea has the darkest colour, and the infusion from its leaves has the most intense taste. This beverage is so common in Poland that it seems that the process of making a decision about the purchase of black tea is not complicated for the consumer. One may assume that this type of tea will always guarantee good taste and aroma, as many consumers have already gotten used to black tea. What is more, its preparation should not pose any problems for the consumer, because one only has to pour hot water over the black tea leaves and brew for about three minutes, although there certainly are some consumers who prefer the tea leaves to be constantly soaking in water and the tea becomes more intensive over time. However, apart from the fact that this type of tea has been “tried and tested” in Poland and may be bought “blindly,” in recent years more and more attention has been paid to the product’s ingredients. The polyphenol compounds included in black tea leaves and created as a result of the tea fermentation process, show strong anti-atherosclerosis, anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory and anti-bacteria properties, which play a vital part in the protection of the organism (Dmowski, Śmiechowska & Sagan, 2014, p. 207). In addition, they reduce blood pressure, the level of cholesterol and glucose in serum (Koch, 2016, p. 308).

Pu-Erh, that is red tea, is the most specific type of tea in terms of both its taste and aroma which may be described as earthy or spicy. This type is distinguished by its long ageing time. Some pu-erh teas are subject to this process for even 7 to 10 years, but the ageing is sometimes speeded up by the addition of external microorganisms (Gawron-Gzella et al., 2018, p. 61). It is said that the red tea has anti-atherosclerosis, hypolipidemic, anti-bacteria and anti-microbial properties, and neutralises free radicals. However, the most commonly named property of pu-erh is its effect in combating obesity (Lv et al., 2015, p. 194). What is important is that red tea may support slimming by the reduction of the glucose level in blood, but it is not a beverage that will on its own cause slimming.

The oolong tea undergoes many production stages, including: sun wilting and then wilting inside a building which is combined with turning leaves, enzyme deactivation, rolling and drying (Hu et al., 2018, p. 202). It has been proven that oolong has anti-cancer, anti-diabetes, anti-allergy and anti-obesity properties, and that is why this tea is recommended to diabetics. It also helps to prevent atherosclerosis, hypertension, heart diseases, and reduces oxidative stress (Weerawatanakorn et al., 2015, pp. 134-135). This type of tea is characterised by a fruity and flowery aroma, as well as a refreshing and mild taste (Wang et al., 2022). Contrary to its name, the turquoise tea has nothing to do with this colour. Its hue is rather closer to green tea. However, sometimes the turquoise tea has the addition of the leaves of *clitoria ternatea* (*Butterfly Pea Tea*) which give oolong its beautiful blue colour, and when you add some lemon, the infusion turns purple.

The least known type of tea is yellow tea. This is due to the fact that for many years its export from China was prohibited (Kozaczko, 2022). Thanks to some of its properties, yellow tea is most similar to green tea, with its mild taste and smell (Feng et al., 2023, p. 7836), as well as similar production stages, where the time of drying yellow tea is longer and it is only partially fermented. Yellow tea also has many properties, such as anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory properties, protecting the liver against damage, and reduction of the risk of obesity (Kozaczko, 2022). This type of tea also needs to be brewed at a lower temperature (70-85°C) and for the right amount of time (between three and five minutes).

The first references to the second type of unfermented tea date back to the 3rd century BC and point to a Chinese doctor who recommended this beverage as a product improving concentration and sharpness of mind (Sikora & Ogonowski, 2011, p. 968). Currently, green tea is the second most produced and consumed type of tea in the world. Its consumption has many positive aspects which affect the consumer's health. Green tea is associated with anti-virus and anti-cancer properties, cholesterol reduction and anti-fungal properties (Siniša & Mishra, 2008). It is often heard that green tea is bitter or astringent, and it is not fit to drink. It is obvious that its consumption depends on the individual preferences of the consumer, but what is very important in preparing green tea is the right water temperature (about 60-70°C) and how long it is brewed for (up to two minutes) (Cichoń et al., 2007, p. 69). When these are observed, green tea is delicate and has a pleasant taste. This type of tea is sometimes treated as a dietary supplement, but it is also applied in other areas, e.g. it is an

ingredient of care products, scented waters, shampoos or anti-ageing emulsions (Sikora & Ogonowski, 2011, p. 968).

White tea is the least processed type. In the production process its leaves are only subject to the process of wilting and drying. These teas are produced from unopened leaves and buds that are covered with a silver fluffy velvet (Plust et al., 2011, p. 47). Such production processes and young leaves bring out the most delicate taste and aroma of all the six types of tea. White tea is a source of vitamin C, and it is considered to be the "elixir of youth," as it contains many more anti-oxidants than green tea and they are conducive to the slowing-down of the ageing process of cells (Czajnikowy, White tea). While making it, it is important to keep the water temperature at about 80°C so as not to burn the leaves. One of the disadvantages of white teas certainly is the fact that they are relatively expensive in comparison to other types.

When choosing tea, the consumer is faced with the dilemma of which tea is best for them. This depends on various factors, such as the price, quality, innovativeness of the product or country of origin (Maciejewski et al., 2024). They may also be guided by the taste and properties of tea that vary for different types of tea. Taking into account that there are six types of tea, it is hard to remember all of their properties, so, to make the purchasing decision easier, the consumer needs some kind of simplified "picture" to give them directions which tea to choose. But the established and common opinions are not always true. Therefore, primary research was undertaken to identify if and to what extent stereotypes about teas matter when making purchasing decisions.

Research methods

The original qualitative research was conducted in October 2024. By taking up the research problem, the authors wished to conduct an in-depth examination of the decision-making process when shopping for tea which may be conditioned by the presence of stereotypes about this beverage, and this type of research gives such opportunity (Czernek, 2014, p. 164), because it attempts to recreate the subjective reality presented by the respondent (Maciejewski, 2022, p. 37). The technique of individual in-depth interviews (IDI) was used. The research had eight respondents who declared that they regularly drank tea (purposive sampling). The research tool was a proprietary interview scenario which comprised of the introduction, the main body and the conclusion. At the beginning the respondent was acquainted with the issues of tea preferences and stereotypes.

The second part consisted of four thematic blocks:

1. The first one referred to the attitude of the respondents towards stereotypes and their impact on everyday life.
2. In the second block the respondents had to describe what they associated with individual types of tea.
3. The third one referred to their familiarity with the stereotypes about specific teas.
4. In the fourth block the respondents had to share the sources from which they drew information about the stereotypes they were familiar with, to what extent they were true and important to them, and they had to explain how they affected their tea shopping decisions.

The third part of the interview was a summary of the conversation. The characteristics of the respondents are shown in table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of the respondents

| No. | Sex | Age | Place of residence | No. of persons in the household | Professional activity |
|-----|-------|-----|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Man | 28 | City with a population of over 100,000 | 1 | Working |
| 2 | Woman | 32 | | 3 | Working |
| 3 | Woman | 26 | | 1 | Unemployed |
| 4 | Woman | 34 | | 2 | Working |
| 5 | Woman | 29 | | 3 | Working |
| 6 | Man | 41 | | 1 | Working |
| 7 | Man | 23 | | 4 | Working |
| 8 | Woman | 30 | | 3 | Working |

Source: Developed on the basis of own research.

The individual in-depth interviews were attended by five women and three men. The interviewed group was comprised of the representatives of generation Z and generation Y (four

respondents each). Every respondent lived in a city with a population of over 100,000, and most of them were employed.

Research findings

Consumer preferences with regard to tea

First, the respondents were asked about their preferences with regard to drinking tea. The issues discussed included: frequency, types, quantity of consumed tea, reasons for choosing a specific type of tea or shopping outlets. All respondents stated that they drank tea every day with the quantity ranging from 250 ml to even 1 l a day, and they most often drank black tea. Green and white teas were also mentioned. The respondents acknowledged that they buy bagged teas, although some of them also buy loose leaf tea. These beverages are consumed with various additions, most often sugar, but the respondents also mentioned honey, lemon, raspberry juice, ginger or fruit or herbal additions. When the respondents were asked why they drank the type of tea they chose, they gave various statements, e.g. *mostly due to its taste and health properties; to warm myself up and for the taste; I drink tea while I have a sit down and a rest*. One may, therefore, say that tea performs various functions. It is not only a tasty beverage, but it may also lift one's mood, and the respondents also identify its health benefits. Given the prevalence of tea, respondents were asked whether there were tea-drinking customs in their families in the past, when they still formed a single household with their parents. Nearly all respondents stated that yes, e.g. *on Sunday morning or for breakfast and supper*. Tea is a beverage which has accompanied the respondents from a very young age, and evokes positive emotions in them. The respondents pointed out that it is a *warm, pleasant, warming beverage, good for health, [...] refreshing and energising, symbolising a moment to oneself*. [...] *Tea makes me*

feel calmer. One of the respondents said that *I like to savour tea and single out its individual flavours, slowly and pleasantly. I have positive associations with tea*. The respondents consider tea as something pleasant, allowing a moment of relaxation and the simple enjoyment of a tasty beverage.

After identifying the consumers' preferences with regard to the consumption of tea and its perception, the second part of the interview started.

Respondents' attitudes towards stereotypes

First, the respondents were asked if they believed in stereotypes at all. Here the responses were split. Four respondents expressed their negative attitude towards stereotypes, saying that *they are generalisations and rarely reflect reality*. Other respondents added that *stereotypes are harmful and never relate to the whole group*, and that *they are oversimplified, wrong convictions*. For some respondents the notion of a stereotype has a negative impression, since they *can lead to unfair assessments and prejudices*. The respondents pointed out that one could not apply common templates just to make it easier to assess people or products. One of the respondents actually expects some scientific explanations that will present the correct information. However, three respondents perceived stereotypes as something good, as *they help to simplify the reality that is sufficiently complicated as it is and they frequently prove to be correct*. It seems that, in the face of the vast amount of information that reaches the consumer, a stereotype facilitates the assessment of people or products, since, as

already quoted in this article, they have not appeared out of nowhere and contain a *grain of truth*.

Some respondents see nothing wrong with stereotypes. Therefore, the respondents were asked in what areas of life, particularly in the area of trade and services, they were accompanied with stereotypes. One of the respondents emphasised that they paid attention to *how the brands are perceived in society. I avoid those with negative connotations*. What is interesting is that the consumer may avoid the products of a given company not because they are defective, wear out quickly, etc., but because of the social “image” of such a company. When drawing information from the stereotypes known to them, the consumer may be prejudiced against the purchase of products of a given brand. Another respondent mentioned that the stereotypes *encourage one to buy products that are considered “healthy.”* Therefore, if the consumer is presented with the health benefits of tea, it may evoke their willingness to buy. One of the respondents who does not believe in stereotypes thinks that they affect purchasing choices, *e.g. some people may avoid certain products*. It is worth mentioning that despite the lack of belief in stereotypes, the consumer may involuntarily form their own opinion on their basis. Three respondents who declared they believed in stereotypes said that the source of a given stereotype was important to them. They were more willing to believe a relative, trusted social media portals or sometimes social media.

Then the respondents were asked about the reasons for the functioning of stereotypes about tea, and to what extent they could affect purchasing decisions. One of the respondents stated that the existence of stereotypes about tea *often arises from a lack of knowledge about*

brewing a certain type of tea. Another respondent noted another cause saying that *people draw information from similar sources, e.g. the Internet, they trust these sources without making any additional reconnaissance. Thanks to the easy access to such information, many people accept it and pass it on*. It is hard to identify all the properties and types of tea, so simplified opinions may often be used and repeated by the consumers, even though they do not have to be based on true information.

When tea first came to Poland, it was treated as a medicinal product from the very beginning. It currently does not perform only this function, but it is still attributed with numerous health benefits. The respondents defined various sources from which, in their opinion, such beliefs may come. They most often pointed to intergenerational transfers. One of the respondents presents it in an interesting way: *I think that, starting from older generations when people worked hard physically and in the times of our grandparents, people wanted to assign nearly medicinal properties to a regular tea after coming home from work*. One of the respondents associated the existence of such stereotypes with the countries where tea is produced, and the culture and customs there: *many cultures have been using tea for ages as a product beneficial to health, which affected its perception*. Another respondent adds that *tea is strongly associated with nature and history, e.g. traditional techniques of brewing tea from China and Japan. Additionally, the Asians live long and drink a lot of tea, which may strengthen the stereotype*. One of the respondents also noted that *contemporary research also frequently confirms the properties of some types of tea, which strengthens such beliefs in society*. The beliefs and opinions about teas seem to be strongly rooted at the source which, in this

case, is comprised of Asian countries and their culture, and may be still reinforced by *advertisements and the experiences of individuals*. In the past, medicine was not so well-developed and *the lack of specialist help [...] led to the development of simple methods of treatment, including various herb infusions*.

Tea has been known as a beverage for hundreds of years. Thanks to its origin, the old native peoples of Asia showed unique veneration to tea and care for its brewing. It was treated as a medicinal product and its positive effect on human health was proven. These traditions were passed on from one generation to the next, which helped to cultivate the customs and culture of drinking tea, as well as beliefs that might apply to individual types of tea.

Respondents' knowledge of tea types

Tea leaves undergo different production processes, which results in a different type of tea, and therefore a different taste, colour or properties. While the consumer is able to describe black or green tea, which are the most frequently consumed types, characterising the remaining four tea varieties seems to be more complicated. Respondents were asked to write down their associations related to each of the six types of tea. The results are presented in Figure 1.

The respondents had the most associations with black tea, which is their everyday drink.

Each of the respondents noticed that this infusion is strong and is supposed to stimulate. In addition, it goes well with other additives, such as sugar, honey and ginger, which makes the choice of this tea in the autumn and winter period fully justified.

Green tea is associated by the respondents as smooth, calming and healthy. As mentioned earlier in this article, green tea has other uses, hence the idea that it is cleansing. This type can often be associated with the ritual of ceremonial brewing during which its preparation is celebrated with great care. Perhaps because of this custom embedded in culture, it evoked associations in the respondents that it is a relaxing and calming tea.

The respondents found white tea the most delicate, pleasant and subtle. However, they also noticed that it is a luxury product that may accompany sublime and exceptional moments. One of the respondents emphasised that the subtlety of white tea is well emphasised by the addition of flowers, e.g. rose petals.

Oolong was defined as a tea which, in terms of its properties and taste, is somewhere between black and green tea. The respondents indicated that it is a tea with a rich taste. Turquoise tea is also sometimes flavoured with milk, which *gives it a unique taste and this milky aftertaste does not go with any other type, as it does with this one*.

Figure 1. Respondents' associations with tea types

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>BLACK TEA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •tea after meal •bagged tea •everyday •full of taste •morning energy •invigorating •ordinary •related to British tradition •“winter tea” •strong •with a bitter taste | <p>GREEN TEA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •relaxing •intensive •slimming •aromatic •fruit (raspberry, hibiscus) •good for the cardiovascular system •decaffeinated •recommended for little children | <p>WHITE TEA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •smooth •luxury •for special occasions •perfect with flower additions •subtle •stimulating •pleasant |
| <p>GREEN TEA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •smooth taste •cleansing •relaxing •bitter •calming •light •healthy | <p>OOLONG TEA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •milky aftertaste •tasty •tastings •tea brewing ceremonies •bridge between green and black tea •rich flavour | <p>YELLOW TEA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •rarity •hard to get •smooth •sweet note •nut aroma |

Source: Developed on the basis of own research.

Although many associations were made with the red tea, not all of them were correct. Pu-erh is certainly not decaffeinated, because this type, like all the others, contains this element. Red tea is sometimes confused with rooibos (made from the red bush), being a beverage that is formally not a tea, although it may resemble it very much in taste or colour. Rooibos is a beverage that is recommended for little children. Due to the colour of the infusion, red tea is very often obtained through fruit additives, especially those that contain red fruit or hibiscus which gives it an intense colour. Nevertheless, there was an association that red tea is slimming or has an intense flavour.

It was difficult for the respondents to determine their associations with yellow tea. Due to the fact that it is the rarest type of tea, this product was unknown to some respondents. One of the respondents emphasised that

it is a difficult tea to obtain, which makes it a certain rarity. A respondent who consumed yellow tea said that this type reminded her of a nutty aftertaste.

The associations mentioned by the respondents allow for a partial presentation of individual types of tea. In the next part of the interview, the respondents were presented with ten stereotypes about teas. The respondents' task was to indicate whether a given stereotype was familiar to them, as well as to decide whether it was true or false.

Respondents' knowledge of stereotypes about teas

When buying tea, regardless of whether it is intended for personal consumption or for another person, the consumer is guided by various factors, such as taste, aroma, type of tea, country of origin or health properties,

which may sometimes prove to be crucial in the decision-making process. However, in order to correctly identify the characteristics of a chosen type of tea, it is best to have such knowledge, although this is not always possible when shopping. The respondents were presented with the following ten stereotypes to which they had to respond:

1. **Black tea is good for children.** The respondents clearly indicate that the content of theine in tea may be harmful to children, although, as one of the respondents pointed out, *black tea is quite often given to children*. One of the respondents noted that *black tea may be too strong for children*. It is worth adding that the caffeine content in the infusion prepared from black tea leaves increases with the brewing time, although the caffeine level is still significantly lower than in the case of coffee (Jarosz et al., 2009).
2. **Drinking tea lowers blood pressure.** It may seem that, due to the caffeine content in tea, it is impossible for its consumption to contribute to lowering blood pressure. It should be clarified that the systematic consumption of green tea may provide such an effect, which is confirmed by studies, e.g. Stępień et al. (2011) or Turek et al. (2012). As for the opinions of the respondents, they were divided. Some respondents had not heard of such a stereotype at all, some claimed that *some teas can have a relaxing effect, which can help lower blood pressure, but this is not the rule*, and others claimed that they did not believe in the health benefits of tea.
3. **Green tea is an elixir of health and beauty.** The respondents declared that

they had heard of this stereotype. They said that green tea *is rich in antioxidants, which may indeed have a beneficial effect on health and beauty, or that it is generally considered to be cleansing*. One of the respondents even added that she drank large amounts of such beverage and was healthy and beautiful, so it was certainly true. Due to its properties, this type of tea slows down the aging process (Musiał et al., 2020).

4. **White tea does not contain caffeine because it is very light in colour.** The respondents rightly noticed that white tea also contains caffeine. Its light colour does not mean that this element is missing (Hilal & Engelhardt, 2007). One of the respondents found white tea stimulating, although he indicated that the sensation was not as intense as in the case of black or green tea.
5. **Turquoise tea is blue in colour.** Interestingly, half of the respondents associated turquoise tea with the blue colour of the infusion. One respondent indicated that this was logical, because *turquoise is derived from blue*. In this case, unfortunately, this is not true, because – as written by another respondent – *oolong usually has a colour from gold to dark*.
6. **A warming tea is one that has spicy additives (cinnamon, cloves, anise, red pepper, etc.).** In the opinion of most respondents, such ingredients cause *a feeling of inner warmth which tea itself (even a hot one) will not provide*. This belief certainly results from the fact that tea with these or similar additives is drunk in the autumn and winter, when the outside temperatures are low. There-

fore, the consumer is looking for a way to somehow warm themselves up on cold days. In addition, the Christmas atmosphere may also be conducive to this belief. Moreover, in stores specialising in selling tea, in the autumn and winter period there is an intensification of sales of teas in general and those with spices in particular. However, some of the respondents noticed that basically every beverage that is served hot warms them up.

7. **Green tea is bitter and unpleasant in taste.** This is an oft-repeated stereotype. Its brewing method, which is quite different from black tea, is making a comeback. All the respondents have heard this stereotype and some of them agree with it. However, one of the respondents presented such a situation: *I happened to drink bitter green tea, but it was mainly due to poor brewing.* Well-brewed green tea has a pleasant, delicate taste. The respondent said that she even tried to dissuade others from their mistake, but her words *always fell on deaf ears.*
8. **Healthy tea is not tasty.** Healthy tea can be tasty. The very fact that each type of tea has special health properties means that it can also be *“seasoned” with various natural additives.* In fact, the key to success lies in its preparation.
9. **Each type of tea must be brewed at the same temperature and this does not affect its properties and taste.** All the respondents knew that the time and temperature of brewing tea depended on its type, because an incorrect brewing process might result in not obtaining the appropriate taste values. Why do many consumers not follow the recommended

methods? Perhaps it is *half due to ignorance and half due to the laziness of people preparing tea, which is why so many people choose black tea, because “you can't ruin it.”*

10. **Red Pu-Erh tea is a slimming tea.** Indeed, pu-erh has slimming properties, which was shown in the previous subsections of the article. Only some respondents rightly note that red tea has *properties that support slimming, but it seems that there is no single beverage that will solve the problem of weight on its own.* It is important to remember that it is not tea that will make us slimmer.

During the interviews, the respondents shared other stereotypes they had heard. This shows how many beliefs and opinions about teas function in society. Of the ten stereotypes listed, some were known to the consumers and some were not. So how do stereotypes help (or not) when making decisions about buying tea?

Making a decision to buy tea based on stereotypes

From family, friends, influencers, social media and television, you can hear many different stereotypes about tea, some of which have a positive connotation and encourage you to buy it, and some are repulsive and stop you from doing that. Hence, buying tea may not be easy, because it may be difficult to assess which source of information will provide more reliable information about a given tea, and perhaps the stereotype will be helpful in making a decision.

The respondents had heard of various stereotypes about tea in their lives, e.g. *green tea cannot be drunk in winter because it cools the body; black tea is strong and invigorating; tea is healthier than coffee because coffee contains*

caffeine and tea does not; red tea is good for digestive problems. The respondents were asked what their reactions were to the stereotypes they had heard. One of the respondents replied: *at first I was sceptical, but I noticed that many people believe them. I do not believe in all stereotypes.* This statement shows that the respondent, when observing her surroundings, notices that stereotypes can shape the perception of tea. Perhaps the respondent deliberately said that she does not believe in all stereotypes, because there are some that she considers to be true. Another respondent said that the stereotypes about tea that he had come across during his life were true for him. He acknowledges that he has ingrained these stereotypes *quite strongly* in himself, because *for a long time I avoided drinking coffee, unaware that tea also contains caffeine, this only changed in adulthood.* Another respondent said that she still believed the stereotypes she had heard about 25 years ago. The reason for believing them is also given by another respondent, who emphasises that the stereotypes she learned about tea are true, because they were passed on to her by her grandparents and parents. It is hard to disagree that the opinions of parents and grandparents are important and valid for a child, whatever they might be. Learning about a stereotype about teas made another respondent curious and willing to familiarise herself with reliable information.

As the respondent notes, in the process of making decisions about buying tea, *I treat stereotypes rather as a starting point for the further exploration of the subject.* It can be said that the developed “images” about a given type of tea create a knowledge base about it. It is

worth emphasising that, when buying such products, almost all respondents try to “recreate” the functioning stereotypes. The respondents recall several situations from their lives:

- *Some stereotypes, such as the one about white tea being luxurious, made me feel uncertain whether I should try it, because I was afraid I wouldn't fully appreciate its taste.*
- *Health aspects convinced me to consume white tea, because it is a good substitute for coffee, even though I don't believe in stereotypes.*
- *Anti-cancer effects convinced me to drink not only black tea. At first it was green tea, later other teas.*
- *When I heard that green tea helps lose weight, I actually bought it.*
- *I replaced black tea with green tea, guided by its health aspects.*
- *The stereotype that green tea helps lose weight encouraged me to drink it regularly. I recognise that the health properties of tea are important, so this stereotype influenced my decision in some way.*

It can be said with full certainty that, when buying tea, these stereotypes are taken into account by the respondents. Although some of the respondents declare that they do not believe in stereotypes, because they may be unfair or untrue, they are helpful when buying tea. What is important is that the respondents indicate that they do not want to routinely repeat variously engrained stereotypes, but also emphasise that their knowledge of them has often accelerated their purchasing decision.

Conclusions

Tea is an extremely complex product in terms of its properties and characteristics. It is difficult to remember all of its advantages and disadvantages, so the decision to buy the right type of tea does not have to be easy. However, for the decision-making process to be less complicated, stereotypes come to the rescue by creating a certain point of reference. The respondents declared that they were familiar with various stereotypes about tea which they had heard from friends, family, social media or the Internet. Some respondents assimilate and accept the functioning “images,” while others clearly disapprove of them, saying that they do not believe them at all. It is, therefore, difficult to unequivocally answer the question whether stereotypes are important to consumers. Interestingly, when buying tea, consumers involuntarily take these established beliefs into account, especially if, at the time, they do not have full information about a given type of tea. What

is more, the respondents clearly indicated that stereotypes accelerated their decision to buy tea, because they saw specific benefits in them. It was only after the purchase that there was a desire among some of the respondents to explore the subject of the properties of tea they had purchased. Stereotypes can be a good basis for acquiring the right information, but it should be remembered that they must be verified in reliable sources.

The research was carried out with some limitations. The interviews were conducted among representatives of Generation Z and Y. In order to delve deeper into the subject of stereotypes about tea, it would be necessary to include the perspective of Generation X and BB consumers in subsequent studies. Qualitative research can be an incentive to undertake quantitative research in order to better assess the scale of the identified phenomena.

Author Contributions

Conceptualisation, M.J., P.L.; methodology, P.L.; software, P.L.; validation, M.J., P.L.; formal analysis, M.J., P.L.; investigation, P.L.; resources, P.L.; data curation, P.L.; writing—original draft preparation, P.L.; writing—review and editing, M.J.; visualisation, P.L.; supervision, M.J.; project administration, P.L.; funding acquisition, P.L. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Influencer Marketing in Building Coffee Communication: a Case Study of GBS Coffee

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ABSTRACT

Influencer marketing is redefining the way brands communicate with consumers, especially in our digital era. The following article presents a case study of the Polish GBS coffee brand, which effectively used cooperation with online creators in its market entry strategy. The aim of the work is to analyse the key elements of the brand strategy, such as product personalisation, selection of influencers and the use of non-standard communication platforms, including social media and internet platforms. Content analysis research, including literature and digital content analysis, shows that authenticity, transparency and matching the values of the influencer with the brand are key to the effectiveness of a campaign. The results of the work indicate that a strategy based on online creators allows not only high brand recognition to be achieved, but also redefines rituals related to coffee consumption. The article fills the research gap regarding the use of influencer marketing in the Polish coffee market, while providing practical tips for other companies planning similar activities.

Keywords: influencer marketing, GBS coffee, product personalisation, social media, authenticity in marketing, coffee market

JEL Classification: D12, M31, M37, L66

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Introduction

In the third decade of the 21st century, influencer marketing continues to be a dynamically developing marketing communication tool, redefining traditional relationships between brands and customers. The increasingly rapid development of broadly understood social media, such as Instagram, YouTube, X or Tik Tok, creates unique opportunities to reach the audience in a more engaging and, at the same time, more authentic

way. Online creators, thanks to their authenticity and closeness to the community, have the ability to not only shape the opinion of their audience, but also to potentially increase brand awareness and to influence consumers' purchase decisions (Boerman, Willemsen & Van Der Aa, 2022).

At the same time, the dynamic development of this tool raises a number of challenges. Organisations using this tool often struggle

with difficulties in selecting influencers who are consistent with the values and strategy of a given brand. In addition, consumers are increasingly sceptical of sponsored content, which in turn leads to questions about the authenticity of the message, as well as the effectiveness of the campaign (Evans, Phua, Lim & Jun, 2022).

It is therefore crucial to deepen the knowledge about the effectiveness of influencer marketing and to describe effective practices, taking into account the perspective of both consumers and brands. Research in this field has not only academic but also practical importance, as it allows companies to better adapt their activities to the expectations and needs of recipients while increasing their engagement and loyalty.

The literature on influencer marketing focuses on three key aspects:

1. **Effectiveness of influencer activities:** in this respect, research shows that authenticity, transparency and trust are the key determinants of online creators (Boerman, Willemsen & Van Der Aa, 2022). The literature particularly emphasises the importance of parasocial relationships that strengthen the emotional engagement of recipients and the propensity to make purchase decisions (Labrecque, 2021).
2. **The relationship between influencer and brand values:** research indicates that matching the values of the influencer with the values of the promoted brand increases consumer identification with the brand, as well as consumer loyalty (Jin & Phua, 2014; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).
3. **Visual and substantive quality of content:** publications show the pheno-

menon in which the aesthetics of materials, as well as the expertise of the influencer, increase the perceived value of the content and its impact on purchase decisions (De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017).

Despite the rich literature, there is a research gap in the area of the effective use of influencer marketing tools on the Polish market in the instant coffee segment. This publication aims to fill this gap.

The aim of the article is to present a case study of the effective use of online creators in the market entry strategy of the GBS coffee brand, with particular emphasis on the analysis of personalisation and communication activities aimed at specific target groups, such as gamers and young adults. The following research questions were asked in terms of the aim of this work:

1. **What elements of the GBS coffee brand's influencer marketing strategy of contributed to its effective market entry?** (focus on activities, including product personalisation and selection of creators).
2. **How did cooperation with influencers affect the involvement of the gamer community and other target groups?** (analysis of parasocial relations, value matching and influencer authenticity).
3. **What long-term effects can the influencer marketing strategy bring in the context of brand recognition and loyalty?** (subjective assessment of the effectiveness of activities in building the brand image and its market position).

The research focused on analysing the effectiveness of the GBS Coffee brand's influencer marketing strategy, with particular emphasis on (1) cooperation with influencers

representing different audience segments; (2) product personalisation and the possible effect of consumer engagement; (3) the potential effect of promotional content, such as reviews, music videos and multimedia campaigns, on building brand recognition; (4) the unusual use of platforms and social media, including

YouTube, Twitch and Pornhub, in order to achieve various communication goals.

The presented work is based on a critical literature review and a qualitative approach involving the analysis of a single case study, which involved the following data collection techniques: (1) qualitative content analysis; (2) analysis of pop culture products.

Evolution of social coffee rituals and their impact on shaping identity in gamer communities

Over the years, society has changed its habits regarding behaviour in local communities, and also in online communities. It is worth noting that previously coffee was mainly used in Poland to celebrate meetings between people. In the third decade of the 21st century, people increasingly associate coffee with an effective stimulant.

The situation is slightly different in the gamer community, because coffee is considered as both an effective stimulant, and also an element of gaming culture. A study conducted by John A. Smith and Robert T. Brown (2022) on gamers showed that caffeine has a positive effect on the cognitive abilities of gamers, especially in terms of reaction speed and concentration in the context of long-term gaming sessions requiring high concentration. Lucy Garcia and Ethan Thompson (2023) speak in a similar tone, drawing attention to the role of coffee as a means of improving attention and concentration among gamers, especially those engaging in high-intensity games. On the other hand, the work of Samuel Martinez and Karen Evans (2020) showed that coffee among gamers plays not only the role of an energy drink, but is also an important element of social ritual. Their research revealed that coffee is an

inseparable element of preparation for long gaming sessions, and coffee breaks during the game are a “ritual” enabling the mind to be reset and regain energy. Interestingly, the culture of drinking coffee was also a determinant facilitating integration in online groups, because on certain forums, gamers exchanged opinions about their favourite drinks or ways of preparing them. Coffee has become a symbol of a certain community of experiences in these communities, which strengthens the bonds between players and allows for establishing deeper relationships in gamer communities.

Gamers' behaviour corresponds to the results of a report by ABC Rynek i Opinia, according to which almost half of freshly prepared coffees are bought outside the home, and are mainly sold at petrol stations. The second place is occupied by grocery stores, and the third by cafes, restaurants and fast food bars. The 2023 International Coffee Organization report indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly influenced the change in our behaviour towards coffee. It turns out that coffee consumption at home has increased, which has boosted interest in coffee-making machines and home brewing products

for coffee. It is worth noting that, at the same time, the number of visits to coffee shops has decreased (see egospodarka.pl, 2023).

Changes in purchases in relation to coffee, and also in the way it is prepared and consumed, are directly related to changes in content consumption and the use of the network understood as the Internet. The most popular concept explaining the networking of online communities is the idea of the Network Society by Manuell Castells. It assumes that this community enables the flow of information in an unprecedented way, which, in turn, influences behaviour on the broadly understood Internet. What is more, the Internet itself has become a forum where people express their identities and build intercultural relations. The researcher emphasises that people are increasingly gathering around topics that connect them, creating online communities based on shared interests. This means that classic territorial structures are becoming less important, while shared interests and statuses within the community are becoming more important (Castells, 2021). Jan Van Dijk (2023) complements Castells's concept by pointing out that digital media and social media have become some of the most important tools for influencing the identity of network users. He emphasises that it is thanks to constant contact with trends, social groups and cultural fashions

that social media consumers often adapt their behaviours to fit the social expectations prevailing in the social network. The author also notes that this process leads to a phenomenon more widely known as “personal branding”, although he understands it not only in a business context, but rather in an identity context that leads to building one's status within the community. This “personal branding” is a result of striving for acceptance and this, in turn, is the result of pressure imposed by the community itself.

It can therefore be concluded that drinking the desired coffee with specific behaviours in a specific community can be considered a status symbol in the group, as well as a level of initiation. At one time in Poland, the Żołądkowa Gorzka vodka brand invested in the segment of popularised Hip-Hop music, creating the habit of drinking vodka in specific situations by e.g. placing its product in the music videos of Polish rappers who, at that time, were considered the influential voice of their generation. Colloquially called “red” vodka, it was an element of the subculture and an indicator of the status and degree of initiation among members declaring their affiliation with the Hip-Hop subculture during social gatherings or concerts. Coffee therefore had the potential to be an element of the gamer subculture.

Definition and role of the influencer in brand communication

In the 2020s, introducing a new product to the market and triggering a related trend is possible thanks to engaged communities built around influential people, who are called influencers.

The term “influencer” and the related phenomenon of influence have been defined in science in various ways. Marijke De Veirman, Veroline Cauberghe and Liselot Hudders (2017) define such an individual as a credible medium for recipients and believe that they

play the role of a spokesperson for their communities. Catherine Lou and Shupeí Yuan (2019) consider an influencer as a person who is able to influence purchase decisions because they have authority and a position in the community, as well as a relationship and common knowledge with the recipients. Ebru Uzunoglu and Sema Misci Kip (2014) define an influencer in a similar tone, considering them as a marketing entity able to influence consumer groups through engagement and authority. They believe that influencers can do this because they are credible in a specific industry and have access to a wide audience, and therefore, thanks to their credibility and reach, they can convince others. Researchers Luis V. Casalo, Carlos Flavián and Sergio Ibañez-Sánchez (2018) see an influencer as an intermediary between consumers and brands using the trust of the recipients. Karen Freberg, Kristen Graham, Karen McGaughey and Laura A. Freberg (2011) reduce the creator to a generator of advertising content. For the purpose of this paper, an influencer is understood to be a creator who creates content on social media and who has an impact on communities resulting from their authority, credibility and the reach of the content they produce. In this article, the terms “influencer” and “creator” will be used interchangeably according to the definition above.

A digital creator, similarly to a celebrity, uses or – to put it more economically – monetises their popularity by recommending their own or commissioned products. Their effectiveness in reaching and convincing target groups depends on their authority, reach and probably expertise in a given field. Researchers point out that what increases the engagement of users who are more likely to trust recommendations is the knowledge, authenticity

and transparency of the creator. They believe that credibility builds a sense of security, and this makes recipients perceive the brand as more trustworthy. This is the case especially when the influencer strives for authenticity and also avoids intrusive commercialisation of the message (Hwang & Zhang, 2020). Lucille I. Labrecque (2021) draws attention in her work to parasocial relationships understood as emotional bonds between the influencer and the recipients in the context of the creator's advertising effectiveness. The researcher believes that they are the key to the effectiveness of the campaign and emphasises that the closer the parasocial relationship, the greater the emotional engagement of the recipients, and as emotional engagement increases, so does their willingness to undertake purchasing actions based on the influencer's recommendations. The author suggests that such relationships are particularly beneficial for brands that want to increase the engagement and trust of recipients in their products. Katerina Sokolova and Hana Kefi (2020) emphasise that trust in the creator acts as a mediation between promotional content and the perceived value of the brand. Buyers who trust the influencer are more likely to perceive the brand positively, as well as to manifest their readiness to make a purchase, which, according to the authors, seems crucial for the effectiveness of an advertising campaign. On the other hand, Seung-A Jin and Jin Phua (2014) indicate values as a key factor in the effectiveness of a campaign for an influencer and the promoted product, because when they match, recipients are more likely to identify with the brand and are more loyal. The researchers note that matching in terms of values strengthens the bond between the buyer and the brand, and increases the long-term

value of the relationship. Marijke De Veirman, Veroline Cauberghe and Liselot Hudders (2017) point to yet another factor of influence in their work, namely visual appeal and expertise. The results of their research showed that the aesthetics of published posts, and the level of influencers' knowledge about a given product, increase their influence on recipients. The authors emphasise that users consider more aesthetic and professional content as more credible and more valuable. On the other hand, Ismail Erkan and Chris Evans (2016) draw attention to the role of social proof. The conclusions from their work indicate that the more reactions the creator generates, the greater the trust of the recipients and their willingness to make a purchase. The authors believe that social proof acts as a tool stren-

gthening the authority of the influencer and also their marketing effectiveness.

To conclude the foregoing considerations concerning influencers, it is worth emphasising that they are online creators who usually generate a relatively large reach, have credibility and authority that allow them to influence online communities, and monetise their status within the community. The sales effectiveness of an online creator is influenced by the expertise in a given field, represented values identical to the values of the product, authenticity and transparency (while avoiding intrusive commercialisation), the aesthetics of the influencer's materials, the number of interactions with the material, the trust of the recipients in the creator, and above all, their emotional relationship with fans.

Case study of the communication of the GBS coffee brand

GBS coffee is a Polish brand that offers coffees with a high caffeine content. The product is aimed at people looking for intense stimulation. GBS products are distinguished by a caffeine content five times higher than in traditional coffees, which, according to the manufacturer, make them one of the strongest on the market. The brand offers many coffee flavours, including white chocolate, tiramisu, vanilla, brownie or coconut with white chocolate (mmaniak.pl, n.d.). This coffee is available as instant coffee, ground coffee and in beans (gbs.pl, n.d.). As the brand itself declares, it emphasises the quality of its products, also offering exclusive coffees such as Kopi Luwak, which is known as one of the most expensive coffees in the world. According to the brand, coffee is gaining popularity among consumers looking for an intense flavour and a strong stimulating effect (gbs.pl, n.d.)

The project was led by Mikołaj Jurkiewicz and Mateusz Jurkiewicz. On the YouTube channel Golden CEO, Mateusz Jurkiewicz talks about the launch and development strategy of the GBS coffee brand. From the very beginning, the company's CEO assumed cooperation with influencers as the main driving force of growth (Golden CEO, 2024). However, the Golden CEO project was completed after releasing three films on the channel. There are mentions on the Internet that show that the company's management knew what sales power influencers had in communities. Before building the company, Mateusz Jurkiewicz was involved in creating music, building his brand on collaborations with famous influencers and Polish rappers such as Young Multi, Kaen or Tetris (Prawdziwy Trap, n.d.). It is worth noting that Golden Bow Solutions campaigns were built

from the very beginning on the involvement of the influencer community related to or directly derived from the computer games segment.

The first mentions on the Internet concern a campaign that personalised coffee flavours, matching them to influencers promoting individual variants. An example of this approach are flavours such as Kokosanka (coconut) Masny Ben, Brownie Nitrozyniak or Masło orzechowe (peanut butter) Xayo, which were supposed to reflect the character and preferences of individual creators, encouraging their fans to try these proposals. They were then reviewed by another influencer called Mr Krycha, known for his food reviews and tests. The video, which lasts less than one minute, was viewed over 320 thousand times (MrKrycha, 2023).

The company used a similar strategy in cooperation with rapper and influencer Sentino and the freak fight federation Fame MMA. As part of the promotional activities, a dedicated ad was created, which was then reviewed by the influencer Young Multi (Ebe Ebe, 2024; Multi & Yfl Shoty, 2024). The collaboration resulted in two music videos by the artist,

entitled “Midas” and “45”. The first song compares the artist to King Midas, capable of transforming any piece of music into a commercial success, while the second compares him to Michael Jordan, the legendary basketball player and symbol of success for both Nike and the Chicago Bulls. In both videos, Sentino appears with GBS coffee, which is presented in the context of the luxury fashion brands worn by the rapper. In the “45” video, coffee appears in a new context, as a stimulant and an addition to whisky. The first of the videos, “Midas”, was viewed 16 million times, and the second, “45”, 2.2 million. These data include only direct views on the rapper’s channel and do not include the so-called reactions to the music videos published by other internet users, including famous influencers. These reactions generate additional reach, thus increasing the impact of the campaign (Sentino, 2023; Sentino, 2023a). Both “Midas” and “45” are songs and music videos produced in collaboration with GBS coffee. Their goal is to promote a lifestyle associated with premium coffee.

Table 1. List of influencers with whom the GBS coffee brand has officially collaborated

| Influencer’s name | Content topics | Number of followers |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Xayoo (Marcin Majkut) | Computer game broadcasts, League of Legends, game analysis, interactions with viewers | Twitch: 1.5 million YouTube: 1 million |
| TheNitroZyniak (Sergiusz Górski) | Vlogs, automotive, computer games, online commentary | YouTube: 2 million Twitch: 500 thousand |
| Masny Ben | Humorous films, parodies, music projects, entertainment content | YouTube: 300 thousand; Instagram: 200 thousand |
| Sentino (Sebastian Enrique Alvarez) | German-Polish rapper, creates his songs in four languages: German, Polish, Spanish and English | Instagram: 353 thousand; YouTube: 288 thousand |
| ZeboPL | Polish YouTuber known for creating humorous and commentary content. He comments on various events, social phenomena and the activities of other online creators. | YouTube: 1.67 million |

Source: own research.

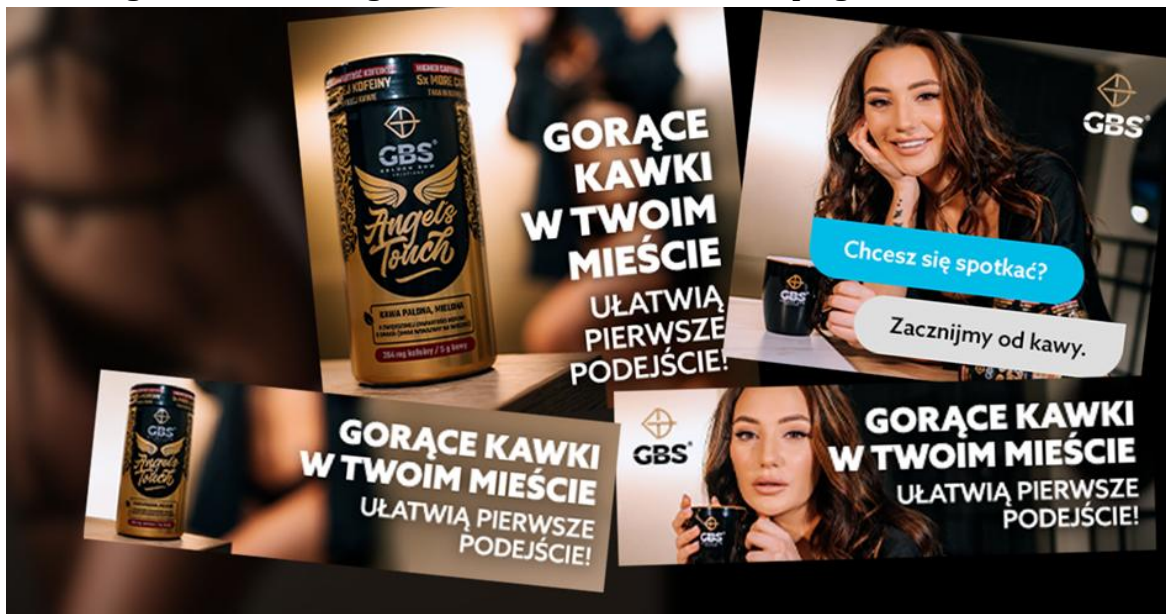
It is worth noting that Golden Blow Solutions has previously collaborated with the Fame MMA federation, creating a dedicated ad, embedded in memetic culture. This ad referred to the beginnings of computer games, presenting coffee as a game character (Szperk00, 2022).

One of the brand's unusual marketing activities was a social campaign conducted on one of the online platforms for adults. The official goal of this initiative was to draw attention to the negative consequences of using pornographic content and to promote opening up to new interpersonal relationships, as well as deepening the existing bonds in the real world. However, the real goal of the campaign

was to generate additional discussion in the online space, both about the product itself and the communication strategy used (Chowratowicz, 2024).

The campaign used advertising messages characteristic of this channel, such as: "Hot coffees in your city will make the first step easier" and "Do you want to meet? Let's start with coffee". The main message of the creation was to encourage recipients to take the first step in establishing a relationship in reality, while the main theme was a proposal to drink coffee together, intended to symbolise a simple way to start a conversation and build relationships (NowyMarketing, 2022).

Figure 1. Advertising banners in the GBS coffee campaign on the website



Source: own research.

The campaign was aimed at the Polish market, which is the brand's key target area, and was organised in the period preceding Valentine's Day, which additionally strengthened its message and adequacy to the needs

of recipients at that time. Below is a list of influencers taking part in the discussion about the brand's campaign on the website addressed to adults.

Table 2. List of influencers taking part in the discussion about the GBS campaign

| Influencer's name | Medium | Reach (number of followers/subscribers) |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------|
| Krzysztof Gonciarz | YouTube | 1.5 million subscribers |
| Sylwester Wardęga | YouTube | 3.6 million subscribers |
| Maffashion | Instagram | 1.4 million followers |
| Jessica Mercedes | Instagram | 1 million followers |
| Michał Sadowski | Twitter | 150 thousand followers |

Source: own research.

Golden Blow Solutions, when introducing its products to the FMCG market, used strategic influencer-based activities to expand its consumer base. In the initial phase, the focus was on cooperation with creators directly or indirectly associated with broadly understood gaming. This activity was aimed at attracting an engaged community of players who had already identified with the ritual of drinking coffee. In the next phase, the communication strategy was expanded to include cooperation with a controversial musician and a federation known for being founded on the basis of influencer fights. Thanks to this, the company successfully moved its products beyond the current gaming

segment, reaching a wider audience. In the final phase, a social campaign was implemented, the aim of which was to provoke a broad discussion among pop culture influencers. This activity allowed for a further increase in the reach of communication, positioning the product as a mainstream element and increasing its recognition among consumers. It should be noted that the strategic use of influencers by Golden Blow Solutions is an example of the effective use of social media marketing, where activities were gradually scaled in order to achieve the maximum reach and diversity of recipients.

Discussion

This article discusses the case of the launch of coffee by Golden Blow Solutions, a company whose strategy was based on cooperation with online creators. It seems that the marketing specialists conducted detailed literature research indicating coffee as both a stimulant and a companion to computer games (Smith and Brown, 2022; Garcia and Thompson, 2023). By identifying this anchor point, it was possible to appropriately position the brand in the coffee market.

It is important to emphasise that the communication strategy evolved over time. At first,

coffee was promoted as a product with a five times higher caffeine content, then as an element of everyday luxury available to everyone, and finally as a key element of social gatherings.

It is worth noting that the seemingly unrelated communication activities had a common denominator in the form of a core, which was the gamer community. It was this community that was the central point from which marketing activities spread outwards, covering increasingly wider groups of recipients.

The most interesting issue that connected the gamer community and young adults, and at the same time sparked a broad discussion among online creators, turned out to be the issue of pornography. While the brand built its recognition through communication about being an effective stimulant, in this case it took on the role of an effective companion for social gatherings, which was a response to the challenge of excessive and unfavourable contact with pornography among young people and adults. A study conducted on a group of almost 6,500 Polish students aged 18-26 showed that 80% of respondents come into contact with pornographic content every day, and over 15% of them show signs of addiction (UMCS, 2021). Using a non-standard medium to promote the

product and initiating a social debate contributed directly to increasing brand recognition.

It should be emphasised that the brand used creators who are advocates for their communities and act as a media for them (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017). That is why they were able to influence their communities (Lou and Yuan, 2019). The foregoing conclusions correspond to the results of a study conducted by Natalia Hatalaska (2016) almost eight years ago, which indicated that online creators in Poland have significant influence on their communities, also in terms of shopping. It is also worth noting that when selecting influencers in campaigns, three key factors were taken into account: (1) reach (number of subscribers and the ability to generate discussion); (2) authority; (3) credibility in their community.

Conclusions

The GBS coffee brand's market entry strategy based on collaboration with influencers has shown that brand communication based on online creators is an effective tool for building brand recognition. Undoubtedly, product personalisation, adaptation to the nature and values of influencers contributed to a deeper involvement of the creator community. In addition, the use of various social formats – from personalised campaigns, through reviews, to music videos – resulted in the effective reach of promotional content to various target groups with a particular focus on gamers and young adults. It is interesting that GBS coffee campaigns not only influenced the brand's positioning, but also contributed to redefining rituals related to coffee consumption, which has become an element of lifestyle in the target groups.

This study fills the research gap in the area

of influencer marketing application in the Polish coffee market, paying special attention to unique target groups, including gamers and young adults, as well as the use of non-standard marketing communication channels for this market.

Companies that want to use the influencer marketing tool should pay attention to several issues. The first issue is the selection of influencers for the campaign who have credibility in specific communities. Each of the creators who were involved in the Golden Blow Solutions campaign had characteristics that matched the characteristics of the coffee being promoted. The second issue is the matching of the products and promotional content to the characteristics of the community. The messages on the adult website and the rapper Sentino's music videos would not have achieved their effective-

ness if they had not been embedded in the creator's unique "world". They caused resonance among recipients because the creators of the campaign consciously selected influencers, media and topics that aroused strong emotions and engaged the audience. The third issue is the fact that the GBS coffee brand also increased its reach and the diversity of recipients with each subsequent step through multimedia campaigns and cooperation with such catalysts of popularity as the Fame MMA federation. The fourth and final issue is the ability to find a balance between achieving reach and audience engagement through cooperation with controversial creators and the risk of potential hate from their opponents. It is common knowledge that every creator has both their supporters and opponents, which means that the product promoted by the influencer can be seen as an integral part of their image, and can

be subject to similar evaluation.

Finally, it is worth emphasising that there are serious limitations to this study. The focus was on only one case study, which is rather exploratory than representative, limiting the possibility of extrapolating the results to the entire population. In addition, the foregoing analysis mainly concerns the short-term effects of the campaign. There is also a lack of precise company data on the sales of its products.

Future research should focus on how influencer marketing affects sales results in the long term, and therefore how long the creator's influence is effective, as well as how it affects long-term brand and product recognition. It would also be interesting to examine the long-term effects of cooperation with online creators, which include the impact on consumer loyalty and maintaining the brand image in a rapidly redefining digital environment.

Declaration of competing interest

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Book Review:

Quality Determinants in Coffee Production **by Lucas Louzada Pereira and Taís Rizzo Moreira.** **Springer, 2021**

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JEL Classification: Y30

Paper received: 05 November 2024 • Paper accepted: 26 November 2024

The book entitled “Quality Determinants in Coffee Production” is an inspiring work on the analysis of coffee production, describing the key factors determining the process of its production. The theoretical and cognitive aspects are presented by an outstanding team of scientists and practitioners. The monograph is not only an academic textbook or a textbook on coffee production and brewing for practitioners, but also consolidates a theoretical, empirical and cognitive approach to the holistic view of the production quality process. The authors’ considerations do not follow the established paradigm that the production of coffee greatly depends on the processes related to the method of harvesting and processing the raw material into the final product, and less on the quality of soil, climate or cultivation methods. They suggest that these processes are coherent and complement each other. I find this approach as a kind of novelty.

The monograph is divided into 9 chapters that are complementary to each other. The first chapter is devoted to various methods of harvesting coffee, starting with a manual harvest and ending with a mechanical one. In the book the authors try to explain how the time and manner of harvesting coffee condition the quality of beans, particularly in the case of a simultaneous harvest of ripe and unripe fruit. Further the processes of drying coffee are discussed, including the drying on sun terraces and with the use of mechanical dryer. In that regard the authors pointed out how important it is to quickly reduce humidity to prevent fermentation and mould growth. In the conclusion the researchers show the effective methods of coffee storage based on the ventilation methods and safeguarding against humidity.

In the second chapter the researchers focus on climate changes and their impact on coffee cultivation in Brazil, with special consideration

given to the Espírito Santo region. The authors prove that the rise in temperatures and irregular precipitation determine the process of coffee ripening, which may often lead to the reduction of harvests and the deterioration of the coffee quality. They also discuss the threats for coffee cultivation, such as draughts and floods, that may cause coffee production to fluctuate. The considerations are supplemented with chapter three which pertains to microbiological research in the field of coffee production. The researchers prove that microorganisms affect the sustainability of the coffee growth process and the resilience of coffee plants, which directly influences the taste of the infusion. This part discusses individual groups of microorganisms, including bacteria and fungi, which support the coffee plants in the absorption of nutrients and protect them from the pathogens. Other issues discussed in this chapter include soil management and the impact of organic fertilisers on the soil ecosystem, which is of key importance in achieving the right coffee quality.

In the following fourth chapter, the biochemical changes taking place during coffee fermentation are discussed in detail, as they are one of the key stages of taste development. The authors present the fermentation techniques and reactions that take place during the process analysed above. They explain how the enzymes and individual microorganisms contribute to the sweetness, acidity and complexity of the coffee aroma. In the context of these considerations, it needs to be stated that part five of the monograph is very interesting, as it describes the chemical composition of coffee beans, including the content of caffeine, chlorogenic acids, lipids and other aromatic compounds in coffee. The researchers thoroughly present

the differences between coffee varieties, focusing particularly on two kinds, that is arabica and robusta. It is worth noting that further considerations on coffee production are given in chapter six which is devoted to the individual methods of its processing. The authors describe the methods of processing the raw coffee material into the final product. Furthermore, they try to explain how various methods and techniques, including, for example, the dry and wet method, help to achieve the optimum aromatic quality of coffee.

The following three chapters focus on the process of roasting coffee, its classification and market trends. In that regard, it should be noted that chapter seven is devoted to the process of roasting coffee, which determines its taste and aroma. The authors discuss the changes that take place in the beans while roasting coffee, and consequently give coffee its sweetness, bitterness and aroma. The researchers consider two determinants that help to achieve the optimum taste of the coffee, that is the temperature and duration of coffee roasting. In the next chapter the authors characterise the methods of the classification of coffee bean quality, with special consideration given to the factors related to the shape, colour and hardness of the beans. The last chapter focuses on the analysis of the modern market trends. The authors point out that consumers more and more often look for coffees with a unique taste, which requires innovative methods of processing and roasting. Also discussed are consumer preferences concerning the methods of making coffee in order to achieve various optimal flavours and aromas.

To conclude, I believe that the monograph entitled "Quality Determinants in Coffee Production" is theoretical, empirical and applicable

at the same time and combines the cognitive values that are very important to both scientists and practitioners. The applied methods of thought operation, deduction and induction help the reader to better understand the nature of problems related to the individual conditions of coffee production, including the optimal tre-

nds and techniques of coffee bean processing. It is worth noting that it constitutes a compendium of knowledge for further exploration of the issue of the variability of quality determinants in coffee production.

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In the case of difficulties please contact our editorial team directly by email: pluberda@ctmri.eu or gmaciejewski@ctmri.eu

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REVIEWING RULES

All papers submitted to the Coffee & Tea Marketing Journal (C&TMJ) are peer-reviewed according to the following procedure:

Initial review: The Editor-in-Chief or Deputy Editor in Chief evaluates each manuscript to determine if it fulfils the scientific criteria. Manuscripts that fail to pass the initial review are treated as declined submissions.

The associate editor checks the quality of the article according to the following criteria:

- the theme and the character of the contribution corresponding to the criteria defined by C&TMJ;
- the formal treatment of the contribution following the Information for authors, including the prescribed formatting for a scientific article;
- citations and a list of the literature used, arranged properly and according to the existing standards.

The editor has the right to reject submissions that are not in accordance with the journal's editorial purpose and do not meet the above criteria and inform the author of the decision made.

Based on the editor's initial review, the contribution proceeds to the peer-review process through the associate editor. During the peer-review process, a minimum of two independent reviewers evaluate the quality of the article submitted and make a proposal regarding the further procedure.

Peer review: Manuscripts that pass the initial review are assigned to two independent reviewers according to their expertise in the particular field. All reviewers are PhD holders in the relevant academic discipline or have significant, long-term professional and teaching experience. The review process is **double-blind** - the reviewers do not know the identity of the author, and the author does not know the identity of the reviewers.

The evaluation is primarily aimed at meeting the following criteria:

1. Does the title of the paper correspond to its content?
2. Is the goal of the paper clearly stated?
3. Is the topic presented in the paper relevant, timely and of significant importance to science?
4. Is the research methodology appropriate and applied properly?
5. Is the paper clearly and concisely written and well organised?
6. Is the paper based on existing theory? Is it supported by a complex and up-to-date theoretical background?
7. Does the abstract of the paper satisfactorily present the goals, methods and results?
8. Do the conclusions clearly summarise the main results and contributions of the paper?
9. Is the language of the paper (British English) correct?
10. Are there any formal mistakes in the paper?
11. Does the paper meet the formal guidelines of C&TMJ?

Approval for publication depends on the positive recommendations of the reviewers. If the reviews differ widely, the Editor invites an additional reviewer to obtain an extra opinion before making a decision.

If the reviewers suggest any amendments, the author(s) should consider them.

The list of reviewers is published on the journal web page at the end of the year.

Decision: The Associate Editor recommends to the Editor-in-Chief the acceptance / revision / rejection of the manuscript based on the review report received from the independent reviewers. The Editor-in-Chief takes a final decision on the acceptance of the paper and notifies the authors. The decision may be "Accept submission", " Accept submission with minor revisions ", " The text requires major revision and new external review", or " Reject submission." If the decision is " The text requires major revision and new external review ", the manuscript has to be revised and sent out during the second round of peer review.

If the paper was sent back to the authors for revision, the reviewers should expect to receive a new version, unless they have opted out of further participation. However, where only minor changes were requested, this follow-up review might be done by the Editor-in-Chief.

The Editor-in-Chief notifies the authors of the result of the peer review process and has the right to comment on the review reports. If the author submits a protest pertaining to the review reports, the Editor-in-Chief and the editor responsible check the author's objections and inform the author of the result.

PUBLICATION ETHICS AND PUBLICATION MALPRACTICE STATEMENT

(based on Elsevier recommendations and COPE's Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors)

Coffee & Tea Marketing Journal (C&TMJ) follows the standard for Ethics and Publication Malpractice set by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). It is therefore committed to ensuring ethics in publication and quality of articles. As publisher of the C&TMJ, Coffee & Tea Market Research Institute takes its duties of guardianship over all stages of publishing extremely seriously and recognizes its ethical and other responsibilities. We are committed to ensuring that advertising, reprint or other commercial revenue has no impact or influence on editorial decisions. In addition, the Editorial Board will assist in communications with other journals and/or publishers where this is useful to editors. Conformance to standards of ethical behavior is therefore expected of all parties involved: Authors, Editors, Reviewers, and the Publisher.

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Reporting standards

Authors of reports of original research should present an accurate account of the work performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. Underlying data should be represented accurately in the paper. A paper should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable. Review and professional publication articles should also be accurate and objective, and editorial 'opinion' works should be clearly identified as such.

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Duties of editors

Publication decisions

The editor is responsible for deciding which of the articles submitted to the journal should be published. The validation of the work in question and its importance to researchers and readers must

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