Natalia Gluza

Image discrepancy, consumer attitude and purchase intention

Doctoral dissertation summary

Supervisor: **dr hab. Renata Nestorowicz, prof. UEP**

Contents

1. Research problem and justification for the study

Today, social networking sites are characterized by instant accessibility, universality and a "multiplication of worlds". The images and information that appear throughout social media indisputably shape the relationship an individual has with other people, i.e., those known in the real world and those in virtual communities. They also affect an individual's self-presentation, ideals and preferred lifestyle, as well as his/her attitudes towards products, price acceptance level or willingness to buy.

Since interactions on social networking sites take place in a virtual world, individuals are free to choose how they present themselves to others – which then allows them to create virtual, alternative images that are in contrast to their real selves (Amichai-Hamburger, 2005; Messinger et al., 2009). Accepting another 'self' allows the user to have an open discussion regarding his/her experiences, thus allowing him/her to avoid personal exposure or embarrassment (Cunha & Orlikowski, 2008). Individuals want to free themselves from their everyday lives, thus their alternative 'self', nurtured in a virtual space, allows them to freely do what they want without having to adapt to everyday life.

Simultaneously for the younger generation, social media have created a kind of "should" environment, i.e., if Internet users want to gain sympathy and recognition from their online friends, they should present themselves as extremely physically attractive or smart, behave in a certain manner, go to certain places, do certain things, or buy certain products. This "should" environment is measured by how many likes are gained for content that is published online, by having as many friends/followers as possible or by gaining wider reach with posts.

This doctoral dissertation attempts to organize issues related to conceptualizing "image discrepancy" based on Higgins' self-discrepancy theory (1987) which, at the theoretical level, is understood in a structural way. The first component is the 'actual self' in the real world (offline). This is what the individual does in his/her everyday life which, in turn, builds his/her real image. The second component concerns the image that results from the standpoint of some significant others in the virtual (online) world (Bizman et al., 2001; Hu et al., 2015; Ahadzadeh et al., 2017; Huang et al., 2019) and, more specifically, what it should be in order to remain a member of the online community ('ought self') to gain recognition and sympathy from other social media users. It is therefore assumed that:

A discrepancy in the self-system, more precisely between the two components of the actual self offline, i.e., the individual's actions in real life, and the ought self from the

standpoint of some significant others online (members of virtual communities, other social media users), is called *image discrepancy*.

The proposed concept of image discrepancy is an original proposal and, although it is based on the scientific reports of other researchers (Higgins, Nakkawita and Cornwell 2020, Mancini and Sibilla, 2017; Hu, Zhao and Huang, 2015) as defined in this scope, it has not been previously empirically researched.

Creating a strategic, alternative self has been documented in the literature, but mostly as regards the psychological aspect (Ahadzadeh et al., 2017; Beos et al., 2021; Dengah & Snodgrass, 2020; Kim et al., 2018; Lee and Suh, 2015; Yang et al., 2021). Factors that determine the tendency for image discrepancies to arise, as well as the psychological consequences of the analyzed phenomenon, seem to be well recognized in contemporary scientific reports. The impact of discrepancies between various components of the self-system (according to Higgins' theory) and people's behavior in various areas has been subjected to empirical research, including the desire to impress others (e.g., Stewart and Clayton, 2021), sharing information within online communities (Suh, 2013), actions performed while gaming (Mancini et al., 2019), wellbeing (Kelly et al., 2015), or body dissatisfaction among people with eating disorders (Lantz et al., 2018).

There has also been research on the impact of image discrepancy on consumer purchasing behavior (e.g., Mandel et al., 2017). However, this research has often focused on the effectiveness of marketing activities (e.g., Meng et al., 2015), online shopping (e.g., Li et al., 2019) or interactions with brands (e.g., Kim and Kim, 2016; Rabbane et al., 2020). Yet there have been relatively few such studies, and the effects of the impact of image discrepancy on the purchasing behavior of consumers as indicated in these studies have been fragmentary (e.g., they did not take into account the moderating factor – which is the product category). Moreover, none of the scientific studies have considered the phenomenon of image discrepancy, attitudes towards the product, or price acceptance level and purchasing intention of consumers, and it was the consumption of selected products that became a tool for creating one's alternative self in the social media that gained social status and belonging to a specific social group (Bynum, 2008). The "visible" consumption of certain goods allows individuals to gain social recognition (Amatulli et al., 2015; Friehe and Mechtel, 2014; Kaus, 2013; Khamis et al., 2012). So far, the choice of buying a product "for show" was based on its high price or by being perceived as a luxury good. Given the possibilities of unlimited exposure of consumed products in the social media, the nature of these products' attributes has changed – it is not their price but their uniqueness

and the possibility of arousing social interest that now determine whether they will be purchased by the consumer.

The choice of a product is no longer determined only by its functional properties but, in particular, by its symbolic dimension, i.e., consumers perceive the symbolic meaning of the consumption of a given product, evaluating it through the prism of satisfying 'envelope needs' (understood as enriching needs that simultaneously accompany and have advantage over one's biological needs). Therefore, the buyer selects a product whose possession and use will allow that buyer to express his/her characteristics or motivation (Hosany and Martin, 2012).

It is also interesting to note the impact that the relationship between image discrepancy and purchasing intention might have on the predictive power of congruence measurement methods. In previous scientific reports, researchers emphasized that greater compatibility of self image and the image of the user of a given product determined a greater likelihood of product purchase (Sirgy, 2018; Aaker, 1996; Govers and Schoormans, 2005; Lin, 2010). However, in the literature on the subject, no studies have been found that would combine the following issues of coherence of images, including self image and the user of a given product (congruence theory), a consumer's purchasing intentions and image discrepancy (differences between the actual self offline and the ought self offline). Previous scientific reports were concerned only with the subjective scope of an individual's own image based on the actual self and ideal self (Malär et al., 2011, Markus and Nurius, 1986; Markus and Wurf, 1987). It would be worth researching whether the 'should' construct can moderate the relationship between congruence and the consumer's purchase intention in the same or similar way. Moreover, the theory of congruence should be viewed through the prism of the changes that have taken place in communication between the brand and the consumer. In other words, it has become necessary to take into account the virtual context.

2. Research objectives and hypotheses

In view of the above, the following research problem was formulated which answers the question: How does the discrepancy between the "actual self offline" and the "ought self online" affect attitudes towards the product and prediction of a consumer's purchasing intention?

In order to clarify the research problem, the following research questions were posed:

P1. How does an individual's tendency to have image discrepancy affect his/her attitude towards the product, including his/her cognitive, emotional and behavioral elements?

P2. Do people who are prone to have image discrepancies perceive individual product categories differently than people who do not show such a tendency?

P3. Will image discrepancy affect the price acceptance level, and to what extent?

P4. How does image discrepancy affect one's intention to buy a product?

P5. How does image disparity affect the predictive value of congruence measurement methods?

On the basis of the literature, the research problem and the research questions, the main goal of this doctoral dissertation was formulated, which is as follows: to determine the effects of "image discrepancy" in shaping attitudes towards the product and to recognize their impact on consumer purchasing intentions.

Implementing the main objective requires ordering the existing knowledge within the individual's tendency to present him- or herself in an alternative way by using selected products and services, as well as researching the impact this behavior has on attitudes towards the product and the purchasing intentions of consumers. Thus, other specific objectives have been set. Taking into account the theoretical dimension of the issues raised here, the following specific objective was indicated:

C1. Conceptualizing image discrepancy and indicating the conditions of its occurrence.

Moreover, a critical analysis of the literature was supplemented with conclusions drawn from the author's own empirical research. In the research layer, the following specific objectives were formulated:

C2. Determining the strength and direction of the impact of image discrepancy on attitudes towards the product

C3. Recognizing how image discrepancy affects perception of individual product categories

C4. Recognizing how image discrepancy affects the price acceptance level

C5. Determining the impact of image discrepancies on consumer decisions whether to make a purchase or not

C6. Identifying the strength and direction of the impact of image discrepancy on the predictive value of congruence measurement methods.

Taking into account the epistemological dimension of the issues raised here, a seventh objective was set as a derivative of the research objectives (C2-C6) and defined as:

C7. Identifying the similarities and differences in the behavior of segments showing and not showing a tendency to have image discrepancies in social media.

The research problems listed earlier refer to detailed objectives and to the research hypotheses formulated below:

H1: Consumers' tendencies to diverge in their image affects their attitudes towards the product:

a. Cognitive element: For consumers prone to have image discrepancies, the utility values of the product are less important than for consumers who do not show this tendency

b. Emotional element: Consumers prone to have image discrepancy are more susceptible to other people's opinions about their products than do consumers who do not show this tendency

c. Behavioral element: Consumers prone to have image discrepancy show a more frequent desire to have a product "for a while" than do consumers who do not show this tendency

H2a: Consumers prone to have image discrepancy more often perceive the product as a tool to gain social recognition than do consumers not showing this tendency

H2b: Consumers prone to have image discrepancy perceive more product categories as tools to gain social recognition than do consumers not showing this propensity

H3: For consumers prone to have image discrepancy, the price acceptance level is higher for a category of products considered as a tool to gain social recognition than for consumers who do not show this tendency

H4: For the category of products perceived as tools to gain social recognition, consumers with a tendency to have image discrepancy are less likely to purchase them than do consumers who do not show this tendency

H5: The predictive power of congruence measurement methods depends on the constructive element of the "image discrepancy":

a. For people prone to have image discrepancy, the predictive power of purchase is higher than for people not showing this tendency, when the image of the product user is compared with the ought self of the actual self

b. For people who are not prone to have image discrepancy, the predictive power of purchase is higher than for those who are prone to it, when the image of the product user is compared with the actual self of the ought self

3. Structure of the dissertation

The structure of this dissertation makes it possible to achieve the goals set herein by presenting the content in a logical order. The dissertation consists of five chapters, preceded by an introduction and summarized by the conclusion. Both the theoretical and empirical nature of this paper is reflected in its layout. It has a classic triad structure: the theory (first two chapters), a description of the methodology of the author's own research (third chapter) and an empirical part in which the results of the author's own research are presented (the last two chapters).

In the first, theoretical chapter, a review of non-concise literature and journals referring to attitudes towards the product was conducted, taking into account a three-element structure: the cognitive, emotional and behavioral components. It also presents the definition of purchasing behavior as adopted in this paper, pointing to relationships between the attitude, intention and target behavior of the consumer. In the following part, the determinants of consumer behavior are discussed, with particular emphasis on the psychological, socio-cultural and marketing factors. The issue of congruence theory is also presented. Methods of measuring conformity of the consumer's self-image with the image of the brand/product user are described. These methods are listed as both direct and indirect. Then, the predictive value of their measurement is assessed.

The subject of discussion in the second chapter is the issue of "image discrepancy". It points to the aspect of understanding the concept of image discrepancy by taking into account the different ways of defining the components of the individual's self system. In particular, Higgins' self-discrepancy theory was taken into account. In conclusion, this concept was presented while signaling the difficulties associated with finding scientific reports covering the subject's scope, i.e., ought self and the context, i.e., offline–online. Continuing along this thread, the possible determinants conditioning the tendency to diverge in an individual's image were discussed which indicated: own motivators for using social media (including susceptibility to liking behavior), the level of public self-awareness (susceptibility to the assessment and opinions of others) and the intensity of and how social media were used.

The discussion in third chapter separates the theoretical layer of the doctoral dissertation from the empirical one. In the third part of this paper, an inventory of the extant research gap is presented in the form of the existence of relatively few scientific studies that have taken into account the impact of image discrepancy on consumer behavior as well as the lack or fragmentation of scientific reports in this area. The detailed objectives of this doctoral dissertation and research hypotheses are also presented. This chapter presents the

methodology of the author's own research, which is focused on the strategy of methodological triangulation and consists of combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to study a single problem. The methods used here (including surveys, ethnography and individual in-depth interviews) and the research techniques (including projection techniques, the balloon test, the test of unfinished sentences) are also discussed. This chapter presents the characteristics of the population by taking into account the demographic structure of the population. Based on the adopted components of the independent variable, i.e., the tendency towards image discrepancies, the characteristics of the respondents are also presented.

In the fourth part of this dissertation, the results of the author's own research are presented. Attitudes towards products were measured in the context of an individual's propensity towards image discrepancies, and an attempt was made to update the hitherto accepted categorization of products (hedonistic/utilitarian) by emphasizing the possibility of gaining social recognition in others. Based on the results of the quantitative research, statistical verification of the formulated research hypotheses was then carried out. Statistical verification was supplemented based on the results of ethnographic research and individual in-depth interviews.

In the last chapter, via adopting the logic of the reasoning presented in chapter four, the price acceptance level, purchase intentions of buyers and the predictive value of the methods of measuring congruence in the context of an individual's tendency towards image discrepancy were analyzed. A summary of the obtained research results is then presented. The cognitive value of the dissertation is also discussed, focusing on the typology of consumers in the context of the phenomenon of image discrepancy. These elements were extended by presenting the characteristics of consumer profiles showing a tendency towards image split or those not showing this tendency. This chapter shows good practices focused on conducting an effective marketing dialogue with consumers.

4. Research methodology

The objectives of this doctoral dissertation (and the formulated research hypotheses in the case of the research objectives) were implemented and verified using various research methods and techniques:

- Critical analysis of the literature on the subject, which is the basis for the discussion in the theoretical part of the paper that enables, in particular, to terminologically clarify the concept of "image discrepancy" and to identify the conditions of its occurrence. A bibliometric analysis was also carried out as a part of this method, the results of which were used to locate the issue of image discrepancy in the science of buyer behavior

- Survey research, which allowed for statistical verification of the research hypotheses. Quantitative results were the basis for determining the strength and direction of the relationship between image discrepancy and attitudes towards the product, its price acceptance level and consumer purchasing intention, as well as the basis for assessing the predictive value of congruence measurement methods. Projection techniques were also used for the purposes of this research method, the application of which allowed for operationalization of the independent variable, which is the "image discrepancy". A total of 367 people took part in the survey.

- Ethnographic research, the results of which contain supplementary comments for quantitative verification of the research hypotheses. Conducting systematic observations of the activities of social media users allowed for a deeper understanding of the formation of the cognitive and behavioral element of one's attitude towards the product and the consumer's purchasing intentions, as well as to find out more about the categorization of products by taking into account the criterion of perceiving the product as a tool for gaining social recognition. A total of 27 people took part in this study.

- Individual in-depth interviews, the results of which contain supplementary comments for quantitative verification of the research hypotheses. On the basis of qualitative data obtained from individual in-depth interviews, the quantitative results of empirical research relating to the shaping of the emotional and behavioral element of one's attitude towards the product, categories of products treated as tools to gain social recognition and consumer purchasing intentions were supplemented. Individual in-depth interviews were conducted among 34 respondents.

A summary of the research methods used in the study is outlined in Figure 1.
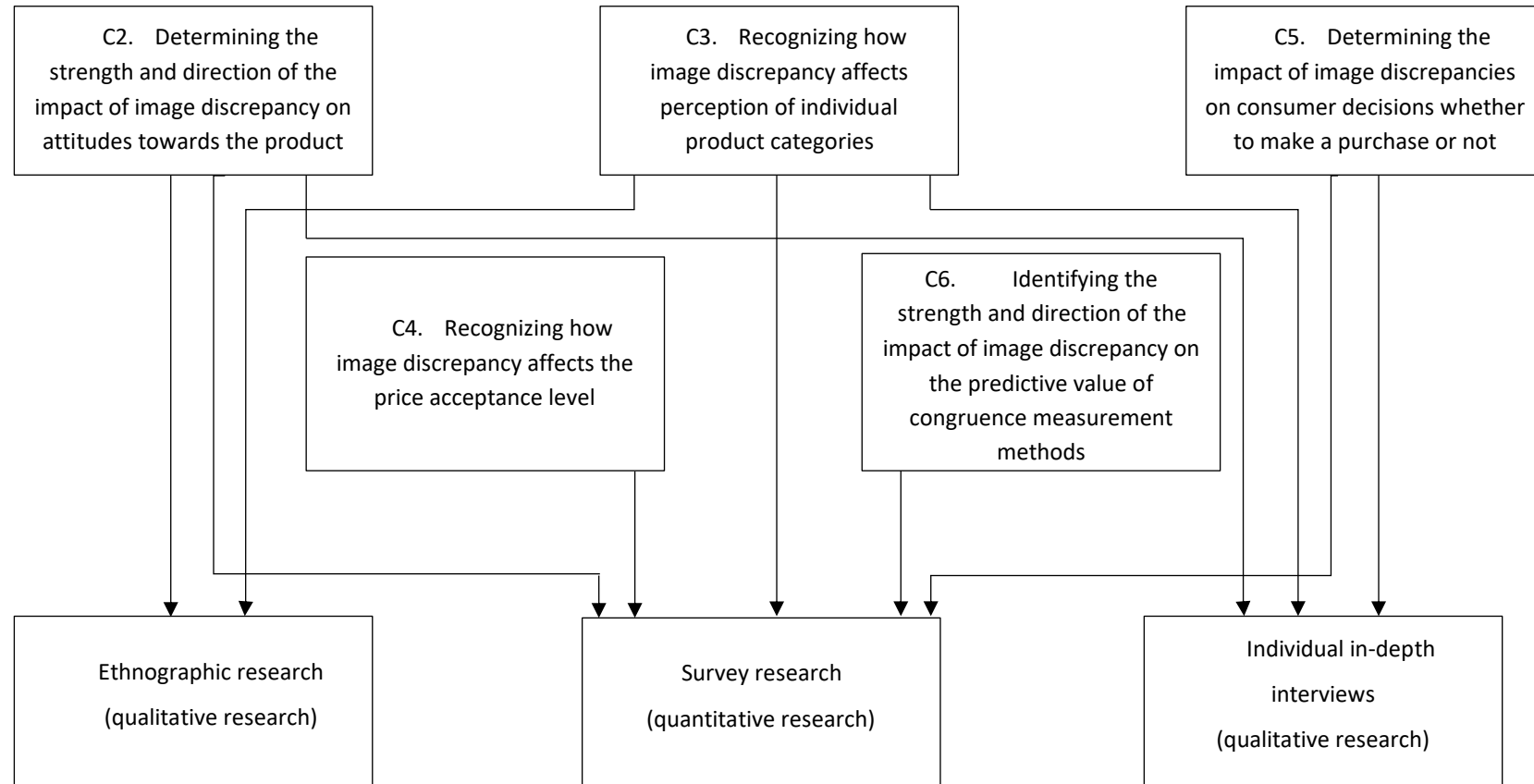
| C2. Determining the strength and direction of the impact of image discrepancy on attitudes towards the product | C3. Recognizing how image discrepancy affects perception of individual product categories | C5. Determining the impact of image discrepancies on consumer decisions whether to make a purchase or not |

| C4. Recognizing how image discrepancy affects the price acceptance level | C6. Identifying the strength and direction of the impact of image discrepancy on the predictive value of congruence measurement methods |

| Ethnographic research (qualitative research) | Survey research (quantitative research) | Individual in-depth interviews (qualitative research) |

Figure 1. Linking the research methods and techniques used with the specific objectives set [1]

[1] C1: Conceptualizing image discrepancy and indicating the conditions of its occurrence was realized, based on critical analysis of the literaturę. This aim has not been used in the diagram. C7: Identifying the similarities and differences in the behavior of segments showing and not showing a tendency to have image discrepancies in social media was realized, based on for the realization of the research objectives established at the outset (C2-C6),

The issues formulated in this paper determined the scope of research that was conducted by the author. The subject scope includes attitudes towards the product and the purchasing intentions of individuals prone to having image discrepancies between the "actual self offline" and the "ought self offline". In the subjective scope of the empirical research, people aged 20-29 actively use social media. This group was deliberately narrowed down to users and online creators of Instagram as the social networking site – where great emphasis is placed on the visual attractiveness of the published content. The spatial scope of the empirical research covered the entire country. Internet tools were used to conduct the quantitative and qualitative research; these included a start-questionnaire, Google forms, Zoom or the MS Teams Communicator, thus allowing to increase the range of the research. Taking into account the time range, it should be noted that the author's own quantitative research was conducted in two rounds, i.e., in December 2020 and April–June 2022. Ethnographic research was conducted April–June 2022, and individual in-depth interviews started in May and ended in July 2022.

5. Empirical results

The realisation of the first objective (C1) made it possible to define the notion of "image discrepancy", which, in contrast to previous proposals, provided a more complete conceptualisation of the phenomenon. The author of the present dissertation extended the scope of the proposed definition to include the constituent element of Higgins's cognitive structure of the individual, which is the ought Self, going beyond the ideal self, which is well recognised in the literature. Moreover, the author extended the traditionally understood discrepancy in the Self system to include the context of the virtual world (more precisely: social networks), which was not reflected in the traditional view of the structure of the individual's cognitive system. An important element in the process of formulating the definition of 'image discrepancy' was the identification of the determinants of its occurrence (C1), among which were the individual's level of public self-awareness, the frequency and intensity of social media use, and the gratification derived from its use.

A tool was developed to operationalise the independent variable of an individual's propensity for image discrepancy. This construct includes three dimensions determined by principal component analysis that go beyond the previously accepted measurement element of discrepancy in the Self system based on the SkRAP scale. The author's more complete proposal includes the discrepancy between an individual's real self and ought self, the propensity of social media users to create content (including their own content and the level of acceptance of the publication of false content by other web users), and the frequency and intensity of use of social networking sites. Noteworthy is the comprehensiveness of the developed measurement tool, which demonstrates the high methodological value of the dissertation. The proposed tool was used to divide respondents into two research groups according to their demonstrated or undemonstrated propensity for image discrepancy, which was developed to measure their attitudes towards the product and potential purchase decisions as well as their attitudes towards goods perceived as tools for gaining social recognition.

The triangulation of methods (including questionnaire surveys, individual in-depth interviews, and virtual ethnography) and research techniques (projective techniques: balloon test and unfinished sentence test) allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of nRW and RW consumers' attitudes towards the product, taking into account their division into components of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural elements (C2). This proved that for RW

consumers, more often than for nRW consumers, the functional value of a product loses its importance in favour of the emotional and social benefits of consuming a good (H1a). Those showing a propensity for image divergence are characterised by a greater susceptibility to third-party opinions about the goods they own than those not showing this propensity (H1b). Moreover, the group of people whose opinions about a product are important to RW consumers is broader because, in addition to approval from family and close friends (the group of people significant to nRW consumers), they seek approval from members of virtual communities and other social media users. Both RW and nRW individuals purchase products, but it is the consumers prone to image divergence who show a greater willingness to brag about the product online and then return it to get their money back (willingness to have the product for a while, H1c). Consumers who were willing to keep the product for longer admitted that they did so for fear of losing their online credibility in a situation where followers would find out about such behaviour.

Combining the results of the questionnaire survey with the answers given during the in-depth interviews and the behavioural observations of the ethnographically surveyed individuals enabled a more comprehensive understanding of the similarities and differences between nRWs and RWs with regard to their perception of products, and more specifically regarding their perception as tools for social recognition (C3). Those showing an image discrepancy are more likely than those not showing it to perceive products as tools for social recognition (H2a). It is among RW consumers that any product, regardless of its utilitarian or hedonistic qualities, allows them to gain social advancement and generate interest among others. For nRW individuals, the emotional and social benefits of consuming a good were only noticeable for products with hedonistic and utilitarian-hedonistic characteristics (H2b). Such results make it possible to 'update' the initially adopted product category by taking into account the division of products by emotional and social characteristics (possibility of gaining social recognition).

An important finding from the results of the study is also that the propensity for image discrepancy influences the level of price acceptance of goods. Staying with the category of products that are perceived as tools to gain social recognition, it was proven that it is among those showing image discrepancy that higher levels of price acceptance are recorded (C4). RW people are willing to pay a higher price than nRW people for goods that will arouse interest among others (H3). However, the two research groups do not differ in their demonstrated

willingness to purchase these products (C5). RW and nRW individuals are highly willing to purchase products that allow them to gain social recognition (H4). It is noteworthy that for those showing a propensity for image discrepancy, the possibility to return the purchased product is crucial, meaning that they see it as a no-cost way to create a self-image online.

Another methodological result of this dissertation is worth noting, which relates to the assessment of the predictive value of congruence measurement methods in the context of the image discrepancy phenomenon (C6). It should be noted that - in opposition to previous research - the author of this dissertation measures congruence interchangeably based on two elements: The Real Self or the Individual's ought self. Higher predictive power is noted among RW individuals than for nRW individuals in a situation in which the product user's image is compared with the individual's Affinal Self. Similarly, and conversely, greater predictive power of purchase occurs for nRW individuals when the product user's image is compared with the individual's real self (H5).

The research carried out in this study allowed for the realisation of the research objectives established at the outset (C2-C6), a derivative of which was the identification of similarities and differences in the social media behaviour of RW and nRW segments (realisation of C7). A characterisation of the respondents demonstrating and not demonstrating a propensity for image divergence was carried out, taking into account their online behaviour (frequency and intensity of social media use, propensity to publish untruthful content of their own, opinions on the behaviour of other users of the portals), as well as their purchasing behaviour (attitudes towards the product, price acceptance level, purchase intentions, purchase prediction).

Against the background of the practical results, it is also worth summarising. It is pointed out that actions taken by companies should be preceded by an analysis of consumers' propensity for image divergence and the adaptation of their actions to the nRW and/or RW group. Maintaining the company's involvement of consumers prone to image discrepancy will be able to reinforce positive word-of-mouth messages about the product/brand (especially within the online brand community) and/or improve the entity's financial performance (consumer willingness to pay a higher price for the product). With regard to RW consumers, marketing messages should emphasise the functional value of the product but also, just as importantly, the emotional benefit derived from the consumption of a particular product. It becomes necessary for the person prone to image discrepancy to see the product as a tool to gain social recognition. On the other hand, economic operators wishing to counterbalance the

buyer's "desire to have a product for a while" should develop a product return policy in order to reduce the logistical costs associated with returned products on the part of the company. Furthermore, it is pointed out that a permanent commitment to social campaigns should be included in the marketing communication strategy, as a result of which consumers could increase their level of self-acceptance (while reducing the image gap).

6. Limitations and further directions of research

An important (albeit conscious) limitation of the research is the inclusion of three product categories. If the number of categories was broadened to include everyday goods, elective goods, luxury goods, and unperceived goods, such a classification could overlap with the proposed product category that takes into account perceptions as a tool for gaining social recognition. The second research limitation arises from the narrowing of the scope of the present dissertation to a static understanding of attitudes; for the purposes of this dissertation, it is limited to identifying an attitude and stating its existence. At the same time, the issue of the dynamics of attitudes, their functioning, and the changes occurring in them has been omitted. Another limitation of the own research is the assessment of the predictive value of congruence measurement methods, which did not include direct measurement methods. An assessment of the predictive value of a purchase was made based on a single indirect method of congruence between an individual's self-image (the individual's real self/objective self) and the image of the product user. The last limitation is determined by the choice of research methods and techniques. The author of the research is aware that the answers given in surveys are characterised by a high declarativity of the respondents, and those from individual in-depth interviews may result from the fear of admitting certain (e.g., sensitive) things to the interviewer. The results based on ethnographic research may be subjective, as the observation was active.

The highlighted limitations of the author's research in this thesis are, at the same time, premises for defining directions for future research. As the closest, the author indicates that they should take into account other product categories as variables moderating the relationship between the propensity for image discrepancy and the level of price acceptance or intention to purchase. Moreover, when assessing the predictive value of a product purchase, one should also take into account direct methods of congruence measurement, which are assessed in the literature as having a higher predictive value, and/or indirect methods of congruence measurement.

The obtained results of the author's research in this dissertation, as well as the directions of future research thus defined, allow confirmation of the significant role played by image discrepancy propensity in shaping consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions. Undeniably, the considerations contained in this dissertation touch upon an important new area that requires further exploration and further research.

7. References

Aaker, D. A. (1996). *Building Strong Brands*. The Free Press.

Ahadzadeh, A. S., Sharif, S. P. i Ong, F. S. (2017). Self-schema and self-discrepancy mediate the influence of Instagram usage on body image satisfaction among youth. Computers in Human Behavior *68*, 8–16. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2016.11.011

Amatulli, C., Guido, G. i Nataraajan, R. (2015). Luxury purchasing among older consumers: exploring inferences about cognitive age, status, and style motivations. *Journal of Business Research, 68*(9), 1945-1952.

Amichai–Hamburger, Y. (2005). *Understanding Human Behavior in Cyberspace*. Oxford University Press.

Beos, N., Kemps, E. i Prichard, I. (2021). Photo manipulation as a predictor of facial dissatisfaction and cosmetic procedure attitudes. *Body Image, 39*, 194–201. DOI: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2021.08.008

Bizman, A., Yinon, Y. i Krotman, S. (2001). Group-based emotional distress: An extension of self-discrepancy theory. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *27*(10), 1291-1300. DOI: 10.1177/01461672012710005

Bynum, R. (2008). The Myth Of Equality. *New English Review*. http://newenglishreview.org/Rebecca_Bynum/The_Myth_Of_Equality/

Da Cunha, J. V. i Orlikowski, W. J. (2008). Performing catharsis: The use of online discussion forums in organizational change. *Information and Organization, 18*(2), 132-156.

Dengah, H. J. F. i Snodgrass, J. G. (2020). Avatar creation in Videogaming: Between compensation and constraint. *Games Health Journal, 9*, 265–272. DOI: 10.1089/g4h.2019.0118

Friehe, T. i Mechtel, M. (2014). Conspicuous consumption and political regimes: Evidence from East and West Germany. *European Economic Review, 67*, 62-81.

Govers, P. C. i Schoormans, J. P. (2005). Product personality and its influence on consumer preference. *Journal of Consumer Marketing, 22*(4), 189-197.

Higgins, E. T. (1987). Self-discrepancy: A theory relating self and affect. *Psychological review, 94*, 319–340. DOI: 10.1037/0033-295X.94.3.319

Higgins, E.T., Nakkawita, E. i Cornwell, J. F. M. (2020). Beyond outcomes: How regulatory focus motivates consumer goal pursuit processes. *Consumer Psychology Review, 3*(1),76-90. DOI: 10.1002/arcp.1052

Hosany, S. i Martin, D. (2012). Self-image congruence in consumer behavior. *Journal of Business Research, 65*(5), 685-691.

Hu, C., Zhao, L. i Huang, J. (2015). Achieving self-congruency? Examining why individuals reconstruct their virtual identity in communities of interest established within social

network platforms. Computers in Human Behavior, 50, 465-475. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2015.04.027

Hu, C., Zhao, L. i Huang, J. (2015). Achieving self-congruency? Examining why individuals reconstruct their virtual identity in communities of interest established within social network platforms. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *50*, 465-475. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2015.04.027

Huang, J., Zhao, L. i Hu, C. (2019). The mechanism through which members with reconstructed identities become satisfied with a social network community: a contingency model. *Information & Management*, *56*(7), 103144. DOI:10.1016/j.im.2019.01.006

Kaus, W. (2013). Conspicuous consumption and "race": Evidence from South Africa. *Journal of Development Economics, 100*(1), 63-73.

Kelly, R. E., Mansell, W. i Wood, A. M. (2015). Goal conflict and wellbeing: A review and hierarchical model of goal conflict, ambivalence, selfdiscrepancy and self-concordance. *Personality and Individual Differences, 85*, 212–229. DOI: 10.1016/j.paid.2015.05.011

Kim, M. K., Jung, Y. H., Kyeong, S., Shin, Y. B., Kim, E. i Kim, J. J. (2018). Neural correlates of distorted self-concept in individuals with internet gaming disorder: a functional MRI study. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, *9,* 330**.** DOI: 10.3389/fpsyt.2018.00330

Kim, T. i Kim, O. (2016). Self- and social motivation to interact with a brand on Facebook: the moderating roles of self-expression and brand engagement in a student sample. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 19*, 328–334. DOI: 10.1089/cyber.2015.0094

Lantz, E. L., Gaspar, M. E., DiTore, R., Piers, A. D. i Schaumberg, K. (2018). Conceptualizing body dissatisfaction in eating disorders within a self-discrepancy framework: a review of evidence. *Eating and Weight Disorders-Studies on Anorexia, Bulimia and Obesity*, *23*, 275-291. DOI: 10.1007/s40519-018-0483-4

Lee, J. i Suh, A. (2015). How do virtual community members develop psychological ownership and what are the effects of psychological ownership in virtual communities? *Computers in Human Behavior, 45*, 382–391. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2014.12.002

Li, S., Phang, C. W. i Ling, H. (2019). Self-gratification and self-discrepancy in purchase of digital items. *Industrial Management & Data Systems, 119,* 1608–1624. DOI:10.1108/IMDS-10-2018-0434

Lin, L. (2010). The relationship of consumer personality trait, brand personality and brand loyalty: an empirical study of toys and video games buyers. *Journal of Product & Brand Management, 19*, 4-18.

Malär, L., Nyffenegger, B., Krohmer, H. i Hoyer, W. D. (2012). Implementing an intended brand personality: a dyadic perspective. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 40*, 728-744.

Mancini, T. i Sibilla, F. (2017). Offline personality and avatar customisation. Discrepancy profiles and avatar identification in a sample of MMORPG players. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *69*, 275-283. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2016.12.031

Mancini, T., Imperato, C. i Sibilla, F. (2019). Does avatar's character and emotional bond expose to gaming addiction? Two studies on virtual self-discrepancy, avatar identification and gaming addiction in massively multiplayer online role-playing game players. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *92*, 297-305. DOI:10.1016/ j.chb.2018.11.007

Mandel, N., Rucker, D. D., Levav, J. i Galinsky, A. D. (2017). The compensatory consumer behavior model: How self-discrepancies drive consumer behavior. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *27*(1), 133-146. DOI: 10.1016/j.jcps.2016.05.003

Markus, H. i Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American psychologist, 41*(9), 954.

Markus, H. i Wurf, E. (1987). The dynamic self-concept: A social psychological perspective. *Annual review of psychology, 38*(1), 299-337.

Meng, J., Bissell, K. L. i Pan, P.-L. (2015). You tube video as health literacy tool: A test of body image campaign effectiveness. *Health Marketing Quarterly, 32*(4), 350–366. DOI: 10.1080/07359683.2015.1093883

Messinger, P. R., Stroulia, E., Lyons, K., Bone, M., Niu, R. H., Smirnov, K. i Perelgut, S. (2009). Virtual worlds—past, present, and future: New directions in social computing. *Decision support systems, 47*(3), 204-228.

Rabbanee, F. K., Roy, R. i Spence, M. T. (2020). Factors affecting consumer engagement on online social networks: self-congruity, brand attachment, and self-extension tendency. *European Journal of Marketing*, 54, 1407–1431. DOI: 10.1108/EJM-03-2018-0221

Sirgy, M. J. (2018). Self-congruity theory in consumer behavior: a little history. *Journal of Global Scholars of Marketing Science, 28*(2), 197-207.

Stewart, V. i Clayton, R. (2021). Achieving the ideal-self While harming my relationship: examining associations Between self-discrepancy, Instagram photo manipulation, and romantic relationship outcomes. *Psychology of Popular Media, 11*(2), 208. DOI: 10.1037/ppm0000344

Yang, D., Wu, T.-Y., Atkin, D. J., Ríos, D. I. i Liu, Y. (2021). Social media portrait-editing intentions: comparisons between Chinese and American female college students. *Telematics Inform, 65*, 101714. DOI: 10.1016/j. tele.2021.101714