



CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) AND THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD RETAILERS – ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR CREATING RETAILERS' COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

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The aim of the paper is to propose segmentation of retailing consumers based on their perception of socially responsible retailers in context of values which determine lifestyle. The authors decided to verify the way in which the perception of socially responsible retailers is shaped by such values as: hedonism, utilitarianism, materialism, or price-sensitivity. At present CSR is an integral part of retailers' global strategies and activities undertaken within its framework are meant to increase the companies' competitive advantage through strengthening their image. On the other hand, an increasing differentiation of consumers' attitudes and buying behaviors can be observed. The way in which values such as: hedonism, utilitarianism, materialism and price-sensitivity determine the perception of socially responsible companies is not well known yet. However, such knowledge is essential for recognizing the relations between the CRS-based image and consumers' qualities responsible for their attitudes and buying behavior. The article refers to the results of research conducted on a representative sample of 1000 consumers in 2013, by means of the CAPI method. The research was a part of a project financed by the National Science Centre, based on the decision No.DEC-2011/03/B/HS4/03576.

Keywords: CSR, Consumers segmentation, Hedonism, Materialism, Utilitarianism.

Introduction

Literature identifies a number of criteria used for the segmentation of consumers: demographic, social-economic, behavioral, cultural, or psychographic determinants (Rudawska 2013, pp. 73-94). However, there are also other possible ways of classifying buyers. Trends observed in societies show an increasing differentiation of consumers' attitudes. They are more and more interested in the following issues: healthy food, the place of origin of raw materials used for food production, production methods, ingredients of products, protection of environment and cause-related promotions, i.e. those related to social initiatives. In the area of communication the broader access to the Internet allows for the appearance of opinion-forming social networks. The interest in local and global social issues is also on the rise (Stefańska 2012, pp. 110-118). The development of such segments as: smart shoppers, (Reformat 2014, pp. 618-632) ethical consumers (Mohr, Webb and Harris, 2001, p. 47; Bezencon and Blili, 2009), organic food buyers (Nestorowicz and Pilarczyk 2010), ethnocentric consumers (Wanat and Stefańska 2014, pp. 814-823) can already be observed. Their differentiation is based on such factors as: the perceived price-quality relation, ethical values, health quality of products, the source and the country of origin, as well as the philosophy

of life and values held. Age, sex, income, place of living are also important, but they are outstripped by the criteria related to life style and behavioral sphere. Therefore, the traditional segmentation criteria are no longer sufficient.

Literature Overview

This study focuses on the selected consumers' features, such as: hedonism, utilitarianism, materialism or sensitivity, which may serve as a basis for a deepened segmentation of buyers, as they determine particular patterns of buying behaviors in the context of CSR.

Hedonism

Hedonism is the belief that pleasure or happiness is the most important goal of life (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982, pp. 92–101). With reference to consumption, hedonism means that in the buying process consumers aim at meeting their emotional and psychological needs rather than doing shopping for economic reasons. It involves seeking such products and services that buying, possessing and using them will be a source of pleasant emotions: joy, happiness, pleasure, fun, or satisfaction. Hedonism has been widely researched (Arnold and Reynolds 2003, pp. 77-93; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982, pp. 92-93). According to Addis and Holbrook (2001, pp. 50-66), the hedonistic consumption is connected with the experiential view of consumption and the following concepts: interaction, variability, rationality and emotions, and uncertainty. Because hedonistic products ensure fun, pleasure, excitement and experimental consumption and they appeal to the senses, they can be very sensational. Hedonism is reflected especially strongly in shopping for clothes, because clothes manifest their owners' personality, style, position, character and keeping up with trends (Bannister and Hogg, 2004, pp. 850-868). If hedonism determines shopping patterns, the symbolic meanings of more subjective characteristics grow in significance. Hedonism is related to consumerism, i.e. accepting by consumers, that it is through the possession and/or consumption of an increasing quantity of products that human being can achieve self-fulfillment and self-development.

Utilitarianism

Utilitarian reinforcement consists of the practical outcomes of purchase and consumption, that is, the functional benefit, value-in-use, economic, pragmatic, and material satisfactions received by consumers as a result of acquiring, owning, and using an economic product or service (Foxall, 2005). The utilitarian consumption is associated with the traditional view of consumption which is based on decision-making process (information processing) and refers to notions like functionality, constancy, rationality and analysis. Consumers who are utilitarians focused on 'the tangible benefits of conventional' products which can be measured relatively objectively. They are not focusing on exploring 'the symbolic meanings or subjective characteristics of products. Nie oznacza to jednak, że utylitaryzm i hedonizm stanowią przeciwieństwa. As Okada noticed (2005, pp. 43-53), in most situations, utilitarian consumption and hedonic consumption are both discretionary and the difference between the two may be a matter of degree and perception. Hedonic (utilitarian) consumption tends to be perceived as relatively more discretionary (necessary) in nature. The same product may be necessary to some and discretionary to others.

Both recognition of hedonism and utilitarianism are important for retailer's strategy, due to products/brands that are highly valued on the hedonic dimension rather than the utilitarian dimension, are better able to charge a price premium or engage in sales promotions. Thus, measures of these two dimensions may serve as input into pricing and sales promotion decisions (Voss, Sprangenber Grohmann, 2001, p. 310). The issue of the influence of utilitarianism on consumers' reactions to

promotional activities has been studied by Roy and NG (2012, pp. 81-88). In their opinion, promotion-focused consumers will exhibit more favorable attitude towards a product when its hedonic benefits are highlighted in comparison to its utilitarian benefits.

Materialism

Materialism has been defined as the importance a person attaches to material possessions and the belief that certain possessions are the primary source of happiness (Belk 1985, pp. 265-280). Consumer researchers have generally conceptualized materialism as either a trait or value that guides our actions and quests for meaning and happiness. It influences the goals we pursue and the means by which we try to achieve them. Materialism can be perceived both in negative context –as unjustified tendency to possess, often not sharing with others, but also as compensatory processes. From the macroeconomic perspective buying products can be seen as a positive phenomenon, because it involves increased consumer demand. On the other hand, excessive consumption and unjustified possession is related to unnecessary exploitation of resources and degradation of natural environment in the process of obtaining raw materials for production. In this context materialism has negative connotations. Also from the point of view of religion materialism is negatively perceived, as it is connected with focusing on the material objects at the cost of the spiritual side of life. In the reference groups possession is a symbol of social status, which indirectly manifests the possessor's social position.

Price Consciousness

Price consciousness is defined as the degree to which the consumer focuses exclusively on paying a low price (Lichtenstein et al., 1993, pp. 234-245). Lichtenstein et al., found, that less price conscious consumers are not very involved with the price aspect of the purchase (1988, pp. 243-252) and wish to engage in little price search (Lichtenstein et al., 1993, pp. 234-245). High price conscious consumers, given their focus on prices (Lichtenstein et al., 1988, pp. 243-252), are cognitively very involved with price and consequently more deeply process any price related information. Another research, made by Manning et al. (2003, pp. 367-377) show that consumers who are relatively vigilant in paying low prices would be motivated to process unit pricing information, and thus be more likely to develop unit price usage knowledge. Knowledge about recognizing and remembering prices is of considerable significance for retailers' price and promotion strategies. Retailers create assortment lines with different prices depending on the product type, or package size, they use prices with complex endings or with odd numbers which tend to be perceived as lower prices. These practices make it more difficult for consumers to remember prices, or make them perceive prices as lower than they really are. A technique often used by producers and retailers is downsizing. In fact all the merchandising techniques related to prices lead to a situation in which consumers are unable to make fully rational choices. Remembering prices by consumers was researched by Vanhuele and Drèze (2002, pp. 72-85). The authors show that the combination of price recall, price recognition, and deal recognition provides a much richer understanding of consumers' knowledge of prices. They also find, that, frequent promotions increase consumers' ability to remember regular prices and that store switchers do not possess better price knowledge than other shoppers.

Retailers 'Social Responsibility from the Consumers' Perspective

The idea of CSR denotes companies' voluntary acceptance of economic, legal and ethical responsibility for the effects of their activity for the society and the environment (Carroll, 1991, pp. 39-48; Carroll 1979, pp. 497-505). The globalization processes and bankruptcies caused by embezzlement on one hand, and consumers' higher expectations backed by a better access to information about the origin and production conditions of goods on the other, are the reasons why at the turn of the 20th century the social

involvement of companies increased. As a result, their strategies were adjusted to the CSR idea. Research conducted so far on attitudes and behaviors of consumers allows for a conclusion that buyers expect companies to be socially responsible, need information about companies' social involvement (Pomeroy and Dolnicar 2009, pp. 286–287; Boulstridge and Carrigan 2000, pp. 355–368) and are willing to pay more for ethical products or for products with a social mission (e.g. product the purchase of which means supporting a socially plausible cause, such as a foundation, or people who need help). What is more, other research by Smith and Alcorn (1991, p. 26) shows that nearly half of buyers declare a willingness to change one brand of product to another, if it is offered by a socially responsible company. Moreover, even though they are willing to punish companies which do not behave ethically, they are much less likely to criticize those socially involved. CSR has a positive impact on a company evaluation and purchase intentions (Mohr and Webb, 2005, pp. 121–147), and this makes the strategy based on CSR very interesting and attractive for retailers.

On the other hand, it can be noticed that factors such as: the assortment quality, place, promotion and price still determine consumers' buying behaviors. A study carried out by Folkes and Kamins shows that although respondents represent a socially responsible attitude, only 20% of them have actually bought products related to a social cause (Carrigan and Attalia 2001, pp. 562–564). Other research indicates an asymmetrical attitude of buyers, who are more likely to “punish” socially irresponsible companies than to reward those which follow the idea of CSR (Carrigan and Attalia 2001, pp. 562–564). According to research conducted in 1996, 76% of consumers declared that if the price and quality are equivalent, they are likely to switch from one brand or place of purchase of a product to another, associated with a social cause they support (Webb and Mohr 1998, pp. 226–238). However, it should be remembered that these are declarations and not real shopping behaviors.

Research by Mohr, Webb, Harris (2001, p. 47) allowed for the selection of a group of socially responsible consumers, or “consumers behaving responsibly in the sphere of consumption”, i.e. Socially Responsible Consumer Behavior. This group is similarly defined by Devinney, Aude, Eckhardt and Birtchnell (2006), for whom a socially responsible consumer makes conscious and deliberate consumption choices based on personal and moral beliefs. These are the buyers who, through their shopping and the way they use their products, aim at minimizing their harmful influence on the environment and maximizing long-term benefits for the society. They take into account the consequences of their purchase decisions and are aware of the fact that their shopping and consumption may contribute to social changes. They make independent decision as to the place of purchase, the time, the size and the type of the products or services they buy, bearing in mind their responsibility for the results of their consumption towards the society and the future generations.

CSR and Values Determining Attitudes and Shopping Behavior

It is hard to clearly define the relationship between the attitude to CSR and the attitude determined by such values as: hedonism, utilitarianism, materialism, or price-sensitivity. It can be expected that some of the above mentioned factors will be correlated and will strengthen the positive perception of a socially responsible retailer, whereas others will be neutral or will show an opposite correlation. Relationship between hedonism and CSR may be based on taking pleasure from seeking and buying products and services, the purchase of which reveals responsibility towards the society or the environment. In this way high-level needs are fulfilled, at the same time being a source of pleasure. This satisfaction is of a mental character. However, it depends on the type of the satisfied need or emotion, as a hedonist may perceive social responsibility as a barrier limiting their access to products giving them positive emotions. We can use the example of a smartphone. A hedonist would gladly buy the newest model of a smartphone, but they have learned from the media about boycotting its producer, whose suppliers violate labor rights. This causes a dissonance between pleasure and responsibility. Utilitarianism implies making rational buying decisions – a purchase must be justified. Therefore, responsible shopping can be expected to harmonize with utilitarianism, because it will bring broadly understood benefits to various groups of stakeholders. It

does not mean, however, that utilitarianism and hedonism cannot go hand in hand, because a “useful” purchase can be a source of satisfaction and pleasure derived from consumption. Nevertheless, there is also the issue of the differentiation between CSR awareness and behaviors related to CSR, which in the case of hedonists can be the least explicit.

Another interesting relationship is the link between materialism and the socially responsible attitude of buyers. Up to now, materialism has not been considered in the context of the CSR attitude. Bearing in mind the essence of CSR, we can assume that materialism contradicts it, but it is not obvious. For consumers CSR is related to making buying decisions which confirm their social responsibility and involvement in matters significant for a group and not an individual. It also means restraining consumption and making purchase decisions on the basis of the social interest, or the benefit for the natural environment. On the other hand, it can be manifested by buying products with a social value, the purchase of which results more from the will to support beneficiaries than from satisfying one's own needs.

There is also a relationship between prices and CSR. Consumers are likely to pay more for socially responsible products, but the price difference must not be too high and must not coincide with the lower quality of a product. Furthermore, when given a choice between a product with a social value or without it at the same price, they will choose the one the purchase of which is related to supporting a socially significant initiative.

Methodology of Research

The article aims at confronting socially responsible attitudes of consumers with selected factors determining buying behaviors, such as: hedonism, utilitarianism, materialism and price-sensitivity. To achieve this objective, we prepared research consisting of the following steps:

1. Multi regression analysis – usage of demographic variables
2. Multi regression analysis – implementation of variables connected with consumption materialism, hedonism, utilitarianism, price consciousness
3. Multi regression analysis – variables statistically valid from previous stages
4. Cluster analysis made on the basis of variables from third stage.

Trial 1 was conducted in 2013 on a representative group of 1000 adult Poles. Descriptive statistics relating to the trial are included in table 1. Part of results of research was presented in publications of Stefańska in the context of competition strategies (2014). Variables connected with consumption (materialism, hedonism, utilitarianism, price consciousness) were described and used for analysis of consumers attitude toward Fair Trade products (*Fair Trade in Strategy of Global Retailers Based on CSR*, ed. M. Stefańska and R. Nestorowicz 2015, in print).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the sample.

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage share |
|---------------|-----------|------------------|
| Gender | | |
| male | 474 | 47.5 |
| female | 524 | 52.5 |
| Age | | |
| below 29 | 263 | 26.4 |
| from 30 to 39 | 179 | 17.9 |
| from 40 to 49 | 146 | 14.6 |
| from 50 to 59 | 179 | 17.9 |
| 60 and above | 231 | 23.1 |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|------|
| Education | | |
| Basic/Lower secondary | 182 | 18.2 |
| Vocational | 270 | 27.1 |
| Secondary | 393 | 39.4 |
| Higher | 153 | 15.3 |
| Income in PLN | | |
| below 1,500 | 135 | 14 |
| from 1,501 to 2,500 | 240 | 24 |
| from 2,501 to 4,000 | 261 | 26 |
| above 4,000 | 133 | 13 |
| Number of answers | 769 | 77 |
| Missing | 231 | 23 |
| Place of living | | |
| Village | 380 | 38 |
| Cities to 19 999 inhabitants | 130 | 13 |
| 20 000 - 49 999 inhabitants | 115 | 12 |
| 50 000- 200 000 inhabitants | 160 | 16 |
| Cities over 200 000 inhabitants | 215 | 22 |

Source: own work based on research

Dependent Variable

Here are some sample positions used in the survey: "I give up shopping in stores known to buy goods from producers employing children" and " If I find out that a point of sale where I do my shopping is unethical towards its employees or suppliers, I take my custom elsewhere". Because attitudes measured by these positions were cohesive, (Cronbach alpha = 0.869), they have been averaged to create a construct „attitude towards CSR". Dependable variable is attitude toward CSR. The scale consisted of seven items measured in a 7-point scale from 1 ("I totally disagree") to 7 ("I totally agree"). The value of 4 indicated a level of "I neither agree nor disagree".

Independent Variables

Independent variables fall into two categories: demographic and social-cultural. Within the former, such variables as: education, age, sex and income were taken into consideration. As for the latter, such variables as: materialism, hedonism, utilitarianism, or price sensitivity were used. Table 2 includes the basic information about these constructs.

Table 2. Information about constructs related to consumerism.

| | Authors of the scale | Number of items | Cronbach alfa |
|---------------------|---|-----------------|---------------|
| Materialism | Richins and Dawson (1992, pp. 303-316) | 9 | 0.774 |
| Hedonism | Babin, Darden and Griffin (1994 pp. 644-656) | 7 | 0.929 |
| Utilitarianism | Rajeev and Ahtola (1991) and Babin, Darden and Griffin (1994 pp. 644-656) | 6 | 0.656 |
| Price consciousness | Lichtenstein, Ridgway and Netemayer (1993, pp. 234-245) | 8 | 0.656 |

Source: own work based on research

Stage 1

At the first stage the following demographic variables were selected: age, sex, education and income. Table 3 includes coefficients of correlation between the attitude towards CSR and these demographic variables. The results indicate that only education was significantly correlated with the attitude towards CSR.

Table 3.Correlations between CSR and demographic variables.

| | Attitude toward CSR | Age | Education | Income of household |
|---------------------|---------------------|----------|-----------|---------------------|
| Attitude toward CSR | 1 | | | |
| Age | -0,016 | 1 | | |
| Education | 0,093** | -0,154** | 1 | |
| Income of household | 0,045 | -0,237** | 0,343** | 1 |

Source: own work based on research

** Correlation is significant at the level of 0.01 (two-way)

However, it should be noted that education manifested a statistically significant correlation with the remaining demographic variables. That is why, among the independent variables included in the regression analysis, apart from education itself, interactions between education and the other demographic variables were used. (Table 4).

Table 4. Results of the hierarchical regression analysis for attitudes towards CSR and demographic variables.

| Model* | R | R-square | Corrected R-square | Standard evaluation error | Statistics of change | | |
|--------|-------|----------|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| | | | | | Change of R-square | F of change | Significance of F of change |
| 1 | 0,067 | 0,005 | 0,003 | 0,83798 | 0,005 | 3,494 | 0,062 |
| 2 | 0,077 | 0,006 | 0,003 | 0,83795 | 0,001 | 1,058 | 0,304 |
| 3 | 0,078 | 0,006 | 0,002 | 0,83846 | 0,000 | 0,076 | 0,783 |
| 4 | 0,078 | 0,006 | 0,001 | 0,83900 | 0,000 | 0,002 | 0,962 |

Source: own work based on research

* (the sequence of introducing variables: education, education*sex, education*age, education*income)

The results of the regression analysis indicate that only education has a marginally significant influence on attitudes towards CSR $-F(1,997)=3,49$ $p<0,1$). None of the remaining variables was statistically significant. It should be added that education as an independent variable accounts for a very small range of variance of attitudes towards CSR, as it amounts only to ca. 1%. It means that demographic variables to a very small degree explain attitudes towards CSR.

Stage 2

Variables related to consumption were included in the second stage of the analysis. The following four variables were used: materialism, hedonism, utilitarianism and price-sensitivity. Correlations between the constructs related to consumerism and the attitude towards CSR are presented in table 5.

Table 5. Correlations between attitudes towards CSR and constructs related to consumerism.

| | Attitude toward CSR | Price consciousness | Materialism | Hedonism | Utylitarianism |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|----------|----------------|
| Attitude toward CSR | 1 | | | | |
| Price consciousness | 0,072* | 1 | | | |
| Materialism | 0,184** | 0,120** | 1 | | |
| Hedonism | 0,069* | 0,096** | 0,606** | 1 | |
| Utylitarianism | 0,322** | 0,242** | 0,169** | -0,031 | 1 |

* -Correlation is significant at the level of 0.05 (two-way)

** - Correlation is significant at the level of 0.01 (two-way)

Source: own work based on research

Results presented in table 5 indicate that all the variables related to consumerism were correlated with attitudes towards CSR in a statistically significant way. This is why all these variables were included in the regression analysis. The sequence of introducing particular variables to the regression analysis depended on the value of the correlation coefficient of a variable with the attitude towards CSR.

Table 6. Results of the hierarchical regression analysis for variables related to consumerism.

| Model* | R | R-square | Corrected R-square | Standard evaluation error | Statistics of change | | |
|--------|-------|----------|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| | | | | | Change of R-square | F of change | Significance of F of change |
| 1 | 0,322 | 0,104 | 0,103 | 0,79318 | 0,104 | 115,553 | 0,000 |
| 2 | 0,348 | 0,121 | 0,119 | 0,78591 | 0,017 | 19,513 | 0,000 |
| 3 | 0,349 | 0,121 | 0,119 | 0,78618 | 0,000 | 0,331 | 0,565 |
| 4 | 0,349 | 0,121 | 0,118 | 0,78657 | 0,000 | 0,008 | 0,931 |

Source: own work based on research

* Sequence of introducing variables: utilitarianism, materialism, price-sensitivity, hedonism

The results of the analysis show explicitly that only two variables: materialism and utilitarianism significantly affect attitudes towards CSR. The other two variables: hedonism and price-sensitivity turned out to have no significance for the explanation of the dependent variable. The fact that both these variables are, on the one hand, correlated with attitudes towards CSR and, on the other, do not influence the dependent variable means that the variance of the dependent variable they account for partly overlaps with the variance accounted for by materialism and utilitarianism.

Stage 3

At the third stage the variables significant at the two earlier stages were used. Additionally, interactions between these variables were taken into account. Results of the hierarchical regression analysis are presented in table 7.

Table 7. Results of the hierarchical regression analysis for variable related to consumerism.

| Model* | R | R-square | Corrected R-square | Standard evaluation error | Statistics of change | | |
|--------|-------|----------|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| | | | | | Change of R-square | F of change | Significance of F of change |
| 1 | 0,322 | 0,104 | 0,103 | 0,79318 | 0,104 | 115,553 | 0,000 |
| 2 | 0,348 | 0,121 | 0,119 | 0,78591 | 0,017 | 19,513 | 0,000 |
| 3 | 0,357 | 0,127 | 0,125 | 0,78360 | 0,006 | 6,886 | 0,009 |
| 4 | 0,376 | 0,141 | 0,138 | 0,77773 | 0,014 | 16,057 | 0,000 |
| 5 | 0,379 | 0,144 | 0,139 | 0,77695 | 0,003 | 2,996 | 0,084 |
| 6 | 0,380 | 0,144 | 0,139 | 0,77704 | 0,001 | 0,771 | 0,380 |

Source: own work based on research

*the sequence of introducing variables: utilitarianism, materialism, education, materialism*utilitarianism, materialism* education, utilitarianism*education

All the three basic variables statistically significant at the earlier stages turned out to be valid also for this part of the analysis. Additionally, the interaction between utilitarianism and materialism was significant and (at a marginal level) between materialism and education. These variables account for about 14% of variances of attitudes towards CSR, which may be assessed as a high value.

Stage 4

On the basis of the three variables obtained at the earlier stages of the analysis, a classification was conducted by means of the non-hierarchical cluster analysis. The objective of this part of the analysis was to isolate market segments with similar characteristics, which differentiate them from others in relation to attitudes towards CSR. Three analyses were conducted for: three, four and five segments respectively.

Table 8. Results of the cluster analysis for four segments*.

| | Segments | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| | 1 Neutral | 2 Anti-materialists | 3 Utilitarians | 4 Educated neutral |
| Education | -1,05679 | 0,12388 | -0,05034 | 0,87265 |
| Materialism | -0,06523 | -1,42449 | 0,98872 | 0,08977 |
| Utilitarianism | -0,50731 | 0,43604 | 1,14798 | -0,39200 |
| Size of segment | 300 | 146 | 198 | 354 |
| Share of segment | 30% | 15% | 20% | 35% |
| Attitude toward CSR | 4,5783 | 5,1524 | 5,2443 | 4,7920 |

Source: own work based on research

*In order to avoid mistakes resulting from variations in the measurement scales, variables used for the cluster analysis were transformed into standardized values.

Results of the cluster analysis for four segments are shown in table 8. Data presented here indicate the existence of 2 pairs of segments. The relation of one of them to CSR is relatively neutral. The other

one includes attitudes closer to the CSR ideas. Both positively related to CSR segments account for 35% of respondents, so clearly they are a minority.

Segment 1 – Neutral. Members of this segment reveal the weakest positive attitude towards CSR. These are people with a lower education than the other segments and average attitude to materialistic and utilitarian values. About 50% of the people from these segments are over 50, with relatively low income. Nearly half of them live in the countryside.

Segment 2 – Anti-materialists. It is a segment with a positive attitude towards CSR. The most important feature of this segment is the relatively anti-materialist attitude. These people have various education levels. Almost half of them live in the countryside. Nearly 60% of them are over 50.

Segment 3 – Utilitarians. It consists of people with a high level of utilitarianism and materialism. This segment has a positive attitude to CSR. Only a third of this segment are people over 50. From this point of view it is the most prospective market segment.

Segment 4 – Educated neutral. It is a segment with a relatively less positive attitude to CSR than the segments of Anti-materialists and Utilitarians. It is characterized by a higher education level of its members than the other segments and by average attitude to utilitarianism and materialism. It has a higher share of women than the other segments, as they account for 60% of it. It consists of relatively young people, as those over 50 account for about 30%. It differentiates this segment from segment 1, where the share of people from this age group is higher. This segment is represented by more relatively wealthy people, who account for nearly 65%. It has the lowest share of people living in the countryside.

Managerial Implications

The retailers' knowledge about consumers' attitudes towards their marketing offer is a basis of the effective positioning of their offer on the market. The applicability of the presented research results refers mainly to marketing communication and to messages conveyed to buyers. It seems to be an essential question whether these messages should appeal to emotions and pleasures of life or rather emphasize specific benefits from shopping. The fact that such variables as hedonism or price-sensitivity are not significant implies that other elements of messages are more important for consumers. From the point of view of CSR, an attractive market segment is the one defined as utilitarians, as it consists of people relatively young and not belonging to the lowest income group. It is the segment to which marketing activities, connected with both communication and product offer, should be addressed. On the other hand, this group is not particularly large, therefore it is hard to treat CSR as an element which could considerably affect a company's competitive position. This is why, activities related to CSR should rather be treated as supplementary for the adopted strategy.

Limitations

The presented research results are an important source of knowledge about consumers' attitudes towards CSR, as well as hedonism, utilitarianism, materialism and price-sensitivity. Although the research revealed some statistically significant correlations, it should be remembered that it was conducted in Poland, where the level of awareness of the CSR ideas and knowledge about retailers' activities within CSR is still low. Therefore, respondents' declarations should be verified by other research, which will reveal if buying behaviors go hand in hand with the declarations. Another factor negatively influencing interpretation of the results are the cultural issues. It is probable that for cultures similar to the Polish one the results would be similar, but for cultures dominated by consumption lifestyle, or those more distanced to materialism, the results could be different. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to conduct research which will take into account the culture and the factors shaping it in a given country.

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