

Consumers' Innovativeness and Responsible Consumption

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The grounds for considerations and the analysis in this article are provided by two phenomena: consumers' innovativeness and responsible consumption. The aim of considerations and the analysis is to seek the impact of consumers' innovativeness on the formation of consumption. The undertaken task was implemented on the base of secondary sources of information and findings of own empirical research. In our article, we provide some insight into consumers' innovativeness and responsible consumption and attempt to explain the essence thereof. 'New consumption' is shown as consumption of the 21st century, with specific features, characterised by diversity and multiplicity of ways of meeting needs and, in consequence, by new behaviours of consumers, not always complying with the requirements of responsible consumption. The presented analysis illustrates consumers' innovativeness which is still low in Poland and thus does not exert any substantial impact on the growth of responsible consumption.

Keywords: innovations, consumer innovativeness, consumer trends, responsible consumption.

Innowacyjność konsumentów a odpowiedzialna konsumpcja

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Podstawę rozważań i analizy w niniejszym artykule stanowią dwa zjawiska innowacyjność konsumentów i odpowiedzialna konsumpcja. Celem rozważań i analizy jest poszukiwanie wpływu innowacyjności konsumentów na kształtowanie odpowiedzialnej konsumpcji. Podjęte zadanie zrealizowano, opierając się na wtórnych źródłach informacji oraz wynikach własnych badań empirycznych. W artykule przybliżamy pojmowanie innowacyjności konsumentów i odpowiedzialnej konsumpcji oraz podejmujemy próbę wyjaśnienia ich istoty. Pokazujemy „nową konsumpcję” jako konsumpcję XXI w. o specyficznych cechach, charakteryzującą się różnorodnością i mnogością sposobów zaspokajania potrzeb, a w konsekwencji, nowymi zachowaniami konsumentów nie zawsze zgodnymi z wymogami odpowiedzialnej konsumpcji. Przedstawione analizy stanowią ilustrację malejącej jeszcze innowacyjności konsumentów w Polsce, która tym samym nie wywiera istotnego wpływu na wzrost odpowiedzialnej konsumpcji.

Słowa kluczowe: innowacje, innowacyjność konsumentów, trendy konsumenckie, odpowiedzialna konsumpcja.

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1. Introduction

It might be expected that in the 21st century, the phenomena referred to as innovation, consumers' innovativeness and new consumption will accompany a modern society on a daily basis and will lead to the improvement of living conditions and quality of life and thus to responsible consumption. This is not the case though, as the development of innovation and new consumer behaviours is not synonymous with positive effects on the society, natural environment and economy (Wróbel, 2017, pp. 71–75; Olejniczuk-Merta, 2016). They frequently do not go hand in hand with the desired responsible consumption in either quantitative or qualitative terms. It can certainly be said that this is not the result of only economic factors such as: income, prices, supply of goods and services. Socio-cultural factors also have a significant impact. In addition, factors inherent in man and based on man's knowledge such as awareness, recognised values, attitudes encourage a specific behaviour and affect human propensity to act in a responsible or little responsible or even completely irresponsible manner with all the consequences.

The article analyses consumer behaviour related to consumers' innovativeness and impact on the development of responsible consumption. In order to better understand and explain consumers' innovativeness, its influence on the implementation and spread of responsible consumption, we will indicate its multidisciplinary roots and various related definitions.

2. Consumers' Innovativeness

In today's knowledge- and innovation-based economy, the concept of innovativeness is common, although various contents are attributed to it. In its most general meaning, innovativeness signifies the introduction of innovations, novelty (Dubisz, 2006, p. 1218). In social and economic sciences, innovativeness is defined as the propensity and ability to develop new and improve existing products and technological processes (Marciniak, 2000). In management, it is understood as new organisational and management systems and other creative and imitative changes leading to the emergence of new values both in organisations creating innovations and for their stakeholders, including end users and consumers (Dwilińska, 2005, pp. 112–123). A broad overview of the understanding of innovativeness and innovation along with their effects (ideas, goods, services) can be found in many studies published in the last century, beginning with Schumpeter (1912, 1954), through Drucker (1968), Myers and Marquis (1969), Freeman (1982), and finishing with Chesbrough (2005), Jensen, Johnson, Lorenz and Lundvall (2007), Godin (2008), European Innovation Scoreboard (2017). Polish elements are also present, for example Mroczkowski and Miller (2017), Świadek (2013), Janasz (2012, pp. 25–28), Wiśniewska (2010, pp. 41–48),

Pangsy-Kania (2007). However, an unambiguous definition of innovativeness in relation to consumers is still being sought.

Joining this search, we initially assume, by analogy with the above-mentioned notions of innovativeness, that consumers' innovativeness means an inclination to buy innovative products. Nonetheless, a careful analysis of this term shows that such understanding is too narrow and superficial with respect to today's consumers who have a wide choice of goods and services offered to them and who attach importance to innovativeness, high quality, uniqueness and attractiveness of the products they purchase. Consumers' innovativeness has its deeper causes and expresses something more and something more specific, with a more profound meaning than a mere inclination to buy.

In order to explain modern consumers' innovativeness, it seems necessary to take into account the quality of products, including the attributes determining the quality, uniqueness and attractiveness, while considering consumer behaviour linked with the purchase but also use and disposal of products. In a saturated market, quality is of vital importance among purchase drivers, as evidenced by the fact that consumers who make their purchase decisions strongly dependent on the quality of offered products are referred to as quality-oriented consumers.

In general, product quality means the degree to which a product meets consumer expectations. However, with regard to consumers' innovativeness and the purchase, use and disposal of innovative products, it seems reasonable to distinguish experienced quality (referring to products that are well known to consumers and linked with the characteristics resulting from experience ensuing from earlier use of such products) and expected quality, namely the quality of innovative products with new attributes unverified by experience (Brett, 1970, p. 108; Pervin, 2002, p. 416). Expected quality of innovative products is also connected with specific consumer behaviour towards products, that is to say the expectation or search and purchase of products that are friendly to society, environment and ethically produced. Possession/use and final disposal of such innovative products in a socially and environmentally responsible manner proves the openness of consumers to what is new and unknown. It also evidences their conscious, careful and purposeful decision-making about purchasing and further using and disposing of these products in a specific way. Such behaviour also indicates consumers' self-confidence. These characteristics of consumer behaviour are displayed by innovators, opinion leaders, and group leaders. Together with the expected quality attributes of innovative products, they are elements of consumers' innovativeness. Consumers' innovativeness so construed allows saying that it is a human characteristic that results from an individual's self-image (self-esteem, self-acceptance), perception of the surrounding world (whether it is safe and can be influenced by an individual) and locus of control (internal or external) (Aldridge, 2006, pp. 91–92; Riesman, 1996).

It is these factors that determine specific consumer behaviour, especially in the area of decision-making, openness of aspirations and attitudes to changes in existing situations, speed of reaction to changes, and even impact an individual's social roles. A positive self-image, self-acceptance, a positive perception of the surrounding world (which is safe and can be influenced by an individual) and a sense of making decisions independently, with self-control of one's behaviour and without being influenced by others make an individual an innovative consumer and possibly a production and management innovator, and an opinion or group leader. If these features are weak, the consumer is less active, less creative, less open to others, expresses limited confidence in other people, institutions and enterprises. The consumer's inclination to innovate is feeble too.

It is worth emphasising that innovativeness, which is quite commonly associated with new products, technological and management innovations, is really a human characteristic, thus being a social concept. This confirms our conviction that consumers' innovativeness does not derive from technological or managerial understanding of innovations but has its source in the human. It is considerably reinforced by various values recognised by consumers – from materialised to pro-social values. On this basis, we can assess how many innovative consumers who are co-creators of responsible consumption exist in a society (Ausebel & Waggoner, 2008). This is the essence of and rationale for considering consumers' innovativeness and new consumption as factors in responsible consumption.

3. New Consumption

New consumption is deemed to comprise consumption acts and processes where the following phenomena are highly intensified: green consumerism, servitisation, dematerialisation, individualisation, homogenisation, heterogenisation, deconsumption, politisation, mediatisation, virtualisation and prosumption (Bywalec, 2010, pp. 195–238). This is one of manifold sources depicting changes in consumer behaviour. Other sources include: Mróz (2013), Rifkin (2012), Patel (2010), Lipovetsky (2005), Gabriel and Lang (2008), Allen and Rigby (2005). In this article, the selection and presentation of new consumption as conceptualised by Bywalec has two reasons: a comprehensive and clearly systematised classification of changes in consumer behaviour and in consumption itself as well as the exemplification of many depicted changes based on Polish cases.

The analysis of new consumption provides insight into both quantitative and qualitative changes in consumption that are mainly expressed as the diversity and multiplicity of ways of satisfying needs and lead to modifications of value systems of many consumers. Like globalisation of markets followed by globalisation of consumption, these developments take the form of large social changes that are spatially extensive, dynamic, and even create

a new consumer culture (Bywalec, 2010, p. 194). They are broadly described in Polish and foreign literature. They are addressed by: Bywalec (2017), Kieźel (2004), Włodarczyk (2013), Lewis and Bridger (2000) and Featherstone (1991), to name a few. In order to provide some insight into changes in consumption, especially taking into account responsible consumption, we will refer to selected, particularly vivid trends in consumption, namely: eco-consumption, servicisation and dematerialisation of consumption, consumerism and deconsumption, prosumption and convestment, ethnocentrism.

Eco-consumption emerged as a response to the growing degradation of the natural environment caused by increasing consumption. The concept of eco-consumption relies on the idea of a society that respects the natural environment and its resources. Consumers following its principles hold pro-environmental values, which suggests that they do not pose environmental threats such as degradation or intensive exploitation of environmental resources (Rumianowska, 2013; Kryk, 2011; Kryk, 2013). Their behaviour is characterised by the economical use of consumer goods, limited consumption of goods absorbing large amounts of non-renewable resources, purchase of goods generating relatively little post-consumption waste, consumption of eco-friendly goods, consumption of goods coming from humane livestock farming.

Servicisation of consumption along with its *dematerialisation*. Servicisation of consumption generally understood as substitution of certain material goods by services in satisfying consumer needs increases the role of services in consumption and leads to the transformation of industrial societies into service-based ones (Bywalec, 2007). An obvious consequence for consumers and their households is their reduced demand for many material goods that fulfil the needs of household members (Kryk, 2011). At the same time, in order to intensify the development of services for consumers and their households, it is necessary to equip them with new technologies (computer, the Internet) that are a precondition for access to many services. More modern household equipment for providing information and greater use of goods that improve housework and satisfy cultural needs mean that consumers are more active professionally and socially, but this activity is also partially transferred to their homes (Włodarczyk, 2016). This undoubtedly improves the quality of life of society. Yet these positive effects of servicisation are accompanied by less desirable or undesirable consumer behaviour. It involves spending free time playing attractive computer games or gaining “junk”, unselected information instead of more valuable ways of spending time. Thus, changes in this area do not always remain in harmony with care about the natural environment, one’s health and social relations.

Consumerism and deconsumption. The development of mass consumption is increasingly leading to overconsumption (hyperconsumption, consumerism), or excessive consumption that has no biological or socio-cultural reasons. Consumerism is usually a negative phenomenon. It involves the acceptance of a materialistic system of values. It leads to shopaholism, workaholism,

deterioration of social relations and production of large amounts of post-consumption waste. It is not good for the broadly understood human health and does not make people happier. Fatigue and disappointment with consumption often appear. Excessive consumption also has a fatal impact on the natural environment through its contamination with post-consumption waste, including the lack of full and professional treatment of waste and used and obsolete equipment (Bywalec, 2007). Hence, consumerism temporarily improves well-being of consumers on the one hand, while having an unfavourable impact on man, the natural environment and economy due to intensive consumption of often non-renewable and other resources on the other hand.

A positive reversal of consumerism is deconsumption. It is a manifestation of responsible consumption because its assumptions and goals express confining consumption to necessary goods, which also entails reducing the amount of waste generated by consumers. In reducing consumption, it is important to be able to rationally and responsibly distinguish between important needs and needs that feed into the basic needs (Szczepański, 1981). Deconsumption can materialise in multiple dimensions: reduced consumption due to the growing uncertainty of household situation, limited quantity of consumed goods for the sake of their quality, reduced consumption of material goods for the sake of consumption of non-material goods, and reduced consumption for rational reasons. Three basic principles of deconsumption are: reduce, reuse and recycle (Szul, 2012). They remain in harmony with the idea of responsible consumption. In addition, it is worth mentioning that deconsumption is stimulated by growing fatigue and disappointment with intensive consumption and increased awareness of the need to rationalise it, growing servicisation and dematerialisation of consumption, a lesser meaning of consumption in human value systems, the need to protect the environment and, above all, its non-renewable resources. The development of deconsumption is therefore promising for responsible consumption.

Prosumption and convestment. These forms of new consumption and production are a manifestation of intertwined production- and consumption-related activities with active participation of people in their implementation, simultaneously performing both roles: consumer and producer. Prosumption involves consumers becoming active in production, usually working for an idea of a new product or service. Convestment is an investment in the consumer that reflects investing in human knowledge and skills through learning processes. Thereby, one becomes a conscious, valuable and attractive actor on the labour market. The effects of such work can be expected to be friendly to the individual, environment and economy. It is, however, difficult to confirm this unambiguously since one's education, experience and responsibility cannot be equated in all forms of one's activity. The observation of the market plus signals from the market and assessments of prosumer behaviour provide information about behaviour that is not always

consistent with the concern for the natural and social environment. Similar conclusions may be drawn as regards investment. It does not guarantee that the behaviour of investors remains in harmony with care about the social interest and the natural environment as private and professional interests do not always overlap. In such a situation, the impact of presumption and investment on the behaviour of consumers performing different roles in economic processes may be said to be multi-directional.

Consumer *ethnocentrism* is another interesting manifestation of changes in consumption and a response to ongoing globalisation, yet it also involves progressive decentralisation of decisions and competences towards lower levels of the market and economy. It encompasses decisions about the choice, purchase and use of products of domestic, regional or local origin rather than foreign goods. This behaviour does not rely solely on economic or functional factors. It is more based on duty and moral obligation than on rationality or emotions. Consumers' choice of domestic products results from both socio-economic knowledge that allows a purchase decision to be made and a specific and positive attitude towards these products (Szromnik & Wolanin-Jarosz, 2013). Ethnocentric behaviour is conducive to GDP improvement but it does not have to be and is not always the best choice in terms of care for the natural or social environment. Ethnocentrism is not directly related with the preference for non-material values and improved quality of a society's life. Consumers today find it ever more challenging to buy domestic products since internationalisation of enterprises and marketing strategies of individual brands make it difficult to identify the actual country of origin of products (Angowski & Lipowski, 2014).

This essentially synthetic and descriptive rather than analytical (due to the purpose of the considerations) look at the emergence of new consumption shows that its development is not synonymous with ensuring responsible consumption. We can talk about contradictions between individual attributes of new consumption and care about natural resources, health and physical and psychological condition of a society. The exceptions are eco-consumption and deconsumption. It is difficult to determine *ex ante* and assess the compatibility between the development of new consumption and the nature and scale of occurrence of responsible consumption attributes. It is necessary to first understand its essence and character.

4. Responsible Consumption

Responsible consumption is construed as the satisfaction of needs by individuals who:

- are aware of the necessity to bear the consequences of their actions,
- can verify and select needs, know the benefits of responsible action,
- choose an option that will ensure a lasting improvement of the quality of life of the present and future generations (Wróbel, 2017, p. 53).

It is often associated with sustainable development. It is perceived as a challenge for management of development and is considered a new quality in management (Wróbel, 2017).

It is a general and universal definition of responsible consumption that can be used in various analyses (e.g. micro, macro, industry-specific). In this wording, it can also be applied to both natural and legal persons (although this article focuses only on consumption and consumers as natural persons). This approach to responsible consumption allows its essence to be expressed through awareness and adequate action to promote consumption of products manufactured without violation of human and employee rights or damage to the environment, while improving the quality of life of a society, protecting the environment and ensuring shared responsibility for the present and future generations (Wielopolska, 2012; Wadhwa, 2017). For this reason, we adopt it for further considerations.

Other definitions and notions of responsible consumption are either more fragmented, narrow, even industry-specific perceptions of responsible consumption or formulated in terms of sustainable development, where responsible consumption is an element on the road towards sustainable development. They are presented, among others, by: Borys (2011), GUS (Polish Central Statistical Office) (2011), Moszyński (2014), Dobrzański (2005), Kiełczewski (2011), Kryk (2006), Pearce, Barbier and Markandy (1990).

Meanwhile, responsible consumption, which affects the living conditions of societies, the natural environment and economies, must be assessed and viewed as distinguished from among many other phenomena within the economy rather than as just a step or element on the path towards sustainable development. It is then better visible that it is based on the capacities of a consuming society that condition successful co-creation of a better world, thus contributing to the quality of life of societies, better care for nature and, consequently, the economy. An important characteristic of such consumption is achieving and raising awareness of individuals/consumers who can ensure integrated awareness and thus undertake actions for the present and future generations, feeling a moral duty towards them and expressing willingness to bear the consequences of their actions (Wróbel, 2017, p. 53; Smil, 2016).

It can be said that responsible consumption is formed and developed according to Kant's motto: *I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law* (Jedynak, 2008, p. 24). Such behaviour already exists in many areas of society functioning, although its scale is relatively small.

Responsible consumption takes the forms of limiting wastage, reducing and eliminating consumption of products from raw materials of unknown origin, preferring energy-saving products (e.g. household appliances/electronics), biodegradable products and packaging, using specialist and expert

advice about health, caring about personal aesthetics and the aesthetics of the surroundings, limiting consumption on credit. Responsible consumption involves checking the conditions in which purchased products were produced, the people who manufactured them (child labour) and the effects that used products have on the natural and social environment (Wróbel, 2014). It is also associated with ensuring decent working conditions in manufacturing plants, minimising pollution and post-consumption waste, supporting local suppliers and animal and environmental welfare (Bylok, 2016). Responsible consumption also implies a prolonged use of still functional equipment, resignation from the purchase of new products to borrow or share them instead, re-use of raw materials obtained from waste, thus reducing environmental pollution. Its development also means that many consumer needs are fulfilled while environmental burden is decreasing, which includes a shift from individual to collective consumption (e.g. transport), eco-innovations resulting in reduced resource intensity of goods and services and extended product life cycles.

Various methods and tools can be used to intensify and accelerate the development of responsible consumption. Among them, the leading role is played by education. This also encompasses consumer knowledge and awareness raising and legal-formal instruments (legal provisions, regulations, instructions, standards, norms) governing the quality, health and safety, etc. Marketing tools and social media may also be used.

Modern interactive communication tools such as computers, mobile phones, the Internet, open-source software and mobile technologies can play a significant role in the development of responsible consumption. They allow both audiences and senders involved in developing responsible consumption to use information simultaneously. In addition, modern technology can serve to build long-term relationships with the consumer, thereby influencing the formation of responsible consumption. Promotional and information activities may also be used as tools for developing responsible consumption (Hoppe & Karaszewski, 2013).

All of this should in principle increase social, economic and environmental effects of responsible consumption, both for present and future generations. Is this happening in Poland? We will seek to answer this question in the next part of the article.

5. Are Consumers' Innovativeness and New Consumption Conducive to the Development of Responsible Consumption in Poland?

Consumers' innovativeness and innovative products that form part of new consumption also stimulate consumers to take to new behaviours that can often be classified as responsible consumption. Yet, they also have their darker side – they sometimes involve excessive and irrational consumption.

Below, we will attempt to provide some insight into innovativeness of Polish consumers and their consumption on the basis of our own research and secondary sources of information.

The results of empirical research carried out by the Institute for Market, Consumption and Business Cycles Research (IBRKK) under the research project financed by the National Science Centre "Konsumpcja w innowacyjnej gospodarce" (Consumption in an Innovative Economy) (NCN 2012/05/B/HS4/04006) and covering both qualitative (five FGIs with consumers and six IDIs with trendsetters) and quantitative research (among 1000 consumers aged 18 and over) show that among the values recognised by Poles as important and at the same representing a primeval source of consumers' innovativeness and responsible consumption, the following rank high: independence and autonomy (51%), respect for human rights, tolerance (50%), and respect and trust of other people (48%). Simultaneously, about one third of Poles consider high income, material prosperity, comfortable home and professional career to be significant. Every fifth respondent emphasised the importance of contacts with other people by means of modern technologies as well as the possession of innovative products. However, Poles most appreciate family life (63% of respondents), which indicates a considerable weight attached to traditional values in their lives.

In terms of innovativeness, Poles can be divided into four groups: consciously innovative (interested in innovations, seeking information about them and acquiring and using them), cautiously innovative (interested in innovations but usually not buying them), unconsciously innovative (declaring that they are not interested in innovative products but that they sometimes buy them) and conservatives (non-innovative consumers) who are not interested in, do not buy and do not use innovative products (Olejniczuk-Merta, 2016).

Every tenth consciously innovative consumer was a member of an organisation (association, party, committee, council, religious group, union or circle), while the proportion of such people in other groups, with lower consumption innovativeness, was half that figure (from 4 to 6% depending on the group). Among consciously innovative consumers, there is also a much larger percentage of those who undertake unpaid work or provide help to other people outside their family (11% vs. 3–5% of consumers from other groups), work for social organisations and foundations (9% and 2–3% respectively) and for a local community – a municipality, town or housing estate (4% and 2–3% respectively). Although this aspect of the characteristics does not directly refer to responsible consumption, it indicates their greater social sensitivity, sensitivity to other people's needs and to the broadly understood environment. People who are open to the world and others are sensitive to pro-social and pro-environmental slogans and actions and simultaneously promote responsible consumption. Depending on the degree of interest in innovative products and services, consumers

display various attitudes and behaviours on the market. A clear relationship can be observed between the level of consumers' innovativeness and their behaviour when shopping. In addition to being more open to new things, innovative consumers consciously seek and make market choices. Also, they more often than others care about their surroundings, health, physical fitness and the natural environment, taking into account the need to protect the latter. When shopping, they much more frequently than the average in the studied population and in other groups (Olejniczuk-Merta, 2016):

- check that electricity-powered products are energy-efficient – 65% vs. 33% of conservatives (again half the former figure),
- pay attention to raw materials, chemical composition of products (48% and 25% respectively),
- check whether cleaning products are harmless to the environment (green) – 33% of innovators and 15% of conservatives,
- pay attention to whether products and packaging are biodegradable (29% vs. 13%),
- check whether cosmetics and personal care products have been tested on animals and whether the packaging is biodegradable – 23% vs. 11%.

Consciously innovative consumers stand out from other social groups also due to modernity manifested not only in the use of technological novelties in communication with other people and in household management but also in the conscious and deliberate selection of innovative socially- and environmentally-friendly goods and services. For the most innovative consumers, the interest in market novelties is so strong that every third (36%) says that they frequently buy new products despite having similar, still functional goods (while this indicator for the entire population studied was 16%, and only 9% for conservatives). Such consumer behaviour is not consistent with the rules and rather indicates excessive consumption. Moreover, the pursuit of technological novelties and the associated frequent replacement of equipment with new, more perfect or more fashionable products contribute to the multiplication of industrial waste that is often difficult to treat. There is also a contradiction between consumers' innovative behaviours fostering the protection of the environment and natural resources (thus being a sign of responsible consumption) and leading to environmental pollution. Buying biological chemicals used in households, light bulbs or mercury-free thermometers, biodegradable packaging, etc., is evidence of responsible consumption. On the other hand, the purchase of new, energy-saving, water-saving, etc., durable goods is problematic since more than 1/3 of the most innovative respondents buy new equipment despite having still well-functioning devices.

The results of an international survey conducted by Havas Worldwide in cooperation with Market Probe in a sample of approximately 10.5 thousand people above 16 years of age indicate that a fairly strong trend of joint acquisition and sharing of products is noted among people aged 16–34

(Havas Worldwide, 2014), while nearly 2/3 of Polish respondents prefer to borrow/rent most things rather than own them. The concept of sharing is gaining popularity among representatives of all generations, although it is not necessarily implemented by them. Two thirds of those surveyed believe that the society would be more prosperous if people shared more and owned less (only 8% of respondents were of a different opinion). It can be concluded that a new model of consumer behaviour is emerging, with a lesser focus on possession and accumulation and a greater emphasis on community and cooperation.

In general, there are relatively few actions in Poland evidencing the responsible behaviour of consumers, which may prove that the development of consumers' innovativeness and more modern behaviour is a long-term process inscribed in socio-economic progress.

On the other hand, the development of innovations regarding goods and services is faster. Nonetheless, this does not preclude the emergence of further, new innovations that can be called "higher-order innovations" or "second-wave innovations". On the one hand, they contribute to increased knowledge, the efficiency of human thinking and action, and on the other hand, to the domination of technological over social development driving, among other things, social exclusion and adverse changes in the labour market. They form the so-called new generation of consumer trends with meaningful names. In Poland, they are quite common. They include (Mróz, 2011):

- "the world is a game" – a trend ensuing from social media development, growing competitive attitudes among people, especially young ones, transferred from the behaviour patterns present in computer games and reflecting the expansion of mobile technologies (smartphones, i-Pads, tablets) and applications that change consumer behaviour;
- "economy of haste" resulting from the transfer of habits from the virtual to the real world, emerged after "times of saving", conducive to efficient and effective shopping through the use of interactive tools for communication with consumers;
- "culture of no commitment" - fashion for the so-called temporary ownership, namely possessing goods for a certain period of time and then reselling them and buying new ones, collective and shared use of consumer goods (Poniatowska-Jaksch & Sobiecki, 2016; Sokołowski, Starzyński, Rok & Zgiep, 2016);
- "an overlap between the virtual and real world" – bridging the reality and the virtual world through the production of objects and devices that can be controlled via the Internet. Consumer demand for such equipment is growing rapidly;
- "hyper-personalisation" – consumer orientation towards highly personalised products and services replacing excess devices performing similar functions. Manufacturers adapt to customer preferences and provide ready, personalised solutions in a short time.

These new trends of “higher-order innovations” cannot be unambiguously recognised as compliant with the requirements of responsible consumption. In parallel, however, trends opposed to innovative products or consumption behaviours are emerging that favour responsible consumption. Such changes include (Mróz, 2011):

- “escape from technology” – a shift from the latest solutions in order to return to the real world with its traditional features influencing behaviour. The reason is the fatigue with hyperactivity resulting from continuous active contact with and control of the world through phones and computers;
- “creative urban planning” – resulting from rapid development of urban agglomerations and an increase in environmental awareness of societies. It involves arranging urban spaces left by disappearing commercial buildings as art, leisure or recreation centres made available to consumers to stimulate other forms of behaviour;
- “retail – the third space” being also a consequence of consumers’ fatigue with e-commerce in this case and their longing for a return to traditional shops with direct contact with shop assistants;
- “outsourcing of self-control” ensuing from excessive information and advertising stimuli addressed to consumers and often causing their confusion and/or submissiveness resulting in poor market decisions. Consumers are beginning to seek support from market advisers or consultants. They are also offered devices that work as “digital assistants” and help consumers to find their feet on the market.

Innovative and responsible consumers are also retro-innovators who, having run a big circle and learnt about many effects of innovations, appreciate new products but at the same time think about returning to traditional shopping and independent decisions and take into account the requirements of the natural environment in which they live.

All these new forms of consumption and new emerging behaviours and consumer trends are increasing the proportion of innovative, including relatively highly innovative, consumers in the structure of our society. Nevertheless, the development of innovations in Poland remains at half the level in more advanced EU countries, with Polish consumers’ innovativeness looking even worse in an analogous European comparison (*European Innovation Scoreboard*, 2017).

6. Conclusion

Summarising the above discussion, it can be said that Polish consumers’ innovativeness is relatively low. We assess the share of innovative consumers in the whole society as similarly small. At the same time, consumer behaviours outlined in the article are accompanied by an unsatisfactory and ambiguous change in the values recognised by buyers and users of innovative products. It involves a “shift” of values important to consumers both

in the expected – pro-social – and undesirable direction, namely towards material values. This suggests that Poland is at the beginning of the road towards responsible consumption.

In our country, the development of innovative products is more advanced than consumers' innovativeness and responsible consumption. What is the reason? Undoubtedly, an important but not exclusive role is played by the economic factor: the income of a large proportion of Poles. This is also connected with insufficient knowledge and social awareness in this respect, well-established traditional values and ways of conduct, and developing materialistic values that matter to consumers.

Meanwhile, progress towards responsible consumption is based on new patterns that reject the materialistic system of values (Olejniczuk-Merta, 2015), opposing the pursuit of more and more material goods, excessive consumption, wastage, and the desire to maximise profit (Kryk, 2011, p. 206).

Considering the above discussion and assessments of consumers' innovativeness and responsible consumption, and paraphrasing the eloquent words of W. Churchill, "if you can't change your mind you can't change anything", it can be said: until the share of material values important to consumers starts decreasing in favour of non-material and pro-social values, until awareness increases about the legitimacy of active, voluntary involvement in responsible consumption development and until broad measures are taken to support the society in changing attitudes and following pro-responsible behaviour patterns, we will not approach the expected level of responsible consumption development, and thus we will not succeed in improving the quality of life of the society.

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