

# Factors Impacting Consumer Choices From the Perspective of Owners and Managers of Beauty Parlors Located in Kraków and the Neighborhood

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The studies on consumer behavior on the market should take into account not only the criteria of product choices, but also the factors determining the choice of the place of purchase. The purpose of the paper is to assess the knowledge about the factors influencing the consumer choices with respect to a beauty parlor on the part of owners and managers offering cosmetic services in parlors located in Kraków and in other cities of the Małopolska Province. The significance of individual factors was assessed.

**Methodology:** A diagnostic survey method was used for the study. An interview questionnaire comprising 51 questions was used as the research tool. The research was carried out with the use of PAPI (Paper and Pen Interview). 298 correctly completed questionnaire were qualified for statistical analyses. The choice of companies was non-random, purposeful and depended on their location in the area of Kraków and the Małopolska Province.

**Findings:** The received results show which factors – according to the owners and managers – guide consumers in their choices of a beauty parlor.

**Research limitations:** When analyzing the generalizing conclusions, caution should be exercised as to uncertainty with respect to the validity of the population list in the address database purchased for the study purposes from an external company. However, attempts were made to make the study representative, yet certain caution should be exercised during the generalization of the findings with respect to the entire population.

**Implications:** Identification of factors determining the choice of a place of purchase of services is valid especially from the point of view of companies operating at a competitive market. Skillful use of knowledge on the consumer behavior often determines the efficiency of actions and the success of an enterprise.

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**Originality:** The paper presents a fragment of analysis of data procured as part of broad research of the market of beauty services in the area of Kraków and the neighborhood. At the present moment, a limited number of scientific publications about the market of beauty services is available, both in the national and regional approach.

**Keywords:** economics, consumer behavior, consumer choices, beauty parlor management.

**JEL:** A1, D7, D12, D91, E21

## Czynniki wpływające na wybory konsumenckie z perspektywy właścicieli i menedżerów salonów kosmetycznych zlokalizowanych w Krakowie i okolicach

### Streszczenie

**Cel:** w badaniach dotyczących zachowania się nabywców na rynku istotne jest rozważenie nie tylko kryteriów wyboru produktu, lecz także czynników decydujących o wyborze miejsca jego zakupu. Celem artykułu jest rozpoznanie znajomości czynników wpływających na konsumenckie wybory salonu kosmetycznego przez właścicieli i menedżerów świadczących usługi kosmetyczne w salonach zlokalizowanych w Krakowie i w innych miastach województwa małopolskiego. Ocenie poddane zostało znaczenie poszczególnych czynników.

**Metodologia:** badania zrealizowano metodą sondażu diagnostycznego. Jako narzędzie badawcze wykorzystany został kwestionariusz wywiadu zawierający 51 pytań. Badania zostały przeprowadzone przez ankietatorów techniką PAPI (Paper And Pen Interview). Do analiz statystycznych zaklasyfikowano 298 prawidłowo wypełnionych kwestionariuszy. Dobór przedsiębiorstw do badań miał charakter nielosowy, celowy i uzależniony był od ich lokalizacji na terenie Krakowa i województwa małopolskiego.

**Wyniki:** otrzymane wyniki wskazują, jakimi czynnikami – zdaniem właścicieli i menedżerów – kierują się konsumenci przy wyborze salonu kosmetycznego.

**Ograniczenia badawcze:** analizując wnioski uogólniające, należy zachować ostrożność z powodu braku pewności odnośnie do aktualności operatu populacji w bazie adresowej zakupionej na potrzeby badań od firmy zewnętrznej. Podjęto starania aby badania miały charakter reprezentatywny, jednak z pewną ostrożnością należy wnioski uogólniać na populację generalną.

**Implikacje:** identyfikacja czynników decydujących o wyborze miejsca zakupu usług jest ważna zwłaszcza z punktu widzenia przedsiębiorstw działających na rynku konkurencyjnym. Umiejętne wykorzystanie wiedzy z zakresu zachowania konsumenta często decyduje o efektywności działania i sukcesie przedsiębiorstwa.

**Oryginalność:** w artykule zaprezentowano fragment analizy danych uzyskanych w wyniku szeroko zakrojonych badań rynku usług kosmetycznych w regionie Krakowa i okolic. Aktualnie dostępna jest niewielka liczba publikacji naukowych na temat rynku usług kosmetycznych w ujęciach zarówno ogólnopolskim, jak i regionalnym.

**Słowa kluczowe:** ekonomia, zachowania konsumentów, wybory konsumenckie, zarządzanie salonem kosmetycznym.

## 1. Introduction

The issue of consumption and consumer behavior has been addressed since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The concept of rational actions voiced by the representatives of the neo-classic school of economics, related to the concept of *homo economicus*, i.e. economic man, making choices in

line with economic factors, has been juxtaposed with the concept of *homo sociologicus*, i.e. a man guided – apart from the aforementioned factors – by the determinants of the environment, mental habits, as well as customs and emotions. In turn, the concept of limited rationality indicated the factors limiting the freedom of choice, while the behavioral theory of consumption stressed the psychological determinants, thus allowing for irrational decisions. The evolution of views and hundreds of studies resulted in the present-day state of knowledge about consumption and consumer behavior.

A number of models have been worked out in the theory of consumer behavior, taking the decision-making process and the factors influencing it into account. These models, extensively discussed in reference books (Maciaszczyk, 2014; Rudnicki, 2000; Sagan, 2011), do not exhaust the issue in question, making it even more open. Continuous changes in all areas of life drive the changes in consumer choices and the determinants affecting them. In order to identify and to understand these determinants, consumer surveys are carried out, i.e. the demand side of the market.

This paper presents a fragment of study results pertaining to entrepreneurs and managers, i.e. the supply side. The purpose of the paper is to assess the knowledge about the factors influencing the consumer choices of beauty parlors on the part of owners and managers offering cosmetic services. The authors of the paper deem the following question of interest: are the factors indicated by the managers of beauty parlors compliant with the factors that the consumer considers important?

## 2. Consumer Choices and Their Determinants

Consumer behavior is defined as “all actions and perceptions of a consumer comprising preparation for the decision on choosing a product, making such choice and consumption” (Hansen, 1972, p. 15) and results from the “individual experience of needs and encompasses all of the objectively and subjectively defined, rational and emotional, conscious and unconscious moves” (Fabiunke, Fischer, & Koppert 1976, p. 32).

The basic assumption in the theory of economics is that people make the best choices they can afford, for the purpose of accomplishing the ultimate result. Thus, they choose such goods or services which – taking limited resources into account – provide them with maximum satisfaction of their needs. This assumption relies on the classically adopted, rational expectations of an economic man. Behavioral economists oppose this assumption. One of the leading representatives of this trend, the laureate of the Nobel prize for the contribution to behavioral economics, R. Thaler claims ironically that the *homo economicus* from economics textbooks can think like Albert Einstein, store as much memory as IBM's Big Blue and exercise the will power of Mahatma Gandhi. Yet, people whom we know are not like this. They are not *homo economicus*, but *homo sapiens* (Thaler & Sunstein 2017, p. 17).

Thaler evidenced the impact of the supposedly irrelevant factors (SIF) on the consumer choices (Thaler, 2018), which make the human decisions imperfect, often irrational and not offering optimum results.

The theory of economics also assumes that consumer choices, i.e. actions taken in the purchase process – in any case difficult to identify, as it happens inside the human mind – start at the moment of making a decision which originates from needs. It is commonly believed that needs drive the man's actions, including decisions on making purchases. However, doubts are raised by the fundamental assumption that a man is aware of his/ her needs and is consistently striving to satisfy them. The essence of a need is narrowed down to the feeling of absence or excess of something in the human nature, which – in relation to the structure of the organism, individual experience and the place of an individual in the society – is indispensable for keeping it alive, allowing for its development, keeping a specific social role and mental balance (Kocowski, 1979) [1]. Meanwhile, people often fail to recognize their authentic needs and when making choices they are only guided by signals and information deriving from the market; in consequence, they make decisions that have nothing in common with satisfying their needs. A modern man is stimulated by the necessity of satisfying artificial needs, created by marketing instruments and actions. Consumer choices are often dictated by desires, wishes or caprices which are unjustly identified as needs (Szczepański, 1981) [2]. A failure to satisfy needs which are indispensable for living is experienced by a man as inconvenience, pain, discomfort; on the other hand, when a desire becomes a need, fear, uncertainty and even depression may appear. According to the Spanish psychologist and psychotherapist R. Santandreu, “creating artificial needs leads to emotional distress, whether or not these those needs are met, because: if they cannot be met, you are unhappy (obviously, in your own belief) ... and if they can be met, you could always lose them... and that brings fear and insecurity into your mind” (Santandreu, 2015, p. 135).

Creating needs has led to excessive consumerism, without making a man happier. In consequence, people buy products or services that they do not need at all. Satisfying an artificial need is not needed for ensuring conditions of development and functioning of man. M. Szpunar notes justly that the consumption system does not satisfy needs (both actual and artificial ones), as its only goal is constant reproduction of insatiety, driven by the inner imperative of possession (Szpunar, 2016).

Hence, it is necessary to change the paradigm of thinking about a rational man making optimum choices in spite of the fact that the representatives of neo-classical economics are against it (Fine & Milonakis, 2009; Mączyńska, 2018). The concept adopted a long time ago is a limiting simplification which distorts correct conclusions.

To understand the behavior of consumers on the market and the choices made by consumers, it is necessary to take a look at diverse determinants

thereof. Numerous classifications are encountered in reference books. V.T.C. Middleton grouped consumption determinants into eight groups which were determined as: economic, demographic, geographic, stances, socio-cultural and social, governmental regulations, media and mobility (Middleton, 1996). On the other hand, Ph. Kotler distinguished cultural, social, psychical and personal factors (Kotler, 2005). M. Jedlińska proposed a division into internal (psychological and demographic) and external (social, economic, cultural, marketing and non-marketing stimuli) factors (Rosa, 2015). Consumption determinants may also be grouped as economic and non-economic (Kryczka, 2018). The first group includes macro-economic factors (economic situation, GDP, inflation, prices, supply of specific goods and services, unemployment rate, currency exchange rates, social policy, European integration, globalization) and micro-economic ones (income, savings, loans incurred, owned material resources, etc.). The group of non-economic determinants features demographic and social factors (primarily age, sex, place of residence, education, profession, marital status, family life cycle, social standards and opinions, reference groups, health condition) and psychological and cultural ones (needs, motivations, stances, tastes and preferences, values, aspirations, personality, customs and habits, emotions, denomination, fashion, lifestyle) and others (geographic environment, climate, technological status, marketing activities, tendency to take risks, politics, etc.).

Such diverse factors affect, directly or indirectly, consumer choices and play a greater or smaller role, depending on the type of product (goods, services, ideas) to which they refer (decreasing or increasing demand for it). They operate in a synthetic mode, they intersect and supplement one another. In spite of their multiplicity, they are averaged in large quantities and acquire features of regularity. Together, they make up the entire picture of consumerism and behavior of consumers at the market (Kryczka, 2014).

### **3. Determinants of the Choice of Beauty Parlors by Consumers**

In the recent years, the market of beauty services has been one of better developing markets in Poland (except for the period of the COVID-19 pandemic). This development is fostered by international trends pertaining to the healthy lifestyle and care for one's appearance, as well as increased affluence of Poles. It is estimated that in Poland, there are around from ten to several dozen thousands of beauty parlors and SPA/wellness centers (<https://beautydays.pl/sektor-kosmetyczny/> 2019) [3].

Strong competition offers the consumers a great freedom of choice among numerous enterprises offering beauty services. On the other hand, from the enterprises' perspective, the competition forces them to create values for their clients which could induce them to make use of the

offered services. To keep afloat on the market and to gain competitive advantage, it is necessary to learn and to understand consumer behavior, which refers to the choices of beauty services and parlors providing such services.

Reference books outline the concepts and models of processes of choosing the place of purchase along with factors affecting such choices (Bartosik-Purgat, 2007). In the case of consumer behavior, the analysis of factors determining the choice of provision of beauty services is of special importance. Consumers may purchase the same or a similar service in a number of beauty parlors, therefore when deciding to use a specific service, they take the place of its provision into account. This also results from the features of such services, in particular their inseparability. It is impossible to separate a service from a person providing it, while the process of providing a service is simultaneous with its consumption. Thence, the place of service performance is significant for the consumer.

It must be noted that studies with respect to consumer behavior on the market of beauty services are performed very rarely in Poland. There is a clear absence of empirical studies representative of the population of Poland in general dedicated to the Polish market of beauty services. “Fractional” studies are carried out sporadically, and they refer to the demand side of the market.

The issue of impact of various factors on the choice of a beauty parlor has found its place in the studies carried out in 2012 by “questus” [4] and published in the “Beauty Services Market in Poland” report (questus, 2012) [5]. The respondents, determining the level of significance of factors pertaining to the choice of a parlor on a five-degree scale, considered the quality of services provided in the parlor the most significant (questus, 2012, p. 53). The second factor with respect to significance was the price of services (89.6% of indications), while the third one was the diversity of the offer (80.5% of indications). The other significant factors affecting the choice of a beauty parlor included: location (almost 80% of indications) and friends’ opinions (77.8% of respondents).

In line with these studies, the most frequent source of decisions with respect to the choice of a beauty parlor was the opinion of friends (58%) and only 15% of the respondents relied exclusively on their own opinion. It is worth emphasizing that information in the press, radio and television had slight significance during the choice of a beauty parlor, while every fifth consumer – when choosing the parlor – was guided by information posted online on websites devoted to health and beauty.

Later studies carried out by A. Dąbrowska and M. Janoś-Kresło confirmed that the most important factors affecting the choice of a beauty parlor are: quality (38.8%), price (34.4%) and location (20.2%) (Dąbrowska & Janoś-Kresło 2007, as cited in Newerli-Guz, 2011).

According to the studies carried out by I. Newerli-Guz [6], the most significant factors determining the choice of a specific parlor were the effects after the treatment, and subsequently the quality of services and professionalism of the personnel (Newerli-Guz, 2011). On the other hand, the diversity of offered services and the use of cosmetics of a specific brand during the treatment were of minor importance.

On the other hand, the results of studies carried out among a group of cosmetology students at the University of Physical Education in Kraków [7] have shown that the main determinants for the choice of a parlor include the quality and the type of provided services (Kryczka & Giemza 2020). Next, the person providing the service, the price and the atmosphere in the parlor were listed. The prestige of a parlor turned out to be of lesser significance, along with discount coupons/loyalty schemes, convenient access, brand of applied cosmetics, as well as opinions of friends and family. Lesser importance was attached to the proximity of a parlor from the place of residence, while advertisements and opinions of bloggers/celebrities were negligible.

It is also worth quoting the studies of internet users who go to beauty parlors (Stanisławska, 2019). They declared that when choosing a beauty parlor, they were primarily guided by opinions posted online (65.4% of indications) and recommendations of friends provided personally (59.6%). Another important aspect was the offer of treatments (61.5%) and then the price (50%). The majority of respondents (53%) preferred well-known and recommended parlors. Among causes for not visiting unknown parlors, the most frequent ones included: fear of the unknown, anonymity of a beautician and fear of bad quality of the provided services.

The results of studies quoted above pertaining to the determinants of a choice of a beauty parlor are difficult to compare on account of diverse study methodologies and the applied research tools, as well as non-uniform choice of potential answers which were suggested to the respondents. However, it may be concluded on their basis that the most significant choice criteria from the consumer perspective include: quality of services, person providing the service and price.

## 4. Methodology

The following research question was asked in this paper:

Which factors, according to the owners and managers of beauty parlors, affect the consumer choices of a place of provision of beauty services?

The studies pertaining to consumer decisions were not, as usually, addressed to the entities using the beauty services, i.e. consumers, but to the entities providing such services. The purpose of adopting this perspective was to recognize the criteria which – according to the managers – guide the consumers when choosing a beauty parlor.

The presented study results form a part of an extensive research project devoted to the analysis of the market of beauty services in the Małopolska Province with special attention given to Kraków, implemented between 2017 and 2019 by the Inter-Faculty Research Team of the Bronisław Czech University of Physical Education in Kraków [8].

The basic information for the entire project was procured as part of studies covering a population of 1,213 companies offering cosmetic services in the area of the Małopolska Province, which were included in the address database purchased for the study needs from “Grupa Marketingowa TAI.” The database was additionally supplemented with 36 parlors that were identified by the Research Team. Their absence in the purchased database most often resulted from the fact that the parlors were established or started to operate already after the database of the aforementioned company was drawn up.

The choice of companies was non-random, it was purposeful and depended on their location in the area of Kraków and the Małopolska Province.

Parlors located in Kraków and its closest vicinity were separated (primarily in communes belonging to or adjoining the Kraków Poviats), including parlors located in other poviats (Myślenice, Tarnów, Gorlice, Olkusz, Bochnia) and cities of the Małopolska Province (Sucha Beskidzka, Proszowice, Biecz, Stary and Nowy Sącz, Oświęcim, Dąbrowa Tarnowska, Limanowa, Zakopane, Rabka Zdrój and others).

A diagnostic survey method was used for the study. An interview questionnaire comprising 51 questions was used as the research tool. The research was carried out with the use of PAPI (Paper and Pen Interview).

Responses from representatives of over 300 beauty and cosmetic parlors were received, but only these questionnaires that contained answers to all the questions of key importance for the study were qualified for analyses. Ultimately, 298 correctly completed questionnaires were qualified to statistical analyses (i.e. 23%) [9]. A definite majority of them, i.e. 178 referred to Kraków, which means that the study covered 39% of all parlors operating in the city and 14.2% of all parlors listed in the entire database. Furthermore, representatives of 116 parlors operating outside of the administrative borders of Kraków were also covered by the study, which constitutes 16.5% of all such facilities in the database (in the case of four interviews qualified for analyses and completed correctly, no location was provided).



## 5. Characteristics of Study Sample

The participants of the study were owners and managers of beauty parlors; the majority of them were owners (80%). Data of persons completing the questionnaire forms confirmed the fact that work in the beauty industry is the domain of women, given that as many as 97% of the respondents were women. The average age of the respondents was 35, while the youngest respondent was 20 and the oldest one was 60. Job seniority at the market of beauty services was diversified, within a range from 0.5 year to 36 years. The average job seniority was 11 years.

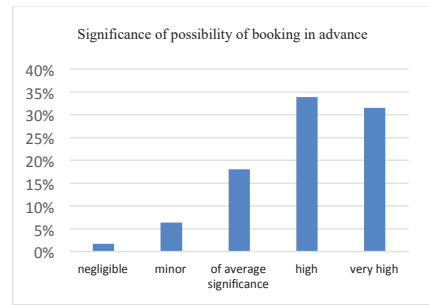
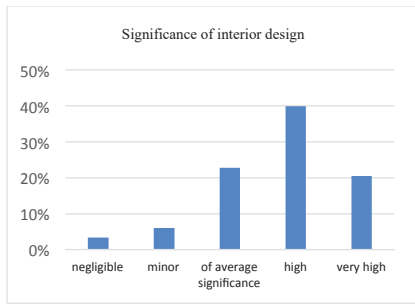
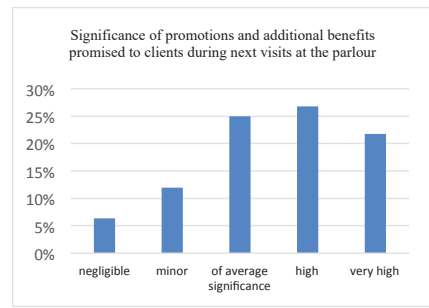
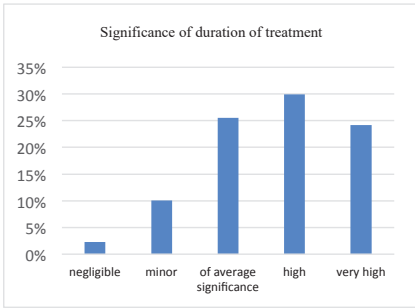
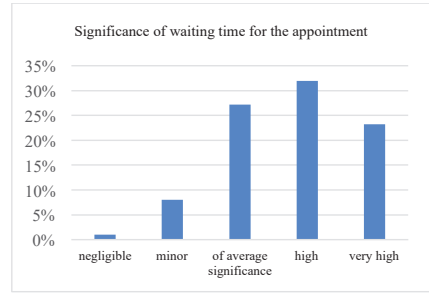
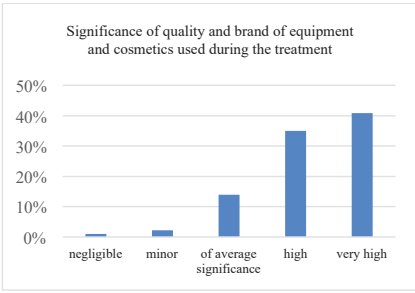
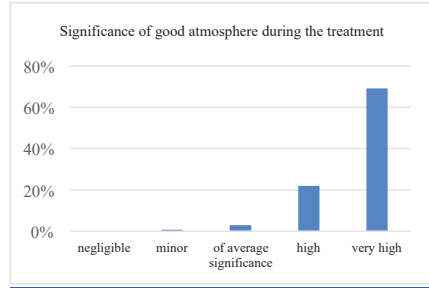
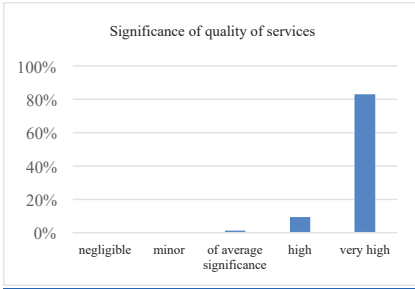
Owners and managers of beauty parlors represented companies where the dominant business model were individually owned independent enterprises or enterprises operating as independent entities (90% of the respondents). The remaining persons managed the parlors functioning as part of own network (approx. 7%) and franchise (approx. 3%). Owners and managers of micro-companies were dominant (96.4%). The remaining 3.7% were representatives of small enterprises. The average number of employees was 3.14 employees per enterprise. The respondents primarily represented parlors (92.2%) where only women were employed. The parlors offered a wide of services in the area of cosmetics and care, medical cosmetology and beauty. The most important category was manicure and pedicure and facial treatment.

## 6. Research Results

The owners and managers of beauty parlors were asked to determine the significance of factors that the clients are most often guided by when choosing a beauty parlor. In multiple-choice answers, sixteen factors were listed (including one unspecified) to which rank had to be assigned by entering a relevant digit assuming that: 5 is greatly significant, 4 is significant, 3 is of average significance, 2 is of minor significance and 1 is negligible. The Stevens ordinal scale was used.

Indications of answers offered in percentage terms are presented in Figure 1. Not all respondents assessed the significance of all factors. However, the values of answers were applied to the number of all respondents.

The compiled information was used to designate the mode and the median for each of the distinguished factors. A ranking is presented below where the determinants for the choice of a cosmetic parlor are presented according to the most frequent assessments, starting from the most important and ending with the least important (Table 1).



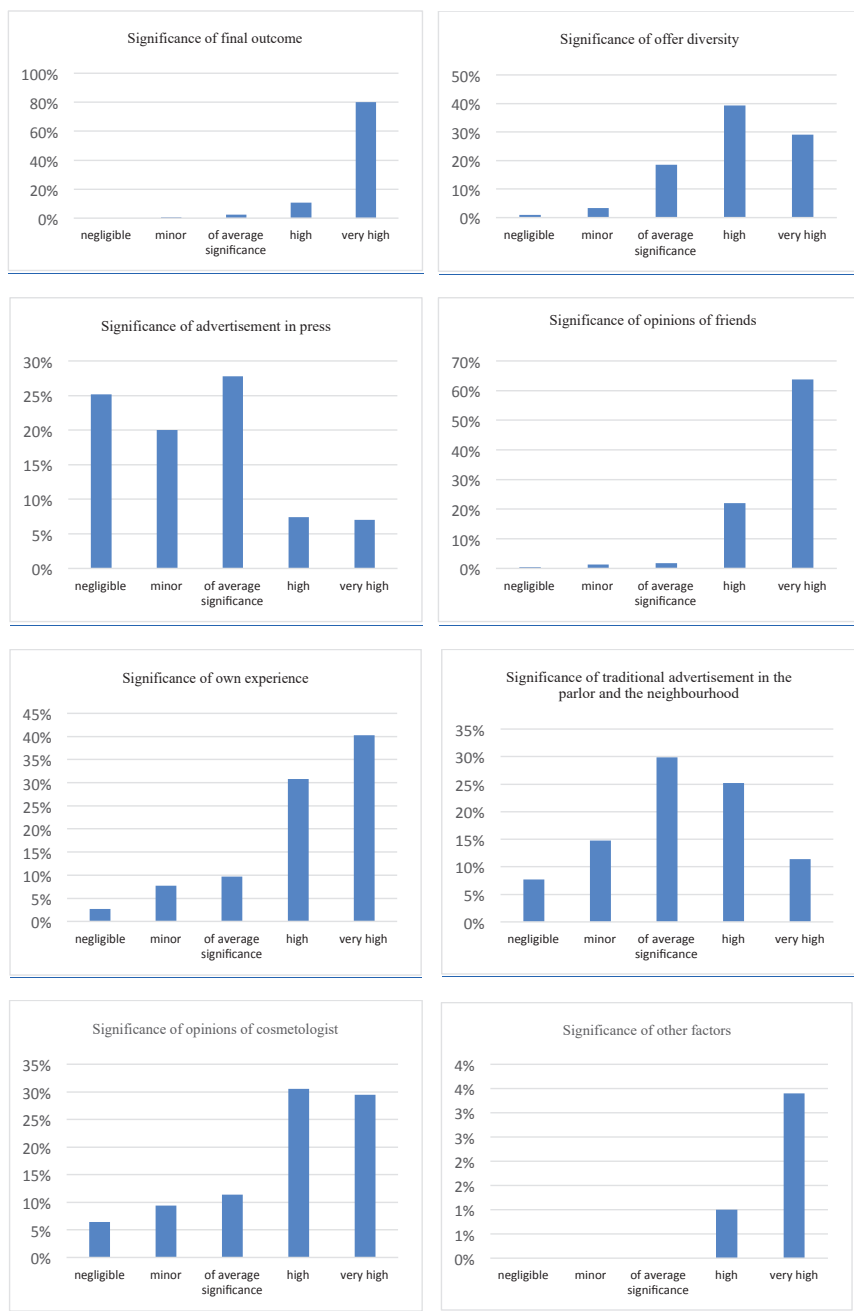


Fig. 1. Significance of individual factors that guide the clients during the selection of a beauty parlor, according to the owners and managers (N = 298). Source: Author's own studies.

No.	Choice factors	Response mode	Number of indications of the mode	Median
1.	Quality of services	5	248	5
2.	Final outcome of treatment	5	238	5
3.	Good atmosphere during the treatment	5	207	5
4.	Opinions of friends	5	190	5
5.	Quality and brand of equipment and cosmetics used during the treatment	5	122	4
6.	Own experience	5	120	4
7.	Interior design	4	119	4
8.	Offer diversity	4	117	4
9.	Possibility of booking in advance	4	101	4
10.	Waiting time for the appointment	4	95	4
11.	Cosmetologists' opinions	4	91	4
12.	Duration of treatment	4	89	4
13.	Promotions and additional benefits promised to clients during next visits at the parlor	4	80	4
14.	Traditional advertisement in the parlor and the neighborhood	3	89	3
15.	Press advertisements	3	83	2
16.	Other	5	10	5

*Tab. 1. Significance of factors determining the choice of a beauty parlor. Source: Author's own elaboration.*

According to the owners and managers, the consumers – when choosing a beauty parlor – are primarily guided by the quality of the provided services. As many as 83% (248 indications) of all respondents assigned very high significance to this criterion; there were no indications with respect to minor and negligible significance, while only 1% indicated average significance. The second factor with respect to the number of indications was the final outcome of treatment. A definite majority, i.e. 80% of the respondents, believe that this factor is of very high significance for the consumers and 11% believe that it has high significance. There were no indications with respect to negligible significance, while in the case of minor and average – only 3%. The third factor with respect to the significance was pleasant atmosphere during the treatment. According to 69% of the respondents,

the atmosphere at the parlor is of great significance for the clients, while according to 22% it has high significance. Next, opinions of friends had a significant effect on the choice of a beauty parlor. In this case, 64% of the respondents admitted that opinions were of great significance for the consumers, while 22% said that such significance was high. In the case of the first four factors listed in the table, the median of the assessment of their significance with respect to the choice of a beauty parlor was: very high significance.

Also the quality and the brand of equipment and cosmetics used during the treatment were highly ranked. According to 41% of the respondents, this criterion has very high significance for the consumers, and according to 53% it is significant (median: high significance). Subsequently, the consumer's own experience was listed, which in the opinion of 40% of the respondents is of very high significance, according to 31%, it is of high significance and according to 11% of the respondents, it does not play an important role (minor and negligible importance).

The factors listed so far had, according to the majority of owners and managers, very high significance for the consumers choosing a beauty parlor. Subsequent determinants played a smaller role. Their significance was assessed primarily as high (not very high). In the case of diversity of the offer, there were 39% of indications; a possibility of booking in advance was indicated by 34% of the respondents, the role of interior design was indicated by 40% and the opinion of cosmetologists was important for consumers according to 31% of the respondents (according to 30% – very important).

Evaluation of the waiting time for the appointment oscillated around high (32%) and medium (27%) significance. Similarly, the significance of the duration of a treatment was assessed as high (30%) and average (26%). Supplementary promotion was given high significance (27% of indications) and average significance (25%).

Owners and managers of beauty parlors believed that the remaining factors played a smaller role with respect to the choice of the place of service provision. These include traditional advertisements in the parlor and the neighborhood. The respondents most often indicated their average significance for the choice of a beauty parlor (30%). Least significance was given to the impact of advertisements in the press. According to 28% of the respondents, such significance is average, while according to 45%, it is minor and negligible (median: minor significance).

It must be added that the unspecific variant "other" was an important factor. The respondents were asked to list the determinants that were not featured in the multiple choice answers and that they were aware of. Some listed as very important: "prices", "participation in trainings, fairs and conferences", "personality, character traits of the personnel", "professional approach of a cosmetologist to a client."

## 7. Conclusions

The market of cosmetic services in Kraków and in the Małopolska Province is greatly dispersed and dominated by independent micro and small enterprises. There is very significant competition on the market. The owners and managers of beauty parlors, wishing to gain clients, should be aware of the determinants of consumption and in particular the factors affecting the choice of a specific parlor, offering cosmetic/cosmetological services. The studies pertaining to consumer behavior are usually carried out among potential clients of beauty parlors. In this paper, the issue was analyzed from a slightly different angle. As a result of the completed studies, an attempt was made at determining the significance of individual factors that the consumers are guided by when choosing a beauty parlor – according to their owners and managers. The compiled materials allowed for formulating numerous conclusions.

The studies have shown that from the perspective of owners and managers, the consumers – when deciding to choose a beauty parlor – primarily take into account the quality of the provided services and then the final outcome of the treatments along with pleasant atmosphere in the parlor. Over 90% of the respondents assigned very high and high significance to each of these factors. The opinions of friends had a slightly lower rank (analogously, 86%). Over 70% of the respondents attributed high and very high significance to the quality and the brand of equipment as well as the cosmetics used during the treatment and own experiences of the consumer. In the completed study, the respondents indicated lesser importance of the diverse choice of offer, a possibility of booking an appointment in advance, interior design, the opinion of cosmetologists, the waiting time for the visit and the duration of the treatment. The effects of promotion, in particular advertisements in the press, had least significance in the opinions of managers and owners of parlors.

Referring the received results to consumer studies, primary significance of the quality of services is hereby confirmed. However, the consumers attach greater importance to the person providing the service, the diversity of the offer, the price and the opinions of friends. These factors, according to owners and managers, are of lesser importance for the clients.

As indicated earlier, the results of studies pertaining to the determinants of a choice of a beauty parlor are however hard to compare; such comparison is also hindered by the diversified variants of suggested answers.

Given the absence of market surveys of cosmetic services carried out in Kraków and in the Małopolska Province, it is not possible to compare the received results with other studies, neither in the subjective nor the dynamic approach.

The issue of choice of a beauty parlor does not seem to be assessed in the respect in which the consumer behavior is related to the choice of

the cosmetic service (Krzysztozek, 2011; questus, 2012; Beauty Business Partner, 2018). From the point of view of an enterprise operating at a competitive market, proper identification of factors affecting the consumer decisions not only in reference to the choice of services is important, but also the choice of the place where they are provided. Familiarity with relevant determinants for the choice of a beauty parlor by the consumers provides the managers with an opportunity of paying greater attention to them. This translates to, e.g., greater necessity of taking care of hiring proper employees, as the persons providing the service are of greater significance for the clients than the interior design.

Such knowledge and improvement of the factors that are important from the consumer's point of view may contribute to the parlor achieving a high market position.

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### **Endnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> The most popular concepts of needs include the concepts of H. A. Murray, A. H. Maslow and in Poland of T. Kocowski and K. Obuchowski.
- <sup>2</sup> However, J. Szczepański classifies the desires and wishes as needs, which he calls fringe needs, while whims are called ostensible needs. Thus, there is a superstructure of the needs above their core.
- <sup>3</sup> The number of beauty parlors and hairdresser salons provided jointly – which often operate together or in close cooperation – amounts to approx. 100,000 in Poland.
- <sup>4</sup> The company's official name is not capitalized. The company was set up in 2004 as Akredytowane Centrum Szkoleniowo-Egzaminacyjne The Chartered Institute of Marketing "questus". It has extensive experience in market surveys, analyses as well as preparation of business case studies.
- <sup>5</sup> 144 respondents took part in the survey; between 13 and 19 March, they completed an online survey about opinions on services of beauty parlors that they use. The majority of persons who answered the questions in the survey were women (97.8%) aged between 21 and 30, who live in towns with fewer than 10,000 residents.
- <sup>6</sup> The survey was carried out on a purposeful sample of 50 women aged between 35 and 56.
- <sup>7</sup> The selected purposeful study sample (60 people) consciously extended their knowledge in the area and was a demanding group of clients of beauty parlors. The study was carried out with the poll method, survey technique in June 2019.
- <sup>8</sup> The research project was carried out by a team of university employees: Professor Wiesław Alejziak, Ph.D., University of Physical Education in Kraków, Professor Wanda Pilch, Ph.D., University of Physical Education in Kraków, Małgorzata Kryczka, Ph.D., Stanisław Matusik, Ph.D., Anna Piotrowska, Ph.D., Jerzy Raciborski, Ph.D., Bartosz Szczechowicz, Ph.D., Grzegorz Kromka, M.Sc. Three more persons joined the project in its final stage: Noemi Kordas, B.Sc., Aleksandra Mależyna, M.Sc. and

Paulina Pastuszek-Głodzik, M.Sc. The report from the study is in the final stage of preparation.

- <sup>9</sup> Wieliczka, Bochnia, Myślenice, Tarnów, Oświęcim, Sucha Beskidzka, Biecz, Proszowice, Biecz, Rabka Zdrój, Stary Sącz, Nowy Sącz, Limanowa, Dąbrowa Tarnowska, Zakopane.

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