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Consumer Behaviour in Music Industry: Generations X and Y

Zachowania konsumentów na rynku muzycznym: pokolenie X i Y

Key words: marketing; consumer behaviour; music industry; Generation X; Generation Y; music marketing

Słowa kluczowe: marketing; zachowania konsumentów; rynek muzyczny; pokolenie X; pokolenie Y; marketing w branży muzycznej

JEL codes: D12; M30; M31; M39; Z11

Introduction

The first half of 2016 was the most successful time in the 21st century on the Polish music market. Market value reached the level of almost PLN 110 million with 23.18% growth in sale of psychical format (71.09% of the market) and 13.04% growth in digital format (28.91% of the market) – from which the most popular distribution channel is streaming, taking 78% of digital music market [ZPAV, 2016]. Digitalization of everyday life has huge impact on music industry and consumers – changing their expectations about communication and distribution – but also brought music piracy [Stafford 2010, pp. 112–113].

Economic transformation in Poland after 1989 created differences in consumer behaviour. Polish consumers born before 1983 are assigned to Generation X and those born after 1983 to Generation Y [Kuczamer-Kłopotowska,2016, p. 219].

The main aim of this paper is to describe differences in consumer behaviour of Polish Generation X and Y in music industry, in the field of following music artists and discovering new ones, buying CDs, attending music events and views on online music piracy.

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1. Differences between Generations X and Y

There are no clear guidelines for determining the dates of the interval which assigns consumers to the generations based on their age or date of birth [Gołąb-Andrzejak 2016, pp. 141–142]. For the purpose of this article, the author decided to use dates that are the most adapted to the Polish market – using the year 1983 as the border for those Generations.

Generation Y, also known as Millennials or Gen Y, was raised with open access to new technologies and with relative affluence which made them selective, impatient and confident but also concerned with environment – in the opposite to Generation X, also called Gen X, "Baby Busters" or "Post Boomers", which was raised in more challenging times but which gave them feeling that the most important things in the life are the ability to handle any circumstance and self-sufficiency [Kotler and Keller 2012, pp. 219–221].

From the point of view of consumers behaviour in music industry the most important difference between those two generations is the use of the Internet which effects not only sale of music or tickets but also might have impact on views of downloading music illegally. Generation Y more often uses new technologies and the Internet during every kind of activity than Generation X [Van den Bergh and Behrer 2011, p. 24]. Use of new technologies is more noticeable among Polish consumers due to specific time of the Polish People's Republic[1] which is when Generation X was born and raised. Those who were born as Generation Y were raised in realities of free market [Gołąb-Andrzejak 2016, p. 143].

2. Consumers' behaviour and views towards online music piracy

Digital piracy of music, also known as music piracy, has become a side effect of Internet development which gave people easy access to the music through peer-to-peer networks, websites and streaming sites. The anonymity of the Internet opened the road for online music piracy lowering the perception of illegality of such behavior and at first significantly decreased physical CD sales [Cesareo and Pastore 2014, p. 516].

Phenomenon of illegal distribution of music through the web and its impact on music sale has been already a topic for many academic researchers and let them come to many conclusions such as [Cesareo and Pastore 2014; Gopal and Sanders 2006; Rob and Waldfogel 2006]:

- music that is valued lower is likely more pirated than highly valued music;
- downloading generally displaces sales but sampling has a positive effect on purchasing intentions;

[1] The Polish People's Republic (*Polska Republika Ludowa – PRL*) – time in the history of Poland being under communist control between 1952 and 1990 which includes introducing martial law between 1981 and 1983.

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- downloaded music is valued much less than purchased music;
- new technologies (e.g. Spotify) offer opportunities for not expensive legal music access but some consumers still prefer illegal versions of music content even if legal, inexpensive versions are available;
- governments and music industry should increase customers' awareness of music piracy, its unethicality, illegality and negative consequences.

Some researchers [e.g. Michel 2006; Zentner 2006; Barker 2012; Adermon and Liang 2010] show that there is a strong negative correlation between illegal downloads and music sales. Others [e.g. Peitz and Waelbroeck 2006; Andersen and Frenz 2010; Aguiar and Martens 2016] suggest that the correlation between those two phenomena is more complicated and apart from reluctance to pay for music, willingness to listen music before buying it plays an important role and downloading music illegally cannot be a substitute for legal music.

Despite large number of researches on online music piracy there is lack of research and publications focused on Polish consumers and Polish music industry.

3. Research problems and methodology

The main aim of this paper is to analyze the consumers' behaviour of Polish Generations X and Y in music market and to find if there are differences caused mostly by having or not having open access to the Internet while growing up which – according to the author – can have influence mostly on following and discovering music artists, on committing online music piracy as well as on views on such activities.

In particular, the aim of this work is to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the ways of following music artist and discovering new ones for both generations?

RQ2: Are there differences in CDs purchasing behavior between Generations X and Y?

RQ3: How and how often do representatives of Generations X and Y attend music events?

RQ4: Does rising Generation Y with new technologies and the Internet have influence on their behaviour and views on online music piracy?

To verify research questions, the author implemented a qualitative study. It involved a group of 127 students (54.5%) born between 1983 and 1998 as a representation of Generation Y (although, what is important, most of them were born between 1995 and 1998 and that covers only 3 years out of 14 that are signed for this group; some authors describe them even as Generations Z or C but it is still not likely to use such a division) and group of 106 students' parents (45.5%) born between 1961 and 1982 as a representation of Generation X. The questionnaire consisted of a set of closed questions and was conducted in January 2017.

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4. Results

It is more likely for Generation Y than Generation X to follow artists and discover new ones using social media and streaming services (Table 1) which can be an effect of growing up much closer to new technologies.

Table 1. Ways of following artists and discovering new ones (data in %)

Web pages and services for following artists:	Generation X	Generation Y
Social services	39	**93**
Official artist's website	**55**	26
Streaming services	54	**82**
Websites for buying tickets	**16**	14
Ways of discovering new artists:	Generation X	Generation Y
Friends	66	**83**
Concerts/festival	**22**	17
TV music channels	**52**	48
Radio	**85**	65
TV talent show	**44**	24
Propositions from streaming services	30	**81**
Propositions from social services	20	**55**

Source: Author's own elaboration, n(Gen X)=106, n(Gen Y)=127.

While representatives of Generation Y most often use online social services to discover new artists – apart from radio that 65% of them had chosen – their parents who are representatives of Generation X are more likely to use traditional media such as TV (by watching music channels and talent shows) and radio. For both Generations, friends also play a big role in this area – recommendations from them are more important for representatives of Generation Y than their parents. Generation X likes to use the Internet to follow the artists they know usually by their official websites but also by streaming services, which they are not likely to use to discover new artists.

There are no differences in the frequency of buying CDs or for whom those CDs are bought – both generations are buying them usually for themselves and are doing it few times a year or less often (Gen X – 83%, Gen Y – 91%). They are also more likely to buy them in traditional stores but in those that are not particularly music shops (67% of Gen X and 72% of Gen Y) – the second liked place for Generation X is the traditional music shop (23%) and for Generation Y – online shop (15%). There are no big differences between those two Generations as for the things considered by them while buying CDs (Table 2).

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Table 2. Things considered while buying CDs (data in %)

	Generation X		Generation Y	
Things that are considered:	for themselves	as a gift	for themselves	as a gift
Packaging	30	72	31	66
Limited edition	50	65	37	58
Special offer / promotion	**82**	54	**69**	44
Friend's recommendation	61	70	**67**	64
Seller's recommendation	10	32	15	37
Format / media	57	57	49	60
Durability of CD	61	58	58	66
Quality of the recording	**88**	**80**	**80**	**81**
Request of the recipient	–	**93**	–	**88**
Versatility of the gift	–	**79**	–	**72**

Source: Author's own elaboration, n(Gen X)=106, n(Gen Y)=127.

When buying CDs for themselves both generations focus mostly on the quality of the recording and special offers but they also find friends' recommendations as an important thing while making buying decision. If a CD is purchased as a gift it is mostly for a close friend or a family member and both groups declare similar things as the most important ones, which are the wish of a person for whom the CD is bought, quality of recording and versatility of the gift. Just little bit less important for both generations is packaging and friends' recommendations – both slightly less for Generation Y than X but representatives of Gen Y are more focused on durability of the CD than Generation X.

Both generations usually attend music events few times a year or even less – 79% of Generation Y and 64% of Generation X go to concerts or festivals which are free of charge and 74% of Generation Y as well as 58% of Generation X when those events are payable. From this we can see that Generation X is less often attending music events than their kids which can be caused by more limited leisure time due to work and home duties. Researched representatives of Generation Y have stronger opinions on which things have more influence on their decision process of buying tickets for such events – it is not important for them if ticket is sold as an online or paper version but they give more attention to information such as localization of the event, duration time, number and popularity of the artist. Localization, duration time and popularity of the artist was also important for few representatives of Generation X but they represent less than half of their group.

Adding information such as the size of the record label that has a contract with an artist, percentage of profits or general profit for the artist from an event or who is the organizer of an event would have influence on buying the ticket for a small group of representatives from Generation X (between 9 and 28%) as well as from Generation Y (between 13 and 17%). For almost one third of researched representatives from Generation X, the biggest influence from such types of information

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would have the one about the organizer of the event. Adding such information usually does not cost anything but due to this research might gain more audience for music events.

Representatives of Generation Y are more often downloading music illegally than their parents (Table 3).

Table 3. Downloading music illegally (data in %)

How often do they download music illegally:	Generation X	Generation Y
Always	3.77	25.2
Sometimes	15.09	**31.5**
Occasionally	29.25	28.35
Never	**51.89**	14.96

Source: Author's own elaboration, n(Gen X)=106, n(Gen Y)=127.

While little bit more than half of representatives of Generation X never download music illegally, or admit to have done it, 85% of their kids admit to such actions. The gap between Generations is not seen only when it comes to occasional downloads which shows that Generation Y is more likely to commit online music piracy which matches their descriptions and also habits of using different new technologies to listen to music – usually smartphones, tablets and computers and less often mp3 players. The frequency on illegal downloads has an impact on general opinions about online music piracy (Table 4).

Table 4. General opinion about online music piracy (data in %)

Downloading music illegally:	Generation X	Generation Y
Is unethical	**51**	41
Has influence only on the artist from major record labels	16	11
Helps in discovering artist's work	65	**80**
Does not bother me	36	**54**
Has negative influence on album sales	61	65
Should be punished severely	**22**	7
Is caused by high prices of CDs	72	76
It is nothing bad or wrong	32	**39**
Has negative influence on artist's profits	**57**	50
Can help promote the artist	58	**71**
Can help in making decision about buying a CD/ticket	63	**81**

Source: Author's own elaboration, n(Gen X)=106, n(Gen Y)=127.

In most of the opinions we can see a difference in statements between both groups. Surveyed representatives of Generations X and Y agreed only about seeing the influence of online music piracy on the artist from major record labels as well as on independent

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artists and that it does have negative influence on album sales. They also agreed that such activities are caused by high prices of CDs.

Generation X, unlikely to their kids, sees downloading music illegally as unethical and thinks that it can have negative influence on artist's profits. Although slightly less than quarter of them think that such actions should be punished severely – only 9 out of 127 researched students can agree with their parents on that matter.

Generation Y, which downloads music illegally much more often than their parents, sees online music piracy more as a chance for the artist to promote their work and as a helpful tool in discovering artist's work and in decision making process of buying CDs or tickets for music events. More than half of this generation is not bothered by illegal ways of downloading music and almost 40% of them do not think that such actions are bad.

Conclusions

There are important differences in consumers' behaviour of Polish Generations X and Y on the music market – although a researched group of Generation Y was mostly focused on people born at the end of 90s – those are the representatives of this group who are starting to have their own money which they can distribute in any way they would like to. It is important for the music industry to see those differences and adapt their marketing activities not only to their older customers, but also to the youngest ones. As we can see from research results, Generation Y is more likely to use new technologies such as social media and streaming services but this way of living, usually being almost connected to the Internet, makes them see online music piracy as less unethical and with less negative influence. It also makes them commit such actions much more often. On the other hand – which is very positive for music industry – they still buy CDs and they attend music events more often than representatives of Generation X. For both Generations special offers or promotions, friend's recommendations and quality of the recording are important while buying CDs for themselves. Even if online music piracy is not an unethical and a bad thing for representatives of Generation Y, they still valued important material aspects of CDs, especially if they buy them as a gift, usually for a close friend or a family member.

While adapting marketing used by music businesses for people that are signed to Generation Y it is important not to forget about older generations, such as Generation X, which is also using new technologies. It might be an opportunity to customize online streaming services to the age of their users, since for representatives of Generation X, those are only the tools to follow the artists they know but not to discover a new ones.

According to the author, it will be very difficult, and maybe even impossible, to change the views on music online piracy in the group of Generation Y. Being able

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to access the Internet and use its free resources – legal or not – created an attitude which might be easier to develop instead of trying to change. The author agrees on others researchers' opinion that music industry should use new technologies to offer music in less expensive but still legal ways such as streaming.

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Consumer Behaviour in Music Industry: Generations X and Y

The first half of 2016 was the most successful time in the 21st century on the Polish music market which value reached the level of almost PLN 110 million. The main aim of this paper is to describe differences in consumer behaviour of representatives of Polish Generations X and Y in music industry. Despite growing market, digitalization of everyday life as well as music industry and large number of researches on online music piracy – there is still lack of research and publications on Polish consumers in music industry. For the purpose of this article, the author decided to use dates that are the most adapted to Polish market – taking the year 1983 as the border for researched Generations.

Zachowania konsumentów na rynku muzycznym: pokolenie X i Y

Pierwsza połowa 2016 r. była okresem największych sukcesów rynku muzycznego w Polsce na przestrzeni XXI w. Osiągnięto wówczas wartość rynku na poziomie niemal 110 mln zł. Głównym celem artykułu było opisanie różnic w zachowaniu konsumentów (przedstawiciela pokolenia X i Y) na rynku muzycznym. Pomimo rosnącego rynku, cyfryzacji zarówno codzienności, jak i branży muzycznej oraz wielu publikacji na temat internetowego piractwa muzycznego wciąż brakuje badań i publikacji na temat polskich konsumentów branży muzycznej. Na potrzeby tego artykułu autor zdecydował się przyjąć daty najbardziej przystosowane do polskiego rynku, ustalając 1983 r. jako graniczny dla badanych generacji.