

STANDARDISATION OF ADVERTISING AS A SYMPTOM OF ENTERPRISES' ADJUSTMENT TO THE GLOBALISATION CHALLENGES

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Abstract. Intensification of globalisation processes in the contemporary world entails consequences for all areas of the socio-economic life. This concerns also marketing management, including advertising, which is particularly sensitive to the developments occurring in the global environment. This article is also put in such a context, focusing on the subject matters of impact of globalisation on advertising activities of enterprises operating in the Polish market. Based on the results of empirical studies, there is presented a concept of advertising management taking into account the disparities existing between the two key strategies: standardisation and individualisation. Against this background, there is made an attempt to diagnose an impact of advertising globalisation on its efficacy and formation of enterprise's competitiveness.

Keywords: advertising, advertising management, globalisation, standardisation of advertising, competitiveness of enterprises.

Jel classification: M37

1. Introduction

Development of the processes of globalisation brings with it a number of consequences for all spheres of the contemporary world. Influenced by the on-going transformations, there are changed determinants of activities carried out by enterprises. Reorientation also comprises the paradigms related to marketing activities. In result thereof, there is shaped a new concept of perception of the phenomena of competition and creation of the marketing strategy. In the context of ubiquitous territorial expansion, originating from elimination of frontiers and from freedom of flow of products, capital as well as consumer's mobility, business orientations are changing. More and more often, when analysing individual markets, there is perceived intensification of competitive processes whose manifestation is clashing of the two different concepts of activities in foreign markets: one, based on standardisation of products and marketing activities, the global strategy and the strategy of individualisation whose substance is adaptation of all actions to the needs and preferences of the target market segments.

The objective of the article is to present changes occurring in the advertising market in Poland under the influence of globalisation and their consequences for the enterprises' market position. In his article, the author made use of both the available literature sources and statistics related to

the advertising market and results of own surveys carried out among foreign enterprises operating in the Polish market.

2. From export marketing to global marketing

In consequence of the on-going transformations in activities carried out by enterprises, there can be seen an evolution of the marketing concept. As its starting point there is adopted the basic export orientation where the enterprise is focused on sales of its products in a foreign market, including an independent choice of the direction of expansion and adjustment to it of the export strategy as well as the programme of marketing activities in that market (Duliniec 2009). It issues from the conviction of superiority of national standards and organisational culture over those taking place in foreign markets (Daniels *et al.* 2004; Czinkota, Ronkainen 1995). Hence, there is an occurring tendency to multiply national solutions in accordance with the so-called self-reference criterion, SRC, developed by J. A. Lee (1966).

At the moment of expanding business activity abroad and undertaking other, more complex forms of expansion there is developing the strategy of international marketing, taking into account an adequate adjustment thereof (including the product) to the specificity of a given market (Jeannet, Hennessey 1998). A substance of this concept is the need to learn and understand determinants of

the environment in a broad sense, formed by foreign markets. Knowledge in this respect determines the degree of adjustments (adaptation) of the marketing elements. F. Bradley (2005) pays attention to this, writing that we deal with identification of needs and demands of customers from different markets and cultures, delivery of goods, services, technologies and ideas ensuring the enterprise distinguishing marketing advantage, transfer of information on those goods and services as well as their international distribution and exchange with the use of one form of entry into foreign market or combination thereof.

There is closely connected with it the concept of multinational marketing, which is focused on seeking for specific elements characterising foreign markets (Albaum *et al.* 2005; Kotabe, Helzen 2000). Individual markets also demonstrate a far-reaching specificity resulting from divergence of economic, social and, first of all, cultural conditions. Particularly important this is in the case of markets whose administrative boundaries do not overlap the cultural ones (e.g. in many-culture countries). There is formed the concept of intercultural marketing then.

In the contemporary world, the more and more often noticeable phenomenon is diffusion or even unification of cultural variables. This provides the premise to single out the last of the marketing concepts, called, after T. Levitt, the global marketing (Russell, Lane 1996; Levitt 1986). This refers to activities of the largest global corporations operating in the global scale, though unnecessarily in the fully unified manner. They are oriented at development of the processes of marketing standardisation, assuming that purchasers of that product all over the world (or, rather, in all the markets where it is sold) are the same, i.e. have unified needs, expectations, preferences and behaviour patterns. This orientation is a symptom of the greatest advancement of the process of internationalisation. The objective of organisation is to shape the global, supranational approach to marketing in foreign markets (global standardisation of marketing) in order to make use of the existing similarities, not omitting, however, important local determinants (differences) (Keegan, Green 2000). In result of this evolution, there are formed conditions to undertake standardising actions at the level of all marketing instruments, including also global advertising.

3. Global advertising

The features of so defined global organisations are the five basic determinants: participation in the global market, possession of global products,

global location of activities, global competition actions and just the global marketing (Quelch, Hoff 1986; Yip 2004). Those enterprises are characterised, first of all, by a significantly greater level of flexibility (Bahrami 1996). In the area of advertising, this is expressed in determination of the relationships between the possibility of standardisation and the necessity to adapt the communication activities. Of the key importance is in this process consideration of the factors determining the process of communication, of which the first place is taken by dissimilarity of the cultural milieu of the message sender and receiver (Toyne, Walters 2004).

Related to advertising, culture must be defined as the distinguishing a given society learned mode of life, interpersonal contacts and reacting to the stimuli coming from the milieu (inclusive also of advertising stimuli) (Engel *et al.* 1986). It is comprised of a body of values for a given society, cumulated by the tradition, enlarged by the language, art, aesthetics, customs, morality, determining the system of reference for human behaviour and ways of perception of the world thereby (Hanna, Wozniak 2001). A consequence of those differences in this respect sticking between the message sender and receiver is, with the lack of adequate adaptation actions, absence of the level of communication, limiting efficiency of influence (lack of feedback). Barriers for standardisation may become the symbols and meaning of words, idioms as well as colloquialisms and slang, the religious and cultural symbols of signs, colours, specificity of purchase habits and life styles, etc. (Mikułowski-Pomorski 1999).

The possibility of standardisation is also limited by differences in the relation of the local communities to advertising (needs, preferences, expectations) – more rigorous and sublimed in wealthy societies and better developed economies (what affects, *inter alia*, a considerably higher level of consumer's ethnocentrism noticeable in the perception of advertising activities), more open in the communities functioning in the countries with a lower level of socio-economic development (significantly greater openness and higher level of acceptance of advertising messages of the international nature). One cannot either forget of differences in development, quality and freedom of access to the media infrastructure, nature of the media market and the level of advertising services in a given country as well as of the administrative and legal barriers (Nowacki 2009).

Therefore, the degree of standardisation of advertising activities depends on many factors, which Harvey (1993) divides into the three groups: the factors affecting an enterprises as sender of

advertisement (the variables characterising the product, market competition and the very organisation); the factors determining the process of creation and issuance of the advertising message (the infrastructural and legal variables) and the factors affecting consumers being receivers of advertising (the socio-cultural variables). And a prerequisite is susceptibility of the assortment offer to globalisation of advertising (Kotler 1997; Belch, Belch 1993).

Existence of the mentioned barriers entails the requirement to apply by the enterprises operating in foreign markets various levels of standardisation and individualisation of advertising. The research conducted in many countries shows that even large global concerns, guided in their market actions by the typical global orientation, only in an insignificant part (around 10 %) allow themselves for standardisation of advertising activities (expressed in issuance of the advertising messages identical with those issued in their mother country in the original language version or, possibly, with a precise translation into the local language). The majority (more than $\frac{3}{4}$) decides to adapt their advertising activities in the local markets, modifying messages as regards alteration of illustrations, contents, convention, heroes, ways of presentation, idiomatic differences in translations, while part (more than 12 %) works out their messages "from the very beginning", retaining only the *leitmotif* (Kanso, Nelson 2002).

4. The Polish advertising market as a research area

Development of the contemporary Polish advertising market dates back to the socio-economic turning-point of the turn of 1980s and the beginning, at that time, of transformation of the Polish economy into the free-market one. Following the expansion of foreign enterprises, already in the three first years there appeared in the Polish market representatives of the majority of foreign advertising networks. In 2009, there were operating in Poland, in the advertising industry, 3116 entities, of which 200 were advertising agencies of the full-service type, and among them there were 24 representations of the largest global advertising networks (Nowacki 2011).

This market's dynamics – besides the data concerning the number of entities – is also illustrated by the rate of growth of advertising expenditure. In 1992–2010, expenses on advertising, according to the price-list data, grew from 103 mln. USD to 5 643 mln. USD (hence, more than 50 times), their *per capita* amount increased from

2.68 USD to 147.51 USD (i.e. 55 times), and the share of advertising expenditure in GDP grew from 0.12 % to 1.59 % (therefore, more than 12 times) (Table 1). Particularly fruitful were for the advertising trade the years up to 2001 – the rate of growth of expenses exceeded 20 % annually. It was the period of formation of the competitive position by numerous foreign enterprises winning the Polish market. Their advertising expenditures were at that time of the investment nature (Nowacki, Struzycki 2002). In the first years of the 21st century, there took place slowdown of the dynamics of advertising expenditures (to a few – several per cent). A characteristic feature was at the time reduction of foreign enterprises' advertising activity and growth of activity of Polish advertisers. The year 2009 brought stagnation caused by the global economic crisis but already in 2010, there was observed positive dynamics of price-list spending of more or less 17 % (Omnicom Media Group 2011).

Table 1. Indices characterising the advertising market in Poland in 1992 –2010 (Source: own calculations based on data of firms monitoring advertising expenditures in media: Expert-Monitor, CR Media Consulting and Starlink, as well as on statistical data of the Central Statistical Office and the Ministry of Economy)

Year	Expenditure on advertising in mn USD	Dynamics (previous year = 100 %)	Expenditure on advertising as percent of GDP
1992	103	-	0.12 %
1993	291	283 %	0.34 %
1994	424	146 %	0.46 %
1995	564	133 %	0.48 %
1996	760	134 %	0.56 %
1997	955	129 %	0.67 %
1998	1381	145 %	0.88 %
1999	1741	126 %	1.06 %
2000	1967	113 %	1.20 %
2001	2419	123 %	1.32 %
2002	2540	105 %	1.34 %
2003	2820	111 %	1.35 %
2004	3130	111 %	1.42 %
2005	3224	103 %	1.47 %
2006	3559	110 %	1.55 %
2007	4200	118 %	1.54 %
2008	4871	116 %	1.65 %
2009	4823	99 %	1.55 %
2010	5643	117 %	1.59 %

Despite such high indices, we can still speak of a considerable underinvestment of the Polish advertising market. The key for its development is still

commitment of foreign subjects, which, in their expansion in the Polish market, often apply procedures of standardisation of advertising activities.

5. Research of the level of standardisation of advertising messages in the Polish market

The so outlined background of development of the advertising processes in the Polish market has become a premise for undertaking by the author of research on the level of standardisation of advertising activities undertaken by the foreign enterprises operating in Poland. From the point of view of analyses carried out in the Polish market, the research was of the nature of fully innovative, as this drift has yet not been touched in such a profile in research works. The objective of that research was to recognise the advertising processes taking place at enterprises and impact thereof on competitiveness against the background of Polish entities. The research covered 214 purposefully selected enterprises whose structure is presented in Table 2. Accomplishment of the research on such a sample allowed for retention of precision of findings with the accuracy of test results bearing the maximum statistical error at the level of (+/-) 7.9 % (the 90 % confidence level) (Churchill 2002).

Table 2. Structure of the enterprises surveyed (Source: own research 2008)

Specification	%
Size of enterprise	
Up to 9 persons	6.1
10–49 persons	19.6
50–249 persons	33.2
250 and more	41.1
Branch of activity	
Manufacture of foods	16.4
Manufacture of non-food products	37.9
Services	45.8
Year of commencement of activity in Poland	
Before 1991	14.5
Years 1991–1995	29.4
Years 1996–2000	35.0
After 2000	21.0
Number of foreign markets serviced	
Up to 2 countries	18.2
3–5 countries	22.9
6–10 countries	18.2
11–20 countries	10.7
More than 20 countries	29.9
Total	100.0

The condition critical for enterprises was carrying out advertising activities in the mass media. Respondents were managers responsible for carried out advertising activities.

For the purposes of research process, there was made the following hypothesis: the use of standardised advertising contributes to improvement of competitiveness of foreign companies carrying out their activities in the Polish market.

For the purpose of verification of this hypothesis, the author in his research touched the following research problems:

- identification of the concept (orientation) of activities in the Polish market;
- characteristics of advertising activities undertaken in Poland from the point of view of undertaken standardising procedures;
- identification of the premises of advertising standardisation;
- determination of impact of standardisation of advertising on formation of competitiveness and competitive advantage in the market.

Each of the research questions was presented in the questionnaire in the form of multiple-choice question, with the variants of answer based on nominal or ordinal scales, mostly of the disjunctive nature. In the analyses, apart from the statements illustrating distributions of replies for the body of enterprises surveyed, there was taken into account differentiation of the results having in mind the variable differentiating the entities being surveyed.

5.1. Level and scope of standardisation of advertising activities

Many foreign enterprises carrying out in Poland their advertising activities use support of international advertising agencies of the network nature. The surveys show that cooperation exclusively with such agencies is characteristic to 19.2 % of foreign entities operating in the Polish market. Almost half of them (43.5 %) make use of services of both representatives of international companies and typically local, Polish agencies and 37.4 % cooperate with only Polish agencies.

The consequence of maintaining contacts with network agencies is the occurring propensity to make use in that cooperation of standardised advertising procedures, noticeable both in the sphere of creation and issuance of messages. Of course, it does not mean that all actions are subject to unification. By reason of the specificity of the Polish market and purchasers' behaviour, the full standardisation seems to be a risky concept. Decided to introduce it are merely 17.8 % of foreign enterprises; 43.0 % apply the dual orientation, combining standardised elements with the actions subject to individualisation, and 39.3 % declare carrying out advertising actions based on a full adjustment to the Polish market's specificity, i.e. complete

individualisation. In the group of enterprises ranking themselves as adherents to the complete standardisation, there prevail the largest entities, which that way 'match' our market to their own scheme of global marketing. Among smaller organisations, there takes place a positive correlation between the volume and scale of activity (measured by the number of foreign markets serviced) and the interest in procedures of advertising individualisation.

Taking into account the so outlined concepts of carrying out advertising activities, it is proper to ask the question of the scale of globalisation processes in this area. Enterprises perceive a number of barriers that hamper advertising standardisation. The most important include differences between the Polish society and other communities (indicated by 33.2 % of companies), language barriers (26.6 % of indications), cultural and religious (22.9 %), differences in legal regulations concerning advertising (19.2 %) as well as dissimilarity of the level of advertising services (16.8 %) and freedom of access to the media infrastructure (15.0 %).

In result of existence of these limitations, it is estimated that among all issued in Poland by foreign enterprises advertising messages the share of standardised messages reaches 44.18 %, the rest (55.82 %) is comprised by individualised messages. Relationships between these two concepts of carrying out advertising activities are subject to quite clear fluctuations depending on the profile of enterprises surveyed. They differ from each other, among other things, by the size of enterprise – in case of the largest organisations, the share of standardised messages exceeds 50 %. However, relatively often this phenomenon takes place also among the least entities (46.54 %). It is also proper to pay attention to the difference issuing from the time-period of activities carried out in the Polish market. Propensity to standardise advertising is characteristic, first of all, for those enterprises, which came to Poland before 2000, while those, which undertook their expansion later, considerably more often applied the individualisation procedures. Individualisation is also a determinant of the entities, for which the Polish market is the single foreign market.

Taking into account the achieved results, one has to consider the possibilities to make use of advertising messages with a different degree of standardisation. The level is determined by the scope of adjustment actions, in result of which there appear the elements differentiating messages as compared with the ones issued in other markets and being treated in this context as benchmarks. In such a case, enterprises may choose from among

six configurations of messages: three may be considered as forms of standardised messages (with possible minor linguistic modifications in relation to the original version) and three as forms of individualised messages (with a large dose of intrusion into the original shape of the message).

The surveyed enterprises apply all forms in the Polish market, though frequency of their use can be different (Table 3).

Table 3. Share of various forms of advertising standardisation in activities of the surveyed foreign enterprises (Source: own research 2008)

Specification	%
Standardised advertising	
Advertising messages identical with the issued ones in the mother country in the original language version	10.82
Advertising messages identical with the issued ones in the mother country and precisely translated to the Polish language	15.87
Advertising messages identical with the issued ones in the mother country and translated into the Polish language taking into account idiomatic differences	17.49
Individualised advertising	
Advertising messages modified to the market's needs (alteration of the advertising copy, illustrations, scenery, story line, slogan, heroes, etc.)	17.34
Advertising messages worked out from the beginning in Poland with retention of the main topic	22.51
Advertising messages completely modified, including the main topic	15.97

The most common configuration consists in developing in Poland of the entire message based on the main idea of advertisement taken from another market (most often, from the parental) – the share of such messages reaches 22.51 %. Such a form of construction of messages is preferred by the companies whose scope of activities covers as maximum few local markets, and, at the same time, they appeared in Poland still before the economic transformation. A little bit more seldom there are used two other forms of individualisation of messages, namely those being created from the beginning, inclusive of the main advertising idea (the share at the level of 15.97 %) and modified by way of alteration of single elements, e.g. heroes, scenery, illustrations, slogan, etc. (17.34 %).

Standardised messages are considerably less popular. The frequency of their use and share grow together with the scope of modifications made. The share of messages where there is applied quite a great freedom as regards translation of the contents and slogans (this mainly concerns taking into

account idiomatic differences, which occur in the Polish language in a relatively big number as compared with the original languages) accounts for 17.49 %. Messages with the verbal translation account for less than 16 %, while advertisements presented in the original language versions – for almost 11 % (and this index is systematically growing). The share of the latter is definitely the highest in the group of enterprises present in our market for more than 15 years. These companies, as it seems, assume that they are so well known in the Polish market that even issuance of the original messages will not weaken their clarity and efficacy as they refer, as a rule, to the threads already commonly known to the target market segments.

The level of standardisation of individual elements of advertising activities concerns, to the greatest degree, the very contents of advertising messages, comprising, in a very broad sense, the illustration, plot and scenery. This is confirmed by 90.6 % of enterprises surveyed, of which 38.3 % indicate the complete standardisation and the remaining 52.3 % – the partial standardisation. Standardisation of the general concept (idea) of advertisement is declared by 38.3 % of companies and the further 52.3 % indicate a partial transposition thereof to the Polish market. A lower number of entities (29.4 %) carry out the full standardisation of the procedures of selection of advertising media. As regards the overall shape of the entire advertising campaign, the complete globalisation is applied by 25.7 % of firms, while the partial one – 60.3 %. More seldom the full standardisation concerns the formulation of advertising slogans (due to linguistic differences) as well as determination of the schedule and frequency of the campaign (as they are the derivative of development of the competitive situation in individual markets) – respectively 22.9 % and 21.5 %. The least scope of standardisation concerns the appearing in spots characters and the background music – 18.2 % and 15.4 %. In the overwhelming majority of cases, they are unanimously adjusted to recipients' preferences, in result of which there appear local heroes and musical compositions known only in a given country (more than 1/3 of firms declare the full individualisation in this activity).

5.2. Standardisation of advertising and company's competitiveness

Against the background of presented deliberations concerning the use of advertising standardisation in foreign enterprises' activities in the Polish market, there is a question of the impact of these processes on the organisation's market position and competitiveness.

Evaluating this phenomenon, the surveyed foreign companies in 61.7 % declare their conviction that standardisation contributes to increasing competitiveness (of which 22.0 % express their conviction definitely). Only 4.7 % have a different opinion, paying attention to a greater efficacy of the messages referring to individualised, therefore better adjusted to the expectations of Polish customers, messages. The remaining 33.6 % are not able to provide their unanimous opinion on this matter (Table 4).

Table 4. Does the use of standardised advertising contribute to growth of company's competitiveness? (Source: own research 2008)

Specification	%
Definitely not	1.4
Rather not	3.3
Difficult to say	33.6
Rather yes	39.7
Definitely yes	22.0

These conclusions are also confirmed by Polish entrepreneurs' utterances, looking at the phenomenon of advertising standardisation through the prism of threats entailed in them to their own market existence.

6. Conclusions

The contents presented in the paper present the subject matters of advertising standardisation in the Polish market, young from the point of view of the tradition of the free-market economy functioning and up-to-date advertising activities. Nevertheless, this is the market with a high dynamics of growth, being an area of expansion of many foreign enterprises. Therefore, the phenomenon in question is of a great importance for shaping competitive relationships. Considering competitiveness according to the concept of Stankiewicz (2005) as ability to an efficient achievement of goals in the market competition, or, pursuant to the concept of Caudredo-Roura (Moroz 2003; Nowacki 2010) as winning and achieving benefits in the market with a growing intensity of competition (and, no doubt, with such one we deal in Poland), one can clearly see that it is owing to application of the proved, standardised concepts of carrying out advertising activities foreign enterprises win the position of leaders in the market. They make use of their experience and know-how transferred to Poland from other markets, outstripping this way Polish companies. This is confirmed by rankings of the market shares in many product categories.

Not continuing this train of the thought and focusing on the presented research findings, it is proper to emphasise high efficacy of their advertising activities, being a result of prudent combination of the standardising procedures with the activities of adjustment to the Polish consumers' specificity. In this context, the research findings confirm the earlier made hypothesis speaking of a positive influence of advertising standardisation on formation of competitiveness of foreign enterprises operating in the Polish market.

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