

Economics and Business Review

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Identifying the portrayal of 50+ consumers in Polish print advertising¹

Sylwia Badowska², Anna Rogala²

Abstract: This article raises an issue of consumers at the age of 50+. The role of this market segment is constantly growing in Poland, but despite of this, it is still hard to identify this wide consumer group. Therefore, the aim of the paper is to identify the portrayal of older people (50+) in Polish print advertising. Amongst over-fifty consumers, the press media are still the key communication channel for spreading marketing recommendations to this consumer group. Content analysis was employed to define the characteristics of these consumers. The research demonstrates that firstly, the older generation is depicted mostly marginally, secondly, women are over-represented, and thirdly, only a few product categories portray the older models at all. Two schemes ‚brand ambassador‘ or/and ‚representative of a consumer target group‘ were used to reflect the portrayals of this market group. In spite of the common opinion, that the market segment of people of 50+ is uniform, the findings suggest that older consumers are not homogeneous. A new age segmentation for the elderly has been proposed. The older market segment is sharply divided into two groups (‚mature‘ and ‚elderly‘). The age of 60 is a strong demarcation line here. The portrayal of ‚mature‘ consumers at the age of 50–59 covers 50% of all the engaged older consumers in print adverts. Over 10 different portrayal models have been found in the market communications analyzed. The contemporary ‚mature‘ ones differ substantially from stereotypical models reserved for elderly consumers. Over 7 different models, mostly still ‚young bodies and souls‘, are adapted to express the portrayal of this target group. However, for both the elderly ‚young‘ and ‚mature‘ (60+) sub-group the models are much more predictable and traditional. The segment of 80+ does not exist at all in print adverts. Generally, the portrayal of 50+ is more complicated and diverse than it is commonly believed in practice.

Keywords: consumer 50+, elderly, older consumer, consumer portrayal, print advertising.

JEL codes: D12, M37, J14.

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Introduction

Aging, as a universal process which affects mostly all developed societies worldwide, is becoming a new peremptory challenge nowadays. Marketing has continued to focus primarily on the younger generation and has seldom noticed the demands of the elderly [Veghova 2011: 1001]. However the number of older people will rapidly increase to 2 billion by 2050 [WHO 2015]. For example, in the US the segment of 85 and older are now the fastest growing segment of population [US Bureau of the Census 2011] and in the UK by 2030 16 million people will be over 65 [ONS 2000]. As the data show, older consumers will become a mainstream market in most well-developed countries and this problem is strongly visible in Poland.

Referring to the Polish market, according to CSOP [2014b], there were 38,5 million people in Poland in 2013 and 5,7 million of them were aged 65+. The group of 65+ covered 15% of Polish population. Based on UN data [2015], Polish society will be the 10th-oldest society worldwide soon. By 2050 the number will increase by another 5,4 million and the group of people aged 65+ is predicted to cover 33% of Polish population. Thus one to three people in Poland will be aged 65+ at that time.

There is obviously a constant tendency observed from the 1990s in demographic analyses of the Polish population that the number of people at post-productive age systematically grows with the number of people and that pre-productive age decreases at the same time. The percentage of people in these two groups in the total population aligned in 2013–2015. It is predicted that the tendency of a growing population of people at post-productive age with a decreasing number of people at the pre-productive age will continue and the disproportion between these two groups will be greater each following year [CSOP 2014b]. Such demographic changes in the Polish population result from people living longer and a decreasing number of births [CSOP 2014a]. It is clear that the Polish population is aging and this tendency will continue through the next decades.

The portrait of the elderly consumers is not clear today and describing who is old seems to be imperfect. The problem appears at the beginning when defining the demographic lower limit of the age of these consumers and various sources indicate different age group ranges [Badowska, Zamojska, and Rogala 2015]. Contrary to the common opinion, senility does not seem homogeneous, and at least three demographic cohorts are observed: 55–64 for ‘young old’ elderly, 65–74 for ‘mature’ elderly and 75 and over for ‘old old’ ones finally [Grey Power 1999; Ahmad 2002]. Elderly consumers differ by family status, marital status, ethnicity, geography, education and social class, just like consumers representing other market segments [Doka 1992] and as well as they vary in spending, social commitments and lifestyles [Euromonitor 2006].

Contrary to common opinion, the elderly live longer, are healthier, more likely to develop new interests and lead a more active life. Nowadays consumers 50+ use the internet, go on holiday and eat in restaurants more often than people of the same age in 2000 [Żurawski 2015]. Elders use their spare time in more active ways than they used to [Bondos 2013] and for this consumer group using new high tech product (f.e smart phones) is not untypical [Badowska 2016]. It is easily observed in the great popularity of Third Age Universities, there are around 350 of them with around one hundred thousand students in Poland already [Koziełski 2012].

Whilst an abundance of literature pertaining to older consumers can be found, the vast majority is either descriptive or based on US consumers, with limited evidence that it can be generalized internationally [Simcock and Sudbury 2006]. Likewise the lacuna of the modern portrayal of older people presenting the character of these consumers in Central and Eastern Europe exists in literature. Thus, this paper explores the models of older people used in contemporary marketing communication and exposes their portrayal basing on Polish experience. The authors decided to study the elderly portrayals employed in print advertising. The reason for the selection the source is based on the fact that amongst over-fifty consumers after television, press media are still the key communication channel for spreading marketing recommendations to this consumer group [IR Center 2015].

To achieve the aim of the paper, is it divided into four sections. The first section is devoted to a literature review presenting the portrayal of older consumers in marketing communication. The second one describes the empirical methodology and data description. The third section presents the research results obtained and finally, the papers closes discussion and conclusions.

1. Literature review: the portrayal of older consumers in marketing communication

There is a great challenge ahead of marketers to understand older consumers and find an effective way to communicate with them. A well-planned and executed integrated marketing communication affects the long-term, loyal relationship between a brand and consumers [Rydel 2001]. A benefit that is worth pursuing. Moreover, communication should be seen not only as actions taken but also as those neglected [Szlis 2011].

In Poland marketers devoted their attention mostly to younger consumers at the age of 15–49 considering them a commercial target group [Żurawski 2015]. Nielsen Media Research reports that focusing only on consumers between the ages of 18–49 is a mistake in not noticing or ignoring the fact that a number of the elderly systematically grows and their life style changes [Diaz

2014]. Ipsos Marketing studies show that the people at the age of 59+ are the group, which watches more television than any other group. It is also TV that is the most popular media for the elderly, followed by radio, press and the internet. As for reliability of media, the press is the most trustworthy regarding advertisements and articles and that applies to 55+ adults and goes along with product placement on TV programmes to 45–55 adults [IR Center 2015]. Only recently the public television broadcaster TVP S.A. and press publishers expanded the maximum age to 59.

Many researchers indicate that consumers of 50+ are being ignored in advertisement – both as the audience and the portrayed models. In the US, only 10% of TV advertisement is targeted at older people, despite the fact that consumers of 50+ spend as much money as other consumer groups all together [Solomon 2006]. It is similar with radio advertisement. Furthermore in the US, only 10% of advertising expenditure is geared to people 45+ and in the UK most of radio advertisement is targeted at people under 30 even though older people listen to the radio more than any other group [Carrigan and Szmigin 2000a]. According to Carrigan and Szmigin [2000b] the percentage of 50+ models appearing in the UK mainstream publications such as *«Daily Mail»* and *«Daily Telegraph»* advertisements was well below the percentage of 50+ adults in the UK population. At the same time those publications have 49% of the 50+ adult readership.

Elderly consumers are being ignored as an audience and underrepresented in advertising but they also suffer from being associated with a very narrow variety of products. It is generally believed that advertisements of health and financial products need the elderly to be portrayed in them but not if advertisement refers to clothes, cars, jewellery or cosmetics [Carrigan and Szmigin 2000b].

However, a number of studies indicate that there is a lack of models in advertising for the elderly, someone that they can relate to. In advertising the popularized portrait of older people is highly subjective and based on stereotypes. Portraits of the elderly in advertisements are based on stereotypical assumptions with which the older generation does not identify [Carrigan and Szmigin 2000a]. However, it can lead to worse scenarios. The research conducted in the US revealed that respondents of the age of 55–64 reported not only enjoying advertisements less but also being offended by them more often, compared to respondents at the age of 18–34 [Shavitt, Lowery, and Haefner 1998]. Another study reveals that 31% of 55+ adults claim to avoid buying products because their advertisements improperly depict the stereotype of older or younger people [Moschic 1994]. Furthermore, according to research carried out by Speer [1993] about 75% of older consumers were dissatisfied with the efforts marketing makes when targeting them. It does not reflect the fact that the new older generations are very different from those of decades ago [Badowska and Rogala 2015]. The elderly are considered to be passive and poorer than young-

er people [Żurawski 2015], often portrayed as ill and with no passion for life [Bondos 2013]. Basing on the stereotypes of advertising, they underline their sickness, infirmity, lack of self-sufficiency and helplessness in everyday living [Omar, Tjandra, and Ensor 2014]. As established by Ahmad [2002], 65% of people at the age of 55–64 feel that advertisements do not reflect their life and who they wish to be today and also how they want to be perceived. Nowadays, older people live longer, are healthier and willing to develop new interests and live active lives. Despite what is believed, they do not fear new technologies and innovative products so much [Badowska, Zamojska, and Rogala 2015]. They feel younger and want to be treated as such. They do not want to be identified with their chronological age [Ahmed 2002], nor be treated or seen as ill, infirm and redundant in society. They do not want to be reminded of getting older and may even be insulted when they find they are on the mailing list of a magazine targeted at the elderly people [Perry and Wolburg 2011].

Not referring to stereotypes but focusing on benefits may be more useful in marketing communication with elderly consumers. However the underlying benefits that elder consumers gain from purchasing products should appeal to their specific needs, e.g. the promise of leading an active and independent life as elders often express fear of having to rely on others for everyday tasks [Goodman 2013]. Also, contrary to the common belief, internet advertising appears to be a promising communication channel for targeting elderly consumers [Lewis and Reiley 2014]. According to Goodrich's [2013] study results, online banner advertisement requiring schema-based processing induced greater attention and purchase intention for older participants than younger participants.

Using stereotypes when communicating with elders may have one more unwanted repercussions as it is believed that consistently exposing older consumers to stereotypical images of themselves may lead to self-fulfilling prophecy. That would result in elderly consumers eventually identifying with and feeling like those elders portrayed in advertisements: needy and vulnerably [Sherrington 2015]. Those older people who are withdrawn and with low self-esteem will not be deemed as attractive as consumers as those who are more confident and open to try new things.

There is a huge need to revise stereotypical assumptions concerning older people. When facing the important demographic trend of a globally ageing population the elderly consumer segment should not be omitted from marketing. Bondos [2013] advises that business should not deny or ignore the ageing population anymore and should answer the urgent question as to who elderly people today are and how to communicate with them.

Therefore, it is an important task for marketing to have more extensive knowledge concerning older consumers groups, their values, attitudes, life styles and most importantly – to develop an effective, integrated marketing communication with this new <older> generation.

2. Empirical methodology and data description

The aim of the study is to identify a portrayal of 'mature' and elderly people in advertising in Poland. The idea of the study is to explore a physical and psychological portrayal of the people of 50 and over presented in contemporary marketing. The study sets out to verify the advertisements and analyze the appearance and roles of 50+ people reflected in print advertising. Amongst over-fifty consumers, press media – after television – are still the key communication channel for spreading marketing recommendations to this consumer group [IR Center 2015].

The objects of the study are the following:

- establishing a quantitative structure of advertisements with elderly models,
- identifying the age and gender structures of the elderly models,
- defining the product categories associated with older people,
- establishing the sorts of communication schemes used to depict the elderly,
- identifying and exploring the portrayals of the elderly.

The results help determine and define the characteristics of the market segments 50+.

The study is partly based on the research model developed and used by Simcock and Sudbury [2006] to portray older models (50+) in the UK prime-time television advertising. The content analysis is employed to define the characteristics of these consumers and build models of older consumers in Polish print advertising. Following Simcock and Sudbury, the content analysis technique is a scientific, objective, systematic, quantitative, and general description of communications content [Kassarijan 1977: 10]. Firstly, the model is adjusted to the age of 50 or over by Simcock and Sudbury using the following criteria:

- the chronological age of presented elderly models presented in the advertisements was known by the authors (as in the case of a celebrity endorser, well-known actors or other people where the age was mentioned),
- there was a specific reference to age in the advertisement,
- the physical appearance of the model (greying/thinning hair, wrinkles, etc.) indicated the age of 50 or over.

Secondly, the criteria of appearance, role and activity or behaviour are used to build different models reflected in advertising. A judgement of the presented people of 50+ has been conducted by the authors.

The study was carried out between December 2015/January 2016. Seven different print magazines, with high readership, based on the results of the 'Polish Readership Survey' in 2015, were selected to conduct the research. The authors employ Polish print magazines which constitute a significant percentage of over-fifty readers (readers of 50+ constitute at least 20% of all magazine readers). The authors analyze the following titles, of which a total of 31 issues were published between March and December 2015, including: weekly opinion (premier news) magazines: *Newsweek* (the Polish edition – 5 issues), *Polityka*

(5 issues), luxury magazines: *Pani* (4 issues), *Zwierciadło* (4 issues) and advisory magazines: *Claudia* (3 issues), *Przyjaciółka* (5 issues) and one lifestyle magazine *Viva* (5 issues).

3. Results

The results are presented in the following order: firstly, the quantitative structure of advertisements with elderly models, secondly, their age and gender structures, thirdly product categories associated with the older people, the next, various kinds of communication schemes used to depict the elderly in advertisements and finally, the elderly portrayals.

Referring to the quantitative structure of advertisements, in total 1,228 advertisements placed in all the 31 issues of the print magazines, which are taken into account are reviewed, and the average of 39.6 advertisements are used in each issue (these numbers do not count product publicity and recommendations). However, merely 44 of these advertisements apply to the models of the over-fifties representing only 3% of all the advertisements in these magazines. The advertisements using models of people over-fifty constitute not more than 1–2 per issue; there are no such advertisements in 8 issues of the magazines reviewed but on the other hand, the model of the consumers 50+ appears seven times in another.

Thus, a total of 32 different ads advertisements identified, where models of people of 50 and over are presented. For the purpose of further analysis, the number should have been reduced. In 4 cases, the brand ambassadors, who are involved into brand/product campaigns, are younger than the target group; e.g., Bilenda brand ambassador for products for 50+ is the Polish actress Elizabeth Olszówka aged 45, Aimee Mullins, brand ambassador for L’Oreal, is 40 (product ambassador for target group of 40+, 50+, 60+) and one person at the age of 49 is employed in the Artherelix campaign. Therefore, only 29 posted advertisements, presenting the models of people of 50 and over, are selected and taken into further consideration.

Concerning the age and gender structures, amongst the various models of older people, ‘mature’ people (at 50–59) accounted for 50% of advertisements, and for the ‘elderly’ (at the age 60–69 and 70+) 31% and 19% respectively. Amidst all the 36 employed people in the advertisements analyzed, women constitute the majority (67%) and were over-representative for these demographic cohorts. The reason is the type of magazines selected, where once aimed at female constitute 1:2.

Referring to the product categories associated with older people, the advertisement for a dietary supplement ‘Promensil’ is edited six times, and the following advertisements: Vichy face cream brand, Janda face cream, L’Oreal foundation, L’Oreal face oil, dietary supplement ‘Artherelix’, Nestle mineral

water are edited twice whereas, and other advertisements are edited only once in all the issues of print magazines reviewed. It appeared that a very limited number of products are considered suitable in which older people are targeted. Based on the outcomes, mostly people of the 50+ are employed to advertise cosmetics brands/products (31% – 9 advertisements and only female characters were used), health and medicine (17% – 5 ads) and social campaigns (10.3% – 3 ads).

Concerning the kinds of communication schemes used to depict the elderly, two of them are used: the first one, the brand or product ambassador and the second, the model of ‘the representative of the target consumer group’. 36 people over-fifty are presented in print advertisements – many people appearing in several advertisements at once, but also the same person occurred in 3 different advertisements at the same time. 12 of these people are brand/product ambassadors (the same person in 2 different campaigns), whilst 23 act as representatives of the target consumer group. Additionally, women occur as an ambassador in 10 different advertisements (1 person in 3 different), and 17 times as representatives of the consumer group. Men appear as brand/product ambassadors in 4 different advertisements, whilst they act as representatives of the consumer group in 8 different advertisements.

Finally, we managed to identify the elderly portrayals. The results of the analysis demonstrate 11 different models of people of 50 and over used in print advertising (presented according to the frequency of appearance):

- **Family pensioner** – elderly people at the age of 60+, mostly women, appearance corresponding to their chronological age, neat and characterized by a natural or modest elegance; they are family people, sharing and protecting, co-experiencing emotions with their close social surroundings and focused on relationships with their loved ones; the older model used predominantly in print advertising (8 times); representatives of the target consumer group were employed to show this older model (seniors surrounded by their families in the Kidla brand product campaign, a mother-senior in the campaigns for Nestle water and Espumisan, the elderly couples in Artherelix campaign);
- **Active** – women or men, with a natural but stylish appearance, corresponding to their chronological age between 50–59; they represent dynamic, intelligent people with a passion for life endowed with self-confidence; the model was used 5 times and represented mainly by brand/product ambassadors (e.g. Krzysztof Hołowczyc in the Avon campaign, Olga Kozierowska in the show ‘You can do more than you think you can...’ prepared with Multikino and a ‘mature’ man in the Artherelix campaign);
- **Fully-satisfied** – a woman aged 50–59, although the appearance seems younger than her chronological age, natural yet exceptionally neat, she is characterized by modesty, directness, being relaxed, self-confident, with a sense of satisfaction; this older model was employed 5 times and expressed by the use of the representatives of the consumer target group (women in the

following campaigns: Dove, Vichy products, dietary supplements: Promensil, Blue Berry Plus, Hair Volume and Artherelix);

- **Professional** – only men at age of 50–69 from both age groups of ‘mature’ and ‘young’ elderly people, their appearance corresponding to their age, handsome, weatherbeaten, wearing a suit or official outfit, characterized by intelligence, high mental activity, professionalism and reliability; the model was used 4 times and the representatives of the target group of consumers reflected this older model and show the character of these personalities (men in the campaigns for Polityka Insight, BMW, Mitsubishi Electric, BGK);
- **Elegant maturity** – a person from both sex groups, well-groomed, stylish, elegant, often corresponding to their chronological age, intelligent, confident, balanced, intriguing and inspiring personality; belonging to the ‘mature’ (50–59) and ‘young elderly’ (60–69) gatherings; mostly brand/product ambassadors were employed to demonstrate this older model, which was used 4 times in print advertisements (an actor and actresses: Krystyna Janda in her brand cosmetics campaign, Kristin Scott Thomas in the campaign cosmetics brand line Lierac Paris and Kevin Spacey in the campaign for BZ WBK);
- **Cool** – it is a mature woman or man, ageless (i.e. it is difficult to determine their actual age), well groomed and natural-looking, characterized by intelligence, commitment, lack of pretension; joyful and witty, direct personality with a distance to themselves; this older model was employed twice in print advertising and represented by the 50–59 year old brand ambassadors (Dorota Wellman in advertising campaign for TVP & Lidl and Dove and Cezary Pazury for Empik campaign);
- **Romantic femininity** – a feminine model of an ageless person probably between 50–59, extremely neat and tidy, stylish with a highly attractive beauty; these women are characterized by romanticism, shyness, subtlety; the older model was employed twice using brand ambassadors (L’Oreal campaigns with Andie McDowell and Tatiana Patitz);
- **Intellectual** – a person of either sex, presented mostly as having natural appearance clearly corresponding to their chronological age, at the age of 65 and over, characterized by intelligence, inquisitiveness, reliability, passion for life; the model was used twice for media and social awareness campaigns, in both the employed ambassadors (the Polish journalist Janina Paradowska for TOK FM campaign and the Polish actor Jerzy Stur in the social campaign ‘Cancer pain-free’);
- **Casual naturalists** – a woman aged 70+, appearance corresponding to their chronological age, with gray hair, casual dress, unpretentious, still active ‘body and soul’, smiling and enjoying her life; a woman representing the target consumer group was used to present the older model, which was used twice (an old woman dancing in the social campaign ‘Europe for Citizens’);

- **Mother-friend** – a woman at the age of 50–59, natural but well-groomed, with a slightly younger look than her chronological age, characterized by confidence, relational, understanding and empathetic, in-direct relationship with adult children; the older model was mirrored by a woman belonging to the target consumer group and used only once (a mother and daughter in the Lirene brand cosmetics campaign);
- **Poor old age** – a woman aged 70+, who looks like people older than their chronological age, with gray hair, casual outfit, albeit tired with a natural face stamped with the stigma of long life hardships, a woman is characterized by serenity, but also concern about their fate; the older model was employed only once (an aged woman in the social campaign ‘Noble parcel’);

In exploring the portrayal of people of 50 and over in print magazines, it should be noted that this portrayal is not one-dimensional. We notice that the analyzed population consists of at least two different age segments and the age of 60 is a strong demarcation line. We call the first group ‘mature consumers’ at the age of 50–59, and the second ‘elderly ones’ at the age of 60+ with sub-segments of the ‘young elderly’ at the age of 60–69 and ‘mature elderly’ at the age of 70 and over.

The first group of the ‘mature’ people at the age of 50–59 is the most frequently presented group, in comparison to the remaining age groups. Their representatives show a diverse spectrum of the seven older models (number of models employed in this group), from ‘active’ (5), ‘fully-satisfied’ (4), through ‘cool’ (2), ‘professional’ (2), ‘elegant’ (2) and ‘romantic’ (2) to ‘mother-friendly’ (1) types. These models are still ‘young bodies and souls’, often ageless, looking younger than their chronological age, sharing different personalities, traits and values. It is essential that both female and male profiles can be observed in this group. These models are still enjoying their life, inspiring their active generation, rich in experience and open to the future. These older models seem to appear colourful, varied and appealing, albeit in the light of the Polish population of 50–59 they seem to look slightly idealized, being more aspirational than is common in real society. The result of the idealized portrayal of this group is influenced primarily by a high number of brand ambassadors used for advertising the products or brands. Generally, brand ambassadors are ‘better’ than the rest of the society, mostly prettier, smarter, richer and with more successes in their life portfolio.

The second ‘elderly’ segment includes two demographic sub-cohorts: the first one (60–69) entitled the ‘young elderly’ and the second (70 and over) denominated ‘mature elderly’. The sub-cohort of people at the age of 60–69 is not so embellished with a variety of models as the preceding one. The following life models: mostly ‘family pensioners’ (6), some ‘professionals’ (2), to seldom ‘elegant maturity’ (1), ‘intellectual’ (1) and ‘fully-satisfied’ (1) can be perceived. These models mostly try to share their life experiences with younger generations and play opinion makers’ roles. Generally, they are presented by ‘the

representatives of target consumer group, and female models seems to appear more frequently in this consumer sub-segment.

The sub-cohort of people of 70 and over ('mature elderly') is demonstrated as 'ripe old age'. It consists of four models: 'casual naturalist' (2), 'family pensioner' (2), 'poor old age' (1) and 'intellectual' (1). Only women reflect the old age presenting a difficult life of the elderly, who were affected by fate at the end of their lives. Importantly, most of those people depicted are shown as the only ones with nobody around them. This suggests a deep loneliness of these elderly people and identifies the social emptiness of people who turn 70, which doesn't seem to be necessarily true in reality.

4. Discussion and conclusions

Taking into account the obtained results, it should be emphasized that models of 'mature' and elderly people are used only marginally in Polish print advertisements. Only 3% of the advertisements reviewed reflected models of people of 50 and over. The analysis draws several important conclusions.

Firstly, people 50+ were mostly suitable to advertise cosmetics, health and medicine; these industries seek to contact these older models widely. For cosmetics, the older model was evidently dominated by the portrayal of women, who still want to keep escaping youth. For health and medicines, people over-fifty are more reliable for the elderly consumer and easily reflect the needs to repair failing health that affects people in the second half of life. Thus, the model of 50+ is used primarily to sell products to improve the quality of life.

Secondly, the model of 'mature' people at the age of 50–59 constitutes half of the advertisements analyzed. Advertising messages in which, the older models are involved, present a wide spectrum of seven different types of personalities reflecting closely the real character of this segment. In general, it should be emphasized that the portrayal of consumers of 50–59 is extremely positive. The 'mature' are portrayed as physically active people fulfilled in their life, pursuing their life goals and, still active consumers, improving their daily existence, happy and proud of who they are. But the portrayal is slightly over-represented in the number of models and the roles played than in fact. Advertisement most often idealizes individuals and this trend is also observed for the mature people. On the other hand, the older models from the elderly groups: of 60–69 and 70+ are significantly less used in communication with the market. In advertising, these people, who are already considered as the elderly and whose number of birth years are much more widely spread than the mature generation, are deprived of the variety of models and are limited to just six. Basing on the messages from print advertising, the generation of people over-sixty is not as dynamic as the preceding one. The 'young' and 'mature elderly' are

portrayed mainly as muted, family, relational, enjoying nature, senility struggling to maintain health and energy, rarely physically active, sometimes tired of the hardships of a long life. Female portrayal dominates in this market segment. For this generation, quite traditional and predictable models are to be seen in print advertising. In the portrayal painted by the advertising brush, there is a visible generation gap. The total lack of people above 80 is observed. This generation is completely unseen although it still exists on the market and it is the fastest growing US consumer group.

Thirdly, we have managed to isolate the age segments of the over-fifty market, which corresponds largely to the present image of the Polish society, but which is so far mostly treated as being single. Basing on the research results, the older segments now ('mature' and 'elderly') have different age ranges than those employed so far in literature. It was observed that these age ranges have been shifting for at least five years and are changing the age concept of the older group classification. Especially, the group of 50–59, which is partly classified so far as 'young old', now should not be recognized like that at all, because the depicted portrayal expresses more young and active characters than have been used so far for this group. The analyzed picture of the consumers of 50–59 investigated suggests that they are just mature people in their prime, highly active and experienced, enjoying their everyday life. Thus far, all these features have been typically exclusive for the generation of forty years old, but today they appear to be more common for a new generation of 50–59, as well. The same situation exists for the group of people of 60–69 and 70+. At the beginning of the twenty first century, they were recognized partly as 'mature old people' and 'old old ones', but now they fit more appropriately into the character of 'young old' and 'mature old' respectively.

Finally, it is worth noting that, in practice, putting the correct portrayal of the population in advertising is a suitable way to pass the right message to the right audience. Consumers, who receive the advertising message, can identify with it or reject it. In many advertising messages, the models employed are not always close to their audience and accepted by the target groups. Thus, it may result in an inappropriate reception of the products by the consumers to whom they are targeted. This is also true for the 'mature' and 'elderly' segments. The marginal usage of the older models in advertising could mean that some products may not be seen by the segment 50+, not even mentioning the more sensitive sub-segment 60+. Many of these customers may not realize that the message is just for them, because simply there is lack of representatives of their generation. Furthermore, as the data show, print advertising is still the most important recommendation source for 50+. Very different reasons for the rare employment of the older models in advertising can be identified. E.g., the young age dominates in marketing departments and most adolescent marketers seem to be unfamiliar with older generations. The next cause is the deficiency of people of 50+ in marketing who would better understand what the

generation wants and feel and how it would like to be depicted. Similarly, the advertisers' reluctance to present 'old age' exists and there is still a strong belief that gray hair is unattractive and not supportive of the product sale. Despite the above, the mega-trend of population ageing is not being reversed. So, it is worth verifying these assumptions, which will be the subject of the authors' further study in future.

Summing up, the literature and research results suggest that the observed demographic changes will significantly mean the increase of the number consumers in the segment of 50+ in Poland as well as in other well-developed countries. Over the next 20 years, consumers of over-fifty will start to play a key role as the mainstream consumer market. For today's consumers 50+ print advertising is the most important source of obtaining marketing information. In advertising, the employ of models is a suitable tool to help consumers find a proper marketing message and offer a dedicated message directly to them. However, in analyzing print advertisements, it can be noticed that models of 50+ are rarely used in communication (only in 3% of advertisements). The most common group of people engaged in advertising products or brands are 'mature' people of the age of 50–59 (over 50% of the older models), whilst the elderly generation (aged 60–79) is definitely presented individually and octogenarians do not exist at all in this communication. Marketeers use two tools: brand/product ambassadors and representatives of the consumers target group to depict people of 50+. Despite the marginal representation of this group in print communication, the content analysis allowed to identify more than 10 different types of the older models briefly capturing the complex portrayal of this generation. It is clear that the portrayal of the group 50+ is not uniform, homogeneous and simple, but it appears to be more composite, diverse and multi-optional. Two different market segments emerge from the material gathered and the new age ranges and classification to describe the older population analyzed have been proposed. The age of 60 is a strong demarcation line dividing the older generation into two different segments: 'mature' and 'elderly'. The segment of 'mature' consumers has been stretched and now it seems to cover also the consumer groups of the age of 50–59. The segment of the elderly of the age 60+ is composed of two sub-segments: 60–69 recognized by the authors as 'young old' and 70+ 'mature old'. All the age segments are characterized by a different appearance, the roles played, behaviour, shared feelings, needs and values.

In print advertising, the general portrayal of people of 50 and over is quite positive, although the 'mature' generation of the 50–59 age group reflects reality more adequately and for the people over-sixty more traditional and predictable models are still reserved and utilized.

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Aims and Scope

Economics and Business Review is the successor to the Poznań University of Economics Review which was published by the Poznań University of Economics and Business Press in 2001–2014. The Economics and Business Review is a quarterly journal focusing on theoretical and applied research work in the fields of economics, management and finance. The Review welcomes the submission of articles for publication dealing with micro, mezzo and macro issues. All texts are double-blind assessed by independent reviewers prior to acceptance.

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