

RECEPTION OF THE MARKETING COMMUNICATION FUNCTION IN THE LIGHT OF ENTERPRISE RESEARCH

**OBSZARY RECEPCJI FUNKCJI KOMUNIKACJI MARKETINGOWEJ
W ŚWIETLE BADAŃ PRZEDSIĘBIORSTW**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is an attempt at empirical verification of the function of marketing communication. The objective formulated in this way aims to assess the content that companies attribute in their strategies to the basic functions of marketing communication. Thus, it defines an interesting problem of the reception of communication functions by enterprises in the practice of promotional activities. This assessment was made possible by empirical research on a sample of 103 companies. Their selection was random and quota-based with the use of controls due to the industry and the size of employment. The study employed open interviews based on the CATI methodology. The structure of the presented consideration is presented in Figure 1. The work consists of two parts. The first part considers the morphology of marketing communication. It focuses on the structure of the function of marketing communication, and it identifies its three major functions. The second part refers to the results of empirical research and presents its empirical assessment. It aims to identify the actual objectives of communication in the context of its informative function and the principles and value of communicated messages-the forms of persuasion and influence exerted on consumers as well as the role of communication as a company's competitive strategy in the sector.

Key words: marketing communication, function, advertising

ABSTRAKT

Celem artykułu jest próba empirycznej weryfikacji funkcji komunikacji marketingowej. Tak sformułowany cel zmierza do oceny treści, jaką przedsiębiorstwa nadają w swoich strategiach podstawowym funkcjom komunikacji marketingowej: informacyjnej, perswazyjnej i konkurencyjnej. Określa więc interesujący problem recepcji funkcji komunikacji przez przedsiębiorstwa w praktyce działań promocyjnych. Artykuł ma dwie części. Przedmiotem rozważań w pierwszej części jest morfologia komunikacji marketingowej. Koncentrują się one na strukturze funkcji komunikacji marketingowej i ich syntetycznej charakterystyce. W części drugiej w nawiązaniu do wyników badań empirycznych — przedstawiono ocenę recepcji funkcji komunikacji przez przedsiębiorstwa. Zmierzała ona do identyfikacji rzeczywistych celów komunikacji — w aspekcie funkcji informacyjnej, zasad i wartości przekazu — jako form perswazji i wywierania wpływu na konsumentów oraz roli komunikacji jako strategii rywalizacji przedsiębiorstwa w sektorze. Podstawą oceny były badania empiryczne na próbie 103 firm. Dobór przedsiębiorstw był losowo-kwotowy, z wykorzystaniem kontroli ze względu na branżę i wielkość zatrudnienia. Badania zostały zrealizowane w formie wywiadu opartego o metodykę CATI.

Słowa kluczowe: komunikacja marketingowa, funkcja, reklama

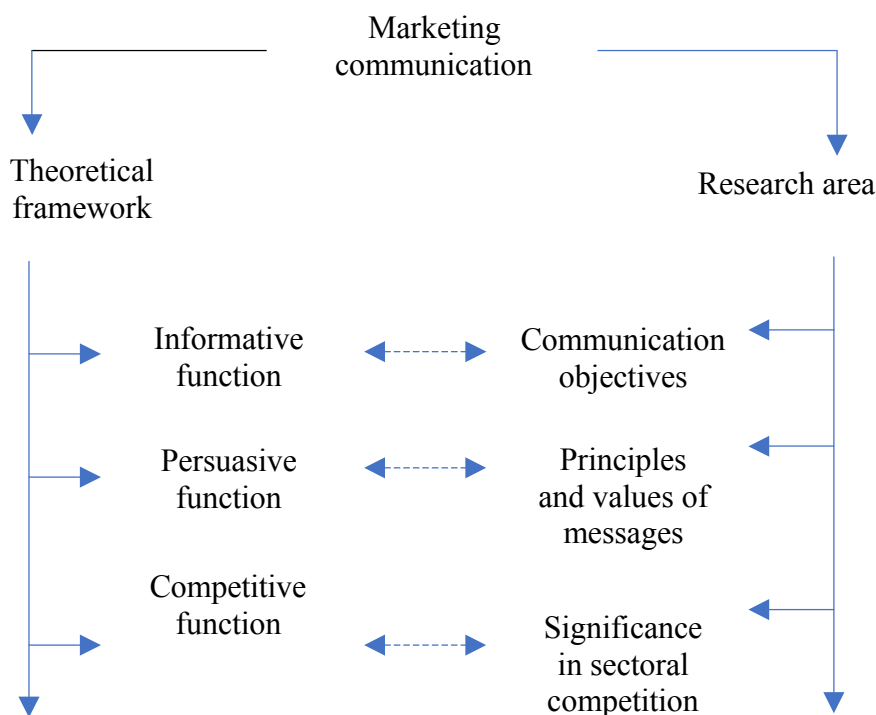
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The Morphology of Marketing Communication — The Perspective of the Function of Marketing Communication

Marketing communication is a significant or, as frequently referred to in scientific analyses and in the literature on the subject a key tool of marketing activities both at a strategic and operational level. At a strategic level, communication enables a company to transform its strategic ideas and concepts into actual market activities. A strategy which is significant from the perspective of the objectives of this article is a set of principles and values that constitute a basis for a company's intended manner of functioning and future expansion (Wrzosek, 2012; Dyduch, 2013; Kaleta, 2013; Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2022). As such, a strategy for functioning and development-with both elements constituting the core of a strategy — aims

to design the boundary framework of market operations and the objectives, values and principles underlying implementation processes and determining an organization's identity and vision. These elements of a strategy refer to the core document referred to as strategy as well as to overall operational activities within respective management functions and all functional areas (marketing, HR, accounting and finance) at an operational level. This statement, in its entirety, also refers to marketing — directing entrepreneurial activities towards the achievement of goals through strategy and market activities.

Figure 1. The model and concretisation of the title problem



Results of research: reception by companies of the marketing communication function
 Analysis and assessment of results

Marketing communication reflects strategic fundamental decisions related to a company's identity and its organisational structure, and it sets directions for choosing information-based ways of creating, shaping and developing the markets. It represents a subsystem of a company's marketing operational activities (apart from the other instruments of the mix such as McCarthy's and Borden's 4Ps, or Lauterborn's 4Cs) which create a platform of dialogue with markets, stakeholders and the surrounding environment. It ensures the transmission of information which determines a company's identity and the benefits of its sales offerings, and it affects customer needs and brand preferences, having an impact on demand and decreasing its price elasticity (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Van den Bergh, 2013; Bruhn, 2013; Wiktor, 2013; Juska, 2017). For example, P. Kotler and K.L. Keller define marketing communications as *"how firms attempt to inform, persuade and remind their customers — directly and indirectly — of products and brands they sell. [...] It also represents the voice of the company and its brands; it is how companies establish dialogue and build relationships with consumers"* (Kotler & Keller, 2012). The proposed definition refers, although indirectly, to all the fundamental functions of communication.

Marketing communication is a form of a company's dialogue with markets, and it is a term and, simultaneously, a market reality that is a much broader concept than promotion. The concept of marketing communication embraces several significant components. First, it assumes the existence of a dialogue (according to the findings of sociology and communication theories), a two-way active interaction between process participants. Therefore, marketing communication, by definition, is based not only on the transmission of sales information but also assumes the acquisition of market information (through the marketing research of relevant messages), which is of key significance from the perspective of strategic and operational goals (Sojkin, 2009; Mazurek-Łopacińska, 2016).

The essence of communication is reflected in its multidimensional significance for the two major market players: selling parties and consumers, that is, the participants of the communication process. Communication as a company's dialogue with its environment is one of the major tools — apart from the other components of the marketing mix — in the process of shaping markets and consumer behaviour as well as in

market rivalry. Communication is a means of expressing a company's identity — it provides information on its operations, promotes the unique value of its offering, encourages purchasing, seeks to gain competitive advantage in the sector and the achievement of other strategic and operational corporate goals. It is the communication process that creates needs, new markets and market segments, shapes purchasing preferences, creates social brand equity and expresses the significance of value and dialogue in performing social and market functions by the two market players.

Marketing communication performs a crucial function as a tool for implementing a company's strategy. It reflects the basic components of a company's identity, its vision and mission, implementation strategies in specific market conditions as well as its values and principles underlying its operations (Maráková, 2016; Smith & Zook, 2016). Among the above elements, and in the context of the objectives of this article, special attention should be given to the goals of marketing communication, the declarations of value and the principles of promotional activities. Such elements themselves, the tools for implementing expansion strategies, contain relatively permanent components which correspond to core strategic decisions at a general level and to the entire organisation as well as to key functional areas including marketing. Marketing communication, a tool for implementing strategies, allows for overcoming the barrier of insufficient knowledge of the market and for shaping the market through diversification, sectoral boundary strategies and effective sectoral competition, ultimately leading to competitive advantage and successful performance on the market. It implies that marketing communication strategies and the related objectives, principles and implementation instruments should result from the adopted strategic goals which serve to implement a company's mission. A mission does not only set general directions for corporate activities, but it also reflects a company's values and how they are put into practice. This statement also applies to a company's system of communication with the markets (Batra & Keller, 2016, s. 122–145; Eagle, Dahl, Czarnecka, & Lloyd, 2014; Hajduk, 2019; Zatwarnicka-Madura, 2019; Szymoniuk, 2019).

The significance of marketing communication from consumers' perspective is widely discussed in theoretical and empirical studies on the

subject as well as in interdisciplinary works. In a synthetic reflection on this issue, we only stress some selected important aspects related to the goals of this article. Communication is a platform for developing consumers' knowledge of the markets and educating them in this area on the one hand, and, on the other hand, a tool for shaping brand needs and preferences, and a platform for creating a positive/negative image of a company and its brands.

The synthesis of the two dimensions of the above reflection is as follows: it can be concluded that marketing communication is a key characteristic of marketing orientation and, as such, constitutes a significant element of contemporary markets across all sectors. The role of communication is coupled with market development and diversification as well as increased demand along with the conditions of excess supply and increasing barriers to purchase. Such conditions require creating a company's system of communication with markets, which is integrated with other marketing tools (Kliatchko, 2005; Percy, 2014; Juska, 2017; Keer & Richards, 2020).

The above-presented issues are of crucial significance. A broader analysis of these problems goes beyond the scope of this paper. The last issue mentioned above directs the presented considerations towards the role of the structure of communication functions and the area of their perception.

The functions of marketing communication reflect the significance attributed to this marketing instrument. They are presented in literatures in several configurations, and the entire set of them constitutes a wide range of factors that affect the markets.

This statement refers to the entire process of communication as well as to their particular structural tools: advertising, personal communication, additional promotion and PR activities used in both communication environments: the real world (offline) and the digital world (online). Also, it encourages a broader professional dispute over the significance of cognitive rigour in scientific research. The limitations of this article do not allow for contributing to this discussion, narrowing its content to the fundamental issues related to the paper's main goals.

In this context, three issues are important from the perspective of the presented considerations. First, we identify three levels of communication function. Second, attention is given to their informative character. Third,

the borders between them are not clear and they overlap. Each of the above issues is briefly discussed below.

The identification of three levels of communication is important as such, and it also helps in formulating empirical answers to the question posed by the title problem of this work. The three levels are as follows: the mission of a communication system — the fundamental function (level 1), basic functions (level 2), and specific functions performed by the particular tools of the system. The identification of three functional levels allows for focusing considerations on fundamental and strategic elements — the subject of the presented empirical research. The fundamental function is a synthetic description of a company's major tasks performed in the process of its communication with the environment. It is the function of ensuring a company's continuous informative presence in the markets (Wiktor, 2013, p. 57). Continuous communication in both environments of social communication (offline and online) enables a company to achieve its strategic goals and perform, in a synthetic dimension, the previously defined tasks. The achievement of these goals is conditioned by the necessity of continuous communication with the markets. This function — without going into much detail and defining operational activities — is a relatively easy task in the context of the digital transformation, the IT revolution and the development of the network society (Castells, 2010; Mazurek & Tkaczyk, 2016; Rodgers & Thorson, 2017; Gregor & Kaczorowska-Spychalska, 2018; Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2021). However, attention should be given here to some special requirements to be met by the process of communication—credibility, reliability and legal and ethical responsibility for the marketing content and messages. This aspect is referred to in this work and related empirical studies. Obviously, the fundamental function is general, but it also provides a useful platform for describing the functions identified at the two remaining levels. Levels 2 and 3 identify the basic functions of communication and the specific functions assigned to the particular tools of the system. This article only discusses the basic functions (level 2), as it aims to present a general synthetic and empirical assessment of the major functions of marketing communication: informative, persuasive and competitive functions.

The communication process performs three basic functions: informative, persuasive and competitive. They reflect the nature of

communication-related activities carried out by all businesses. To some extent, they also refer to basic communication functions defined by sociology and social communication theory. What they all have in common is the informative character of promoting a company's identity and its offering and the same way of influencing an addressee — a consumer. This work's focus on the empirical measurement of the content and the assessment of the function of communication leads to a selective reflection and emphasis laid on those factors which may directly result in manipulation.

The informative function, by its very nature, is a company's basic function of communication with its environment, creating a platform for transforming a marketing strategy into the tactics of market activities based on the marketing mix composition. The area of reception of this function is broad and is reflected at all levels of marketing communication. The content and character of the informative function are strictly related to the objectives of business operations communicated by a company as well as to the mechanism of consumers' market behaviour. Generally, it applies to each of the five stages of the purchasing process: creating needs and preferences, seeking market information, assessing purchase variants, buying decisions and evaluating. Each stage, widely analysed in literatures, has a specific analytical dimension. In this context, special attention is given to the possibility of affecting the particular stages through marketing activities, particularly through promotion programmes.

Promotion is closely related to the basic function of communication, that is, persuasion. It aims to initiate, shape and retain consumers' desirable actions and behaviour at each stage of the purchasing process. Under contemporary market conditions, marked by excess and, to some extent, manipulated supply, persuasion becomes a dominant function of a company's communication with the markets. In sociology, social psychology and communication theory persuasion is regarded as a major non-manipulative form of influencing people. This view is shared by such authors as Cialdini (2008), Perloff (2017), Doliński (2005), Doliński and Gamian-Wilk (2014), Tokarz (2010) and Duffy and Thorson (2016). Is it true of marketing as well? This important question can open the way for broad theoretical analyses, debates and empirical studies. 'To persuade' means to cause somebody to believe in something/to do something, and

according to social sciences, persuasion should be based on unbiased and precise information, representing a transparent way of communication. It leads to a consensus and is aimed to convince somebody of somebody else's case (in this context, this personification seems to be justified) and to achieve common goals. In this approach, persuasion is identified with an impartial and rational manner of exerting influence, although in the world of advertising, especially in the sector of consumer goods, a special role is played by emotional arguments. They tend to appeal to things valued in a given culture or market segment — truth, kindness, love, friendship, family, ecology, environment, etc. The methods of persuasion can have a positive or negative impact on recipients' behaviour (Perloff, 2017; Danciu, 2014). The area of reception of the persuasion function is broad, similar to a set of specific persuasive promotion activities and tools. It relates to the system of values and principles used by a company to communicate its identity and offering. The persuasive function aims to promote a company's offering in a way that ensures the acquisition, retention and loyalty of addressees, leading to the creation of a permanent customer base (see: Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders, & Wong, 2003; Bruh, 2013; Janiszewska & Kall, 2012). In this context, the persuasion function of communication is related to the third basic function — the competitive function. This function is performed by creating a set of the non-price instruments of market rivalry. Such instruments include the informative characteristics of a company's offering and its presentation in the form of persuasive arguments, encouraging consumers to make a specific buying decision in the situation in which a package of substitute brands is available in a given sector (Porter, 1980, 2001). The area of perception of the competitive function manifests itself in two dimensions. The first one refers to a company's assurance of the attractiveness and impact of its instruments of communication with the environment. It is also strictly related to the previously mentioned functions, particularly to the persuasion function and its character. The second area is based on creating a recipient's platform of evaluation, which ensures a company's 'informative victory' over promotion campaigns launched by competitors. It is a significant dimension of the identification of the communication function and the character of the competitive function of promotion (communication).

The above reflection leads to an important conclusion that stresses the role of a company's specific values and principles of communicating with its environment: those elements which can, and do constitute, a system of shared and approved social standards and behaviours in a given culture. These elements determine the acceptance or rejection of specific forms and tools of marketing communication at a social level. The argument in favour of this statement is the socially based and critical reception of advertising and strong convictions about its manipulative character and the violation of ethical standards and generally accepted principles of community life.

The third, previously mentioned aspect, is the arbitrary character of classifying communication functions. Each function is a carrier of information, and the adopted classification and approach reflect a different focus on the promotion content. It indicates that the presented classification of communication functions can be treated as arbitrary. These functions, through the area of reception and their character, overlap and complement one another, and their combination represents a company's basic tasks in its communication with the environment.

Empirical Verification — Research Results

Research methodology

The empirical study, under the adopted model and the structuralisation of the discussed problem, aimed to investigate the degree and ways in which the three basic functions of communication are performed in practice and are reflected in companies' strategies. Three areas of corporate communication strategies were verified: (1) the objectives of communicated messages, reflecting the informative function, (2) the principles and values of messages from the perspective of their impact on recipients and their persuasion function, and (3) the ways of using communication in the sectoral competition, related to the competitive function of messages. The proposed approach is selective. All the functions are mutually interlinked; similarly, the identified areas are not autonomous and separate forms of impact on the environment — they are explicitly interdependent. However,

the identification of these areas allows for outlining a certain approach to the problem and for contributing to a debate over corporate marketing communication strategies and their functions at theoretical, empirical and research levels. In this approach, the article presents selected elements of the evaluation of strategies, goals, principles and values used by companies to develop their communication strategies, as well as communication forms and tools aimed to gain competitive advantage in a given sector. The study was conducted at the turn of 2019 and 2020 under grant NCN (No. 2018/29/B/HS4/00563). They had a wide scope, covering a group of 103 enterprises representing the business sector, while a representative consumer survey (N = 1004) was conducted among Polish adult inhabitants. The detailed results are presented in a monograph *Information Asymmetry in Online Advertising* (Wiktor & Sanak-Kosmowska, 2021). The analysed enterprises represented production, trading and service sectors. The selection of the participants was based on random-quote sampling, with consideration given to the industry and the number of employees. About the number of employees (EU criteria), the analysed entities represented three groups: small (47%), medium (30%) and large (23%). The study employed open interviews based on the CATI methodology.

The informative function vs. the goals of a marketing communication strategy in the light of companies' declarations

The goals of marketing communication, declared by the surveyed companies, play a major role in developing their marketing strategies. The adopted approach assumes that they can constitute a concrete empirical manifestation of the informative function of marketing communication. This function relates to a relatively permanent impact on the markets and an explicit declaration of a company's identity. Therefore, it plays a major role in designing all the specific components of a communication system. The conducted analysis identifies eight elements — potential targets — but it accepts the possibility of extending the 'cafeteria' (list of possible responses) and the content of companies' declarations. As many as 84% of the surveyed businesses regard increased sales as the main goal of

marketing communication. It may seem obvious, but it was not the only indicated goal. Many surveyed companies pointed to other objectives of their communication with the markets. Great importance was also attributed to building brand awareness (73% indications) and building customer relationships (67%). Such goals refer to communication and relationships, and their role should be stressed in this context. Sales-related goals concern short periods, while the other two goals are achieved in longer periods. It is longer periods that reflect companies' continuity of communication activities and their efforts aimed to ensure a permanent informative presence in the markets and the media. From this perspective, the results of the study should be regarded as significant.

The significant elements of the surveyed companies' declared structure of goals also refer to the competitive function of communication, that is, the third area of our empirical research. The above statement can be referred to the previous reflection on the complementary character and overlapping of all communication functions. It is not possible to draw clear-cut borders between them in theoretical considerations or in identifying separate research areas. In this context, two specific responses given by the surveyed companies deserve special attention: strengthening a competitive position (a company's increased competitiveness — 54% of indications), and acting in response to competitors' activities in the sector (37%). Such results clearly correspond to the previously discussed role of marketing as a non-price instrument of sectoral competition. The competitive function of promotion gains in significance in contemporary markets, particularly in the situation of an excess supply and an increasing number of similar-quality products offered by competitors in the sector. Each basic function (informative and persuasive) should contain, or even suggest to consumers, an a priori evaluation of offerings in the context of competitive products/services. The results of the study seem to point to the significant elements of setting the objectives of a marketing communication system: the intensity of competitive conditions in particular sectors has a major impact on the function of communication. The informative and persuasion functions assume a new role as a result of a great emphasis laid on competition-related issues. The results of this stage of the study provide empirical confirmation of the function of communication as a key instrument in implementing a marketing strategy.

The persuasion function in the context of the values and principles of a company's communication with the markets

The second research area focused on the principles and values adopted in the process of a company's communication with the markets. These factors have a value per se, but they also perform an instrumental function, which relates to the content and designators of the persuasion function of marketing communication as well as to the area of reception and the ways of influencing and creating an atmosphere of a favourable attitude to a company's offering. In this approach to this problem, emphasis is laid on identifying how a company influences the recipients of messages, the environment, markets and stakeholders. It is also a proposal for the conceptualisation of an approach to the analyses of persuasive marketing as an integrated system and, simultaneously, as a set of particular components in offline and online communication.

From a methodological perspective, empirical verification of values and principles adopted by companies in developing their communication strategies assumes the form of an open question. The surveyed entities were requested to describe three basic values underlying a company's communication with the markets. The question was asked in a broader context of the fundamental social values which govern the rules of public life and which are also crucial in business activities. These values included patriotism, trust, stability and integrity-universal values, which, because of their social significance and acceptance, can be referred to in companies' promotion campaigns.

The results of the study point to 56 values spontaneously declared by 103 surveyed enterprises. Obviously, these values are attributed to various degrees of importance. Due to the limitations of this article, the presented analysis is general and synthetic. The basic value of marketing communication is the quality of an offer (product, brand, service). This value is regarded as the most important one by all the surveyed companies, regardless of their sector, number of employees or core business. Quality, as declared by respondents, constitutes the essence and core of the Unique Value of Advertising (UVA) (Wiktor, 2013), or, as Reeves (1991) refers to it, the Unique Selling Point (USP). It constitutes a major component of a market stimulation strategy (a price-quality strategy), the manner of

influencing consumers and affecting their needs and purchasing preferences, directly reflecting the persuasive character of communication. Therefore, there is no doubt that the quality of an offer, as a key value of communication, is strictly related to the two other functions, that is, the informative and competitive ones.

Importantly, according to the respondents' declarations, performing the persuasive function of communication is based on such values as reliability, integrity, price, and professionalism (indicated by 3/4 of respondents). Equal significance (more than 55% of indications) in marketing communication and persuasion strategies is attributed to such values as trust, stability, timeliness, image, reliability, ecology, customer relationships and innovativeness. Some other values (including professionalism, loyalty, courage, passions, education, personal culture and specialisation) had lower positions in the ranking of 'three most important values' of marketing communication, which does not mean, however, that they are less significant in specific marketing operational activities. A detailed analysis by company and sector pointed to relatively similar responses.

The competitive function vs. the promotion forms of competition in the sector

The third research area was the identification of companies' approach to competition about the use of the competitive function of communication. The conducted analysis refers to the previously presented theoretical reflection on the structure of the communication function. It is not an in-depth analysis of competition mechanisms. It aims to present the empirical significance of marketing communication — by describing its informative and persuasion functions — in the process of competition in a given sector. This issue is addressed earlier in the paper in the form of a theoretical reflection (the designators of the competitive function). Here, we present how enterprises use marketing communication attributes to affect (strengthen or maintain) their competitive position in the sector. It is a well-known fact that a competitive position is affected by all marketing activities of strategic or operational character, including a company's

continuous communication with the markets and the effective performance of communication functions.

The conducted survey aimed to describe the degree of significance that enterprises attribute to the competitive function of communication activities. The research study adopted an important assumption: the companies were to express their views on the perceived and actually experienced situations in the sector and their assessment of competitors' competitive activities. This methodological approach aimed to obtain unbiased opinions and assessments without disclosing the respondents' own strategy based on competitive marketing communication. The study covered 8 characteristics of the potential role of promotion (online advertising) in the process of gaining a competitive edge.

We present three significant elements of assessments, obtained based on extensive analysis. The first one relates to the surveyed companies' strong conviction about the great significance of the competitive function of marketing communication, especially online advertising. This conviction is declared by more than 70% of respondents (72%), and the synthetic assessments of this tool (on a 1-5 scale) is at the level of 4.03. Differences in the distribution of responses by company size are relatively small — 0.22 points (4.15 — small businesses, and 3.93 — medium and large entities). This assessment is strongly correlated with the respondents' shared conviction that the intensity of sectoral competition requires enterprises to rely their advertising campaigns on targeted ads, focused on the precisely identified segment and market niches. This conviction is shared by 77% of the surveyed enterprises, and the synthetic assessment is at the level of 4.05. This is the second important issue explored in the study. The third element, related to the previous ones, is the emphasis laid on the specific character of a communication strategy. The increasing intensity of competition in particular market segments requires advertising to communicate the superior character of a company's offering as compared with competitive ads. This view is shared by 81% of the surveyed enterprises, and their assessments are at a high level of 4.15 (4.00 — small companies, 4.26 — medium and large entities). This conviction can be referred to the previously stressed significance of the UVA or the USP — the unique values of the communicated content and a platform for competing in the sector through marketing communication.

Concluding Remarks

The article attempts to present an empirical verification of the functions of marketing communication through an assessment of companies' promotion activities. The first part of the work focuses on the morphology of functions performed by a company's communication with the markets. The basic functions of marketing communication systems (informative, persuasive and competitive) are discussed in a broader context of the mission of marketing communication—ensuring a company's continuous informative presence in the markets and the media. These functions are assessed in the context of the area of perception—their content and characteristics.

In the second part — about the results of empirical research, selected elements of the assessment of enterprise strategy in shaping marketing communication are presented, including how enterprises shape three basic functions: informational, persuasive and competitive. The research allowed answering the question of what is the reception of the basic functions of marketing communication by enterprises, and what is their empirical content in specific market activities. The objectives of the marketing communication strategy are a concrete expression of the implementation of the information function. These objectives are recognised by companies in two periods: short and long. In the former, the increase in sales (84% of indications of enterprises) is of fundamental importance, and in the second—building relationships and brand awareness. The values and principles of communication were linked to the strategy of influencing the market—the content of the persuasive function. All surveyed companies (N = 103) put the quality of the offer in the first place in communication. This is a basic and universal value. About 3/4 of companies declare reliability, honesty, price and professionalism among their values and principles. These are significant elements of the UVA or the USP. The results of the research indicate clear importance of communication attributed by companies (72%) in shaping market position. There is a widespread belief among companies that advertising must communicate the superiority of the offer over the advertisements of competitors and be an important tool for competition in the sector. The results of the research indicate the interpenetration of marketing communication functions. It is not possible to create limits of

delimitation between them, both in theoretical terms and in the practice of market activities of enterprises.

The presented results provide insights into significant empirical interdependencies between the fundamental marketing communication functions and the areas of their impact on the practice of companies' marketing activities. Also, they can encourage further research on the multidimensional aspects and significance of marketing communication in the contemporary world.

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