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DETERMINANTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF MULTI-LEVEL MARKETING IN POLAND IN THE CONTEXT OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GENERATIONS X, Y, Z

Aron-Axel Wadlewski*

University of Lodz, Faculty of Management, 22/26 Jana Matejki Street, 92-237 Łódź

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Abstract

The main purpose of the article is an attempt to assess the development potential of Multi Level Marketing in Poland, considering differences in perception of the system by different generations. In the theoretical part of the article, the essence of the concept of Multi Level Marketing is explained, market trends in the development of direct selling are presented, and the characteristics of generations X, Y, and Z are described. Then, according to the empirical part of the paper, the results of surveys on the differences in the perception of Multi Level Marketing by Polish representatives of generations X, Y, and Z are presented. In the last part, based on the analysis of the collected data, conclusions were formulated concerning further development perspectives of the direct selling branch.

Keywords: multi-level marketing, network marketing, direct selling, generation X, generation Y, generation Z

1. INTRODUCTION

Multi Level Marketing (MLM) is considered to be a highly controversial activity. In Poland, this system is commonly identified with the acquisition, and people operating within it are often described as "swindlers" and "sectarians". The reasons for such perception are, on the one hand, the

lack of reliable literature on the subject and, on the other hand, market practices connected with propagating by recruiters the vision of fast and high profits that do not require much time and work. Not without relevance is also the fact of fraudulent companies pretending to be MLM, which operate according to the principles of financial pyramid schemes. As a result,

* Corresponding author: aron.wadlewski@uni.lodz.pl

MLM business is not as popular in Poland as in other countries worldwide. The unfavourable conditions do not, however, cause a decreasing trend in the development of the phenomenon in Poland. On the contrary, a systematic and constant increase in the importance of this sector is observed year by year (WFDSA, 2021). The observed development of the MLM industry in Poland is considerably influenced by the growing expansion of companies, which effectively combat negative stereotypes (Warzecha, 2015). Also of great importance are the changing social attitudes resulting from the emergence of new generations. Differences in the perception of MLM by the next generations may create an opportunity for even stronger development of this phenomenon in Poland. Generations are free from prejudice and various stereotypes may be important in this case (Maciejewski, 2018). Positive perceptions of MLM activities by new generations may, in this case, foster a trend of increasing importance of the phenomenon. In contrast, the observation of negative attitudes among younger generations may have the opposite effect.

It will be important for this study to attempt to assess the potential for further development of the MLM industry in Poland. To achieve this goal, it will be necessary to introduce the essence of MLM and its current situation in both the Polish and global markets. Next, it will become important to identify and classify the generations present in society, together with a general characteristic of their behavior in the professional sphere. Finally, it will be crucial to analyse the perception of MLM by representatives of different generations in Polish society.

2. THE ESSENCE OF MULTI LEVEL MARKETING

MLM, also called Network Marketing or Multilevel Direct Selling, is an unconventional form of off-store retailing understood as a way to distribute products by maximally shortening the route "from the manufacturer to the customer" with the use of promotion-mix tools through a network of distributors and customers. It is one of the methods of organising and regulating the sale of products by direct sellers, using techniques for managing, motivating and recruiting new people who will sell products by building their own sales networks (Warzecha, 2012). The strategy of including the enterprise's customers in the organization of sales structures, included in the Network Marketing concept, makes it necessary to interpret the essence of the issue from two different perspectives. The first one is the perspective of the enterprise, for which MLM means a kind of outsourcing in the field of sales and advertising of the offered products. The second perspective is that of the customer-distributor, for whom Network Marketing will mean a business activity involving the building of a personal sales network, from the turnover of which he receives additional commissions by the remuneration plan in force in the company (Dudzic, 2016). Due to personal sales and product promotion accompanying the Network Marketing concept, it is considered a branch or offshoot of direct selling. However, looking from the perspective of the customer-distributor, its formula is much broader and concerns in its essence the philosophy of conducting business. This is because in MLM, apart from classic personal selling, the main objective is the process of creating group of distributors, from whose

turnover receive additional commissions. This means that in Network Marketing, apart from making profits from sales, it is also possible to earn income from the turnover generated by the created group of customers-distributors. As this income does not result directly from the sales activities of the customer-distributor forming the group, it is called passive income. The possibility of achieving higher profits thanks to the specificity of such a solution is the reason why most distributors operating in the direct sales system transform their activities into MLM activities. This is confirmed, among others, by the market in the United States, where almost 70% of the companies belonging to the direct sales sector are MLM companies (Olaya & Cruz, 2008).

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF GENERATIONS X, Y, Z

To investigate the occurrence of different attitudes towards the issue in question among people of different ages, it seems reasonable to identify and classify the generations present in society, which may be analysed as different generations.

The literature on the subject mentions various definitions of the term "generation". For the subject under discussion, it is assumed that a generation is a group consisting of all persons who are more or less of the same age and have been shaped by the same or similar experiences. As a result of a similar influence of the social and historical environment on the quality of life during adolescence, during which a person's personality is shaped and developed, each generation is characterised by different traits, beliefs, expectations or interests, common to all of them. Despite the differences in the

form of manifestations of individualism of particular individuals in a given generation, all its members are united by a common consciousness of the fate experienced, related rules of conduct, attitudes or the way of perceiving reality. As a result of the occurrence of all the above-mentioned factors, these people are bound together in a kind of unified whole referred to as a generation (Gajda, 2017).

The numerous terms used in the literature to describe particular generations of people can be assigned to five chronologically consecutive generations (Wiktorowicz et al., 2016). They are the so-called "traditionalists" (also known as the Silent Generation), Baby boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z. From the perspective of how the direct sales and network marketing industry can continue to develop, it is important to analyse the generations that comprise the professionally active. Currently, the last four of these generations belong to this group. However, because the percentage share of people born between 1946 and 1964, who belong to the Baby Boomers generation, is falling in the labour market, it is reasonable to omit this group from further analyses of the industry's growth potential.

When considering the criteria differentiating generations X, Y and Z, the criterion of an approach of the representatives of particular generations to the nature of performed work becomes significant. This criterion may influence the composition of different visions of the performed profession among representatives of different generations (Kukła & Nowacka, 2019).

Generation X is most often considered to be people born between 1965 and 1979 (Van der Berg & Behrer, 2012). Despite the time

frame given, its boundaries are quite fluid and related to how quickly the spread of technology occurred in a specific territorial area. The term Generation X was first used in 1964 by Jane Deverson, a British sociologist who did research and then published her findings focusing on the youth of the time in her book *Generation X*. The term was later popularised by Douglas Coupland in his book *"Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture"*, which discusses the most important problems and concerns of this population. In Poland, Generation X is today's forty- and fifty-year-olds, who witnessed the country's systemic evolution, the economic crisis of the 1970s, the fall of communism, the rise of Solidarity, working "in the West" and importing products considered synonymous with modernity and luxury. For people of this generation, work is an essential factor that determines the possibility of success, provided that enough hard work is put into it (Rosa, 2013).

Generation Y (Millennials) are people born between 1980 and 1996 (Van der Berg & Behrer, 2012). They are entrepreneurial people with a good education, characterised by divided attention and knowledge of new technologies. Professionally, they are mainly oriented towards achieving their professional goals and needs (Wawrzonek, 2014). They wish to remain independent in terms of their form of employment and the way they fulfil their job duties (Kroenke, 2015). Therefore, they expect flexible working hours, access to the latest technologies, and opportunities to make changes and develop their competences (Dolińska-Weryńska, 2016). Millennials are characterised by higher flexibility than generation X (Baran & Kłos, 2014), individualism, mobility and openness to change. They show reluctance to long-term commitments and therefore often

change jobs. However, despite their weak loyalty to employers, they can be highly committed to their work if it meets their needs and expectations (Krasnova, 2019). Greater focus on their benefits and needs is something that visibly distinguishes them from representatives of generation X. In the professional sphere, people from generation Y are often characterised by a lack of self-discipline and patience, a low work ethic, a demanding attitude, poor decision-making, as well as difficulties in direct contacts (Hysa, 2016). Generation Y's strengths, on the other hand, include self-confidence, high ambition, creativity, and resourcefulness (Dolińska-Weryńska, 2016).

Generation Z are people born after 1996 (Van der Bergh & Behrer, 2012). In major part, they are continuing their education, but some have already entered the labour market. The literature points out that this generation is quite diverse, however, some characteristics define generation as a whole. The most characteristic features include multitasking, mobility, flexibility, freedom to use modern technologies, knowledge of the web and constant being online (Muster, 2020). Due to the small percentage of this generation in the labour market, it is not yet possible to formulate certain conclusions on the characteristics of these people in the sphere of professional life. From the analyses carried out on the work behaviour of their first representatives, it is possible to forecast about the existence of many factors differentiating these people in comparison with older generations (Sidor-Rzadkowska, 2018). Among the most important, it is noted that these people are even more demanding than those from generation Y. They find it hard to come to terms with the prospect of long-term promotion. They are impatient and would like to have a fantastic career on the

spot and without effort. Representatives of this group would like to have everything immediately and "at once". Unlike older generations, they hardly adapt to the imposed organisational culture, preferring to create their system of rules, norms and values. They do not care about stability, avoid routine and look for variety. They tolerate risk better than previous generations. They like to explore unconventional working methods and ways of earning money, which often become an object of their fascination. They are willing to go for foreign internships and take up jobs abroad. Their weakness is the difficulty of functioning offline in everyday life (Chomałowska & Żarczyńska-Dobiesz, 2016). They are often described as overconnected, overcommitted and overwhelmed (Chomałowska & Żarczyńska-Dobiesz, 2016). Constantly functioning online makes these people have problems with attention, verbal communication and the ability to establish interpersonal contacts in the real world.

4. THE GROWTH POTENTIAL OF THE DIRECT SELLING INDUSTRY

The World Federation of Direct Selling Association (WFDSA) represents the global network marketing and direct selling industry in over 170 countries worldwide. It comprises more than 60 local and regional direct selling associations including, among others, "Seldia" operating within Europe and the Direct Selling Association operating in Poland (Wyrzychowski, 2019). According to a report published in 2021 by the WFDSA, the global value of the entire direct selling sector including the Chinese market in 2020 was USD 179 billion. Analysing more detailed financial data on the global

performance of the direct selling industry between 2017 and 2020 (excluding China), further growth of the sector can be observed. This is evidenced by an increase in the three-year compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.0%. This data confirms the importance of the phenomenon and the potential that accompanies the development of this industry. Referring to the top 10 countries in terms of turnover in the direct selling sector, it is important to ask about the future direction of the development of companies in this sector in Poland. Currently, there are more than 100 companies in the Polish market that distribute products based on direct sales and multi-level marketing (Network Magazine, 2021). These include both global companies and companies operating in the country. Among the global companies, there are 6 entities operating in Poland that belong to the world's top 10 direct selling companies, according to the Global 100 List published by the American Direct Selling News portal. These are companies such as Amway, Herbalife Nutrition, Avon Products Inc., Vorwerk, Tupperware and Oriflame (WFDSA, 2020). Of all the companies operating in Poland, Avon Cosmetics, Oriflame and the Polish company FM Group are particularly among the most popular (Małysiak, 2018). When considering the opportunities for the development of the direct selling industry, in addition to analysing the number of entities operating in the market, the number of people willing to engage in this type of business should also be considered. This is because the development of the industry is more influenced by the number of independent sales professionals responsible for the generated turnover than by the number of companies on the market or the size and structure of their product range.

According to the WFDSA report, there will be more than 125.4 million people in the direct selling industry worldwide in 2020. This is 3.3 million more than in 2018 and 5.7 million more than in 2017. Referring to the number of people involved in the direct selling industry in 2016 of 113.6 million (WFDSA Annual Report, 2019/2020), it can be concluded that there is a steady and systematic increase in interest in this form of business. This conclusion also seems to be supported by the fact that the number of people operating in the direct selling industry increased in 2019 and 2020, with a rapid increase of 5.2 million people operating in this sales system over the period. However, the situation of sudden growth was caused by a general decline in the growth trend of the entire industry in 2019 - a decline of 1.9%. The situation of the COVID 19 pandemic and the restrictions introduced in connection with it, limiting the forms of face-to-face contact, i.e. those on which the specific functioning of the direct selling concept is based, may have been responsible for this. According to the data contained in the WFDSA report of 2020, out of the entire population of people operating in the direct selling industry, women constitute the overwhelming majority (74%) and thus almost triple the number of men (26%) operating in this system. Analysing the population structure from the perspective of the leading activity, the report distinguishes (out of 119.9 million in 2019) 15.2 million people operating in the industry full-time, i.e. devoting more than 30 hours per week to building a direct sales business; 44.2 million part-timers, devoting up to 30 hours a week to growing their businesses. 60.5 million others - including those who have recently joined the industry and those who joined because of preferential product conditions

but are not actively seeking to do so.

While analysing the prospects for further development of the sector, the percentage distribution of people engaged in direct selling from an age perspective also seems important. The key to the sector's development may be the change in the percentage ratio of younger, middle-aged and older people. An increasing percentage of younger people may indicate a potential for further growth, while an increasing percentage of middle-aged and older people may indicate a stagnation. Referring to the data contained in the WFDSA reports for 2020 and 2021, it is possible to conclude that there is potential for further growth in the direct selling sector. Analysis of the data from the published reports shows that the people making up the largest percentage of direct sellers are those aged between 35 and 44. In 2019, they accounted for 26% of the total population with their share decreasing to 25% in 2020. Relatively the second largest group are those aged 45 to 54 years - their share of the surveyed population in 2019 accounted for 25% while falling to 23% in 2020. The third largest group is people aged 55+, their share in the analysed community in 2019 was 23% before decreasing to 22% in 2020. The least numerous groups active in the direct sales industry include those aged 18-24 and 25-34. The youngest group aged 18-24 accounted for just 7% of the total surveyed population in 2019, while the share of the 25-34 age group was 19%. Comparing the percentage share of these groups with 2020, both groups show a 2% increase. The increasing percentage share of young people in the direct sales and network marketing sector may therefore indicate an increase in interest in this form of activity among representatives of the younger generation.

5. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

To attempt to assess the potential for further development of the MLM industry in Poland, considering the possible existence of a difference in the perception of the system by different generations X, Y, and Z, the following research questions were formulated:

RQ1: What is the familiarity with the concept and principles of MLM-based business and what are the differences in this field among the different generations X, Y, and Z.

RQ2: What are the differences in perception of MLM business among the representatives of generations X, Y and Z in the study sample?

To answer the above questions, the results of a survey conducted at the turn of July and August 2021 were used in a fragmentary way¹. The study was carried out using the technique of an online survey addressed to a purposively selected research sample consisting of members of a Facebook group associating Polish distributors of MLM companies and a group of students of the Faculty of Management at the University of Łódź studying management at the second level. The survey consisted of 26 closed

questions, including 5 questions with metrics. Due to the different nature of the groups to which the invitation was sent, filtering questions were introduced to separate those declaring knowledge about MLM from those openly admitting ignorance of the issue. There were also sections with questions for those considering the possibility of starting a Network Marketing business, those currently continuing their MLM activities and those who stopped for whatever reason. The obtained data were presented in a tabular form illustrating the percentage structure of the answers given taking into account the division of the respondents into representatives of different generations.

6. INTERPRETATION OF SURVEY RESULTS

Among the people from the above-mentioned groups, 275 respondents took part in the study. According to the data in Table 1 among the total number of respondents participating in the study, the smallest group were representatives of generation X, i.e. people aged 43 to 57. Their share in the research population amounted to 25.1%. People from generation Y, aged 26-42, accounted for 34.9% of the respondents. The most numerous group was the generation Z, whose percentage share in the entire

Table 1. Characteristics of the sample (n=275)

Variable	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Gender		
Male	47	17.9
Female	228	82.9
Year of birth		
1965–1979	69	25.1
1980–1996	96	34.9
Above 1996	110	40.0

¹The research was conducted by Patrycja Rybarczyk, M.A., for her Master's thesis entitled "Differences in Perception of Multi Level Marketing by Generation X, Y, Z". "Differences in Perception of Multi Level Marketing by Generations X, Y, Z".

population amounted to 40%. Women constituted the majority of all respondents - their percentage share was 82.9%, whereas men constituted the remaining 17.9% of respondents.

By analysing the survey results in Table 2, it can be observed that of among all the persons surveyed, Generation Y has the highest percentage of people with higher education, with 46.9% of them declaring that they have completed higher education. It should be noted, however, that generation Z is mainly composed of people below the age of 26, most of whom are continuing their education. This is confirmed by the fact that 68.6% of the representatives of this group declare that they continue their education. This state is also explained by the fact that 65.8% of people from this generation declare no work experience. Among the representatives of generation X, there were mostly people with secondary education - so

declared 53.6% of people from this generation. This group also includes the relatively largest percentage of people with more than 10 years of work experience, resulting mostly (48.8%) from an employment contract. It is worth noting at this point the changing proportions of the percentage distribution in the category of possible forms of employment. While in Generation X the employment based on a contract of mandate constitutes less than 1/5 of the form of employment contract (7.3% to 48.8%), in Generation Y this ratio is already approximately 1/2 (19.6% to 37.7%), while in Generation Z employment based on a contract of mandate is almost twice as high as employment based on an employment contract (16.4% to 7.9%). This result seems to confirm different preferences of particular generations regarding employment flexibility in the professional sphere. When interpreting the indications of persons

Table 2. Sample characteristics by generation X, Y and Z (n=275)

Variable	% of Generation X representatives	% of Generation Y representatives	% of Generation Z representatives
Educational level			
Primary	0.0	0.0	0.0
Gymnasium	2.9	0.0	15.2
Vocational secondary education	23.2	22.9	18.1
High school	53.6	30.2	29.5
Higher	20.3	46.9	37.1
Work experience			
Lack of	0.0	0.0	65.8
Less than one year	0.0	0.0	14.4
1-2 years	0.0	2.0	15.3
2-5 years	1.5	17.0	4.5
5-10 years	1.5	47.0	0.0
10-20 years	54.4	34.0	0.0
Over 20 years	42.6	0.0	0.0
Professional situation			
I am studying	0.0	1.4	68.6
Unemployed	4.9	2.9	1.4
Employed under a task-specific contract	9.8	0.7	1.4
Employed on a contract of mandate	7.3	19.6	16.4
Employed on an employment contract	48.8	37.7	7.9
Self-employed	9.8	2.9	0.7
Work in an MLM company	19.5	34.8	3.6

declaring MLM activities, the highest percentage is observed in the group of millennials (Generation Y - 34.8%), where the ratio is almost the same when compared to employment based on an employment contract (37.7%). By comparison, in Generation X, those working in the MLM system (19.5%) account for less than half of those employed under a form of employment contract (48.8%). A similar percentage ratio is also observed among representatives of generation Z, where MLM activities (3.6%) account for half of the professional activities in the form of a permanent job (7.9%).

Table 3 shows the results of the survey on familiarity with the MLM concept. The greatest lack of familiarity with this issue is indicated by representatives of generation Z, where as many as 55.9% of people subscribe to such a statement. Of the 44.1% of people who had previous contact with the concept of MLM, only 21.6% declare knowledge of the principles of this business. The situation is different among the representatives of generation Y, where as many as 96.9% of people declare knowledge of the very issue, and 72.9% of them declare the ability to grasp its assumptions. Representatives of generation X fare slightly worse than the millennials, from among whom 91.2% of people confirming the knowledge of the concept only 61.8% can explain what this form of business is about.

Respondents who declared to be able to explain the principles of MLM were redirected to a section where they were asked to respond to a question about the nature of opinions in their environment about network marketing. They were then asked to express their feelings about this system. The results of the responses are illustrated in Table 4. The data collected in this way show that the relatively highest number of positive

opinions on MLM is found among the Y generation (39.8%), which equally positively (44.8%) and negatively (39.1%) perceives this type of activity. A significant majority of negative opinions on MLM (51.4%) is found among the surroundings of Z generation. It may have an impact on the negative attitude towards the system of representatives of this population, who twice as often (32.4%) declared such an opinion, as people having a positive opinion about it (17.6%). In the environment of generation X, opinions on MLM are mostly neutral, and among those clearly oriented, positive ones prevail (17.6%). However, the opinions prevailing in the environment do not translate into a positive attitude towards the system on the part of representatives of this generation. On the contrary, most of them (56.9%) have a negative opinion about it.

Multi Level Marketing is often perceived in a negative way in the context of direct sales, financial pyramid schemes or unworthy of engagement in the low-profit activity. Confirmation of such associations by respondents may be a justification for the negative opinions about the industry present in the surveyed populations. The results reflecting the perception of Multi Level Marketing by respondents in the above categories are presented in Table 5.

For 2/3 of the representatives of generation X, who declared prior knowledge of the system, MLM is the same as direct selling. Almost 40% of them identify it with a financial pyramid, and less than 3/4 of respondents do not perceive such an activity as a serious and profitable activity. The results obtained seem to confirm the situation of low social awareness of Network Marketing in this age group. Taking into consideration the fact that the study involved members of a Facebook group of people

directly related to the MLM industry, this does not create a good prospect for further development of the phenomenon. MLM is best perceived by representatives of generation Y. Among respondents in this age group, 59.8% can distinguish it from direct selling. The vast majority (86.2%) do not perceive MLM as a financial pyramid scheme, and more than half (64.1%) consider it a serious and profitable activity. The

Table 3. Knowledge of the concept and principles of MLM by generations X, Y, and Z (n=275)

Variable	% of Generation X representatives	% of Generation Y representatives	% of Generation Z representatives
Knowledge of the MLM concept			
Yes	91.2	96.9	44.1
No	8.8	3.1	55.9
Knowledge of MLM business principles			
Yes	61.8	72.9	21.6
No	25.0	9.4	69.4
Rather yes	13.2	17.7	9.0

Table 4. Opinions about MLM (n=172)

Variable	% of Generation X representatives	% of Generation Y representatives	% of Generation Z representatives
Opinions about MLM in respondents' environments			
Positive	17.6	39.8	11.4
Negative	3.33	23.9	51.4
Neither positive nor negative	49.0	36.4	37.1
Respondents' opinions about MLM			
Positive	39.2	44.8	17.6
Negative	56.9	39.1	32.4
I have no opinion/opinion on network marketing	3.9	16.1	50.0

Table 5. Perception of MLM (n=172)

Variable	% of Generation X representatives	% of Generation Y representatives	% of Generation Z representatives
Is MLM the same as direct selling?			
Yes	66.7	40.2	44.1
No	33.3	59.8	55.9
Is MLM the same as a financial pyramid scheme?			
Yes	39.2	13.8	23.5
No	60.8	86.2	76.5
MLM in my opinion is...			
A not very serious activity, thanks to which you can only earn a few PLN	72.5	33.6	82.4
A serious, profitable business	27.5	64.1	17.6
Other	0.0	2.3	0.0

prevalence of positive statements about MLM among millennials may create an opportunity for the development of this industry. The fact that these people constitute the main target group of recruitment activities conducted by representatives of Network Marketing companies may also be advantageous for such development. MLM is perceived slightly worse by representatives of generation Z. Most of them (76.5%) can distinguish MLM from a financial pyramid scheme. More than half (55.9%) do not identify the system with direct sales. Despite the preponderance of correct perceptions about MLM, the vast majority (82.4%) do not treat it as a serious activity. Perceiving Network Marketing from the perspective of a not very serious activity may be the result of the past experiences of this age group. Taking into consideration, that this group consists mostly of very young people, it seems obvious, that Network Marketing is more often perceived as an additional income-generating job, than as a serious business activity. However, it is worth mentioning that this situation may change over time. With the expansion of sales networks, a form of additional occupation may transform into a leading character of activity, which is the main source of income. The described situation may in this case cause a change in attitudes and, consequently, lead to the development of the whole industry.

7. CONCLUSION

When trying to answer the research question formulated in this study concerning the knowledge of the concept and principles of operation of MLM-based business in particular generations, it can be concluded

that there is a low level of knowledge about the principles of operation of the system among the respondents. This is evidenced by the fact of comparing MLM to direct sales or financial pyramid scheme by a significant percentage of those who previously declared knowing about it. A low level of knowledge of Network Marketing may also be evidenced by negative statements made by people associated with the MLM industry. This applies mainly to representatives of generation X, who found themselves in the research sample due to their membership in a Facebook group associating people involved in this type of business. Despite the lack of comprehensive knowledge of how MLM enterprises work, the ability to distinguish a system from a financial pyramid scheme by the vast majority of respondents may be positive for the industry. Another positive thing may be the fact that there is a preponderance of neutral and positive opinions about the system both in the environment and among the respondents themselves. Answering the second research question about the difference in the perception of MLM activities by representatives of generations X, Y and Z, it is possible to formulate a statement about a visible divergence in how Network Marketing is perceived by different generations. Looking from the perspective of the attractiveness of this form of activity, MLM is best perceived by generation Y, who mostly perceive it as a serious and profitable business. This group, due to their age and current professional experience, also constitutes the most attractive target group to which MLM companies address their recruitment activities. Such a situation may be the basis for the formulation of a statement related to the purpose of this study concerning the assessment of the potential

for further development of the MLM industry in Poland. Due to the conditions above regarding the perception of the MLM industry by young generations Y and Z, one may formulate a belief in the possible further development of this phenomenon. However, high growth dynamics may not be favoured by negative opinions about it, indicated by the respondents. Especially if we take into account their potential impact on generation Z, most of whom do not yet have a clear opinion on this form of business.

Due to a large imperfection of the conducted research concerning both the way of selecting the sample and its size, it will not be possible to formulate objective conclusions constituting generalisation for the entire population. Nevertheless, the conducted data analysis may provide a good basis for further studies and in-depth research into the practical problems of management in the sphere of distribution and promotion in the concept of multi-level marketing.

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ДЕТЕРМИНАНТЕ РАЗВОЈА МУЛТИЛЕВЕЛ МАРКЕТИНГА У ПОЉСКОЈ У КОНТЕКСТУ РАЗЛИКА ИЗМЕЂУ ГЕНЕРАЦИЈА X, Y, Z

Aron-Axel Wadlewski

Извод

Основна сврха овог рада је покушај да се процени развојни потенцијал мултилевел маркетинга у Пољској, с обзиром на разлике у перцепцији система од стране различитих генерација. У теоријском делу чланка објашњена је суштина концепта мултилевел маркетинга, представљени су тржишни трендови у развоју директне продаје и описане су карактеристике генерација X, Y, Z. Затим су, према емпиријском делу рада, приказани резултати истраживања о разликама у перцепцији мултилевел маркетинга пољских представника генерација X, Y, Z. У последњем делу, на основу анализе прикупљених података, формулисани су закључци који се тичу даљих перспектива развоја сектора директне продаје.

Кључне речи: мултилевел маркетинг, мрежни маркетинг, директна продаја, генерација X, генерација Y, генерација Z

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