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MARKETING DIRECTION OF MARKETPLACE SALES TO THE CONSUMERS OF THE DIGITAL AGE

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Abstract. *Contemporary market changes, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, are directing sales on the markets to consumers of the digital age. The problem that the research wants to achieve is consumer preferences and needs analysis in order to understand sellers' actions in products selling. Numerous researches results indicate that there is a potential of this market and that it has specialties in comparison to traditional consumers. The goal of this work paper is to give encouragement to market sellers for additional investments in marketing in order to achieve increased business results. Theoretical research results are based on professional literature usage, the author's experience, statistics data and tables, while the empirical research was carried out using a survey questionnaire. The empirical research results show that there is both sellers' and consumers' interest in purchasing and implementing useful changes in marketing communications. From the research conducted, can be concluded and recommended that certain marketing orientation can influence the increase in the market products sale that will contribute to the specific customers' interests satisfaction and consumption increase.*

Keywords: *marketing direction, markets, sellers, consumers, digital age.*

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Introduction

Marketing direction towards consumers of the digital age creates a new trade dimension and facilitates the communication of specific consumer preferences for sellers. For marketplaces as small individual business entities, these technologies appliance is essential for recognizing, learning and solving the problems of lease users and consumer behaviour algorithms (Prdić et al., 2022). It can be said that agricultural products buyers are homogeneous in terms of desires and preferences, so the marketplace activity in trade should be adjusted to that. Especially, it is necessary to emphasize that these products are essential for human health. During the last year many things have changed, so the first post-pandemic survey was expanded with additional questions regarding sources of information, new social networks and advertising formats popularity (Kostić, 2022). Hence, the fundamental task of marketing direction is the market differentiation, the promotion and sale of marketplace products through social networks, e-markets and other means of distribution to digital age consumers. The core of a good value delivery system is a set of key business processes which help deliver distinct value to the customer (Mittal et al., 2005). Up to date technology enables markets and sellers to monitor and recognize the wishes and motives of purchase, which is enabled

by the market group and the level of value in the consumption of fresh products. Dynamic life in urban areas presents an additional challenge of survival (Bott et al., 2019). Marketplaces contribute to many social benefits, increased income, social communication and interaction, social wealth development, and also a higher degree of connection between consumers and the local community (Bonanno et al., 2017). Marketplaces emerged along with the emergence of commodity exchange, about five thousand years ago (Petrović et al., 2021). If we take the historical and actual context of the market role in fresh products distribution, its social importance, and agricultural products as part of the market significant for people's living and health, it is necessary to adjust the market assortment and marketing activities to the market trends, taking into consideration tradition and modern, urban generation of consumers.

The aim of the work is investigation of the connection and reliability of the marketing direction of the sale of agricultural products from the marketplace through online purchase to the satisfaction of modern, digital age consumers. The results of this research can serve marketplaces as business enterprises for identifying factors that influence business relationships building between markets, sellers and consumers. After introduction, follows a review of the literature, then the formation of hypotheses based on the research materials and methodology, and finally, research results and conclusions in the form of recommendations. The author's practical and scientific experience contributes to the making recommendations for business practice appliance.

Literature Review

The budgeting process is complex, consistent of several serial steps, which implementation needs some time (Mihajlović et al. 2022). The primary task of marketers is to create budget for directing marketing communications to consumers who are historically tied to the digital age. Companies are taking advantage of social networking platforms in order to expand their geographic reach of customer (Gao et al., 2018). In the case of marketplaces, social network platforms provide greater representation on the market and reorientation of the market business model. Social networks have emerged as a powerful and effective tool for business communication maintenance (Hussian et al., 2019). Digitization of services was analysed from everyday life point of view and users as a tool that can (and should) be used by the community (human-centered digitalization) (Toivonen et al., 2019). Namely, the market success, in addition to the modern communication technologies usage, implies other social life issues, and marketplaces are good places for that. Urban and rural areas are significantly different in the daily use of the Internet (Eurostat, 2020). Otherwise, in many development technology clusters, corporate activity dominates more than university activity (Ahmetagić et al., 2022). The simple organization and organizational structure direct the marketplaces to rural areas of production, but also focus on agricultural production clusters. Based on the positive correlation between domestic producers, safe shopping for consumers and the positive correlation between collecting taxes for the state, and a clear position in the public eye, the future direction of marketplaces is defined (Prdić, 2022) There are more and more portals and pages offering new ways of buying and selling products and services (Vladislavljević, 2022). Money transactions and sales through social networks must not be at the expense of state taxes collecting. Improving one's own market performance implies monitoring and learning from competitors, the ultimate effect of which is to see one's own marketing position, adjust and adapt, and achieve a strategic position (Prdić et al., 2022). Own business performance should be used as an effective tool for identifying competitors' performance. Modern business analysis is a special business activity (Cavlin., 2022). Business analysis in the digital age implies reaching and analysing the best business processes. The world economy is changing fast, the global growth of the trade exchange of goods is constantly increasing from year to year, both absolutely and relatively (Gazdić et al., 2022). Information technologies and digital transformation together make perfect tools in production and services for companies that are visible, networked and beneficial to their users.

Methods

The central problem that we analyse in the work paper is the formation of a marketing directions integrated model that would lead to online sales of market products increase. There was conducted a thorough analysis of online shopping, especially after the Kovid-19 pandemic, as well as the importance of modern consumers of the digital age and current positions in the sale of marketplace fresh products. The main goal is observation of current trade factors and marketing activities planning. Focusing on consumers of the digital age means to emphasize the usage of fresh products based on good communications. The research was conducted using a personal interview via a survey questionnaire and included 180 respondents at the Futoška market in Novi Sad, as part of the JKP Tržnica, during the period of June 15 to 30, 2022. Of those interviewed 150 are consumers and 30 are sellers of vegetables. For vegetable sellers, the condition was that they sell products 5 times a week. The research was performed in the green part of the market. When it comes to consumers who were surveyed on a sample of 150, only those who come to the market 3-4 times a week were interviewed. The theoretical part of the research is based on the application of professional and scientific literature in the field of marketing, business and markets. The results were processed using statistical data processing methods and presented by tables and graphs. Marketing research is a function that connects consumers, customers and the general public with the marketer using information - and that information serves for recognition and defining marketing opportunities and problems, to design, refine and evaluate marketing actions, to monitor marketing performance and to improve the understanding of marketing as a process (Kotler et al., 2017).

The intention is to use the selected methods for achieving the goal of the research by establishing an effective model of marketing directions, and also to verify the following hypotheses through empirical research.

H1: Sellers in the market insufficiently use online product sales as a concept of effective sales.

H2: Consumers in the market have a positive attitude about the potential change of attitudes about shopping - Among consumers exist average desire for online shopping and changes in shopping.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of research of marketplace sellers' attitudes about shopping online

During the interview itself and conversations with vegetable sellers, the opinion that prevailed is that condition for being interviewed is the experience of products sale of 5 years minimum. This condition is set for the relevance of the research. These sellers also have a broader perception of the importance and social role of markets in selling fresh and healthy agricultural products. In response to the question from hypothesis **H1**, the surveyed sellers had the opportunity to give an answer on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 expressed a negative opinion, and 5 an extremely positive one. According to the data in Table 1, the average score of insufficient application of online communication in sales is 2.5 in the area of the analysed marketplace.

	N	Mean	Stan. deviation	Std. Error Mean
Underselling	30	2,5	,660	,0664

Source: Author's research

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Underselling	-6,185	28	,000	-,378	-,5112	-,2256

Source: Author's research

In accordance to empirical test data obtained, with the significance of $\alpha=0.000=0\%$, $\alpha<5\%$, which shows that the average value, the evaluation of insufficient application of online communication in sales differs from the tested value, so it can be concluded that it cannot be accepted hypothesis that the average rating of the application of online communication in the analysed market is 3, since in the sample it is equal to 2.5, which means that it is less than 3. So, hypothesis **H1** is not accepted.

Analysis of consumer attitudes about online shopping research

The research of consumer attitudes in the analysed market includes consumers' perceptions and attitudes about the purchase itself and purchasing decisions (Table 3 and 4). Besides, the research embraced the basic factors in the conceptual model of purchase that have a direct impact on the purchase, such as reliability, safety, quality and price of products.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Change of user	180	3,989	,63780	,06410

Source: Author's research

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Willingness to buy online	3,031	179	,00	,49545	,3667	,61222

Source: Author's research

According to the obtained data of the empirical test $\alpha=0.989=98.9.3\%$, $\alpha>5\%$, which means that the average rating of acceptance of online shopping (i.e. the rating of changing the user's behaviour) in shopping with consumers does not differ from the tested value. Thus it can be concluded that hypothesis that the average desire for change for shopping behaviour in the entire set is 4 can be accepted. From the presented above, it can be concluded that the hypothesis **H2** is accepted. So, consumers on the market have a positive attitude about the potential change in the way of shopping, i.e. adding to the existing traditional shopping and sellers' offer and their own shopping behaviour. In the future, it is necessary to maintain a continuous research of consumer attitudes. Knowledge based on scientific results, can help the markets to more easily recognize the factors and their influence on the leasing of space to sellers, but also the offer of sellers of products for online shopping and adjust their offer accordingly. Organizations are becoming more capable of collecting and exploiting personalized user data (Payne et al., 2017). The research confirmed the attitudes of consumers that they are ready for online shopping as a complement to traditional shopping, which implies that creation of a customer database is the foundation for future marketing directions. Using this database, a customer profile is created and it may help in making relevant business decisions (Business Dictionary, 2018). The existence of a positive connection between the database of markets and sellers can lead to the organization of special e-marketplaces and largely increase business activity on the market as well as consumer satisfaction with online shopping.

By using the survey questionnaire of the analysis of the attitudes of consumers about the online purchase of agricultural products, the respondents answered the previously asked questions about the importance for the purchase, and the following answers were given. What are the most important factors for you in online shopping?

- Reliability of online shopping 38%
- Safety of online shopping 17%
- Quality of products 25%
- Price of products 20%.



Figure 1. Factors affecting online shopping by consumers

Source: Author's research

In the research, there were checked the sellers' views on the desire for online sales and consumers' views on the online purchase of agricultural products from green markets. The results show the connection of sellers' interest in sales, but they use it insufficiently. Consumer attitudes about purchase of products online are positive and can be useful to sellers and market places for organizing e-markets. The results of the research on consumer attitudes indicate the existence of a significant positive correlation between reliability and consumer satisfaction of 38%, which is in line with numerous studies after the Covid-19 pandemic. Also, there a significant correlation related to the safety of online shopping 17%, product quality 25% and product price 20%, which indicates that consumers do not make distinction between the products they buy in the market places and online, and expect the same quality and price.

Recommendation

Digital technologies find their implementations in all branches of the economy. Besides the company's ability, the use of these technologies also depends on the ability and understanding of their benefits. Nowadays communications and the application of technology give a chance for sellers to augment their sales and preserve competitiveness on the market. The application of technology provides easier access to products and services, better functionality and new revenues (Gomber et al., 2018). Solving the tasks of determining the statistical characteristics of the output information of complex systems can be achieved by modelling, using the methods of statistical testing (Savić et al., 2022)

The representativeness of the statistical model ought to be measured by the coefficient of determination of dependent variables. The level of online shopping depends on the influence of independent variables such as reliability, security, quality and price. Positive correlation existing between these factors and online shopping, provides a motive for sellers for creating effective marketing and sales strategies in the online environment. Besides the field research, the research can be extended to online one, through social networks, and to include both social and demographic characteristics of consumers, that are pivotal.

Conclusion

Contemporary market environment in the so-called digital age is getting more and more complex and dynamic. Business systems are directed towards users in a joint effort of creating value. The work paper has identified changes in relations between sellers and consumers and their mutual relations when it comes to online sales and purchases of agricultural products from green markets. Digital changes have altered sellers - consumers' communication, particularly after the Kovid-19 pandemic, and the role of customers is a basic factor in trade and value creation. Marketing orientation is a new approach to sales, databases, orientation towards digital sales and marketing, and all that are parts of the process and contemporary trends.

Marketplaces and marketplace sellers' business strategy requires adjustability to the digital era market. The fundamental business principle of marketplace sellers includes adapting to

transformations in digital business, following trends in online sales and changing personal business strategies in that course. The actual sellers' marketing strategies have to be changed and specially adjusted to the group of consumers of the digital age with the assistance of strategy of marketing targeting.

Based on the empirical data of the hypothesis *H1* testing, it is clear that the average rating of the insufficient application of online communication by sellers in sales differs from the tested one. In the sample is 2.5 and that is, therefore, lower than the tested 3, so the hypothesis that market sellers use online sales as a concept of effective sales of products to an insufficient degree, it is not accepted.

According to the empirical test of hypothesis *H2* data, the average rating of acceptance of online shopping among consumers does not distinguish from the tested one, so the hypothesis that the average desire for changes in shopping behaviour in the entire group is 4, and hence is accepted. Therefore, the hypothesis that consumers on the market have a positive attitude about a potential change in shopping standpoints - the average desire for online shopping and changes in shopping exists among consumers, since they have a positive attitude about changes in shopping. So, the hypothesis is accepted Consumers on the market have a positive attitude about a potential change in the way of shopping, i.e. renewing existing traditional shopping and sellers' offer and their own shopping behaviour.

In addition to new knowledge about customer behaviour when shopping online through attitudes about reliability, safety, product quality, and price, the results of this research can be useful to markets and business organizations both through communication and influence on sellers and on consumer satisfaction in online shopping. In addition to the theoretical and empirical contributions of the research, there are certain limitations that primarily relate to the size and distribution of the sample. Future research should be directed in the direction where the demographic structure of the respondents can be included in the sample size.

Future Research Lines

Naturally, we understand some limitations in the study, as it is a specific case and in which there was a strong capacity and opportunity for improvement. Thus, we defined as future lines of research, two fundamental and converging options, which would be the possibility to compare the results over time with other industrial organizations and apply the study methodologies to companies in non-industrial sectors, such as logistics and services (Romana, 2016).

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