



Determinants of assessing the quality of advertising services - The perspective of enterprises active and inactive in advertising

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a comparative analysis of the perception of advertising services, addressing the intensity of advertising services and the evaluation of advertising quality. Using multidimensional scaling techniques for 505 enterprises in Poland, the authors demonstrate that managers employ different criteria to assess the quality of advertising services. The selection of these criteria is influenced by the company's size and its experience co-operating with advertising agencies. A statistically significant relationship occurred between the size of the company and the choice to use or not to use the services of advertising agencies, the companies' choice to use or not to use the services of advertising agencies and the perception of the importance of factors that determine advertising agencies' quality by the managers of these companies.

1. Introduction

Professional advertising is a young field in Poland. The country's shift from a command to a market economy 20 years ago prompted companies to demand more sophisticated advertising services; this demand generated supply. The era when every product was easily sold out due to shortages of goods is over, which has stimulated companies' interest in advertising services. Additionally, international companies that needed to use the services of companies providing advertising gradually began to enter the Polish market (Nowacki & Strużycki, 2002, pp. 205–252). In the years from 2009 to 2015, the number of entities in Poland's advertising market grew by > 25%, and the value of advertising expenditure grew by almost 10% (Nowacki, 2016). Currently, the key issue for companies is to ensure that they receive appropriate quality of advertising services. However, the concept of appropriate quality is ambiguous due to the large number of factors involved (Cagley, 1986). Entrepreneurs assign different priorities to these factors; they also differ with regard to the awareness and perception of quality as well as in their perception of the factors that affect the quality of advertising services. This article focuses on the perception of the quality of advertising services. It aims to compare the assessments and opinions of two groups: companies that use advertising services and those that do not use them. The presented analysis covers the following research questions concerning the scale of the use of advertising services:

- Does the size of the business influence the use of advertising agencies?
- Does the size of the business influence the evaluation of the factors that affect the quality of the services provided by advertising agencies?
- Does the fact that businesses use the services of advertising agencies influence the evaluation of the criteria (factors) affecting the quality of services provided by advertising agencies?
- How do companies that use advertising agency services and those that do not use these services differ with regard to the evaluation of the factors (criteria) impacting the quality of services provided by advertising agencies?

The research hypotheses presented in the latter part of the paper derive from the research questions.

The research approach presented in this article is different from the one applied in most studies that focus on the perspective of the service recipient. These studies primarily show how to choose advertising services, whereas this article focuses on how to offer them and whether they include an innovative dimension. Research concerning advertising agency-customer relations and clients' perceptions of the quality of advertising services allows advertising agencies to prepare strategies adapted to the needs of different types of clients. This allows the advertising agencies to identify which groups of components that affect quality should or should not be emphasized.

The structure of the article is as follows. It begins with a literature

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review concerning the quality of advertising services. Then, the article presents a description of the research sample and the hypotheses, followed by the description of the research results. The article ends with a discussion of the results and conclusions.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Advertising services and their importance for businesses

Advertising has two prominent definitions. First, advertising is understood as any paid form of non-personal communication about an organization, product, service or idea to an identified sponsor (Alexander, 1965; Sheehan, 2014). Second, advertising refers to quality. Deming turned the attention of business to quality and strongly proposed the integration of new solutions aimed at ensuring quality into the activities of businesses (Stoma, 2012). Although he advocated for delivering a predictable level of homogeneity and reliability at the lowest possible costs and adjusting to market requirements, Ishikawa linked the idea of quality closely to client satisfaction (Stoma, 2012). With customer-centric orientation, quality is seen as the degree of the buyer's satisfaction in having his needs met or compliance with his requirements (Oakland, 2000). Transferring the abovementioned definitions to the area of services, it appears that a service has adequate quality if its implementation meets or exceeds customers' expectations (Grönroos, 2000; Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1990). The concept of the quality of services seems to have two aspects: technical and functional. The former refers to the result of operational processes (i.e., market impact and the effect of their use), whereas the latter refers to the relationship between their provider and their recipient.

Advertising is an important tool for companies. To capture consumers' attention, companies must engage in fierce competition on an unprecedented scale. Arens, Schaefer, and Weigold (2009) argue that economic growth requires advertising as it becomes the driving force of free competition. Sanayei, Javadi, and Baluchianzade (2012) believe that modern advertising has a complex nature; its role might be placed within mass market communication, art, economics and the socio-cultural environment. Advertising services include two types of activities: advertising agencies (i.e., companies that specialize in the creation, production, and placement of advertising messages and that may provide other services that facilitate marketing communications) (Belch & Belch, 2009) and activity related to media representation (Nowacki & Strużycki, 2011).

With ever-tougher competition and ever-better market communication, the significance of advertising services in business activity continues to grow. Hence, there is an increasing supply of advertising services globally in terms of both the number of service providers and higher advertising expenses (Faisal & Khan, 2008). According to ZenithOptimedia, global advertising expenditures are growing at a rate of > 4% per year; their value in 2016 reached almost 550 billion USD, and in 2018, it is projected to be nearly \$600 billion (Pallus, 2016). Chinese markets show the highest dynamics (Adspend database, 2016). In China, in addition to the increase in advertising expenditures over the years, we can observe that advertising agencies grew enormously, at the expense of originating companies (advertisers) (Prendergast, Shi, & West, 2001).

Enterprises value good advertising services because they may exert a positive influence on improving managerial processes, building competitive advantage and improving customer retention (Stoma, 2012; Trasorras, Weinstein, & Abratt, 2009). Good advertising services contribute to increased efficiency; the latter translates into higher sales, revenue and profit growth figures. Thus, investment in advertising may generate tangible and measurable returns. Albion and Farris (1981) point toward advertising's market power (advertising influences competition, profits and concentration) and its economic effects, which are particularly visible in the context of product innovation, primary demand and aggregate consumption.

As technology makes it easier for customers to make purchasing decisions (easy access to information, word-of-mouth communication, cross-border referrals), competition becomes ever tougher; hence, there is a relentless quest for recognition and reputation among business entities. Many firms take a fully customer-centric approach (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2010). Colony from Forrester Research mentions “entering the age of the customer – a 20-year business cycle in which the most successful enterprises will reinvent themselves to systematically understand and serve increasingly powerful customers” (Weber & Henderson, 2014). From the marketer standpoint, what matters is the ability to address customer needs and desires and to be remembered. Successful advertising rests upon its persuasive role and presentation of information, reasoning and emphasis (Sheehan, 2014). Exposure is not enough; companies need to focus customers' attention, stand out from the crowd and guarantee proper interpretation of stimuli, such as by ensuring understanding of marketing messages (Bachnik, 2016). Spreading a message to a target audience may be a task for an advertising agency.

Calfee and Ringold argue that consumer attitudes toward advertising remain relatively constant over time. Approximately 70% of consumers feel that advertising is often untruthful and manipulative but provides valuable information (Percy & Rosenbaum-Elliott, 2012). Along with an unfavorable attitude toward advertising, consumers recognize the benefits of advertising that outweigh the deficits (Pollay & Mittal, 1993). This is another reason why companies attach importance to the quality of advertising and consider who should provide them with advertising services.

2.2. The quality of advertising services and criteria for its evaluation

Instead of developing advertising competences internally, numerous companies (advertisers) seek external sources of expertise and external advertising service providers. The latter may be seen as having deep subject-matter expertise, unique knowledge of audiences, and proprietary methods or acting as agents of change and renewal (with stories to boost brands and vibrant ideas capable of capturing consumers). They may be perceived as committed to driving high-impact business results for their clients or as business partners able to influence clients' marketing budgets and priorities (Gralpois & Liodice, 2010). The best advertisement agencies create value by giving the product/service its own personality, developing an understanding of the product/service, creating a memorable picture of that product/service and trying to differentiate it from its competitors (Faisal & Khan, 2008). Non-controllable variables may also matter, such as the company's goals, its use of advertising as a marketing tool, and resources allocated to marketing. The latter is related to company size. Hence, we present Hypothesis 1:

H1. Company size affects the use of advertising services.

What is crucial to tenderers (advertising services providers) in shaping the quality of services is to focus on aspects of prior importance to customers. In the case of PR and advertising agencies, the customer focus may take the form of constantly advocating for the clients and constructing compelling ideas about the desired market position for the client, responding to changes in the environment (Weber & Henderson, 2014). Burnett makes it very clear: “The work of an advertising agency is warmly and immediately human. It addresses human needs, wants, dreams and hopes. Its product cannot be turned out on an assembly line” (Gralpois & Liodice, 2010). As a result, every client of an advertising agency will pay attention to different quality factors. The decision of which advertising agency to choose poses a challenge (Cagley, 1986). There are many players in the market, and it is not easy to evaluate and compare their capabilities and offerings; it is also not easy to predict the outcome of their proposals. Therefore, companies need to develop proper selection criteria. There are various approaches to accomplishing this task: relying on case histories, conducting investigations of

possible factors leading to satisfaction or dissatisfaction with current relationship, describing the selection process (Armstrong, 1996), or preparing checklists (Herbers, 1989; Taraba, 1991). Turnbull and Wheeler (2016) identify four categories of advertisers' expectations in relation to advertising agencies: craft, affinity, functionality and perspective. Within the context of the Polish advertising industry, Paliwadana and Barnes (2005) argue that there seem to be three broad categories of selection criteria. These are skill-related (such as the quality of advertising agency service, agency's record of successful campaigns, level of creativity), market-related (such as reputation and price) and compatibility-related (such as previously held competitive accounts, geographical proximity) selection criteria. This framework might have broader geographical adoption (Van Rensburg, Venter, & Strydom, 2010) if clients are assumed to expect much the same services from their advertising agency regardless of industry type, geographic location or company size (Woonbong, Marshall, & Son, 2003). The Polish economy is dominated and fueled by small and medium enterprises, which constitute 99.8% of the market (Chaber et al., 2017), but these enterprises are less inclined toward advertising than large companies are. As a result, the size of a company may determine the way it makes a purchasing decision on advertising services, which is the focus of Hypothesis 2:

H2. The size of companies differentiates their perceptions of the individual evaluation criteria of advertising services quality.

When analyzing the market for advertising services, there are two types of clients/advertisers. The first group consists of entities that frequently use the services of advertising agencies and appreciate their significance. The second group consists of entities that are not engaged in intensive advertising and have no contact with advertising agencies and thus poor knowledge of the advertising process. According to Cagley and Roberts (1984), the evaluation criteria applied by firms with a relatively high percentage of sales spent on advertising differ from those of firms with a relatively lower advertising-to-sales ratio. The authors of this article believe that the use of external advertising services providers affects the assessment of the services. Hypothesis 3 covers this assumption:

H3. The importance of individual criteria for assessing the quality of advertising services varies with the use or non-use of advertising services.

West (1997) argues that the variation in criteria depends on whether the relationship with the agency is project-based or collaborative (i.e., held for an extended period of time).

These groups differ in the perception of factors that determine the quality of research services. They also show relatively large differences with regard to the importance attached to individual factors. When determining the quality of advertising services, organizations can choose from a wide range of variables, focusing on the same service or advertising agency. In addition to the frameworks developed by researchers mentioned above, other important factors are worth mentioning.

In the processes of advertising, the cooperation of enterprise-clients (advertisers) with providers of advertising services (advertising agencies) is of great importance (Dahlstrom & Ingram, 2003; Gülsoy, 2012; Lichtenthal & Shani, 2000). Establishing a trust-based relationship with clients might be a predominant criterion for favorable assessment of the agency and the quality of its services (Solomon, 2016). Duhan and Sandvik (2009) recognize that trust is not enough; to improve an advertising agency's performance and increase the advertiser's readiness-to-pay-more for the agency's services, it should be combined with commitment and cooperation. Other researchers point to the development of rapport and sharing a mutual business understanding (Cagley, 1986; Michell, Cataquet, & Hague, 1992). This can be facilitated by common values (Davies & Prince, 2005; Michell, 1988).

The level of customer satisfaction depends on integrity, core service,

account management, cost management as well as mutual commitment and communication (Van Rensburg, 2010). According to Beverland, Farrelly, and Woodhatch (2007), the pro-activity of an advertising agency, understood as showing initiative, expanding horizons, and offering strategic reflection, may significantly improve customers' satisfaction and encourage them to use the agency's services in the longer term. However, the relationship between advertising agencies and their clients seems to be shaped not only by economic outcomes but also by emotions and feelings (Levin, Lobo, & Thaichon, 2016). The decision of how to allocate the marketing budget might thus be influenced by variables that are not purely rational.

This subjective aspect of the perception of the quality of advertising also influences customer satisfaction. Advertising agencies, like other service providers, need to deliver value to their clients, and this perceived value drives satisfaction (Levin et al., 2016; Patterson & Spreng, 1997). (Dan, 2010). This difficulty in achieving customer satisfaction and the growing pressure to deliver short-term results causes the average client-agency relationship to last only three years.

Many agencies seem to compete for clients using their creativity (Lehnert, Till, & Ospina, 2014; Michell et al., 1992). Creativity comes into play especially when advertising is considered art rather than a tool to sell products (Armstrong, 1996). Creativity is believed to breed innovation, which seems to be closely linked to competitive advantage – solving customers' problems and transforming market standards (Bachnik, 2010; Percy & Rosenbaum-Elliott, 2012).

Controversy in advertising has recently drawn the attention of advertisers, raising the question of what it takes to develop socially responsible advertising messages and how to read ethical standards in advertising. The examination of ethical issues may relate to individuals who create advertising (where their personal moral development may affect the messages they create), but it may also relate to the actions of advertising agencies, which consist of people whose ethical behaviors are impeded, to some extent, by socialization process (modeling behaviors), environmental influences (organizational values) and hierarchical relationships (influence of supervisors) (Sheehan, 2014). The client's individual perception of an ethical standpoint may make ethics another variable that distinguishes providers of advertising services and causes clients to be more inclined to spend money on advertising.

In terms of the quality of advertising services, scope might be a factor here. Some research suggests that advertisers might be interested in a narrower range of agency capabilities (Cagley, 1986). Looking at advertising services through the prism of market practice reveals their obvious integration. Entities that provide advertising services currently feature a far-reaching process of integration activities.

3. Methodology

The correct evaluation of the quality of services depends on the ability of organizations to analyze specific service parameters. This is particularly evident in the case of complex services, such as in the instance of advertising services. A literature review was carried out to reveal the criteria used to select an advertisement agency and to evaluate the quality of advertising services (Ammani, 2012; Armstrong, 1996; Cagley, 1986; Cagley & Roberts, 1984; Duhan & Sandvik, 2009; Faisal & Khan, 2008; Taraba, 1991; Van Rensburg et al., 2010; West, 1997). In addition, to confirm that the literature-based list was comprehensive and to revise the criteria, a pilot study covering 120 managers was conducted. This allowed the authors to make the criteria transparent to prospective respondents.

To show how entrepreneurs who use advertising services and those who do not use these services vary in their assessment of the criteria determining the quality of advertising services, a quantitative study was conducted. The article analyzes the responses of 505 enterprises using business services matched in a layer-quota way, taking into account three basic criteria for layering: a sector of activity, size measured by the number of employees and location of headquarters. The pool did

Table 1
Percentage distribution of responses regarding the use of advertising services among small, medium and large enterprises.

Specification	Number of employees in the company					
	From 10 to 49 people		50–249 people		250 and more people	
	Numeric	in %	Numeric	in %	Numeric	in %
Non-using	76 _a	48.1%	99 _a	49.7%	51 _b	34.5%
Using	82 _a	51.9%	100 _a	50.3%	97 _b	65.5%
Sum	158	100.0%	199	100.0%	148	100.0%

Each letter in subscript represents a subset of the number of employees in the company. The proportion of the columns does not differ significantly from each other at the level of 0.05.

not include pilot-study respondents.

The survey was conducted using face-to-face direct interviews with managers responsible for the relationships with providers of business services. It was based on a proprietary questionnaire containing questions relating to the use of various services and their multifaceted evaluation. A set of twenty-six criteria was used to assess the quality of advertising services:

1. Direct cooperation with representatives of agencies
2. Level of creativity of advertising ideas
3. Use of innovative solutions in the field of applied media, agents and advertising media
4. Level of overall advertising strategy
5. Possibility of obtaining favorable prices when buying airtime and advertising space
6. Good knowledge of a particular market segment/needs and behavior of consumers/product category
7. Individual approach to each client and problem/understanding of the needs and expectations
8. Autonomy in solving realization problems
9. Observance of the rules of professional ethics
10. Offering strategic and long-term solutions
11. Cooperation in solving marketing problems
12. Direct relationship between the agency and the amount of sales
13. The implementation of services in a short time
14. Good reputation among people of the industry
15. Level of conducted by the agency research and analysis
16. High level of competence and knowledge of employees
17. Experience in a particular industry
18. Openness to suggestions of the client/not imposing own solutions
19. Ability to provide the agency confidential data about strategy and sales results without worrying about their “leakage”
20. Clear and detailed information on the issue of budget
21. Ratio of price to quality of services
22. Ability to provide services on a limited budget
23. Wide range of services
24. Local character of the agency resulting in better knowledge of the realities of specific market
25. Belonging to an international network
26. Possession of quality certificates

For the purposes of analysis and verification, the hypotheses surveyed a population of enterprises that was also divided into two groups, those using advertising services (279 subjects, or 55.2%) and those not using such services (262 subjects, or 44.8%). In the case of the first group, the analysis included opinions concerning the criteria for assessing the quality of services used; in the second case, we consider opinions about the criteria that appear important to the surveyed entities.

To verify the relationship between entrepreneurs' characteristics and the choice to use or not use advertising services, the authors applied the Chi-square test. To verify the relationship between the choice to use or not use advertising services and the factors determining the

quality of those services, they used the Mann-Whitney test. For the interpretation of identified dependences, the authors applied the multidimensional scaling technique. For this purpose, perceptual maps were reconstructed to show how the entrepreneurs using and non-using the advertising services vary with regard to the assessment of the quality of the services.

4. Results

A statistically significant correlation was found between the size of the company measured by the number of employees and the use or non-use of advertising services ($\chi^2 = 9.068$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.05$). Hypothesis 1 was confirmed. However, the relationship found was weak (Cramer's $V = 0.134$).

Table 1 shows the percentage distribution of responses regarding the use of advertising services among small, medium and large enterprises. Among large companies, the share of those using advertising services amounted to > 65%. Among medium-sized and small enterprises, the percentage using advertising services fluctuated by approximately 50%. The table shows no statistically significant differences in the use of advertising agencies for small and medium-sized companies. It is important to note that statistically significant differences appear between large companies and small and medium-sized businesses.

Table 2 summarizes the verified hypotheses concerning the size of the enterprise measured by the number of employees and its assessment of the validity of all of the analyzed 26 factors affecting the quality of advertising services. The conducted analyses show no relationship between the size of the company and the 26 factors affecting the quality of advertising services. In each of the following analyzed cases, the critical significance level of p is greater than $\alpha = 0.05$. Hypothesis 2 is not confirmed. The size of the company does not differentiate the assessment of the factors determining the quality of advertising services.

Since we are analyzing the responses of two different groups, which include those using and those not using advertising services companies, the authors apply a nonparametric Mann-Whitney U test to verify the relationship between the choice to use/not use advertising services and the assessment of factors affecting their quality. In a set of 26 criteria, the choice to use/not use advertising services differentiates 14 criteria. Analyzing all 14 statistically significant dependencies shows that the entities using advertising services attach greater importance to the criteria affecting the quality of such services than do those who do not use them (Table 3). Hypothesis 3 is confirmed.

Taking into account the criteria where the assessment varied due to the use/non-use of advertising services, two perceptual maps were reconstructed showing differences in the assessment of key criteria for companies that use advertising services and companies that do not use such services.

Perceptual maps show the differences or similarities between the assessed objects in two-dimensional space. Coefficient Stress (S) and coefficient R^2 inform us about the quality of the model. The program performing the multidimensional scaling procedure aims to minimize the Stress function. The closer a function's value is to 0, the better the

Table 2

Statement of verified hypotheses regarding the size of the enterprise measured by the number of employees and its assessment of the criteria influencing the quality of advertising services.

Number of Criterion	Chi ² test values	df	Critical significance level of p
1. Direct cooperation with representatives of agencies	3.076	2	0.215
2. Level of creativity of advertising ideas	3.285	2	0.193
3. Use of innovative solutions in the field of applied media, agents and advertising media	4.121	2	0.127
4. Level of overall advertising strategy	0.832	2	0.660
5. Possibility of obtaining favorable prices when buying airtime and advertising space	0.456	2	0.796
6. Good knowledge of a particular market segment/needs and behavior of consumers/product category	1.087	2	0.581
7. Individual approach to each client and problem/understanding of the needs and expectations	1.228	2	0.541
8. Autonomy in solving realization problems	2.952	2	0.229
9. Observance of the rules of professional ethics	1.749	2	0.417
10. Offering strategic and long-term solutions	1.411	2	0.494
11. Cooperation in solving marketing problems	1.834	2	0.400
12. Direct relationship between the agency and the amount of sales	1.100	2	0.577
13. The implementation of services in a short time	0.824	2	0.662
14. Good reputation among people of the industry	1.308	2	0.520
15. Level of conducted by the agency research and analysis	3.216	2	0.200
16. High level of competence and knowledge of employees	2.751	2	0.253
17. Experience in a particular industry	2.189	2	0.335
18. Openness to suggestions of the client/not imposing own solutions	0.941	2	0.625
19. Ability to provide the agency confidential data about strategy and sales results without worrying about their “leakage”	2.766	2	0.251
20. Clear and detailed information on the issue of budget	3.904	2	0.142
21. Ratio of price to quality of services	0.194	2	0.908
22. Ability to provide of services on a limited budget	1.081	2	0.582
23. Wide range of services	1.574	2	0.455
24. Local character of the agency resulting in better knowledge of the realities of specific market	3.205	2	0.201
25. Belonging to an international network	3.682	2	0.159
26. Possession of quality certificates	2.669	2	0.263

rank order of input data is mapped in two-dimensional space. The first perceptual map (Fig. 1) illustrates the assessment of criteria that affect the quality made by individuals working in companies not using advertising services. The coefficients Stress and R-squared are as follows: $S = 0.188$, $R^2 = 0.777$.

The first dimension shows that people assessing knowledge of the market segment/needs and behavior of the consumer/product category (criterion no. 6) similarly evaluated the criterion for the possibility of

obtaining a favorable price when buying airtime and advertising space (criterion no. 5). These individuals differently evaluated the beam, which may include the criteria such as autonomy in solving realization problems (criterion no. 8) and offering a strategic and long-term solution (criterion no. 10). In contrast, when analyzing the second dimension, there are visible differences in the assessments of the criterion of implementation in service in a short time (criterion no. 13) and the criterion of use of innovative solutions (criterion no. 3). The first

Table 3

Summary of verified hypotheses regarding the fact of using/non-using advertising services by businesses and the assessment of the criteria affecting the quality of advertising services.

Number of Criterion	Average		Mann-Whitney Test		r
	Non-using	Using	Z	p	
1. Direct cooperation with representatives of agencies	224.37	267.58	-3.658	0.000	0.164
2. Level of creativity of advertising ideas	220.79	269.12	-4.062	0.000	0.008
3. Use of innovative solutions in the field of applied media, agents and advertising media	231.24	262.49	-2.619	0.009	0.117
4. Level of overall advertising strategy	241.57	256.75	-1.252	0.211	*
5. Possibility of obtaining favorable prices when buying airtime and advertising space	219.01	265.08	-3.857	0.000	0.174
6. Good knowledge of a particular market segment/needs and behavior of consumers/product category	229.86	263.12	-2.743	0.006	0.005
7. Individual approach to each client and problem/understanding of the needs and expectations	233.37	256.17	-1.95	0.051	*
8. Autonomy in solving realization problems	227.17	262.85	-3.055	0.002	0.006
9. Observance of the rules of professional ethics	235.12	257.53	-1.938	0.053	*
10. Offering strategic and long-term solutions	232.62	259.55	-2.325	0.020	0.004
11. Cooperation in solving marketing problems	238.99	252.48	-1.151	0.250	*
12. Direct relationship between the agency and the amount of sales	237.04	258.58	-1.775	0.076	*
13. The implementation of services in a short time	232.82	263.66	-2.587	0.010	0.115
14. Good reputation among people of the industry	224.85	264.85	-3.381	0.001	0.006
15. Level of conducted by the agency research and analysis	235.29	256.36	-1.79	0.073	*
16. High level of competence and knowledge of employees	233.84	260.94	-2.27	0.023	0.004
17. Experience in a particular industry	230.78	263.47	-2.716	0.007	0.121
18. Openness to suggestions of the client/not imposing own solutions	229.58	262.74	-2.767	0.006	0.005
19. Ability to provide the agency confidential data about strategy and sales results without worrying about their “leakage”	234.7	260.55	-2.183	0.029	0.097
20. Clear and detailed information on the issue of budget	236.39	254.68	-1.566	0.117	*
21. Ratio of price to quality of services	235.63	257.82	-1.865	0.062	*
22. Ability to provide of services on a limited budget	238.51	253.79	-1.305	0.192	*
23. Wide range of services	238.08	255.00	-1.424	0.155	*
24. Local character of the agency resulting in better knowledge of the realities of specific market	243.44	250.73	-0.59	0.555	*
25. Belonging to an international network	244.63	251.61	-0.58	0.562	*
26. Possession of quality certificates	224.85	264.7	-3.395	0.001	0.006

* Not applicable; due to lack of identified dependences, the measure was not calculated.

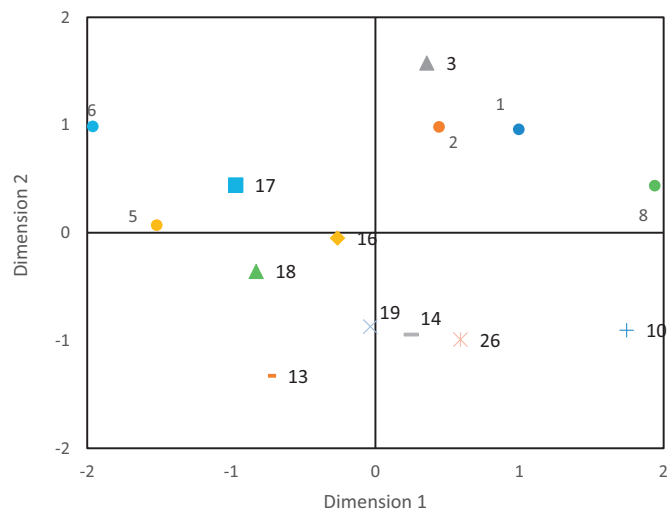


Fig. 1. Assessment of the significance of criteria affecting the quality of advertising services for people non-using advertising services in two-dimensional space.

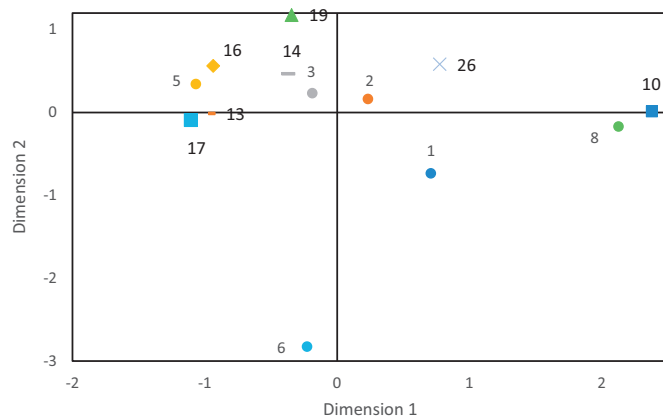


Fig. 2. Assessment of the significance of criteria affecting the quality of advertising services for people using advertising services in two-dimensional space.

dimension is more visible as the beams of the criteria are more separated from each other.

The second perceptual map (Fig. 2) illustrates the assessment of the criteria affecting the quality of advertising services as indicated by individuals working in companies using such services. The coefficients Stress and R-squared are as follows: $S = 0.163$, $R^2 = 0.904$.

The first dimension shows that people assessing criterion autonomy in solving realization problems (criterion no. 8) similarly evaluated the criterion offering strategic and long-term solutions (criterion no. 10). These individuals differently assessed the beam that includes criteria such as the possibility of obtaining favorable prices when buying airtime (criterion no. 5) and experience in a particular industry (criterion no. 17). The second dimension proved interesting. Respondents assessed good knowledge of a particular market segment (criterion no. 6) differently than all other criteria.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The analysis confirmed *Hypotheses 1 and 3* but rejected *Hypothesis 2*. First, a one-way relationship was found between company size and the use of advertising services. Second, the size of the company does not determine the method of evaluation by decision-makers of factors affecting the quality of advertising services.

Third, the importance of individual criteria for assessing the quality of advertising services varies between companies that use advertising

services and those that do not use these services. The variable associated with the use or non-use of advertising services influences the assessment of 14 out of the 26 factors affecting their quality. This seems to indicate that the two groups of companies differ in their ways of evaluating the quality of advertising services, attaching different importance to individual quality determinants. Moreover, the analysis of these results should provide for the difficulties in comparing trends on the Polish market with other markets, particularly those that are highly developed and those with a longer tradition in advertising. The Polish advertising market is relatively young; it began to develop after 1989, when other markets were already very well developed in this regard.

Among the company managers who do not use the services of advertising agencies, there is a greater variation with regard to their perceptions of criteria that impact quality than among business managers who use the services of agencies.

The executives who use advertising services point to one particular dimension that can be defined as requiring specialized knowledge. Simultaneously, the managers of these companies seem to be more aware of the problem of sensitive data being revealed when dealing with outside companies. This interpretation causes criterion no. 19 to be located at the periphery of the perceptual map. The further the object (or the criterion) from other objects (or criteria) and the closer to the poles of perceptual maps, the more it is perceived as distinct from other examined criteria. For the managers of companies that do not cooperate with advertising agencies, this criterion is located close to the center of the perceptual map.

Among the managers who do not use advertising services, there appear two distinct groups of managers distinguished on the basis of the first dimension. The first group expected the service to be implemented within a short period of time. The second group, located on the opposite pole of the first dimension, expected advertising agencies to implement innovative solutions. Based on the second dimension, the evaluators may be divided into two groups: a group that expected the company to be autonomous and offer long-term solutions and a group that expected advertising agencies to know a specific market and act as an intermediary that allows them to buy airtime at a lower price.

The article focuses on the possibilities available to research agencies in building relationships with customers, particularly with regard to the process of shaping the quality of the advertising services offered. Knowledge of customers' preferences in this area can help in developing an adequate offer of advertising services and in establishing effective cooperation with potential customers. The study results seem to indicate that advertising agencies should differentiate their promotional strategies depending on whether they address companies that have or have not used advertising services.

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