Article

Cooperation between Final Purchasers and Offerors in the Online and Offline Environments vs. the Benefits Derived by Active Purchasers

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Abstract: The purpose of article is to identify opinions on the preferred environment of cooperation between final purchasers and offerors, and to determine the benefits that the purchaser may derive from this cooperation depending on the environment in which the cooperation takes place. To prepare the theoretical part of the article, cognitive-critical analysis of the world literature on marketing, market behavior, and management was used. The results of this analysis indicate a cognitive and research gap in the area of considerations about the environment of cooperation between final purchasers and offerors and the importance of this environment in relation to the expected benefits. In order to reduce the identified gaps, empirical studies were conducted among Polish adult representatives of final purchasers, in which the survey method was used to collect primary data. The primary data collected was subjected to statistical analysis using various methods (average score analysis, exploratory factor analysis, cluster analysis) and statistical tests (e.g., the Kruskal–Wallis test). The results of the statistical analysis made it possible to verify the formulated research hypotheses. It was found, inter alia, that the majority of respondents considered offline and online environments to be equally useful for cooperation between final purchasers and offerors. More than half of the respondents appreciated benefits related to personal development (through gaining new knowledge, skills, and experience), social development (through building relationships with other people), and creating offers better suited to purchaser expectations due to influencing their shape. The preferred environment of cooperation with offerors was a feature differentiating opinions on the benefits of the following: Personal development, social development, and the possibility of obtaining an offer that better meets the expectations of purchasers. This feature did not differentiate benefits related to psychological development and material benefits. Conclusions drawn from the research have a high cognitive value (increasing knowledge about the behavior of active purchasers) and practical value (helping managers to create conditions favorable for cooperation between offerors and final purchasers).

Keywords: cooperation; final purchaser; active purchaser; offeror; online; offline; environment of cooperation; sustainable system of market relations

1. Introduction

The contemporary consumer market is an increasingly complex system of relations between its participants. Their joint activities are one of the key features of this market, fitting the paradigm of joint value creation [1]. Cooperation is an opportunity for offerors to gain a competitive advantage, to enter the path of sustainability [2] and, consequently, to achieve market success. For final purchasers, it is an
opportunity to obtain benefits that are not available under the conditions of the traditional approach based on the disconnection of market roles. Cooperation is also a huge challenge, as it requires a complete break with the classic approach to mutual relationships. Therefore, it is very important to undertake research in this area, as it allows factors favoring and hindering mutual cooperation to be discovered.

It can be assumed that cooperation is the result of noticing the benefits that it can achieve. The benefits are definitely greater than those achieved by market participants who play traditional market roles, understood as the separate roles of supplier and recipient. Final purchasers can cooperate with one another, yet it is the cooperation between final purchasers and offerors that plays a particularly important role, especially for marketing activities. It has a multidimensional character within which the individual and social contexts permeate [3]. Taking joint actions in the area of marketing leads to establishing and tightening mutual relationships (social development); sharing one’s marketing potential, including knowledge, experiences, skills, and abilities; increasing one’s potential (personal development); creating an offer better suited to the expectations of the final purchasers; etc. It brings benefits not only to purchasers, but also to offerors in the form of greater profits, greater sales, and greater market share (tangible benefits), and strengthening the emotional loyalty of purchasers, shaping a positive image, etc. (intangible dimension of benefits). Thus, it can be said that engaging in mutual cooperation makes it possible to achieve the state of sustainable market development of participants of this cooperation, who thus become genuine partners.

While the implementation of the approach based on cooperation requires both offerors and purchasers to completely redefine their prior thinking and functioning, being a challenging task, it is also one of the key factors of success in an increasingly competitive market. Taking into account the assumptions of the marketing orientation in which the final purchaser and their needs are the starting point for activities undertaken by offerors, it seems that it is particularly important to solve the following research problems: Identifying the purchasers’ expectations regarding the cooperation environment (online, offline, or both); identifying the benefits they would like to achieve thanks to this cooperation; defining the structure of identified benefits; identifying the differentiating respondents’ preferences in mentioned scopes according to the environment of cooperation. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to identify the opinions on the preferred environment of cooperation between final purchasers and offerors, and to determine the benefits that the purchaser may obtain from this cooperation, depending on the environment in which it takes place.

The article is structured to achieve that goal. The second, i.e., theoretical, part of the article presents the results of the literature analysis, which allowed research hypotheses to be formed. The third and fourth parts present the methodology of primary research and the results. Next, an academic discussion is conducted, comparing the results obtained with the results of research by other researchers, and the most important conclusions, theoretical and practical implications, and limitations of the research, as well as directions of future research, are indicated.

2. Literature Review

One of the main features of the contemporary consumer market is extremely high dynamism [4], which increases market unpredictability. Its functioning is influenced by facts relatively well known for years, including globalization [5], the development of technologies including IT [6], and sudden events, such as the coronavirus pandemic beginning in early 2020 (its impact on the behavior of final purchasers is examined mainly in relation to purchasing behavior—e.g., by Sheth [7]; Butu et al. [8]). Each of these aspects leads to larger or smaller changes in the attitudes and behavior of practically all market participants. These changes are especially visible in the case of market attitudes and behaviors manifested by final purchasers, which in turn even forces changes in the current attitudes and behaviors of offerors [7].

One of the examples of changes is the definitely higher level of activity of contemporary final purchasers compared to the level of activity shown by purchasers several years ago, and even more
so, several dozen years ago. As a rule, in the past, the final purchaser limited their activity to buying products available on the market, which were created by manufacturers and offered by traders. This placed the purchaser in the role of a typical recipient, while offerors acted as product suppliers. The market was thus characterized by a specific asymmetry.

The aforementioned dynamic changes related to, inter alia, the development of the internet, on the one hand led to a marked increase in the market awareness of final purchasers, and on the other hand opened up previously unavailable opportunities to undertake extra-shopping behavior [9] and to satisfy perceived needs more fully [10]. The increase in market awareness, among other things, led purchasers to notice the fact that they can jointly decide the features of the marketing offer through participating in its creation. Offerors began to notice that purchasers are key actors in the market game [11], as joint creators of marketing activities. Final purchasers, apart from purchasing behavior, began to undertake communication and creative behaviors, which resulted in elements of the marketing offer that better met their expectations due to the joint preparation of these elements with offerors.

In the literature, co-creation is defined as the participation of final purchasers and producers in creating the value offered on the market [12]. As can be seen, in this definition it is narrowed down to cooperation with producers, although purchasers may also engage in activities undertaken by other offerors, including traders and service providers [13]. In this article, cooperation is understood as final purchasers taking active steps to engage in cooperation with offerors in the process of preparing various elements of a marketing offer. It should also be emphasized that the term ‘final purchaser’ is used here on purpose. The term ‘consumer’, which dominates in the literature on marketing, management, etc., is not used in this article. The approach proposed in this article is about focusing on people who buy products, i.e., purchasers, and not on people who use the purchased products, i.e., consumers. This results from roles played in the purchasing decision-making process, among which the purchaser plays an important role. In turn, the term ‘offeror’ in this article means producers, traders, and service providers, i.e., entities whose main market activity consists of the manufacture of products and their distribution on the market.

The effect of joint action is the fact that the separation of market roles, which characterizes the traditional way the consumer market functions, has been replaced by the interpenetration of the role of the supplier and the recipient. Unfortunately, it is not always authentic in nature, sometimes being just a kind of illusion [14]. Of course, only the actual departure from the classical disconnection of market roles leads to the creation of a balanced relationship between final purchasers and offerors, facilitating the latter’s achievement of market success. With the involvement of final purchasers in the process of creating an offer, purchasers and offerors play both of these roles. Offerors become suppliers of their marketing potential, including abilities, skills, knowledge, experience, etc., while still fulfilling the role of recipients of products jointly created with offerors. Offerors, on the other hand, play the role of recipients of the above-mentioned components of the purchasers’ marketing potential, still playing the role of suppliers of products and extra-product elements of a marketing offer jointly created with purchasers. Gaining knowledge about purchasers, which is typical of classical marketing [15], has ceased to be a sufficient market differentiator. Currently, offerors can effectively distinguish themselves on the market thanks to acquiring purchasers’ knowledge and jointly creating new knowledge and new experiences [13], etc.

Thanks to the involvement of final purchasers in the process of creating marketing offers, the resources previously at the disposal of purchasers and offerors are used by both parties in the process of cooperation, which means that they simultaneously act as integrators of these resources [16]. Purchasers participating in the process of jointly creating marketing offers with offerors are referred to as active purchasers [4], co-producers [10], and prosumers [17], to distinguish them from those who limit their activity to making purchases, who are referred to as passive buyers [18].

The joint creation of marketing offers by final purchasers and offerors fits into the paradigm of joint value creation [1]. It describes how purchasers can be included in the process of creating (especially at the stage of preparation and implementation) material products (goods) and intangible products
(services), as well as other values, including experiences as active participants in these activities [18]. According to both this paradigm and the ‘service-dominant logic’ theory, value is co-created by the enterprise and the purchaser [19,20]. Each element of the marketing offer represents a specific value for both the offeror and the final buyer. If this value is more valuable than the expenditure incurred to obtain it, then the purchaser buys it. This value is manifested in the material and non-material features of the offer, thanks to which the purchaser achieves certain benefits and satisfies their needs.

For many active purchasers, the very possibility of participating in the creation of a marketing offer is a large, even a key, value [10]; it is so valuable that, primarily because of it, they decide to get involved in this process. They also appreciate the possibility of jointly creating values such as emotions and experiences [21,22], which enrich mutual relations and encourage cooperation in the future. Admittedly, in the literature, researchers focus mainly on the joint creation of material products [23,24] and non-material products, including services [25,26], less frequently analyzing extra-product elements of the offer, although these, of course, can also be jointly created by final purchasers. The extra-product elements include both tangible elements, such as product packaging, promotional activities, etc., and intangible elements, including product and/or offeror brand [27,28], product and/or offeror image, etc.

Regardless of the scope of the cooperation in question, it can take place spontaneously or inspired by offerors. The spontaneous involvement of final purchasers in the creation of marketing offers is not the effect of using additional incentives, but results from efforts to prove their own usefulness, to participate in joint activities, etc. in the form of material prizes. In turn, the inspired participation in the co-creation of an offer is the result of an offeror applying certain incentives, such as material prizes.

However, regardless of the nature of the cooperation, certain conditions must be met for it to occur. First of all, an offeror must create conditions for this cooperation, starting from the infrastructural conditions [29], through market education of purchasers, ending with the authentic use of purchasers’ ideas and suggestions. At the same time, both parties must redefine their attitudes towards each other, showing an open attitude and mutual trust [30]. Without them, cooperation will not bring any of the expected benefits, leading to negative consequences in the form of disappointment, cognitive dissonance, and discouraging similar actions in the future. Building mutual trust is also especially important because purchasers increasingly distrust offerors [31], showing great skepticism towards their actions. Therefore, cooperation requires a redefinition of the attitudes and behavior of both offerors and final purchasers, who must start to treat each other as genuine partners. Only then is it possible to obtain various advantages for the offeror and the purchaser. Even now, some offerors appreciate purchasers more, but still treat them only as resources [32] and not as partners.

In the literature on the subject, the benefits for final purchasers usually include the possibility of creating products that better meet their expectations [33]. Of course, these are not the only benefits that the purchaser can achieve by participating in the process of preparing marketing offers. They are important, but they seem insufficient to effectively motivate final purchasers to play the role of prosumers. Performing this role in practice provides a much greater number of benefits that enable meeting the needs of a higher order, especially social and psychological ones, but also self-realization. It can be assumed that cooperation with offerors brings a number of benefits enabling the fulfillment of many needs at the same time, which could not be satisfied by taking only purchasing behavior. An active buyer gains a sense of, for example, exerting influence on the shape of an offer, usefully directing their creativity [34], being recognizable [35], participating in social interactions, contributing to shaping a given community [36], etc. It can therefore be said that cooperation between final purchasers and offerors leads to the achievement of benefits in two dimensions, i.e., individual and collective, which interpenetrate. Therefore, it can be considered as a component of open [37] and even social [38] innovations.

Cooperation may be of a different nature when it comes to the number of entities participating in it. It can be network-based [39] or non-network. In the latter case, it may take the following forms: One-to-one [19]; one-to-many [40]; and many-to-many [41].
The interaction between final purchasers and offerors can take place both online and offline. In the literature, as a rule, purchasers’ activity regarding cooperation with offerors refers to the internet [23,25,42], including social media [43–45], and many advantages are ascribed to it, while the shortcomings and barriers of cooperation in this environment are ignored [46]. In practice, interaction between final purchasers and offerors can of course also take place in the real world [46–48]. This results, inter alia, from the fact that most human activity still takes place off the internet. Cooperation with offerors is no exception. Of course, the internet offers technical possibilities for activities that were not available until recently. An example is sharing one’s opinions and ideas about an offer on social media [49]. In the current pandemic era, when face-to-face contacts have become limited, these opportunities have been used even more. However, even during this exceptional situation, people may use other forms of contact, for example by phone. It is true that the internet makes it possible to establish and maintain relationships [50], but they are of a completely different nature to relationships established in the real world. Therefore, the current limitation in the number of personal contacts has resulted in the recognition and benefits of these advantages. It can therefore be assumed that after the situation has normalized, people in various spheres of life will more willingly return to offline contacts, which also applies to market behavior.

The interaction between final purchasers and offerors can, in practice, take place simultaneously in the online and offline environments. Both environments and the activities undertaken there can therefore complement each other, which leads to the achievement of a specific balance. The use of modern technologies is intertwined with the use of traditional forms of contact. As a result, offerors receive a more complete picture of final purchasers’ expectations, and active purchasers can achieve a wider range of benefits contributing to the satisfaction of a greater number of needs.

Taking into account that the attention of researchers has so far been focused mainly on interaction on the internet, the possible benefits of such interaction have also been considered in relation to behavior in this environment. The expected benefits can be interpreted as the reasons for joint activities. The reasons for final purchasers’ involvement in cooperation on the internet were analyzed, among others, by Fernandes and Remelhe [51]; Hsieh and Chang [52]; Prebensen and Xie [53]; Nordin and Kowalkowski [54]; and Bettiga, Lamberti, and Noci [36].

Admittedly, Mandolfo, Chen, and Noci [24] analyzed the influence of two groups of reasons on purchasers’ willingness to cooperate with producers, dividing them into internal and external motives. However, their research concerned (1) the generally understood reasons, (2) only joint product creation, and (3) cooperation on the internet. Therefore, the studies by Mandolfo, Chen, and Noci [24] adopted a different approach than in the research presented in this article, narrowing the subject and environmental scope of cooperation, and not taking into account specific aspects encouraging cooperation. Even more so, the benefits achieved by final purchasers from cooperation with offerors according to the environment of this cooperation were not analyzed either.

Thus, it can be concluded that there is a clear cognitive and research gap in this regard. The reduction of the identified gaps will be possible by solving the following research problem: What is the significance of the environment of cooperation between final purchasers and offerors in the preparation of marketing offers in relation to the benefits expected by the purchasers? The solution to this problem is achieved by achieving the aim of this article, i.e., identifying opinions on the preferred environment of cooperation between final purchasers and offerors and determining the benefits that the purchaser may achieve from this cooperation, depending on the environment in which it takes place.

In order to achieve the goal, an attempt was made to verify the following research hypotheses:

**Hypotheses 1 (H1).** The preferred environment of cooperation with offerors is a feature that differentiates opinions about the benefits of personal development.

**Hypotheses 2 (H2).** The preferred environment of cooperation with offerors is a feature that differentiates opinions about the benefits of social development.
Hypotheses 3 (H3). The preferred environment of cooperation with offerors is a feature that differentiates opinions about the benefits of psychological development.

Hypotheses 4 (H4). The preferred environment of cooperation with offerors is a feature that differentiates opinions on the material benefits it achieves.

Hypotheses 5 (H5). The preferred environment of cooperation with offerors is a feature that differentiates opinions on the benefits of the possibility of obtaining marketing offers that better meet purchaser expectations.

3. Research Methodology

In order to achieve the goal of this article and to verify the research hypotheses, empirical research was carried out. To collect primary data, an internet survey was used, using the Computer-Assisted Web Interview (CAWI) technique. The research was carried out in the first half of 2020 among 1196 adult representatives of final purchasers in Poland. The geographic scope was nationwide. It was panel-based. The sample was quota. The socio-demographic characteristics (sex, age, education, and region) were dispersed proportional to the distribution in the general population with a deviation of no more than ten respondents in relation to the proportion of the distribution of the entire Polish population (based on Central Statistical Office (GUS) data and CAPI population studies).

The subject scope of this article covers the following groups of variables: The preferred environment of cooperation between final purchasers and offerors and the benefits expected by final purchasers from cooperation with offerors.

During the research, the respondents were asked to indicate their preferences regarding the environment of interaction with offerors (online, offline, both). Moreover, they were presented with a set of 13 benefits that could be achieved by a final purchaser through cooperation with offerors. These were distinguished based on the results of a cognitive-critical analysis of the literature among others \[24,41\] and the results of unstructured interviews preceding the survey. The interviewees included 20 adults representing Polish final purchasers. The results of interviews showed the 15 benefits. Taking into account the results of the literature analysis benefits listed by interviewees were narrowed down to 13, including the following benefits: ‘Feeling of having a genuine influence on an offer and/or the offeror’; ‘feeling of being needed’; ‘possibility of testing the suitability of one’s ideas’; ‘possibility of obtaining a marketing offer that better meets purchaser expectations’; ‘possibility of obtaining a material prize’; ‘possibility of obtaining a cash prize’; ‘possibility of gaining new experience’; ‘possibility of obtaining new knowledge’; ‘possibility of obtaining new skills’; ‘possibility of establishing relationships with other people’; ‘possibility of impressing other people with one’s activity’; ‘filling up one’s excess free time’; ‘possibility of gaining respect from other people’. Two benefits related to ‘receiving a fixed remuneration’ and ‘obtaining regular material prizes’ were not taken into account during the main research. In the literature \[2,24\] these types of rewards are not classified as final purchaser’s co-creation activity incentives.

Each of the benefits of cooperation with offerors was to be assessed by the respondents on the odd Likert scale, which is one of the most fundamental and most frequently used psychometric tools in the social sciences \[55\]. In this article, its five-step variant was used, in which rating 5 meant definitely yes, 4—rather yes, 3—neither yes nor no, 2—rather not, and 1—definitely not. The use of such a scale is necessary to use the method of average scores analysis and exploratory factor analysis.

The primary data collected was subjected to quantitative analysis, using the following methods: Average scores analysis, comparative analysis, exploratory factor analysis, cluster analysis, and the Kruskal–Wallis (KW) test.

Exploratory factor analysis was applied to reduce the number of variables constituting the primary data obtained from survey studies and to detect structures in the relationships between these variables, that is, to classify them \[56\]. Therefore, this analysis was used to reduce the number of variables influencing the analyzed category, i.e., the ‘expected benefits of cooperation with offerors’, and to detect internal interdependencies in the relationships between those variables. The main components...
method was used to isolate the factors, but it was important to determine the number of those factors. In order to verify the number of common factors (the so-called main components), the technique of the Kaiser criterion was used, which consists of leaving only those factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. Each such factor explains a certain level of general variability of the analyzed system, defined by a percentage of variance, which can be interpreted as a measure of explaining the problem. The factors were rotated by the oblimin method. Within individual factors, the variables with the highest factor loadings in relation to a given factor were distinguished (the assumed value was ≥0.7).

In factor analysis, hidden factors are identified, which include features responsible for the perception of the problem described by the question through their prism. However, factor analysis does not allow the answer to be found, whether the differentiation in terms of the separation of individual groups (e.g., due to the preferred environment of interaction) is statistically significant enough to say that respondents’ opinion determined by the analyzed answer is significantly different. This question is answered by the KW test, which is a non-parametric equivalent of ANOVA.

Cluster analysis is a multi-dimensional exploratory method. It consists of grouping objects into clusters in such a way that objects within one cluster have more common features than in relation to objects from other clusters. It can be used to group people or other objects based on their values in a dataset [57]. Cluster analysis can therefore be used to discover data structures, but without providing an explanation or interpretation. In other words, cluster analysis is used to discover the structure of the data without explaining why it exists.

The KW test is a non-parametric equivalent of ANOVA. Its results make it possible to find the answer whether the differentiation in terms of the separation of individual groups (e.g., according to the preferred environment of cooperation with offerors) is statistically significant enough to say that the respondents’ opinion determined by the analyzed answer is significantly different. From the point of view of statistical criteria, in the case of the KW test, the data does not have to meet many requirements. The only requirements for its implementation are the following [58]:

- The dependent variable should be measured on at least an ordinal scale (it can also be measured on a quantitative scale).
- Observations in the analyzed groups should be independent of each other, which means that a person in one group should not be in another group being compared at the same time (this requirement is met by dichotomous questions, which allows the division of the respondents into two separate groups, and single-choice questions).

The KW test, as a non-parametric equivalent of one-way analysis of variance, is therefore used when the data do not meet the requirements for similar parametric tests, and the data can be ordered according to specific criteria. It checks whether the number of independent results from a group comes from the same population or from a population with the same median. Individual samples do not have to be of the same size. The input data is an n-element statistical sample divided into ‘k’ separate respondent groups with frequencies from n1 to nk.

The interpretation of the test may consist only of the comparison of the ‘p’ value with the adopted level of significance (usually 0.05), or in the analysis of the test statistics value in the case when it is necessary to assess the ‘strength/intensity’ of differences between the groups. Large values of test statistics indicate differentiation in individual groups (i.e., against the hypothesis of equality in individual groups), and the higher these values, the greater the differentiation.

The statistical analysis of the collected primary data was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics Ver. 25.

4. Research Results

The results of the research conducted indicate that the highest percentage of respondents considered both the environments analyzed to be equally useful for cooperation between final purchasers and offerors (Table 1). Admittedly, the offline environment was the preferred place of cooperation for only
4.3% of respondents, but almost 70.0% of respondents believed that both environments should be used in parallel as a coherent space for cooperation between final purchasers and offerors.

Table 1. Respondents’ preferred environment of cooperation with offerors during the preparation of marketing offers (%).

| Environment of Cooperation with OFFERORS | Indications (%) |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Online                                  | 27.3            |
| Offline                                 | 4.3             |
| Both environments are equally useful for cooperation with offerors | 68.4            |

Source: Own study based on research results.

Taking into account the subject of the article, it should be considered what, according to the respondents, the benefits are of such cooperation for final purchasers and what their hierarchy is. As shown in Table 2, out of the 13 analyzed benefits, achieving six of them (rating 5) was categorically confirmed by more than half of the respondents. These include benefits related to personal development (through gaining new knowledge, skills, and experience), social development (through building relationships with other people), and creating offers better suited to purchaser expectations due to influencing their shape. At the same time, these were the benefits whose average scores had the relatively highest values, amounting to at least 4.39. In turn, the aspects related to gaining benefits related to satisfying psychological needs (respect, impressing others) and filling up excess free time were relatively the least important for respondents. It is worth noting that the last of the above-mentioned aspects was at the end of the hierarchy, obtaining the average rating with the clearly lowest value. It should be added that for each of the analyzed benefits, the value of the standard deviation did not exceed one third of the average value, which indicates that the average values accurately reflect the hierarchy of the benefits analyzed [59].

Therefore, a question arises as to what the internal structure of the analyzed benefits is.

In order to identify the abovementioned structure, exploratory factor analysis was carried out for all respondents. The adequacy measure of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) draw is 0.861, i.e., greater than 0.5 [60]; Bartlett’s sphericity test is significant (variables are statistically significantly related); $\chi^2$ is 10144.404; and $p = 0.000$. Based on the Kaiser criterion, four factors were distinguished with eigenvalues that exceeded 1, explaining almost 77% of the total variability of the analyzed system (Table 3). The first factor, with an eigenvalue of 3.291, explains more than 25% of the total variability of the studied problem. It includes four variables with factor loadings of at least 0.7 (Table 4). Each of these variables reflects benefits connected with personal or social development. It is worth recalling that these were among the benefits most important to respondents, taking the leading positions in terms of average values.
Table 2. Benefits achieved by final purchasers due to cooperation with offerors during the preparation of marketing offers, according to respondents.

| Benefits of Cooperation                                                                 | Symbol | Indications (%) | Average Value | Position | Standard Variation |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------------|---------------|----------|--------------------|
| Feeling of having a genuine influence on an offer and/or the offeror                    | A      | 54.6 34.7 7.0   | 4.39          | 6        | 0.810              |
| Feeling of being needed                                                                   | B      | 37.9 35.6 17.1  | 3.99          | 8        | 1.028              |
| Possibility of testing the suitability of one’s ideas                                    | C      | 44.6 41.0 10.0  | 4.25          | 7        | 0.853              |
| Possibility of obtaining a marketing offer that better meets purchaser expectations      | D      | 56.8 34.2 6.5   | 4.44          | 3        | 0.747              |
| Possibility of obtaining a material prize                                               | E      | 20.7 27.9 29.8  | 3.41          | 10       | 1.072              |
| Possibility of obtaining a cash prize                                                   | F      | 23.1 27.6 27.8  | 3.45          | 9        | 1.103              |
| Possibility of gaining new experience                                                   | G      | 56.3 33.8 6.3   | 4.42          | 5        | 0.794              |
| Possibility of obtaining new knowledge                                                  | H      | 59.9 30.9 6.2   | 4.47          | 1        | 0.777              |
| Possibility of obtaining new skills                                                    | I      | 59.6 30.1 6.7   | 4.45          | 2        | 0.802              |
| Possibility of establishing relationships with other people                              | J      | 57.8 31.3 7.1   | 4.43          | 4        | 0.811              |
| Possibility of impressing other people with one’s activity                              | K      | 23.2 24.0 28.5  | 3.37          | 11       | 1.049              |
| Filling up one’s excess free time                                                       | L      | 16.5 23.2 26.7  | 3.07          | 13       | 1.009              |
| Possibility of gaining respect from other people                                        | L      | 20.2 24.1 28.2  | 3.26          | 12       | 1.012              |

Where: 5—definitely yes; 4—rather yes; 3—neither yes nor not; 2—rather not; 1—definitely not. Source: Own study based on research results.
Table 3. Hierarchy of factors according to their eigenvalues based on the Keiser criterion (for all respondents).

| Factor | Eigenvalue | Accumulated Eigenvalue | % of Total Eigenvalues (Variation) | Accumulated % of Eigenvalues |
|--------|------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1      | 3.291      | 3.291                   | 25.318                            | 25.318                      |
| 2      | 2.429      | 5.720                   | 18.681                            | 43.999                      |
| 3      | 2.387      | 8.107                   | 18.364                            | 62.363                      |
| 4      | 1.883      | 9.990                   | 14.483                            | 76.846                      |

Source: Own study based on research results.

Table 4. Results of factor analysis of benefits achieved by final purchasers thanks to cooperation with offerors during the preparation of marketing offers (for all respondents).

| Variable                                                      | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 | Factor 4 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Possibility of obtaining new knowledge                        | 0.910    | 0.111    | 0.232    | 0.090    |
| Possibility of obtaining new skills                           | 0.898    | 0.089    | 0.204    | 0.096    |
| Possibility of gaining new experience                         | 0.865    | 0.130    | 0.199    | 0.136    |
| Possibility of establishing relationships with other people   | 0.780    | 0.226    | 0.221    | 0.005    |
| Possibility of gaining respect from other people              | 0.188    | 0.849    | 0.195    | 0.149    |
| Filling up one’s excess free time                             | 0.096    | 0.822    | 0.096    | 0.220    |
| Possibility of impressing other people with one’s activity    | 0.165    | 0.793    | 0.192    | 0.258    |
| Feeling of having a genuine influence on an offer and/or the offeror | 0.116    | 0.116    | 0.823    | 0.002    |
| Feeling of being needed                                       | 0.151    | 0.318    | 0.714    | 0.172    |
| Possibility of testing the suitability of one’s ideas         | 0.308    | 0.212    | 0.706    | 0.122    |
| Possibility of obtaining a marketing offer that better meets purchaser expectations | 0.341 | −0.024 | 0.637 | 0.080 |
| Possibility of obtaining a cash prize                         | 0.128    | 0.264    | 0.110    | 0.914    |
| Possibility of obtaining a material prize                     | 0.093    | 0.292    | 0.131    | 0.907    |

Source: Own study based on research results.

The second factor distinguished includes three variables that reflect benefits related to meeting psychological needs and filling excess free time, i.e., those benefits that took three final positions in the hierarchy due to low average values.

The third factor also includes three variables reflecting the benefits of being able to verify one’s ingenuity and the feeling of doing something for others and influencing an offer. In turn, the fourth factor consists of two variables that reflect tangible benefits (financial and material). They took distant positions in the hierarchy in terms of average values. As can be seen, each factor distinguished has a homogeneous character, taking into account the specific benefits that underlie the variables that constitute them. It should be emphasized that the variable illustrating the ‘possibility of obtaining a marketing offer that would better meet the purchaser expectations’ was not included in any factor, despite the fact that it was ranked third in the hierarchy due to relatively high average value.

The results obtained during the factor analysis are confirmed by the results of cluster analysis (Figure 1). The identified clusters cover the same variables as the identified factors. Moreover, the cluster with the smallest distance consists of the variables that make up the first factor (Figure 1).
Figure 1. Dendrogram showing clusters of benefits that are achieved by a final purchaser due to cooperation with offerors (for all respondents). Where: Letters as in Table 2. Source: Own study based on research results.

At the next stage of the analysis, the aim was to define the internal structure of benefits achieved by final purchasers due to cooperation with offerors, taking into account the preferred environment of such cooperation. Exploratory factor analysis was therefore carried out separately for each of the three groups of respondents: (For respondents claiming that the preferred environment of cooperation is the online environment, the adequacy measure of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) draw is 0.857, i.e., greater than 0.5 [60]; Bartlett’s sphericity test is significant (variables are statistically significantly related); $\chi^2$ is 2599.543; and $p = 0.000$. For respondents preferring the offline environment, the adequacy measure of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) draw is 0.784, i.e., greater than 0.5 [60]; Bartlett’s sphericity test is significant (variables are statistically significantly related); $\chi^2$ is 559.129; and $p = 0.000$, and for respondents who believe that both environments are equally useful, the adequacy measure of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) draw is 0.856, i.e., greater than 0.5 [60]; Bartlett’s sphericity test is significant (variables are statistically significantly related); $\chi^2$ is 7098.267; and $p = 0.000$. Those who prefer the online environment, those who prefer the offline environment, and those who believe that both environments are equally useful. For the respondents preferring the online environment (Table 5) and those considering both environments equally useful (Table 6), four factors were distinguished, whereas for the respondents preferring the offline environment (Table 7), three factors were distinguished.

Table 5. Hierarchy of factors according to their eigenvalues based on the Kaiser criterion (for respondents preferring the online environment for cooperation with offerors).

| Factor | Eigenvalue | Accumulated Eigenvalue | % of Total Eigenvalues (Variation) | Accumulated % of Eigenvalues |
|--------|------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1      | 3.159      | 3.159                  | 24.302                            | 24.302                      |
| 2      | 2.461      | 5.620                  | 18.933                            | 43.235                      |
| 3      | 2.422      | 8.042                  | 18.633                            | 61.868                      |
| 4      | 1.862      | 9.904                  | 14.325                            | 76.193                      |

Source: Own study based on research results.
Table 6. Hierarchy of factors according to their eigenvalues based on the Kaiser criterion (for respondents claiming that both environments are equally useful for cooperation with offerors).

| Factor | Eigenvalue | Accumulated Eigenvalue | % of Total Eigenvalues (Variation) | Accumulated % of Eigenvalues |
|--------|------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1      | 3.389      | 3.389                  | 26.069                            | 26.069                        |
| 2      | 2.412      | 5.801                  | 18.555                            | 44.624                        |
| 3      | 2.312      | 8.113                  | 17.781                            | 62.405                        |
| 4      | 1.904      | 10.017                 | 14.645                            | 77.050                        |

Source: Own study based on research results.

Table 7. Hierarchy of factors according to their eigenvalues based on the Kaiser criterion (for respondents preferring the offline environment for cooperation with offerors).

| Factor | Eigenvalue | Accumulated Eigenvalue | % of Total Eigenvalues (Variation) | Accumulated % of Eigenvalues |
|--------|------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1      | 3.970      | 3.970                  | 30.542                            | 30.542                        |
| 2      | 2.998      | 6.968                  | 23.064                            | 53.606                        |
| 3      | 2.906      | 9.874                  | 22.357                            | 75.963                        |

Source: Own study based on research results.

In the case of respondents preferring the online environment and respondents who believe that both environments are appropriate, the first factor includes for variables, and these are the same variables as for all respondents (Table 8). The first factor distinguished for respondents preferring the offline environment has a completely different specificity. It consists of five variables that reflect psychological benefits, tangible benefits, and the possibility of filling excess free time. These are together the same variables that make up the second and fourth factors for all respondents.

The second factor for each of the three analyzed groups of respondents includes three variables each, but is of a completely different nature. It is created by variables with completely different specificities. For respondents who prefer the online environment, these are the variables that reflect benefits related to the possibility of testing one's own creativity and usefulness to others. The same variables for all respondents formed the third factor. The second factor identified for respondents preferring the offline environment includes three variables illustrating benefits of personal development in the form of the possibility of acquiring new knowledge, skills, and experience. In turn, an analogous factor distinguished for respondents who attribute the same usefulness to both environments is formed by three variables reflecting benefits related to meeting psychological needs and using excess free time.

The third factor identified for respondents preferring the online environment covers completely different variables than the analogous factor identified for people preferring the offline environment of cooperation with offerors. For the former of these groups of respondents, the third factor covers the same variables as the second factor identified for people preferring both environments, and for the latter group of respondents, the third factor covers the same variables as the second factor distinguished for the supporters of the online environment. For respondents indicating the usefulness of both environments, the third factor consists of one variable, which is also included in the third factor for people preferring the offline environment.

The fourth factor, which was distinguished only for respondents who prefer the online environment and those who appreciate both environments, includes two identical variables reflecting tangible benefits. They also created the fourth factor for all respondents. Therefore, it can be concluded that the fourth factor has the same structure for each group of respondents for which it was identified.
Table 8. Results of factor analysis of benefits achieved by final purchasers thanks to cooperation with offerors during the preparation of marketing offers (for each of 3 groups of respondents).

| Analyzed Value                                             | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 | Factor 4 |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Possibility of obtaining new skills                        | 0.898    | 0.111    | 0.899    | 0.169    | 0.903    | 0.094    | 0.079    | 0.285    | 0.207    | 0.124    | -        | 0.086    |
| Possibility of obtaining new knowledge                     | 0.894    | 0.225    | 0.922    | 0.225    | 0.859    | 0.112    | 0.106    | 0.360    | 0.216    | 0.094    | -        | 0.080    |
| Possibility of gaining new experience                      | 0.855    | 0.292    | 0.873    | 0.221    | 0.781    | 0.130    | 0.114    | 0.324    | 0.172    | 0.113    | -        | 0.143    |
| Possibility of establishing relationships with other people | 0.740    | 0.012    | 0.758    | 0.161    | 0.470    | 0.224    | 0.257    | 0.536    | 0.236    | 0.037    | -        | 0.003    |
| Feeling of having a genuine influence on an offer and/or the offeror | 0.119  | −0.007   | 0.096    | 0.829    | 0.423    | 0.119    | 0.101    | 0.771    | 0.824    | 0.038    | -        | −0.007   |
| Feeling of being needed                                     | 0.121    | 0.291    | 0.168    | 0.728    | 0.180    | 0.316    | 0.309    | 0.825    | 0.698    | 0.174    | -        | 0.187    |
| Possibility of testing the suitability of one’s ideas       | 0.247    | 0.183    | 0.344    | 0.710    | 0.254    | 0.194    | 0.243    | 0.766    | 0.696    | 0.069    | -        | 0.157    |
| Possibility of obtaining a marketing offer that better meets purchaser expectations | 0.266  | −0.066   | 0.379    | 0.660    | 0.501    | −0.053   | 0.067    | 0.572    | 0.604    | 0.044    | -        | 0.089    |
| Possibility of gaining respect from other people            | 0.193    | 0.798    | 0.186    | 0.192    | −0.069   | 0.850    | 0.846    | 0.312    | 0.208    | 0.182    | -        | 0.129    |
| Filling up one’s excess free time                          | 0.117    | 0.825    | 0.091    | 0.207    | 0.155    | 0.825    | 0.818    | 0.057    | 0.043    | 0.213    | -        | 0.219    |
| Possibility of impressing other people with one’s activity | 0.170    | 0.886    | 0.157    | 0.218    | 0.125    | 0.792    | 0.782    | 0.112    | 0.198    | 0.291    | -        | 0.235    |
| Possibility of obtaining a cash prize                       | 0.134    | 0.878    | 0.129    | 0.097    | 0.175    | 0.254    | 0.255    | 0.001    | 0.116    | 0.911    | -        | 0.918    |
| Possibility of obtaining a material prize                   | 0.125    | 0.908    | 0.082    | 0.116    | 0.115    | 0.269    | 0.311    | 0.016    | 0.142    | 0.890    | -        | 0.916    |

Where: I—people preferring the online environment; NI—people preferring the offline environment; B—people preferring both environments. Source: Own study based on research results.
It should be remembered that when analyzing opinions, attitudes, or market behaviors using the factor analysis method, the identified factors can be identified with respondents’ segments [61]. Representatives of individual segments are characterized by homogeneous opinions on the benefits that can be achieved by final purchasers due to cooperation with offerors during the preparation of marketing offers. On the other hand, clear differences are visible when comparing opinions expressed by representatives of segments distinguished according to their preferences regarding the environment of cooperation with offerors (Table 9). Both among the general population of respondents, those preferring the online environment, and those appreciating both environments, the segment that focuses on people pointing to benefits related to personal and social development comes to the fore. For each of these groups, there is a segment that gathers respondents who primarily see material benefits. However, it corresponds to the fourth factor, which is relatively the least important. On the other hand, among the respondents who prefer the offline environment of interaction, representatives of the leading segment are characterized by the fact that they appreciate both psychological and material benefits. Therefore, it can be assumed that the preferred environment of cooperation differentiates opinions about the benefits achieved due to this environment.

Therefore, in the next stage of the analysis, the KW test was carried out. The occurrence of statistically significant differentiation in terms of the preferred environment of cooperation with offerors can be observed in the case of five analyzed variables (Table 10). The level of significance did not exceed the limit value of 0.05 in their case. These are variables illustrating the benefits related to personal and social development, and the possibility of creating marketing offers that better meet final purchasers’ expectations. For respondents, hypotheses H1, H2, and H5 turned out to be valid, whereas hypotheses H3 and H4 turned out to be invalid.
Table 9. Respondents’ segments identified based on their preferences regarding the environment of cooperation with offerors.

| Segment | For All Respondents | For Respondents Who Prefer the Online Environment | For Respondents Who Prefer the Offline Environment | For Respondent Who Attribute Equal Usefulness to Both Environments |
|---------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1       | Possibility of obtaining new knowledge | - Possibility of obtaining new skills | - Possibility of gaining respect from other people | - Possibility of obtaining new skills |
|         | Possibility of obtaining new skills | - Possibility of obtaining new knowledge | - Filling up one’s excess free time | - Possibility of obtaining new knowledge |
|         | Possibility of gaining new experience | - Possibility of gaining new experience | - Possibility of impressing other people with one’s activity | - Possibility of gaining new experience |
|         | Possibility of establishing relationships with other people | - Possibility of establishing relationships with other people | - Possibility of obtaining a cash prize | - Possibility of establishing relationships with other people |
| 2       | Possibility of gaining respect from other people | - Feeling of having a genuine influence on an offer and/or the offeror | - Possibility of obtaining new skills | - Possibility of obtaining respect from other people |
|         | Filling up one’s excess free time | - Feeling of being needed | - Possibility of obtaining new knowledge | - Filling up one’s excess free time |
|         | Possibility of impressing other people with one’s activity | - Possibility of testing the suitability of one’s ideas | - Possibility of gaining new experience | - Possibility of impressing other people with one’s activity |
| 3       | Feeling of having a genuine influence on an offer and/or the offeror | - Possibility of gaining respect from other people | - Feeling of having a genuine influence on an offer and/or the offeror | - Feeling of having a genuine influence on an offer and/or the offeror |
|         | Feeling of being needed | - Filling up one’s excess free time | - Feeling of being needed | |
|         | Possibility of testing the suitability of one’s ideas | - Possibility of impressing other people with one’s activity | - Possibility of testing the suitability of one’s ideas | |
| 4       | Possibility of obtaining a cash prize | - Possibility of obtaining a cash prize | - Possibility of obtaining a cash prize | - Possibility of obtaining a cash prize |
|         | Possibility of obtaining a material prize | - Possibility of obtaining a material prize | - Possibility of obtaining a material prize | |

Source: Own study based on research results.
Table 10. Analysis of the significance of differences between respondents’ answers regarding the benefits that final purchasers obtain due to cooperation with offerors, according to the criterion of the preferred environment of this cooperation.

| Analyzed Variable | Preferred Environment for Co-Creating Marketing Offers with Offerors | Average Rank | Kruskal-Wallis Test Value | Level of Significance ‘p’ |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Feeling of having a genuine influence on an offer and/or the offeror | Online | 576.41 | 3.198 | 0.202 |
| | Offline | 567.52 | | |
| | Both environments are equally useful for cooperation with offerors | 609.26 | | |
| Feeling of being needed | Online | 594.80 | | |
| | Offline | 561.80 | | |
| | Both environments are equally useful for cooperation with offerors | 602.27 | | |
| Possibility of testing the suitability of one’s ideas | Online | 588.56 | | |
| | Offline | 568.58 | | |
| | Both environments are equally useful for cooperation with offerors | 604.34 | | |
| Possibility of obtaining a marketing offer that better meets purchaser expectations | Online | 568.46 | 13.164 | 0.001 |
| | Offline | 487.25 | | |
| | Both environments are equally useful for cooperation with offerors | 617.44 | | |
| Possibility of obtaining a material prize | Online | 603.85 | 1.524 | 0.467 |
| | Offline | 542.49 | | |
| | Both environments are equally useful for cooperation with offerors | 599.85 | | |
| Possibility of obtaining a cash prize | Online | 603.41 | 1.395 | 0.498 |
| | Offline | 544.75 | | |
| | Both environments are equally useful for cooperation with offerors | 599.89 | | |
| Possibility of gaining new experience | Online | 540.00 | 16.898 | 0.000 |
| | Offline | 593.82 | | |
| | Both environments are equally useful for cooperation with offerors | 622.18 | | |
| Possibility of obtaining new knowledge | Online | 547.13 | 13.222 | 0.001 |
| | Offline | 610.27 | | |
| | Both environments are equally useful for cooperation with offerors | 618.30 | | |
| Possibility of obtaining new skills | Online | 546.02 | 13.675 | 0.001 |
| | Offline | 613.48 | | |
| | Both environments are equally useful for cooperation with offerors | 618.55 | | |
Table 10. Cont.

| Analyzed Variable                              | Preferred Environment for Co-Creating Marketing Offers with Offerors | Average Rank | Kruskal-Wallis Test Value | Level of Significance ‘p’ |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Possibility of establishing relationships with other people | Online                                                              | 531.61       | 21.792                    | 0.000                    |
|                                                | Offline                                                             | 623.14       |                           |                          |
|                                                | Both environments are equally useful for cooperation with offerors   | 632.21       |                           |                          |
| Possibility of impressing other people with one’s activity | Online                                                              | 575.10       | 2.225                     | 0.329                    |
|                                                | Offline                                                             | 607.89       |                           |                          |
|                                                | Both environments are equally useful for cooperation with offerors   | 597.94       |                           |                          |
| Filling up one’s excess free time              | Online                                                              | 598.31       | 0.029                     | 0.986                    |
|                                                | Offline                                                             | 606.31       |                           |                          |
|                                                | Both environments are equally useful for cooperation with offerors   | 598.09       |                           |                          |
| Possibility of gaining respect from other people | Online                                                              | 562.41       | 5.225                     | 0.073                    |
|                                                | Offline                                                             | 622.25       |                           |                          |
|                                                | Both environments are equally useful for cooperation with offerors   | 611.45       |                           |                          |

Source: Own study based on research results.
5. Discussion

Research by other authors focuses mainly on the internet as an environment of interaction between final purchasers and offerors. Some researchers even treat the internet as the only environment for such cooperation, among others [23, 62], the appearance of which allowed cooperation to be initiated and developed [24, 45, 63]. The online and offline environments are not simultaneously examined as a space for cooperation between final purchasers and offerors, although the research clearly indicates that almost three-quarters of respondents found both environments equally useful for cooperation in the process of preparing marketing offers. Owing to the alleged advantage of technological possibilities available due to the internet, many researchers have assigned a dominant role to it in advance, not taking into account the opinions of final purchasers themselves in this regard.

Literature on the subject analyzes the issue of the reasons for final purchasers’ involvement in joint activities with other entities, including offerors. The reasons motivating purchasers to such activity can often be equated with the benefits they expect. However, as a rule, studies concern a specific type of cause, focusing on a narrow area of cooperation. For example, Hsieh and Chang [52] focused on psychological causes of brand co-creation, stating that the most important of them is identification with a given brand. On the other hand, the results of the research presented in this article show that in the case of analyzing various types of benefits, psychological benefits turned out to be relatively less important for respondents in comparison with benefits related to personal or social development.

Some authors, in turn, focus their attention on a specific product or a specific group of products. For example, Prebensen and Xie [53] studied the impact of jointly creating a tourist product on the satisfaction felt by an active purchaser. They found that co-creating such a product led to an increase in the level of satisfaction by creating an intangible value such as experience. Buonincontri, Morvillo, Okumus, and Niekert [64] came to similar conclusions, stating that co-creating a tourist product positively influences not only the level of satisfaction perceived, but also the feeling of happiness. On the other hand, according to Nordin and Kowalkowski [54], cooperation between purchasers and producers, regardless of the product concerned, contributes to the improvement of the wellbeing of an active purchaser. It can be said that these results are consistent with the results of the research presented in this article. The benefit of ‘the possibility of gaining new experience’ was among the benefits that achieved the relatively highest average score value, and was also included in the most important, i.e., the first, factor, both for all respondents, for those preferring the online environment, and for those who appreciate both environments of cooperation. It is worth noting, however, that the studies conducted by Prebensen and Xie, and by Buonincontri, Morvillo, Okumus, and Niekert, did not analyze various benefits, focusing instead on satisfaction and experience. Moreover, the importance of preferences regarding the environment of cooperation with offerors was not investigated either.

Among the reasons for final purchasers’ involvement in cooperation with other market participants, reasons such as altruism and willingness to help others are also mentioned; however, these studies often concern joint value creation with other purchasers, and moreover, have a narrower subject scope, limited to cooperation only on the internet (e.g., [36, 65]). The results of the research presented in this article do not confirm the fact that in the case of cooperation with offerors, purchasers expect such benefits in the first place. The ‘feeling of being needed’ only took the eighth place. The indications
concerning this benefit were not statistically significantly differentiated by preferences relating to the environment of cooperation with the offerors.

On the other hand, conclusions drawn by Hoyer, Chandy, Dorotic, et al. [66] are confirmed. They stated that final purchasers, when participating in the co-creation process, are guided by social considerations and the possibility of deepening their technological knowledge. The benefits of ‘establishing relationships with other people’ and ‘possibility of obtaining new knowledge’ analyzed in this article were among the most important effects expected by respondents. They created the most important, i.e., the first, factor, both for all respondents, for those who prefer the online environment, and for those who appreciate the simultaneous use of both environments of cooperation. Thus, these benefits were expected by the respondents who formed the main segment among all respondents and among both groups. These were also respondents whose opinions statistically significantly differentiated the preferred environment of cooperation. It is worth noting that this article analyzes the benefit of gaining new knowledge without narrowing it down to a specific area of knowledge.

In turn, some researchers indicate that the key reason for engaging in cooperation is the desire to obtain material rewards, among others Brockhoff [67], Etgar [68]. However, this was not confirmed by the results of the studies presented in this article. The ‘possibility of obtaining a material prize’ and the ‘possibility of obtaining a cash prize’ were placed at distant places in the hierarchy of benefits expected by respondents. Moreover, both of these benefits have entered the last, i.e., fourth, factor for all respondents, for those preferring the online environment, and for those who appreciate both environments of cooperation. Only in the case of respondents who prefer only the offline environment, were these benefits included in the first, most important factor. The preferred environment for cooperation was also not a feature differentiating the indications regarding benefits relating to material rewards.

6. Conclusions

Summarizing the results of the research, it can be stated that the majority of respondents believed that both environments of cooperation between final purchasers and offerors should be used in parallel. Among the benefits of such cooperation achieved by purchasers, the most important are benefits related to personal and social development, and the possibility of creating an offer that better meets purchaser expectations. The last position in the hierarchy was taken by material benefits. Moreover, the above-mentioned benefits related to personal and social development built the most important first factor both for all respondents and for those preferring the internet as an environment of cooperation, and for those appreciating both analyzed environments. On the other hand, benefits related to personal development entered the second factor for respondents preferring the offline environment, and the benefits related to social development for this group of people were not included in any factor.

The factor analysis conducted made it possible to identify segments of respondents who expect certain benefits from cooperation both for all respondents and for groups of respondents distinguished according to their preferences regarding the environment of cooperation with offerors. The representatives of the main segments were characterized by identical expectations regarding the benefits of cooperation for (1) all respondents, (2) respondents preferring the online environment, and (3) respondents appreciating both environments of cooperation. Taking into account the features of all segments, the most analogous are visible for segments distinguished for all respondents and for those who believe that both environments are equally good as places for cooperation with offerors. On the other hand, features of the segments distinguished for respondents preferring the offline environment clearly differ from them. It can be concluded that offerors should not only create conditions enabling cooperation with final purchasers on the web, but also beyond it. They should also develop other ways of influencing purchasers from particular segments in order to effectively encourage their representatives to co-create marketing offers.

In the case of key benefits for all respondents, as well as for those preferring the internet and those appreciating both environments of cooperation, i.e., benefits related to personal and social
development, the preferred environment of interaction with offerors turned out to be a feature that differentiated the respondents’ opinions in a statistically significant way. This feature also differentiated opinions on the benefit, reflecting the ‘possibility of obtaining an offer that better meets purchaser expectations’, although the expectations of this benefit did not characterize representatives of any of the identified segments. Thus, research hypotheses H1, H2, and H5 for respondents turned out to be valid, whereas hypotheses H3 and H4 turned out to be invalid.

7. Implications, Limitations, and Directions for Further Studies

The results of the research and the conclusions drawn on this basis significantly contribute to the theory of marketing and the theory of market behavior, especially behavior undertaken as part of cooperation. They allow the knowledge gap identified during the analysis of the world literature to be filled. They reflect respondents’ preferences regarding the environment of cooperation with offerors, contradicting the approach presented in literature, according to which the internet is the only or the best environment for joint activities. It turns out that respondents are looking for a kind of balance in this regard, appreciating the parallel use of the online and offline environments. It is also of a cognitive value to identify the hierarchy of benefits expected by respondents that may be shared with final purchasers due to cooperation with offerors, as well as to identify the internal structure of the analyzed benefits for all respondents and for the three groups distinguished according to their preferences regarding the environment of cooperation. An important contribution to the theory is also the comparison of the benefits expected by representatives of each of these groups.

The results of the research presented are also characterized by a high empirical value. They have important practical implications, especially managerial ones. They allow for shaping of the environment of mutual cooperation in line with the expectations of final purchasers, taking into account the need to create conditions for undertaking joint activities both online and offline. Identifying the benefits expected by the respondents allows managers to compose a set of incentives that will effectively stimulate final purchasers to enter joint marketing activities. In addition, identifying the segments of respondents with different expectations related to these benefits allows a much better adjustment of these incentives to the expectations of representatives of a given segment, facilitating the effective differentiation of activities undertaken in relation to particular segments of active purchasers.

Obviously, the research conducted has certain limitations. Among them, the following can be mentioned: Subject (the research covered only adults), object (the research covered the preferred environment of cooperation between final purchasers and offerors, and the benefits expected by final purchasers due to this cooperation), and geographical scope (the research covered representatives of final purchasers in Poland). Another limitation related to this study is the fact that only the final purchasers’ perspective is presented. In the case of cooperation, the point of view of offerors is important too. Future research will be defined to overcome these limitations. Therefore, in future research, the analysis will include minors, as well as an attempt to thoroughly analyze the preferred environment of cooperation with offerors and the benefits associated with it according to the demographic, psychographic, and behavioral characteristics of final purchasers. Offerors should be subjects of the future research too.

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