

COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION AS AN ALTERNATIVE TREND IN CONSUMER BEHAVIORS ON THE EXAMPLE OF GENERATION Z

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Purpose: The theoretical aim of this paper is to characterize the concept of collaborative consumption as a trend alternative to market consumption based on product ownership. The practical goal, on the other hand, is to determine the degree of knowledge of collaborative consumption among representatives of Generation Z, to learn about the ways in which this particular generation participates in initiatives and activities within collaborative consumption, to learn about the assessment of the consumption various forms, as well as about the motives for engaging in them.

Design/methodology/approach: The theoretical part uses the method of critical analysis of the literature, while the empirical part contains the results of own research using an online survey conducted among representatives of Generation Z.

Findings: The research results reveal that, on the one hand, the representatives of Generation Z lack the knowledge of the concept of collaborative consumption or of the concepts related thereto, but on the other hand – that they actively participate in some forms of the consumption, which is connected with a varied assessment of individual forms of collaborative consumption. Among the motives of involvement in collaborative consumption, economic motives are definitely dominant, while ecological and social motives are of lesser importance.

Research limitations/implications: The results of the research provide a valuable source of information on the perception and participation of Generation Z in collaborative consumption and fill the gap in this area. The limitations of the study are due to the use of the online survey method. The aim of the acquired knowledge, both methodological and empirical, is to improve the methodology of nationwide representative surveys planned in the future.

Practical implications: The results of the research provide the knowledge being the basis for the creation and development of various forms of entrepreneurial activity and business models based on the concept of collaborative consumption.

Social implications: Collaborative consumption can be treated as an alternative way of satisfying consumers' needs in conditions of economic duress and deteriorating environmental conditions. At the same time, it contributes to building up social relationships.

Originality/value: The conducted research provides a new perspective on collaborative consumption in the context of a particular group of consumers on the market, i.e. representatives of Generation Z. The originality is related to the results of empirical research presenting collaborative consumption in the context of the behaviors of Generation Z.

Keywords: consumer, consumer behaviors, collaborative consumption, Generation Z.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

The concept of consumption is very strongly rooted in the description of societies, and consumer behaviors are currently characterized by high variability and complexity, which means the occurrence of various consumption paradigms and consumption models (Bywalec, 2007, 2010; Zalega, 2012; Bylok, 2013; Mróz, 2013; Bywalec, 2017; Lipowski et al., 2020). One relatively new trend in consumer behaviors is collaborative consumption, also referred to as joint, access-based, shared, co-operative or co-consumption¹. This phenomenon is also referred to as a trend alternative to the traditional understanding of market consumption based on buy-sell transactions, and at the same time it is in line with parallel trends in the development of consumption, including dematerialization, virtualization, servicalization or greening (Wardak, Zalega, 2013).

In the literature, collaborative consumption and the sharing of things related thereto are more popular among younger age groups, including the so-called Generation Z (people born after 1994), which results from the fact that they grew up in a specific economic, political, socio-cultural and technical-technological context (Zgiep, 2014; Garcia-Rodriguez et al., 2022).

The concept of collaborative consumption was first used by Felson and Spaeth (1978) in the late 1970s in the paper “Community Structure and Collaborative Consumption: A Routine Activity Approach”. The authors defined collaborative consumption as the process in which one or more people consume goods or services by engaging in joint activities with others, and they used travelling together with friends in their car (car-sharing/pooling) as an example. However, they did not realize at the time how dynamically this phenomenon would develop in the first and second decade of the 21st century. Much later, in 2007, the concept of collaborative consumption was used by Algar (2007), who published a paper entitled “Collaborative Consumption”, and Botsman and Rogers (2010) popularized the term in their monograph entitled “What’s Mine Is Yours: The Rise of Collaborative Consumption”, in which they conducted an in-depth analysis of collaborative consumption and attempted to confirm that it was not a short-term phenomenon, but a long-term change in consumer behaviors. They pointed to the need for changes in consumer behaviors that would help to maintain a better balance in the natural environment due to the rapidly consumed natural resources. The book publication coincided with the first TEDx conference in Sydney in 2010, during which Botsman presented a model of collaborative consumption supported by the results from many years of research, describing the phenomenon as “the new socio-economic ‘great idea’ signaling a revolution in

¹ The adjective “collaborative” in the general sense can be understood as “co-operative”. However, in some Polish studies an opinion is expressed that the term *konsumpcja kolaboratywna* should not be used because the current dictionary of the Polish language does not include the adjective describing the noun. *Konsumpcja kolaboratywna* is therefore treated as a loan translation of the English term collaborative consumption. On the other hand, it is emphasized that in future the term *konsumpcja kolaboratywna* will become widely used in the Polish terminology, as was the case with many other terms borrowed from English (Burgiel, 2015a).

the way of consumption” (Stępnicka, Wiączek, 2018). In the same year, Gansky’s monograph “The Mesh: Why the Future Business Is Sharing” was published. It presents collaborative consumption as a rapidly changing phenomenon that shapes the face of consumption. The change in attitudes of some today’s consumers, consisting in the increase in the importance of collaborative consumption, was confirmed in subsequent years in publications by such authors as Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012), Bainbridge (2013), Lamberton (2016), Anwar (2023).

In the literature in Poland, the concept of collaborative consumption appeared in the second decade of the 21st century. In the context of consumer behaviors it was investigated by, among others, Mróz (2013), Wardak and Zalega (2013), Burgiel (2015a; 2015b), Małecka and Mitreęga (2015; 2017), Rudawska (2016), Kamińska (2017), Koźlak (2017), Szymańska (2017), Dąbrowska and M. Janoś-Kresło (2018), Włodarczyk (2018), Zalega (2020). An attempt to determine the impact of collaborative consumption on the economic development and the formation of new business models can be found in the works of Małecka (2016), Janczewski (2017), Mazurek-Łopacińska and Sobocińska (2018). It should be mentioned that few of the above works contain results of own empirical research of a primary nature. In this area, there is a huge research gap.

2. Collaborative consumption as a trend alternative to ownership-based consumption

Collaborative consumption refers to a model of consumption that involves sharing, exchanging, lending and reselling goods and services between consumers, as well as sharing goods and services, and more broadly speaking – resources. While in the case of traditional (market) consumption we have to do with the transfer of ownership of the acquired good, i.e. an acquisition of goods into ownership, in the case of collaborative consumption there is no ownership transfer. The focus on the function of the product (so-called product service approach) and the access to and the ability to actually use it (so-called pay-per-use), are perceived as more important than owning the product (cf. Table 1) (Wardak, Zalega, 2013; Burgiel, 2015a; Rudawska, 2016; Mazurek-Łopacińska, Sobocińska, 2018). What is particularly important, an entity participating in the collaborative consumption process can remain only on the demand side, but it can also easily become an active participant in the market supply side, offering its resources to others interested in using them, while the offer can be both free of charge and paid (Mróz, 2013; Kamińska, 2017).

Table 1.*Collaborative consumption and ownership-based consumption models*

Differentiating criteria	Shared consumption	Ownership-based consumption
Main behaviors shaping the consumption model and lifestyle	borrowing, renting, sharing, exchanging goods, joint use	buying, possessing, using (including exclusive use), disposing, selling, expressing oneself through held products
Ownership rights	paid or free use of goods not always related to the transfer of ownership (use of goods without the ownership title or transfer of ownership rights through exchange or donation)	access to goods by acquiring ownership rights
Needs, motivations and values associated with the type of consumption	need of social contacts, sense of community, group membership, trust, sustainable development, environmental concerns, freedom, need to oppose excessive consumption, rationalization, deconsumption, economy	acquisition, collection, accumulation of goods, consumption, material status, individual, individualism, hedonism, prestige resulting from possession, self-expression through the brand of products
Dominant type of relationship and network	consumer-to-consumer; decentralized networks	consumer-product; centralized networks
Length of time the product remains in use	relatively long; extending the time of the use of products by consumers	relatively short; tendency to replace products with newer ones
Type of innovation	social innovation, breakthrough innovation	different types of innovation

Source: Mazurek-Łopacińska, Sobocińska, 2018.

Although the phenomenon of collaborative consumption in the sense of co-operation has been characteristic of human behavior practically since the dawn of time, the term itself appeared relatively recently, and its understanding has significantly evolved and changed in recent years. The idea of collaborative consumption dates back to the time when people started to co-operate and provide services to each other if a need for that arose. One example is neighborhood aid, which manifests itself in lending/borrowing necessary items, resulting from the rarity of their occurrence, the impossibility of purchase or the need to economize (Burgiel, 2015b; Janczewski, 2017; Mazurek-Łopacińska, Sobocińska, 2018).

The concept of collaborative consumption is relatively new and complex at the same time, and for this reason the number of publications, especially those containing results of empirical research in this area, is limited. There is no single empirically confirmed theory that describes and explains the phenomenon. Empirically, this is an emerging area. Undoubtedly, any research in this field will enable a better understanding of the essence of collaborative consumption, the prospects of its development and its impact on the shape of present and future social and economic life.

The issues of collaborative consumption, as well as the concept itself, are, contrary to how they seem, difficult to define unambiguously, because new forms of consumption are constantly arising. There are opinions that manifestations of collaborative consumption are observed in many areas of life and escape standard divisions (Mazurek-Łopacińska, Sobocińska, 2018). In addition, the descriptions and definitions of the phenomenon found in socio-economic theory and practice are often presented and interpreted for the specific use of the interested parties,

including business entities, and they depend on the actual need. An additional problem in Polish conditions are the many terms used with reference to the forms of collaborative consumption taken from the English language, which are difficult to translate and convey their essence, and which are thus incomprehensible (Janczewski, 2017).

3. Origin, dimensions and forms of collaborative consumption

Many authors emphasize that the pillar of collaborative consumption is the idea of sustainable development, treated as a counterbalance to the generally negatively perceived phenomenon of consumerism. The economic development to date has been mainly related to the production and consumption of more and more goods and services. A consumer with a growing purchasing fund has been interested in buying an increasing amount of goods and services, which has led to overconsumption and hyperconsumption. These phenomena are still observed in many markets, mainly in developed countries. An alternative to this mainstream will be actions related to a reduction in excessive consumption, and conscious and voluntary simplification of lifestyle, i.e. the so-called anti-consumption. It should be emphasized that “this activity and attitude do not have to be related to only limiting consumption as such. They can also mean opposing excessive consumption and acquiring harmful goods in excess” (Rudawska, 2016, p. 182). In this context the concept of prudent (responsible) consumption, can be encountered. It means “anticipating the consequences of own consumer behaviors and respecting the entire life cycle of a given good, taking into account its fate beyond the act of purchase and consumption” (Rudawska, 2016, p. 183).

The emergence of the idea of prudent consumption opens the door to the creation of consumption models based on the collective use of goods and services. An example is collaborative consumption, which means that consumers share and exchange what they own instead of buying new products. If necessary, they look for used items, borrow or rent what they need. At the same time, they are ready to share, transfer or sell the things they no longer need, exchange them with others and borrow necessary things from others – for free or for profit (Burgiel, 2015a). In this way, the product is reused and its life cycle is extended. This reduces the number of resources needed to produce products and the amount of waste, which has a positive impact on the environment.

Collaborative consumption as a consumer trend is part of the concept of the sharing economy, which means a system of resource circulation facilitating the sharing of resources still usable in the sense of goods or services, whether for a fee or free of charge, directly between the interested parties or with the participation of an intermediary (cf. Table 2). A key feature of the sharing economy is the process of sharing resources, i.e. granting access to using them jointly. The sharing entity owns or has the right to use the resources it shares. Incomplete use

of owned/held resources, i.e. the possession of “surpluses”, prompts the owner/holder to make the resources available to other consumers, but transactions within the sharing economy do not lead to a change in the ownership of the resources (Sobiecki, 2016; Koźlak, 2017; Frenken, Schor, 2017; Zervas et al., 2017; Rutkowska, 2018; Guyader, Piscicelli, 2019; Mont et al., 2020; Quattrone et al., 2022).

Table 2.

Sharing economy in a narrow and broad sense

Sharing economy in a narrow sense	Sharing economy in a broad sense
Making free or still usable resources available to others (based on sharing)	Making free or still usable resources available to others not only based on sharing
Making free or still usable resources available to others only by private individuals	Making free or still usable resources available to others by private individuals and business entities
Making free or still usable resources available to others for or without a fee	Making free or still usable resources available to others for or without a fee
No intermediary or the intermediary's minor role	Intermediary's substantial role
Emphasis on trust and co-operation in the community	Emphasis on the recipient's economy and convenience

Source: Janczewski, 2017.

The idea of collaborative consumption appeared in economically developed Western countries and began to develop dynamically at the turn of the first and second decade of the 21st century. The financial crisis of 2008 and the related need to economize and make better use of resources are often cited as a catalyst for its development (Janczewski, 2017; Kamińska, 2017). At the same time, significant changes in the systems of values were initiated in affluent countries, including the fact that a growing group of consumers began to doubt that a further increase in consumption was satisfactory for them, which coincided with the awareness of environmental degradation and other negative phenomena, such as the weakening of interpersonal bonds. On the other hand, the modern consumer's features are still a desire to maximize satisfying their needs and the so-called compulsion to buy an increasing amount of goods and services. “Our species-specific mix of features, consisting of the desires in the realm of status, indulgence towards one's own weaknesses, propensity for addiction, and above all – the desire for pleasure derived from consumption, keep buyers from concrete changes in consuming. People simply neither want nor like to limit themselves if they do not have to do so” (Burgiel, 2015b, p. 155). Many consumers, especially the wealthy ones, quickly get bored with what they own and they are constantly looking for new ways to satisfy their needs by buying new products (Zgiep, 2014; Burgiel, 2015a).

Currently, the following phenomena are listed as the main causes of collaborative consumption (Mróz, 2013; Burgiel, 2015b):

1. Popularization of the Internet – with the development of the Internet, consumers have gained new, previously unavailable tools for communicating and exchanging information. The development of new technologies and social media has significantly accelerated and intensified processes within sharing economy and collaborative consumption.

2. Consumer prudence, being a result of economic crises and the consequent need to search for new forms of consumption that make it possible to save resources held by households, including the increasing importance of the availability of goods and the possibility of using them without owning them.
3. Increasing environmental awareness – consumers have become more aware of environmental concerns, and there is a growing number of consumers reporting a willingness to “restrain consumption”, which may have a beneficial impact on our planet.

Collaborative consumption is a developmental phenomenon. At the same time it is broad, diverse and characterized by many manifestations. Therefore, three main subsystems (also referred to as dimensions or categories) are distinguished in the collaborative consumption model (Wardak, Zalega, 2013; Burgiel, 2015a, 2015b; Szymańska, 2017; Mazurek-Łopacińska, Sobocińska, 2018; Stępnicka, Wiączek, 2018):

1. Redistribution markets, which are based on the exchange, transfer or resale of products no longer wanted, used or needed by their owners. Owing to that, the products are acquired by those who want to use them further. Depending on the model, the transactions are free or paid in various forms, i.e. in the traditional form of money, but also in points or in digital coins.
2. The collaborative lifestyle, also referred to as co-consumption, which is based on the exchange (free or paid) of services related to tangible goods, as well as broadly understood intangible resources such as time, space or qualifications. The basic manifestation of this lifestyle is the strengthening of existing relationships and the creation of new social ties.
3. Product use systems, also referred to as product service systems, which rely on gaining access to the benefits of using a product, but without the need to purchase it for ownership. Within a given system, certain products are used by different consumers, usually on a loan basis.

Among the basic forms (kinds) of collaborative consumption which have been created and developed in recent years, the following can be mentioned (Wardak, Zalega, 2013; Burgiel, 2015a; Koźlak, 2017; Szymańska, 2017; Mazurek-Łopacińska, Sobocińska, 2018):

- Swapping – exchanging things between private individuals, including swapping clothes or toys (clothing swapping and toy swapping).
- Carpooling – sharing and using the seats available in a private car.
- Home swapping – the exchange of apartments and homes for vacation between individuals from different regions of a country or from different countries.
- Couchsurfing – sharing and using accommodation in private apartments and houses, e.g. during travel.
- Roomsharing – short-term renting of a room on certain dates.

- Cohousing – combining independent apartments with a common space used by all residents, such as a kitchen, laundry, playground. etc.
- Coworking – renting rooms where work can be done, e.g. in a remote form.
- Time banking – Time banks are usually informal organizations that mediate the exchange of services between their members. The currency in these transactions is time, with each hour of work having the same value, regardless of the type of service offered and sought. The “earned” hours can be exchanged for any services offered by other members of the time bank.
- Crowdfunding – a form of raising capital to cover the costs associated with various social and business ventures. These projects are funded by the communities organized around them.

4. Collaborative consumption in Poland and Generation Z

The question arises to what extent the concept of collaborative consumption in its contemporary sense will be accepted in countries such as Poland. Consumer behaviors in our country are certainly marked by the situation before 1989, i.e. functioning in a centrally planned economy. The use of common goods was imposed from above, compulsory and obligatory (Zgiep, 2014). There was a widespread shortage of goods and services offered on the market, and due to that difficulties occurred in meeting basic consumer needs. Looking for used things and borrowing them from relatives or neighbors was a compulsion, not a conscious and voluntary choice dictated, for example, by ecological reasons. This certainly contributed to the subsequent increased desire to acquire goods for ownership rather than use those made available by other consumers. Currently, like in other countries, the possession of certain material goods (a car or a single-family house) is still an indication of the material and social status in Poland, although on the other hand, it is increasingly emphasized that consumers can also begin to appreciate the benefits of having access to and using goods instead of buying and owning them (Kamińska, 2017).

Changes in the household environment, as well as the accompanying political, economic, social or cultural consequences, lead to incidental reactions or permanent modifications of consumer behaviors. Some members of the society accept the changes, but the extent and level of acceptance of trends in individual societies will vary and depend on social norms and values, culture, tradition, consumer awareness, perception of economic and social phenomena, as well as on the degree of economic development of the country or region. A special group of consumers in terms of the current state and prospects of development of collaborative consumption in Poland are representatives of the so-called Generation Z. This is due to the fact

that collaborative consumption and the sharing of things related thereto are more popular among younger age groups, including Generation Z (Zgiep, 2014).

Generation Z, or New Millennials, are people born after 1994 (Eisenstadt, 2003; Erickson, 2008; Tulgan, 2009; Wątroba, 2017). The Millennials also include the previous group – Generation Y, i.e. people born between 1980 and 1994. Generation Z is a group of people of similar age, in a similar phase of their lives, and at the same time they are a specific “link in biological genealogy and cultural genealogy”. They are distinguished by growing up in a specific economic, political, socio-cultural and technical-technological context (cf. Table 3) that creates the so-called cohort effect, i.e. the formation of certain attitudes – the generational “personality” based on the experience of similar events and collective memories (Winograd, Hais, 2008; Espinoza, Schwartzbart, 2018; Espinoza, Ukleja, 2018; Lipka, 2019; Maciołek, 2019). The Millennials’ behaviors are confronted with even earlier generations, i.e. Baby Boomers (assumed to have been born between 1945 and 1964) and Generation X (born from the mid-1960s to the late 1980s) (Wątroba, 2017).

Table 3.
The context of Millennials’ growing up

Context	Components
Economic context	Ambiguity; uncertainty; economic polarization/increasing social inequalities; awareness of shrinking domestic labor resources; multi-optionality; flexibility; mobility; need to adapt to change; individualization/personalization; co-creation; reliance on market research; speed of action; focus on quick results; impatience; presentism; just-in-time actions; increasing importance of the service sector; shortening of the life cycle of products/services; creativity; innovation; changing jobs; importance of participation in rivalry; not expecting economic security from the state; remaining subject to viral, participatory, interactive, network marketing; reduced consumer and employee loyalty; common occurrence of atypical forms of employment; non-employmentism; desire to integrate work with leisure time; exposure to underemployment; need for temporary use of specific goods instead of ownership
Political context	Global perception of the world; globalization of terrorism; freedom of choice; pragmatic optimism; coherence of consumer and corporate values; pursuit of sustainable development; environmental protection movements; need for authenticity and transparency
Socio-cultural context	Diversity; ethical heterogeneity; independence; need for affiliation, meaning, development and achievement; recognition of otherness; openness to social problems; social responsibility; social exclusion; mass and intensive information exchange; cultural fragmentation; consumption of the media “here and now”; expectation of hedonism; intense experiences, experience; ludic attitudes; non-massiveness; acceptance of goals and their modification to one’s own visions; sense of social security; spending time with parents at home; having working mothers; trust; optimism; expectation of achievement; oversocialization; subjectivity; co-decision-making; high status of cyber-popularity; promotion of collective actions; relativization of systems of values and authorities
Technical and technological context	Digitalization; dissemination of digital technologies; multimedia; use of the cloud; ubiquity of the Internet as a natural means of communication in leisure, education and work; irrelevance of spatial barriers; constant access to feedback; sharing of knowledge; high divisibility of attention; multitasking; high rank of virtual communities and social media; networking; fusion of online and offline identities; mobile phones; text messages; use of e-commerce

Source: developed based on Lipka, 2019.

5. Results of empirical research

In order to identify and characterize manifestations of and motives for the involvement of representatives of Generation Z in collaborative consumption, primary quantitative research was conducted. The research used an online survey method consisting of closed questions and a metric. The survey was carried out in the period of May-June 2024 with the participation of 168 students of the University of the National Education Commission in Krakow, representing Generation Z.

Among the respondents, women accounted for 61.9%, while men accounted for 38.1%. Their financial situation was generally average (41.7%). 13.1% of the respondents described their material situation as very good, 19.6% as good, 19.0% as bad, and 6.5% as very bad. Almost every fourth respondent came from a city of over 500 thousand inhabitants (24.4%), and every fifth – from the countryside (19.6%). The rest came from towns and cities of less than 10 thousand inhabitants (14.9%), 11-50 thousand inhabitants (15.5%), 51-100 thousand inhabitants (11.9%) and 101-500 thousand inhabitants (13.7%).

The survey covered the following issues: the knowledge of the concepts related to collaborative consumption, the importance of owning products and the readiness to engage in collaborative consumption, the participation in and the assessment of forms of collaborative consumption, the motives for participation in collaborative consumption.

The following research hypotheses were adopted:

1. The level of the knowledge of the concept of collaborative consumption in the theoretical context, i.e. the concept itself and the concepts related thereto, among the representatives of Generation Z is poor.
2. The Generation Z representatives' inclination to share a product with others within collaborative consumption decreases with a rise in the product worth.
3. The readiness of the representatives of Generation Z to participate in collaborative consumption is higher in the case of forms realized with friends compared to those realized with strangers.
4. The participation in and the assessment of collaborative consumption initiatives and activities by Generation Z vary depending on the consumption forms.
5. Among the motives for participation in collaborative consumption by Generation Z representatives, the economic motives are the most important.

5.1. Knowledge of concepts related to collaborative consumption

In the survey the respondents were asked to determine their level of familiarity with the concepts of collaborative consumption, co-consumption and shared consumption, and it was not indicated in any way that these concepts were identical and could therefore be used interchangeably. It turned out that the respondents' knowledge of the concept of collaborative

consumption was very poor. Only 7.7% of them said they knew the concept and its meaning. Twice as many respondents admitted having heard about collaborative consumption, but they did not know exactly what it meant (15.5%). In turn, more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the respondents did not know the concept at all (76.8%). At the same time, almost every third respondent said that they knew the concept of shared consumption (32.7%), and a little less – of co-consumption (29.2%). On the other hand, almost half of the respondents heard something about these concepts, but they did not know their exact meaning – 45.8% (shared consumption) and 52.4% (co-consumption), respectively (cf. Table 4). There is a noticeable disparity in the knowledge of the concept of collaborative consumption and of the terms used interchangeably (shared consumption and co-consumption) in favor of the latter. It is worth noting that the answers were declarative. It is likely that the respondents treated co-consumption and shared consumption intuitively, and their actual knowledge of the essence of the concepts under analysis cannot be determined for sure.

Table 4.

Knowledge of collaborative consumption and identical concepts

Item	I know and I know what it means	I have heard something, but I don't know exactly what it means	I don't know
Collaborative consumption	7.7 %	15.5 %	76.8 %
Co-consumption	32.7 %	45.8 %	21.4 %
Shared consumption	29.2 %	52.4 %	18.5 %

Source: own studies.

The research also identified the knowledge of the English-language terms describing the forms of collaborative consumption, such as carpooling, home swapping, couchsurfing, swap parties, bookcrossing, time banks and crowdfunding. It is worth mentioning that the essence of these concepts was not explained to the respondents in Polish. The respondents were only asked to determine the level of their knowledge of the English terms. The survey results indicate that the level of the knowledge of these concepts is varied, but generally quite low. In the case of terms such as carpooling, home swapping, couchsurfing and time banks, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the respondents said they did not know them. The relatively best known term was time banks – 14.9% of the respondents, while 13.1% had heard of it, but did not know exactly what it was about. When it comes to home swapping, the percentages of indications were 8.9% and 18.5%, carpooling – 8.9% and 13.7%, couchsurfing – 7.1% and 19.6%, respectively. It was a little better in the case of bookcrossing. One in five respondents said they knew the concept (20.2%), and about a quarter had heard something about it (26.2%). On the other hand, about half of those surveyed did not know the concept (53.6%). The only exception is the relatively well-known concept of crowdfunding. Almost every second respondent declared their knowledge of it (45.8%), slightly less had heard about it, but did not know it exactly (41.7%), while only 12.5% did not know the concept at all (cf. Table 5). Despite the generally poor knowledge of the above terms, in the further part of the research it turned out, as will be discussed below, that the respondents did know and in some cases positively assessed the forms of collaborative consumption, and their ignorance concerned only the English counterparts.

Table 5.*Knowledge of English terms for forms of collaborative consumption*

Form of collaborative consumption	I know and I know what it means	I have heard something, but I don't know exactly what it means	I don't know
<i>Carpooling</i>	8.9 %	13.7 %	77.4 %
<i>Home Swapping</i>	8.9 %	18.5 %	72.6 %
<i>Couchsurfing</i>	7.1 %	19.6 %	73.2 %
<i>Swap parties</i>	10.7 %	22.0 %	67.3 %
<i>Bookcrossing</i>	20.2 %	26.2 %	53.6 %
<i>Time banks</i>	14.9 %	13.1 %	72.0 %
<i>Crowdfunding</i>	45.8 %	41.7 %	12.5 %

Source: own studies.

5.2. Importance of owning products and readiness to engage in collaborative consumption

The respondents were asked about the importance of owning products during their use. The survey results revealed large differences in responses depending on the type of product, i.e. whether it was expensive or cheap. The respondents attached the highest importance to product ownership in the case of expensive products, regardless of whether the product was used frequently (77.4%) or only occasionally (67.3%). They declared that ownership was less important if the products were cheap – frequent use (33.3%) and occasional use (26.8%). Owning a product was not important for about a fifth of those surveyed in the case of expensive frequently used products (19.6%) and for a little more than a quarter for expensive products they used occasionally (28.0%). At the same time, for more than half of the respondents, ownership was not important for cheap products for frequent and occasional use (55.4% and 59.5%, respectively) (cf. Table 6). It follows from the above that the respondents are less likely to engage in collaborative consumption for products which involve a large financial expenditure on their part. For expensive products, they prefer to own them and they are less likely to make them available to or share them with others as part of collaborative consumption. It is certainly due to concerns that other people will use the product without due care and about the risk of the product getting damaged.

Table 6.*Importance of owning a product while it is in use*

Item		Yes	No, provided that you can use the product in another way (e.g. borrowing it from someone)	Not important
Expensive products	frequent use	77.4 %	19.6 %	3.0 %
	occasional use	67.3 %	28.0 %	4.8 %
Cheap products	frequent use	33.3 %	55.4 %	11.3 %
	occasional use	26.8 %	59.5 %	13.7 %

Source: own studies.

Another issue to analyze was the respondents' willingness to engage in various initiatives and activities within collaborative consumption, i.e. free or paid loan of things, free or paid transfer of things, exchange, as well as sale and purchase of used/unnecessary things. Among the 18 different specific behaviors indicated in the questionnaire, including whether they are undertaken with friends or strangers, in 8 cases the respondents declared readiness to participate at the level of above 85%. At the same time, only 3 behaviors were indicated by less than half of the respondents. The most frequently indicated willingness was to: borrow things for free from a friend (95.8%), give used/unnecessary things to a friend (95.2%) or a stranger (94.0%), and sell used/unnecessary things to a stranger (94.0%). The least common forms of behavior are: getting used/unnecessary items from a friend without having to pay for them (47.0%), lending things for free to a stranger (45.8%), and exchanging used/unnecessary items with strangers (25.6%) (cf. Table 7).

The survey results indicate that the respondents were more ready to participate in collaborative consumption in the case of initiatives and activities carried out with friends rather than with strangers. Out of 9 general behaviors indicated in the questionnaire, as many as 7 would be more likely undertaken with friends. This was especially true for lending things to someone (both for free (friend: 88.7 %, stranger 45.8%) and for a fee (89.3% and 51.8%, respectively), as well as for exchanging used/unnecessary things with other people (60.1% and 25.6%).

Table 7.
Willingness to engage in collaborative consumption

Form of collaborative consumption			Yes	No
Lending things for free	to	a friend	88.7 %	11.3 %
		a stranger	45.8 %	54.2 %
Borrowing	from	a friend	95.8 %	4.2 %
		a stranger	86.9 %	13.1 %
Lending things for a fee	to	a friend	89.3 %	10.7 %
		a stranger	51.8 %	48.2 %
Borrowing	from	a friend	79.2 %	20.8 %
		a stranger	74.4 %	25.6 %
Free transfer of used/unnecessary items	to	a friend	95.2 %	4.8 %
		a stranger	94.0 %	6.0 %
Getting used/unnecessary items for free	from	a friend	47.0 %	53.0 %
		a stranger	50.6 %	49.4 %
Exchanging used/unnecessary things	with friends		60.1 %	39.9 %
	with strangers		25.6 %	74.4 %
Selling used/unnecessary items	to	a friend	91.1 %	8.9 %
		a stranger	94.0 %	6.0 %
Buying used/unnecessary items	from	a friend	72.0 %	28.0 %
		a stranger	67.3 %	32.7 %

Source: own studies.

5.3. Participation in and assessment of forms of collaborative consumption

An important aspect of the survey was to find out whether the respondents and their families/friends engaged in specific forms of collaborative consumption undertaken using special websites, and how they assessed them. As shown earlier, the respondents had a relatively poor knowledge of the English terms defining the forms of collaborative consumption, especially such as carpooling, home swapping, couchsurfing, and swap parties. In this part of the research, however, it turned out that they generally knew such forms (this time described in Polish), and assessed some of them positively, whereas their ignorance concerned only the English terms.

The survey results indicate that the largest and at the same time the dominant part of the respondents have had an experience of sharing/using things (e.g. in the form of lending/borrowing tools) among their family and friends (92.9%). This is a phenomenon that can be treated as a traditional manifestation of collaborative consumption. It has commonly been around since the dawn of humanity, and so it actually had existed long before the concept appeared. The other forms were indicated much less often. Among their friends and families, 44.0% of the respondents had met with sharing/using free seats in cars (carpooling) and slightly less – 41.7% – with swapping things. A third of the respondents had met with couchsurfing (33.9%). In turn, one in five of them had had an experience with home swapping (22.6%), exchange of services in leisure time (time banking) (22.6%) and raising capital to cover the costs of social/business projects (crowdfunding) (20.2%) (cf. Table 8).

Table 8.

Participation of family/friends in collaborative consumption

Form of collaborative consumption	Yes	No
Carpooling	44.0 %	56.0 %
Home swapping	22.6 %	77.4 %
Couchsurfing	33.9 %	66.1 %
Sharing/using things, e.g. lending/borrowing tools	92.9 %	7.1 %
Swapping items	41.7 %	58.3 %
Time banking	22.6 %	77.4 %
Crowdfunding	20.2 %	79.8 %

Source: own studies.

When it comes to the respondents' participation in such forms of collaborative consumption, the results were very similar to the forms they observed among their family and friends. A vast majority of those surveyed declared that they shared/used things by lending or borrowing them (94.0%). Next came carpooling (41.7%) and swapping (40.5%), followed by couchsurfing (28.6%), time banking (25.0%) and crowdfunding (22.6%). Home swapping (6.5%) was definitely the least frequently indicated form (cf. Table 9).

Table 9.
Respondents' participation in collaborative consumption

Form of collaborative consumption	Yes	No
Carpooling	41.7 %	58.3 %
Home swapping	6.5 %	93.5 %
Couchsurfing	28.6 %	71.4 %
Sharing/using things, e.g. lending/borrowing tools	94.0 %	6.0 %
Swapping items	40.5 %	59.5 %
Time banking	25.0 %	75.0 %
Crowdfunding	22.6 %	77.4 %

Source: own studies.

The respondents' participation in individual forms of collaborative consumption is related to the assessment of the forms. The respondents very positively (82.7%) assessed sharing/using things (lending/borrowing), which – as a reminder – is a common phenomenon among them. Carpooling, used by them very often, was also positively assessed (71.4%). Time banking (67.9%) was ranked third, even though, as already mentioned, up till then only one in five of those surveyed had used it. It seems therefore that this form of collaborative consumption has great potential for development. The other activities are characterized by a clear advantage of negative ratings over positive ones, including swapping, for which only 31.5% ratings were positive, couchsurfing – 30.4%, crowdfunding – 28.0%, and home swapping – 25.0% (cf. Table 10).

Table 10.
Assessment of collaborative consumption

Form of collaborative consumption	Positive	Negative	Don't know
Carpooling	71.4 %	22.0 %	6.5 %
Home swapping	25.0 %	60.7 %	14.3 %
Couchsurfing	30.4 %	60.7 %	8.9 %
Sharing/using things, e.g. lending/borrowing tools	82.7 %	12.5 %	4.8 %
Swapping items	31.5 %	54.8 %	13.7 %
Time banking	67.9 %	19.6 %	12.5 %
Crowdfunding	28.0 %	58.9 %	13.1 %

Source: own studies.

5.4. Reasons to engage in collaborative consumption

The consumer's propensity to demonstrate certain behaviors in collaborative consumption is determined by his/her motivation, i.e. the inner readiness to take certain actions, which is triggered by a set of specific factors. The basic groups of motives that were investigated are economic, environmental and social ones. Economic motives include financial benefits (profits/savings), economic duress, an opportunity to get rid of unnecessary things. Environmental motives are about avoiding waste and caring for the natural environment. Social motives, on the other hand, include the belief that one should help others, as well as the expectation of reciprocation from the other party. The survey results indicate that the very diverse forms of collaborative consumption are triggered by different motives (cf. Table 11).

Table 11.
Reasons to engage in collaborative consumption

Form of collaborative consumption	Economic motives			Environmental motives		Social motives	
	Economic benefits (profits/savings)	Economic duress	Opportunity to get rid of unnecessary things	Avoiding waste	Concern about the state of the natural environment	Belief that we should help others	Expectation of reciprocation from the other party
Lending to somebody	x	x	x	16.1 %	2.4 %	89.3 %	78.6 %
Borrowing things for free from somebody	78.6 %	72.0 %	x	12.5 %	4.2 %	x	x
Lending things for a fee to somebody	88.1 %	46.4 %	x	11.3 %	1.8 %	60.7 %	39.9 %
Borrowing from somebody	53.0 %	49.4 %	x	7.7 %	4.8 %	x	x
Giving someone used/unnecessary things for free	x	x	85.1 %	88.1 %	6.5 %	94.0 %	73.8 %
Getting used/unnecessary things from others for free	82.1 %	79.8 %	x	14.9 %	4.2 %	x	x
Exchanging used/unnecessary things with other people	58.3 %	58.9 %	80.4 %	78.6 %	5.4 %	19.6 %	7.1 %
Selling used/unnecessary things to someone	94.6 %	41.7 %	97.0 %	29.2 %	1.8 %	56.0 %	38.1 %
Buying used/unnecessary items from someone	47.6 %	45.8 %	x	19.6 %	1.2 %	x	x

Source: own studies.

When engaging in collaborative consumption, the respondents attach great importance to economic factors, including financial benefits in the form of earned income or savings (without having to spend funds), but also to the factor related to economic duress, which results from finding oneself in a certain (unfavorable) material situation. Financial benefits in the form of income played a dominant role in collaborative consumption forms related to payment, namely in the case of selling used/unnecessary things to someone (94.6%) and lending things to others for a fee (88.1%). The other motives played a much smaller role in the above cases (except for the opportunity to get rid of unnecessary items as a reason for the sale, as indicated by 97.0% of the respondents). For example, when selling unnecessary things to someone, only 56.0% of those surveyed justified it with the belief that others should be helped (a social factor), and in the case of lending various things to someone for a fee, the percentage was 60.7%. The high ranking of the motive in the form of the opportunity to get rid of unnecessary things proves that – although the importance of helping others was indeed pointed out – the respondents are motivated primarily by their own convenience.

Financial benefits in the form of savings were most important in the case of getting used/unnecessary things from someone for free (82.1%) and borrowing things from someone (78.6%) without paying. The above two manifestations of collaborative consumption very often appeared also in situations of economic duress as a motive for undertaking such actions

(79.8% and 72.0%, respectively). The significance of this motive stems from the belief that some things are not worth buying, especially in a situation where they are used only occasionally and, additionally, can be received or borrowed from others free of charge.

The next two factors, identified as environmental, were linked to the concern about the state of the natural environment and the avoidance of waste related thereto. The results of the survey indicate that the concern about the natural environment, being an essential pillar of the concept of collaborative consumption in Western countries, was of minimal importance and was the least frequently indicated motive for collaborative consumption among the respondents. The percentage of indications for this motive in the case of individual forms of collaborative consumption did not exceed as little as 6.5% (which was the case for an unpaid transfer of used/unnecessary things to others). Much more often, at least in relation to some forms of collaborative consumption, there was a motive in the form of a desire to avoid waste. Its greater popularity was probably due to the more specific character and to the fact that the expected effects of the actions were felt already at the moment they were taken up by the respondents (I am giving something I no longer need/use to someone, so I am not wasting it here and now), compared to the concept of caring for the state of the natural environment, the effects of which cannot be noticed immediately. Avoiding waste was most often indicated in the case of giving used/unnecessary things to someone for free (88.1%) and exchanging such things with other people (78.6%). In the case of other forms of collaborative consumption, no more than 30% of those surveyed indicated the importance of this motive.

Among the social motives that decide collaborative consumption were the belief that one should help others and the expectation of reciprocation from the other party. The former definitely dominated in the case when things were transferred or lent to someone for free (indicated by 94.0% and 89.3% of the respondents, respectively). It was less important in the case of a paid loan (60.7%) or selling things to someone (56.0%) because, as already mentioned, the economic motives were the most important then. In turn, the expectation of reciprocation from the other party as a social motive appeared most often in the case of unpaid forms of collaborative consumption, including lending or giving things to someone for free (78.6% and 73.8%, respectively). It was less often indicated when paid actions that involve lending (39.9%) or selling things (38.1%) were taken up.

6. Summary and conclusions

The emergence of the concept of collaborative consumption in the first years of the 21st century was the effect of the popularization of the Internet as an information and communication medium (facilitating the implementation of various forms of consumption), consumer prudence (resulting from economic crises and the need to search for new forms of

consumption related thereto), as well as the increase in environmental awareness. The idea of collaborative consumption appeared in economically developed Western countries. Consumers look for solutions to meet basic but also higher-level needs without owning products, as the needs can be satisfied through various forms of collaborative consumption. The question remains whether and to what extent this idea will be accepted in countries such as Poland, where the ownership of goods is still a sign of the material and social status. Moreover, also in economically developed countries, not all consumers are convinced by the concept of giving up the ownership of goods in favor of the possibility of using them based on their availability only.

Collaborative consumption seems to be more popular among younger age groups, including the representatives of Generation Z born after 1994, who grew up in a specific economic, political, socio-cultural, and technical-technological context. In connection with the above, empirical research was carried out, thanks to which the level of knowledge of the concept among the representatives of Generation Z, the ways of the generation participation in various forms of collaborative consumption, the assessment of its individual forms, and the motives for engaging in various forms of collaborative consumption were determined. Five research hypotheses were adopted, which were confirmed by the survey results.

According to hypothesis 1, the level of knowledge of the concept of collaborative consumption among the representatives of Generation Z was low. The knowledge of identical concepts, such as co-consumption and shared consumption, was a little better, although it is impossible to be sure of the actual knowledge of the respondents in this respect. Similarly, the knowledge of the English-language terms defining individual forms of collaborative consumption was poor, especially of terms such as carpooling, home swapping, couchsurfing and time banking.

The Generation Z representatives demonstrated varied readiness to engage in collaborative consumption depending on the worth of the product. It turned out that, as the product worth increased, the inclination to share it with other people as part of collaborative consumption decreased (hypothesis 2). At the same time, the readiness to participate in collaborative consumption was higher in the case of its forms realized with friends compared to those realized with strangers. This was especially true for lending things to someone (both with and without a fee), as well as for exchanging used/unnecessary things with other people (hypothesis 3).

According to hypothesis 4, the participation of Generation Z representatives and their assessment of the initiatives and activities included in collaborative consumption varied depending on its form. On the one hand, the traditional sharing/using things, which is done by almost all respondents in the form of lending/borrowing, can be indicated here, but on the other hand – the very rare home swapping is pointed to as well. In turn, among the motives for participation in collaborative consumption, the economic motives were of primary importance, while the environmental and social motives were viewed as much less significant, even though

they are immensely important from the point of view of sustainable development and responsible consumption (hypothesis 5).

Considering the above, it is difficult to determine unequivocally whether collaborative consumption will become a standard in consumer behaviors that will replace traditional consumption based on product ownership. It seems more reasonable to believe that it will be a phenomenon complementary to traditional consumption. Moreover, it can be expected that the Generation Z representatives, as they enter adulthood and improve their material status, even if they are now in favor of collaborative consumption and engage in its various forms, will tend to give up this particular consumption type in favor of ownership-based consumption, and their specific age group will be replaced by next younger generations. On the other hand, collaborative consumption cannot be treated as a trend that will lose its relevance or even disappear in the near future. This is supported by the indisputable reasons for its current and future development, i.e. the popularity of the Internet, consumer prudence and environmental awareness.

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