

Bachnik, Katarzyna; Nowacki, Robert

## Article

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# Innovative Marketing Services in Business Practice

Katarzyna Bachnik<sup>1</sup> and Robert Nowacki<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT

Businesses embrace a tremendous shift towards service-dominant logic in order to achieve and sustain advantage. To expand its influence, marketing needs to take on a service lens as well. The customer-centric approach tries to position value generation with processes that allow customers to „get things done”, which is linked with a quest for innovation. Modern marketing takes an integrative approach – by trying to link various channels, touchpoints, and customer relationships – which both caters to organizational goals and fulfils customer expectations and aims at persuading and affecting behaviors rather than attitudes.

The paper reports the theory of marketing service innovation and examines research data on how enterprises use marketing services, how they define their innovativeness, and perceive them as value generators. The authors break marketing services into advertising services and market-research services. Intense competition characterizes both. The analysis covers small, medium, and large companies in Poland. The main conclusions are: (a) the level of service innovativeness depends on a company context (its size, scope of operations, and business locations); (b) enterprises evaluate marketing services which they can access as generally innovative and potentially beneficial.

**KEY WORDS:** marketing services, advertising services, research services, innovation, innovative marketing.

**JEL Classification:** M3, M31, O3

<sup>1</sup>Hult International Business School, 1 Education St, Cambridge, MA 02141, USA

<sup>2</sup>University of Economics and Human Sciences in Warsaw, Poland, Okopowa 59, 01-043 Warsaw, Poland

## 1. Introduction

Business needs to embrace a shift towards service-dominant logic in order to achieve and sustain advantage (Bettencourt et al., 2014; Chesbrough & Spohrer, 2006; The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2001). Business services are purchased by economic entities whose common constitutive feature is the support of various kinds of businesses and entrepreneurship to which they are complementary (Maslowski, 2004). Hoffman and Bateson (2011) postulate the emergence of the service imperative whereby intangible aspects of products are becoming key features that differentiate the products in the marketplace. The growing importance of service

directs attention towards improving the quality of life, stimulating productivity, and creating new workplaces. Knowledge-based services may lead to innovations especially because service companies tend to report higher demand for external sources of knowledge than production ones. Service firms from Central Europe are in constant search for development strategies which opens them up for innovations of various sorts (Damanpour et al., 2009; Grabowski & Stawasz, 2017; Makó et al., 2013). Companies that provide telecom, financial, and business services are regarded as the most promising in the field as they make the highest investments in R&D. A firm's size and location determine the use of business consulting (Webber et al., 2010). In advanced economies, services generate more than

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to:

Katarzyna Bachnik, Hult International Business School,

1 Education St, Cambridge, MA 02141, USA

E-mail: katarzynabachnik@gmail.com

two-thirds of global gross domestic product (GDP) (OECD, 2024). For example, in the USA services account for 77,6% of GDP in 2021, in Poland – 58,2% in 2022 (The World Bank, 2024).

The entities providing business services include enterprises carrying out, *inter alia*, their activities within the framework of IT, telecommunication services, in the field of information, legal, accounting, and tax advice services, in the field of research and development services, management and consultancy, engineering and architecture services, advertising, market, and public opinion research as well as the services related to employment. These are the so-called knowledge-intensive business services (Kox & Rubalcaba, 2007), intrinsically characterized by high innovativeness, which stems from the development of the accompanying infrastructure and the required creativity. As a result, business services are among the most dynamically developing, and the further development of information technologies and pro-innovative changes in the operations of enterprises allows us to assume that their scope will systematically increase (Kuźmicki & Linkiewicz, 2021).

To expand its influence, marketing needs to take on a service lens as well. The customer-centric approach tries to position value generation with processes that allow customers to „get things done” (Christensen et al., 2007), which is linked with a quest for innovation. Modern marketing takes an integrative approach – by trying to link various channels, touch-points, and customer relationships – which both caters to organizational goals and fulfils customer expectations and aims at persuading and affecting behaviors rather than attitudes. To generate value, benefits need to outweigh the costs. This idea is especially true for the B2B sector. In the current market conditions, the implementation of innovation is one of the main strategic objectives of a company, as it determines the maintenance of a sustainable competitive advantage, protecting the company from losing its competitive position in the market as well as guaranteeing market success (Wolf et al., 2021). Research shows that marketing is an important area for implementing innovations, especially in the SME sector (Medrano & Olarte-Pascual, 2016).

Marketing services constitute a special type of business services. If we define services as „the application of specialized competencies (skills and knowledge),

through deeds, processes, and performances for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself” (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), we can identify marketing services and break them into advertising services and market-research services (COM, 1998). This classification is consistent with Eurostat groupings of core business operations (Nowacki, 2009). Intense competition characterizes both. It is driven by two factors mainly: the large number of entities providing marketing services and the dynamic development of techniques and solutions applied by them. Yet, there is relatively little known about advertising services in different countries (Stafford, 2005).

Marketing services are highly dynamic. In 2023 in Poland the net expenditure on advertising amounted to PLN 11.96 billion (Wirtualnemedia, 2024), which means it had increased more than eighty-five times in the 34 years after the economic marketization, accounting for a high annual rate of growth in the last decade of the twentieth century and a clear reduction of spending in the twenty-first century (Nowacki, 2017). At the same time spending on research services increased more than thirty times, reaching PLN 792 million in 2022 (Polskie Towarzystwo Badaczy Rynku i Opinii, 2024). The numbers justify the question about the quality of marketing services and their influence on business effectiveness.

Research issues concerning the innovation of marketing services and their business context (perception, relations with elements of enterprise management, and benefits) are important and current for the development of the discipline of management and quality sciences. The paper stays within the development trend of marketing services and adds a new component to it. Its aim is to verify how enterprises use marketing services, define their innovativeness, and perceive them as value generators. The analysis covers two broad categories of marketing services: advertising services and market-research services, taking into consideration their innovativeness and business use.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: The second section presents the theoretical background and identifies the research hypothesis. The third section describes the methods, and the fourth section analyzes the research results. The conclusions are then refined with a discussion of the work's implications, limitations, and scope for future research.

## 2. Theoretical Background

The service definition quoted above points to service flexibility and adaptability. These qualities are vital in the marketing context as they reflect high corporate susceptibility to the implementation of innovative solutions. Marketing services, as well as other business services, are claimed to be highly innovative.

Defining and understanding the term “innovation” is not an easy task. This applies in particular to services. Innovation can be attributed to a large variety of technological changes, reflecting new processes, services, or products (Spyropoulos, 2018). Innovation is the management of all activities related to the process of generating ideas, developing technologies, producing and marketing a new (or improved) service, the process of its production (provision), or equipment used for this purpose (Trott, 1998). The innovation process is full of discrepancies and contradictions. Integrating these contradictions is a challenge for anyone who wants to manage innovation (Gümüş & Gümüş, 2015). It should be emphasized, however, that innovation is a key factor in the development of an organization.

Innovative services must be either totally different from the current services or based on the current services but with better arrangements in terms of processes, designs, or quality (Miles, 1993). Innovative marketing services need to carry the “newness” component too. It may either result from taking specific actions for the first time or from the perception that the service differs from existing solutions (Amabile, 1996; Damanpour, 1991; Kotler, 1994). The element of “newness” must relate either to the creation or commercialization of the solutions (Afuah, 1998; Potocan & Nedelko, 2014). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. Regardless of their size or sector, enterprises are very keen on spending money on innovative marketing services.

In the marketing context, innovation may result either from the development of marketing-related infrastructure (media and means of advertising as well as methodologies and research tools) or from creativity (which is particularly desirable in

advertising services). The emphasis on the creative component increases with the constant realization that advertising effectiveness is low (Karp, 1971) and with studies proving that ad creativity has positive effects on consumers’ attention and ad liking and impacts purchase intentions (Kover et al., 1995; Smith et al., 2007, 2008; Zinkhan & Watson, 1996).

The trends like development of the media market, broader use of digital media, neuro research, including IT technologies in the research, evolution toward online research, data collection, and research analysis create new opportunities for marketing-service providers and make them reconsider past practices. Big data provides companies with countless details on customers which can be thoroughly analyzed (Moorey et al., 2015). The changing consumer profile makes service providers tap on new technological and social solutions to stay noticed or appreciated. Social media change the way people think about meeting their needs and about their relationships with brands and companies. People change their attitudes and perceptions easily, which again poses challenges for marketers. It might be a good solution to create conditions that enable creativity, which is one of the main factors responsible for the attractiveness of the message for the recipients and its effectiveness (Nowacki, 2021). Creativity understood as a “process of developing and expressing novel ideas for solving problems or satisfying needs” is a goal-oriented process for producing innovations (Bachnik, 2018; Managing creativity..., 2003). Advertising is legitimated as a creative process (Moeran, 2009). This stays in line with the foundations of knowledge-based economy and intelligent organization. For this reason, the use of innovative solutions is considered one of the manifestations of their quality (Bachnik et al., 2018). As a result, four basic aspects of innovation in marketing services are distinguished: a new concept of the service, a platform for cooperation with clients, a new system of service delivery, and a new way of providing a service (den Hertog, 2002). Businesses invest in service innovations firstly to overcome resource constraints and secondly to take emerging opportunities, expand their target

markets, and improve their competitive positions (Goyal, 2014). Innovative activity is also the key to successful expansion into foreign markets (Donbesuur et al., 2020), especially in developing countries (Edeh et al., 2020). However, an innovative service concept needs to be supported by superior execution. An innovator's service quality may be more difficult to imitate than the service concept itself (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991). Turning to business consulting may be associated with the quest for designing a development strategy, improved competitiveness, increased market share, and gains (Ramsden & Bennett, 2005). In effect, the authors formulate the following hypothesis:

H2. There are statistically relevant differences in how enterprises evaluate and value innovative marketing services (depending on their location, scope of operations, and financial standing).

Modern digital technologies, used both in the processes of advertising creation and production, are of particular importance for the development of innovation in advertising services (Harms et al., 2017; Raghubansie & EL-Gohary, 2021), as well as research services. The emergence and development of artificial intelligence (AI) has laid the technical foundations for intelligent operations in all areas of the advertising industry (Lai, 2021). AI is increasingly being used in advertising as part of targeting, personalization, content creation, and ad optimization (Bhatt, 2021; Campbell et al., 2022; Jaiwant, 2023; Malthouse & Copulsky, 2023). Advanced tools for analyzing the behavior of potential advertising recipients allow agencies to precisely process messages (Choi & Lim, 2020; Muhlhoff & Willem, 2023). The vast amounts of data that internet users leave behind enable advertising agencies to use artificial intelligence to identify patterns and trends in consumer behavior (Mogaji et al., 2020a; Mogaji et al., 2020b; Shah et al., 2020). On this basis, innovative technologies help to formulate more effective advertising strategies, increasing the efficiency of advertising information processing and decision-making (Malthouse & Copulsky, 2023; Muhlhoff & Willem, 2023).

AI is widely used to create ad content (Aguilar & Garcia, 2017; Bakpayew et al., 2022; Omar et al., 2022; Sun et al., 2022; Smith, 2020). By using this

type of innovation, it is possible to present users with ads that may be of interest to them, creating an appropriate emotional charge in the minds of the recipients of the ad (Wu & Chang, 2022). Innovative technologies can help creative teams generate diverse and rich advertising content by analyzing vast amounts of data and information, although it is important to note the fact of controversy over the use of privacy-invasive data and the use of comparative advertising (Wen-xi & Xiang, 2024; Wiredu et al., 2023).

As a result, there is more talk about optimizing advertising activities (Argan et al., 2022; Nair & Gupta, 2021). The basic problem of ad optimization is how to effectively display ads to the most interested users with a limited budget, which is supposed to lead to the maximization of key metrics such as key performance indicators or conversion rates. Thanks to advances in technology, advertising agencies offer unprecedented opportunities to create creative ads that are more personalized, efficient, inspiring, and responsible (Rathee & Milfeld, 2023).

The innovativeness of advertising services is also reflected in the dynamics of the development and evolution of advertising media, including the increasingly intensive use of social media and the creation of new advertising formats (Sharma & Aggarwal, 2023).

From the perspective of research services, it is worth paying attention primarily to changes in the scope of applied research methods, techniques, and tools, especially in the context of digital evolution (Gal et al., 2017). The development of neuro research, or the use of broadly understood ICT and next tech technologies for monitoring consumer behavior, is conducive to the optimization of the process of providing research services, including shortening the time of research implementation, minimizing costs, increasing the accuracy, objectivity, and credibility of measurements, improving computational and analytical procedures, and the possibility of using the results to influence consumer behavior (Nowacki, 2020). Based on the analysis provided above, the authors formulate the following hypothesis:

H3. Enterprises experience particular benefits when they use innovative marketing services.

### 3. Methodos

To collect sufficient data, research was carried out on the stratified-quota nationwide sample of 505 companies which operated in Poland and used business services. The researchers conducted direct interviews with managers in charge of the entities in the sample, using their proprietary questionnaire based on categorized questions. All respondents were chosen from senior management teams responsible for conducting marketing activities and for leading co-operation with other entities in this area. The questionnaire included questions on the use of business services – including marketing services – and innovation of these services – and their impact on business management processes and improved competitiveness. To verify their hypotheses the authors used a chi-square test ( $\chi^2$ ) and T-Chuprov coefficient to find the relationships between variables and to show their strength. The analysis applied structural indicators to reflect the percentage of enterprises which bore out certain concepts and practices.

Production organizations dominated the sample (39.8%), followed by service providers (31.1%) and commerce companies (29.1%). As for the company size – measured by the number of employees – medium-sized entities prevailed (39.4%), followed by small businesses (31.3%), and large ones (29.3%). In terms of location, the companies that had their head-quarters in the most investment-wise attractive voivodeships (located in Group A with the synthetic index of investment attractiveness above 0.3) were the most numerous and constituted 53.7% of the sample. 27.1% of the enterprises were registered in voivodeships with medium investment attractiveness (group B with the investment attractiveness from minus 0.3 to plus 0.3), and 19.2% in group C (with the lowest investment attractiveness indicator below minus 0.3). The authors also wanted to illustrate the socio-economic development which influences the innovation potential (Nowicki et al. 2014; Nissan et al. 2012). Accounting for other characteristics, the sample was dominated by entities with nationwide operations (32.5%), founded between 2000 and 2004 (20.4%), with an average market position (61.0%), defining their economic situation as

"good" (45.7%), with the average monthly turnover above PLN 1 million (35.1%) and based exclusively on Polish capital (84.4%).

### 4. Research Results

#### 4.1. Innovative Advertising and Research Services

In Poland, businesses commonly used marketing services. More than half of the sample (55.2%) used services provided by professional organizations (advertising agencies and media houses). However, much fewer (only 20.0%) used research services (see Table 1).

The most active users of advertising services were commercial entities (61.2%), large companies (65.5%), with international operations (73.0%), a strong market position (64.7%) and at least a good economic situation (61.6%) and high monthly revenues above PLN 1 million (67.8%). They were more often entities with foreign or mixed capital (74.2%). The location of the headquarters and the length of a company's market presence had little effect on the use of advertising services.

The findings with respect to the use of market-research services were similar. The only substantive difference regarded the sector of activity: Manufacturing companies bought re-search services most often (24.4%). Otherwise, the users were mainly large entities (38.5%), with global operations (39.1%), a strong market position (33.2%), a good economic condition (25.1%), monthly income exceeding PLN 1 million (31.4%), based in whole or in part on foreign capital (43.8%). Interestingly, values which describe the structure of individual groups vary much more in the case of research services. The origin of capital is a good example here. While only 1.5 times more entities with foreign or mixed capital declare using advertising services, in case of research services the ratio is triple.

Companies which used marketing services assessed their innovativeness as high and very high. As for advertising, 77.1% of the managers in the survey declared that the services were quite innovative or very innovative. The type of core operations did not influence the diversification of responses. Surprisingly, the range of operations did not have a significant influence on the responses, either. The percentage of local companies which perceived their advertising services as innovative was the lowest (70.2%), while the percentages of regional, domestic, and international companies were

**Table 1**  
*Use of Advertising Services and Market-research Services by the Surveyed Enterprises and Opinion on Their Innovativeness*

Specification		What services does your com-pany use?		How do you evaluate the level of innovation of mar-keting ser-vices that your company uses?					
		Advertising services (N = 505)	Research services (N = 505)	Advertising services (N = 279)			Research services (N = 101)		
				A	B	C	A	B	C
%									
Total		55.2	20.0	6.8	16.1	77.1	4.0	24.8	71.3
Sector (core opera-tions)	Production	55.2	24.4	6.3	13.5	80.2	4.1	18.4	77.6
	Services	49.7	17.8	7.8	16.7	75.6	4.2	25.0	70.8
	Commerce	61.2	16.3	6.4	19.2	74.4	3.6	35.7	60.7
Number of employees	10 to 49	51.9	8.9	6.1	24.4	69.5	-	35.7	64.3
	50 to 249	50.3	15.1	9.0	14.0	77.0	3.3	33.3	63.3
	250 and more	65.5	38.5	5.1	11.3	83.5	5.3	17.5	77.2
Range of operations	Local	51.1	8.9	7.2	20.3	72.5	-	33.3	66.7
	Regional	48.8	19.8	2.3	18.2	79.5	-	-	100.0
	Domestic	50.0	15.9	4.9	17.1	78.0	-	34.6	65.4
Origin of capital	International	73.0	39.1	10.7	10.7	78.6	8.9	26.7	64.4
	Only Polish	51.2	14.9	8.4	16.9	74.7	4.8	29.0	66.1
	Foreign or mixed	74.2	43.8	1.5	13.6	84.9	2.6	17.9	79.5
Group of voivodeships	Group A	57.6	20.7	3.9	14.1	82.1	3.6	23.2	73.2
	Group B	49.6	23.4	4.4	19.1	76.5	3.1	15.6	81.2
	Group C	56.7	13.4	18.2	18.2	63.7	7.7	53.8	38.5

Note: A - Not innovative at all/Somewhat innovative; B - Difficult to say/No opinion; C - Quite innovative/Very innovative

comparable (79.6%, 78.1%, and 78.6% respectively). Innovativeness of advertising services was more visible or recognizable to medium-sized companies (77%), large organizations (83.5%), and those located in A and B groups of voivodeships (82.1% and 76.5% respectively compared to 63.7% of entities in group C). All companies with bad or very bad economic situations found their advertising services innovative (compared to 79% of companies which determined their economic situations as good or very good).

The innovativeness indicator for research services was 71.3% (see Table 1). In general, fewer respondents evaluated their research services as somewhat innovative. Responses varied a lot across business segments (77.5% of production companies, 70.9% of commercial,

and 60.7% of service ones), organizations grouped by size (64.3% of small, 63.3% of medium, and 77.2% of large companies) and geographic locations described in terms of investment attractiveness (73.2% of entities in group A, 81.2% in group B and only 38.5% in group C). Again, the range of operations did not cause a diversity of responses, except for the group of regional companies which unanimously (100%) found their research services innovative. The economic situation of companies did not affect their assessment of research services.

The analysis of the correlation between the respondents' evaluations of marketing services innovativeness and the characteristics of their companies – for which the authors used a Chi-square test – revealed that such correlation existed only for certain character-



**Table 2**

*Analysis of the Correlation Between the Assessment of Innovation of Advertising Services and Research Services and the Characteristics of Companies Which Use Them*

Specification	Advertising services			Research services		
	Chi-square $\chi^2$	Df	Significance	Chi-square $\chi^2$	Df	Significance
Sector	5.068	8	0.750	3.148	6	0.790
Number of employees	17.178	8	0.028	4.913	6	0.555
Range of operations	16.016	12	0.191	19.080	9	0.025
Year of establishment	28.880	20	0.090	17.098	15	0.313
Market position	4.436	8	0.816	0.573	6	0.903
Economic situation	8.646	8	0.373	5.738	6	0.453
Average turnover per month	28.975	24	0.221	23.422	18	0.175
Origin of capital	4.670	4	0.323	2.102	3	0.552
Group of voivodeships	17.801	8	0.023	9.617	6	0.142

istics. These were: the number of employees the group of voivodeships for advertising services, and the scope of operations for research services. In these three cases P did not exceed the critical value of 0.05 (see Table 2). However, the relationships were weak – the T-Chuprov's coefficient ratio was 0.16 for advertising services and 0.25 for research services.

Having collected the managers' opinions about the innovativeness of marketing services which they used is worth asking how they defined service innovation. As mentioned above innovation of marketing services can result from two variables: the development of the marketing infrastructure and / or the creativity of the form and content of communication. However, understanding the source of innovation can be ambiguous. This is visible in the theory outlined at the beginning of this article and in the variation of survey responses.

Innovation of marketing services relied primarily on perceiving them as new or improved at the national level (29.5% of responses) (see Table 3). Less frequently were they referred to as elaborate and delivered in an innovative way (18.9%), applying new methods of client interaction (15.6%), or innovative at the scale of regional and local markets (15.1%). Only one in ten managers considered the services innovative at the global scale (10.9%), which undermines their groundbreaking character. Production companies saw their marketing services innovative slightly more often (15.3%). And ser-

vice companies seemed to value more innovativeness at a regional or local scale. Similarly, large companies more frequently recognized the potential of innovative services in the area of relationships with customers or organizational changes, and small enterprises associated innovation more with innovative ways of providing services and with the novelty of perception at the regional or local scale. The wider range of operations, the more opinions concerning the innovative nature of marketing services on the global scale (17% of international companies in relation to 10.1% of local ones) and in the scale of the country (respectively 34% to 25.4%). At the same time, mainly regional and national companies (as well as companies which described their economic situation as very bad and bad) declared that organizational changes and new marketing methods were sources of innovation for the marketing services. The weaker a company's market position and the more attractive its location (that is Group A) the stronger are links between the innovation of marketing services and the innovative way of their provision.

The analysis of the correlation between the respondents' opinions on the nature of marketing services innovativeness and the characteristics of their companies – for which the authors used a Chi-square test – revealed that such correlation existed only for three features (see Table 4). These were: the business sector, the market position, and the group of voivodeships. In



**Table 3**  
*The Nature of Innovations in Marketing Services in Poland in the Opinion of Enterprises Surveyed (N = 505)*

Specification		A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
		%							
Total			10.9	29.5	15.1	18.9	15.6	5.7	4.0
Sector (core operations)	Production		15.3	30.0	12.4	16.5	15.9	7.6	2.4
	Services		5.1	30.8	17.9	17.9	17.1	2.6	8.5
	Commerce		10.3	27.6	16.4	23.3	13.8	6.0	1.7
Number of employees	10 to 49		7.1	29.2	15.9	23.0	15.9	4.4	4.4
	50 to 249		11.5	29.1	18.2	17.6	13.9	6.1	3.0
	250 and more		13.6	30.4	10.4	16.8	17.6	6.4	4.8
Range of operations	Local		10.1	22.2	23.2	22.2	14.1	2.0	6.1
	Regional		8.5	25.4	18.3	21.1	16.9	7.0	2.8
	Domestic		8.6	33.8	13.7	15.1	15.1	7.9	5.0
Origin of capital	International		17.0	34.0	6.4	19.1	17.0	5.3	1.1
	Only Polish		11.0	28.8	17.5	17.2	15.0	5.5	4.6
	Foreign or mixed		10.4	32.5	5.2	26.0	18.2	6.5	1.3
Group of voivodeships	Group A		12.0	30.3	13.0	22.6	13.0	6.3	2.9
	Group B		2.4	28.2	18.5	17.7	23.4	4.0	5.6
	Group C		22.5	29.6	15.5	9.9	9.9	7.0	4.2

Note: A - These are new/improved services on the global scale; B - These are new/improved services on the scale of our country; C - These are new/improved services on the scale of the regional/local market; D - These are services created and rendered in an innovative way. E - These are services based on up-to-date ways of interactions with the customer; F - These are services connected with organizational changes in the companies rendering them; G - These are services in case of which there are applied new methods of marketing impact on the market

these cases, P did not exceed the value of 0.05. At the same time, the relationships were strong - their T-Chu-prov coefficients were 0.54, 0.60, and 0.80, respectively.

4.2. Benefits from Services

The innovation of marketing services which companies bought becomes important in the light of benefits that these companies expected to get (see Table 5). Since innovative marketing services entail higher costs, their purchase must be supported by rational arguments pointing to specific benefits which justify the investment. 41.2% of enterprises in the survey assessed the level of benefits from the marketing services as quite big or very big and 45.3% assessed the benefits as medium. The perceived benefits grew with the company size (the benefits were perceived big by 31% of small companies, 39.2%

of medium companies, and 54.7% of large companies) and the strength of its market position (the percentages of weak, medium, and strong companies which considered the benefits big were 23.1%, 28.9%, and 63%, respectively). The same was true about the company's economic situation (the percentages of companies in a bad, medium, and good economic situation which perceived the benefits as good were 17.6%, 27.7% as and 52.7%, respectively). International companies experienced benefits most often (51.8%), followed by regional and country organizations (42.9% and 37.8% respectively) and local ones (32.6%). However, less than 10% of international and country-wide entities reported no change at all (or only a slight improvement).

Companies which felt at least medium benefits from buying innovative marketing services varied in their

**Table 4**

*Analysis of the Correlation Between the Opinions on the Nature of Marketing Services in Po-land and the Characteristics of Companies Which Use Them*

Specification	Advertising services		
	Chi-square $\chi^2$	Df	Significance
Sector	22.515	12	0.032
Number of employees	8.532	12	0.742
Range of operations	27.423	18	0.071
Year of establishment	31.510	30	0.391
Market position	24.904	12	0.015
Economic situation	11.519	12	0.485
Average turnover per month	43.073	36	0.194
Origin of capital	11.262	6	0.081
Group of voivodeships	33.355	12	0.001

**Table 5**

*Level of Benefits From Marketing Services at the Enterprises Surveyed*

Specification		How do you assess the level of benefits that the company gains from the purchase of marketing services?		
		We do not achieve any benefits / Rather small	Medium	Quite big / very big
		%		
Total		13.5	45.3	41.2
Sector (core operations)	Production	10.0	44.8	45.3
	Services	18.5	43.3	38.2
	Commerce	12.9	48.3	38.8
Number of employees	10 to 49	20.3	48.7	31.0
	50 to 249	12.0	48.7	39.2
	250 and more	8.2	37.2	54.7
Range of operations	Local	24.4	43.0	32.6
	Regional	14.3	42.9	42.9
	Domestic	7.9	54.3	37.8
	International	7.8	37.4	54.8
Origin of capital	Only Polish	15.4	47.1	37.5
	Foreign or mixed	4.5	37.1	58.4
Group of voivodeships	Group A	17.0	39.9	43.2
	Group B	7.3	46.7	45.9
	Group C	12.4	58.8	28.9

understanding of what these benefits meant or where the influence of the services was the greatest. The majority thought that innovative marketing services gave them higher competitiveness (36.6%), new clients (32.0%), lower costs of running a business (31.4%), an improved image (23.3%) and improvement of relationships with customers (21.3%). The companies were less likely to notice relationship between innovative marketing services and introducing new/improved products (16.9%), Improvement of activity effectiveness measured with financial indicators (15.6%), organizational advancement (14.9%), enter-ing new markets (14.9%), and technological advancement (11.9%) (see Table 6).

5. Conclusions

The findings presented in the paper contribute to advancing an understanding of how enter-prises perceive

innovative marketing services and how this perception relates to their assess-ments of overall service quality and intentions to use the services. The research shows that assessments of innovation of advertising services and research services are generally similar - differences in the perception are small, and so are relationships between the assessments and the features of companies. Innovative marketing services are usually regarded as designed and delivered in new, non-traditional ways; fewer companies see innovativeness in new types of customer interactions and in more open-minded or- ganizational cultures that accept experi-mentation.

The research results should draw the attention to the complexity of innovation in the field of marketing ser- vices. Managers present different levels of knowledge on innovation. In general, they assess innovation of marketing services positively. They can see symptoms of innovation, but they are not always convinced of the

Table 6  
The Most Important Types of Benefits from Marketing Services at the Enterprises Surveyed

Specification		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Total		16.9	14.9	15.6	36.2	31.4	23.3	32.0	21.3	14.9	11.9
Sector (core opera- tions)	Production	17.7	17.7	18.8	33.1	30.4	21.5	30.9	21.0	14.9	11.6
	Services	12.5	12.5	14.8	35.9	32.0	29.7	35.2	18.8	17.2	12.5
	Commerce	20.3	13.3	11.7	40.6	32.0	19.5	30.5	24.2	12.5	11.7
Number of employees	10 to 49	19.0	9.5	9.5	34.1	33.3	23.0	33.3	22.2	16.7	11.1
	50 to 249	14.9	16.6	16.6	36.0	34.9	22.9	30.9	21.7	17.7	10.3
	250 and more	17.6	17.6	19.9	38.2	25.0	24.3	32.4	19.9	9.6	14.7
Range of operations	Local	18.6	8.8	14.7	26.5	29.4	22.5	28.4	24.5	19.6	11.8
	Regional	6.4	19.2	21.8	30.8	37.2	24.4	35.9	23.1	12.8	14.1
	Domestic	19.2	11.3	12.6	39.7	35.1	27.8	35.8	19.2	11.9	10.6
Origin of capital	International	19.8	22.6	16.0	44.3	23.6	17.0	27.4	19.8	16.0	12.3
	Only Polish	17.0	13.4	14.2	35.2	32.4	23.9	34.4	21.3	15.9	11.6
	Foreign or mixed	16.5	21.2	21.2	40.0	27.1	21.2	22.4	21.2	10.6	12.9
Group of voivode- ships	Group A	16.0	14.2	12.0	39.6	32.0	22.7	32.4	21.3	16.0	12.4
	Group B	15.7	13.4	23.6	30.7	26.0	25.2	29.9	28.3	11.0	15.0
	Group C	21.2	18.8	12.9	35.3	37.6	22.4	34.1	10.6	17.6	5.9

Note: A - Introduction of new/improved products into the market; B - Entering new sales markets; C - Improvement of activity effectiveness measured with financial indicators; D - Raising company’s competitiveness; E - Operating costs reduction; F - Improvement of company’s image; G - Win-ning new customers; H - Improvement of relationships with customers; I - Organizational improvements; J - Technological improvements

full usability of innovative solutions from the point of view of management processes and raising their companies' competitiveness. We notice that advertising services rank better than research services in this respect. It is also interesting that managers' opinions on innovation of marketing services and their impact on the business success are not generally influenced by variables which characterize the organizations themselves. Enterprises evaluate marketing services which they can access as innovative and potentially very favorable expecting such benefits as improved competitiveness, new customers, lower operating costs, improved image and stronger relations with business partners. The level of innovativeness depends on a company's context: its size, scope of operations and business locations.

The article focuses on three research hypotheses:

H1. Regardless of their size and sector, businesses are very keen on using innovative marketing services. The research shows that the sector does not influence the drive toward innovative marketing services, but the company size may, so this formulation of the hypothesis should be rejected (see Table 1).

H2. There are statistically relevant differences in how companies evaluate innovation of marketing services depending on their own characteristics. This hypothesis should be rejected because the research shows that interrelations occur sporadically and they are weak (see Tables 1 and 2).

H3. Enterprises experience particular benefits when they use innovative marketing services. This hypothesis can be accepted as over 40% of the companies in the study perceive benefits from innovative marketing services as big or very big (see Table 5).

## 6. Discussion, Limitations and Future Research

Innovation is one of the most important organizational assets. It helps support the long-term viability and functioning of the company, it is also one of the key topic in business education (Bachnik et al., 2023). It is a major driver of efficiency for companies which operate in a competitive environment (Talke et al., 2011). Innovation has become a necessity for survival and maintaining competitive advantage and one of the most important competitive strategies, for both small and

large companies (Kaufmann & Tödtling, 2002). Of great importance are innovations in the sphere of knowledge management. They yield many benefits in terms of organization's revenues, its competitiveness, and satisfaction of customers and business partners (Nowacki & Bachnik, 2016). Birkinshaw et al. (2008) finds a positive relationship between a firm's management innovation and its performance. The majority of managers and founders are aware of the possibilities of using innovative solutions. They recognize the fact that each management area can be subject to innovation. However, they are not always capable of appropriately implementing change (Staniewski et al., 2016).

One limitation of the study relates to the subjectivity of the term "innovation" in marketing and the fact that the understanding of innovation varies across enterprises. Practitioners could benefit from a classification of marketing innovation types as well as an analysis of barriers and stimulators which shape the innovation of marketing services. This could further improve management processes of companies which appreciate the value of innovative marketing services and increase effectiveness of these companies.

To further understand the value of innovative marketing services, future work could be carried out within the e-marketplace. The B2B e-marketplace is perceived as an efficient platform for enhancing marketing operational effectiveness (Albrecht et al., 2005; Son & Benbasat, 2007) and Chong et al. (2016) argue that e-marketing can greatly contribute to firms' growth and development. The big question arises how e-marketing strategies may change the perception of e-services and whether will influence the frequency with which companies approach marketing agencies in order to boost their innovativeness and creativity.

The market situation is also important for the development of marketing services. Functioning in the conditions of an economic downturn, with the existing demand constraints creates the requirement or even necessity to improve the tools of influencing the market. An interesting research approach would be to conduct a study on the assessment of innovation and effectiveness of marketing services in the post-COVID 19 era. As other studies

show, managers feel pressure related to the uncertainty of the future (Deloitte Insight, 2020).

For many companies it is a time of accelerated digital transformation and of introduction of quick changes in many areas. Many stores have turned into online sales and have closed their stationary outlets. The change in how to operate influences the perception and positioning of marketing services. The context of how to use them changes too, e.g. in connection with the need to switch to remote work and with the wider use of services provided electronically. For many marketing agencies, the coronavirus pandemic is a moment of truth - whether they will maintain their financial liquidity and thus will be able to implement innovative solutions is being tested and verified. However, it is worth noting that the metrics of optimism among companies providing B2B services are higher than scores in the B2C segment (Deloitte, 2020).

The current situation provided clear evidence that every organization should have a crisis strategy ready. An effective procedure for many companies may be to modify the portfolio of services and the methods of their provision. Efficiency in this area may increase their competitiveness advantage, and thus lessen the negative outcomes of the crisis.

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