SILESIAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY PUBLISHING HOUSE

SCIENTIFIC PAPERS OF SILESIAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY 2023
ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT SERIES NO. 174

INTRODUCTION OF A NEW FRENCH BEER BRAND ON THE POLISH MARKET IN THE OPINION OF CONSUMERS

Elżbieta PIERZGALSKA[1*], Kamil REZMER[2], Iwona KOBUSIŃSKA[3]

[1] Jan and Jędrzej Śniadecki University of Technology in Bydgoszcz, Faculty of Management;
elasiemaa768@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0003-3667-9863
[2] Jan and Jędrzej Śniadecki University of Technology in Bydgoszcz, Faculty of Management;
kamilrezmer@outlook.com, ORCID: 0000-0003-3667-9863
[2] Jan and Jędrzej Śniadecki University of Technology in Bydgoszcz, Faculty of Management, Bydgoszcz;
iwona.kobusinska@wp.pl, ORCID: 0000-0002-6123-0905
* Correspondence author

Objective: The study aims to identify the behavior, opinions, motives and expectations of Polish consumers towards beer brands, with a particular focus on a beer brand manufactured by a French brewery. The consumer survey carried out allows identification of several major potential consumer groups to be targeted by a medium-sized independent French brewery with its offer.

Methodology: The study employed the use of primary sources obtained via a measurement instrument, in the form of an online survey questionnaire, developed for the purpose of the ResearchLab 2022 academic contest organized by Le Sphinx. The consumer survey was conducted in the period from April 12 to May 01, 2022. A method of indirect measurement, i.e., a survey questionnaire, was used to collect the material, which allows collection and examination of data on large research populations. The questionnaire consists of introductory questions regarding the beer market in Poland, consumer behavior questions concerning consumer awareness, preferences and consumption motives, questions pertaining to market barriers and foreign beer brands, as well as a metric part. The research process involved the use of Sphinx software, which allows intuitive development of a survey questionnaire, its quick distribution, convenient collection of data, as well as comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis thereof. The platform additionally allows for real-time tracking of the survey results, which quite is important when conducting research on a well-defined study group. The survey encompassed a research population of 3792 respondents (male and female) of different age ranges. The sample size was determined on the basis of Internet accessibility in Poland (92.4%, in 2021) (2021 Information Society in Poland…, 2021, p. 125). In order to maintain result representativeness, the minimum number of survey participants was calculated at 2401 respondents, assuming a confidence level of 95% and an error of 2%. The representative sample was of a quota nature, defined by the contest holder, and encompassed 40% of respondents aged 18-35 and 36-55 respectively, as well as 20% of respondents over 56 years of age. Gender-wise sample distribution was 60% males and 40% females. The data was examined using such statistical methods as structure analysis, as well as positional or classical measures.

http://dx.doi.org/10.29119/1641-3466.2023.174.11

Results: The survey results show that the preferred beer package size is 500ml glass bottle, with an alcohol content of 3.6% to 7%. The main Polish market competition for the French independent brewery's new beer brand are Lech, Żywiec, and Desperados. The preferred beer types are lager (72%), IPA (47%) and flavored beer (47%). The beer flavors most commonly chosen by consumers on the Polish market are lemon and lime, mojito, apple and honey. An ideal beer, as typified by the respondents, would be characterized by average proportions of aroma, color, carbonation, bitterness and alcohol content. The factors prompting consumers to try new beer brands are primarily taste, price and advertising, therefore, it is worth focusing on the three, maintaining proportions in the order in which the factors have been presented. Information regarding alcohol novelties most commonly is derived from friends or Social Media, which is why advertising should involve the use of these channels for e.g., various types of Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Tik Tok contests. The respondents reacted positively to the French beer brand, and the majority would opt to try this type of beer, given the opportunity. Their expectation with regard to the brand is high price, good quality and taste, as well as elegance. Its envisioned label design is associated with the national colors of France, the city of Paris, Napoleon, and the Alps. It is thus worth taking the above associations into account when designing the label.

Originality: The article presents the consumer opinions regarding introduction of a new French product on the Polish market. It is addressed to distributors of imported beer.

Key words: beer, beer market in Poland, France, French brewery.

Article category: Research Paper.

Introduction

Beer is a popular low alcoholic beverage, consumed since ancient times (Pal, Piotrowska, Adamiak, Czerwińska-Ledwig, 2019, pp. 145-152). Its emergence can be assumed to be associated with the human transition from nomadic tribes to sedentarity. Traces of beer-making vessels have been discovered in Iran, the Tigris and Euphrates basins and Egypt. Knowledge of the existence of beer can be acquired from the monuments remarking that a person who does not know beer, does not know what is good (Strojny, 2003). In ancient times, as well as in the Middle Ages, beer was considered not only a drink, but a medicine as well (Fałat, Górska, Plinta, Sadownik, 2002). Since 1990, improvement in the quality of beer and a rapid increase in the supply thereof can be observed. The rivalry for customers has begun at that time. Beer has not been in short supply, while the range of the choices in stores has been expanding (Boss, 2014).

The oldest known alcoholic beverage, the first variety of which had been consumed as early as in the 12th century BC, is beer. Rooted predominantly in a European culture, the brew has been successively refined over the years, and now entails a wide range of flavors, aromas, colors, manufacturing ingredients and alcohol content (Carlsberg Polska). Brewing is now recognized as a constantly evolving craft (Okrzesik, 1997). Breweries are seeking innovative techniques, while extensive research on various related aspects (e.g., proportions and temperature selection, fermentation time etc.) is emerging. The goal is to tailor the recipe to consumer demands and introduce a unique, recognizable product on the market. The developed branches of transportation industry, globalization and international cooperation have allowed trade and exchange of products previously unavailable due to their short shelf life. Innovations have enabled production of exotic flavors of beers (Lamparska, 2016). Similar solutions are very advanced in the present day.

Consumption of alcohol has increased over the past 30 years in Poland, which keeps Poles ranked in the group of societies with the highest alcohol consumption. In 2020, the total value of the alcoholic beverages market was PLN 39.26 billion. Beer sales accounted for almost half (45.76%) of the market, with a value of PLN 17.96 billion. Beer dominates the volume of retail sales (in 2020, it accounted for 86.6% of the alcoholic beverage sales volume) and contitutes a chief alcohol category in small-format stores. It generates 50% of alcoholic beverage sales in the colder and more than 60% in the warmest months. There is a common misconception that Poles drink Polish beer. The beer market in Poland encompasses three foreign corporations. Kompania Piwowarska is owned by Japan's Asahi Group. Grupa Żywiec S.A. is owned in 65.16% by the Dutch Heineken International BV and 33.20% by China's Yunnan Ltd., whereas Carlsberg Polska is a Danish company (Klimkiewicz, Obłąkowska, Bartoszewicz, 2021).

Research results

A preliminary consumer survey was conducted in connection with the planned introduction of a French beer brand on the Polish market. The publication presents the results of the survey, which aimed to identify Polish consumers' behavior, opinions, motives and expectations with regard to beer brands. The study allows identification of the main potential consumer groups to be targeted by French brewery with its offer. Beer is consumed by 8 out of 10 survey respondents, i.e., a majority in relation to non-beer drinkers. Relevant data, in the form of percentage measures, is presented below (Figure 1).

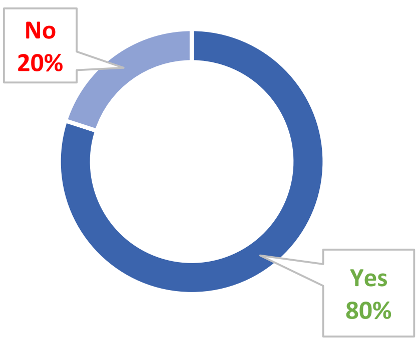

Figure 1. Survey respondents' consumption of beer.

Source: own compilation.

The most prevalent reason behind the surveyees' non-drinking of beer is the unsuitable taste of the beverage. This factor was indicated by one in three respondents (35%). Similarly, 31% of the surveyed specified that they prefer other types of alcohol (e.g., wine). One in two respondents does not consume beer due to health reasons (harmful effect of alcohol on the body). The factors least discouraging the purchase of beer are mainly the price (4%), which according to the surveyed is not too exorbitant. One in ten respondents does not consume beer because of pregnancy (9%) or prefers not to provide a reason (8%) (Figure 2). The determinants of beer consumption are shaped contrastingly. In this case, majority of the respondents (75%) are willing to try a new product based on such aspects as taste, followed by price (52%), recommendation (48%), interesting label/appearance (29%), and promotion (26%).

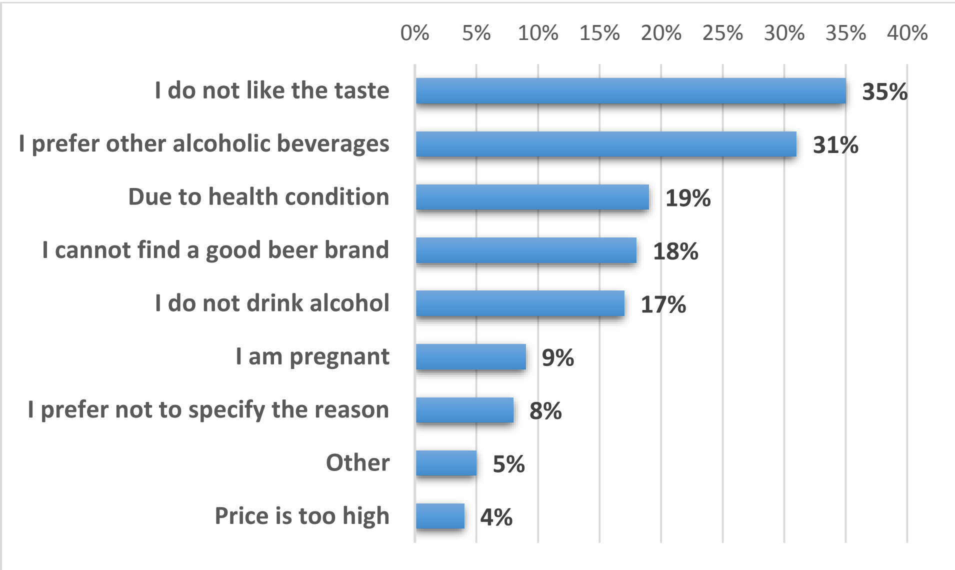

Figure 2. Factors discouraging beer consumption.

Source: own compilation.

More than half of the respondents drink beer 2-3 times a month or once a week. One in ten (6%) drinks beer every day. In contrast, as many as 2 in 10 respondents drink beer less than 2-3 times a month (Figure 3).

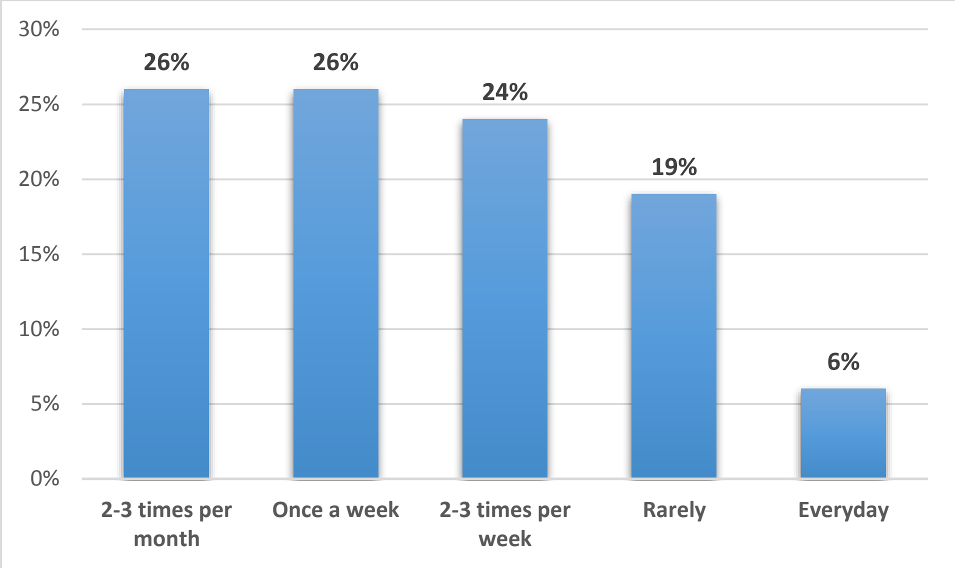

Figure 3. Beer consumption frequence.

Source: own compilation.

In the matter of beer consumption circumstances, most of the surveyed, i.e., one in four respondents (23%), drink beer when socializing with friends, almost one in five (17%) drink beer at barbecue get-togethers. Every ten respondent (11%) drinks beer during sports events, as well as while watching television, TV series or movies (10%). The remainder (i.e., less than 10%) drink beer occasionally, e.g., with a meal, on vacation, or at a party/disco (Table 1).

Table 1.
Beer consumption behavior

Circumstance/event	Share [%]
Socializing with friends	23
Barbeque get-together	17
Sports event	11
Watching television/TV series/movies	10
When relaxing	8
Mealtime	8
Vacation	6
Family gatherings	5
Cultural events	4
Party/disco	4
Special events	3
Other	1

Source: own compilation.

Most commonly the respondents purchase beer at supermarkets, which is most probably due to the variety of products and promotions. The large number of supermarkets on the Polish market, in relation to other types of stores (e.g., neighborhood, convenience stores), also contributes to the more frequent purchases in those retail establishments. Nearly every second respondent (42%) drinks beer in a bar or pub. Four out of ten make their beer purchases in neighborhood stores, while the rest purchase beer in restaurants, gas stations, and other facilities (Figure 4).

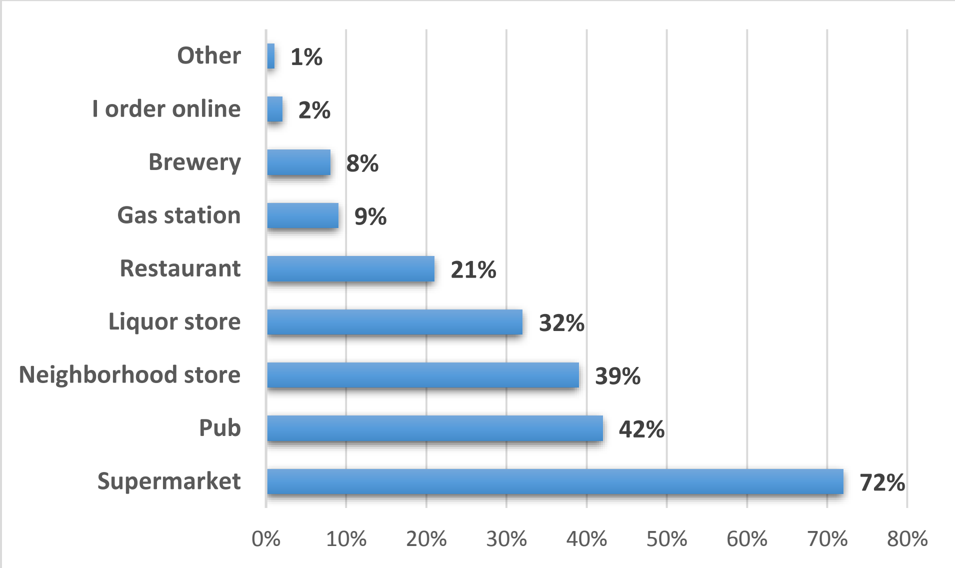

Figure 4. Place of beer purchase.

Source: own compilation.

Half of the respondents (51%) do not spend more than PLN 19 per week on beer. Only one in ten respondents (8%) spends between PLN 30 and PLN 39 per week on beer purchases. Every fourth respondent (24%) is able to spend more than PLN 39 on beer purchases (Table 2). As such, the respondent group spending significantly more money on beer purchases than the average can be targeted with a potential offer. On average, consumers spend PLN 22.76 per week on beer.

Table 2.
Weekly spending on beer purchases

Range [PLN]	Share [%]
Less tna10	25
from 11 to 19	26
from 20 to 29	17
from 30 to 39	8
40 and over	24
Total	100

Source: own compilation.

The majority of respondents (75%) prefer beer of a standard volume, i.e., 500 ml, while 20% prefer 330 ml beer. The remaining respondents choose beer size above 500 ml, e.g., 580 ml. Most respondents (83%) prefer to consume beer from a glass bottle. The respondents' belief that canned beer tastes inferior of significance (Dlaczego piwo…). Beer in a glass bottle is considered a more convenient form of the beverage. Women are more likely to choose glass bottled beer, whereas men choose canned beer.

A significant portion of the respondents (69%) choose beer within a 3.6% - 7% alcohol content range. The remainder drink beer with reduced alcohol content, while relatively few prefer beer with high alcohol content in the range of 7.1% to 10% inclusive (Figure 5).

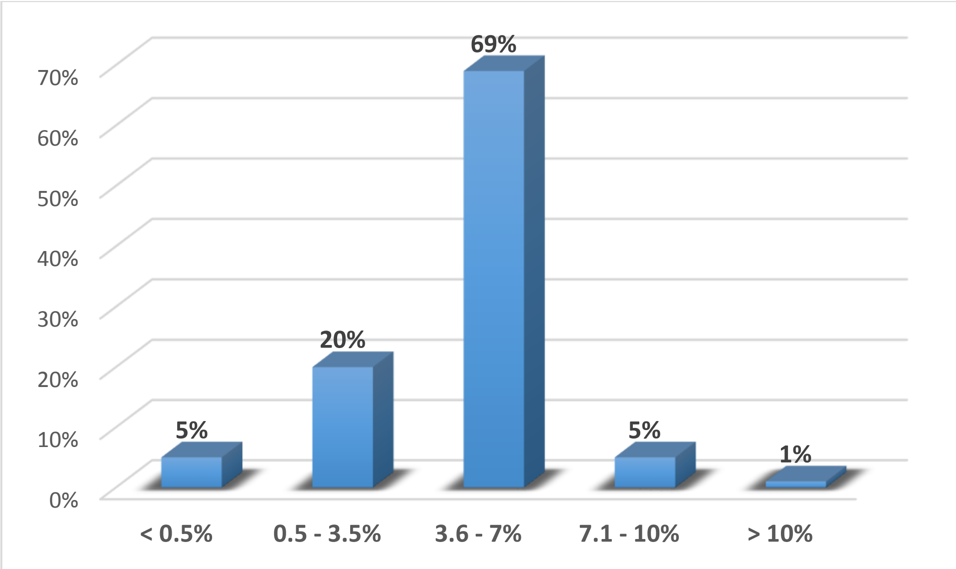

Figure 5. Most popular beer alcohol content.

Source: own compilation.

The questionnaire included questions regarding consumer awareness of beer brands on the Polish market. The respondents were unable to assess which beer brand, in their opinion, offers the highest quality, variety, and the best price-to-quality ratio. According to the surveyed, Tyskie is the most popular beer brand in terms of quality. Lech and Żywiec have been ranked marginally lower, followed by Heineken and Desperados. In the respondents' view, Lech markets the most variety of beer, while Redd's offers the least. In terms of the price-to-quality ratio, Lech and Perła were indicated most frequently. The most popular brand on the Polish market is Desperados, Somersby and Lech. (Figure 6).

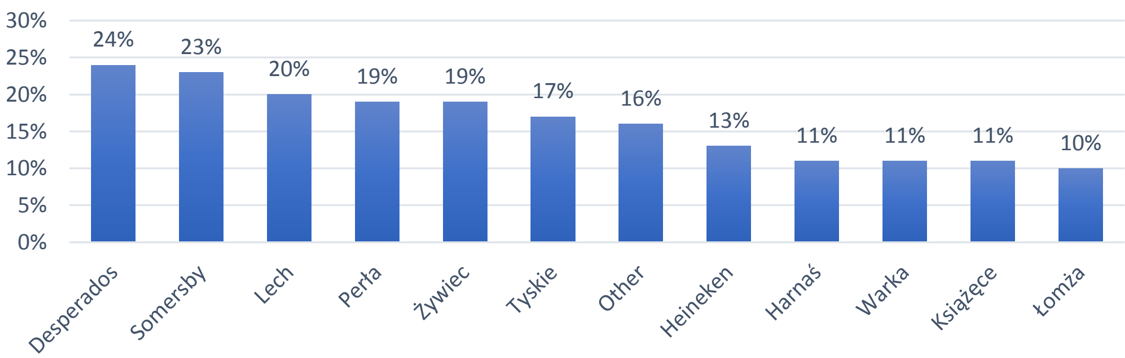

Figure 6. Respondents' most preferred beer brands.

Source: own compilation.

Three out of four (72%) respondents most commonly pick lager, which possibly indicates a preference for rather classic beer styles. Flavored beers and Indian Pale Ale (IPA) are chosen by one in two respondents (47%). The potential consumers surveyed relatively rarely choose such beer styles as Stout, Bock and Trappist (Figure 7).

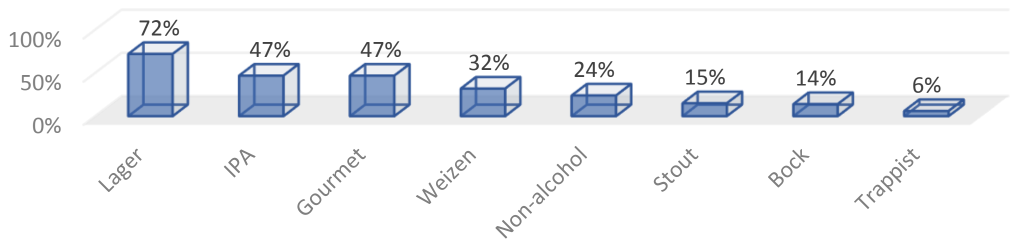

Figure 7. Respondents' most preferred beer styles.

Source: own compilation.

69% of the respondents drink craft beer, while 31% do not consume this type of beer. Flavored beer is consumed by as many as 80% of the surveyed. 73% of the respondents answered affirmatively to the question regarding drinking non-alcoholic beer (Figure 8).

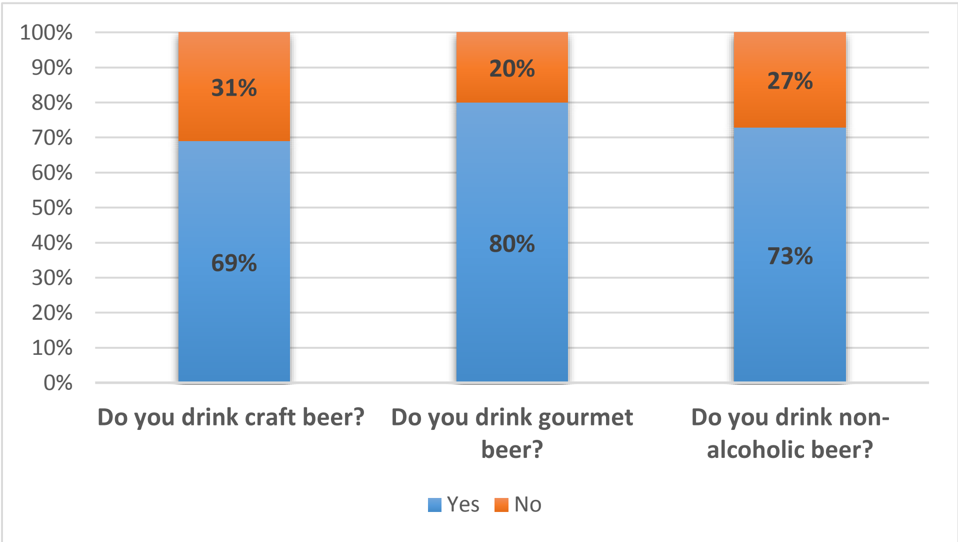

Figure 8. Craft beer, flavored beer and non-alcoholic beer consumption.

Source: own compilation.

In reference to beer flavors, 23% of the surveyed consumers mostly choose Lemon/Lime, while15% pick beer of an equally refreshing flavor, i.e., Mojito. Every ten respondent chooses apple, honey, tequila or raspberry flavors (Figure 9).

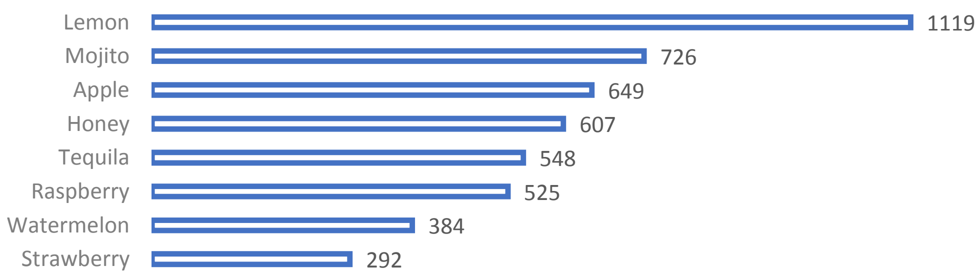

Figure 9. Most preferred beer flavors.

Source: own compilation.

The indicators analyzed represent the characteristics of an ideal beer, on a scale from 0-5, where 0 is the lowest and 5 is the highest value. Five assessment criteria were provided (aroma, color, carbonation, bitterness and alcohol content) (Figure 10).

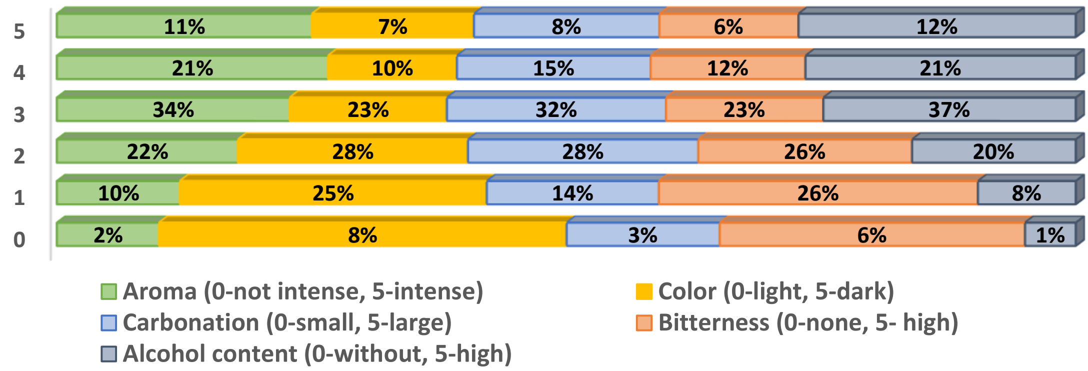

Figure 10. Ideal beer as per the respondents.

Source: own compilation.

The majority of respondents selected a good taste of beer as the most important aspect, followed by the ease of availability in stores, product familiarity, improvement in mood, value for money, natural ingredient content, eco-friendly packaging, low calorie content, and support in maintaining good health (Figure 11).

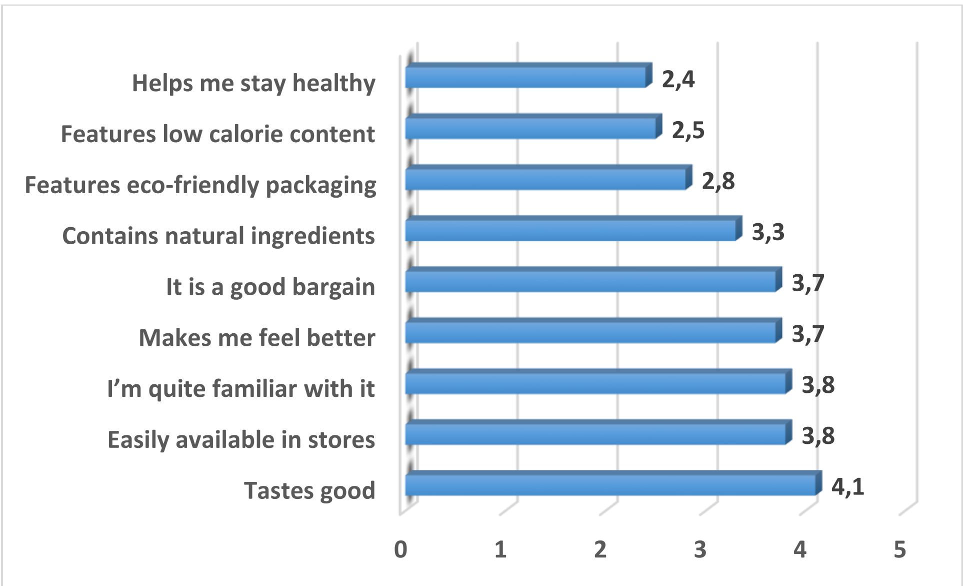

Figure 11. Beer consumption motives.

Source: own compilation.

Most respondents (58%) learn about new products from friends, or from social media and the stores where they normally buy beer (38%). The remainder obtain such information from other given sources (Figure 12).

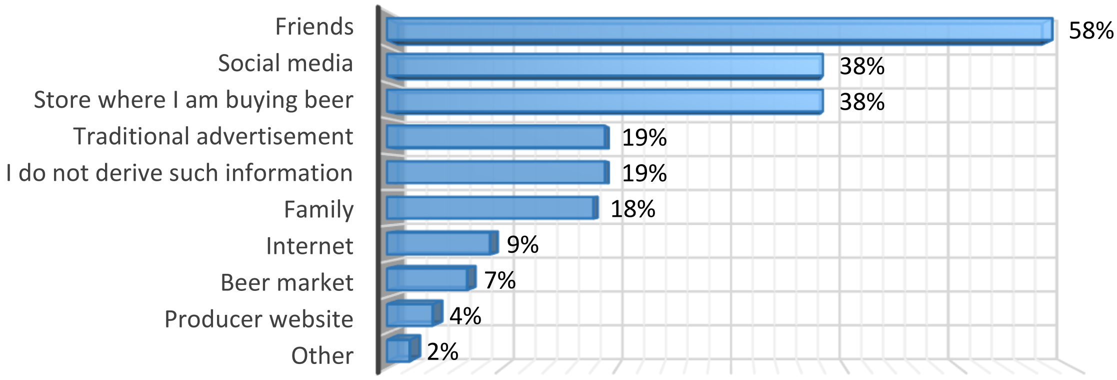

Figure 12. Sources of new alcohol product information.

Source: own compilation.

¾ of the surveyed believe that the amount of beer brands available on the Polish market is sufficient. Every tenth respondent indicates oversaturation of the beer market in Poland. Only 16% of the consumers surveyed believe that the market has not been fully saturated (Figure 13).

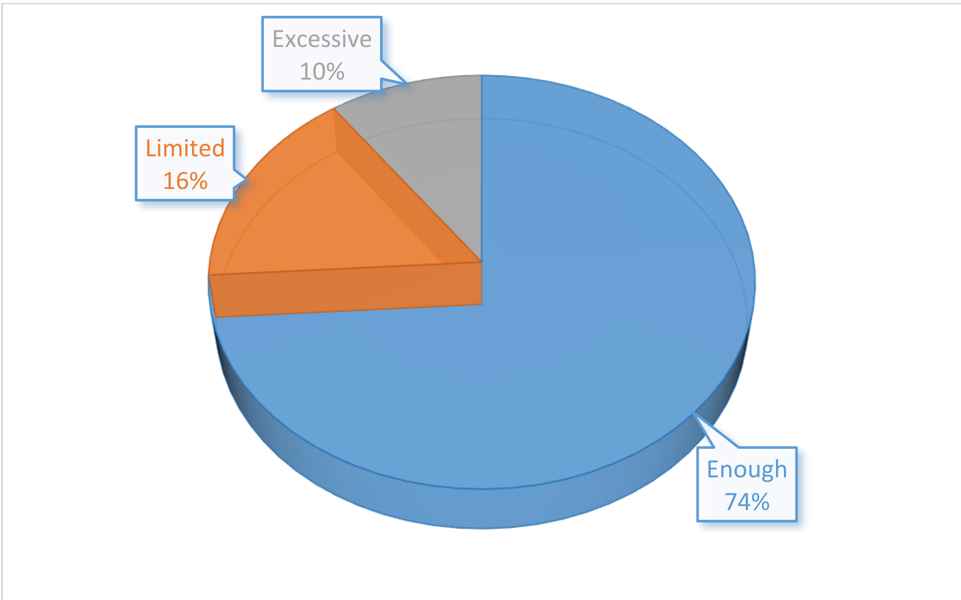

Figure 13. Beer brand availability on the Polish market.

Source: own compilation.

47% of the respondents would add unique flavors to the beer offer in Poland, 28% would incorporate more craft beer into the offer, 25% would like beer to be cheaper, while ¼ show interest in foreign beer brands. The remainder would appreciate higher aesthetics in beer appearance, an environmentally committed brand, and a larger selection of non-alcoholic beer (Figure 14).

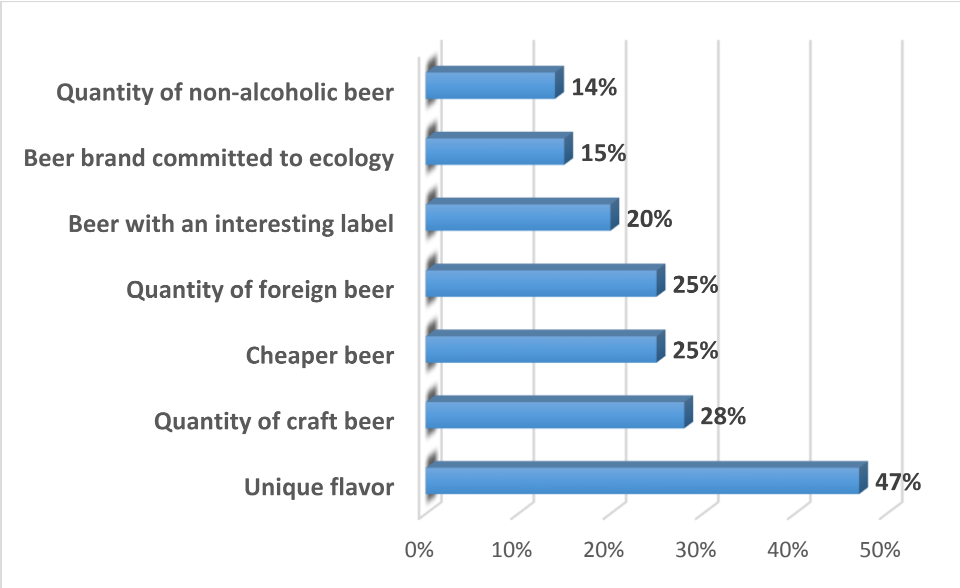

Figure 14. Beer market offer diversification

Source: own compilation.

66% of the respondents show positive attitude towards the inclusion of national symbols on the French beer's label. The most frequently selected characteristic symbols associated with France include: the city of Paris, Napoleon, the Alps/Mount- Blanc, the Côte d'Azur and Croissant. Less frequently, the respondents indicated such related associations as a kiss, champagne or Coco Channel (Figure 15). The feelings the respondents reported in association with the French beer include curiosity (58%), acceptance (36%), surprise (29%). Sadness, rejection or confusion were indicated quite rarely. Every second respondent (52%) has not consumed French beer but expresses interest in trying it. 16% of the respondents do not want to try the beer from France, while one in four respondents has no opinion in this regard. 9% of the respondents have already tried the French beer.

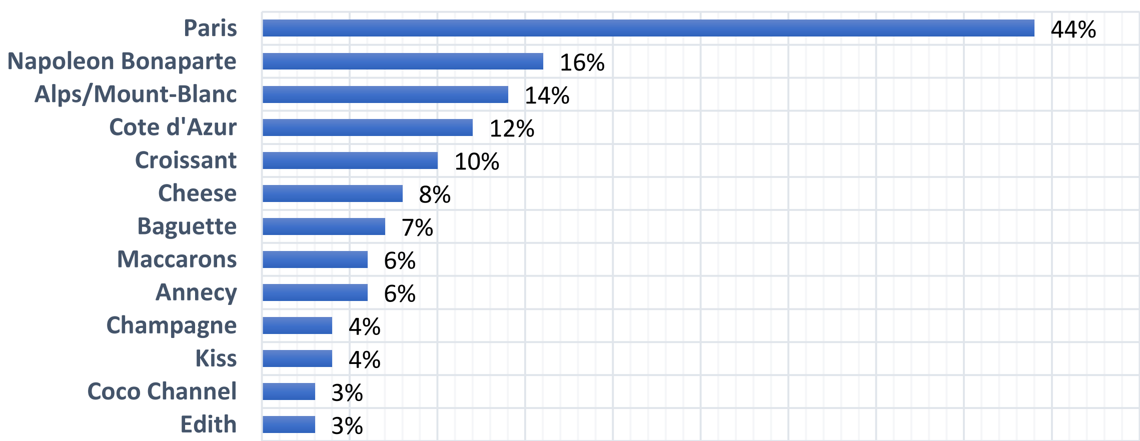

Figure 15. Beer label symbols of distinctive places/things associated with France.

Source: own compilation.

A product feature indicated most frequently by the surveyed was high price (40%). 31% responded that French beer can be of good quality, 30% considered French beer as tasty, 29% elegant, 19% aromatic. The qualities least frequently associated with French beer were cheapness, poor quality or modernity (Figure 16).

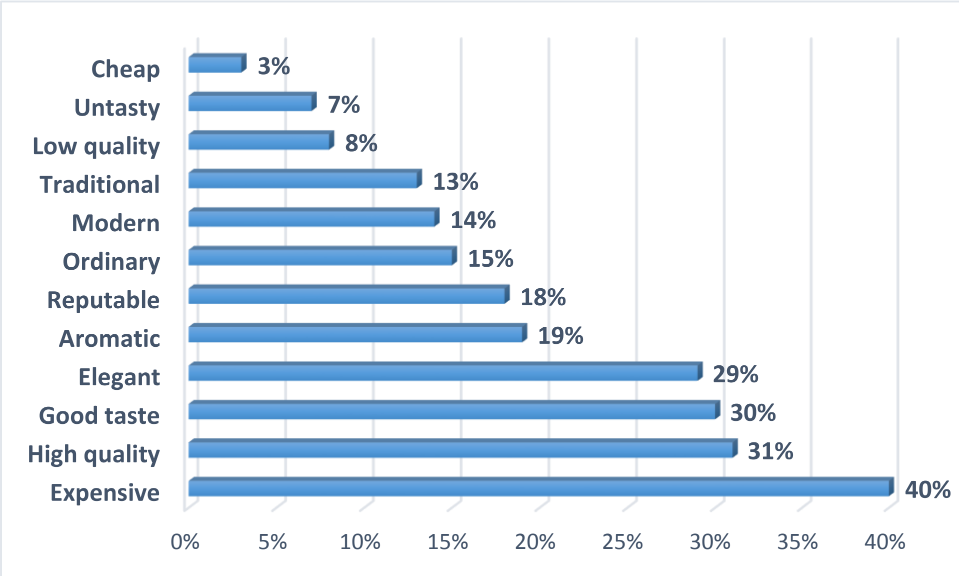

Figure 16. Characteristic features of French beer.

Source: own compilation.

The survey covered a sample of 3792 respondents, 57% of which were male (2156 persons), 42% female (1603 persons), while 1% preferred not to specify their gender. The largest number of respondents, i.e., 28% (1 077 respondents), were persons aged between 18 and 25 y/o. The next age range, i.e., 26-35 y/o, included 482 respondents (12.93%). One in five respondents (22%, 850 persons) fell within the age range of 36-45 y/o. The 46-55 y/o range consisted of 649 persons, i.e., 17% of the respondents. Precisely 400 persons made up the group of 56-65-year-olds, accounting for 10.55% in the overall structure of the sample. Respondents over the age of 65 accounted for 8.8% (334 persons). The survey covered 49% of respondents with higher education, 37% with secondary education, 7% with vocational education, 4% with basic vocational education, 2% with primary education, and 1% with junior high school education (Figure 17).

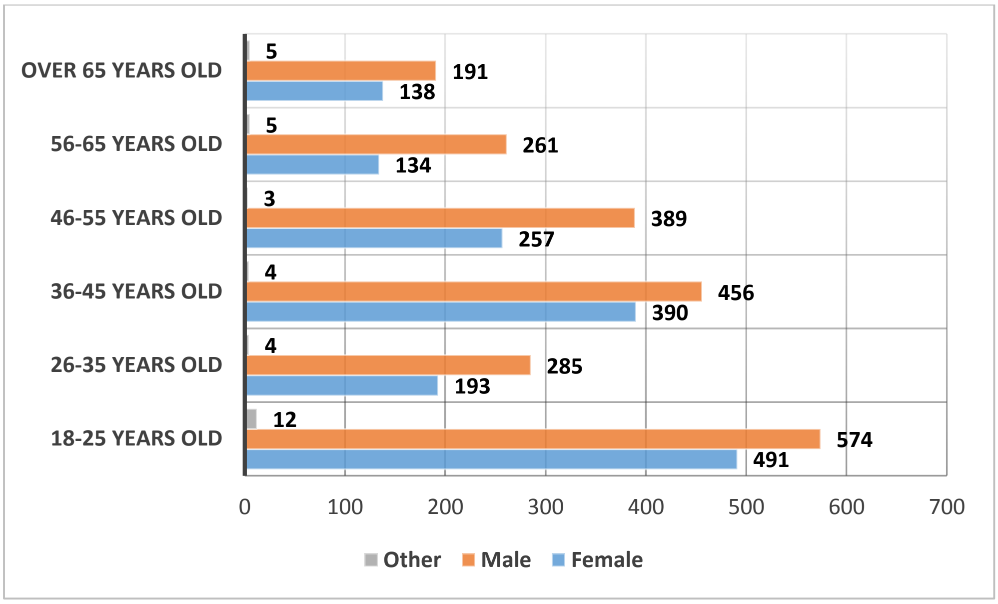

Figure 17. Respondent distribution by gender and age.

Source: own compilation.

The largest number of respondents indicated the Mazovian Province (16%) as the region of residence, followed by the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Province (12%), and the Silesian and Subcarpathian provinces (10% each). Every third respondent (28%) lives in a rural/city setting of up to 10 000 residents, 23% of the respondents live in a city of 100 000 – 500 000 residents, while 18% of the surveyed live in a city of more than 500 000 residents. A similar share has been observed with regard to the respondents living in cities of up to 50 thousand residents. The remaining 13% of the surveyed live in cities of up to 100 thousand residents (Figure 18).

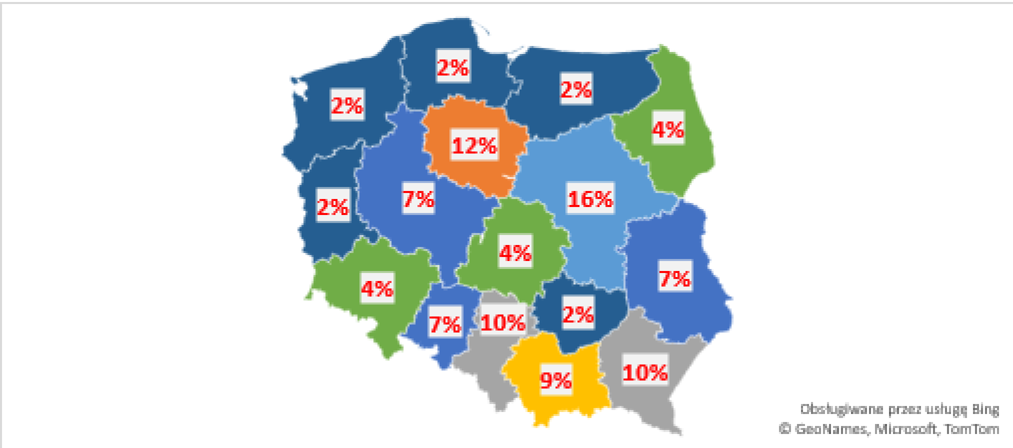

Figure 18. Respondent distribution by province.

Source: own compilation.

Taking the criterion of monthly net income into account, the structure of the respondent distribution was relatively even. The most dominant group was made up of persons with incomes between PLN 3001 and PLN 4000. Monthly income of between PLN 4001 and PLN 5000 was indicated by the smallest number of respondents (Figure 19).

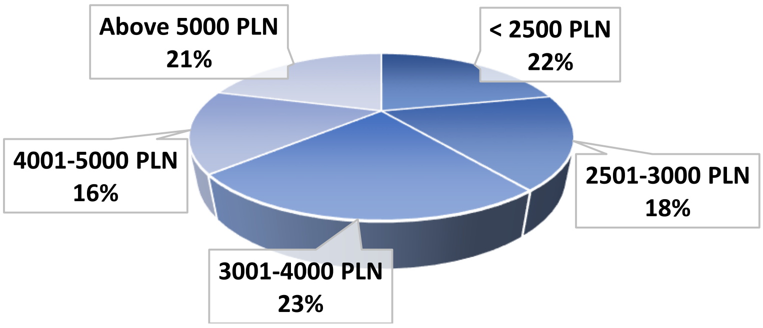

Figure 19. Respondent structure by net monthly income.

Source: own compilation.

Conclusion

The results show that, for a significant portion of Poland's population, beer is a well-known alcoholic beverage of choice. The most customary beer consumption occasions are sports and cultural events as well as family gatherings. Alcoholic beverage purchases are generally made at the largest in supermarkets, in bars and neighborhood/liquor stores. 51% of Poles spend up to PLN 19 a week on beer purchases, while 24% - from PLN 40 upwards. Most commonly, beer is consumed up to 3 times a week and 2-3 times a month. The preferred package size is 500 ml in a glass bottle, with an alcohol content of 3.6% to 7%. Poles typify Tyskie, Lech and Żywiec as beer brands of highest quality. The beer brands with the most variety and best value for money are Lech, Żywiec and Desperados. The main competition to a new beer brand launched on the Polish market will be Lech, Żywiec, Desperados, Tyskie and Somersby, which are typified as the beer brands chosen most frequently by Poles. The preferred beer styles are lager (72%) and IPA (47%), as well as flavored beer (47%). Most commonly selected flavored beer flavors are lemon and lime, mojito, apple and honey. A significant proportion of the respondents buy non-alcoholic beer occasionally. An ideal beer, according to the respondents, contains average proportions of aroma, color, carbonation, bitterness and alcohol. The factor prompting consumers to try a new beer brand is primarily taste, which accounts for 75% of the responses, followed by price (52%) and advertising (48%). Information on alcoholic beverage novelties most commonly is derived from friends or Social Media as well as the alcohol product shelves of the stores in which the respondents shop most often. 74% of the surveyed believe that the Polish market enjoys a sufficient offer of beer variety. The respondents react positively to the French beer brand; most of them are willing to try such a beer, expecting a high price, but good quality and taste as well as elegance. The label was associated with the national colors of France, the city of Paris, Napoleon and the Alps.

Based on the data indicating that alcohol consumption in Poland has increased over the past 30 years, and the fact that Poles remain among the societies characterized by the highest alcohol consumption, opening up to the Polish market is strongly recommended.

References

1. Boss, J. (2014). Piwo dawniej i dzisiaj. Inżynieria *Przetwórstwa Spożywczego, vol. 3(11),*
2. *Carlsberg Polska, Jasne strony piwa,* https://www.carlsbergpolska.pl/media/11541/ksi%C4%85%C5%BCka-jasne-strony-piwa.pdf, 12.10.2022.
3. *Dlaczego piwo w puszce smakuje inaczej?* Związek Pracodawców Przemysłu Piwowarskiego – Browary Polskie, https://www.browary-polskie.pl/fakty-i-mity-na-temat-piwa/, 18.05.2022.
4. Fałat, Z., Górska, R., Plinta, P., Sadownik, A.W. (2002). *Przewodnik piwosza*. Bielsko-Biała: Pascal.
5. Klimkiewicz, A., Obłąkowska, K., Bartoszewicz, A. (2021). *Polska zalana piwem. Analiza ewolucji modelu spożycia alkoholu w Polsce – przyczyny i skutki. Raport.* Warszawa: Instytut Jagielloński.
6. Lamparska, M. (2016). Krótka geografia piwa. *Acta Geographica Silesiana, Vol. 24,* https://rebus.us.edu.pl/handle/20.500.12128/6830, 12.10.2022.
7. Okrzesik, J. (1997). Warzenie i sprzedawanie piwa. *Gospodarka, No. 50-52,* pp. 18-24.
8. Pal, J., Piotrowska, A., Adamiak, J., Czerwińska-Ledwig, O. (2019). Piwo i surowce browarnicze w kosmetologii oraz kąpiele piwne jako forma zabiegowa. *Post Fitoter, no. 20(2).* Warszawa: Borgis, pp. 145-153.
9. *Społeczeństwo informacyjne w Polsce w 2021 r.* (2021). Warszawa: Główny Urząd Statystyczny; Szczecin: Urząd Statystyczny w Szczecinie.
10. Strojny, A. (2003). *Piwnym szlakiem po Europie Środka*. Kraków: Bezdroża.