



## EMOTIONAL MARKETING CONCEPT: THE NEW MARKETING SHIFT IN THE POSTMODERN ERA

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**Abstract.** The paper provides key assumptions for the development of the new theory shift, *emotional marketing*, as a natural outcome of the postmodern (consumer) society conditioned by the increasing need for consuming symbolic senses. Symbolic features of exchange objects shape the needs of the contemporary consumer, having a greater impact on their choice on the market. Emotional exchange factors affected by the increasing *culture of consuming symbols* become the key attribute of exchange in the postmodern era, therefore formation of the *emotional marketing concept* becomes a relevant object of research in contemporary marketing management. The increasing significance of symbols (their meanings and senses) in the contemporary consumer society becomes the key consumption stimulating factor and forms a new ethos of consumption, which triggers development of new marketing shifts.

**Keywords:** postmodern era, relationship exchange, socioemotional relations, symbolic meanings, symbolic exchange, emotional marketing.

## EMOCINIS MARKETINGAS: NAUJA MARKETINGO KRYPTIS POSTMODERNIOJE EPOCHOJE

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**Santrauka.** Straipsnyje pateikiamos pagrindinės prielaidos naujai – *emocinio marketingo* – teorijos kryptiai plėtotis kaip natūrali postmodernios epochos išdava, nulemta vis didėjančios simbolinių prasmų reikšmės šiuolaikiniuose rinkos mainuose. Emociniai mainų veiksniai, veikiami psichosimbolinių prekių ženklų ar kitų mainų objektų požymių, formuoja šiuolaikinio vartotojo poreikius, darydami didesnę įtaką jo pasirinkimui rinkoje. Straipsnyje siekiama išryškinti vis didėjančią emocinių veiksnių įtaką šiuolaikiniuose rinkos mainuose tarp įmonės ir vartotojo, pagrindiniu šiuos procesus katalizuojančiu veiksmu laikant simbolius ir jiems suteikiamas reikšmes bei prasmes, kurios skatina naujos marketingo krypties (konceptijos) formavimąsi, akcentuojant didėjančią emocinio ryšio tarp skirtingų rinkos dalyvių reikšmę. Didėjanti simbolių (jų reikšmių ir prasmų) reikšmė šiuolaikiniame visuomenėje tampa esminiu vartojimą skatinančiu veiksmu, formuoja naują etosą, kurio poreikiams rinkoje valdyti būtinos naujos marketingo kryptys.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** postmoderni epocha, santykių mainai, socioemociniai santykiai, simbolių prasmės, simbolių mainai, emocinis marketingas.

## 1. Introduction

The metamorphosis of the modern era into the postmodern one<sup>1</sup> conditions fundamental transformations in marketing, which replaced established exchange models of industrial economy with new ways of managing consumer needs on the market: creation of lasting and personalised exchange, provision of personalised offers, formation of socioemotional relationships, etc. Transition from the modern to the postmodern era does not imply dramatic changes to the society's mental or activity-related techniques, but signals changes to some of the basic characteristic elements of the social environment, which affect the subsidiarity of the features that dominated in the previous eras and fields of activity and their replacement with new ones, that allow adjustment to the lifestyle structure of the nowadays society and form a new ethos.

In the postmodern consumer society marketing should be treated as activity that conditions transformation of the society's lifestyle and consumption and affects many aspects of social life: from formation of personal needs and senses down to the management of the state's image. Shifts of the postmodern era reveal the importance of emotional factors in marketing and its characteristics of shaping and satisfying the needs and market views of contemporary consumers, applying new approaches to the management of consumers' buying/consuming decisions. In the contemporary era competitive advantage on the market is developed through emotional attributes (symbols) of exchange or exchanged objects, which supplement existing theories of marketing management with new ones that highlight the emotional functions of exchanged objects.

Informational and communicational processes shift the attitude to the traditional object of exchange – the product/service, highlighting their symbolic meanings, which serve

to stimulate *emotional consumer experiences* by brands and by their created semantic meanings thus minimising production and marketing costs for developing and marketing new products/services. Symbols, as the basic characteristic category of the postmodern era, boost the level of consumption as symbols serve to secure consumer's emotional needs on the market and to shape individuals' emotional experiences. Transition from transaction- to relationship-based *form of exchange* automatically triggers changes in the approach to the attributes of exchange between the company and consumer as relationships are now treated as a *higher* category of exchange with an emotional background shaped by the symbolic attributes of exchange or exchanged objects.

Growing significance of emotional needs in the consumption environment is conveyed as the basic prerequisite, which naturally calls for defining a new *emotional marketing concept*. The key assumptions for the formation of the new marketing concept are examined from the *social values aspect* characteristic of contemporary society<sup>2</sup>, as values allow identifying the individual's "real" incentives on the market in exchange with the chosen company or with its product/service brands. Based on this aspect, social values reflect *people's behaviour* and their *aims* and *inclinations* affected by not only clearly determined cost-benefit incentives, but also the individual's *emotional* needs on the market.

## 2. Emotional marketing: prerequisites for the formation of the new shift

The characteristic needs of the contemporary social environment on the market prompt changes to the established views on exchange, revealing the importance of emotional qualities in the consumer's buying/consumption decision process. *Emotional marketing*, as the new concept of marketing, develops in the context of contemporary marketing concepts, which focus on the importance of emotional link between the company and the consumer affected by the system of the characteristic values and needs of contemporary consumers, which, in turn, forms a new *symbol consumption culture*. Emotional marketing can be defined as a new *paradigmatic approach* or a *new marketing shift*, where management (creation, support, evaluation)

<sup>1</sup> Postmodernism is used here as the defining term which covers peculiarities in the evolution of contemporary society determined by the changing values of the social environment and by habits of lifestyle and consumption. The term of the postmodernist society is used as synonym for the post-industrial, information or knowledge society used to distinguish a new type of society and its characteristics.

The term of the postmodernist era is used to define the historic period beginning from 1970, which discloses conceptual changes in the fields of science and stimulates formation of new approaches (paradigms) and their use in order to explain current phenomena in the society. The period in the evolution of the science of marketing where the consumer's commitment to the company and/or their choice to consume a specific product is based on not only rational and functional, but also socio-emotional factors, is defined in this paper by the term of postmodernist marketing. The concept of postmodernist marketing (Brown 1993, Firat 1991) covers management of the needs and wants of the new type of consumer through symbols and their meanings, which are used to shape the consumer's needs on socio-emotional grounds.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that the importance of satisfying psychological consumer needs in market exchange is disclosed by the following different theories: *the hedonistic theory*, which says, according to R. B. Brandt (1998), that the consumer is motivated to buy / consume by only those qualities of exchange or exchanged object which give pleasure; *the pluralist value theory*, which denies the fact that the consumer's desire is based on the rationally perceived want because desire as such is not a rational spring (Richardson 1990).

of emotional link between the company and the consumer (or other market players) becomes the key exchange-stimulating feature. This means that contemporary exchange focuses on the importance of emotional link, consumer's emotional experiences and the marketing management principles used to create them. The theory rests on the basic idea that the consumer's buying/consumption choices are increasingly affected by not rational, but rather emotional attributes of goods/services, brand symbols and other exchange elements, whose psychosymbolic features determine buying/consumption levels, and the type and duration of relationship<sup>3</sup>. Contemporary consumption culture permeated with symbols transforms value creation chains, replacing rationally determined exchange attributes with emotional ones, which serve to stimulate buying or consumption habits using symbols or their created individual socioemotional experiences.

The importance of creating emotional link naturally calls for a new approach to exchange, focusing on the emotional qualities of brands, which, referring to J. Baudrillard (2002) reveal themselves as a hyperreality phenomenon in the culture of consumption. With symbols becoming one of the basic exchanged objects, management of exchange is focused on *satisfying* not the functional or other rational, but rather *emotional consumer needs*. The postmodern era is characterised by the significance of social orientations, therefore the importance rendered to the emotional features of products or exchange in contemporary exchange transforms into the object of *emotional marketing* and into the management of exchange to explain consumer behaviours and habits. Based on what was said, the concept of emotional marketing can be defined as the "marketing concept whose principles are devoted to developing and supporting the socioemotional relation with the consumer on the market" (relation in this context is interpreted as the highest category of the form of exchange, which can be achieved only with the presence of the socioemotional link between two or more market players).

To substantiate formation of the emotional marketing concept the paper examines the characteristic value system of the postmodern society, which reveals the emotional basis of those values and forms the "want" (not only needs) of contemporary consumers on the market.

<sup>3</sup> Types and characteristic features of relationship exchange are broadly examined in works by J. G. Barnes and D. M. Howllet (1994, 1998); V. Liljander and I. Roos (2002); S. Rao and Ch. Perry (2002); L. L. Berry and L. G. Gresham (1986); J. R. Copulsky and M. J. Wolf (1990); P. Doyle (1995); R. Christy et al. (1996); R. J. Brodie et al. (1997); Ch. Gronroos (1994, 1997, 2004); P. D. Berger and N. I. Nasr (1998); E. Gummesson (1994, 1998, 2004); K. Moller and A. Halinen (2000); R. Žvirelienė and I. Bučiūnienė (2008); R.W. Palmatier et al. (2009); R. Korsakienė (2009).

### 3. Emotional consumer values as basis for the formation of the emotional marketing concept

In the marketing management context the transformation of the personal value system is significant in that it directly affects the alternation of established marketing concepts and classic discourses and their improvement by introducing new meanings, which can naturally express the value peculiarities of contemporary social environment on the market. The personal value system, which shapes the wants of consumers, in marketing can be examined as a separate object of research, which reveals the social and emotional orientation of the consumer as a personality in the contemporary era.

The behaviour of contemporary consumers, according to S. Brown (1993), reflects a *dynamic change*<sup>4</sup>, but not stability, which causes the weakening of the qualities of authenticity and consistent personality, reducing the chances to predict and explain consumer behaviours. In the marketing context this prompts value not for things, their functions or characteristics, but for their *meanings*, which people themselves attribute to things (Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Goulding 2000; Nootboom 1992; Thompson and Troester 2002): all this leads to the principal conclusion that the contemporary culture of consumption develops on *emotional grounds*. The importance of emotional needs on the market can be examined with reference to J. Habermas' (1987, 2002) viewpoint to the individual world of living, which is constructed by the individual as proactive *player in communication*. Conducted analysis of scientific literature (Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Goulding 2000; Nootboom 1992; Thompson and Troester 2002) has revealed the following characteristic value-based attitudes of consumers in the postmodern era:

1. The value of the actually existing object in semantic meanings, which enable each individual to interpret the products/services expressed in symbols based on their level of knowledge, experience and erudition.
2. The value of external objects in emotional forms, creating value for the consumer by satisfying their characteristic psychosymbolic needs.

It should be noted that these value-based attitudes reveal their emotional qualities, for which a rational explanation of people's behaviours in exchange not always can be found. On the other hand, the needs of contemporary consumers can be treated as people's natural *need for symbolic meanings of goods/services*, whose materialisation in quantity

<sup>4</sup> This statement reflects the view of R. Muliolytė (1999) that at the time of social change reappraisal of social values becomes more distinct. It is namely the transition from the modern to the postmodern era that provides favourable conditions for value change processes.

and content of information allows minimising the cognitive dissonance<sup>5</sup> in market exchange. The contemporary era reveals the importance of the individuals, highlights their characteristic values and individuality and has many links with consumption, which is the axis of contemporary society, therefore in the context of marketing *the consumers' buying/consumption decision process and exchange is identified by value-filled symbols* (Firat 1991; Firat et al. 1995; Pranulis 2000). Symbols, as the principal exchange-promoting category, affects the consumption phenomenon because they serve to satisfy emotional consumer needs on the market conditioned by not rational needs, but *emotional wants*. Hence consumers' social behaviours on the market are formed through the *buying/consumption decision process*, which is shaped by emotional attributes, and through *exchange* conditioned by the consumption and lifestyle features of the changing society and by the attitude to personal values.

Values reflect *people's behaviour* and their *aims and inclinations* affected by not only clearly determined cost-benefit incentives, but also individual *social or psychological needs*. In the value creation context the emotional attributes of exchange allow identifying people's "real" incentives on the market, in exchange with the chosen company or with its product/service brands.

#### *The importance of creating emotional link in symbols of goods/services in the postmodern era*

Each product has a visual and specialist goal of communication. In some cases each moment of using the product serves a specific purpose, justifying the consumer's desired image (for instance, the consumer using a microwave oven expresses his/her desired image to himself/herself and to others – an independent individual, living a perfect life at a fast pace, free of banal household work, etc. – the image created by the interaction between the consumer's cultural context and with the help of marketing communication media) (Brown 1997; Firat 1991). In the postmodern era uniqueness is attributed to *symbols*, which are separated from their original meanings (Nooteboom 1992). The postmodern market is permeated with simulated reality shaped by *signs*, which serves to express personal identity. The term of "simulacra" (Baudrillard 2002) refers to the development of contemporary exchange between the consumer and the

company in product/service brands, and their symbols, which prompt consumers to identify themselves with the company and with the semantic meanings of its product/service. According to A. F. Firat and A. Venkatesh (1995), J. Baudrillard (2002), the buying/consumption process in the contemporary era should be associated with *imitation*, *illusion* and the vision of what is not actual or real, but can be realized in *symbolic meanings*. Hyperreality is the "image creation" based on the meaning rendering process, replicated in reality. These are such images which support consumers' daily lives and enable them to sense their existence and place in the society. In the postmodern culture the phenomenon of illusion, apart from being recognised, is boldly practiced in marketing when people's individuality is satisfied with different meanings of products/services expressed in symbols. In the marketing context the phenomenon of hyperreality offers the chance to satisfy individual consumer expectations by creating the *illusion (images affected by characteristics of psychosymbolic exchange or exchanged objects)*, therefore marketing in the contemporary era can be defined as a *tool for satisfying consumer illusions*.

The postmodern era faces the lack of "symbolic literacy" (Firat et al. 1995), which occurs when consumers do not perceive the sense of things or their basic meaning. Symbols have no specific source and can be controlled with the help of the system of signs. In this process the consumer becomes *consumer of the symbol/image* because this is the way objects are presented to him/her. In this world of symbols/images consumers seek *meaning and experiences*, whereas *creation of images and their transfer to the consumer's consciousness* become the basic purpose of emotional marketing. All this supports the importance of emotional attributes in contemporary market exchange, which appear to be the key categories of the emotional marketing concept.

In the contemporary market conventional movements and actions of daily life are presented as fascinating and tempting, products are readily introduced with their defined roles and style, and even the difference in opinions and critique are merchandised and sold (Brown 1993; Firat et al. 1995; Firat and Dholakia 2003; Brown 1997). Value creation in contemporary exchange cannot be examined without perceiving the *meaning and peculiarities of signs*, which should be associated with the content and contexts of information, which, in turn, transform the object of exchange on the market. Consumers become dependent on a myriad of *rapidly changing symbols*, which create new meanings that, in turn, trigger manifestations of people's individuality. This approach questions the *rationality viewpoint* that used to be applied in modern sociology, which stands out for denying the personal values attributed to the category of sensations as contradiction to scientific causal argumentation. On the other hand, criteria of economic rationality in the modern era dictate the ultimate interest

<sup>5</sup> Cognitive dissonance occurs when two or more attitudes of the individual start contradicting one another or when the person's behaviour contradicts his or her attitudes. Acting and gaining experience on the market, consumers develop their attitudes, which affect their behaviour on the market and buying/consumption habits. The consumer's opinion in the context of exchange demonstrates the individual's positive or negative evaluations, feelings and attitude to the company or to its products/services.



of the human ego in satisfying their needs, wants and desires, which reflects people's natural trait to consider *what is useful or harmful to them*. The idea of rational choice should be associated with the modern era, where consumers base their actions on the market on rational criteria, which can be satisfied by applying established traditional marketing concepts – production, goods, etc. In the postmodern era of the culture of consumption, with *prospering improvement*, clarification and reinterpretation of *classic paradigms*, new meanings are introduced able to naturally communicate the peculiarities of contemporary social environment, which includes *increased significance of socioemotional needs* as response to growing rationality in not only consumption, but also lifestyle habits.

A. F. Firat and A. Venkatesh (1995), A. F. Firat and N. Dholakia (2003) identify postmodern existence with the *era of symbols*, when in both consumption and the very lifestyle of members of the society symbols become the integral part of nowadays identity; the objective of marketing management is seeking that consumers identify with symbols to satisfy their *fragmented preferences* for products/services, creating perceived value through emotional meanings of exchange or exchanged objects. The consumption process in contemporary exchange can be identified with activity based on symbols, which enables one to satisfy *emotional and cognitive* consumer wants in semantic forms of expressing products/services and to individualise consumer needs in information content media and reduces consumers' psychological dissonance and catalyses the sense of identification with the symbolic meanings reflected by the product/service or with the social group of consumers.

Diversity of the society is conditioned by the *concept of distinction*, i.e. the fundamentals of the contemporary system of culture lie in diversity based on *differentiation of symbols and their consumption* (Firat and Venkatesh 1995). Since the social structure is a consumption environment, it is not the decisive factor of specific consumption processes or a symbolic aspect of consumption. Consumers of the postmodern era are loyal to not the specific product/service, but *symbols* and their created *images and visions*. According to F. Webster (2006), "establishment of a brand in contemporary marketing management should be associated with product or even company images, which are propagated using different communication media". Structured viewpoints of different researchers (Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Firat 1977; Venkatesh 1999; Firat and Dholakia 2003; Brown 1993, 1995; Webster 2006; Castells 2005; Jameson 2002) provide grounds to limit the *rationality discourse*<sup>6</sup>, to explain consumer behaviours that stimulate buying/con-

sumption decisions and reveal the importance of emotional qualities.

Development of the emotional marketing concept is justified by the following characteristic features of contemporary consumers, which disclose the emotional nature of the buying/consumption decision and its relevance in the context of marketing management:

- Individuals' *natural wish to express themselves through different images* created in product/service symbols. Hyperreality can be defined as "image creation" based on the meaning rendering process, replicated in reality. Applying the postmodern discourse, uniqueness is attributed to *symbols*, which are separated from their original meanings (Nooteboom 1992).
- The phenomenon of hyperreality, as the reflection of value created in symbols for the consumer, triggers the alternation in the *form and duration of exchange* and the creation of informal and lasting co-operation with the company based on *personal* trust, which requires a new approach to exchange and to the techniques of identifying added value that are used to measure direct and indirect benefits of exchange.
- Consuming not the different products/services, but their *symbols*, which stimulates the *hyperreality phenomenon*.
- Conventional movements and actions of daily life are presented as fascinating and tempting, products are readily introduced with their defined *roles and style*, and even the difference in opinions and critique are "merchandised" and sold.
- Consumers are not faithful to brands – they are faithful to *images and symbols*, especially those which they themselves create when using the products.
- Value for the consumer is created through stimulating people's *emotional* traits, which prompt perception of exchange itself as a value that satisfies socioemotional needs and creates the emotional value of exchange.
- Promotes a particularly personal lifestyle, affects manifestations of weakened social relationships, prompts hedonism and interest in oneself and one's needs, which, as is assumed, can be satisfied by shopping when this process is perceived as an illusion serving to achieve completeness of the personality (Webster 2006: 161).
- Individuality and exclusivity are the categories defining the individual's psychological state, which is controlled with informational and communicational media when the consumer's rational choice is replaced with emotional categories of exchange.
- Allows highlighting the consumer's characteristic emotional features, which should be associated with

<sup>6</sup> The characteristic feature of rational discourse is denial of personal values which are attributed to the category of senses as opposition to scientific causal argumentation.

the individual's personal character, values and views to the environment, therefore stimulation of this feature positively affects consumer perceived value.

- In the context of postmodern discourse consumption is squeezed into social, cultural and *symbolic structures* and therefore should be naturally treated as a process of *symbolic exchange* and active attribution of signs rather than simple acquisition of an object.
- Consumption becomes a tool for self-realisation and self-identification; a tool which helps to *create* oneself and one's image.
- Consumers seek to express themselves through symbols created by their consumed products/services.
- To express different images people purchase and use the same products, hence, what looks like differences, on the level of symbolic culture turns into a hidden unity.

In the contemporary market consumers' buying/consumption decision process and exchange are implemented through informational processes and communication media, stimulating the emotional wants of consumers, which requires a new approach to the marketing activity by defining marketing as the *process of minimising information uncertainties in order to turn consumer illusions into a mutually valuable reality*. This definition of marketing validates the characteristic features of the postmodern era – perceiving illusion as a reality filled with symbols, which affects satisfaction of individual consumer needs and expectations by the content of information. Symbols, as a product of information, directly affect the person's (consumer's) buying/consumption choices or development of other types of exchange. For this reason the concept of emotional marketing is based on the management of symbols in the exchange process as of the basic attribute of exchange which serves to shape relationships between different market players.

The use of the emotional marketing term in the context of the marketing science is justified with the following basic qualities of consumer wants:

1. Consumers seek to express themselves and their relationships with others through objects within their ownership. Expression of the personality in the contemporary consumer society develops through the satisfaction of wants, which is based on emotional ties between the consumer and the company or its product brands. The self-expression aspect is the highest category of personal needs, which has emotional characteristics.

2. Consumers consider as valuable that kind of exchange and exchanged objects which help them express their *feelings*. The characteristic needs of contemporary consumers reveal the complex nature of communication, the importance of intensity and dissolution and the speed of

hyperreality, which consistently (re)creates new images and meanings, which, in turn, establish their rules and present them as lifestyles.

It should be noted that the identified characteristic qualities of contemporary consumers require treating emotional marketing as a phenomenon which serves to shape buying/consumption incentives in emotional relationship exchange created in symbols of exchanged objects and in their reflected images or semantic meanings. The new approach to marketing highlights the relevance of emotional attributes in the exchange process, replacing the rational exchange attributes with psychosymbolic ones. All this validates the raised hypothesis that in the postmodern era *creation of the consumer's positive emotional basis* becomes the key objective of marketing management when consumer perceived value is shaped using emotional attributes of exchange and exchanged objects and creating emotional value for the consumer.

#### *The place of emotional marketing in the postmodern concept of the science of marketing*

In the broad sense postmodernism can be defined as not a specific concept describing a new level in the society, which relates to current radical innovations in the different spheres of social activity (economy, culture, etc.), but an ethos affecting transformations of the society's value-related changes and stimulating *new manifestations of lifestyle and consumption style* (Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Firat *et al.* 1995; Firat 1991; Brown 1993; Goulding 2000; Webster 2006; Muller 2006). In the context of postmodernism the concept of consumption is totally new, is based on the new perception and establishes a new (postmodernist) culture of consumption and hence a new type of consumer, which quality-wise is very different from consumers of the past<sup>7</sup>. Postmodern discourse in the context of marketing management denies the principle of modernity, treating the consumer as a *fragmented personality*, whose consumption system is dominated by *symbols and their meanings* that influence replacement of exchange developed in economic categories with *emotional* relation. In the marketing context such an approach to consumers highlights their characteristic aspect of *individuality* and calls for an ultimately personalised development of exchange having regard to the characteristic personal qualities, which unfold in the habits and needs of consumption. After systematising the different contemporary marketing concepts such as *interactive marketing, micromarketing, direct marketing, databased marketing,*

<sup>7</sup> The impact of postmodernism on marketing management was broadly examined in works by A. F. Firat (1977, 1991), A. F. Firat *et al.* (1994), A. F. Firat and A. Venkatesh (1995), S. Brown (1993, 1997).

*macromarketing, neomarketing and relationship marketing*, it should be assumed that all these theories are subjected to the principal goal – *ultimately individualised management of exchange*, which is shaped on *emotional grounds*.

In contemporary value discourse satisfaction of rational consumer values starts manifesting itself through critique and is aligned with moral and emotional decisions as landmarks of the fundamental human needs. Consumers' buying/consumption decision process and exchange are the crucial principle of social life, which not only serves to explain the processes taking place in the contemporary market, but also affects all spheres of social life, which in the postmodern era should be associated with formation of emotionally comfortable relationships. This attitude can also rest on *the theory of limited rationality*, which argues that consumer choices and consumption habits are not based on the rational decision, which is conditioned by the abundance of information in today's market. Consumers do not remember all considered alternatives and rely on the last impression. Seeking efficient relationship exchange, the objective of marketing is to create exclusive and sometimes shocking messages, which could reinforce the consumer's impression and habits. For this reason symbols arouse people's emotions, which, in turn, draw attention. People's attention in the postmodern era becomes one of the crucial categories of marketing management because attention triggers action, which affects the duration, form and outcome of further exchange. Based on what was said, management of meanings and senses of symbols using information and communication media is becoming object of emotional marketing when personal buying/consumption needs are shaped in emotional qualities reflected by those symbols.

Consumers' buying/consumption decision process and the concept of exchange as such gain new meanings being interpreted as the relation between company and consumer, which manifests itself as long as *mutual emotional* satisfaction is in place. For this reason the characteristic needs of contemporary consumers cannot be examined from the purely rational point of view because the consumer's buying/consumption decision process and exchange with the company occur *as not only exchange of material values*, but also emotional action, which shapes mutual relationships.

It should be noted that the different approaches to marketing and existing theories do not affect each other and can be applied having regard to the different goals on the market. New marketing paradigms generalise the elements of state-of-the-art marketing models and enable adaptation to the changing structure of the society, increasingly rapid lifestyles as well as to the variety and dynamics of consumption styles, i.e. increasing preferences of individualised customers, transformation of consumption models, restructuring of social and economic activities and multicultural factors.

This leads to the assumption that contemporary marketing concepts *cannot be defined in traditional terms* and must be based on new insights, which reflect the alternation of social exchange when the latter is perceived as *value-based exchange* in the marketing context without questioning the relevance of the fundamental concept of exchange in discourses of modern marketing theories.

#### 4. Conclusions

1. Emotional marketing reveals a new shift in marketing management, which focuses on the emotional imperative of exchange on the market. The increasing meaning of symbols of products and of their brands on the market calls for a new approach to the consumers' buying/consumption decision process and exchange when symbols are perceived as tools to ensure the consumer's emotional need. The concept of emotional marketing aims to define a new marketing shift based on emotional elements of product brands and/or exchange, which affect the buying/consumption habits more than the rational choice factors.

2. Emotional marketing incorporates elements of different postmodern concepts of marketing (knowledge, relationships, etc.), which highlight creation of emotional relations between the company and the consumer and validate the factors motivating buying/consumption with emotional attributes of exchange and/or product brands.

3. Symbols (both visual and communicational verbal, written, etc.) are becoming the basic object of emotional marketing and stimulate the individual to make decisions based on emotional rather than rational categories.

4. Emotional marketing can be interpreted as a new shift (paradigm) of marketing, which focuses on the relevance of latent relations between the company, its products and the consumer in making buying/consumption decisions. Emotional attributes of exchange and/or product brands allow ultimate individualisation of the buying/consumption process since the same symbol can have different meanings of senses for different consumer groups.

5. The characteristic consumption peculiarities of the contemporary social environment have disclosed their emotional basis, which theoretically validates development of the concept of emotional marketing as a separate shift in marketing management. Since symbols significantly affect buying/consumption habits, they need to be examined from aspects of information and communication when symbols are interpreted as a resource of information, which arouses different emotions for the person.

6. The concept of emotional marketing can be interpreted as a unique shift in marketing management focusing on the emotional creation of relationships between the



company and the consumer as the key motivating factor for consumers' buying/consumption decisions and exchange. All this conveys a postmodern approach to the science of marketing where buying/consumption models are constructed in emotional categories with focus on symbols and their created visions, images and sensations. This altogether becomes the crucial feature of the postmodern era when consumers' buying/consumption process is stimulated with psychosymbolic attributes of exchange and exchanged objects.

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