

НОВІ СПОЖИВЧІ ТЕНДЕНЦІЇ ХХІ СТОЛІТТЯ ТА ЇХНІ РИНКОВІ НАСЛІДКИ

© Собчик Г., 2014

Проаналізовано зміни у споживчих перевагах та споживчій поведінці, які спостерігаються у ХХІ ст. як результат специфічних економічних, соціальних та культурних передумов. До особливостей споживання, що виникають у контексті глобалізації ринків та економіки, загалом зараховують зміну структури споживання, споживчий гедонізм, екологізацію споживання, етичність та сталість споживання, зниження споживання тощо. Досліджено тренди щодо екоспоживання та принципи сталого споживання, які охоплюють екологічні, економічні, соціальні, психологічні та просторові напрями. Запропоновано перспективи досліджень споживчих мегатрендів.

Ключові слова: споживання, нові тренди в споживчій поведінці, маркетингова орієнтація.

NEW PHENOMENA IN THE XXI CENTURY CONSUMPTION AND THEIR MARKETING IMPLICATIONS

© Sobczyk G., 2014

The article brings forth a presentation of the changes in consumption patterns and consumer behaviour that have been taking place in the twenty-first century as a result of specific economic, social and cultural conditioning. The already identified consumption developments occurring in the context of the globalisation of economies and markets include the following: transformation in the structure of consumption itself, consumption hedonism, the greening of consumption, ethical and sustainable consumption, deconsumption and other trends.

Key words: consumption, new trends in consumer behaviour, marketing orientation.

Problem formulation. Nowadays, consumption is increasingly becoming a means of determining the place of the individual within the society, ceasing to constitute a mere method of fulfilling their existing needs. The consumers seek to differentiate themselves through their consumption of goods and services, which serves them as a way of communicating to the environment the values that distinguish them from others. Changes in the market of consumer goods engender positive and negative social, economic and cultural effects. If consumption allows for full satisfaction of the needs and expectations of individuals, it largely becomes the purpose of their existence, the drive behind their actions and creativity. Freedom of choice when buying favours the determination of the true consumer preferences, thus facilitating far more rational decision-making processes at the time of purchasing. However, consumption is increasingly becoming a means of identifying the place of the individual within society, rather than simply constituting a way to meet existing needs.

Modern trends of self-expression through growing consumer aspirations are referred to collectively as the post-modern consumer society. When combined with consumerism, the trends of postmodernism relate primarily to the more affluent countries, but they are rapidly spreading onto the markets with lower incomes and standards of living [1, p. 14]. Existing trends in consumption feed on the consumption growth conditions, while simultaneously and deliberately shaping its level and structure for the implementation of selected targets of individuals and social groups. A review of the reference literature points to a multitude of megatrends, trends and novelties which are encompassed by the new consumption phenomena, but not all of them have occurred in different markets or are likely to occur within the nearest future. So far, their

presentation has been greatly dispersed in various publications, being discussed secondarily on the margins of the new consumer behaviour trends. The recent publication of the work by B. Mróz served to systematise an overview of new consumer trends occurring in the twenty-first century within the space of the global market. [2]¹⁰

Article objectives. The purpose of this article is to present modern trends in consumption which are already in occurrence, as well as their conditioning, characteristic traits and manifestations. Also elucidated will be the practical implications of consumption changes in the marketing strategies employed by various companies. The drafting of this article called for an overview of the reference literature on consumption and modern consumer behaviours and patterns identifiable at a household level. A numerical presentation of the changes in the structure of Polish households consumption patterns draws from the available statistical sources of the Central Statistical Office.

Presentation of the main material. The determinants and manifestations of global trends, as well as the processes of individualisation and differentiation of consumer behavioral patterns in various cross-sections can be grouped as follows:

- economic growth and an increase in living standards,
- globalisation of economies and markets,
- the global financial crisis,
- demographic and socio-educational changes,
- the development of production, distribution and promotion of goods and services.

As part of the relationship between consumption processes and economic development, consumer demand acts as a catalyst for the development of production (extended reproduction), which is a source of income and purchasing power for the holder. The economic development occurring at a rapid pace at the turn of the twentieth and the twenty-first century in many regions of the world (China, India, Central and Eastern Europe) has greatly incremented the size of the modern consumer society. On the other hand, the mid 1980s saw the initiation of the ongoing accelerated process of globalisation of the world economy. Globalisation is a multi-dimensional process, encompassing all aspects of life of societies. Globalisation economy should be understood as a process of "deepening of the economic links between different countries and regions in the world, due to the increasing ease and speed of international transactions and cross-border flows of goods, services and production factors, together with the normalisation of institutions and mechanisms characteristic of a developed market economy" [3, p. 16]. Market symptoms of globalisation include the growing international harmonisation of consumer preferences and massive demand that prompt manufacturers and retailers to undertake large-scale production and marketing activities which enable sales worldwide.

New trends in consumption and buyers behavioural patterns shape demographic and socio-educational changes, which include in particular the aging of the population, the fall in birth rates, the lengthening of life expectancy, the rise of the middle class, the growth in education, health education, the effect of imitation of lifestyle of reference groups, etc. They further form higher quality requirements on the part of consumers, as reported in relation to the offer of goods and services available on the market.

The changes in consumption and the level thereof are created by the development and availability of diverse, innovative products, as offered in a way that ensures easy accessibility for the buyer. The rapid technological progress and the resulting market competition affect the appearance of new products which are oftentimes of higher attractiveness and quality than those hitherto available on the market, and which – as such – displace the older products. The mass production of consumer goods which are increasingly cheaper turns their consumption into a widespread phenomenon. The changes in the offer of goods and services also apply to the institutional market, while inspiring the obsolescence of a variety of new products.

¹⁰ Some of the new consumer shopping habits of (eg. gender blending). as presented by the author, can hardly be included among consumption trends. They rather constitute custom novelties.

The result of the changing consumption conditioning which bears economic, social and cultural traits are new trends in consumer behaviour of the society that are to be understood as a given direction of the changes in consumer preferences, directly resulting from the changes permanently occurring in the market environment [4, p. 26]. Among the major trends observed are the following:

- changing consumption patterns,
- consumer hedonism, greening of consumption
- ethical (responsible) and sustainable consumption, deconsumption,
- smart shopping
- other (virtualisation, domocentrism).

The first of the above-mentioned directions of change in consumption is particularly characteristic of countries such as Poland, which have undergone a market transformation over the last 25 years. A characteristic trait of these changes is an increase in consumer spending and a systematic decline in the share of expenditure on food with a simultaneous rise in expenditure on modern-day durables and services. The share of expenditure on food and non-alcoholic beverages decreased in Poland in the years 2007–2012 from 27.8 % to 25.1 % of the total consumption expenditure [5], but it still continues to be much higher than in the highly developed countries, where it does not exceed 20 %. Ranking in the second place in household expenditure is housing and energy-generating products, whose share in the total expenditure has increased by 1.1 pp and the 20.3 % index is similar to many European countries (e.g. in Austria in 2010 it amounted to 21.6 %, while reaching 22.3 % in Ireland and 20.2 % in Spain)[6]. Also incremented is the share of expenditure on most services, in particular, those offered by the sectors of gastronomy, hospitality, recreation, culture and transportation. By contrast, both the share of expenditure on communications services, due to the lower prices of these services, and the share of expenditure on educational services have decreased slightly.

The shifts occurring in the level and structure of household consumption in Poland indicate a process of its modernisation. A revaluation of consumption is to be noted, which consists in a lesser intake of food, especially the products of low nutritional value, towards the purchase and use of more durable consumer goods. The level of furnishing of Polish households with basic electronic equipment and domestic appliances is nearly complete, and a rapid spread in the use of next-generation devices, such as a plasma or LCD television set, digital camera, or a personal computer with Internet access is further to be noted. Gradually decreasing are the differences in the equipment of households in modern durables between various socio-professional groups.

Materialistic values and consumerist lifestyle, often referred to as consumer hedonism, has become visibly widespread in recent decades, reaching all far-flung corners of the planet. Underlying these consumer behavioural patterns, which are focused on the pleasure and enjoyment of ownership of material goods, are imitation, snobbery and conspicuous consumption. Imitation can be understood broadly as any behaviour bearing the traits of duplication of certain consumption patterns and consumer behaviour of other individuals, or narrowly as specific imitative behaviours [7, p. 145]. One manifestation of such mimicry is buying the same or similar products to those purchased by others and the acquisition of "must have" products, only because others are using them. The imitation in the form of a stage effect (lemming-like rush), the more consumers own a given product, the greater the pressure on its possession for the other group members.

The snobbery effect is manifested in the acquisition of unusual and original products, so that the mere possession thereof would serve the owner to distinguish themselves from the others. The consumer will then opt for products rarely purchased by others, standing against all forms of imitation.

On the other hand, ostentatious consumption is characterised by purchasing and utilisation of specific – usually luxury – goods (services) that are meant to be "for show", allowing the consumer to demonstrate their affluence, the values respected and a specific life style.

Another trend in contemporary consumption is its greening, which is the result of increasing environmental awareness of the society with regard to the environmental threats. Eco-consumption mainly encompasses the consumption of organic food, but it also includes pro-environmental behaviours in the functioning of the household. Obtaining food that meets the environmental criteria and standards requires

adequate production of raw materials and product processing. Organic food is produced from vegetable or animal raw materials, which are produced in an organic farm system, ie. excluding synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, antibiotics, hormones, etc. Agricultural producers hold proper certificates and they must conform to the law on organic farming. In view of lower productivity and higher labour intensity of organic farming, its products in the market of organic foods are more highly priced than conventional foods.

An important condition for obtaining organic food is processing of raw organic farming materials while maintaining their high biological and nutritional quality (proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals). The manufacturing process does not permit the use of any additives and excipients. Such growers function in the system of organic farming and, therefore, must comply with the principles delineated in the Act on the Health Conditions of Food and Nutrition.

A manifestation of the growing consumer nutrition knowledge is the development of functional foods market. It is the result of heightened attention paid to proper nutrition, the increased participation of older persons in society, as well as the convenience of consumption. The functional foods group comprises foods fortified with additional substances beneficial to the body (eg. vitamins, additional bacterial cultures), *light* foods, multi-component foods and those easy to prepare for consumption. In 2012, the Polish market of functional foods was estimated at €1.2 billion, which is far less than in Western European countries [8].

If we are seeking answers to the question as per the reasons for the dissemination of the innovative trend in consumption of organic and functional foods, then the awareness of the risks of pollution and environmental degradation is the primary but not the only condition for green consumer behaviour. Other causes include the development of this foods market, the level of affluence of consumers, the state of environmental infrastructure, the environmental policy of the state, as well as consumers' care for their own health and a higher quality and gustatory values [9, p. 52].

Notable in Western countries, especially in the US, is an increased interest in ecological products not only in the food and beverage sector, but also in terms of household chemicals, cosmetics, clothing and electronic equipment. The growing LOHAS (*Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability*) trend has meant that American consumers have at their disposal retail chains specialising in the sales of organic products throughout various industries [2, p. 137]. As observed in various countries, an interest of households in waste segregation, use of biodegradable bags, limiting consumption of water and electricity is on the increase. Such behaviours combine ecological incentive with economical concerns relating to the costs of maintaining the abode and are bound to become more common as a result of the informative and educational campaigns carried out with the purpose of raising the environmental awareness of society, encouraging the use of organic product markings or establishing sanctions for unfair manufacturers.

The trend of ecological consumption forms part of the concept of ethical (responsible) consumption, which, in turn, is comprised by sustainable consumption. The researchers treat the concept of sustainable consumption in the same way as any sustainable development, the essence of which would be the pursuit of such methods and directions of need satisfaction which safeguard the preservation of the environment and natural resources for future generations, which entails a balance between consumption and the natural environment, as well as the change in the civilisation model. It, therefore, constitutes an inclination towards socially responsible consumption. A sustainable consumer lifestyle draws attention to the following dimensions and rules of consumer behaviour [10, p. 203]:

- a) ecological – minimised impact on the environment,
- b) economic – the current standard of living possible to continue in the future,
- c) social – maintenance of positive social relations, no support of discrimination and laboured exploitation,
- d) psychological – achieving a balance between addressing the tangible and intangible needs,
- e) spatial – the principle of geographical economic order is respected.

These principles usually indicate a broad view of sustainable consumption.

In the era of consumerism, new trends appear which are contrary to the above-specified patterns and which seeks deconsumption and a withdrawal from hyperconsumption. It involves a conscious and deliberate reduction in the volume of goods consumed. The noticeable tendency to reduce consumption

among certain groups in the society is not only consequent to the fashionability of the concept of a healthy and frugal lifestyle, but such behaviours are also stimulated by the recession and the fear of its consequences, and further on by progressive servicisation and dematerialisation of consumption, the heightening of quality consumer aspirations, reduction of the rank of consumption among the system of human values, followed by the protection of natural resources [11, p. 151]. "Anticonsumerism" consists in the search for highly durable products of high-quality and in the dissemination of pro-health and pro-environmental awareness throughout the society.

One of the newly emerged forms of deconsumption is collaborative consumption, also referred to as "consumer cooperation", or "shared use economy" (sharing economy). Collaborative consumption is a consumption model based on paid and free-of-charge sharing, reselling and lending of goods and services. The point of these solutions are the savings made on purchases of new items, their more rational use, flexibility in meeting the needs which occur periodically and ecological considerations. Consumer market of goods exchange displaces the notions of property, creating temporary ownership; its recent development has been particularly dynamic in the USA, where the subject of trade is real estate (e.g. house swaps for holidays, rental accommodation), motor vehicles and sports equipment [2, p. 147]. It should be noted that an important prerequisite for the popularisation of collaborative consumption is the development of information and communication technologies that facilitate the marrying of supply and demand of "free" goods and services. Increasingly widespread consumer access to the Internet, social networks, possession of modern mobile devices, access to online payment systems – allow of these allow initiatives undertaken in the framework of joint consumption.

In practice, „the shared use economy” encounters specific barriers, such as the attachment to private ownership and full control over one’s resources, the fear of theft and devastation and the, as of yet, unresolved issue of consumer rights.

The new trend of modern consumption, associated particularly with the functioning of households in crisis conditions, is smart shopping. In the case of demand restraints associated with economic recession, consumers protect their hitherto-achieved consumption levels by adjusting their shopping habits to the situation they are in. Smart shopping activities include rational household budget planning through purchasing of the necessary products at a low price ("expect more, pay less"). Meeting the needs of the household is consequential to an increase in purchases in discount stores, the acquisition of white-label goods, searching for information on cheaper products and conducted promotional sales, purchasing goods online, more careful preparation for purchases and avoiding compulsive shopping on the spur of the moment. Research shows that smart shopping is combined with the use of offers from different types of trade (not only discount chains or supermarkets) and that it is more common among the wealthier and better educated consumers [4, p. 28–30].

The above-specified macrotrends in the consumption of the twenty-first century do not cover all the changes occurring in this domain. The consumer behaviours already identified as well as new ones which are likely to occur in the future constitute finite opportunities and challenges for entrepreneurial marketing orientation. The not fully satisfied demand in the currently poorer countries opens up a capacious market for many industrial goods upon improving of the economic conditions of their societies. At the same time, a large-scale production is a cheaper type of production, which is also affordable for many buyers. On the other hand, the observed individualisation of consumption and a strong interest in branded products, including luxury goods, force the prices of such products to surge and meet an appropriate margin. Consumers seeking products related to a given trend, tend to accept a higher price if the product and the conditions of its purchase find them fully satisfied.

In B2C relations (businesses with consumers) an increasing importance is attached to a direct contact of the manufacturers with their target clients. Apparently, the fading of the borderline between the company and the consumer takes place within the concept of the prosumer, when the purchaser is engaged in the process of joint creation of the product’s value. They may participate in the design of a new product, its testing and promotion. Each producer and seller, even if they have no interest in the concept of the prosumer, ought to be instructed in terms of the flexibility of activities and the ability to adapt their offer to the individual needs on a large scale. P. Kotler dubs such activity with the term “mass customizing”, which

implies the companies' ability to implement a large-scale preparation of their products, services and communication programs – all tailored to the individual needs of the consumer [12, p. 282]. Positively influencing the buyer is the opportunity to try the product out before the final decision of its purchase. A consumer who is given a chance to “test drive” new products before buying them, makes a much better choice in a highly satisfactory manner.

Direct marketing is being implemented on a much wider scale and it is characterised by two main features – impact selectivity and interactivity. Then, the company is focused on the individual customer or a narrow niche of the market and, as such, it is prepared for a two-sided way to maintain communication with the entities of its immediate surroundings. Individual approach to the consumer allows one to better get to know their needs and expectations, offering them the right product, at the right time and in the manner expected. Conducive to making an effort to meet changes in consumer behavioural patterns is the development of modern information and communication technology, which equips us with many tools for direct distribution and communication with buyers and receiving their feedback quickly.

Conclusions and perspectives for further research. In conclusion, a brief review of modern trends in the twenty-first-century consumption, it should be noted the universal nature of the premises of these changes, such as globalisation, enhancement of the economic conditions of society, social and cultural changes and the global financial crisis. The differentiation of such conditions in cross sections of individual markets affects the appearance of consumer trends and behavioural patterns, whose diversity is building up quickly, especially in the highly developed countries. Some orientations in consumption are of an opposite (dichotomous) nature, for example hyperconsumption and deconsumption; individualism and assimilation (homogenisation) of consumption; shared and conspicuous consumption; network generation and digital abstinence.

The emerging megatrends and novelties in consumption are not only generated by the developing consumer communities, but also by businesses introducing market innovations in terms of product, distribution and marketing communication. New developments in consumer behaviour require of companies unconventional, more direct methods and forms of communication with the ever-more demanding consumers.

Against the background of a number of trends and market behaviours practiced by consumers, by far the leading trend defined by many researchers as excessive consumption, unjustified by any social and environmental considerations. It requires a redefinition due to the divergent consumption conditions and objectives of particular groups within the society. Further research on the issue tackled in this article should include an empirical verification of the prevalence of consumption trends shown herein, considering the different modes of conditioning operative in individual markets. Posing an interesting problem would be international comparisons and identifying the role of the consumer in the marketing strategies employed by companies.

1. Szulce H. *Rozważania o konsumpcji* / H. Szulce // *Handel Wewnętrzny*, 2011. – No 1. – P. 13–18.
2. Mróz B. *Konsument w globalnej gospodarce. Trzy perspektywy* / B. Mróz. – Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Szkoła Główna Handlowa w Warszawie, 2013 – 300 p.
3. *Globalizacja i integracja europejska*, ed. J. Kotyński. – Warszawa: Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, 2005 – 245 p.
4. Zalega T. *Nowe trendy w zachowaniach konsumpcyjnych miejskich gospodarstw domowych w okresie kryzysu* / T. Zalega // *Marketing i Rynek*. – 2013. – No 8. – P. 24–31.
5. *Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Poland 2010*. – Warsaw, 2010. – 915 p.
6. *Rocznik Statystyki Międzynarodowej 2012*. – Warszawa: GUS, 2012. – 614 p.
7. Burgiel A. *Naśladownictwo, ostentacja i snobizm w zachowaniach polskich konsumentów* / A. Burgiel // *Handel Wewnętrzny*, 2012. – No 5. – P. 143–152.
8. <http://www.networkmagazyn.pl/Rynek%20produkt%C3%B3w%20funkcjonalnych%20w%20Polsce> (access: 3.09.2014).
9. Łuczka-Bakuła W. *Decyzje zakupu na rynku żywności a świadomość i zachowania proekologiczne konsumentów* / W. Łuczka-Bakuła // *Handel Wewnętrzny*, 2011. – No 3. – P. 52–59.
10. Kiełczewski D. *Zmiany zachowań konsumentów jako czynnik zrównoważonego rozwoju* / D. Kiełczewski // *Handel Wewnętrzny*, 2012 – No 5 – P. 201–208.
11. Bywalec C. *Konsumpcja w teorii i praktyce gospodarowania* / C. Bywalec. – Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2007. – 224 p.
12. Kotler P. *Marketing* / P. Kotler. – Poznań: Dom Wydawniczy Rebis, 2005. – 754 p.