

## Peculiarities of Consumer Perception in the Aspect of Marketing to Women

Jūratė Banytė, Žaneta Paunksnienė, Aušra Rūtelionė

Kauno technologijos universitetas  
K. Donelaičio g. 73, LT-44309, Kaunas

*Changing consumption culture, a rapid market growth, an intensive pace of society's life reveals the need for deeper consumer and their preference studies. One of the emerging key tasks for marketing professionals is to understand, adapt to and develop the consumer and his/her behaviour. Social and cultural environment surrounding the consumer, his individual characteristics and psychological state constitute the objects investigated by consumer behaviour theorists. The majority of these theories are used in the development of new marketing directions, conducting complex marketing research and forecasting market changes. The article analyses one variable of consumer behaviour, defined as perception, seeking to identify its usage possibilities while developing marketing to women. The aim of the article is to define perception peculiarities as a variable of consumer behaviour within the context of marketing to women. The article reveals the issue of perception as a relevant object of contemporary consumer behaviour studies and validates the importance of this variable recognition in the development of marketing to women. The conception of perception in the consumer behaviour theory is briefly reviewed and a consistent theoretical analysis of the elements of the process such as sensation, attention, interpretation and retention is performed. Besides, the theories of marketing to women by L. Johnson and A. Learned (2004) and M. Barletta (2003) are summarized, identifying the main directions of these studies. Based on the analysis performed, the possibilities of combining the perception as a variable of consumer behaviour with theoretical provisions of marketing to women are validated and the use of perception elements while developing marketing to women is defined.*

Keywords: *consumer behaviour, perception, marketing to women, gender marketing.*

### Introduction

The contemporary product and information marketing are characterized by abundance and multiplicity. An individual living in such an environment is constantly influenced by various stimuli and signals. The results of this interaction directly depend on the person's environmental perception that is activated from the birth and is used on a regularly basis in the life of a conscious human. The development of an appropriate and perceptible message to the consumer becomes one of the main goals for marketing professionals. Within this context the importance of consumer's perception cognition, controlling the link between a personality and surrounding world, is

highlighted. Conducting perception studies, it is necessary to consider changes related to changing roles of recent consumers, women and men. In this case it is important to mention the increased activity of women in the society and family and the formation of a particular market for women. Therefore, women and peculiarities of their behaviour become a relevant research object, which forms a prerequisite for the development of a new direction, defined as marketing to women.

**The research problem.** The interpretation of perception presented in the theory of consumer behaviour is characterized by a variety of opinions, which causes difficulties trying to identify characteristic peculiarities of expression. The same situation is with the studies of marketing to women that present behavioural differences of men and women, without identifying the peculiarities of perception as a variable of consumer behaviour, considering the aspect of genders. Seeking to provide a uniform definition and context interpretation of the perception, it is important to carry out a theoretical analysis of the elements of perception process, determine the key features of consumer behaviour variable and integrate them as a common description.

**The research object** dwells on the perception as a variable of consumer behaviour and its role in the theory of marketing to women.

**The research aim** is to identify the peculiarities of perception expression as a variable of consumer behaviour within the context of marketing to women.

**Research methods used.** Conducting theoretical studies of perception as a variable of consumer behaviour and marketing to women, the methods of comparative analysis and systemization of scientific literature were employed.

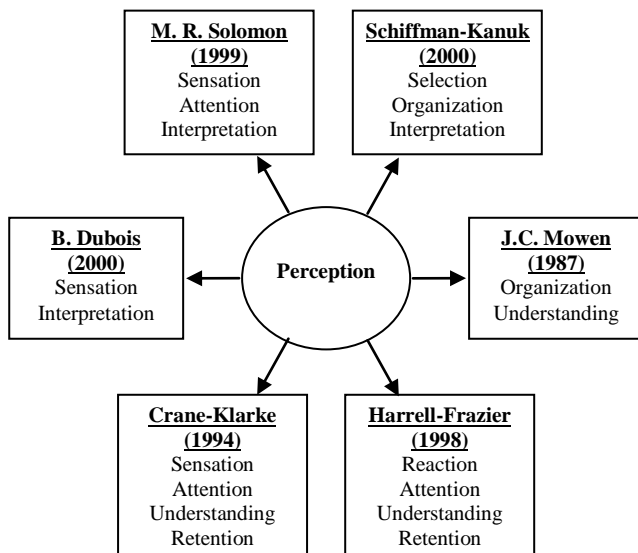
### The conception of perception in the theory of consumer behaviour

*Perception* is one of the objects studied by the science of consumer behaviour. According to J. Mowen (1987), *consumer behaviour* defines the actions of people, seeking to satisfy their wishes and needs while purchasing and consuming goods and services. Analyzing the works of scientists studying consumer behaviour, it is possible to make a conclusion that perception is presented as one of personal factors, determining consumer behaviour. *Personal factors* mean the closest environment of a human, including everything what is inside the person, his head and soul, characterizing him as a personality. Using his sensory receptors

and being influenced by external factors, the person receives information, accepts and adapts it, forms his personal attitude, opinion, and motive, which can be defined as factors that will influence his further activity and behaviour. Perception within this context is considered as one of the principal personal factors, conditioning the nature and direction of remaining variables. Authors J. C. Mowen (1987), D. L. Loudon and A. J. Della Bitta (1993) determine *perception* as a phase of information processing, while C. G. Walters and B. J. Bergiel (1989), F. G. Crane and T. K. Klarke (1994), G. D. Harrell, G. L. Frazier (1998), M. R. Solomon (1999), B. Dubois (2000) define *perception* as a separate variable of consumer behaviour having features of the process and including separate phases of the process.

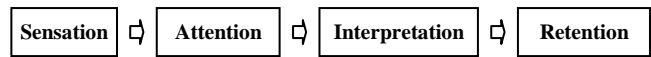
C. G. Walters and B. J. Bergiel (1989) characterize *perception* as a solid process during which an individual acquires knowledge about the environment and interprets the information according to his/her needs, requirements and attitudes. The works of F. G. Crane and T. K. Klarke (1994), G. D. Harrell, G. L. Frazier (1998), M. R. Solomon (1999), B. Dubois (2000) present *perception* as a more complicated process, during which sensory receptors of a consumer capture a message sent by external signals and the information received is interpreted, organized and saved, providing a meaning for it and using it in a decision making process.

Summarizing the studies of the perception concept provided in the scientific literature, it can be concluded that *perception has characteristics of a process and is constituted by separate complementary elements with an appropriate sequence. This process is influenced by subjective features of an individual and has distinctive individual characteristics.* Figure 1 shows the elements of perception as a process, provided by various authors.



**Figure 1.** The elements of the perceptual process: a generalized context of theoretical studies (constructed by the authors)

Analyzing classifications proposed by marketing specialists, it can be stated that *sensation, attention, interpretation and retention are the dominating elements of the perceptual process.* The interaction of these elements is presented in Figure 2.



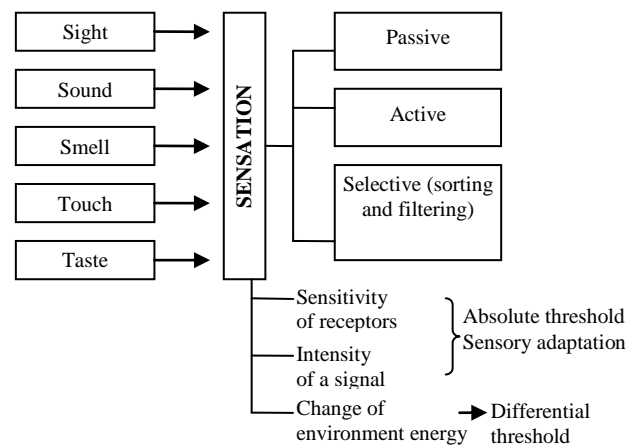
**Figure 2.** The elements of perceptual process

F. G. Crane and T. K. Klarke (1994) introduce the theory of perceptual filters, based on the statement that the perceptual process is a set of filters, used for sorting and modification of a stimulus, the result of which is perception, finally stored in the memory of consumers. According to the authors, the consumer cannot feel all the stimuli in the phase of sensation (for example, those who do not read the Lietuvos Rytas newspaper will not be affected by advertisements of the newspaper). Besides, consumers do not react to every stimulus sent in the phase of attention, or they do not understand the meaning of a stimulus properly while interpreting it and finally they do not remember everything they have understood. The theory reflects the importance of evaluation and recognition of the elements of the perceptual process, seeking to activate and affect the consumer's perception. Every phase makes the consumer feel differently as the intensity of his reactions and the importance of external influence change.

**Sensation.** J. C. Mowen (1987) presents a definition of sensation in his studies claiming that *sensation is a stimulation of a consumer's sensory receptors and transmission of the information to the brain and the spinal cord with a help of nerve cells.*

In theoretical works on consumer behaviour sensation is usually considered as a *physiological mechanism that helps a human, using his sensory receptors (eyes, ears, nose, mouth and skin) to react to external stimuli (image, sound, scent, taste and texture).* The studies of A. Statt (2003) present a wider range of stimuli effecting sensory receptors. They could be classified as skin affecting stimuli such as pressure, cold, heat, pain; four types of taste receptors reacting to sweet, salty, sour and bitter food; visual senses such as colored and black and white. All the functions of sensory receptors can be activated separately or simultaneously.

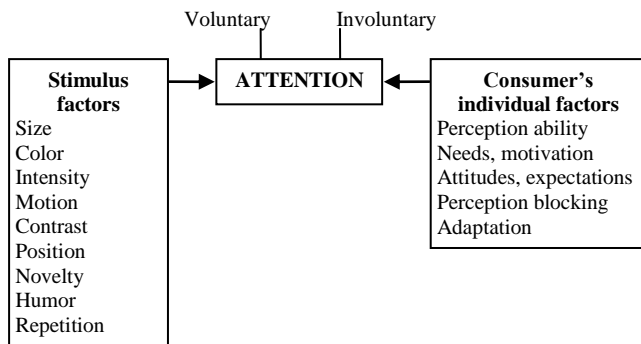
Summarizing the analysis of scientific literature, it is possible to present a theoretical description reflecting the essence and content of the element of the perceptual process (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Theoretical proof of sensation as an element of the perceptual process (constructed by the authors)

Sensation, activated by external stimuli, can be of three types: *passive, active and selective* (Crane, Klarke, 1994). The intensity of sensory input depends on the sensitivity of receptors and the intensity of signals that are limited by the absolute threshold that refers to the minimum amount of stimulation that can be detected on a sensory channel (Solomon, 1999) and the ability of an individual to adapt the margin, depending on circumstances (Mowen, 1987). In addition to this, every sensation is conditioned by the variation of environmental energy, defined by the differential threshold. It refers to the ability of a sensory system to detect changes of differences between two stimuli (Solomon, 1999)

**Attention.** Another element of the perceptual process is *attention*. D. L. Loudon and A. J. Della Bitta (1993), characterize attention as a filtering mechanism of the information provided by a stimulus. The researchers claim that attention is expressed as a processing scope of the quantity of stimulus information. The bigger the scope of the stimulus processing, the more of the stimulus information a consumer realizes and conceives. Attention is a direction and focus of a mental activity to particular objects. J. C. Mowen (1987) distinguishes two types of attention: *voluntary and involuntary*. Voluntary attention occurs in such circumstances when a stimulus absolutely meets a consumer's demand and situation. Involuntary attention appears when a consumer faces a new and unexpected stimulus, interesting and attractive, though irrelevant at the time being. The literature of B. Dubois (2000), M. R. Solomon (1999), R. Urbanskienė et al. (2000) distinguishes two principal variables influencing attention that are *individual features of signals and personal features of a consumer as the recipient of the signal*. A generalized theoretical description of attention was constructed by the authors of the article and is presented in Figure 4.



**Figure 4.** Theoretical proof of attention as an element of the perceptual process (constructed by the authors)

**Interpretation.** D. L. Loudon and A. J. Della Bitta (1993) define the interpretation of the element of the perceptual process as a *process of sensation decoding*. The authors note that during this process feelings are turned into symbols such as words, numbers or images and other. Symbols are also used for information storage and further analysis.

The interpretation is rendering of a meaning for the signal received. The understanding and decoding of a stimulus depends on several factors such as sensibility of an individual, his motivation and opportunities (time and

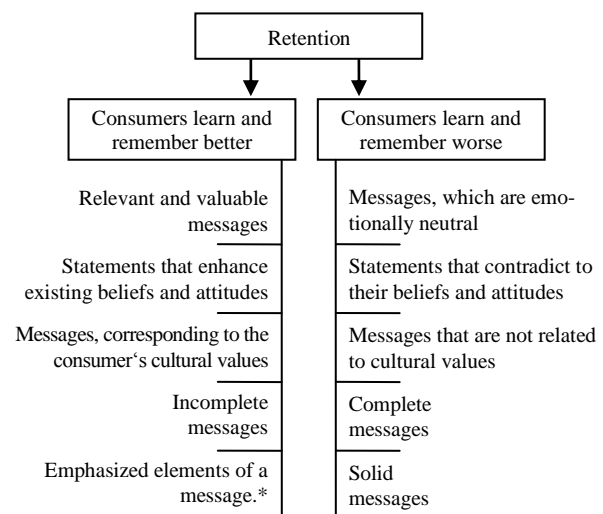
other). Consequently, the interpretation of a stimulus is an especially individual process during which the stimulus is provided with a subjective and personal meaning. Two people hearing or seeing the same thing interpret the signal received differently due to their expectations of the signal.

D. L. Loudon and A. J. Della Bitta (1993) distinguish two stages for a stimulus interpretation:

- *The analysis of a stimulus features*, where a consumer identifies the main features of a stimulus and evaluates the peculiarities of a feature set.
- *The stage of synthesis*, where the evaluated elements of a stimulus are combined with available external and internal information.

For example, a consumer watching the illustration of Toyota Corolla assesses the shape, color and other external characteristics of the car first of all. The characteristics are integrated and unified in the mind of the consumer as an integral vehicle, without identifying it separately as glass, steel or rubber. Even if during the analysis of characteristic features consumers unified the vehicle similarly, the information would be interpreted differently, depending on personal experience and subjective features. While interpreting a consumer uses the information stored in his mind and compares the stimulus with the previously received, interpreted and retained. This process in the mind of an individual is usually automatic and unconscious. Marketing specialists define this process as *categorization*. B. Dubois (2000) describes three principal mechanisms of categorization. Consumers group categories according to the level (for example, prices), *associations* (for example, a high price signifies high quality) and *comparisons* (for example, brands, packages and colours).

**Retention.** S. H. Britt (1979) places a significant emphasis on the last element of the perceptual process known as *retention* in his works. He notes in his studies that the consumer memorizes better and retains those signals and their meanings that are close to his attitudes. The author presents several principles of retention. Systemized theoretical attitudes of S.H. Britt (1979) are reflected in Figure 5.



\* This effect decreases with an increasing number of underlined elements..

**Figure 5.** Retention principles suggested by S. H. Britt (1979) (constructed by the authors)

The performed analysis of theoretical attitudes on the perceptual process supports the statements, presenting the idea that perception as a variable, determining consumer behaviour, is characterized by *the features of the process and consists of separate, following a particular sequence and complementary elements such as sensation, attention, interpretation and retention.*

Summarizing it is possible to claim that the evaluation of the importance of perception as one of the key variables of consumer behaviour provides prerequisites for the formation of a new attitude to possibilities of implementing the results of the studies in the activity of a company's marketing. The study includes the analysis of perception expression within the context of marketing to women, seeking to identify the peculiarities in the behaviour of women-consumers and employ them in the theory of marketing to women.

### Theoretical background of marketing to women

M. Barletta (2003) presenting the theory of marketing to women follows the insight of a marketing theorist T. Peters (1997). He defines the market of women as the most promising market in the near future and emphasizes the threat that will occur if the peculiarities of marketing to women are not considered. The review of scientific studies in this area allows making a conclusion that the significance of marketing to women is determined by the following preconditions:

- Women constitute more than 50 percent of the world population.
- The level of women incomes is increasing (for example, a study of income growth tendencies in the US of women and men indicated that the average annual income of men increased by 0.6 percent in 1970-1998, and the income of women increased by 62 percent (Barletta, 2003)).
- Women approximately condition 80 percent of purchases (Johnson, Learned, 2004).
- Priorities, attitudes and hobbies of men and women are different.
- Marketing to women is characterized by higher profitability (Barletta, 2003).

Two purposes for the development of the theory of marketing to women are identified in the work of M. Barletta (2003):

1. To structure diverse differences between women and men and introduce a distinctive system of women's culture.
2. To integrate the peculiarities of women culture and use the knowledge received, seeking to influence all the stages of a decision making process, performed by a woman.

The peculiarities of marketing to women and possibilities of practical implementations are analyzed by other American scientists such as L. Johnson and A. Learned (2004). The authors state that marketing to women must be characterized by two key features: *visibility and transparency*, which can be applied separately or arranging them as a *hybrid*.

L. Johnson and A. Learned (2004) define *a message*

*developed and introduced specially for women as visible.* For example, this feature is observant in the advertisement of Gillette Venus or vitamins for women.

According to L. Johnson and A. Learned (2004), marketing, characterized by *transparency* requires a deeper understanding of the market as well as an innovative point of view and decisions, corresponding to women values. *Transparency is a development of a brand for a specific market. At the same time it includes marketing activities, corresponding to lifestyles and preferences of the selected women's segment, used in more subtle and refined ways*, different from the direct communication, stating for consumers that the brand is "for women". According to the authors, "a marketing characterized by transparency will dominate in the future, while a visible marketing will be applied only episodically". L. Johnson and A. Learned (2004) claim that the main conditions for the development of transparent marketing are the following:

- *Narrower target segment.* It is recommended to focus on a smaller, but a more important part of the market. A positive attitude of these consumers to the product will attract a larger audience.
- *Deeper cognition of a chosen segment.* It is important to understand what factors influence the selected part of the market and answer the main two questions of what are everyday activities, thoughts, stresses, fears, hobbies and motives of its representatives as well as what are their expectations, wishes, beliefs and desires.
- *Customer feedback during the process of a product creation.*
- *Brand context.*
- *Individuality, uniqueness and distinction of a brand in comparison to other brands.*
- *Reliability and sincerity.* It is important to reveal both strengths and weaknesses of a brand to consumers honestly. Such openness and straightforwardness helps to achieve more confidence in a brand, its producers and a company as a whole.

The key conditions for the development of transparent marketing commit marketing specialists to have a fresh look at the development of marketing programs and ways to obtain an intended part of the market.

A marketing researcher M. Barletta (2003) presents the GenderTrends™ Marketing Model and states that the main goal of marketing to women is to attract and affect as many women-consumers as possible. The model presented in the author's work is shown as a synthesis of *a compass*, including *a star* that means women culture, *a circle*, which signifies marketing elements and *a spiral* indicating a female decision making process.

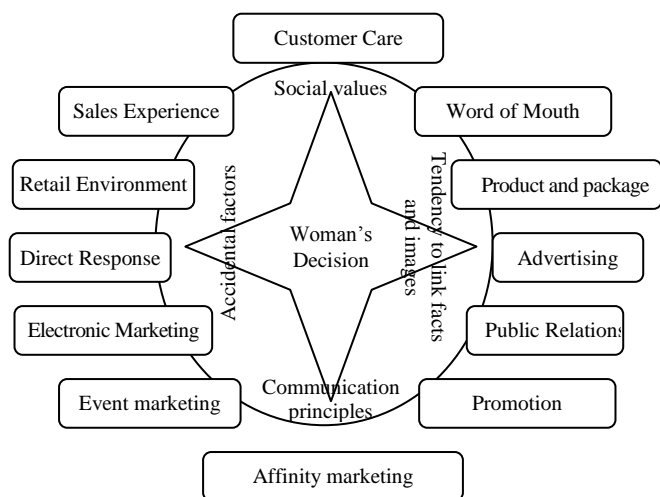
Four axes of *the star* comprise spheres, where, according to the author, the main cultural differences between women and men manifest (Barletta, 2003):

- *Social values* define different beliefs and attitudes on human interrelationship.
- *Accidental factors* imply different roles of men and women.
- *Tendency to link facts and images* identify differences in how women and men perceive and process information.

- *Communication principles* signify different styles and ways of self-expression.

Another constituent part of GenderTrends™ Marketing Model is *the circle*, which, according to M. Barletta (2003), unifies twelve marketing elements. Following the author's interpretation of the constituent part of the model of marketing to women, it is possible to make an affirmative conclusion, stating that the constituent parts of the circle reflect the tools used to attract women-consumers if the axes of the star represent the factors, influencing the behaviour of a woman during the process of decision making. Here it is important to note that describing the GenderTrends™ Marketing Model, the original and theoretical attitudes and concepts of M. Barletta (2003) were used. Still the problem arises due to the fact that the author does not indicate a clear distinction of so called marketing elements as well as a criterion for the interpretation of their content. Thus, the concepts and terms used can reasonably become a separate object of scientific discussions. However, this article attempts at revealing the general conception of marketing to women and the essence of the presented model, without a detailed analysis of the content of individual constituent elements.

A further analysis of GenderTrends™ Marketing Model, presented by M. Barletta (2003) indicates the previously discussed constituents as integral parts of the *compass*. The compass indicates that each axe of the star, reflecting the peculiarities of women culture, influences each marketing element. Therefore, marketing specialists seeking for a more efficient usage of marketing elements need to consider all the peculiarities of women culture (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Compass as a constituent of M Barletta's (2003) GenderTrends™ Marketing Model

The central constituent of the model is woman's decision. The author identifies four stages of this process :

1. *Activation* that includes the perception of a problem and the beginning of a product search.
2. *Nomination* during which all suitable brands are identified within a general set of brands.
3. *Investigation* identifies the accumulation of the information about brands.
4. *Succession* indicates the repeated purchasing of a product that a chosen brand meets the requirements.

Describing the features of the GenderTrends™ Marketing Model, M. Barletta (2003) distinguishes the main four differences in the decision making process by men and women:

- *Women start the decision making process differently from men as they look for a multitude of verbal information, ask for advice from their friends, acquaintances and salespersons.*
- *Women look for a perfect variant, while men look for an acceptable one.*
- *The goal to acquire a perfect variant forces a woman to accumulate a large amount of information and test some of the variants. Her decision making process follows the principle of a spiral because having new knowledge, a step back to the previous stage is made. Meanwhile, the decision making process of men is linear because unsuitable variants are eliminated in every successive stage, thus, there is no step back.*
- *When a large amount of information was accumulated and a product was successfully purchased and tested, a woman is prone to purchase the same product repeatedly. Men make decisions every time and evaluate a product over again.*

After the analysis of scientific literature it is possible to state that the opinion of M. Barletta (2003) is supported by M. Johnne (2004), who, analyzing the situation in the market indicates that the actions for marketing to women must be well considered and responsibly selected. According to the author, the market for women is especially sensible and a company having an ill-formulated message faces a risk of losing a part of the market for women-consumers. M. Johnne's (2004) article quotes the words of the marketing manager for the clothing shop network Sears Canada Inc. characterizing the concept of marketing to women: "Marketing to women is not a contradiction between women and men, but an understanding of how your consumer wants to use the products, how he/she shops, what level of quality he/she expects, what style interests him/her and what price level he/she considers as acceptable".

Completed theoretical studies reflect the novelty and relevance of marketing to women. It is possible to indicate that the interpretation of the perceptual process considering the aspect of marketing to women will allow for an extension of research limits of this still inconclusively developed marketing direction.

### **Interpretation of the perceptual process and its implementation in the development of marketing to women**

Considering the fact that the purpose of this article is to identify the peculiarities of women's perception and use them in the development of marketing to women, the differences between women and men perceptions described by A. Pease, B. Pease (2001), L. Johnson, A. Learned (2004), W. A. Roberts (2004), S. H. Britt (1979) and M. Barletta (2003) are presented in the following chapters of the article. Their analysis is related to elements of the perceptual process, discussed in the previous part. A

unanimous opinion is dominating in the works of the mentioned authors who claim that men and women assess the surrounding environment differently which is extremely important while perceiving perception as a variable of consumer behaviour.

Following the attitude that the reaction and actions of men and women are different in all four stages of the perceptual process, an analysis of every stage of the perceptual process is performed considering the aspect of gender criterion.

**Sensation.** Five sensory receptors of women are better developed than those of men. Women can easily identify slight nuances that are not sensed by the sensory receptors of men:

- **Vision.** Two X chromosomes within a woman's organism make up a number of an eye cells distinguishing colors and provide women with a larger number of cells, in comparison to men (men have less X chromosomes). This difference is reflected by a woman's ability to describe colors more comprehensively. The majority of women have a peripheral vision field of 180°. Eyes of a man are larger in comparison to a woman and his brains form a vision of "a distant tunnel". This means that a man can see an image clearly and precisely right in front of him and much further (Pease, 2003).
- **Hearing.** Women can distinguish high sounds perfectly well. The brain of a woman differentiates one sound from another, categorizes and summarizes them. Due to this fact a woman is able to listen to a person she is communicating to and hear the conversation of other people at the same time (Pease, 2003).
- **Smell.** A woman is more sensible to scents and aromas and is capable to distinguish her child just only by the smell of his/her skin. The perfume industry is characterized by gender marketing as perfumes for women are created using flower aromas while traditional masculine perfumes reveal "masculine" odors of wood, tobacco, leather and other. A woman's nose recognizes the odors of pheromones and musk associated with men that cannot be consciously sensed (Pease, 2003).
- **Touch.** The abilities of sensory receptors of women and men to feel texture are largely different. Scientific research proves that an adult woman's skin is at least ten times more sensible for touch and pressure than a man's skin. A woman's skin is thinner than a man's and has an additional subcutaneous layer that protects from cold in winter and makes the skin firm. However, the skin of women due to its thinness becomes faster and more wrinkled. The skin of men is less sensible for external irritation (Pease, 2003).
- **Taste.** Men distinguish saltiness and bitterness better, that is the reason why they drink bear and women distinguish sweetness and sucrose better, what makes them bigger chocolate eaters than men (Pease, 2003).

**Attention.** Considering the differences of sensory receptors of men and women it can be concluded that a woman receives much more signals sent by a message.

Therefore, the analysis of attention indicates that:

- Women are able to react to several signals at the same time (Johnson, Learned, 2004).
- The perception of women is subject-oriented (humans), and the one of men is object-oriented (things) (Barletta, 2003).
- Women notice different nuances, details and subtle implications better (Barletta, 2003; Britt, 1978).

**Interpretation.** Most important processes determining the level of understanding of the received signal (provided information) occur in this stage of perception. The following differences of the interpretation process of women and men are observed in the works of scientists:

- Women have difficulties while distinguishing a shape from a background (Britt, 1978).
- Women are more liable to combine perceived facts and constructs, while men separate and assess them individually. Women have a synthetic (assessing objects as interrelated), and men have an analytical (every object is assessed separately) thinking (Barletta, 2003).
- A woman's understanding is directed to relationships, mutual understanding and cooperation. Results, aims, status achieved, direct movement till the end and victory in a competition are the main things for men (Pease, 2003).

**Retention.** This phase identifies the capacity of an individual memory that is validated by the results of the research performed by S. H. Britt (1979). The scientist, describing the differences of memory capacity of women and men claims that the memory of women and their ability to reproduce the information received are more advantaged than that of men.

In addition to the analysis the perceptual process from the perspective of gender performed, the peculiarities of women and men behaviour, generalized in the article by W. A. Roberts (2004), are provided in Figure 7.

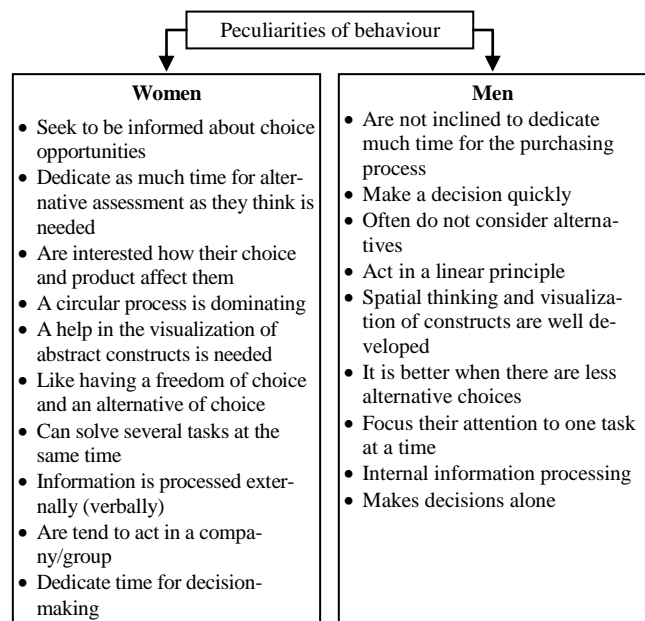


Figure 7. Peculiarities of men and women behaviour generalized by W. A. Roberts (2004)

Features of the elements of female perceptual process

Element	Description of a feature
Sensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide field of peripheral vision (up to 180°)</li> <li>• Ability to distinguish and describe a wide range of colors</li> <li>• Ability to listen to several sound sources at the same time</li> <li>• Sensible scent receptors</li> <li>• High sensibility of the skin</li> <li>• Ability of taste receptors to distinguish sweetness best</li> </ul>
Attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaction to a few signals at the same time</li> <li>• Subject-oriented (human-oriented) perception</li> <li>• Special observation and ability to observe many different nuances and details</li> </ul>
Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synthetic thinking and tendency to integrate facts and constructs</li> <li>• Understanding, directed to relationship and cooperation</li> <li>• Help is needed in the visualization of abstract concepts</li> </ul>
Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Characterized by a good memory and ability to reproduce received information</li> </ul>

Based on the possibilities for integration of perception as a variable of consumer behaviour, and all the theoretical provisions of marketing to women it is possible to draw several conclusions regarding the purposefulness and timeliness of empirical research of the woman's perception for the development of marketing to women.

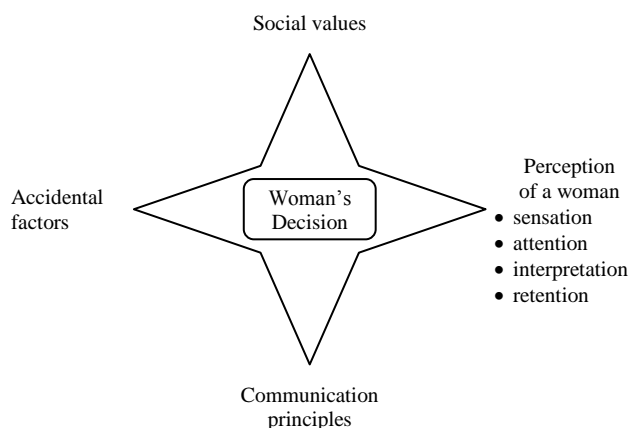
## Conclusions

After the analysis and summary of theoretical expressions of perception peculiarities, defining it as a variable of consumer behaviour within the context of marketing to women, the following conclusions can be made:

1. According to the scientists studying consumer behaviour, perception controls the relationship between environment and an individual, with the help of which the consumer acquires knowledge, forms his opinion and attitude to processes occurring in the environment. It can be unambiguously stated that perception is presented in the theory of consumer behaviour as one of the personal factors, and the contemporary empirical studies are related to the analysis of the role of perception with regard to particular objects, situations and stimuli.
2. On the basis of theoretical studies, it was determined that, though some scientists describe the perception as a stage of information processing and assimilation, the majority of researchers distinguish the previously mentioned factor as a separate variable of consumer behaviour that has the features of a process and is constituted by complementary elements such as sensation, attention, interpretation and retention. It must be emphasized that the perceptual process is influenced by subjective features of an individual and has individual characteristics.
3. The analysis of the elements of the perceptual process reveals the interdependence and interaction of

The differences identified allow stating that companies, before they create messages for the market, seeking for communication, should to consider the gender or the target segment and peculiarities of behaviour related with it. The perception of women is characterized by particular features, rejecting which marketing activities become ineffective and do not provide the final result. The identified peculiarities of women perception can be successfully integrated with the theories of marketing to women. *Theoretical provisions of marketing to women discussed in the previous sections reflect an ambiguous attitude and reveal possibilities for the implementation of this concept. L. Johnson and A. Learned (2004), analyzing the specifics of marketing to women, examine the differences of marketing actions and reactions to them. However, the main research object in the studies performed by M. Barletta (2003) centers on the decision-making process of women. Following the statement that perception is one of determinants of a consumer's decision-making, the possibilities for implementation of the perceptual elements related to M. Barletta's (2003 Gender-Trends™ Marketing Model are presented further on.*

The analysis of the model suggested by M. Barletta (2003) allows drawing a conclusion that the central element, determining the course of the process, reflected in the model, is the culture of women (the star). This part of the model comprises the key variables conditioning the peculiarities of women behaviour. They are social values, accidental factors, a tendency to link facts and images and communication principles. *Evaluating the features of women behaviour, presented by the author and perception as a consumer behaviour variable, analyzed in the work, it is possible to note that the tendency to combine facts and images is one of the peculiarities of women behaviour. Thus, striving to identify the possibilities for the implementation of the perceptual elements, it is purposeful to extend one of the star's elements of M. Barletta's (2003) model, adding another elements, reflecting the peculiarities of women perception (Figure 8).*



**Figure 8.** The place of perception in the model of marketing to women by M. Barletta (2003)

On the basis of the analysis on peculiarities of women behaviour performed, it can be stated that *woman's perception* as the feature of woman's culture that is newly integrated into the model includes all the elements of the perceptual process: sensation, attention, interpretation and retention and is analyzed by the theory of consumer behaviour. The features of women perception, characteristic to these elements are presented in table 1.

the elements. The consumer reacts to external stimuli with a help of sensory receptors, where some of stimuli are distinguished from the general mass with a help of attention, converting them into symbols meaningful for the consumer in the process of interpretation (words, numbers, images etc.), stored and used in the further analysis of environment. Summarizing the studies of perception as a process, a conclusion about its significance and possibilities of implementation of the research results in the development of new marketing directions and companies' marketing activities is drawn.

4. The empirical studies performed and statistical information reflect the growing significance of women in the society and form prerequisites for the formation of the new direction in marketing to women. In order to develop this direction, it is important to identify the peculiarities of expression of the perceptual elements characteristic for women and include them into the concept of marketing to women.
5. Based on the theoretical studies of marketing for women, it was determined that the main purpose for the creation of a new theory is to present a particular system of women's culture, integrate its peculiarities and implement the acquired knowledge in order to influence all the stages of the decision-making process of a woman. Two main features of marketing to women are distinguished in the scientific literature: visibility and transparency. The synthesis of women culture, marketing elements and the decision-making process of a woman is reflected in the GenderTrends™ Marketing Model suggested by M. Barletta (2003).
6. Using the interpretation of the perceptual process and its elements while considering the aspect of marketing to women, it was determined that women are characterized by an expression of sensation, attention, interpretation and retention that differs from men's. These differences are preconditioned by biological nature of humans; therefore, they are evident, in a stronger or a more moderate form in every society or culture. After the assessment of these natural features of individuals and adequate corrections of classical aspects of the perceptual process a set of perception elements characteristic for women is identified that can be purposefully implemented in the development of marketing to women.

## References

1. Antonides, G., Consumer Behaviour: A European Perspective/ G. Antonides, W. F. van Raaij. John Wiley&Sons Ltd., 1998.
2. Baker, T. L. The effect of introducing a new brand on consumer perceptions of current brand similarity: The roles of product knowledge and involvement / Baker T. L., Hunt J. B., Scribner L.L. //Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, 2002.
3. Barletta, M., Marketing to Women: How to Understand, Reach, and Increase Your Share of the World's Largest Market Segment. Dearborn Trade Publishing, 2003.
4. Barletta, M. Sales Build Sales and Boost Share by Tapping Into Women's Buying Power and Marketing Excellence// Trendsight website, February, 2003.
5. Bolton, L. E. Consumer Perceptions of Price (Un) Fairness / L. E. Bolton, L. Warlop, J.W. Alba // Journal of consumer research, 29(March), 2003.
6. Britt, S.H. Psychological principles of marketing and consumer behaviour. Lexington Books, 1978.
7. Crane, F.G. Consumer Behaviour in Canada: Theory and Practice, 2nd ed. / F.G.Crane, T.K Clarke. Dryden, 1994.
8. Dichter, E., Handbook of Consumer Motivations: The Psychology of the World of Objects. McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964.
9. Dikčius, V. Marketingo tyrimai: Teorija ir praktika. Vilnius, Vilniaus vadybos kolegija, 2003.
10. Dubois, B. Understanding the consumer: a European perspective. London: Prentice Hall, 2000.
11. Foxall, G. R. Goldsmith R. E., Brown S., Consumer Psychology for Marketing, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. / G.R Foxall, R.E. Goldsmith, S. Brown // Thomson Learning, 2004.
12. Harrell, G. D. Marketing: connecting with customers/ G. D. Harrell, G. L. Frazier // Prentice Hall, 1998.
13. Hawkins, D.I. Consumer behaviour: building marketing strategy/ D.I. Hawkins, R.J. Best // McGraw-Hill, 1998.
14. Hoyer, W. D. Consumer Behaviour, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. / W.D. Hoyer, D.J. MacInnis // Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004.
15. John M. What women want: Gender-based marketing is a risky business, but it's a risk companies can't afford not to take// CMA Management, December/January, 2004.
16. Johnson, L. Don't think pink: what really makes women buy – and how to increase your share of this crucial market/ L. Johnson, A. Learned //American Management Association, 2004.
17. Loudon, D.L. Consumer Behaviour: Concepts and Applications, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. / D. L Loudon., A.J. Della Bitta // McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993.
18. Mowen J. C. Consumer behaviour. Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987.
19. Palmer, A. The effects of perceptual processes on the measurement of service quality/ A. Palmer, M. O'Neill // Journal of services marketing, Vol. 17, issue 3, 2003.
20. Paulauskaitė, N. Organizacijos kultūros tyrimas įgyvendinant visuotinės kokybės vadybą/ N. Paulauskaitė, P. Vanagas. Kaunas: Technologija, 1998.
21. Pease, A. Kodėl vyrai nesiklauso, o moterys nesiorientuoja žemėlapiuose/ A.Pease, B. Pease. Vilnius: Alma littera, 2003.
22. Pranulis, V. Marketingas: Vadovėlis. / V. Pranulis, A. Pajuodis, R. Urbonavičius, R. Virvilaitė. Vilnius: Eugrimas, 1999.
23. Roberts, W. A., Gender Vending// Prepared Foods, July, 2004.
24. Schiffman, L. G. Consumer behaviour, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. / L.G. Schiffman, L.L Kanuk. Prentice Hall Int., 2000.
25. Solomon, M. R. Consumer behaviour: buying, having, and being. New York: Prentice Hall, 1999.
26. Solomon, M. Consumer Behaviour: A European Perspective/ M. Solomon, G. Bamossy, S. Askegaard. New York: Prentice Hall, 1999.
27. Sweeney, T. What women want// Credit Union Management, April, 2000.
28. Till, B. D. Conditioning of Meaning in Advertising: Brand Gender Perception Effects/ B. D. Till, R. L. Priluck // Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising, Vol. 23, issue 2, 2001.
29. Urbanskienė, R. Vartotojų elgsena: Vadovėlis. / R. Urbanskienė, B. Clotey, J. Jakštys. Kaunas: Technologija, 2000.
30. Walters, C.G. Consumer behaviour: a decision-making approach/ C. G. Walters, B. J. Bergiel. South-Western Publishing Co., 1989.
31. Старт, Д. Психология потребителя.- Спб.: Питер, 2003.
32. Britų moterys kraunasi turtus /Respublika, Nr. 97, 2005 m. balandžio 28d.

Jūratė Banytė, Žaneta Paunksnienė, Aušra Rūtelionė

### Vartotojų suvokimo raiškos ypatumai į moteris orientuoto marketingo aspektu

Santrauka

Kintanti vartojimo kultūra, spartus rinkų augimas, intensyvus visuomenės gyvenimo tempas reikalauja gilesnių vartotojų ir jų preferencijų studijų. Marketingo specialistams viena iš pagrindinių užduočių tampa suprasti, prisitaikyti ir ugdyti vartotoją bei jo elgseną. Vartotojo socialinė, kultūrinė aplinka, jo individualūs bruožai, psichologinė būseną – tai var-



tojų elgsenos teoretikų tyrinėjami objektai. Dauguma šių teorijų panaudojamos plėtojant naujas marketingo kryptis, vykdam kompleksinius marketingo tyrimus, prognozuojant rinkos pokyčius.

Vartotojų elgsenos tyrimų kontekste išryškėja vartotojo suvokimo, kontroliuojančio ryšį tarp asmenybės ir jo aplinkinio pasaulio, pažinimo reikšmė. Kita vertus, atliekant suvokimo studijas, būtina įvertinti permainas susijusias su pastarojo meto vartotojų - moterų ir vyrų kintančiais vaidmenimis. Šiuo atveju paminėtinas išaugęs moters aktyvumas visuomenėje bei šeimoje ir savitos moterų rinkos formavimasis. Todėl *šiam straipsnyje analizuojamas vienas iš vartotojų elgsenos kintamųjų – suvokimas ir siekiama identifikuoti jo panaudojimo plėtojant į moteris orientuotą marketingą, galimybes. Straipsnio tikslas yra nustatyti suvokimo kaip vartotojų elgsenos kintamojo raiškos ypatumus į moteris orientuoto marketingo kontekste.*

Suvokimas vartotojų elgsenos studijose laikomas kaip vienas iš vartotojo elgseną sąlygojančių asmeninių veiksnių. Asmeniniai veiksniai - tai artimiausia žmogaus aplinka; tai, kas glūdi žmogaus viduje, jo galvoje; jie apibūdina žmogaus asmenybę. Naudojamas savo jutimo organus ir veikiamas išorės veiksnių, žmogus gauna informaciją, ją priima, adaptuoja, suformuoja asmeninį požiūrį, nuomonę, motyvą – veiksnius, darysiančius įtaką tolimesnei veiklai ir elgsenai. C. G. Walters ir B. J. Bergiel (1989), F. G. Crane ir T. K. Klarke (1994), G. D. Harrell, G. L. Frazier (1998), M. R. Solomon (1999), B. Dubois (2000) – suvokimą išskiria kaip atskirą vartotojų elgsenos kintamąjį, pasižymintį proceso savybėmis ir apimančią atskirus etapus. Analizuojant marketingo specialistų pasiūlytus klasifikavimus, galima teigti, kad *dominuojantys suvokimo proceso elementai yra jutimas, dėmesys, interpretavimas ir išsaugojimas.*

Teorinėse vartotojų elgsenos studijose *jutimas* dažniausiai traktuojamas kaip fiziologinis mechanizmas, kuriuo žmogus jutimo organais (akys, ausys, nosis, burna, oda) reaguoja į išorinius dirgiklius (vaizdas, garsas, kvapas, skonis, tekstūra). Kitas suvokimo proceso elementas - *dėmesys* yra psichinės veiklos nukreipimas ir jos sutelkimas į tam tikrus objektus. D. L. Loudon, A. J. Della Bitta (1993) suvokimo proceso elementą *interpretavimą* apibūdina kaip jausmų dekodavimo procesą. Jų teigimu, šiame procese jausmai yra verčiami į simbolius, tokius kaip žodžiai, skaičiai, vaizdiniai ir pan. Interpretavimas - tai prasmės gautam signalui suteikimas. Nemaži dėmesio paskutiniam suvokimo proceso elementui – *išsaugojimui* savo moksliniuose darbuose skiria S. H. Britt (1979). Jo studijose pažymima, kad vartotojas geriau įsimena ir išsaugo savo nuostatomis artimus signalus bei jų reikšmes.

Atlikta suvokimo proceso teorinių nuostatų analizė patvirtina teiginį, kad nagrinėjamas vartotojų elgsenos kintamasis pasižymi proceso savybėmis ir yra sudarytas iš atskirų, atitinkama seka pasižymintį bei vienas kitą papildančių elementų: *jutimo, dėmesio, interpretavimo ir išsaugojimo.*

Apibendrinant galima teigti, kad suvokimo kaip vieno iš pagrindinių asmeninių vartotojų elgsenos kintamųjų svarbos įvertinimas, sudaro prielaidas formuoti naujam požiūriui į šių tyrimų rezultatų panaudojimo įmonių marketingo veikloje galimybes. Straipsnyje atliekama suvokimo raiškos į moteris orientuoto marketingo kontekste analizė, siekiant identifikuoti suvokimo ypatumus moterų vartotojų elgsenoje bei panaudoti juos plėtojant į moteris orientuoto marketingo teoriją.

M. Barletta (2003), pristatydamą į moteris orientuoto marketingo teoriją, remiasi marketingo teoretiko T. Peters (1997) išsakyta įžvalga. Jis moterų rinką apibūdina kaip perspektyviausią rinką netolimoje ateityje (pvz., moterys sudaro daugiau kaip 50 proc. pasaulio gyventojų, moterys daro įtaką apytikriai 80 proc. pirkimų ir pan.) ir pabrėžia grėsmę, atsirisančią neįvertinus į moteris orientuoto marketingo ypatumų.

Į moteris orientuoto marketingo ypatumus bei jo praktinio taikymo galimybes nagrinėja kitos JAV mokslininkės - L. Johnson ir A. Learned (2004). Pasak jų, į moteris orientuotas marketingas turi pasižymėti dviem pagrindinėmis savybėmis - *matomumu ir skaidrumu*, kurios gali būti taikomos tiek atskirai, tiek suderintos tarpusavyje.

Pasak L. Johnson ir A. Learned (2004), *matomas* - tai pranešimas, sukurtas ir skirtas specialiai „moterims“. *Skaidrumu* pasižymintis marketingas, pasak jų, reikalauja gilesnio rinkos pažinimo, inovatyvaus požiūrio ir sprendimų, atitinkančių moterų vertybes. *Skaidrumas* - tai prekės ženklo kūrimas savitai rinkai, tai marketingo veiksmai, atitinkantys pasirinkto moterų segmento gyvenimo stilių bei prioritetus, naudojami subtiliais ir rafinuotesniais būdais nei tiesiog pranešant vartotojams, kad šis prekės ženklas skirtas „moterims“.

Marketingo tyrėja M. Barletta (2003) siūlo į moteris orientuoto marketingo modelį. Šis modelis vaizduojamas kaip *kompasso*, susidedančio iš *žvaigždės* – moterų kultūros ir *rato* – marketingo elementų bei *spiralės* – moters sprendimų priėmimo proceso- sintezė.

Keturios *žvaigždės* ašys apima sritis, kuriose, anot autorės, pasireiškia pagrindiniai moterų ir vyrų kultūrų skirtumai: *socialinės vertybės, atsitiktiniai veiksniai, polinkis sujungti faktus bei vaizdinius ir bendravimo principai.*

Kita į moteris orientuoto marketingo modelio sudedamoji dalis – *ratas*, kuris, M. Barletta (2003) teigimu, apima dvyliką marketingo elementų.

Tolesnė M. Barletta (2003) į moteris orientuoto marketingo modelio analizė rodo, kad autorės aptartos sudedamosios dalys sujungiamos į *kompassą*. Kompassas atskleidžia tai, kad kiekviena žvaigždės ašis, atspindinti moterų kultūros ypatumus, veikia kiekvieną marketingo elementą. Taigi marketingo specialistai, siekdami efektyviai panaudoti marketingo elementus, turi įvertinti visus moterų kultūros ypatumus.

Centrinė modelio sudedamoji dalis yra *moters priimami sprendimai*. Autorė išskiria keturis šio proceso etapus: *aktyvizavimo, rūšiavimo, susipažinimo, pakartotinių pirkimų.*

A. Pease, B. Pease (2001), L. Johnson, A. Learned (2004), W. A. Roberts (2004), S. H. Britt (1979) ir M. Barletta (2003) darbuose vyrauja viena nuomonė: vyrai ir moterys aplinką vertina skirtingai, o tai ypač aktualu suvokimo, kaip vartotojų elgsenos kintamojo pažinimo prasme. Pabrėžiama nuostata, kad *visuose keturiuose suvokimo proceso etapuose vyrų ir moterų reakcija bei veiksmai skiriasi.*

*Jutimas*. Penki moterų jutimo receptoriai yra išvystyti geriau negu vyrų: jos gali skirti nežymius niuansus, neįjuntamas vyrų jutimo receptorių.

*Dėmesys*. Vertinant vyrų ir moterų jutimo receptorių skirtumus, galima daryti prielaidą, kad moterį pasiekia kur kas daugiau pranešimų siunčiamų signalų.

*Interpretavimas*. Šiame suvokimo etape vyksta svarbiausi procesai, lemiantys gauto signalo (pateiktos informacijos) supratimo lygį. Mokslininkų darbuose galima įžvelgti tokius moterų ir vyrų interpretavimo proceso skirtumus:

- *Moterys sunkiau atskiria figūrą nuo fono.*
- *Moterys linkusios sujungti suvokiamus faktus ir vaizdinius, tuo tarpu vyrai atskiria juos ir vertina individualiai. Moterys pasižymi sintetiniu (vertina objektus kaip susijusius tarpusavyje), o vyrai – analitiniu (kiekvieną objektą suvokia atskirai) mąstymu.*
- *Moters supratimas nukreiptas į santykius, savitarpio supratimą ir bendradarbiavimą.* Vyrams svarbiausia rezultatas, tikslų, statuso siekimas, kryptingas ėjimas iki galo, varžybų pergalė.

*Išsaugojimas*. Šiame etape išryškėja individo atminties galimybės, kurias patvirtina S. H. Britt (1979) tyrimų rezultatai. Šis mokslininkas, aprašydamas moterų ir vyrų atminties galimybių skirtumus, vienareikšmiškai teigia, kad *moterų atmintis ir gebėjimas atkartoti gautą informaciją pranašesni nei vyrų.*

Identifikuoti skirtumai leidžia teigti, kad žmonės, prieš kurdamas pasiūlymus rinkai, siekdamas komunikacijos su vartotoju, turi atsižvelgti į tikslinio segmento atstovų lytį ir su ja susijusios elgsenos ypatumus. Nustatyti moterų suvokimo ypatumai sėkmingai gali būti jungiami su į moteris orientuoto marketingo teorijomis. Išanalizavus M. Barletta (2003) pasiūlytą modelį, galima daryti prielaidą, kad centrinis ir modelyje atspindinčio proceso eigą lemiantis elementas yra moters kultūra – žvaigždė. Šioje modelio dalyje sujungiami keturi pagrindiniai kintamieji, lemiantys moters elgsenos ypatumus: socialinės vertybės, atsitiktiniai veiksniai, polinkis jungti faktus bei vaizdinius ir bendravimo principai. Vertinant autorės vardijamus moters elgsenos bruožus ir darbe nagrinėjamą vartotojų elgsenos kintamąjį - suvokimą, galima teigti, kad *polinkis jungti faktus ir vaizdinius yra vienas iš moters suvokimo ypatumų. Taigi siekiant identifikuoti suvokimo elementų panaudojimo galimybes, manoma, kad tikslinga išplėsti vieną iš M. Barletta (2003) modelyje nurodytos žvaigždės elementų, papildant jį kitais moters suvokimo ypatumus atspindinčiais elementais: jutimu, dėmesiu, interpretavimu bei išsaugojimu.*

Remiantis straipsnyje atskleistomis suvokimo kaip vartotojų elgsenos kintamojo ir į moteris orientuoto marketingo teorinių nuostatų integravimo galimybėmis, daroma išvada apie empirinių moters suvokimo tyrimų tikslingumą bei atlikimą laiku, plėtojant į moteris orientuotą marketingą.

Raktažodžiai: *vartotojų elgsena, suvokimas, į moteris orientuotas marketingas, lyčių marketingas.*

The article has been reviewed.

Received in January, 2007; accepted in February, 2007.