

RESEARCH ON THE DECISION TO PURCHASE AND CONSUMPTION FOR AGRI-FOOD PRODUCTS ON THE IASI MUNICIPALITY MARKET

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Abstract

The paper aims to analyze the purchasing and food consumption behavior of the population of Iasi, as well as the decision-making act made at individual or group level, in connection with the purchase and consumption of agri-food products, designed to meet food needs, present and future, including both the decision-making processes that precede and those that determine the purchase / consumption of these product categories. Food satisfies the physiological needs of every human being, which cannot be delayed and, therefore, for this satisfaction the needs of the consumer affect a part of their income. The way in which food needs can be met differently, through food of animal or vegetable origin, rationalization of the number of calories, dietary principles, vitamins, minerals, etc., ultimately determines the level of expenditure depending on these options. They differ according to age, social condition, preference for the structure of consumption, degree of civilization, geographical condition, even fashion and imitation, etc. At first glance, defining consumer behaviour seems to be a relatively easy process. In reality, however, the definition of this concept involves taking into account a variety of elements, resulting in a series of definitions presented by the literature over the past decades. Given the complexity of this concept, for its definition, specialists have resorted to various sciences starting with anthropology, sociology and psychology, and ending with economics and marketing. In this paper, the emphasis is on treating the concept of consumer behaviour from a marketing perspective.

Key words: purchasing behaviour, decision making, products, agri-food, consumer

Studying consumer behaviour has become a concern of marketers, as they can learn how buyers choose their goods and services to answer multiple needs, what are the stimulate the factors that influence their choice. (Chiran A., Gindu E., Jitareanu A.F., 2015).

In the mid-1960s, the study of consumer behaviour became a distinct field of marketing, as at this time the adoption of the marketing option requires an understanding of the complex mechanism of transforming the need into demand for goods and services.

The increasing complexity of economic life has led to the need to know the mechanism of human economic behaviour, which is becoming more extensive and complicated, which requires separate study of the two intrinsic components: human behaviour as a producer of goods and services and consumer behaviour.

For the contemporary society, in which the technical-scientific progress tends in many fields to replace the producer - man with the manufacturer - machine, the study of the consumption behaviour becomes very important and significant, especially since the scarce resources with alternative uses that the human society has at its disposal require the

production, only of those goods and services that meet the needs in the necessary quantities. Therefore, knowing and explaining the consumption and buying behaviour has become an urgent necessity, ignoring the way it manifests itself, producing serious imbalances.

That is why it is equally important for the producer to find solutions to produce in conditions of maximum efficiency and to know the reasons why his goods and services are bought, to find out: who, what, where, why, when, how and how much they buy and how often, in other words, to find out why people respond in a certain way to the products and services offered to them, why they have a certain attitude towards them.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The methodological and scientific support in this paper was based on a series of direct and indirect documentation such as: observation, analysis (qualitative, quantitative, and historical), synthesis, comparison, systemic, monographic, statistical, figures and tables in the full and complex exposure and rendering of phenomena and economic processes studied.

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The theoretical support of the research focused on the study of important scientific papers in the field of economy and management, with reference to the fiscal administration and the current problems in the public finances.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Thus, Romania adhered to the European Union, with profound structural issues at the level of the agricultural sector. In our country, the number of subsistent and semi-subsistent farms is very high, predominating the agricultural exploitations led by the elder farmers, and the food industry is insufficiently developed in order to assure an outlet market for the basic agricultural products.

Romania is an atypical market, with changing consumers and in constant search of low prices." This is a common opinion among marketers in our country. In fact, these considerations are largely biased, due to ignorance of the consumer and his needs.

During the more than ten years of advertising in Romania, the knowledge of the Romanian consumer has had several forms, starting from intuition or the application of international templates to the actual research, which revealed complex results about them. However, many of these researches proved to be less relevant than initially thought due to the fact that Romanians are not used to speaking freely in surveys or research and provide false data or refuse to answer certain questions. One of the most important variables of the marketing environment over which the company has no control but which it tries to influence in the desired direction is the consumer.

The factors that determine the behaviour of consumers regarding the purchase of a good or service do not refer only to the physical needs (food, shelter, clothing) and do not depend exclusively on its purchasing power (price, income) (table 1).

Table 1

Involvement of the buyer in the stages of the decision-making process

CHARACTERISTICS	LOW	Average	WHOLESALE
- Type of behavior	Routine	Partial solution of the election problem	Complete solution of the election problem
- Recognizing the problem	Selective	Generic	Generic
- Information research	- Limited	- Intern - External limited	- Intern - External limited
- Evaluation of alternatives	- Internal	- Few attributes - Simple decision rules - Few alternatives	- Many attributes -Complex rules - Many alternatives
- Purchase	- Purchase	- Purchase	- Purchase
- Post-purchase behavior	- No dissonance - Limited evaluation	- No dissonance - Limited evaluation	- Dissonance, evaluation - Complex evaluation

Consumer involvement in each stage of the decision-making process is the reflection of cognitive (utilitarian motivations focused on the functional characteristics of the product) and affective (Park C.W, Young S.M - Consumer Response to Television Commercials, the Impact of Involvement and Background, Music on Brand Attitude Formation, Journal of Marketing Research, 1986, 23.1 p.11-21), and the intensity has its source in the importance of the product or service for the consumer and in the risk involved in buying it.

As a result, a low, medium or high involvement can be delimited, as it results from the adjacent table. Therefore, the concept of involvement has different types:

1. decisions with weak involvement, which in fact does not imply a decision as such, because experience ensures a unique

preferred solution, the product being purchased. So, decisions are made on a routine basis, with fidelity playing an important role, as does learning. It results from repeated purchases.

2. Decisions with strong involvement which are usually complex decisions, which go through all stages of the decision-making process.

If we consider the way purchasing decisions are made, we can classify them into:

3. Programmed decisions: characterized by repeatability and similarity in the mode of adoption. These are the routine decisions by which most products and services are purchased with very high frequency and high fidelity;
4. Unscheduled decisions: refer to new situations, are restructured and have strong

psychological and financial implications, because there is no precedent involves a higher risk and have a more complicated structure.

Referring to this subject, the American psychologist Harold Leavit defines human behaviour as the twinning of three essential elements, namely the stimulus, the need and the goal.

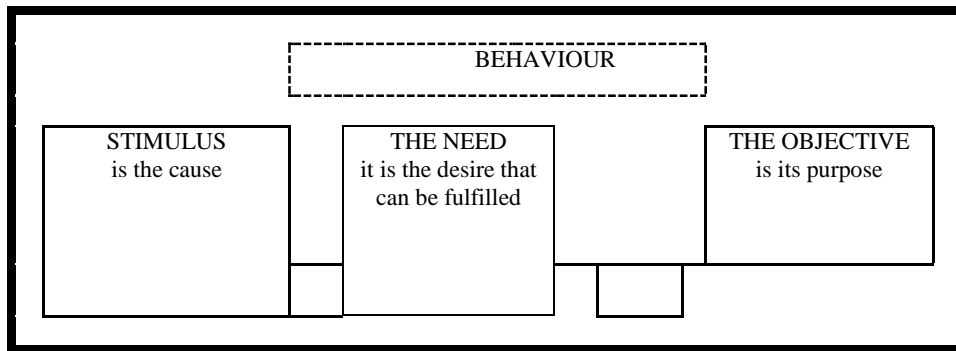


Figure 1 Human behaviour

Source: <http://www.unibuc.ro/eBooks/StiinteADM/sica/5.htm>, Consumer behaviour, fig. 5.1, page 4 of 34

Most theories consider consumer behaviour as a function determined by socio-cultural factors and personal traits. Among the socio-cultural factors with the greatest influence on consumer behaviour and in the development of marketing strategy, there are culture, class and social position, family behaviour and group (reference group). Family behaviour has a strong influence on consumer behaviour. The family, as a reference group, is distinguished by the following characteristics:

- direct contact;
- shared use;
- subordination to the needs of the individual.

Both buying and consuming behaviour can be influenced by certain information received from

internal or external sources manifested in the form of stimuli. Thus, the consumer is aware of the emergence of a need suggested by various internal stimuli, such as: hunger or thirst, stimuli that, at some point, reach a sufficiently high level to become impulses.

The 4 elements of the marketing mix: product, price, placement, promotion, enter the "black box" of the consumer where it turns into a set of reactions, such as: the choice of product, brand, supplier, when the purchase is made and the quantity purchased. The buyer's traits influence his way of perceiving and acting on the 4 elements and the decision-making process influences the consumer's behavior (figure 2).

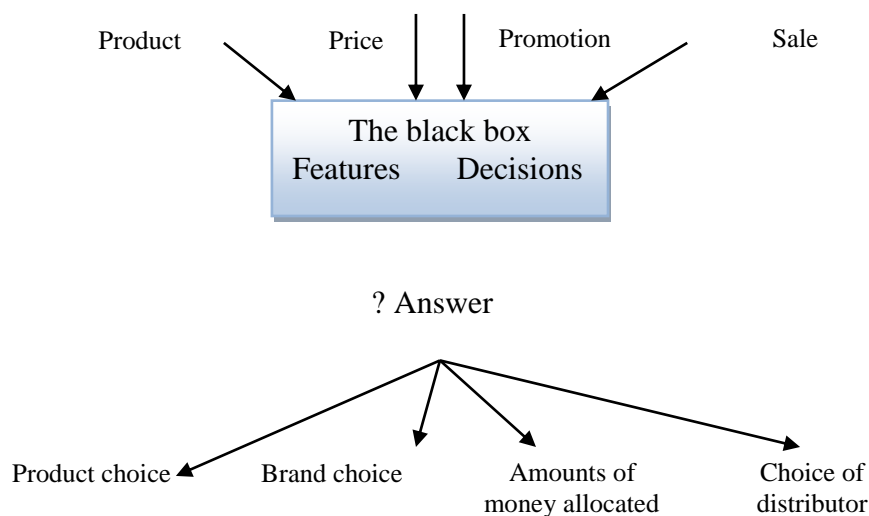


Figure 2 Buyer behavior model

Sursa: adaptare după Rik Pieters – A control view on the behaviour od consumers. European Journal of Marketing, 93.

Understanding and detecting the consumer's reactions to the different characteristics of the product, the price and the advertising campaign is an advantage for the companies that have these answers. In summary, the differences in the level of consumption of the main foods are determined,

in order, by household size, the number of children under 18 and the size of income. The environment of residence imprints a certain specificity, derived, mainly, from the ways of covering the needs, but the quantitative differences are less obvious.

Table 2

Average consumption of agri-food products and beverages
Average monthly quantities per person

The product	U.M.	Years	TOTAL	Regions					
			Country	Northeast	East	West	Northwest	Center	Bucharest
Bread and bakery products	kg	2019	10.14	7.37	9.53	10.81	10.28	10.73	9.41
Fresh meat	kg	2019	2.45	2.40	2.63	2.70	2.17	2.30	2.71
Meat products	kg	2019	0.90	0.83	0.77	1.23	1.00	1.06	0.67
Fish and fish products	kg	2019	0.38	0.39	0.64	0.17	0.11	0.21	0.47
Milk	l	2019	5.87	7.08	4.43	6.24	7.63	6.42	4.57
Cheeses and sour cream	kg	2019	1.14	1.35	1.08	0.98	1.12	0.73	1.20
Eggs	buc.	2019	14.50	14.43	14.57	14.60	15.08	14.95	12.84
Beans and other legumes	kg	2018	0.45	0.66	0.54	0.32	0.45	0.34	0.29
Potatoes	kg	2019	4.12	4.79	3.98	4.74	4.24	3.81	4.05
Vegetables and canned vegetables in	kg	2018	7.04	6.45	7.36	7.39	6.67	6.36	6.37
Alcoholic beverages	l	2019	2.24	3.30	2.36	1.10	1.46	1.73	1.36

Improving eating habits is at stake in public health through a healthy diet based on the following principles:

- rebalancing the daily energy intake (reducing fat intake) in favor of unsaturated fatty acids, carbohydrates and increasing fiber intake to the detriment of simple carbohydrates;
- increasing the consumption of fruits and vegetables and reducing alcohol;
- increasing the share of calcium for a population considered deficient;
- decrease in the frequency of obesity in children, respectively in obesity and overweight in adults, intensification of physical activities.
- In Romania, the size of self-consumption of food products is significant, due to the high share of the rural population (45%), as well as the effects of Law no. 18/1991 - Land Law,

through which a large part of the urban population received ownership of agricultural land.

The size and structure of food consumption of households is the cumulative result of purchases on the market and the use of food from their own resources. The most synthetic image on the quantitative and sicalitative parameters is given by the food consumption expressed in calories and nutritional factors. On the whole households, in 2019, the average daily consumption per person of 2521 calories and 80.7 gr. proteins, increasing compared to the previous year by 1.8% and 2.2% respectively for proteins. By statistical regions, the highest average daily intake of calories and protein is found in the North-East region (2652 calories and 84.2 grams of protein) and the lowest in the Bucharest region (2276 calories and 73.5 grams of protein).

Table 3

Buying agri-food products and alcoholic beverages, by categories of households according to the occupational status of the head of the household, in 2019 - average monthly quantities per person

Specification	Total households, of which:	By categories according to the occupational status of the head of the household					
		Employees	Employers	Self-employed in non-agricultural activities	Farmers	Unemployed	Pensioners
Cereals and cereal products, total (kg)	11.62	11.59	10.59	11.34	10.10	10.86	12.31
- bread and bakery products	8.49	9.34	8.61	8.12	5.85	8.59	8.57
- Malay	0.38	0.29	0.22	0.71	0.44	0.25	0.43
- flour	0.74	0.52	0.39	0.76	1.05	0.62	0.87
Fresh meat, total (kg)	1.35	1.80	2.31	1.06	0.41	1.17	1.27
Meat preparations (kg)	0.57	0.73	0.78	0.55	0.28	0.50	0.52
Canned meat and meat with vegetables (kg)	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.02
Milk (l)	3.25	3.64	4.64	3.20	1.55	2.40	3.56
Cheeses and cream	0.61	0.74	0.99	0.44	0.22	0.46	0.66
Eggs (pieces)	5.86	7.93	8.29	5.01	1.21	6.13	5.38
Fruit (kg)	1.41	1.91	2.87	0.99	0.41	1.08	1.35
Potatoes (kg)	2.59	2.93	3.05	2.17	1.41	2.72	2.68
Jam, compote (kg)	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.03
Mineral water and other non-alcoholic beverages (l)	2.22	3.29	6.33	1.87	0.65	1.65	1.75
Alcoholic beverages (l)	0.86	1.06	1.34	0.77	0.72	0.60	0.76

The market thus represents the sphere of assertion for that part of the consumption needs that manifests itself in the form of the demand for goods and services. Unfortunately, the market only covers a sequence of the circuit triggered from the moment of the appearance of the needs until the one of their satisfaction, respectively of their reappearance in the form of the demand for goods and services.. In ensuring a successful business, the consumer's behavior must be better understood by finding the answer to the following questions: Who buys horticultural products? How to buy? When and where do you buy? Why buy? What are your favorite products? quantitative differences are less obvious.

The size of the household is another influencing factor on the way of manifesting the demand at the level of agri-food markets, as well as on the buying and consuming behavior. In fact, in most cases, the size of the household is closely related to the living environment (in rural areas

there is a higher birth rate), to the level of education (there is a phenomenon of declining birth rate mainly in people with high level of training); households with a larger number of members registering lower incomes than smaller ones (*table 3*). The increase in household size determines the allocation of higher shares of total food consumption expenditures, a fact determined by the lower income level of these categories of households, a lower caloric consumption per person (consequence and lower energy requirements for children, compared with that of adults), and expenses generated by the consumption of food, beverages and tobacco, also lower, but at a rate that exceeds the rate of reduction specific to consumption caloric. This proves the orientation of more households towards food with a lower degree of processing, and, implicitly, with lower added value, a fact easy to observe from *tables 4*.

Table 4

Average consumption of agri-food products and alcoholic beverages, by categories of households according to household size, in 2019 - average monthly quantities per person

	Total households	Of which, by categories according to household size					
		1 person	2 persons	3 persons	4 persons	5 persons	6 persons and more
Bread and confectionery	10.112	10.594	10.373	10.023	10.002	10.051	9.796
Corn	1.489	2.113	1.836	1.114	1.158	1.485	1.828
Flour	0.832	1.136	1.053	0.818	0.731	0.688	0.636
Fresh meat, total (kg)	2.447	3.369	2.966	2.640	2.263	1.895	1.539
Meat preparations (kg)	0.894	1.249	1.043	0.919	0.842	0.734	0.626
Milk (l)	5.854	7.836	6.757	5.660	5.213	5.401	5.086
Cheeses and cream	1.140	1.577	1.400	1.140	1.002	0.976	0.853
Eggs (pieces)	14.471	21.503	17.195	14.503	13.157	12.091	10.056
Fruit (kg)	2.277	3.257	2.676	2.517	2.186	1.634	1.332
Potatoes (kg)	4.114	5.860	4.569	4.102	3.749	3.537	3.461
Jam, jam, compote (kg)	0.225	0.303	0.257	0.228	0.229	0.189	0.141
Mineral water and other non-alcoholic beverages (l)	2.480	2.958	2.930	3.310	2.486	1.500	0.896
Alcoholic beverages (l)	2.231	2.644	3.052	2.226	1.969	1.891	1.513

Age is another factor that influences buying and consuming behavior. The segment represented by older people is more oriented towards traditional foods, while the younger ones are more receptive to the new. As a result, in Romania, products such as hamburgers, hot dogs, or pizza are addressed, especially, to young people. More and more young people give up the traditional Romanian dishes that are usually prepared in their own kitchen, in favor of eating fast food, or ready meals. These changes, which tend to become consumption habits, are mainly due to the fact that young people are most susceptible to cultural influences transmitted horizontally, they are more pronounced compared to those vertically (respectively, the transmission of values through parentage). Instead, the segment of the elderly, beyond the orientation towards what is traditional, puts a great emphasis on foods with low content of substances whose excessive consumption can have negative effects on health (sugar, fats, salt, and alcohol).

CONCLUSIONS

Among the different categories of households depending on the age of the head of the household, the group of 35-49 years with the highest level of income, as well as the highest level of expenses occasioned by the purchase of food, beverages and tobacco. In terms of caloric consumption, this group has the lowest average daily calorie intake, which shows that this category of households is oriented towards expensive

products, superior in quality, but with low energy content.

The Romanian agricultural and food sector has great potential for development, given that over 60% of the total area of Romania is agricultural and over 40% of the total employed population works in agriculture (source: INSSE 2020).

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