

Chapter 8

Perception of Romanian Consumers on Ecological Products

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ABSTRACT

This chapter aimed to investigate perceptions and attitudes of Romanian consumers about organic products, in order to study the connection between knowledge and attitudes of consumers and their place in purchase decision-making system to understand their behavior toward organic food. In the first part, after a brief introduction, the authors tried to perform a review of the literature in the field, starting from the presentation of the concept of green or ecological consumption behavior and the notions related to it. A synthetic scheme of the drivers of the green market was proposed as a conclusion of this introductory part. The main concern is about consumption of the ecological products in Romania. The authors identified a number of 17 relevant studies performed in Romania in order to help them substantiate their work. They took into account two issues, namely, Ecological Non-Food Products and Ecological Food Products.

INTRODUCTION

During the last years significant changes occurred within the trinomial including economic environment, ecological environment and social environment.

The economic environment together with the social one - represented in the new patterns of consumption - have influenced the ecological environment - represented by the environmental dimension of the consumption of goods and services.

Sustainable Consumption represents “that form of consumption which uses goods and services that respond to basic needs, enhancing the quality of life, improving resource efficiency and minimizing

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emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so as not affect the future generations' lives" (Sima, V., Gheorghe, I. G., 2015).

In this context, the followers of eco-economic and eco-social models attempt to make their mark on consumerist tendencies, aiming to determine the orientation of both economic operators and population, towards more pronounced ecological and eco-social consumption patterns.

We can assume that the model of green economy begins to require and determine changes in consumer habits. The sustainable consumption models or the green consumption patterns began to dictate market trends.

A change of the consumers' behavior means primarily a fundamental transformation of the values and life style. Changing the thinking and action of consumers cannot be imposed by the authorities. The emergence of new and durable traditions in consumers' behavior requests a wise informing and consulting campaign.

The objective of this chapter is to investigate perceptions and attitudes of the Romanian consumers on ecological products, in order to study the connection between knowledge and attitudes of consumers and their place in purchase decision-making system to understand their consumption behavior.

BACKGROUND

The issue of organic products and how they are perceived in the market have become topics of general concern for researchers worldwide. The end of the twentieth century and beginning of XXI century were marked by a growth of the concerns in this area worldwide. Thus, new concepts have emerged and have been developed, such as: eco-attitude, sustainable consumption patterns, green behaviour, green attitude, green intention, green purchase, eco-consumer, eco-products (with many divisions), green market.

A large number of studies on green or ecological consumption behaviour found that consumers who concern more on environmentally friendly are characterised by a specific *eco-attitude*. This concept contains notions related to:

- Ecological Citizenship
- Environmental Citizenship
- Green Citizenship
- Ethical Investment
- Social Economy
- Sustainable consumption patterns
- Green Purchase
- Green Purchase Intention
- Green Purchase Behavior
- Green Purchase Attitude
- Eco-Consumer
- Eco-Products
- Green Market.

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