Consumer Ethnocentrism: a Concept to Support the Increase the Economic Resilience of a Market

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Abstract

This paper aims to identify some local specifics of the ethnocentrism tendency in Romania, together with some socio-psychological variables related to buying local products. It was also analyzed the existence of a correlation between the socio-economic development of a county and the level of ethnocentrism of consumers in that county. In order to be able to assess the level of socio-economic development, an aggregate indicator composed of five dimensions was built. Most of the data was gathered using a structured online questionnaire, filled by 1246 Romanians, but there was also used the statistical data. Ethnocentrism was measured using the consumer ethnocentric tendency scale (CETSCALE). The socio-psychological variables were used to measure if they have influence on the CETSCALE. The data was analyzed with the SPSS 20.0 statistics software for Windows, using descriptive statistics, factor analysis and correlation. The search results show some regional aspects of the consumers that could be of interest for companies and government.

Introduction

In the context of the different crises that the Romanian society is going through, one of the priorities that must be taken into account refers to elements that will support the sustainability of the domestic socio-economic ecosystem and that will allow it to increase its resilience. Thus, based on the elements of fragility revealed by the last crises, the main directions to be considered in a coherent strategy are: the food system and the general economic ecosystem (the need for diversification).

In the case of the food system, the main guidelines are: increasing the variety of locally produced food, increasing the economic viability of farms by association, developing a geographically balanced storage infrastructure. The general economic ecosystem must have a strategic and coherent approach in the following directions: attracting and developing high value-added economic activities, developing and diversifying the entrepreneurial environment, supporting diverse and complementary economic sectors, increasing the value collected from

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taxes without increasing the tax burden (Strat & Vuță, 2020). The volume of Romania's agricultural trade requires an increase in the competitiveness of the agricultural sector and a diversification of the food processing industry (Andrei, Popescu, Nica, & Chivu 2020). Regarding the diversification of the entrepreneurial environment this might also occur due to the pandemic, where the flexible working schedule could have become a competitive advantage for the organizations (Dima, Țuclea, Vrânceanu, & Țigu, 2019). Sustainability could be achieved through an increase of performance on three levels – economic, social and enivironment, which is usually happening in countries with consistent development policies implementations (Subic, Vasiljevic, & Andrei, 2010).

Regarding the trade situation, in 2019, Romania's imports were 86.3 billion euros, and exports 69 billion euros, Romania registering a negative trade balance, worth 17.3 billion euros, 2.2 billion euros higher than in 2018, given that exports increased by 1.9% and imports by 4.2% (see tabel 1). This data confirms the results of a former study conducted by Miron, Dima, & Vasilache (2010) that the economy will be dependent of the imports, which is affecting the sustainable development of the economy (p.31). These reinforce the idea of the need to increase the consumption of local products.

Table 1. The evolution of Romania's trade balance

Year	Import (bn. euro)	Export (bn. Euro)	Trade deficit
2014	58.5	52.4	6.1
2015	62.9	54.6	8.3
2016	67.3	57.3	9.9
2017	75.6	62.6	13
2018	82.8	67.7	15.1
2019	86.3	69	17.3

Source: INS press release no. 120/11 May 2020 (data processed by the author)

This paper is structured as follows: in Section 2, it is presented the literature review on the impact of demographic and socio-psychological factors on consumer's ethnocentric tendencies. The conceptual framework, aim, research methodology, and data are described in Section 3 and research findings are offered in Section 4. Section 5 presents concluding comments.

1. Theoretical background

One of the most well-known concepts regarding the consumption of local products is consumer ethnocentrism, which was mainly researched by Shrimp & Sharma (1987) who developed the consumer ethnocentric tendency scale (CETSCALE). The term „Consumer ethnocentrism" it is used to represent the beliefs held by the consumers about the appropriateness, indeed morality of purchasing foreign products.

According to the synthesis made by Shankarmahesh (2006) based on 37 studies conducted in Australia, Austria, Great Britain, Canada, China, Czech Republic, France, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Malta, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Russia, Singapore, Turkey and the United States from 1964 to 2002 there were four main antecedents of consumer ethnocentrism identified, namely: socio-psychological, economic, political and demographic.

Socio-psychological background includes: animosities, collectivism, conservatism, cultural openness, dogmatism, perceived fear, inclination to the problems of global humanity, the list of values, materialism and patriotism.

The economic background includes: capitalism, the level of economic development, a growing national economy and a growing personal financial situation.

Regarding the socio-psychological background for this study will be of interest the following notions: salience, empathy and responsibility.

Perceived fear ("salience"). One of the essential facets of CET is the way its morality is perceived. This translates into ethnocentric consumers who consider buyers of foreign products morally responsible for the difficulties of local workers (Kral et al., 2020), who lose their jobs due to international competition. Olsen, Granzin, & Biswas (1993) looked at consumer cooperation in buying local goods as a form of "helping behavior." This construct refers to the perceived fear of workers and local industry, which would be affected. In fact, Rosenblatt (1964) mentioned that the perception of fear by the group is in a positive relationship with ethnocentrism. Olsen et al. (1993) found empirical support to emphasize the positive relationship between perceived fear and CET. Sharma, Shimp, & Shin (1995) included the fear variable perceived as a moderator in their conceptual model, which the authors explain as follows: "When a country feels attacked or threatened by external competition, foreignness takes on a negative connotation, and nationalism and ethnocentrism is on the rise. Fear of losing their jobs could influence consumers' reactions to imports."

The authors found strong empirical support for the moderating role of "perceived fear" in the relationship between CET and attitudes towards imported goods. Whether perceived fear is a precedent for CET or a moderator between CET and attitudes or a desire to buy foreign goods is still a matter for debate, even if there is sufficient evidence for both perspectives.

Consequences through mediators. Olsen et al. (1993) proposed the following elements: perceived equity, empathy, costs and responsibility as possible mediators between CET and the desire to buy imported goods. Regarding consumer ethnonationalism, the authors argued that it has a negative influence on perceived equity. Ethnocentric consumers would consider international competition unfair to local industry. The decrease in perceived equity will then influence consumers to buy local goods instead of foreign goods. Empathy is "the ability to understand a person's perception of a situation and their cognitive and emotional response to a situation". Consumer ethnonationalism positively influences empathic feelings for others, considered to be similar to those of the consumer. This connection is similar to Rosenblatt's (1964) hypothesis that high

ethnocentrism will increase the solidarity of those within the group. High empathy for the group will later influence the desire to buy local products. Olsen et al. (1993) considered that a high ethnonational identity will lower the costs of collaboration between group members. In other words, ethnocentric consumers tend to disregard the additional costs of buying local products. The reasoning is consistent due to an important property of CET, namely price inelasticity. Responsibility is defined as "accepting an obligation". According to the authors Olsen et al. (1993), as perceived equity decreases, perceived consumer responsibility increases, leading to a desire to buy local products. The empirical research conducted by the authors based on a very large number of American respondents supports the role played by each mediation variable described above.

In the literature, the concepts of local product, regional product, traditional product are recognized as independent concepts, but in practice, many foods use a mix of these concepts. Therefore, researchers such as Fernández-Ferrín & Bande-Vilela (2013) examined the value of foods with local, regional and traditional characteristics; as well as the possible link between the level of consumer ethnocentrism and the actual purchasing power of local-regional-traditional food.

Fernández-Ferrín, Bande, Calvo-Turrientes, & Galán-Ladero (2017) focused on researching the influence of parents on the level of regional ethnocentrism of their children. The model proposed by them considers that the levels of regional identity and regional ethnocentrism of parents are potential antecedents of ethnocentrism among their children. The exploratory analysis presented by them supports the hypothesis that consumer ethnocentrism is a general trend acquired in childhood through the process of socialization.

2. Conceptual framework

An examination of an Eastern European country that entered the European Union in 2007 was a good reason for the current study. Even if the country had some struggles navigating from a centralized regime to a free market economy, it had achieved a GDP per capita adjusted for purchase power parity of over $29.900 in 2019 (World Bank, 2021). However, taking into account both the existence of a large number of imported goods and a limited number of domestic goods, and the great openness of the Romanian economy, it is considered necessary to research the preferences and inclinations of Romanian consumers in this context. Similar studies have been conducted in CEE (Vida & Reardon, 2008; Iacob, Kuada, & Lawson, 2014) Thus, the present study has several objectives to be presented below. First of all, we want to apply the CET scale, very rarely used in Romania, to assess the ethnocentrism of the Romanian consumer. On this occasion, both its reliability and unidimensionality will be checked. Secondly, it will be observed how the demographic factors, the region and the place of residence (rural vs. urban) influence the results of the ethnocentrism of the Romanian consumers. Thirdly, the identification of the correlations between socio-psychological variables and CETSCALE. Fourthly, the identification of the correlations between the level of development of each county in Romania and its CETSCALE score.

2.1 Aim, research methodology, and data

The motivation for choosing this theme lies in the fact that the world's economy has undergone changes as a result of the impact of the global crisis, especially in terms of consumer choices.

The main objective of the research is to identify the degree of ethnocentrism and some its influencing factors among consumers on the Romanian market.

The secondary objectives of this paper is to identify regions with ethnocentric consumption potential, an important component for the creation of a sustainable economy. It is desired to identify the regions with the potential to develop the production of local goods and their promotion campaigns, as well as identifying some correlations between a social-development aggregated indicator and the ethnocentric consumers. All these secondary objectives converge towards the main objective.

Trends in consumer ethnocentrism were measured based on an online questionnaire sent to e-mail addresses and completed by 1246 randomly selected respondents from a database. The final questionnaire has 41 questions and is made up of five parts. Recent studies have analyzed the use of the questionnaire completed with pencil versus the one completed online and it has been shown that there are no differences in response style (De Jong, Steenkamp, Fox, & Baumgartner, 2008).

Of interest to this paper is the third part of the questionnaire, which aimed to measure certain antecedents and moderators of consumer ethnocentrism. The socio-psychological antecedents consist of the following constructions: "perceived fear", "empathy" and "responsibility". These items were measured in previous research that validated scales in the field of psychology and marketing.

The fourth part of the questionnaire of interest was the one measuring the trend of consumer ethnocentrism, the CETSCALE developed by Shimp & Sharma (1987). This tool consists of evaluating 17 statements on the Likert scale with 7 levels (1 = "strong disagreement" and 7 = "strong agreement").

Higher results on this scale indicate that respondents are willing to buy local products while lower results indicate a willingness to buy goods produced in another country. Thus, CETSCALE scores can range from 17 to 119. The justification for the use of the scale is based on the confirmation of its reliability and validity by a large number of researchers (Luque-Martinez, Ibanez-Sapata, & del Barrio-Garcia, 2000; Sharma et al., 1995).

In addition, CETSCALE has been used and validated in Central and Eastern Europe (Lindquist, Vida, Plank, & Fairhurst, 2001; Huddleston, Good, & Stoel, 2001) and in Africa (Saffu & Walker, 2006). According to reports by Durvasula, Andrews, & Netemeyer, (1997), high scores of CETSCALE indicate a high level of ethnocentrism, while low scores of CETSCALE indicate a low level of ethnocentrism.

The translation of the items was done by an authorized translator. For the present sample we will analyze the CETSCALE results, taking into account the demographic variables. Also here will be evaluated the correlation of socio-psychological factors with CETSCALE.

The Excel document was imported into SPSS 20.0 for Windows, and this software was used for all analyzes. Data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. I mention that the total sum of the percentages in the tables may not add up to 100 percent due to the rounding of the results to only two decimal places. Continuous data were compared using the Mann-Whitney U-Test due to the possibility of data abnormalities. The Spearman order correlations were used to verify the CETSCALE results and the statements regarding the socio-psychological factors of the questionnaire. considered the method appropriate as long as the statements of attitudes are ordinal (Likert Scale) and the CETSCALE results were assumed to be abnormal. The values of $p \leq 0.05$ were considered statistically significant.

3. Research findings

Sample description: Table 2 shows the composition of the analyzed sample. Thus, the age between 25-34 years has the highest frequency, which means that the majority of respondents were in this age range, representing a percentage of 28.2% of the total, predominantly women, with a percentage of 50.6%. The average level of education of the sample members is that of undergraduate studies (37.6%), the average income is between RON 1,001 and RON 2,000 taking into account that 319 people out of 1,246 gave this answer. Regarding the regions of residence, they had small fluctuations except for the northeastern region which had the highest percentage of 22.6%. The division by area of residence shows that the urban area predominates (58.3%). Data were weighted by gender and residence.

Table 2. An overview of the sample characteristics

n=1246 (size)	Frequency	Percentage
Age*		
15-24 years old	167	13.4
25-34 years old	352	28.2
35-44 years old	307	24.7
45-54 years old	235	18.9
55-64 years old	158	12.6
over 65 years old	28	2.2
Gender		
Female	631	50.6
Men	615	49.4
Education		
Vocational school	63	5.0
High School	272	21.8
Post-secondary studies	93	7.4

n=1246 (size)	Frequency	Percentage
Undergraduate studies	468	37.6
Master's Degree	308	24.7
Doctoral studies	42	3.4
Income		
≤ 1 000 RON	105	8.5
between 1 001 RON and 2 000 RON	319	25.6
between 3 001 RON and 4 000 RON	181	14.6
over 4 000 RON	264	21.6
	1176	94.4
Non-answers	70	5.6
Regions		
Bucharest-Ilfov	126	10.1
Center	112	9.0
Vest	109	8.8
Nord-Vest	148	11.9
Nord-Est	281	22.6
Siuth-Est	136	10.9
South-Muntenia	149	11.9
South-Vest	185	14.9
Residence		
Rural	519	41.7
Urban	727	58.3
Note: *value-p ≤0.05, statement and Romanian group are significantly different; note that due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100 per cent		

Source: Own analysis. Data processed with SPSS v. 20 Windows

3.1 Hypotheses

The current study focuses on the validation/invalidation of the following research hypotheses developed based on literature review:

- Hypothesis no.1: CETSCALE is unidimensional.
- Hypothesis no.2: Consumers living in socio-economically developed regions are less ethnocentric than those living in less economically and socially developed regions.
- Hypothesis no.3: Consumers living in rural areas are more ethnocentric than those in urban areas.
- Hypothesis no.4: Perceived fear positively influences consumer ethnocentrism.
- Hypothesis no.5: Ethnocentric consumers will show a higher empathy for the purchase of local products.
- Hypothesis no.6: Ethnocentric consumers will show greater responsibility for purchasing local products
- Hypothesis no. 7: The counties with a high development index are negatively correlated with counties with a high consumer ethnocentrism

To achieve the objective of data analysis, specific statistical tools such as factor analysis with principal component analysis, mean scores, standard deviation and Cronbach's alpha were used.

3.2 Analysis and results

The CETSCALE results were collected, and the descriptive statistics showed the average of 70.24 (SD 25.23) out of the maximum of 119.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of CETSCALE

		Suma ETNO
N	Valid	1246
	Missing	0
Mean		70.64
Std. Deviation		25.104
Skewness		-0.098
Std. Error of Skewness		0.069
Kurtosis		-0.853
Std. Error of Kurtosis		0.139
Minimum		17
Maximum		119

Source: Own analysis. Data processed with SPSS v. 20 Windows

After studying the vault (kurtosis) and asymmetry (see Table 3) it turned out that the data series follows an acceptable distribution. For Skewness the range -0.8 and +0.8 is considered acceptable, and for Kurtosis -3 and +3. The average of ethnocentrism indicates the intensity of ethnocentrism.

Differences between the demographic characteristics of the sample of respondents (eg age, level of education) and the period of data collection could prevent a significant comparison between the results of ethnocentrism in different studies.

Reliability, dimensionality and validity of the scale.

Analyzing the reliability of the 17 items of the CET scale shows that good results were obtained in terms of two measurements of consistency: the total correlation of the corrected items (the corrected total - item correlation - the homogeneity index) and the Cronbach's alpha index (Campo-Arias & Oviedo, 2008) (see table 4).

Table 4. Reliability test of CETSCALE

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0,956	0,956	17

Source: Own analysis. Data processed with SPSS v. 20 Windows

Regarding the value needed to support the consistency of the scale, it is important to emphasize that there is no single rule regarding the definition of the minimum value. In this regard, Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham (2006) suggested that Cronbach's alpha should be greater than 0.7, while the total correlation of the items should be greater than 0.5, although values above 0.4 show an acceptable level of homogeneity for all scale items. However, there are authors who propose other values. This is the case of Santisteben (1990), who considers that the Cronbach's alpha index should be at least 0.5; Nurosis (1993) considers that the total correlation of the items should be at least 0.3.

In this respect, according to the above arguments, the consistency of CETSCALE is confirmed; Cronbach's alpha by the values obtained show that they are at levels considered acceptable. In the same way, all correlation coefficients of all items are significant, all being equal to or greater than 0.4 (see Table 5). This result indicates that this instrument is a reliable indicator of ethnocentrism.

Unidimensionality of the scale. Once the reliability of the scale for CETSCALE has been demonstrated, the second step is to analyze whether the scale is composed of a single factor or size. There are a number of methods and indexes available to confirm the unidimensionality of a particular scale, but in this study it was used factor analysis to assess the dimensionality. The methodology is still one of the most used and developed techniques at an empirical level (Brown, 2006; Kline, 2010; Thompson, 2004).

Before applying the factor analysis, it is recommended to use confirmatory measurements:

• the sphericity test of Bartlett and KMO (Kaiser - Meyer - Oklin) which measures the sufficiency of the sample. In this case, the first (16741.75) is significant (p <0.01), showing that it must reject the null hypothesis of the idea of no correlation between items;

• KMO (0.960) can be considered more than acceptable. Therefore, according to the results obtained, it can be concluded that CETSCALE is suitable for the development of a factor analysis (see Table 6).

Table 6. KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0,960
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	16,741,753
	df	136
	Sig.	0

Source: Own analysis. Data processed with SPSS v. 20 Windows

Table 5. The correlation matrix between CETSCALE items

	CET1	CET2	CET3	CET4	CET5	CET6	CET7	CETS	CET9	CET10	CET11	CET12	CET13	CETS4	CET15	CET16	CET17
CET1	1,000	0,577	0,612	0,646	0,491	0,591	0,709	0,599	0,693	0,468	0,587	0,447	0,581	0,424	0,418	0,547	0,521
CET2	0,577	1,000	0,499	0,440	0,418	0,450	0,505	0,495	0,522	0,535	0,540	0,513	0,458	0,442	0,419	0,709	0,458
CET3	0,612	0,499	1,000	0,645	0,476	0,553	0,617	0,563	0,623	0,447	0,542	0,433	0,596	0,417	0,415	0,526	0,511
CET4	0,646	0,440	0,645	1,000	0,438	0,486	0,589	0,531	0,653	0,379	0,443	0,381	0,659	0,332	0,365	0,466	0,446
CET5	0,491	0,418	0,476	0,438	1,000	0,723	0,658	0,587	0,529	0,530	0,577	0,525	0,486	0,575	0,506	0,484	0,639
CET6	0,591	0,450	0,553	0,486	0,723	1,000	0,774	0,654	0,600	0,538	0,679	0,527	0,532	0,591	0,558	0,525	0,677
CET7	0,709	0,505	0,617	0,589	0,658	0,774	1,000	0,710	0,739	0,561	0,689	0,540	0,598	0,559	0,516	0,573	0,660
CET8	0,599	0,495	0,563	0,531	0,587	0,654	0,710	1,000	0,665	0,587	0,654	0,585	0,561	0,549	0,565	0,585	0,574
CET9	0,693	0,522	0,623	0,653	0,529	0,600	0,739	0,665	1,000	0,542	0,627	0,49	0,621	0,472	0,447	0,590	0,567
CET10	0,468	0,535	0,447	0,379	0,530	0,538	0,561	0,587	0,542	1,000	0,695	0,672	0,492	0,655	0,580	0,629	0,590
CET11	0,587	0,540	0,542	0,443	0,577	0,679	0,689	0,654	0,627	0,695	1,000	0,661	0,549	0,645	0,607	0,635	0,661
CET12	0,447	0,513	0,433	0,381	0,525	0,527	0,540	0,585	0,49	0,672	0,661	1	0,536	0,684	0,685	0,63	0,561
CET13	0,581	0,458	0,596	0,659	0,486	0,532	0,598	0,561	0,621	0,492	0,549	0,536	1,000	0,473	0,505	0,549	0,54
CET14	0,424	0,442	0,417	0,332	0,575	0,591	0,559	0,549	0,472	0,655	0,645	0,684	0,473	1,000	0,707	0,560	0,678
CET15	0,418	0,419	0,415	0,365	0,506	0,558	0,516	0,565	0,447	0,580	0,607	0,685	0,505	0,707	1,000	0,598	0,620
CET16	0,547	0,709	0,526	0,466	0,484	0,525	0,573	0,585	0,590	0,629	0,635	0,63	0,549	0,560	0,598	1,000	0,572
CET17	0,521	0,458	0,511	0,446	0,639	0,677	0,660	0,574	0,567	0,590	0,661	0,561	0,54	0,678	0,620	0,572	1,000

Source: Own analysis. Data processed with SPSS v. 20 Windows

To better explain the concept of CETSCALE, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used (SPSS v20). The CETSCALE unidimensionality hypothesis could be tested if all items had high load values (> 0.40 or even> 0.50) on a single factor. The EFA results (see Table 7) show that there is a two-factor solution for our sample. In this case, CETSCALE is not unidimensional for our sample. Hypothesis no. 1 is rejected.

Table 7. Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9,988	58,754	58,754	9,988	58,754	58,754	5,909	34,758	34,758
2	1,391	8,182	66,937	1,391	8,182	66,937	5,470	32,179	66,937
3	0,902	5,305	72,242						
4	0,648	3,812	76,053						
5	0,490	2,879	78,933						
6	0,412	2,421	81,353						
7	0,411	2,419	83,772						
8	0,392	2,308	86,080						
9	0,344	2,025	88,105						
10	0,332	1,954	90,059						
11	0,280	1,649	91,707						
12	0,278	1,637	93,345						
13	0,257	1,514	94,859						
14	0,248	1,459	96,318						
15	0,231	1,359	97,677						
16	0,219	1,288	98,964						
17	0,176	1,036	100,000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Own analysis. Data processed with SPSS v. 20 Windows

This analysis may assume that the initial 17 variables could be reduced to 2 basic factors. The two factors explain 70% of the variation in the database. This means that when the two components are assumed to exist, 70% of the information can be predicted for each of the 17 variables (usually only 20% is expected to be predicted). The first component explains more of the variation than the second (35% compared to 32%) (see Table 7). In this section the factors were not described, but only the proof of the unidimensionality of the scale.

CETSCALE by region of residence. Hypothesis no. 2.: Consumers living in socio-economically developed regions are less ethnocentric than those living in less socio-economically developed regions. Regarding the ethnocentrism of Romanians according to region, we observe (see Table 8) that the region where the highest values were recorded were the regions of South-East, Center and West, which means that in these regions there is the greatest inclination towards the acquisition of local products, compared to the South-West and Bucharest-Ilfov regions, where the lowest values were registered.

**Table 8. Analysis of the ethnocentrism
of the Romanian consumer by region of residence**

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
a. Region = Bucharest-Ilfov	126	17	119	67.06	24.509
a. Region = Center	112	17	119	73.37	25.531
a. Region= West	109	20	119	73.25	23.916
a. Region = North-West	148	17	119	71.39	28.462
a. Region = North-Est	281	18	119	70.55	23.517
a. Region = South-Est	136	21	119	75.70	23.798
a. Region = South-Muntenia	149	17	119	70.64	23.284
a. Region = South-West	185	17	119	65.74	26.933
	1246				

Source: Own analysis. Data processed with SPSS v. 20 Windows

Taking into the consideration of the study made by Miron, Dima, & Vasilache, (2009) where three indexes were calculated (the infrastructure index, the population rejuvenation index and the intellectual capital index) to evaluate which were the most developed regions in Romania, the analysis gave Bucharest-Ilfov, South-Muntenia and South-West as the most developed one. Therefore, according to the data hypothesis no.2 is accepted.

CETSCALE by the place residence. Hypothesis 3: Consumers living in rural areas are more ethnocentric than those in urban areas.

Regarding to the place the residence of the respondents, the difference is small (see Table 9.). However, it could be said that the people living in rural areas have a slightly inclination in terms of purchasing local products.

Table 9. Romanian Consumer Ethnocentrism by place of residence

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
a. Place of Residence= rural	519	19	119	71.35	24.886
a. Place of residence = urban	727	17	119	70.14	25.262
	1246				

Source: Own analysis. Data processed with SPSS v. 20 Windows

According to the data hypothesis no.3 is accepted.

Further on, it will be presented a table with correlations among the socio-psychological variables and CETSCALE.

Hypothesis no.4: Perceived fear positively influences consumer ethnocentrism. Hypothesis no.5: Ethnocentric consumers will show a higher empathy for the purchase of local products. Hypothesis no.6: Ethnocentric consumers will show greater responsibility for purchasing local products.

Table 10. Spearman's correlations: socio-psychological variables and CETSCALE

			Sum_ETNO
Spearman's rho	Soc_psih1	Correlation Coefficien	0,537**
	Soc_psih2	Correlation Coefficien	0,613**
	Soc_psih3	Correlation Coefficien	0,659**
	Soc_psih4	Correlation Coefficien	0,654**
	Soc_psih5	Correlation Coefficien	-0,071**
	Soc_psih6	Correlation Coefficien	0,080**
	Sum_ETNO	Correlation Coefficien	1,000
		N	1246

Source: Own analysis. Data processed with SPSS v. 20 Windows

The results in Table 10. show that there are significant linear correlations between two of the statements corresponding to the socio-psychological variable "perceived fear", two of the statements corresponding to the socio-psychological variable "empathy" and the CETSCALE. The two statements corresponding to the socio-psychological variable "responsibility" for ethnocentrism do not correlate with CETSCALE.

According to the data hypothesis no.4 is accepted. According to the data hypothesis no.5 is accepted. According to the data hypothesis no.6 is rejected.

Dimensions Indicator of socio-economic development and CETSCALE. Hypothesis no.7: The counties with a high development index are negatively correlated with counties with a high consumer ethnocentrism

Next, it will be analyzed the existence of a correlation between the socio-economic development of a county and the level of ethnocentrism of consumers in that county.

In order to be able to assess the level of socio-economic development, an aggregate indicator composed of five dimensions was built. Each dimension is defined by a certain indicator. The reference year used for the statistical data is 2015, because in that year were also collected questionnaires used in the quantitative research. Therefore:

1. For the construction of Dimension 1 "Population" two indicators were taken into account: Population by place of residence (at county level) and Share of the population under 18 years of age in relation to the total population at county level

2. For the construction of Dimension 2 "Material prosperity" only the GDP per capita was taken into account.

3. For the construction of Dimension 3 "Economic power" were taken into account: the number of enterprises, foreign direct investment, the number of employees, the employment rate, the average net earnings and the situation of the unemployed.

4. For the construction of Dimension 4 "Population education" the following indicators were taken into account: school population, school units,

situation of school laboratories, situation of gyms, situation of sports fields and situation of computers in educational institutions.

5. For the construction of Dimension 5 "Physical and mental well-being" the following indicators were taken into account: the number of libraries, the situation of the beds in the sanitary units, the situation of the medical-sanitary personnel and the situation of the sanitary units.

$$\text{Socio-economic indicator} = \text{Average of the Dimensions}$$
$$\text{Dimension 1} = \text{Average } (zI1, zI2, zI3, zI4, zI5)$$
$$z_i = (x_i - minU) / (maxU - minU)$$
$$minU = min * 0,8; \quad maxU = max * 1,2$$

Table 11. Dimensions Indicator of socio-economic development and CETSCALE

No. crt.	Counties	Population Avg.	GDP Avg.	Economic Agents and Labor Force Avg.	Education Avg.	Culture and Health Avg.	AGGREGATED INDICATOR	CET SCALE
1	Alba	0.219	0.223	0.192	0.116	0.121	0.174	73.83
2	Arad	0.247	0.239	0.190	0.164	0.110	0.190	65.25
3	Argeş	0.260	0.208	0.228	0.259	0.258	0.243	72.47
4	Bacău	0.381	0.090	0.172	0.209	0.205	0.211	73.56
5	Bihor	0.322	0.172	0.201	0.232	0.206	0.226	64.00
6	Bistriţa-Năsăud	0.329	0.134	0.143	0.091	0,083	0.156	68.89
7	Botoşani	0.367	0.050	0.119	0.090	0.124	0.150	73.57
8	Brăila	0.165	0.121	0.142	0.058	0.062	0.110	79.79
9	Braşov	0.300	0.292	0.215	0.198	0.159	0.233	80.60
10	Buzău	0.253	0.119	0.204	0.108	0.124	0.162	67.42
11	Călăraşi	0.280	0.110	0.094	0.049	0.049	0.116	79.89
12	Caraş-Severin	0.184	0.139	0.116	0.054	0.075	0.113	72.06
13	Cluj	0.265	0.359	0.397	0.413	0.323	0.352	62.12
14	Constanţa	0.341	0.352	0.213	0.289	0.190	0.277	76.24
15	Covasna	0.278	0.129	0.110	0.054	0.060	0.126	66.56
16	Dâmboviţa	0.293	0.146	0.168	0.164	0.148	0.184	64.68
17	Dolj	0.288	0.154	0.268	0.268	0.249	0.245	68.15
18	Galaţi	0.286	0.103	0.197	0.182	0.150	0.184	68.61
19	Giurgiu	0.220	0.147	0.085	0.039	0.034	0.105	88.17
20	Gorj	0.224	0.222	0.167	0.106	0.109	0.166	71.73
21	Harghita	0.281	0.127	0.134	0.124	0.074	0.148	74.00
22	Hunedoara	0.184	0.138	0.187	0.127	0.127	0.152	80.25
23	Ialomiţa	0.296	0.131	0.110	0.036	0.038	0.122	83.20
24	Iaşi	0.466	0.146	0.192	0.351	0.395	0.310	69.79
25	Ilfov	0.280	0.432	0.180	0.075	0.026	0.199	71.38
26	Maramureş	0.307	0.137	0.141	0.148	0.147	0.176	77.00
27	Mehedinţi	0.197	0.080	0.157	0.046	0.064	0.109	84.33
28	Municipiul Bucureşti	0.522	0.814	0.662	0.821	0.760	0.716	66.66
29	Mureş	0.334	0.172	0.192	0.215	0.207	0.224	69.44
30	Neamţ	0.308	0.069	0.160	0.159	0.147	0.169	72.12
31	Olt	0.205	0.094	0.174	0.115	0.131	0.144	74.28
32	Prahova	0.301	0.264	0.216	0.262	0,249	0.258	70.26
33	Sălaj	0.274	0.154	0.145	0.062	0.071	0.141	59.63
34	Satu Mare	0.289	0.126	0.138	0.108	0.080	0.148	64.56
35	Sibiu	0.294	0.252	0.205	0.165	0.126	0.208	63.25
36	Suceava	0.461	0.073	0.178	0.243	0.175	0.226	79.89
37	Teleorman	0.178	0.082	0.199	0.091	0.086	0.127	71.83
38	Timiş	0.282	0.382	0.236	0.280	0.260	0.288	60.66
39	Tulcea	0.216	0.131	0.121	0.034	0.031	0.107	78.61
40	Vâlcea	0.197	0.150	0.160	0.094	0.113	0.143	77.16
41	Vaslui	0.386	0.029	0.158	0.080	0.113	0.153	69.33
42	Vrancea	0.287	0.089	0.143	0.055	0.073	0.129	74.33

Source: Own analysis. Data processed with EXCEL, Microsoft Office

According to the results presented in Table 12, it appears that there is a weak correlation between the results of the indicator and the CETCALE results, and this relationship is negative. In a negative connection, the high values of one variable are associated with the low values of the second variable and vice versa. From here we can conclude that with the increase of the level of socio-economic development, the ethnocentrism of the consumer will decrease.

Table 12. Correlation indicator socio-economic development and CETSCALE

		Indicator	CETSCALE
Indicator	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.356*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.021
	N	42	42
CETSCAL E	Pearson Correlation	-0.356*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.021	
	N	42	42

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Source: Own analysis. Data processed with SPSS v. 20 Windows

According to the data hypothesis no.7 is accepted.

Discussions. Managerial implications.

In this study, my objective was to understand the Romanian consumers' ethnocentrism and the effects of some socio-psychological factors on their attitudes towards imports, and subsequently on purchase intentions. The place of residence, as a demographic factor, was also analyzed. The focus was on the socio-psychological variables "salience", "empathy" and "responsibility". Six of the current study's hypotheses were supported. These findings confirm results from previous consumer ethnocentrism research, while integrating them in an overall model (Shankarmahesh, 2006). The results indicate one more time that CETSCALE is a reliable indicator of ethnocentrism. Compared to consumers of other nationalities who were studied in previous ethnocentrism research (Lindquist et al., 2001; Luque-Martınez et al., 2000; Supphellen & Rittenburg, 2001, Javalgi, Khare, Gross, & Scherer, 2005), Romanian consumers appear to not be overly ethnocentric.

Marketing specialists could improve their campaigns, if they would understand the network of influence that makes consumers prefer local products in favor of imported ones. Consumer cooperation in the purchase of local products could be seen as a form of aid for workers whose jobs are endangered by the success of imported products. Understanding the ethnocentric trends of the consumers and the link between ethnocentric trends and socio-psychological factors, could be helpful for both local and international companies to properly correct their resources in building spending strategies, to develop plans, better marketing strategies and policies.

Regarding the consumption of local products, foreign markets should also be explored. Nowadays, with the help of European funds, local farmers could be encouraged to focus their production on bio and organic food, for which there is a rising demand on an expanding market, which can find a most welcoming soil in Romania, and the production of which could create niche opportunities for exports to a wider range of destinations (Andrei, et al., 2020).

Limitations and future research

The limitations offer fertile premises for future studies. For example, future research could be done on a more representative number of respondents. Moreover, a comparative analysis between two countries, or between regions or countries in transition on the same study could be made. The results of the analysis suggest a number of new questions about what should be further researched. Some positive correlations (Maramures, Satu Mare, Alba-Iulia, Brasov, Bacau, Arges and Constanta) between the CETSCALE and the aggregated indicator (Table 13) have been identified, that could be further investigated. Even if this data shows that between the results of the indicator and the CETCALE there are some weak correlations, there might be of interest for some researchers and marketing specialist to try to understand the opportunity to produce and sell local products in those counties.

Regarding the CETSCALE results in urban versus rural areas, the data shows that the diference was not so significantly. Taking into consideration that former studies showed big gaps between the reveneus of the households in rural area versus urban ones (Chivu, Ciutacu, & Georgescu, 2014), some further research could made to understand some cultural aspects or other variables that could influence the consumer ethnocentrism.

Future researchers could also take into consideration some aspects related to cultural specifics of some regions such as minority culture and language (as for example: Hungarian, Roma, Russian, Turkish minorities). Moreover, answers to the questions if ethnocentrism apply to services need more research.

Due to the focus on the consumer in the contemporary business world, the market orientation paradigm, advances in consumer knowledge and its dynamics will continue to be crucial for both market researchers, theorists and practitioners. Given the results mentioned during the paper, it can be stated that research opportunities in Central and Eastern Europe seem to be abundant. In order to increase the confidence in the generalizability of my findings future research in these countries is needed.

4. Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to measure the ethnocentric trends of consumers in a transition economy, Romania. However, all this followed the inclusion in specialized research at the global level and the analysis of certain antecedents and moderators that would influence the consumer's ethnocentrism.

Regarding the ethnocentrism of the Romanian consumer, it presented some differences, when certain demographic factors were taken into account: the environment of residence (urban vs. rural, region). Regarding the analysis of the correlation of socio-demographic factors with CETSCALE, the results show that there is a significant linear correlation between statements corresponding to the socio-psychological variable "perceived fear" and ethnocentrism, between statements corresponding to the socio-psychological variable "empathy" and ethnocentrism. The analysis regarding the connection between the socio-economic development of the counties and the ethnocentrism of the consumers presents a negative correlation. According to the results, as the level of socio-economic development increases, consumer ethnocentrism decreases.

Overall, the results of this study appear to be encouraging in developing knowledge in this area about consumer attitudes in advanced transition economies.

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