Endowment with Durable Goods as Welfare Indicator. Empirical Study Regarding Post-Communist Behavior of Romanian Consumers

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The endowment of households with durable goods is – for comparison regionally, nationally or globally – a „barometer" of the standard of living in a country, with major implications both at micro and macroeconomic level being an important statistical indicator for the „actors" of this market. Particularities of the Romanian market (structure of households compared to EU media with direct implications over the degree of endowment, acquisition through „credit only with identity card", lack of some basic commodities, outfit with „second – hand" commodities, the first „Black Friday" takes places 22 years after the collapse of communism etc.) influences a buying decision of the Romanian consumer and reveals a post-communist consumption behavior. Implications of this market are both social and micro and macro-economic as they reflect the living standard, conditions of life and life quality of population. In order to prove this aspect I carried-out a sampling based marketing research by using a sample of 300 households' representative at the urban level, using double sampling schemes, stratified sampling and quota sampling. The results of the research emphasize significant differences among Romanian households, according to socio-demographic characteristics of the head of household, related to variables of buying process (place, favorite brands, period of acquisition, buying power etc.). These marketing and socio-demographic variables are integral part of the consumer's decision buying process, acknowledged as endogenous and exogenous variables, process whose purpose is reflected in the degree of endowment with durables and therefore the economic and social welfare of population.

Keywords: *durable goods, Romanian household, statistical method, post-communist behavior, representativeness sampling.*

Introduction

Starting from the main purpose of the activity of marketing, which is to study consumer's needs, and using as a model Maslow's *pyramid of needs hierarchy* (Kotler *et al.,* 1999, p. 361) (Figure 1)*,* we can say that the purchase and endowment with durable goods are covering both needs at the bottom. There are included *psychological needs* (washing clothes, car travel, cooking, etc.) and *needs related to safety* (double glazed windows to ensure thermal comfort). Also, there are considered the needs of the middle of the pyramid, such as: *social needs* (holding subscriptions of landline and mobile telephone, Internet). Finally, there are included the needs of top of the pyramid as: *needs related to appreciation* (recognition of social status through durable goods which incorporate high technology: LCD monitors, plasma TV, digital cameras, home cinema system, etc.), and even *needs of update* (PC, laptop possession, change of mobile phone depending on its performance, changing a TV, refrigerator, monitor, old camera and replace it with either a digital camera or a cam-recorder, etc.). The pyramid principle, also, applies to durable goods, with the particularity that, in Romania, "climbing" towards the top of the pyramid is dependent in great measure on variables such as income level, consumer's occupation, level of training, age, trends etc.

Also, Grewal *et al.,* quoted by Guiltinan (2010) showed that, a durable good may serve to a variety of

„*functional attitude*" that influences the evaluation of consumers over the benefits provided by a durable good (own or replaced), these *functional attitudes* being:

- *Knowledge function:* for instance, the degree to which the product helps a consumer organizing and structuring his/her life, making it more predictable and secure;
- *Value – expressive function:* the degree to which a product helps a consumer expressing his/her values and self-identities to others;
- *Social – adjustive function:* the degree to which the product helps a consumer to gain an approval in social settings;
- *Utilitarian function*: the degree to which a product yields a rewarding consumption experience as a means to an end.

To examine the influence of such socio-demographics variables on endowment with durable goods of households from Romania, we used a marketing research based on survey (stratified sampling and quota sampling) using a representative sample of 300 households starting from the urban national level of households distribution according to employment status and educational level of household head. The data were gathered in May 2011.

According to national and European statistical data, the Romanian market has experienced upward trends of equipping households with durable goods (Gabor *et al.,* 2011). Even more, for certain products, such as mobile

phone and television, there are households where there are found more than one product and the products with new technologies such as plasma televisions, microwave ovens, etc., also experiencing an accelerated pace of purchasing in all categories of households.
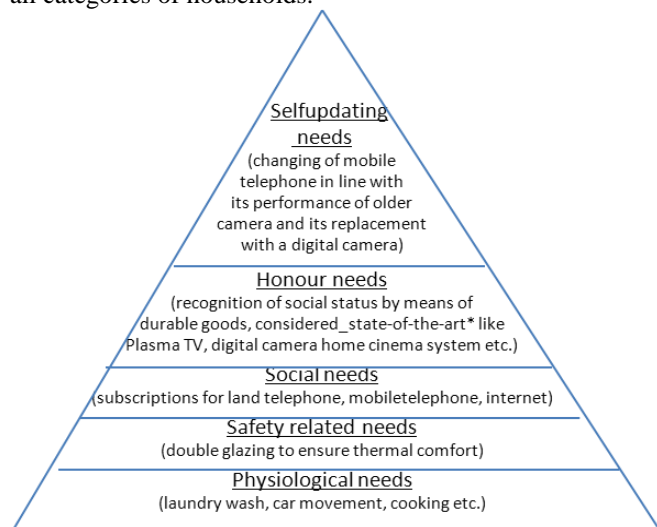

Figure 1. Maslow's pyramid of needs
(Adaptation of the author for durable goods after Kotler *et al.,* 1999, p. 361)

The durable goods market has been intensely surveyed and researched as regards economic modeling, the most common economic variables considered being *monopoly of producers on this market, second-hand car market, replacement rate of durable goods, price sensitivity of households, price strategies, their replacement policy, subsequent introduction of durable goods on the market,* however, few researches are based on primary data collected based on statistical sampling, studies about Romanian market characteristics being practically not available. This aspect may be the result of the fact that endowment of households with durable goods is a statistical indicator measured and reported annually at national level of every country, with regard to a certain number of durable goods (as usual those with a low replacement rate). Thus, in this study we fill in a „hole" in the specialty literature, important aspects of this market being important variables of the thinking strategies as regards communication policy of the firms operating on this market or other policies in the marketing mix of a firm. In this producer – final consumer equation, variables that have been researched in this study on the Romanian market stand between and interfere, influencing the decision making process of the producer and the consumer. In order to have a feed-back, therefore to sell, producers should build up communication policies considering the results of this study, these being important variables of increasing efficiency of communication policy and implicitly their turnover. On the durable goods market, relations between the market „players" are important, and we refer here to relations between producers – dealers – financiers – governmental policies – final consumers (households).

In the next section, a brief literature review of research related to durable purchasing and consumer values is followed by the presentation of the sample structure and its socio-demographic characterization. The results of our research are then presented in detail. In the final section, implications of our results are discussed and suggestions made for future research.

Durable goods market research by statistical methods, can reply to some various, complex and important problems for economy both at microeconomic level and macroeconomic level and, implicitly worldwide, if we consider the significant and recent phenomenon of globalization, phenomenon that marketing should reply in fact by individualization, segmentation, finding typologies of consumers that „group" in line with the same needs, attitudes, opinions, intentions, motivations etc.

The goal of this research based on statistical sampling is to detail characterization of the endowment degree with durables of households at urban level and the market related to these commodities, and comparison of results with data available worldwide. In Romania, the endowment degree with durables is the target of annual statistic reporting in the publication entitled *Coordinates of living standards* and – up to 2006 – *Endowment of households with durables* that contains reporting for a number of 25 commodities, in our research comprising 36 durables. Endowment with durables is an indicator of both living standard and life quality in Romania and marketing – and tacitly marketing research – helps identifying the needs – current and future – of consumers, to ranking these needs – according to the Maslow pyramid – for consumers in Romania, with all their characteristics. Also, identification of marketing variables that influence the post-communist buying behavior of Romanian consumers in order to detail the information related to the "endowment of households with durables" indicator that measures the standard of living, health and implicitly, quality of life. Data gathered by means of a questionnaire have been summarized and processed by means of the SPSS software and Excel, using absolute and relative frequencies, simple means, calculated average scores, weighted means for processing data measured by means of specific scales of marketing, respectively: Likert scale, Stapel scale, constant sum scale, sorting scale, etc.

Literature review

Studying the endowment degree of households with durable goods in Romania lead to the results related to the stage of purchasing these goods, this aspect being detailed in the section concerning the results of the research carried-out, those related to the oldest and the newest durable goods respectively, in the endowment of Romanian households. The previous studies (Hebden & Pickering, 1974; Paroush, 1965; Corfman *et al.,* 1991) *showed that endowment of households with durable goods depend on factors such as: income, welfare, social class, family size, duration of marriage and use of credit,* variables that were taken into consideration in this research, too[i]. Also, other studies connect the endowment degree with goods, occupational status of wife, service costs (Bellante & Foster, 1984; Reilly 1982; Strober 1977; Weinberg & Winer 1983; Corfman *et al.,* 1991). Economists acknowledge the importance of the fact that demand of durable goods is very important as many aspects of this market in certain

countries (such as the case of Romania, approached in this research) are not known or surveyed.

In the foreign literature the first research with regard to this market is since 1979, when Kasulis, Lusch and Stafford were anticipating that, from a high number of reasons (including a high population – in the '80s – with age between 18 – 34 years) the durable goods will be the fastest segment of consumer market in the '80s. This acquisition is considered by the authors as being discretionary, but they consider that period was characterized by the existence of a quite subjective distribution of income for each household to purchase durable goods. This economic detail also characterized Romania in 2006 – 2008, the period of „credit with identity card only” sustained by banks (foreign and Romanian capital) in Romania. Modeling of relation between value, usefulness and holding of durable goods was studied and approached by Corfman, Lehmann and Narayanan (1991) by means of a convenience sampling on a sample of 735 respondents for discretionary goods.

Wilcox (1991) brought a major contribution to the durable goods field by contribution related to the analysis, trend and measurement of household expenses and savings, emphasizing through his study that, in the 80s, the durable goods purchased increased rapidly between 1982 and 1986 when the economic growth was strong, the result of this growth being the rise of the real net inventory of durable goods in households by 60 % and by 45 % on inhabitant.

Gray (1992) studied the *influence of consumption costs over durable goods and services*. The issue of purchasing durable goods „on credit” was approached by Hira (1993) who analyzed this „tendency” (called „*consumer durable revolution*”) in the '20s. If we carry out an analogy with the Romanian market in the surveyed period, what was considered luxury durable goods in the '20s, in Romania, as regards category of these goods, necessity goods were „placed” or purchased by credit (considered in the European Union as being part in the „basic” endowment of a household), for instance: double glazing, refrigerator, air conditioning etc.

Monopoly of durable goods market is approached, as regards *sellers with effect over the diversification strategy of these goods* by Casado-Izaga and Saracho (2002).

The strategy of sales as regards durable goods in relation to sales with full payment or installment payment or to conclude leasing contracts for the final goal of profit maximization was approached by Poddar (2004).

An experimental pattern concerning *the behavior on the second-hand durable goods market compared to the decision of renting these goods* (illustrated on car leasing contracts) was carried out by Kay-Yut Chen and Huang (2005). In the durable goods industry there is still a global feature namely: country where a product is designed is not the same with the country it produces, aspects related to the *impact of country of design and the country of manufacture over perceptions of durable good consumers* were studied by Hamzaoui and Merunka (2006).

Wagner (2006) approached the „*new*” second-hand market of durable goods and considered that, *one of the factors that led to decreasing the durable goods buying cycle is diminishing their durability.*

The effect of the second-hand durable goods market over price dynamics and *strategies of introducing new products* has been studied by Hao Zhao and Jagpal (2006).

The durable goods market was approached as regards the *selection of working life in case of differentiated products,* by Goering (2007), who built up a model that considered the impact of these products over the selection of monopolists on the durable goods market related to product durability. An aspect that considers an important demographic variable has been studied by Podoshen (2008), concerning *the brand loyalty, the „word of mouth” and the effect of an unpleasant experience compared to the use of a brand as regards durable goods within Afro-American consumers compared to those non-Afro-Americans, singularized on cars.* Prince (2009) through his research responds to another problem of the durable goods market, namely he tries answering the question *how do consumers choose the quality level and time of replacing the commodity for the vertically differentiated durable goods* (illustrating on computers), these aspects being analyzed both theoretically and practically by means of structural equation patterns. Ong, Kitchen and Chew (2010) used a convenience sampling of primary data for the conjoint analysis application in order *to analyze the decisions taken by consumers in Malaysia in selecting durable goods, air conditioning systems,* respectively.

Albaum and Wiley (2010) used a descriptive sampling based on a questionnaire items of which contained eight Likert acceptance scales and two demographic variables, related to the *perception of the extended warranty that producers provide to an independent service supplier when buying a PC by mail, phone order or on line.*

Seitz, Razauk and Wells (2010) researched *the importance of brand equity over the purchase of durable goods, singularized on air conditioning systems.*

The issues of modeling the durable goods market have been approached in various senses, Guiltian (2010) approached *the aspects of replacement decision of these durables*, the results of his research (practically a „stocktaking” of topic in specialty literature) emphasizing as *replacement reasons: their usefulness in conjunction with the depreciation rate and the discount rate of consumers, deterioration of intrinsic performances concerning durable goods may result in their total or part replacement thus resulting the „desire of something new” or waiting the validity of some new benefits.*

The second-hand market also enjoyed the attention of researchers with the results of Hide–Fumi–Yokoo (2010) who studied aspects of the *involvement of second-hand market in the durable goods recycling process.*

The results were published for the durable goods market in Romania but were strictly related to *endowment of households with a computer, home internet access and mobile phone services* (in urban environment) and as regards the knowledge based society, by Nicolae (2010).

Maintaining the expanded rate in the last years concerning the durable goods market survey, Liberali, Gruca and Nique (2011) published the results of their research regarding *the effect of senzitation to price and habituation over the purchase of durable goods.* Also, Pukeliene and Starkauskiene (2011) identified *the material well-being* like *one of factors of life quality.*

Sample description

In the sample formation, and consequently to ensure its representativeness, we started from national distribution of households according to two criteria, namely: the distribution of urban households based on occupation status and level of education of the household head. The data were collected in May 2011.

To increase the representativeness of the sample, we considered it is appropriate to apply a scheme of combined sampling, respectively the quota sampling, - and stratified sampling, using two layers as follows:

• first layer consists of the household head occupation, including: employed persons, including the following categories: *manager, employed person with higher education, employed person with high-school education, unqualified laborer,* freelancers, respectively *employers and self-employed*, farmers, unemployed, retired.

• the second layer consisting of the level of training of household head, as follows: primary level: *no school, elementary school, secondary school*, secondary level: *vocational school, high-school, technical/craftsmen school*, higher education level: *college/university, postgraduate studies*. In applying the quota sampling there have been distributed to each operator the quotas to be achieved while respecting the distribution of households according to statistics at the national level.

For information gathering stage we used a questionnaire administered by trained operators, namely trained students who have practical experience in this field, questionnaire containing a broad range of scales both classical and specific to marketing data and, implicitly, identification of socio-demographic variables of the household head characteristics.

The socio-demographic characterization of the sample indicators of hard core trend are provided by:

• *Average size of household* in the sample is *3 people*, *variation coefficient* calculated and equal to *7.6 %* thus showing a uniform population and an average representative within the sample;

• A household with children below 18 years, the average number of children per household is *1 child per household.*

• *Average age of household head* is *49 years*, this value is the result of a high percentage of households of pensioners in the sample, 40 % respectively, the average being representative for 70 % of population (variation coefficient is 29.7 %).

• *Size of household*: 1 person – 12 %, 2 persons – 25 %, 3 persons – 26 %, 4 persons – 26,3 %, 5 persons and more – 10,7 %;

• *Type of household head*: 78,7 % - male, 21,3 – female;

• *Education level of household head*: primary (including no education) – 8 %, secondary – 74,7 %, higher – 17 %

• *Occupation status of household head*: Employer – 3 %, freelancer – 1,3 %, manager – 2,3 %, Higher educated employee – 11 %, Standard education employee – 33,3 %, unemployed – 4,0, pensioner – 40 %, farmer – 1 %

Presentation of the research results

Related to the endowment on the 36 durable goods comprised in the research, the following data resulted across the full sample - table 1 and in figure 2 durable goods in the endowment of households in Tîrgu Mureş were presented structured on groups of years of service.

Table 1

Endowment with durable goods on the entire sample

Durable goods	%	Durable goods	%
Car	53.0	Hi – fi audio system	12.3
Land telephone	73.3	DVD player	32.3
Mobile telephone	81.7	Printer/ multifunction	26.7
Refrigerator	97.3	Sewing machine	45.3
Paraboloidal antenna/cable	88.0	Non-automatic washing machine	26.7
Internet access	50.7	Hood	51.0
Color TV	90.3	Cooker	98.3
Black-white TV	14.3	Radio cassette player	64.7
Freezer/Refrigerating box	49.0	Audio tower	27.7
Microwave	41.7	Bicycle	52.7
Automatic washing machine	72.7	Cosmetic care appliances	38.7
Dish washing machine	8.0	Vacuum cleaner	85.0
Computer	55.3	Motorbike/moped	7.3
Laptop	16.0	Body care appliances	16.7
LCD monitor	20.0	Double glazing	43.0
Camera	50.0	Kitchen machine	26.0
Digital camera	33.0	Air conditioning	6.6
Video camera	12.7	Home cinema system	13.7

Summarizing and processing the sampling data in line with the average years of service of durable goods in the households of the sample, these have the following components:

• *Durable goods older than 5 years*: sewing machine, black-white TV, non-automatic washing machine, radio – cassette player

• *Durable goods with years of service lower than 2 years:* DVD player, digital camera, body care appliances, LCD monitor and laptop.
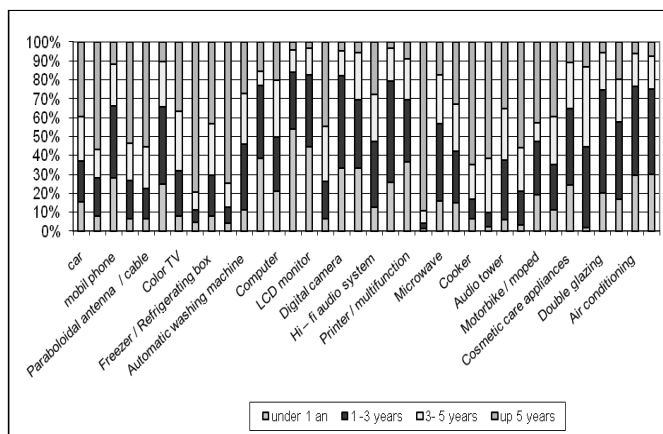

Figure 2. Goods in households on groups of years of service

Thus, if we shall compare the results achieved following the application of the sampling based research in Tîrgu Mureş with data at national level, on total households, it can be easily noticed that, only for color TVs the endowment in Tîrgu Mureş is below the national level (by 18.9 %[ii]), for the rest, in case of all durable goods

compared, the endowment in Tîrgu Mureş is by far over the national level, the same situation being experienced if we compare with the development region Centre with the mention there is still a durable good for which Tîrgu Mureş registered a lower level, mobile phone respectively (by 1.3% lower[iii]). However, the most important comparison is between Tîrgu Mureş and the national level – urban environment, mentioning that, negative differences registered previously for color TVs maintain. Negative differences in Tîrgu Mureş compared to the national-urban level are also registered for the following durable goods: *refrigerators* (-5.7 %), *automatic washing machines* (-7.1 %), *musical towers* (-5.6 %), *cooker* (-0.9 %), *radio-cassette player* (-6.1 %). However, there are positive differences for Tîrgu Mureş, according to the sampling data, for the following durable goods: *bicycles* (+34.7 %), *internet connection* (9.6%), *CD player* (9.9 %), *freezer* (+31.3 %), *sewing machines* (+24.5%), *PCs* (+6.4 % to which laptops are added in a proportion of 16 %), *cars* (+16.3 %), *land telephone* (21.6 %), *non-automatic washing machines* (+17.8 %, the additional remainder is justified by a high percentage of households with pensioners in sampling), *vacuum cleaner* (+3.8%), *dish washing machine* (+7.2 %), *video camera* (+ 3.6 %), *motorbike/moped* (+6.6 %).

Related to endowment of households with various types of subscriptions, at the level of the full sample, data shown in figure 3 was obtained. Thus, 79.5 % of households have TV cable subscriptions, 74.7 % have land telephone subscriptions, 68.3 % mobile telephone subscriptions, only 48 % of households have internet access at home and only 18 % have satellite aerials.
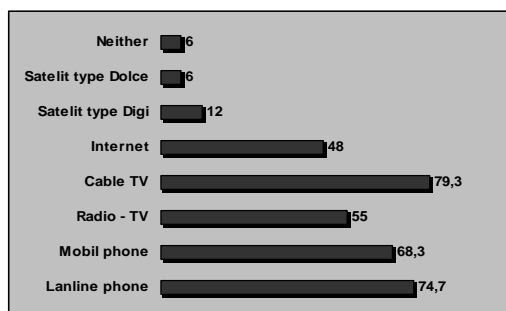

Figure 3. Endowment with subscriptions

At the level of the entire sample, the average score concerning the satisfaction degree as regards endowment of household, is 3.65 indicating that a level is „satisfied enough" of households in Tîrgu Mureş (11 % - very satisfied, 57.3 %- satisfied, 18.3 % - indifferent, 10 % - unsatisfied, 3 %- very unsatisfied).

To measure the evaluation of the *buying power* by households in the sample, we used five statements on the Likert scale, in table 2 being comprised percentage distributions on each version of response and average scores obtained by each statement.

If we rank decreasingly the average scores obtained by each of the five statements, it results that, at the level of the full sample, the highest score (3.26) is held by the statement according to which *households succeed* buying even more expensive goods *but with restrictions in other„areas" of costs*, being closely followed by the

opinion according to which income „*is enough only for a decent living*" without affording acquisition of some other more expensive goods as well. In exchange, the lowest score is held by the last statement „*income is not enough even for survival*", almost half of households being in total disagreement with this statement.

Table 2

Percentage distribution of response versions concerning the buying power of households and average scores

Statements related to evaluation of the buying power of a household	Total agreement	Agreement	Indifferent	Disagreement	Total disagreement	Average score*
We succeed having everything we need, without restrictions from anything.	5.3	15.7	22.3	31.7	22.7	**2.42**
We succeed buying some more expensive goods, but with restrictions in other domains	8.3	45.7	19.7	17.0	8.3	**3.26**
Our income is enough for a decent living, but we cannot afford buying some more expensive goods.	13.3	3.7	23.3	19.0	9.0	**3.18**
Income is enough only for survival.	9.3	18.3	20.3	34.7	16.0	**2.66**
Income is not enough even for survival.	5.0	6.0	11.3	29.3	46.3	**1.85**

For the types of brands preferred when buying durable goods by households in Tîrgu Mureş, the ranked average scores are: *foreign brands* – 51.13 %, *Romanian brands* – 33.71 % and "*no-name*" *brands* – 13.96 % thus resulting that, foreign durable goods are preferred than the Romanian ones. As regards *the oldest goods in a household*, these are shown in table 3.

Table 3

The oldest durable goods in a household

The oldest durable good in a house-hold	Below 5 years	5 – 10 years	11 -15 years	16 -20 years	21 -25 years	26 -30 years	30 -35 years	Over 35 years	Total (pcs.)	Average years of
Sewing machine		6	3	6	5	4		4	28	20.2
Black and white TV		2	2	1	1			1	7	16.4
Car	2	3	6	5	5	1			22	15.0
Cooker	6	22	12	16	9	2	1	1	69	13.6
Refrigerator	3	20	9	10	4	2	1	1	50	13.2
Vacuum cleaner		4	1				1		6	12.5
Non-automatic washing machine		9	3	3		1			16	11.6
Bicycle	1	4	1	1	1				8	10.6
Color TV	5	17	9	3	1				35	9.4
Land telephone		9		2					11	9.3
Radio cassette player	2	5	1			1			9	9.2
Freezer	1	4	1						6	7.2

As regards the *promotional influences in buying goods*, the highest influences relate to *TV advertisings* (43 %), *advice received from friends and acquaintances* (38 %), in a relatively equal proportion (26 %, 25 %, 24 %) – *the same brand used, warranty provided and promotional leaflets of shops*, promotional leaflets of brands (19 %), the lowest influences (about 8 %) belonging to: street panels, internet advertising, press advertisings, radio advertisings and posters in or on the public means, only 11 % of respondents not being influenced by any of the aforesaid versions.
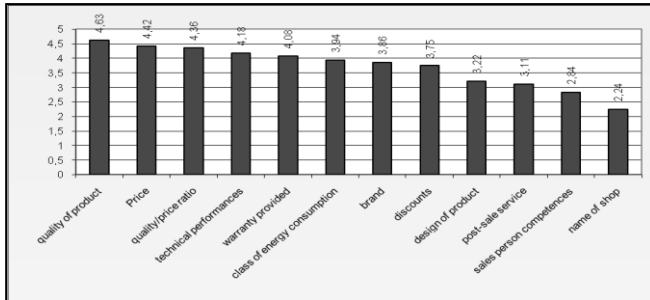

Figure 4. Ranking of aken into consideration when buying durable goods

Ranking of *attributes* taken into account when households in Tîrgu Mureş buy durable goods is shown in figure 4, the most important attribute being the *quality of product*, followed closely by *price, quality/price ratio, technical performances*, *warranty provided*, high score attributes (over 3.0) also obtaining: *class of energy consumption, brand, discounts, design of product, post-sale service*, the most insignificant attribute being quoted as the *name of shop*.

The most important reason for which durable goods are purchased is their „*usefulness*" for 51 % of households, followed by „*the oldest are damaged*" for 34 %, and in a very small proportion, „*increase of household needs*" – 9 % and „*to be in fashion* " for only 6 %.

Within the entire sample of households, 25 % of these are endowed with „*second–hand*" durable goods, most common being *automatic washing machines* (6.2 %), *color TVs* (4.0 %), *refrigerators* (3.3 %), *cars* (2.7 %), *cooker* (1.7 %), *vacuum cleaner* (1.3 %) and *bicycles* (1.0 %), the remainder being encountered at less than 1 % of households.

Almost half of the investigated households, 42 % respectively have loans or credits, their structure on periods of contracting being: 1 % - up to 20 years, 9 % 10 – 20 years, 25 % 5 – 10 years, 29 % 3- 5 years, 26 % 1 - 3 years, 10 % under 10 year**.**

Finally, we structure comparatively the results of our research and those in the foreign literature related to the durable goods market, in the table 4.

Table 4

International comparative research of the durable goods market

Surveyed aspects	Results of this study for Romania (based on primary data)	Results mentioned in foreign literature
Endowment with PC	55.3 % of households in Tîrgu Mureş to which 16% having laptop is added	35 % of households have a PC across the country in 2008 according to INS (Nicolae, 2010)
Internet and mobile subscriptions	48.0 % have internet subscription	- 27.3 % have internet subscription (Nicolae, 2010) - variation of mobile communications market's active subscribers over time (Lickus, 2012)
Buying power of households	„*We succeed buying some more expensive goods, but with restrictions in other domains*", (the average score on Likert scale is 3,26) followed by „*our income is enough for a decent living, but we cannot afford buying some more expensive goods*" (the average score on Likert scale is 3,18)	- economic and budget modeling of households in case of discretionary goods using as variables: value, usefulness and endowment with goods (Corfman et al., 1991) - studying consumption costs compared to goods and services (Gray, 1992)
Credits for buying durable goods	42 % of households have loans or credits, 56% in a short term (less than 3 years)	- modeling of producers' choice between selling installment sales and full sales (Poddar, 2004) - credits provided in the '20s for buying goods (Hira, 1993) - household expenses and saving (Wilcox, 1991)
Origin of brands	Foreign durable goods are preferred better than the Romanian ones for 51.13 % of households	- importance of brand equity over buying of air conditioning devices (Seitz et al., 2010) - impact of country of design and country of manufacture over buying of goods (Hamzaoui & Merunka, 2005)
Promotional influences	The highest influences relate to TV advertising (43 %), advice received from friends and acquaintances (38 %), in a relatively equal proportion (26 %, 25 %, 24 %) – *the same brand used, warranty provided and promotional leaflets of shops*, promotional leaflets of brands (19%), the lowest influences (about 8%) belonging to: street panels, internet advertising, press advertisings, radio advertisings and posters in or on the public means, only 11% of respondents not being influenced by any of the aforesaid versions	- brand loyalty of Afro-American consumers (Podoshen, 2008)
Attributes considered when buying	The most important attribute being the *quality of product*, followed closely by *price, quality/price ratio, technical performances*, *warranty provided, class of energy consumption, brand, discounts, design of product, post-sale service*, the most insignificant attribute being quoted as the *name of shop*.	Perception of extended warranty provided by producers (Albaum & Wiley, 2010)
Reason of buying and replacing the durable good	*The most important reason for which durable goods are purchased* is their „*usefulness*" for 51 % of households, followed by „*the oldest are damaged*" for 34 %, and in a very small proportion, „*increase of household needs*" – 9 % and „*to be in fashion* " for only 6 %.	- product performance is the „key" of motivation for discretionary buying in order to replace a durable good (Liberali et al., 2011) - selection of quality and replacement time of a commodity (Prince, 2009) - rational model in the replacement decision of commodity (Guiltinan, 2010) - decrease of commodity buying cycle (Wagner, 2006)

Surveyed aspects	Results of this study for Romania (based on primary data)	Results mentioned in foreign literature
Endowment with second – hand durables	25 % of Romanian households in urban environment have second-hand durables.	- car market (Clerides & Hadjiyiannis, 2008) - relation between second-hand durables and introduction of new products on the market (Zhao & Jagpal, 2006) - second-hand market modeling and recycling of goods (Yokoo, 2010)
Durables to be purchased in the future		- the first 10 goods to be purchased by Romanian households in the future are: double glazing, car, kitchen machine, laptop, plasma TV, microwave, hood, dish washing machine, iron machine, vacuum cleaner (Gabor et al., 2009) - patterns of future purchases within middle population in the '80s (Kasulis et al., 1979)
Satisfaction degree of own household endowment	11.0 % of households are „very satisfied" and 57.3 % are „satisfied" only 10% are „unsatisfied".	Research has not been carried out
The oldest durables in endowment	After average years of service Sewing machine – 20,2, black and white TV – 16, 4, car – 15,0, cooker 13,6, refrigerator – 13,2, vacuum cleaner – 12,5, non-automatic washing machine – 11,6	Research has not been carried out.
The newest durables in endowment		Mobile phone, plasma TV, washing machine, refrigerator, car, digital camera, microwave, computer, laptop (Gabor et al., 2009)
Criteria used in selecting durables[iv]		- *price* (8,07), followed by *promotions* (6.83) and *product brand* (6.80), *post-sales service* provided having the slightest influence (Gabor et al., 2009)
Information sources[v]		*Friends' recommendations* (6.58), followed closely by *specialty press* (6.53) *and promotional leaflets* (6.41), *recommendations of shop assistants* being the least used source but not a significant difference compared to the other sources (Gabor et al., 2009) (Gabor & Isaic – Maniu, 2011b)
Preference for foreign brands		- preference for foreign brands is *discriminated by next socio-demographic variables: age, last school graduated and net monthly income earned by the household head* (Gabor & Isaic–Maniu, 2011a) - ethnocentricity and consumer behavior for national brand/goods, domestic and foreign purchase behaviour (Kreckova et al., 2012)
Positioning of brand		Positioning of brand concerning durable goods and other variables used in the Romanian consumer's acquisition process (Gabor, 2012)

Conclusions and discussions

The market of durable goods in Romania, and implicitly the endowment of households with such goods, has some features and the purpose of this study is to discover and highlight these features. Although the National Institute of Statistics of Romania publishes annual data on household endowment with durable goods, in this research there are also taken into account other durable goods and variables that highlight important issues, and implicitly particularities of the Romanian market and households.

Economists acknowledge the importance of the fact that demand of durable goods is very important as many aspects of this market in certain countries (such as the case of Romania, approached in this research) are not known or surveyed.

One of these particularities would be that there was a period in which the Romanian households purchased "second hand" durable goods and then followed the purchasing of durable goods based on an ID document only. These two aspects are caught in our research because we believe that both "events" have a national character. All the more in the cities of Transylvania it has become significant because of geographical proximity of Western Europe and more intense connection with Hungary on one hand and, on the other hand because - and we refer here to the second "trend" – of the higher purchasing power of Transylvania compared with the rest of the country.

The household endowment with durable goods in Romania is characterized by features that clearly differentiate it from other European Union countries, which are given on one hand by the peculiarities of the structure of households and on the other hand by the "trends" such as: household endowment with "second – hand" durable goods, "ID only credit", the lack of durable goods of basic necessity, household equipment with high-tech durables as a fashion, household equipment with "old" durables (white - black TV, non-automatic washing machine, etc.), the "innovative" character of some buyers which is not always supported by their purchasing power. They are supported by the "duality" of durable goods equipment need - basic needs and needs placed on top of Maslow's pyramid - incorporating the "latent needs", "latent variables", subjectivism, desires, in other words variables which are used by marketing, the "players" on the market are interested of and which can be measured, in the marketing research.

The results of the research have emphasized a low degree of the wealth indicator for households in human environment in Tîrgu Mureș, *endowment with durables* respectively, characterized by: quite a few households have very old durables (for instance black & white TV, car, washing machines etc.) and a buying behavior typical to the post-communist period characterized by preference for foreign brands and rejection of Romanian ones, high price sensitivity (sustained by a low buying power), the most

important attribute is the quality/price ratio, the reason of buying being mainly provided by the usability of a product and replacement of faulty products. One of the explanations concerning these products is the high weight (40 %) of households wherein the household head is pensioner in the sample structure.

These results also invalidate the national perception that Romania's historical area wherein Tîrgu Mureş is located, Transylvania respectively, is a developed one, the results of this research go against it and practically confirm the "last" positions occupied by Romania within EU Member Countries regarding the indicators of wealth and quality of life.

The firms operating on the Romanian market can use the results of this based on sampling because representativeness of the households sample at national-urban level is ensured, the results can be inferred in general population, at national-urban level, respectively. These firms should also adopt market strategies adapted to

particularities of the Romanian durable goods market and especially the structure particularities of Romanian households, with lots of differences compared to the average of European Union.

The study presents importance primarily for the "market players", respectively the marketers and foreign manufacturers of those goods who can adapt their strategies to the specificity of the Romanian market adapting the offer and their communication policy to which the Romanian consumer (household) is sensitive to, respectively *prices, promotions and brands* (variables that characterized the phenomena like" Black Friday"). Romanian producers, with a share of only 31 % among the consumers' preferences, can adapt their market strategies by providing prices adjusted to the purchasing power of households and having more intense promotional periods. Also, they can follow the *conceptual model of transformation of a national brand into an international one* (Kuvykaite & Mascinskiene, 2010).

Acknowledgments

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Šelpimas ilgalaikio naudojimo reikmenimis kaip gerovės rodiklis. Rumunijos vartotojų postkomunistinio elgesio empirinis tyrimas

Santrumpa

Namų ūkio „šelpimas ilgalaikio naudojimo reikmenimis" yra statistinis rodiklis, užregistruotas visos šalies ir regionų mastu *Nacionaliniame statistikos institute,* atliekant šeimos biudžeto stebėjimą ir kurio pradinis tikslas yra nustatyti namų ūkius ir nepasiturinčius žmones, taip siekiant pagrįsti ir apsaugoti atitinkamas socialinės apsaugos programas. Taip pat tai yra Rumunijos gyvenimo standartų ir gyventojų gyvenimo sąlygų „barometras". Tiriant rinką, jis yra labai svarbus, nes, kartu su pagrindiniais duomenimis paremtais stebėjimais, kuriuos išplėtojo rinkodaroje besispecializuojančios tyrimų įmonės ar gamintojų, importuotojų, platintojų ir t. t. rinkodaros skyriai, jis gali pateikti konkrečią ir išsamią informaciją apie pirkimo laiką, vietą, informacijos šaltinius, įvairius dalykus, į kuriuos reikia atsižvelgti prieš priimant sprendimą pirkti, ir t t. Tai lemia tikslius ir svarbius valdymo sprendimus. Šie sprendimai gali būti susiję su „tipiniais" organizacijos rinkodaros valdymo klausimais: kokia žiniasklaidos priemonė būtų naudojama reklamai, kur bus reklaminiai šaltiniai, kada būtų organizuojami reklaminiai laikotarpiai, *ką, kada, kaip, kas, kam perka.* Visa ši informacija, reguliariai skelbiama leidiniuose kartu su informacija, gauta iš rinkos tyrimo, gali sudaryti efektyvių rinkodaros strategijų modelį, kuris rinkoje gali suteikti kompanijoms konkurencinį pranašumą.

Namų ūkio „šelpimą ilgalaikio naudojimo reikmenimis" Rumunijoje apibūdina ypatybės, kurios aiškiai atskiria ją nuo kitų Europos Sąjungos šalių, ir kurios, iš vienos pusės, suteikia namų ūkių struktūrai išskirtines ypatybes ir, iš kitos pusės, sudaro tokias „tendencijas" kaip: namų ūkio šelpimas panaudotais ilgalaikio naudojimo reikmenimis, „kreditas tik pagal ID", pagrindinio būtinumo ilgalaikio naudojimo reikmenų trūkumas, namų ūkio aprūpinimas madingais modernios technologijos ilgalaikio naudojimo reikmenimis, namų ūkio aprūpinimas „senais" ilgalaikio naudojimo reikmenimis (nespalvotas televizorius, neautomatinė skalbimo mašina, ir t. t.), taip pat kai kurių pirkėjų „naujoviškas " požiūris, kurį ne visada atitinka jų perkamoji galia. Juos palaiko ilgalaikio naudojimo prekių „dvejopumas", įrangos poreikis. Tai pagrindiniai poreikiai esantys *Maslow* piramidės viršūnėje, įskaitant „paslėptus poreikius", „paslėptus kintamuosius", subjektyvizmą, troškimus, kitaip tariant kintamuosius, kuriuos naudoja rinkodara, kuriais domisi rinkos „žaidėjai" ir kurie gali būti įvertinti rinkodaros tyrime.

Tobulos visuomenės šalininkas John Kenneth Galbraih mini, kad (1996), vartotojo savarankiškumas yra viena iš labiausiai paplitusių ir pasidalinamų tradicinės ekonomikos idėjų, kuri išsiskiria tiesiogine nuoroda į „šelpimą ilgalaikio naudojimo reikmenimis". Skurdas ir nelankstumas, kuriuo komunistinės šalys savo gyventojams tiekė tokias prekes, buvo lyginami su reklama. Šių prekių įvairovė ir gausa kapitalistinėse šalyse padarė didesnę įtaką komunistinių sistemų žlugimui nei manoma.

 Becker (1994) pradeda nuo tradicinės vartotojų pasirinkimo teorijos, remdamasis tuo, kad vartojantis vienetas – namų ūkis – bando maksimizuoti U naudą, kurią gauna tiesiogiai iš paslaugų, susijusių su prekėmis x_i, įsigytomis rinkoje, esant suvaržyto prekių pirkimo įtakai. Poreikio kitimus, kurie neturi jokio ryšio su realių pajamų pokyčiais ir santykinėmis kainomis, paaiškina skonio pokyčiai. Šie trys veiksniai – *pajamos, kainos ir skonis* – visiškai paaiškina vartojimo elgesį. Amerikiečių profesorius mano, kad tradicinės vartotojų pasirinkimo teorijos silpnoji vieta yra dydis, kuriuo pagrįstas skonių kitimas, norint paaiškinti elgesį, kai jo negalima paaiškinti nei tuo, kaip skonis yra sudarytas, nei galima nuspėti jo daromą įtaką. Kaip tvirtino Gary Becker, taip pat svarbūs yra ekonomistų ignoruoti nepiniginiai veiksniai, kurie turi reikšmę priimant sprendimus pirkti prekę.

Šio *tyrimo tikslas* pagrįstas statistine atranka ir yra detalizuotas namų ūkių „šelpimo ilgalaikio naudojimo priemonėmis" miesto mastu ir šių prekių, susijusių su rinkos apibūdinimu bei rezultatų palyginimu su pasauliniais duomenimis mastu. Rumunijoje „šelpimas ilgalaikio naudojimo priemonėmis" yra aprašytas publikacijoje, pavadintoje *Gyvenimo standartų koordinatės* (plg. angl. *Coordinates of living standards)* ir iki 2006 *Namų ūkių šelpimas ilgalaikio naudojimo priemonėmis,* (plg. angl. *Endowment of households with durables*), kuriuose yra pateiktos 25 prekių ataskaitos. Mūsų tyrime nagrinėjamos 36 ilgalaikio naudojimo priemonės. „Šelpimas ilgalaikio naudojimo priemonėmis" yra ir gyvenimo standarto, ir gyvenimo kokybės Rumunijoje rodiklis, o rinkodara ir numanomas rinkodaros tyrimas tik padeda nustatyti vartotojų dabartinius ir būsimus poreikius, suklasifikuodamas juos pagal *Maslow* piramidę ir pritaikydamas Rumunijos vartotojams su visomis jų savybėmis**.**

Norėdami ištirti tokių socio-demografinių kintamųjų įtaką Rumunijos namų ūkių „šelpimui ilgalaikio naudojimo prekėmis", naudotas rinkodaros tyrimas, pagrįstas stebėjimu (sluoksniuota atranka ir dalies atranka), ir panaudojant tipišką pavyzdį, kurį sudarė 300 namų ūkių. Į tyrimą įtraukti ir nacionalinio lygio miesto namų ūkiai, atsižvelgiant į įdarbinimo statusą ir namų ūkio „galvos" išsilavinimo lygį. Naudojantis anketa, surinkti duomenys buvo apibendrinti ir apdoroti panaudojant *SPSS* programinę įrangą ir *Excel*, panaudojant neribotus ir santykinius dažnius, paprastas reikšmes, apskaičiuotas vidutines reikšmes, svorinius vidurkius duomenims apdoroti su tam tikromis rinkodaros skalėmis: *Likert skale, Stapel skale, pastovios sumos skale, rūšiavimo skale ir t.t.*

Ekonomistai pripažįsta faktą, kad ilgalaikio naudojimo prekių poreikis yra labai svarbus daugeliui šios rinkos tyrėjų ir nėra žinomas arba stebėtas tam tikrose šalyse (Rumunija). Rumunijos rinkoje veikiančios įmonės gali pasinaudoti šio, atranka pagrįsto, tyrimo rezultatais. Šios įmonės taip pat turėtų priimti rinkos strategijas, pritaikytas Rumunijos ilgalaikio naudojimo prekių rinkai, kurios ypač būdingos Rumunijos namų ūkiui ir turi daugybę skirtumų, lyginant su Europos Sąjungos šalių vidurkiu.

Šis tyrimas pirmiausia svarbus „rinkos žaidėjams", t. y. tų prekių pardavėjams ir užsienio gamintojams, kurie gali pritaikyti savo strategijas Rumunijos rinkai. Jie turi atkreipti dėmesį į tai, kad Rumunijos vartotojui labai svarbi *kaina, skatinimas* įsigyti prekę, *prekių ženklai* (kintamieji, kurie apibūdina tokį reiškinį kaip „Juodasis penktadienis"). Rumunijos gamintojai (tokie kaip *Arctic* prekės ženklo), turėdami tik 31 % vartotojų, pirmiausia turi peržiūrėti savo rinkos strategijas ir pritaikyti jas, atsižvelgdami į kainas, kurios atitiktų namų ūkių perkamąją galią. Tam jiems reiktų aktyviau pasinaudoti įvairiomis reklaminėmis priemonėmis.

Remiantis GfK rekomendacijomis, Rumunijos vartotojų vertybių sistemos supratimas sudaro pagrindą prekės ženklo sėkmei šioje rinkoje, nes ji turi didelį potencialą susidomėti ilgalaikio naudojimo priemonėmis, vartotojų vertybėmis, t. y. pagrindiniais veiksniais naujovėms ir bendravimui.

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[i] Duration of marriage has been replaced with the social status of the household head.

[ii] The difference is not justified if we consider the sampling data that relate to durables in households in a number higher than one, thus for 29.3 % of households in Tîrgu Mureş there are two color TVs, that cover the difference compared to the national level, being exceeded even by 10.4 %

[iii] Idem for mobile phone , where the difference is also positive, 0.8 % respectively

[iv] Nested on a scale from 1 to 10, 10 – the most important criterion.

[v] Idem