

# DETERMINING CONSUMERS' PROPENSITY TO BUY ROMANIAN PRODUCTS

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## *Abstract:*

*In this paper we investigated the sources of "Buy Romanian" attitude. We formulated three constructs namely Buy Romanian, nationalism and internationalism and we measured them by developing three scales. The scales were included in a questionnaire that was administered to 110 respondents. Performing statistical analysis, the results showed us that Buy Romanian is influenced by the general opinion toward the Romanian products and by nationalism orientation. There is no correlation among Buy Romanian and internationalism. These findings are useful because in order to stimulate buying behavior of Romanian products by Romanian consumers, it is necessary to spot the deepest motivations.*

*Keywords: consumer behaviour, buying motivations, nationalism, internationalism*

## **1. Preliminary discussion**

From an economic point of view, we need economic nationalism to stimulate the internal market and to create strong Romanian companies. Romanian companies can become influent if they have a strong local market at their base. It is important that local consumers accept, like and purchase local products.

But after years of communism and all kinds of privacy, Romanian consumers are willingly to experience new products and services, as a way to enhance their satisfaction. Compared with the Romanian products, foreign products have a more favorable image, better quality and a better design. It is only recently that Romanian products were able to compete with foreign products especially those from western countries. A life-style like in the Western Europe or North America, comprising the consumption of about the same products is the target of every

Romanian. Romanians are strongly internationally oriented.

We need to appreciate Romanian products as brands. The principles of branding apply in equal measure to companies, products and countries (Popescu, 2011: 145).

Soon thou, Romanian consumers learned that the preference of Western products can lead to degradation of their purchasing power: the exchange rate worsened, the factories lacked new orders so they had to close, leaving many unemployed. A nationalist feeling arouse within Romanians.

Today, purchasing decisions has developed from a simple cause and effect relationship to a complex process that is as much a function of the complex environment and individual and group behavior as it is a function of design (Kulcsár 2010: 317), (Bocean 2006: 111).

When we refer to Romanian products we referred to manufactured

products and this was clearly specified to our survey respondents. We excluded the agricultural products or the products with a low manufacturing degree.

## 2. Method

For this study we used a sample of 110 of graduate and undergraduate students from the University of Craiova. All questionnaires were administered and the students completed the questionnaire. After it was finished, the questionnaire was checked for possible omissions, than the students were thanked for their time. In the design of the questionnaire we mainly used 5 point Likert (Meghisan & Nistorescu,

2008: 58) scale and other closed-end questions.

Concerning the reaction of the Romanian buyers to an eventual buy Romanian call, we addressed a six item measurement scale, at which the respondents were invited to respond using a 5 point Likert scale. The main question asked was: "What would you do if the Government will ask you to buy Romanian products when the country is in crisis?". The supplement "when the country is in crisis" was added in order to find a justification for a possible governmental actions, taking into account that it is not desirable for any institution to ask you to buy certain products, based on their origin.

The results are detailed in the table 1.

**Table 1**

### Buy Romanian scale statistics

	Mean	Std. deviation	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I would buy Romanian products if the Government would ask me that	2.99	1.177	.440	.358	.877
I would limit my import consumption if this is to lead to the economic stabilization of Romania	3.69	.936	.782	.707	.815
I would buy Romanian products so that Romania will step out of the economic crisis	3.78	1.026	.776	.728	.813
I would buy Romanian products so that Romanian people will keep their jobs	3.71	1.087	.780	.697	.810
I would buy Romanian products in order to keep the wealth in the country	3.22	1.128	.649	.600	.836
I would buy Romanian products to show that I am a good Romanian	3.02	.986	.529	.378	.856
Item means	3.40				

*Cronbach's Alpha = 0.859*

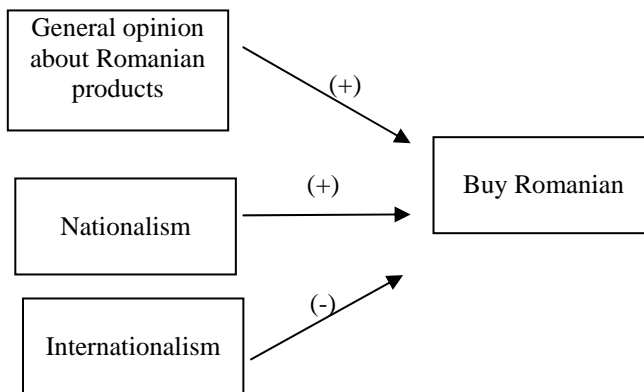
The results are grouped within less than one point. The lowest score is for the desire to please the government (2.99). The credibility of the government is quite low, after years of unfulfilled promises. The scores are higher to those items where by their actions Romanians will generate some benefices for the country and its people. If the way out of the crisis is by purchasing Romanian products, Romanian will act in this way (3.78). In the same scores are the affirmations

(3.71) and economic stabilization of Romanian economy (3.69).

Therefore we can say that people are motivated buy the desire to help. This is a contrasting conclusion taking into account that Romanians do not tend to be quite helpful. At declarative level anything is possible, including the desire to help. However buying Romanian products is not associated with being a good Romanian (3.02).

**3. Sources of “Buy Romanian” attitude**

The model we propose here can be is described in figure1:

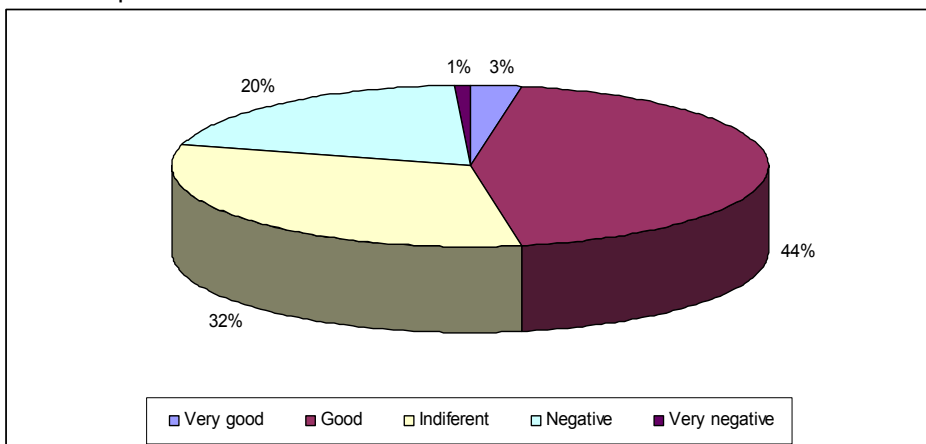


**Figure 1. Conceptualized model**

**3.1 General opinion about Romanian products**

“products” the results are detailed in the figure 2:

At the question “What is your general opinion about Romanian



**Figure 2. Percentage frequencies for general opinion about Romanian products**

The correlation between the general opinion regarding the Romanian goods and the buying behavior is detailed in the table below. We notice that there is support for the positive

correlation between the general opinion and the eventual Buy Romanian response. The intensity of the correlation is however rather weak ( $R^2=0.281$ ).

Table 2

**General opinions' influence on Buy Romanian statistics**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.212	.289		7.649	.000
General opinion	.363	.085	.378	4.249	.000

*Dependent variable: Buy Romanian*

We notice that 44% percent of the respondents say that their general opinion is good, 3% is very good, 32% have a neutral opinion, 20% have a negative opinion about the Romanian products and 1% have a very negative opinion. We notice that the percentage of the people that have a positive

opinion is higher than the percentage of people with a negative perception. If we sum we can say that the percentage of those who have a good and very good opinion is 47% and the percentage of those who have a negative and very negative opinion is 21%.

Table 3

**General opinions' influence on Buy Romanian scores**

General opinion about Romanian products	Buy Romanian score
Good and very good opinion	3.67
Negative and very negative opinion	2.83
Indifferent	3.38

There is a obvious difference between the "Buy Romanian scores" of those who have a good and very good opinion of the Romanian products (3.67) and those who have a negative and very negative appreciation of Romanian products (2.83). That is in order to ask people to buy Romanian products or before expecting people to buy Romanian products, there must be a shift in the attitude toward Romanian products. A sudden change in the consumption behavior can stand only if at its base there is strong attitudinal commitment. Otherwise people would feel frustrated and may consider the Buy Romanian call as a manipulation strategy.

### 3.2 Nationalism vs. internationalism orientation

Deepening our analysis we want to investigate if the nationalist or internationalist attitude influences the "Buy Romanian" decision.

Nationalism comprises a multilevel thought pattern including national linking, national feeling, national pride, national superiority, national preference (Dekker, H. et al, 2003). National emotions, national beliefs, attitudes toward foreign products and people can be explained in the process of social interaction.

The nationalist people are more competitive, more aggressive and more

prejudiced toward other countries (Druckman, 1994). In these conditions it is likely to suppose that the nationalists are more inclined to buy domestic products all the time (Balabanis, G et al. 2001).

Economic Nationalism derives from concerns for economic security and economic power. It is defined as the apprehension for economic security and economic power involving high concentrations of ownership of firms in

order to be more affluent and economically advanced. The causes of economic nationalism are fear to loose jobs and purchasing power in favor of foreign companies. In this paper we approach the nationalism construct and not economic nationalism.

For the nationalism construct we developed a 5 item scale inspired by Dekker et al, 2003. The results are presented in table 4.

**Table 4****Nationalism scale statistics**

	Mean	Std. deviation	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I am proud to be Romanian	3.70	.991	.736	.628	.797
I love my country	3.78	.871	.804	.719	.785
I am emotionally attached to country	3.65	.934	.698	.563	.808
I am willingly to fight for my country unconditioned	2.94	1.111	.613	.384	.832
The Romanians are dignified, fair, hard working and intelligent people	2.74	1.089	.497	.257	.863
Item means	3.36				

Cronbach's Alpha = 0.849

The items of the scale tested with SPSS we of good condition, the initial Alpha was 0.849 so no item should be deleted. The scale showed strong internal consistency, so nationalism is a good construct.

The average for nationalism was 3.36. Romanians do not display strong

nationalism convictions, but rather moderate. Trying to explain the correlation between nationalism and an eventual "Buy Romanian" response we performed a linear correlation. The results are detailed in the table 5.

**Table 5****Nationalism influence on Buy Romanian statistics**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.171	.318		6.828	.000
Nationalism	.363	.092	.357	3.977	.000

*Dependent variable: Buy Romanian*

There is a weak correlations between the two variable analyzed

( $R^2=0.357$ ). From the coefficient of the regression functions we can see a

positive correlation between nationalist conviction and a positive “Buy Romanian” response. Thus the hypothesis that nationalism positively influences “Buy Romanian” holds true.

**Internationalism** is the empathy for other people and cultures. Internationalism is an open mind approach to various problems, cultural savvy and understanding for foreign business. It is expected that internationalism to increase in the context of globalization. However consumers and societies regard globalization according to their interests and convictions.

People displaying internationalist convictions are expected to easily accept products and services from other countries. Internationalism convictions of consumers do not mean that the

consumers do not necessarily reject national products, but in terms of better quality and prices they prefer foreign products.

The impact of internationalism on consumers buying behavior was studied by many authors: Balabanis, G et al. 2001, Smith 1995, Shimp & Sharma 1987, Herche 1992.

For the internationalism construct we developed our own scale. The scale showed internal consistency (alpha 0.732) but the corrected item-total correlation was under 0.4 for “The place of Romania is in the European Union” and “My wardrobe has items that can be found in other cultures”. Also the value of Cronbach’s Alpha would increase by removing these two items. As a consequence these two items were eliminated for the final scale.

**Table 6**

**Internationalism scale statistics**

	Mean	Std. deviation	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
The place of Romania is in the European Union	3.74	.83	.331	.138	.734
I consider that the people who belong to other cultures are interesting	4.12	.69	.634	.488	.653
I like to have contacts with persons from other cultures	4.30	.70	.611	.536	.658
There are many good things we can adopt from foreign cultures	4.36	.63	.565	.476	.676
I like to discover new lifestyles	4.03	.81	.531	.316	.675
My wardrobe has items that can be found in other cultures	3.54	1.05	.294	.131	.768
Item means	4.02				

*Cronbach's Alpha = 0.732*

The new scale is detailed in the table 7.

**Table 7****Reworked Internationalism scale statistics**

	Mean	Std. deviation	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I consider that the people who belong to other cultures are interesting	4.12	.69215	.625	.442	.752
I like to have contacts with persons from other cultures	4.30	.70053	.704	.536	.713
There are many good things we can adopt from foreign cultures	4.36	.63140	.676	.472	.733
I like to discover new lifestyles	4.03	.81192	.506	.267	.821
Item means	4.20				

*Cronbach's Alpha = 0.804*

The new scale has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.804. The score for internationalism (4.20) is higher than the score for nationalism. Romanians are interested in other cultures' traditions and items. The high score can also be explained by the fact that Romanians

regard the international environment with hope to enhance their living standard, in the absence of favorable internal opportunities. Next we performed the traditional linear regression. The results are detailed in the table 8.

**Table 8****Internationalism influence on Buy Romanian statistics**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.744	.583		4.703	.000
Internationalism	.156	.137	.109	1.137	.258

*Dependent variable: Buy Romanian*

As can be noticed internationalism cannot be used to explain the buying behavior since the significance level is higher than 0.05. It is not a relationship between the two variable since Person  $R^2=0.012$ . In this case our initial formulation does not hold true. The international orientation of Romanian does not diminish their appetite to buy Romanian products. In the context of continuing globalization and further integration, preserving a national pride is positive aspect.

**4. Conclusions**

In this paper we tried to figure out the possible behavior of Romanian consumers in case of Buy Romanian call. Such calls have not been formally made in the latest years but, with the economic crisis, there is a feeling of solidarity that begins to spring. A manifestation form of this solidarity is, among other things, to purchase Romanian products. The motivation for this is diverse in shape and intensity. We defined the construct "Buy Romanian" buy using a six item scale.

Then we tried to look for explanation of the "Buy Romanian" determinants. We found out that the "Buy Romanian" is positively correlated with the general attitudes of the Romanian public toward the Romanian products and with the nationalist sentiment. After years of import prohibition we can say that the Romanians are not necessarily dissatisfied with the quality of Romanian products, but they wanted to try something else. A person that poses or experience foreign products and services is better perceived by society. This is way many Romanians wanted to buy foreign products, not for their intrinsic qualities. As the forbidden fruit has been bitten the origin of the product is of less importance; what counts are the utility and image of the product. This is way we see a revitalization of the perception of Romanian products.

Formulating the construct of nationalism we identified a positive correlation with the "Buy Romanian". In this respect, those who are more nationalist are more inclined to buy Romanian products. This is a plausible

and logic explanation. We expected that those who manifest internationalist convictions to be less inclined to purchase Romanian products. But we did not found any correlation among the two constructs. The orientation to internationalism does not diminish the propensity to buy Romanian products, and this is a positive findings taking into account that Romanians scored high for internationalism than for nationalism.

Further research is needed to spot the motivations of Romanian people to buy Romanian products. Other determinants of Buy Romanian can be identified such as the perception of the Romanian brands or the perception of the comparative made in Romania vs. others made in. Regarding the methodological aspects of the paper the main limit of the paper is the use of student sample. While this is a well accepted research tool in consumer behavior, the findings of this paper can be tested by using an extended questionnaire or by using an experiment.

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