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Examination of the consumers' ethnocentrism and products' origin in the case of Hungarian foodstuffs

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Abstract

'Consumer ethnocentrism' is defined as consumers' beliefs about the appropriateness or morality of purchasing domestic and foreign-made products. As a consequence of the influx of foodstuffs of dubious origin into Hungary and the increasing number of food scandals, demand for Hungarian foodstuffs of reliable origin has increased. Consumers, however, do not necessarily acquire information from the most reliable sources in the course of purchasing and most of them are not fully aware of what the trademarks featured on the various products mean. Our questionnaire survey sought answers to the questions of how respondents regard Hungarian products and what segments can be distinguished from the aspect of their attitudes concerning Hungarian products. We distinguished four consumer groups – with the aid of cluster analysis – in terms of the factors affecting their choices between Hungarian and imported products when buying foodstuffs, and in terms of their overall attitudes to Hungarian products which appears also in the knowledge of origin labelling.

Keywords

consumer ethnocentrism, Hungarian food products, trademarks, questionnaire survey, cluster analysis

1. Introduction

The negative impacts and effects of globalisation have triggered a great variety of processes and efforts to counter its progress all over the world. One of these is referred to as *localisation*, a process of increasing appreciation of all types of locality (regions, sub-regions, micro-regions etc.). The value of the individual's immediate environment, local characteristics and traditions increases as a result of the process of localisation (Petrás, 2005).

People's need for expressing national identity as well as their increased sensitivity to risks strengthen consumers' ethnocentric feelings. Sumner (1906) defined ethnocentrism as "people's inclination to regard their own groups to be the 'centre of the universe', judging other groups from their own perspectives" (Balabanis et. al., 2004).

Malota (2003) distinguished three dimensions of the ethnocentric feelings in a broader sense:

- Positive ethnocentrism (patriotic feelings): it has positive impact on evaluation of national products and it has no influence, or it has positive impact, on the evaluation of foreign products.
- Negative ethnocentrism (nationalism): it has a positive impact on judgements of national products and a negative impact on foreign products.
- Cosmopolitism: a third dimension of nationalism in its broader sense, comprising positive attitudes relating to other nations. It has no considerable influence on the evaluation of national and foreign products.

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Malota's surveys among Budapest residents showed that Hungarians are characterised predominantly by patriotic sentiments, along with some measure of territorial nationalism and feelings of being superior. Those proclaiming territorial nationalism assert that all Hungarians should be living in Hungary, while superiority relies on the belief that Hungarians are the best and greatest and Hungary is the best country in the world. Few respondents were found to be characterised by cosmopolitism (Malota, 2004).

The concept of consumer ethnocentrism was defined by researchers scrutinising issues of country-origin image, as follows: consumers' beliefs about the appropriateness or morality of purchasing foreign-made products (Shimp and Sharma, 1987; in Javalgi et al., 2005) Ethnocentrism may have a strong impact on products' country-origin image, if there is a scarcity of other available information (Chasin et al., 1993).

Lehota (2001) argued that ethnocentrism is a form of 'cultural closedness': it is the consumer's belief that purchasing imported goods is not right because it results in losses for the national economy.

Horváth et al. (2006) outlined the value-based product and service development techniques determining the nutrition habits of today's consumers. Foodstuffs that can be associated with places of origin embody a variety of values so they appear in a variety of trends. The trend called 'Slow Food' involves national specialities adopted in all regions of the world. The values of health and ethics appear in the 'D.O.C. food' trend, the main element of which is an interest in foodstuffs qualifying as rarities, those that are indigenous or are gradually disappearing in the given area. This shows a growing interest in authentic foodstuffs of controlled origin (e.g. regional specialities) and a growing rejection of foodstuffs of dubious origin. Ethical values appear in what is referred to as 'ethical food'. One typical example is products bearing the 'Fair Trade' logo identifying products originating from disadvantaged countries. Skuras and Dimara (2004) argue that the increased demand for healthy foodstuffs from traceable and authentic sources is the main motivating factor leading consumers to giving preference to national or regional and traditional foodstuffs.

Marking (labelling) foodstuffs is an element of food safety The advantages and positive features of products can be communicated to consumers with the aid of any of the elements of the marketing-mix. However, a trademark system meeting the following criteria provides more authentic information;

- it is based on clearly defined requirements;
- an independent supervisory body ensures that the requirements are met;
- the supervisory body is owned by the state or it is controlled by an authority;
- the fact that control mechanisms are applied is proven by a clearly identifiable label, trademark or logo.

Although many consumers lack background information required for understanding some of the details, the markings featured on labels attached to foodstuffs are important for Hungarian consumers, in particular for more highly educated and middle-aged ones. One generally observed trend is that the place of origin and trademarks and other markings proving this have grown in importance (Bánáti-Popp, 2006). Pallóné (2007) also asserted that the reason for the introduction of an increasing number of trademark systems – including geographical indications and markings of origin – is because food safety is gradually becoming a factor in competition. There are a lot of trademarks in Hungary too, in proof of domestic quality. Many consumers, however, do not know what the various logos mean and what criteria products are expected to meet if they are to be entitled to bear the trademark concerned and which marking provides reliable information concerning their origin.

Another important question to be clarified is what consumers consider to be Hungarian products, i.e. what criteria need to be met by a product to qualify as a 'Hungarian product'. Totth (2009) asserted that marketing strategy building may be complicated by the differences between the attitudes of different consumer groups within the Hungarian society towards Hungarian products, which may depend on ethnocentrism as well as on the heterogeneous image of products. Other questions are raised by the fact that while a large proportion of consumers declare that they prefer Hungarian products, they do not select Hungarian products in their actions and in actual purchasing situations. One reason for this may be Hungarians' price sensitivity.

Szabó (2006) compared the country-of-origin image of Hungarian and imported foodstuffs from the older EU countries. Three clusters were distinguished in the course of the analysis. The committed consumers to the Hungarian food products were 15.6% of the sample. According to the 52.6% of the respondents, in some attributes the domestic foods, and in others the imported foodstuffs, were better. 31.8% of the sample slightly preferred the imported products. Apart from the producer's availability the more preferred flavour is the most important benefit of the Hungarian products for all clusters.

In a series of opinion polls carried out by Ipsos Zrt. in 2009, some 52% of Hungarian consumers preferred Hungarian products when they have a choice. Particular emphasis is laid on meat and processed meat products, milk and other dairy products and fruits and vegetables. A total of 40% of the respondents said their decision on whether to prefer the Hungarian or the imported product depends on the type of product itself. Only 8% of consumers said that they do not prefer Hungarian products. As a consequence of the economic crisis some 20% of the respondents said that they purchased Hungarian products more often, 69% of them preferred Hungarian products to the same extent while 11% of them have purchased Hungarian products less frequently since the outbreak of the crisis (Ipsos Zrt., 2009).

According to a Gfk's Shopping Monitor 2008-2009 Hungarian consumers continue to regard quality as the most important criterion when shopping for foodstuffs despite the economic crisis, while price has been steadily in second place since 2003. In comparison to the findings of a 2006 survey, expectations concerning the presence of Hungarian products in the shops have grown somewhat stronger, which may be an indication of a desire to support the Hungarian economy (Gfk, 2009A). According to a survey conducted by Ipsos Zrt. however, price is the most important factor for consumers when shopping for foodstuffs, followed by quality, promotional campaigns and the favoured taste. The origin of the product is the fifth highest priority (Ipsos Zrt., 2009).

An oral survey by Lakner et al. (2000) was conducted with 182 persons in 1998. The respondents had to evaluate the importance of 13 food buying criteria on a 1-5 scale. Connected with the origin and quality indicators, the following criteria were mentioned: producer country, producer region, trademark, quality logo. From among the criteria the trademark and the quality logo are moderately important, the average score of the producer country was 3.2 and the role of the producer region was even lower (2.36).

Szakály (2009) argued that Hungarians are characterised by patriotic attitudes and sentiments but from the aspect of consumer ethnocentrism contradictions are observed between attitude and actual consumer behaviour. He assumes that a Hungarian consumer favours collective values by preferring domestic products as long as it does not cost him an extra Forint. This is why a much smaller proportion of Hungarian consumers will choose domestic products when actually purchasing products, than when they are asked about their preference for Hungarian products. Their research has shown that if the domestic food product costs just as much as its imported equivalent, as many as

76.8% of the respondents would choose the Hungarian product, while if the Hungarian product costs more than the imported item only 25.3% of them would do the same. If the higher-priced Hungarian food product carries a Hungarian trademark the percentage of those who would prefer the Hungarian product would only be higher by some 6%. These findings show that although the majority of Hungarian consumers have patriotic attitudes, their shopping decisions are determined primarily by the prices of products.

Some two thirds of Ipsos Zrt's respondents noted that it is difficult to distinguish Hungarian products from imported ones. The packaging indicates the place of origin and about 85% of the respondents considered that this was an adequate source of information. Brand names and product names contribute 31% and 21% to identification, respectively. A survey conducted by Ipsos Zrt revealed that 77% of the respondents consider items made from or of Hungarian ingredients to be Hungarian products, while 58% of them said that products to which the relevant trademarks are attached qualify as domestic. Other criteria included whether the given product is manufactured by a company in Hungarian ownership (47%) and whether it qualifies as a traditional product (39%) (Ipsos Zrt., 2009).

The publication in 2009 of the Code of Ethics on the Food Production Chain (Élelmiszer Termékpálya kódex) eventually resulted in an agreement on what criteria should be met by a product for it to be considered Hungarian. The definitions include the following: products – such as fruits and vegetables – delivered from the producer right to the shop must qualify as Hungarian. Moreover, the raw materials of so-called homogeneous products (made from a single component), such as cheese products, must also originate from Hungary. Products made from multiple components must be made in Hungary and the components must include some produced in Hungary (Code of Ethics on the Food Production Chain, 2009). Accordingly, the Code of Ethics on the Food Production Chain highlights Hungarian raw materials and Hungary as a place of production or manufacture as criteria to be met for a product to qualify as Hungarian. On the other hand, logos indicating the product's being of a 'Hungarian' nature lay more emphasis on high quality, Hungarian production or distribution, rather than on Hungarian raw materials, while the indications of origin used in the EU are still less widely known in Hungary. The first three digits of the product identifying bar code (599) is the manufacturer's identifier referring to Hungary's product identification office, which may be assigned to imported foodstuffs as well (Légrády, 2009).

2. Research objectives and methodology

The main goal of the research was to identify the characteristics of the most common trends in food consumption among Hungarian consumers, i.e. whether any relevant shift among the key components of consumer behaviour can be identified in domestic demand as well. In order to accomplish the key objective of our research we aimed to find answers and solutions to the following questions in the course of the survey discussed in this paper:

- What views are held concerning Hungarian food products by consumers, according to the opinions of people doing their shopping in a Hungarian-owned and those buying foodstuffs in a foreign-owned store chain
- What considerations can be identified as having an impact on consumers' choice when purchasing Hungarian food products and what consumer groups can be distinguished on the basis of such differences
- What correlations can be identified between ethnocentric attitudes and preference of Hungarian foodstuffs among customers of a domestic and a foreign-owned store chain

- What factors respondents regard to be criteria characteristic of Hungarian product attributes
- What sources of information customers rely on in order to identify domestic products
- We assume that consumers with more ethnocentric and patriotic attitudes will have more positive views of Hungarian foodstuffs and that the patriotic attitude will affect their actual search for information when shopping for foodstuffs, which will lead to better knowledge of the sources of information revealing products' places of origin

The survey took place in the Cora hypermarket near the town of Fót and in the CBA Príma supermarket in the town of Szada in the summer of 2008 and in the spring of 2009. Both stores are located near to Budapest. Cora Hypermarket is located beyond the town and the CBA supermarket located on the edge of the town. Forty of the total of 2,400 units of the CBA chain – including the one in Szada – belong to the top category of shops, with an adequately wide choice of products and sophisticated interiors. Both chains of stores lay particular emphasis, in both their marketing strategies and in terms of the composition of their product ranges, on ensuring that their offer is dominated by domestic products. CBA even features its being 'The Hungarian chain of stores' as one of the most important elements of its communication.

The two chains of stores are hugely different in terms of their respective ownership structures, thus the results and conclusions of the surveys make it possible to compare the respective opinions of the customers of the chain in 100% Hungarian ownership (CBA) to those of consumers of the foreign owned hypermarket chain (CORA). The difference between the two types of stores (hypermarket and supermarket) could, in principle, affect the interpretation of the findings. Since CORA is a hypermarket with a very large floor area we sought to select a CBA shop that does not differ much from a hypermarket at least in terms of the width and depth of the food products on offer. The CBA shop in Szada is a supermarket of a large floor area, located on the edge of the town, with a wide range of products where consumers do their shopping to stock up for longer periods as in a hypermarket.

The method of the survey was personal interviews in the shops concerned, using standardised questionnaires. All consumers doing their shopping in the stores at the time were regarded as the 'basic population' in the course of the interviews. The individuals in the sample were selected by way of personally approaching and asking one in three consumers to answer our questions. The data were processed with the aid of the SPSS 16.0 software. It is important to emphasise that the presented examinations provide a preliminary review only, because of the size and composition of the sample; general conclusions for the total population can only be drawn in limited dimensions. In interpreting the results attention should also be paid to the fact that Hungary was hit by the global economic crisis during the period between the two surveys: e.g. according to the findings of surveys carried out by Gfk. Hungária the proportion of people preferring Hungarian products increased slightly from 64% to 68% (Gfk, 2009B).

The first question in our questionnaire was aimed at identifying consumers who take the place of origin of the product into account when they shop for food products and who prefer Hungarian products. The second group of questions was aimed at identifying the general image of Hungarian foodstuffs. (The product attributes were evaluated on the five point Likert scale). The third question comprised five statements aimed at exploring the considerations motivating those preferring Hungarian products (using the five point Likert scale). The fourth question was asked to clarify the criteria to be met by a product if it is to qualify as Hungarian according to the respondents. The fifth question was an open question, asking consumers about the types of information they taken into account in trying to identify Hungarian products, while the sixth question was asked in order to see how widely known certain sources of information were among consumers. Each of the fourth and the sixth question was a multiple-choice question where the respondent could pick one or more of the possible answers offered by the interviewers. Since a logo is a visual type of information, in testing logo awareness we showed the logos in question to the respondents.

Descriptive statistics were used in our analyses together with the K-mean cluster analysis method and, for describing the segments, we used cross-tables. Chi^2 test was applied for the significance examination (sig: $p \leq 0.05$). The interpretation of the cross tables was aided by adjusted standardised residuals (Adj.R) showing the difference in comparison to the expected values calculated on the basis of marginal distributions. (Adj.R >= 2: with 95% reliability, difference in positive direction can be experienced, related to the expected value. Adj.R >= 3: with 99% reliability, difference in positive direction can be experienced, related to the expected value. In case of negative numbers, in the same value-intervals, related to the expected value, the direction of the difference will be negative).

3. Results and discussion

The sample

197 (N1) and 190 (N2) questionnaires were filled out in the course of the survey in the Cora Hypermarket and in the CBA supermarket, respectively. The distribution of the sample is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

The distribution of the sample %

		CORA	CBA	Total
Gender	Female	80.7%	66.3%	73.6%
	Male	19.3%	33.7%	26.4%
Age	< 18 years	1.0%	2.1%	1.6%
	18-30 years	20.3%	12.1%	16.3%
	31-45 years	44.2%	19.5%	32.0%
	46-60 years	27.4%	38.9%	33.1%
	61 years <	7.1%	27.4%	17.1%
Marital status	single	22.8%	17.9%	20.4%
	married	26.9%	43.7%	35.1%
	married, with children	50.3%	38.4%	44.4%
Educational level	primary	2.5%	10.5%	6.5%
	secondary	39.6%	45.8%	42.6%
	tertiary	57.9%	43.7%	50.9%
Net per capita income*	< HUF 60,000 (< Euro 222)	9.1%	21.6%	15.2%
	HUF 61-100,000 (Euro 223-370)	42.6%	51.6%	47.0%
	HUF 101-150,000 (Euro 371-555)	24.9%	18.4%	21.7%
	HUF 151-200,000 (Euro 556-740)	10.7%	7.4%	9.0%
	HUF 200,000 < (Euro 741 <)	12.7%	1.1%	7.0%

* Net income per capita in the family. Calculated with 270Ft/Euro.
Source: authors' own research, N1 = 197, N2 = 190 (2008-2009)

Since shopping is done predominantly by women and since they are the primary target group of the stores in question, women are over-represented in the sample. Middle-aged customers accounted for a higher percentage of the sample than of the national average. In the case of the Cora hypermarket those aged between 31 and 45 years, in the CBA supermarket those aged between 46 and 60 as well as those over 60 years of age make up the highest percentages of the sample. People with average or slightly over the average income made up the bulk of the sample. However, among Cora customers there was a higher percentage of people with higher than average income, while more lower than average income earners were found among CBA customers.

Evaluation of the characteristics of Hungarian foodstuffs

One of the key objectives of our research was to scrutinise Hungarian consumers' opinion of Hungarian food products, therefore we tested the extent to which respondents think the attributes listed in Table 2 are characteristic of Hungarian food products. Because our aim was to determine the image of the Hungarian foodstuffs as perceived by the consumers, we did not explain the listed attributes in detail. Most of the product attributes listed in the table were assigned medium or slightly higher than medium scores, with high relative variance rates. Accordingly, the mean resulted from very low or very high scores, indicating that consumers are strongly divided in terms of their views of the various product attributes. Most respondents said that the most typical characteristic of Hungarian food products is that they are rich in taste and flavour (4.02). This was the attribute featuring the lowest variance so this is what customers agreed on most of all. The least typical characteristic of Hungarian food products is that they are unhealthy; however, a fairly high relative variance rate was found in this aspect (0.42), i.e. the respondents' opinions were deeply divided in this regard.

Table 2

Evaluation of the characteristics of Hungarian foodstuffs

	Mean	Std.Dev.
good price to value ratio	3.37	1.02
available manufacturer	3.57	1.08
adequate food safety	3.67	0.96
rich in taste / flavour	4.25	0.84
'trendiness'	3.61	0.96
less attractive packaging in comparison to that of imported products	3.07	1.31
not easy to identify as really originating from Hungary	3.10	1.25
there is enough information on the label	3.78	1.08
less/fewer additives	3.03	0.96
unhealthy	2.38	1.01
scarcely advertised	3.20	1.29
less broad product ranges on offer than those of corresponding imported products	3.30	1.23
excellent quality	3.92	0.81

Source: own research (2008-2009), N = 387 (1-5 scale, where 1 = does not apply at all; 5 = fully applies)

Description of the food consumer groups

Our analysis of the data on the attributes of Hungarian food products revealed major differences in terms of customers' opinions on the various product components, as were indicated by the fact that the mean figures resulted from relatively high variances. To distinguish different consumer groups we performed cluster analysis with the aid of the K-means method. Variance analysis showed significant differences between at least two segments in terms of every product attribute. The findings of the survey lead to the forming of four segments, two of them with positive, the other two with negative attitudes to Hungarian products. The segments so identified are examined first on the basis of the product attributes involved in factor analysis, in the course of which the mean scores of the various clusters are compared to the sample mean (Table 3):

A: 'Consumers with strong negative attitudes towards Hungarian products': Customers in this group held the most negative views of Hungarian foodstuffs in comparison to the sample mean. They rated attributes associated with trendiness, quality and the proximity of the manufacturer lowest among all segments. Their evaluation of marketing activities apart from pricing (narrow range of choice, less attractive packaging, scarcity of advertisements) was close to the sample mean. On the whole, therefore, they are characterised by a negative attitude and disinterestedness with regard to Hungarian products.

B: 'Consumers with positive attitudes towards Hungarian products for safety considerations': The key advantage of Hungarian food products for members of this segment is safety: the main attributes include adequate food safety, available manufacturer and reliable label information. The members of this group of consumers identify the weakness of marketing, narrow product ranges and less attractive packaging as the main shortcomings concerning Hungarian food products.

C: 'Consumers with positive attitudes, biased towards Hungarian products': The respondents in this group held positive views of all product attributes and noted no shortcomings in regard to Hungarian products. They appreciated traditional product attributes most highly, including that Hungarian food products are rich in taste and flavour, excellent quality, trendiness and good price-value ratio. They assigned the lowest rating to the statement of Hungarian foodstuffs being unhealthy and they also consider the elements of the applied marketing mix to be adequate.

D: 'Consumers having no trust in and characterised by negative attitudes towards Hungarian products': The members of this segment noted the difficulties in identifying the Hungarian nature of the products concerned as being the key shortcoming of Hungarian food products and they rated the healthiness of such products lower than the sample mean. They rated conventional product attributes (rich in taste/flavour, excellent quality, trendiness, good price-value ratio) somewhat lower than the sample mean, just like the attributes relating to safety. The negative rating in this group is likely to result from difficulties of identification: customers are not really sure that some products are actually of domestic origin.

The various segments of food consumers cannot be clearly described in terms of the basic variables, thus the dominant differences between the groups are identified in terms of the descriptive variables. The statistically most significant correlations in terms of basic variables were identified in regard to income levels. Correlations with income is identified in group **'B'** (positive with low income and negative with high income) according to the standardised residuals, i.e. this segment comprises mostly people with incomes falling between 223-370 Euro. Group **'C'** comprises a higher proportion (14.8%) of people with higher (Euro 556-740) incomes than the percentage made up by people earning this much in the entire sample. Notable correlation was found in group **'A'** in regard to qualifications, this group comprising a higher than average percentage of people with secondary qualifications. From the aspect of age groups mention should be made of the fact that middle-aged persons (aged between 31 and 45 years) make up a smaller proportion of group **'B'** – the segment of those striving for safety – than the sample average.

Table 3

The segments formed on the basis of the views taken of the attributes of domestic products

Attributes	Sample mean	A	B	C	D	Sig. ($p < 0.05$)
	N = 387	N = 83	N = 82	N = 122	N = 100	
rich in taste/flavour	4.25	3.63	4.56	4.63	4.06	A-B, A-C, A-D, B-D, C-D
trendiness	3.61	2.96	3.76	4.01	3.54	A-B, A-C, A-D, B-C, B-D, C-D
excellent quality	3.92	3.45	4.15	4.29	3.68	A-B, A-C, A-D, B-D, C-D
unhealthy	2.38	2.75	1.98	1.94	2.94	A-B, A-C, B-D, C-D
adequate food safety	3.67	3.08	4.17	3.89	3.50	A-B, A-C, A-D, B-C, B-D, C-D
less wide product ranges in comparison to corresponding foreign products	3.30	3.40	4.02	2.42	3.71	A-B, A-C, A-D, B-C, B-D, C-D
less attractive packaging in comparison to foreign products	3.07	2.94	4.18	1.85	3.76	A-B, A-C, A-D, B-C, B-D, C-D
scarcity of advertising	3.20	2.35	3.33	2.89	4.17	A-B, A-C, A-D, B-D, C-D
available manufacturer	3.57	2.94	4.13	3.80	3.34	A-B, A-C, A-D, B-D, C-D
good price-value ratio	3.37	2.99	3.57	3.75	3.08	A-B, A-C, B-D, C-D
difficulties in the identification of whether the product is actually Hungarian	3.10	3.23	2.45	2.54	4.19	A-B, A-C, A-D, B-D, C-D
adequate information on the label	3.78	3.02	4.55	4.04	3.47	A-B, A-C, A-D, B-C, B-D, C-D

Source: own research 2008-2009. N = 387 One-Way ANOVA sig. < 0.05, Test of Homogeneity of Variances sig. < 0.05 – Post Hoc Tests Tamhane (sig. < 0.05), sig. > 0.05 – Post Hoc Tests LSD (sig. < 0.05), Classify = K-Means Cluster, Number of Clusters = 4, Maximum Iteration = 20, Convergence Criterion = 0, Missing Values = Exclude Cases Listwise).

Cora and CBA customers make up 51% and 49% of the total sample. No statistically identifiable correlation was found between the choice of store and the segment to which a particular consumer is assigned. One trend was observed however: Cora customers make up a larger percentage of groups **'A'** (56.6%) and group **'D'** (58%) – the groups with more negative attitudes – than the percentage they account for in the whole sample, while CBA customers make up a higher percentage of groups **'B'** (56.1%) and group **'C'** (54.1%) – the groups with more positive attitudes – than their percentage in the whole sample.

In evaluating information taken into account when choosing from among products, Hungarian food consumers attach importance to the products' origin: 698 % of them take the foodstuffs' place of origin into account and 68.7% of them favour Hungarian products. (The group of those looking out for the place of origin and the group of those preferring Hungarian products were made up of respondents who answered the relevant questions by 'frequently' or 'always'). There is a significant correlation between the two groups ($Chi^2 = 0.00$), so it was safe to conclude that those checking the place of origin of products give preference to products originating from Hungary.

The differences among the segments established on the basis of the views taken of domestic foodstuffs in regard to consumer ethnocentrism were also examined during the survey (Table 4). The cross table was analysed with the aid of the established segments and the answers given by ethnocentric respondents. The group characterised as 'Checks the place of origin' was made up of the respondents who answered these questions by 'always' or 'frequently', while the group defined as 'Prefers Hungarian products' was made up of those answered '4 – agrees for the most part' or '5 – fully agrees'.

Table 4

Description of the segments from the aspect of ethnocentrism

Importance of place of origin	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**Total sample**
Checks the place of origin (sig. = 0.00)	53% Adj.R. = -3.8	81.7% Adj.R. = 2.7	80.3% Adj.R. = 3.1	61% Adj.R. = -2.2	69.8%
Prefers Hungarian products (sig. = 0.00)	53% Adj.R. = -3.5	81.7% Adj.R. = 2.9	83.6% Adj.R. = 4.3	53% Adj.R. = -3.9	68.7%
Statements concerning consumer ethnocentrism					
It is patriotic to buy Hungarian products. (sig. = 0.00)	49.4% Adj.R. = -3.6	67.1%	79.5% Adj.R. = 3.8	63.0%	66.1%
It is important that Hungarian consumers should prefer Hungarian products. (sig. = 0.00)	75.9% Adj.R. = -3.0	89.0%	94.3% Adj.R. = 3.2	82.0%	86.0%
I like traditional brands and products. (sig. = 0.00)	74.7% Adj.R. = -3.1	87.8%	92.6% Adj.R. = 2.8	83.0%	85.3%
Special local products are growing more and more important as a counter-reaction to globalisation. (sig. = 0.01)	51.8%	56.1%	63.9% Adj.R. = 2.6	43% Adj.R. = -2.6	54.3%
I help Hungarian farmers by purchasing their produce/ products. (sig. = 0.00)	77.1% Adj.R. = -3.7	91.5%	95.9% Adj.R. = 3.1	87.0%	88.6%

Source: Own research (2008-2009) N = 387 Nominal scale. Attributes = clusters. Chi^2, Adj.R. = adjusted standardised residuals, % = column percentage, the proportion of the examined variable in the cluster.

In the case of **A: 'Consumers with strong negative attitudes towards Hungarian products'** the adjusted standardised residuals reflect a strong negative correlation with the preference for Hungarian foodstuffs, along with all of the statements applying to ethnocentrism. The respondents belonging to this segment are not interested in a product's place of origin and they do not prefer domestic products when shopping for food. The adjusted residuals also have a strong negative correlation with the statements concerning the purchasing of Hungarian food products. The negative rating of the statements pertaining to ethnocentric behaviour shows that the members of this group are lacking in patriotic feelings, so their choice of products is not affected by any strong feeling of national identity. This negative attitude probably influences their views of the attributes of the products as well, as is indicated in the significant down-rating of the product attributes in comparison to the sample mean.

In the case of **B: 'Consumers with positive attitudes towards Hungarian products for safety considerations'** the survey revealed a strong positive relationship between one's being concerned about the place of origin of a product and one's preference for domestic products. Accordingly, the consumers assigned to this group attach importance to the place of origin of products and they make no secret of their preference for Hungarian foodstuffs. There is no such clear correlation in regard to the attitude relating to consumer ethnocentrism. The ratings of the statements relating to the description of patriotic feelings are more or less equal to the sample mean in this segment. Accordingly, the positive attitude towards Hungarian products does not stem from a characteristic ethnocentric behaviour and their choice of products is motivated by other factors. Since the members of this segment over-rated the product attributes pertaining to the quality and safety of Hungarian products it may be assumed that preference of Hungarian products is a result of food safety considerations and of commitment to traditional products.

Members of **C: 'Consumers with positive attitudes, biased towards Hungarian products'** show the most definite ethnocentric attitudes. They are characterised by strong positive correlations with all such statements, particularly the rating of the statement pertaining to patriotism. Accordingly, this group is made up of openly patriotic respondents holding positive opinions concerning Hungarian foodstuffs in terms of their preferences as well. Probably as a result of their patriotism, these customers are positively biased towards Hungarian products, for they marked no shortcomings from the aspect of product attributes.

The negative attitude – towards Hungarian food products – of the consumers assigned to **D: 'Consumers having no trust in and characterised by negative attitudes towards Hungarian products'** is reflected primarily by that they do not look for the place of origin of whatever they buy and they are the ones most likely to purchase imported products. The only significant correlation in this group was found in relation to a single statement according to which: 'special local products are growing more and more important as a counter-reaction to globalisation' but this correlation is a negative one. The negative attitude of the members of this segment probably originates from the fact that they are the ones most strongly missing reliable information concerning the reliable identification of Hungarian products.

The criteria of being 'of Hungarian origin'

Since there had been no clear definition of what qualifies as a 'Hungarian product' we tried to find out what our respondents meant by 'Hungarian product'. The interviewers listed seven criteria for 'Hungarian': the origin of the raw materials, the place of processing/manufacture, the nationality of the owner, the employees' nationality, the location of the company's registered office, the company's name and the place of the distribution of its products (Horváth et al. 2009). Most respondents (376) mentioned Hungarian raw materials and Hungarian production/manufacture as the ones to be met by a product to qualify as 'Hungarian', in line with the results of earlier surveys, as well as with the definition contained in the Code of Ethics on the Food Production Chain. The second most frequently (351) mentioned criterion was production in Hungary, followed by the employment of

Hungarian labour (297). These were then followed by Hungarian product name (295) and Hungarian manufacturer (284) and registered office in Hungary (268). Distribution of the manufacturer's products primarily in Hungary was mentioned by the smallest number of respondents (117). There were no significant differences between the customers of the two different stores in terms of their views of what makes a product Hungarian. Significant correlation between the clusters and criteria was found in one case. The criterion that the company should have its registered office in Hungary was found to be less important for 'Consumers with strong negative attitudes towards Hungarian products', than the sample mean, while the same criterion was more important for 'Consumers with positive attitudes towards Hungarian products for safety considerations'. Although there was no significant correlation the standardised residuals showed a negative correlation with cluster 'A' in relation to the criteria 'Manufacturer in Hungarian ownership' and 'They employ Hungarian labour'. All the above lead to the conclusion that the segment of negative attitude considers fewer criteria for a product to qualify as Hungarian, which must be linked to their disinterestedness.

Awareness of the sources of information for identifying Hungarian products, among the segments

The respondents were asked to list a few factors they rely on to identify Hungarian products. A total of 554 answers were received to this open question from the interviewees in the two stores. Table 5 illustrates the factors mentioned by respondents and the numbers of respondents mentioning them:

Table 5

The factors helping in the identification of the Hungarian products according to the customers' opinion

CBA + CORA	number of times mentioned
flag	78
logos	76
place of manufacture	65
indication (marking)	63
notices, posters put out in the stores	54
label information	49
known brand	48
manufacturer's name	29
Hungarian name	26
inscription	18
packaging	14
ingredients	13
bar code	12
advertisement	5
appearance	2
traditional product	2
total:	**554**

Source: own research (2008-2009) N = 387

To arrive at a more finely detailed picture we listed to the customers the sources of information we had collected and which we considered to be of relevance. The sources of information probed in this round included logos indicating Hungarian origin (the national and EU), product label information, well-known Hungarian manufacturer's brands, trading company's brand indicating Hungarian origin, bar code, the notice 'Hungarian' put out on boards in the store and the manufacturer's personal warranty (e.g. the seller in a market). The interviewers showed pictures of the logos concerned help respondents recognise them since these are presented on products in the form of visual information. (In the course of the interviews respondents were not asked about the criteria to be met by a product bearing the marking concerned).

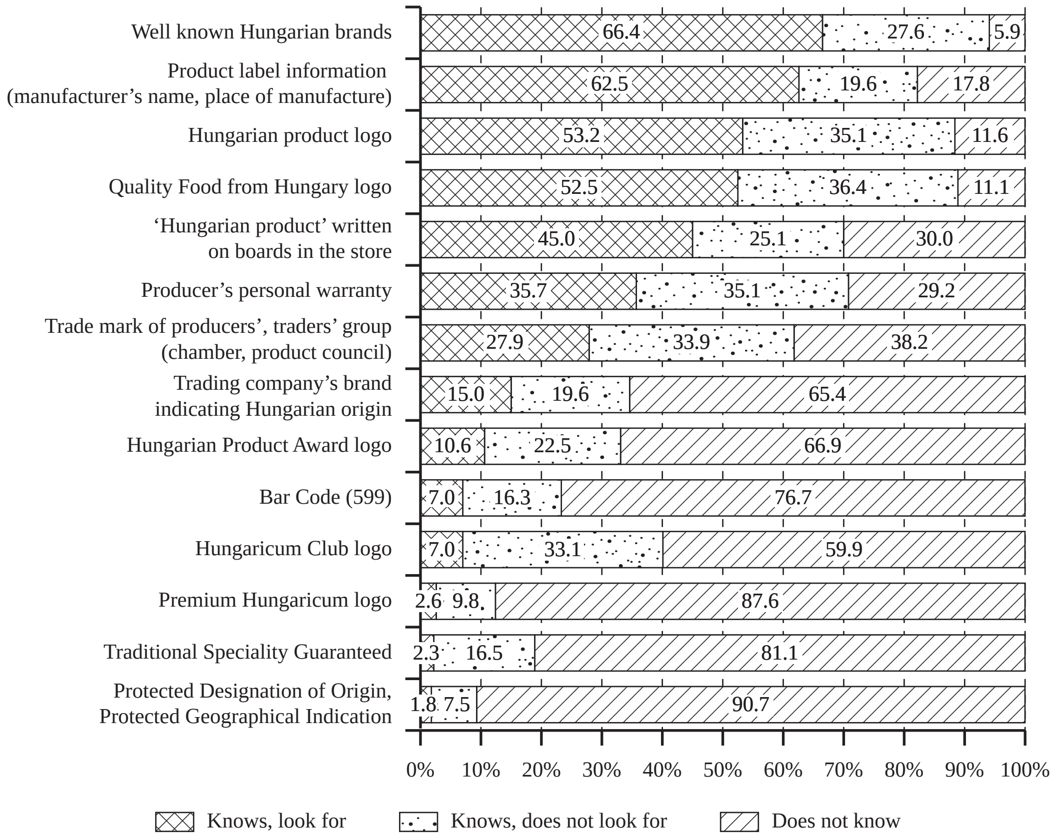

Figure 1: The information-sources used to identify Hungarian food products

Source: own research (2008-2009), N = 387

Most consumers purchase some well-known Hungarian manufacturers' brands when they want to purchase Hungarian food products (Figure 1). Accordingly, in the case of products qualifying as 'Hungaricums' adequate knowledge of the brands and the propensity to buy such products are both highest in this case. This is followed by information on the product label on which 62.5% of the respondents rely when they want to purchase Hungarian foodstuffs. From among the logos the Hungarian Product logo and the Excellent Hungarian Food Product logo are the most frequently sought after and known to the same extent. These are known to 89% of the respondents and 53% of them look for them when shopping for foodstuffs. A total of 61.8% of the respondents know the trade mark of one or another producer group but only 27.9% of them actually look for products bearing such marks. Much less well known are the Hungarian Product Grand Prix logo, the Hungaricum Club logo and the Premium Hungaricum logo. The Traditional and Special trade marks and geographical indications are known to a negligible percentage of respondents though products bearing these logos are sometimes available in Hungary. A high proportion (46%) of the respondents rely on the notices indicating Hungarian origin on boards posted in the stores, which is not necessarily regarded to be a reliable source of information. A total of 35.7% of the respondents ask producers for information (e.g. in markets), while 34.6% of the customers know private labels indicating Hungarian origin and 15% of them actually look for them in shops. (There are products whose Hungarian origin is particularly highlighted among the private labels of both the Cora and the CBA stores chosen as the venue of our research).

The findings drawn from the answers given to the multiple-choice question matched those drawn from the answers received to the open question in that customers often rely on various logos in purchasing Hungarian products, they read label information (place of manufacture, name of manufacturer) and they often find their way around with the aid of the boards and posters displayed in the shops. One difference is however, that while in the case of the open question famous Hungarian brands were mentioned only in 48 cases, in the case of the questions assisted by mentioning examples this became the most important factor helping product identification. Thereafter we studied how the knowledge of and reliance on the above sources of information varies across the segments we had identified. Significant correlation between segments and the knowledge and use of information in seven cases: The Hungaricum Club logo (sig. = 0.02); Premium Hungaricum Club logo (sig. = 0.06); product label information (sig. = 0.00); Excellent Hungarian Food Product logo (sig. = 0.00), produce group's trade mark (sig. = 0,00); known Hungarian manufacturer's brands (sig. = 0.00); bar code (sig=0.04).

Amongst **'consumers with strong negative attitudes towards Hungarian products'** the standardised residuals showed differences in the case of six information sources. The awareness of the Excellent Hungarian Food Product is lower and it is sought after by a lower percentage of the respondents than had been expected. The awareness of the Hungarian Product logo is higher among these respondents and 44.6% of the segment actually looks for them when buying food products. However, 47% of these respondents do not look for the mark on products despite their awareness of it. A total of 45% of those in the segment read product label information when purchasing foodstuffs but even so this is a lot lower than the sample mean. A total of 10.8% of these respondents do not know Hungarian manufacturers' brands which, although not a very high proportion, is still almost twice a high as the total sample mean, and the proportion of those purchasing such products in this segment is also below average. A higher percentage than the sample mean do not know the bar code and this segment is least characterised by looking out for the 'Hungarian product' sign posted on boards in the stores. It was observed in the case of the segment that their awareness of and reliance on the most widely known types of information is below the sample mean.

The **'consumers with positive attitudes towards Hungarian products for safety considerations'** look for the most widely known sources of information when they want to purchase Hungarian products. Most of these respondents read label information (73.2%), known brands (84.1%), products featuring the Excellent Hungarian Food Product logo (64.6%) or they seek to buy food products bearing the logo of one or another producer group (36.6%).

The **'consumers with positive attitudes, biased towards Hungarian products'** are the most well informed concerning logos. A somewhat higher percentage among them than the sample mean know the Hungaricum Club and the Premium Hungaricum logos (50% and 19.7%) though members of this segment are not typically looking for them either. A total of 61.5% of the group seek for the Excellent Hungarian Food Product logo and the highest percentage among the group's members read the label. This segment comprises the smallest number of people who do not know producer group trademarks and though 70.5% of them do not know much about the bar code, they still do not account for as high a percentage as the sample mean. On the whole, the preference of the people assigned to segment C – they are the most patriotic consumers – of Hungarian products appears in seeking for information in the course of shopping for foodstuffs and they appeared to know more than the members of any of the other segments about logos that are to be found on fewer products.

Fewer among those **'customers having no trust in and characterised by negative attitudes towards Hungarian products'** have any knowledge of the Hungaricum Club and the Premium Hungaricum logos than the sample mean, but those who do not look for these despite knowing about them account for a lower percentage of the group than the sample mean. The fact that the members of the group do not look for such trade marks is assumed to stem from their lack of knowledge of them. A total of 54% – the highest percentage among the segments identified here – of the members of this group do not know about producer group trademarks. More than half (53%) of the segment look for label information, but this is below the sample mean while there is a higher percentage of individuals among them who say they know but do not care about those details, probably because of the unreliability of such information. Interestingly, though this segment is less well informed in regard to the less frequently encountered national trademarks, the members of this group knew – somewhat – more about the EU's logos relating to the protection of geographical origin than those of the other groups.

4. Conclusions

Firstly, in studying the evaluation of the attributes of Hungarian food products we found that the average consumer considers that Hungarian products are of a medium or somewhat higher than medium quality. The average ratings however, resulted from the aggregation of a wide variety of opinions, therefore it seemed to be worth further analysing the views taken of product attributes.

Secondly, based on consumers' views of the product attitudes we distinguished four consumer groups – with the aid of cluster analysis – in terms of the factors affecting their choices between Hungarian and imported products when buying foodstuffs and in terms of their overall attitudes to Hungarian products. Some of the motives affecting their preference of Hungarian products are driven by emotive (affective) elements, others are guided by cognitive ones. Both emotive and cognitive motives may be either positive or negative. Such motives determine consumers' attitudes to domestic products, which in turn, affects their views and judgements of the various product attributes as well. The positive attitude for a product – however it is not sure forecaster for the purchasing – influences the buying decision positively.

Two of the four consumer segments established in the course of the analysis relate positively to Hungarian products. Our findings show that one of these two groups is made up of people of definite ethnocentric attitudes. Ethnocentrism encourages the development of customer' positive attitude to Hungarian products as a significantly positive emotive element. Supply side participants (farmers, processing companies) can have little influence on this behaviour, as it stems from a person's internal convictions. Any more significant change in this field may result from an increasing appreciation by Hungarian consumers of ethical values (including patriotism), if ethnocentric behaviour 'develops into a trend'.

Confidence in Hungarian products appears as a cognitive type of motive when the members of the other segment with positive attitudes make their decisions on what products to buy. Hungarian food producers and food processing companies should continue to rely on this confidence 'capital' since cognitive elements can be fortified by arguments, experience and proof. Laying emphasis on and highlighting reliable Hungarian quality may be particularly efficient in the communication of the advantages of domestic food products from the aspect of the contents of the messages to be conveyed.

Another sign of a growing demand for product attributes associated with confidence and trust is that in one of the two groups showing negative attitudes to Hungarian food products this negative relationship results from customers having no access to sufficient information, as a consequence of which they cannot determine whether a given product is Hungarian or not. The members of the other group – with the highly negative attitude – know even less about and rely even more scarcely on even the most widely known sources of information in comparison to the other segments, probably as a consequence of the fact that these people are, in general, disinterested and have an overall negative attitude.

Thirdly, although the fact that domestic raw materials are the single most important criterion for consumers in deciding whether a product is Hungarian or not has been proven by earlier surveys (Ipsos Kft., 2009) and by our survey as well, no sufficient importance is attached to this in the design of logos or in their communication.

Fourthly, our survey of consumers' awareness of sources of information indicating Hungarian origin showed that consumers tend to go for the best known brands when they want to be sure of choosing Hungarian products. This indicates adequate knowledge of our products qualifying as 'Hungaricums' and shows consumers' trust and confidence in them. A large proportion of respondents read the product label (country of origin, manufacturer's name etc.), scrutinise boards posted in the stores (which, however, do not necessarily provide them with sufficient and unambiguous information). The best known and sought after among the trademarks relating to source of origin include the Hungarian Product and the Excellent Hungarian Food Product logos. These were known to 89% of the respondents but only 53% of them are actually looking for them on the products.

Awareness of the other logos falls short of the above. A negligible percentage of our respondents knew about the markings used in the European Union for the protection of origin, not surprisingly, since consumers see few products bearing such logos on the shelves of shops in Hungary.

We assume that a consumer with an ethnocentric attitude will be more interested in checking label information and in knowing more about brands and trademarks. This was proven by our research, as the members of the segments of definitely ethnocentric attitudes knew most about the sources of information concerning the origins of products while those assigned to the segments of people having negative attitudes knew less in this aspect than the average.

As regards communication concerning identification and food safety it is crucial that consumers should be provided with adequate information concerning products and that they should get to know what the various trademarks mean. Expanding consumers' knowledge by adequate marketing communication in relation to origin and the quality indicator trademarks is a crucial task, along with emphasising the features that are really important for consumers, such as safety, Hungarian raw materials and manufacture in Hungary. These would boost confidence and trust in logos actually representing Hungarian origin of products. Acquiring trademarks could also help Hungarian farmers and producers who do not have sufficient resources for efficient brand building as do those producing the most renowned Hungaricums in emphasising the excellence of their products.

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