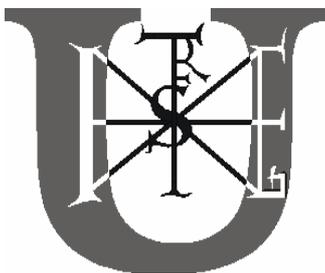


**Szent István University Gödöllő**  
Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences  
**PhD School of Management and Business Administration**



# **The role of ethnocentrism in case of consumers' decisions on the food market**

**DOCTORAL (PhD) THESIS**

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## I. Preceding of the work, goals of the research

In contrast with the globalization and the homogenization of the world markets the locality (country, region, countryside etc.) is more and more important. The localization of the food-chain results the closer connection of the producer and consumer. According to Papadopoulos and Butt (2006) the origin of the products gives an opportunity to the producers to differentiate their products. The origin of the products is a key issue regarding the agricultural products because of the strong connection with the land, not only in the material meaning, but also the cultural matters, food procession procedures, eating habits and traditions. Töröcsik (2007) says, that consumer values (orientation) getting more relevant in consumer behaviour. The importance of the pleasure of the consumption has shifted to health care and convenience values. The growing importance of ethical factors (e.g. fair trade, the preference of local food) is the next step of this tendency. The positive discrimination of the local products against import products is moved by the ethnocentric behaviour of the consumers.

Since the membership of the EU, in Hungary we can see that the competition is getting stronger between import and national products. Beside the Hungarian consumer's ethnocentrism is quite weak. Due the free flow of the products the possibility of choice between Hungarian and import products became obvious, and its effect on protecting Hungarian labour and economic growth. One of the possible way to strengthen the market position of the national products, when the demand for Hungarian products generated by the consumers' needs. That is why it is a must to analyse the role of the importance product's origin in the consumer decision process. As a result of the much food-safety scandal in the past, the local products are getting in focus as a possible risk reducing factor.

In 2012 in Hungary the „Hungarian product regulation” came into effect, which aim is to support the market position of the Hungarian products and to give relevant information for the consumers about the origin of products. This matter shows the actuality of my research theme.

In my dissertation 3 aims were targeted, as follows:

The first aim is connecting to the synthesis of the literature of the research field:

### **C1. The systemising of national product preference's affecting factors and the studying of specific factors of food products. The creation of a theoretical model of the influencing factors of the preference of local food products.**

Based on the literature of place of origin, ethnocentrism and on the existing theoretical models, I have created a theoretical model, which synthesises the influencing factors of the preference of national products.

The primer part of my research follows a doubled structure. As a result of a store-based consumer research, I was looking for the reason whether the consumer trends and their main value factors are reflected in the consumers' decision making process. Regarding that, I targeted the following principle:

### **C2. The studying of the main consumption trends in case of the Hungarian buyers. To study the main value factors of food consumption (health care, ethical, convenience and pleasure).**

As the result of the survey the main food consumption trends are exactly shown in the Hungarian consumers' food choosing decisions. The judgement of the Hungarian food products' characteristics are connected to the pleasure, convenience and health value factors, while the judgement of ethical issues are ambiguous.

The second part of my primer research was the study of ethnocentric behaviour of the young consumers. The survey was carried out in Hungary, Poland and Germany, during that I was focusing on young consumers' the ethnocentric tendencies, pointing out the each counties unique characters.

Regarding the second primer research I target the following principle:

**C3. To analyse the ethnocentric tendencies of young consumers in case of a developed Western-European country (as Germany), and a country in a similar economic development phase (as Poland) and Hungary.**

The analysis of the third target was divided into two main topics:

**C3a.: The validation of the theoretical model, which summarize the key factors of national food preference.**

The validation of the model was carried in a quantitative way. The results show that ethnocentrism definitely has positive effect on national food preference, but has county specific factors and beside that the choice of national products has different extent in case of the food risk reduction.

According to the previous surveys youths are less ethnocentric, than elders, because of elders' conservative attitude (Malota 2003). Regarding this statement shall be considered with the result of a representative survey in 2009, which showed, that among the ethnocentric consumers there is a group which was named „patriotic youths”. The preconception that youths are not a homogenous group considering the ethnocentrism, was based on this result.

The next aim of my research was the following:

**C3b.: The segmentation of young adults by consumer ethnocentrism.**

As a result of my study it is possible to say, that the young adults can be segmented by the affective, normative and cognitive dimensions of consumer ethnocentrism, in case of the respondents of the three countries.

## II. Materials and methods

Several researches were carried out in the field of consumer ethnocentrism and country of origin in the past years in Hungary and internationally, too. This is the reason why I synthesised the existing literature, theoretical models and I have created a theoretical model, which synthesises the influencing factors of the preference of national products (Figure 1).

The primer part of my research follows a doubled structure: two quantitative researches were carried out to investigate the national food preference, which are the followings:

1. To study the main value factors of food consumption (health care, ethical, convenience and pleasure). – Research among the customers of a Hungarian and an international store chain at the point of sale.
2. The analysis of the effecting factors of the national food preference. – Research among young adults in Hungary, Poland and Germany.

Hereinafter I outline the circumstances of the two primer surveys separately.

### ***1. Research among the customers of a Hungarian and an international store chain at the point of sale***

The survey took place in the Cora hypermarket near the town of Fót and in the CBA Prima 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 2400 units of the CBA chain - including the one in Szada - belongs 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 17.0 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.

## 1.1. The characterisation of 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. 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 were a higher percentage of people with higher than average income, while more lower than average income earners were found among CBA customers.

## 1.2. The main goal and the hypothesis of the research

**C2. The studying of the main consumption trends in case of the Hungarian buyers. To study the main value factors of food consumption (health care, ethical, convenience and pleasure).**

*H1. The key components of consumer behaviour values can be identified in the judgement of Hungarian food products.*

*H2. Consumer segments can be differentiate based on the judgement of the Hungarian foodstuffs, which segments are different in their motivation of purchase national food and attitude toward Hungarian foodstuffs.*

*H3. We may find differences between the customers of a Hungarian and a foreign sore chain according to their preferences and judgement of the Hungarian foodstuffs.*

*H4. According to the customers, the most important criteria of the „Hungarian food product” are the Hungarian raw materials and the national producing process.*

*H5. Ethnocentric tendencies lead to the better knowledge of information sources about the origin.*

Table 1. The questions of the survey

Theme	Questions	Type of scale
Behavioural components - origin related information search - national product buying preference	Question 1. (1; 2 components)	ordinal
Image of Hungarian foods	Question 2.	Interval (5 point Likert scale)
Main reasons of the Hungarian food preference	Question 3.	Interval (5 point Likert scale)
Main criteria of being 'Hungarian food'	Question 4.	nominal
The factors helping in the identification of the Hungarian products	Question 5-6.	Open question, nominal
Demographic questions	Question 9.	nominal
Questions in Cora Hypermarket		
Filter question	Question 7. (Component 1.)	nominal
Frequency of consuming	Question 7. (Component 2.)	nominal
Product knowledge and preference	Question 7. (Component 3.)	Open question
Image of 'Íz és hagyomány' brand	Question 8.	Interval (5 point Likert scale)
Questions in CBA Prima supermarket		
Shop visit frequency	Question 7.	Interval (5 point Likert scale)
The knowledge of the Hungarian ownership	Question 8.	Open question
Shop choosing habits, expectations and attitude toward a domestic store chain	Question 9.	Interval (5 point Likert scale)

Based on the literature, five questions were asked regarding the main affective and rational reasons of the domestic food preference, which questions are the followings:

- I think it's patriotic to buy Hungarian products.
- It is important that Hungarian consumers should prefer Hungarian products.
- I like traditional brands, products.
- Local products are growing more and more important as a counter-reaction to globalisation.
- I help Hungarian farmers by purchasing their produce/products.

### **1.3. Statistical methods and criteria of the survey**

Beside of the descriptive statistics crosstabs, one-way ANOVA, paired-sample t-test, factor and K-mean cluster analysis were used for the data analysis.

In case of the crosstabs, Chi<sup>2</sup> 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 $\geq 2$ : with 95% reliability, difference in positive direction can be experienced, related to the expected value. Adj.R $\geq 3$ : 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) (Sajtos and Mitev, 2007).

The statistical criteria of the one-way ANOVA test are the followings: One-way ANOVA: sig $<0,05$ ; Variance homogeneity test: in case of homogeneous variance (sig $>0,05$ ) the used Post Hoc test is LSD; in case of heterogeneous variance (sig $<0,05$ ) the used Post Hoc Test is Tamhane (Sajtos and Mitev, 2007).

K-mean cluster analysis was used for the creation of the consumer segments. During the cluster analysis F-statistic was used, which shows the most deterministic factor in the segment creation (Székelyi and Barna, 2008).

Factor analysis was used for the determination of the Hungarian food's product characteristics. The method was Maximum-likelihood with Varimax rotation. The statistical criteria of the acceptance of the factor structure are the followings: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy:  $>0,5$ ; communalities:  $\geq 0,25$ ; goodness of fit test:  $>0,00$ ; cumulative variance:  $\geq 33\%$ , factor loadings:  $\geq 0,25$  (Székelyi and Barna, 2008).

## ***2. The analysis of the ethnocentric tendencies of young consumers in Germany, in Poland and in Hungary***

The research was carried out in three countries, among young adults. The selected countries were Poland (a post communist, new EU member country, in a similar economic development phase like Hungary), Germany (a developed, old EU member Western-European country) and in Hungary. The data collection in Poland (Warsaw University of Life Sciences) was on the winter of 2008, in Germany (University of Hohenheim) and in Hungary (Szent István University) was on the spring of 2009.

According to the previous surveys youths are less ethnocentric, than elders, because of elders' conservative attitude (Malota 2003). Regarding this statement shall be considered with the result of a representative survey in 2009, which showed, that among the ethnocentric consumers there is a group which was named „patriotic youths”. The preconception that young adults – which consumer group is a trend leader group – are not a homogenous group considering the ethnocentrism was based on this result.

1417 questionnaires were collected in the three countries: 484 from Hungary, 518 from Poland, 415 from Germany. The same standardized questionnaire was used in the three countries on native languages. The questionnaire was translated to Polish and to German language and back to

Hungarian, by bilingual translator. The sampling method was arbitrary sampling, not random. The missing data were not replaced by the mean, because that would bias the results.

## 2.1. The characterisation of the sample

According to the age, the respondents create homogeneous consumer group: 18-26 age young adults. According to the qualification the sample is homogeneous, too: university students. The marital status is irrelevant from the viewpoint of my research theme. Concerning to the income I did not created numerical categories, the respondents categorised themselves subjectively.

The distribution of the sample

	Hungary N=484	Poland N=518	Germany N=415
<b>Gender %</b>			
Male	39,7%	43,6%	41%
Female	60,3%	56,4%	59%
<b>Habitation %</b>			
Capital city	33,7%	21,2%	0,5%
Other large city	26,2%	8,7%	44%
Small town	20%	29,9%	26,5%
village	18%	37,8%	28,9%
<b>Net income/head</b>			
Much lower, than the average	3,50%	8,7%	2,7%
A bit lower, than the average	10,7%	15,4%	8%
Average	49,2%	48,5%	48%
A bit higher, than the average	26%	21,2%	26%
Much higher, than the average	5,80%	2,7%	5,3%
<b>Has already been to abroad %</b>	93%	97%	75%

Source: own research (2008-2009)

It is important to emphasise, that because of the size and composition of the sample; general conclusions for the total population can only be drawn in limited dimensions. But the dimensions of the domestic food preference and the correspondences can be studied, and the main trends can be highlighted by the research.

## 2.2. The goals and the hypothesises of the research

**C3. To analyse the ethnocentric tendencies of young consumers in case of a developed Western-European country (as Germany), and a country in a similar economic development phase (as Poland) and Hungary.**

The analysis of the third target was divided into two main topics:

**C3a.: The validation of the theoretical model, which summarize the key factors of national food preference.**

*H6: The created statement list, which based on the literature, is appropriate to measure the consumers' ethnocentric tendencies, country specifically.*

*H7: The dimensions of consumer ethnocentrism – within the statement list - are separated according to the theory.*

*H8: The ethical aspects of the food preference are more dominant in case of the Western European country, than the two Central and Eastern European countries.*

H9: The image of the home country is more negative according to the Hungarian and the Polish youths, than in case of the German respondents.

H10: The main value factors of the consumer behaviour trends are observable in the judgement of the Hungarian foodstuffs, in case of the young adults.

H11: The willingness to buy of Hungarian foodstuff is influenced by the factors of the theoretical model on the assumed manner, but country specifically.

H11a: The dimensions of consumer ethnocentrism (cognitive, affective and normative dimensions) influence the willingness to purchase domestic foodstuffs on different extent.

H11b: The cognitive dimension influences the willingness to purchase directly, and the affective and normative dimensions influence it directly and indirectly, too.

H11c: The image of domestic foodstuffs is influence the attitude toward domestic foods.

H11d: The affective dimension of ethnocentrism is influence the image of domestic foods.

H12: The preference of local foods is a risk reducing factor according to the young adults.

### **C3b.: The segmentation of young adults by consumer ethnocentrism.**

H13: Young adults can be segmented according to the ethnocentric tendencies.

H14: We can find differences among segments of the three countries.

## **2.3. The creation of the consumer ethnocentrism statement list**

The Consumer Ethnocentric Tendencies Scale (Cetscale) is used for the measurement of the consumers' ethnocentric tendencies. The cetscale includes 17 statements, which statements are evaluated by the consumers on Likert scale (Shimp és Sharma 1987). Lindquist et al. (2001) tested the shortened Cetscale on students, which included 10 statements. According to Lindquist et al. (2001) the shortened Cetscale can be valid with situation specific corrections. This is the reason why, that the shortened Cetscale was the basis of my statement list. But, because the Cetscale had been created according to the US circumstances, I have done the translation with some corrections, and I have completed the list according to the relevant literature to be appropriate to measure the affective, cognitive and normative dimensions of ethnocentrism. For the creation of the statement list I have used the statements which were applied in the previous research in the store chains.

Table 2. The consumer ethnocentrism statement list

<b>Statement</b>	<b>The dimensions consumer ethnocentrism</b>
Only those products should be imported, which cannot be manufactured by the Hungarian/Polish/German producers.	Normative dimension – economic impact
I consider it is important, that the Hungarian/Polish/German customers prefer the Hungarian/Polish/German products.	Affective dimension - emotional reasons
I consider that purchasing Hungarian/Polish/German products is patriotic.	Affective dimension - emotional reasons
We should purchase products manufactured in Hungary/Poland/Germany instead of letting other countries get rich off us.	Normative dimension – economic impact
Purchasing foreign products hurts Hungarian/Polish/German economy and causes unemployment.	Normative dimension – economic impact
Domestic foodstuffs may hurt consumers' health less, than the imported foodstuffs.	Cognitive dimension – attitude toward domestic foods
Domestic foodstuffs have better quality, than foreign foods.	Cognitive dimension – attitude toward domestic foods
I prefer domestic foodstuffs, even if it is more expensive, than imported products.	Cognitive dimension – attitude toward domestic foods
I like traditional brands, products.	Affective dimension - emotional reasons
It is not right to purchase foreign products, because it puts Hungarians/Poles/Germans out of jobs.	Normative dimension – economic impact
The purchasing of the domestic products is important from environmental point of view.	Sustainability – Environmental reason

Source: own design based on Shimp és Sharma (1987), Lindquist et al. (2001) Shimp (1984); Brodowsky (1998); Lehota (2001); Verlegh és van Ittersum (2001)

Although, the dimensions of ethnocentrism which I study do not include the theme of environment protection, I have framed a statement regarding this, because according to the literature the environmental benefits of the local products are getting more and more important.

### III. Results

#### *1. Results of the theoretical synthesis*

##### **C1. The systemising of national product preference's affecting factors and the studying of specific factors of food products. The creation of a theoretical model of the influencing factors of the preference of local food products.**

Töröcsik (2007) says, that consumer values (orientation) getting more and more relevant in consumer behaviour. The importance of the pleasure of the consumption has shifted to health care and convenience values. The growing importance of ethical factors (e.g. fair trade, the preference of local food) is the next step of this tendency. The positive discrimination of the local products against import products is moved by the ethnocentric behaviour of the consumers. According to Papadopoulos and Butt (2006) the origin of the products gives an opportunity to the producers to differentiate their products from the others. The origin of the products is a key issue regarding the agricultural products because of the strong connection with the land. That is the reason why special motivation factors lead to domestic food preference.

Based on the literature of the place of origin and the consumer ethnocentrism, we can say, that consumer ethnocentrism affects domestic food preference by affective, cognitive and normative dimensions. Beside of this, according to the existing models of the role of place of origin in food preference the origin affects the product preference by the relation of "country of origin image – the product image – attitude – behaviour".

My theoretical model synthesises the influencing factors of the attitude and preference toward domestic foodstuffs, which are the followings:

- The main value factors of consumer behaviour.
- The dimensions of consumer ethnocentrism.
- The process of origin influencing food choice.

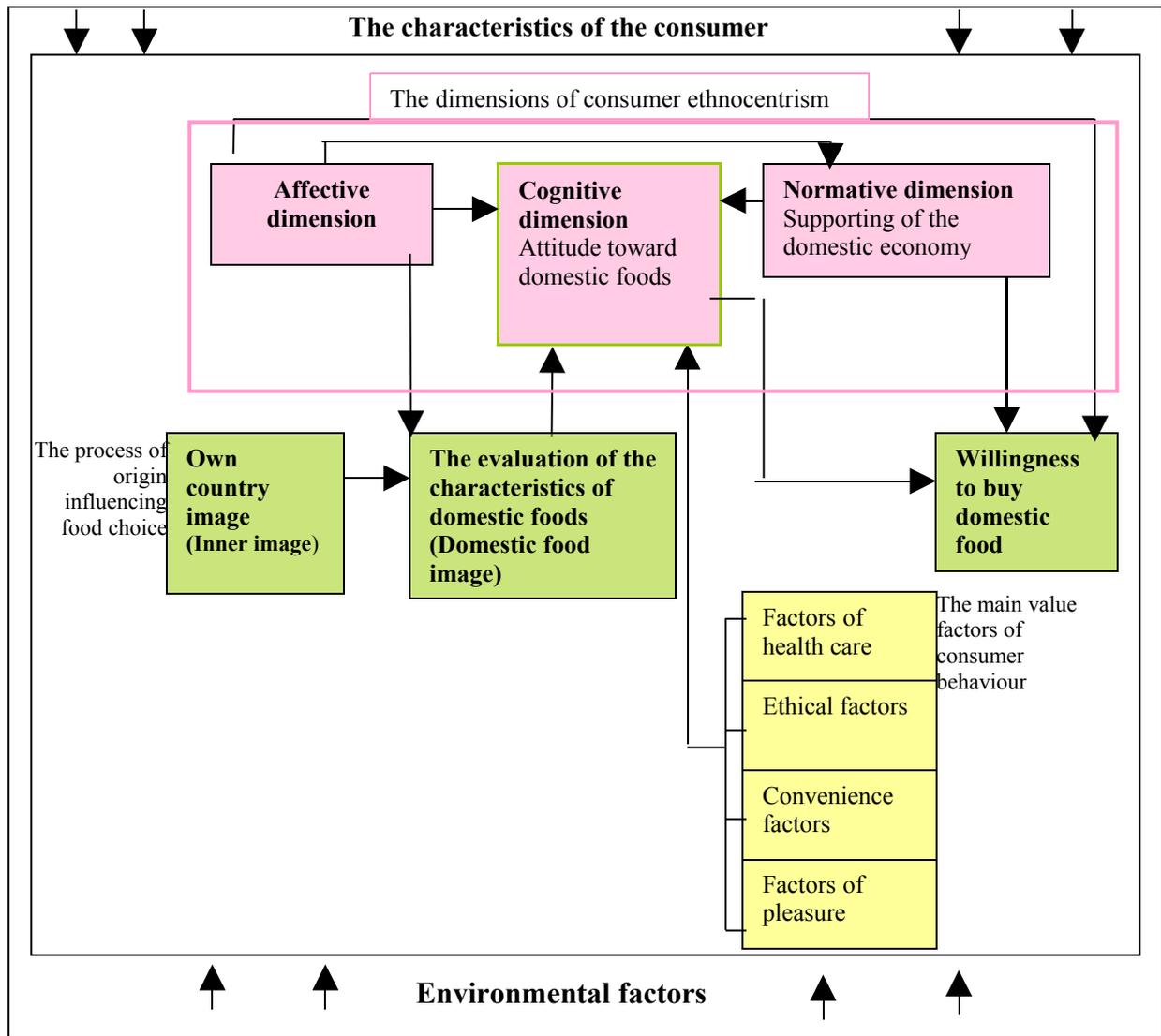


Figure 1. The theoretical model of the influencing factors of domestic food preference

## ***2. Research among the customers of a Hungarian and an international store chain at the point of sale – Results***

### **C2. Studying of the main consumption trends in case of the Hungarian customers. To study the main value factors of the food consumption (health care, ethical, convenience and pleasure) (T2; H1-H5).**

As the result of the survey the main food consumption trends are exactly shown in the respondents' food choosing decisions (**H1 accepted**). Judgement of the Hungarian food products' characteristics are connected to the pleasure, convenience and health care value factors, while the judgement of ethical issues are ambiguous, because the ethical values separated into two factors, which shows the divided opinions of the respondents. Three factors from the five shows the strengths and two shows the weaknesses of the Hungarian foodstuffs. The strengths are the 'Characteristics of pleasure', the 'Characteristics which guarantee the safety' and the 'The advantages caused by the local character' factors, which connected to the pleasure, health care, and ethical values. The 'Imperfectness of the marketing tools' and the 'The characteristics caused by the lack of information' factors - which are related to the convenience and ethical values - are the weaknesses of the Hungarian foods. This result shows the possible way of the product development: It is important to develop those characteristics of the Hungarian foodstuffs, which refer to the products' experience and credence characteristics.

- 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 (**H2 accepted**). 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.

Although there was no significant correlation between the segments and the store choice, a tendency is detectable, that there are more consumers with negative attitude toward Hungarian foodstuffs in Cora Hypermarket and there were more consumers with positive attitude in CBA.

Beside of this, examining the judgement of the product characteristics, I can say that the customers of CBA have more expressed opinion about the strengths and weaknesses of the Hungarian foodstuffs, than the Cora's customers (**H3 partly accepted**).

- 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. 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. Acquiring trademarks could also help Hungarian farmers and producers who do not have sufficient resources for efficient brand building to emphasise the excellent quality or the reliable origin of their product (**H5 accepted**).

- Domestic raw materials are the most important criterion of being 'Hungarian product' for consumers as the earlier surveys (Ipsos kft, 2009) proved, too. This shows that „Hungarian product regulation” controls the criteria of the Hungarian products' notation well (**H4 accepted**).

### ***3. The analysis of the ethnocentric tendencies of young consumers in Germany, in Poland and in Hungary - Results***

#### **C3. To analyse the ethnocentric tendencies of young consumers in case of a developed Western-European country (as Germany), and a country in a similar economic development phase (as Poland) and Hungary.**

Analysis of the third target was divided into two main topics:

##### **C3a.: Validation of the theoretical model, which summarize the key factors of the national food preference.**

The consumer ethnocentrism statement list is suitable to measure the consumer ethnocentrism with country specific corrections (according to the Cronbach alpha and the statistical criteria of the Principal component analysis). The corrections in the case of the three countries were the followings: in case of Hungary and Poland I had to skip the statement 'I like traditional brands, products.' and in case of Germany I had to skip the statement 'I consider that purchasing German products is patriotic.' These suggest that in case of Germany, the preference of traditional foods is more dominant in the manifestation of consumer ethnocentrism, than in case of the two other countries, what suggests the traditional foods' better market position. (**H6 accepted, T1**).

- The studied dimensions of consumer ethnocentrism have only separated according to the theoretical hypothesis partly. There were overlaps between the 'affective' and the 'economical effect' dimensions. This suggests that these dimensions are not independent dimensions, but affect each other (**H7 partly accepted**).

- The 'environmental impact' statement fitted to the statement list in case of all the three countries well, what shows that it is worth to study the environmental impact of the preference of local products in the future.

- To study the main consumer values of the food choice, exploratory factor analysis was carried out. Only in case of the German analysis resulted a well fitting model (goodness of fit > 0,00), which shows that German youths are more conscious in a food selecting situation. In case of the Hungarian respondents, we may see a tendency (not significant) onto the appearance of the values (**H8 accepted**).

- Studying the countries inner-image we can see, that the German inner-country image is rather positive, the Polish is neutral, while the Hungarian is expressly negative (**H9 accepted**).

- In case of the judgement of the domestic foods I wanted to explore the appearance of the main value factors of the food consumption trends (health care, ethical, convenience and pleasure), just like in the case of my previous point of sale research. As the result of the exploratory factor analysis I did not find statistically correct factor structure in case of the three countries. This shows that the image of the domestic foods is simple, not differentiated (**H10 accepted**). This suggests that the young adults are less conscious in the food choice, than the elders, or middle age customers in case of my previous point of sale research.

The Hungarian and Polish food image is rather traditional, because of the dominant role of the health, safety and experience characteristics. While, the image of German foods is rather modern, because the dominance of the marketing activities (aesthetic packaging, trendy, wide product range). This suggests that the average German food image (what is modern) and the traditional German food image is separated, while the images of the Hungarian and Polish foods are rather traditional.

- The path model analysis - what I have used for the validation of my theoretical model – that the dimensions of the ethnocentrism influence the willingness to in a different extent, and they are in an interaction with each other (**H11a accepted**).

In case of the Hungarian respondents the cognitive dimension affect the willingness to buy directly, and affective and normative dimension affect it directly and indirectly, while in case of the Polish and German respondents the normative dimension affect only indirectly, through the attitude (**H11b partly accepted**). Presumably, the different importance of the 'economic impact' is caused by the different economical situation of the countries. Beside of this, 'buy domestic' communication campaign may have significant direct effect on the willingness to buy Hungarian foodstuffs by the 'process of the direct acting'.

- I have studied the effect of product image on the attitude toward the product. In case of the Hungarian and Polish sample this correlation was significant, but in case of the German sample the correlation was not significant (**H11c partly accepted**). While in case of the Polish model the most dominant influencing factor on attitude is the product image, in case of the Hungarian model the most dominant factors which effects on attitude are the affective component and the economic impact. The effect of product image is rather small. In case of the German model there was no significant correlation between the image and the attitude (**H11c partly accepted**) and between the affective factor and the image (**H11d partly accepted**). Presumably reason of the lack of the correlation between the affective and cognitive dimension, that the average German food image is modern, but the affective and cognitive dimensions of the ethnocentrism are concern to the traditional foods. Presumably, thanks for the efficient collective marketing activity in Germany since years, the image of the average German foods and the traditional German foodstuffs are separated.

From among the food selecting criteria, the ethical factor has the most dominant effect on the attitude toward domestic foods in case of all the three countries, but I found the strongest correlation in case of the German model (**H11e accepted**). Beside of this, a negative correlation was found between the attitude and health care component, In case of the Hungarian and German model. This suggests, that Hungarian and German respondents think, that domestic foods are unhealthy.

According to the path-models the domestic food preference in case of the Hungarian respondents is lead by affective and normative factors mostly, and the judgement of the domestic product is less dominant. This suggests an emotion based choice of domestic product, than a conscious product choice. It would be important that the domestic products should mean a high quality and safety food choice alternative for the consumers. Search characteristics of the foods have to refer to the high quality, but the experience characteristics have to confirm it, because this is the term of the consumers' loyalty.

Figure 2. 3. and 4. show the validation of my theoretical model with path models.

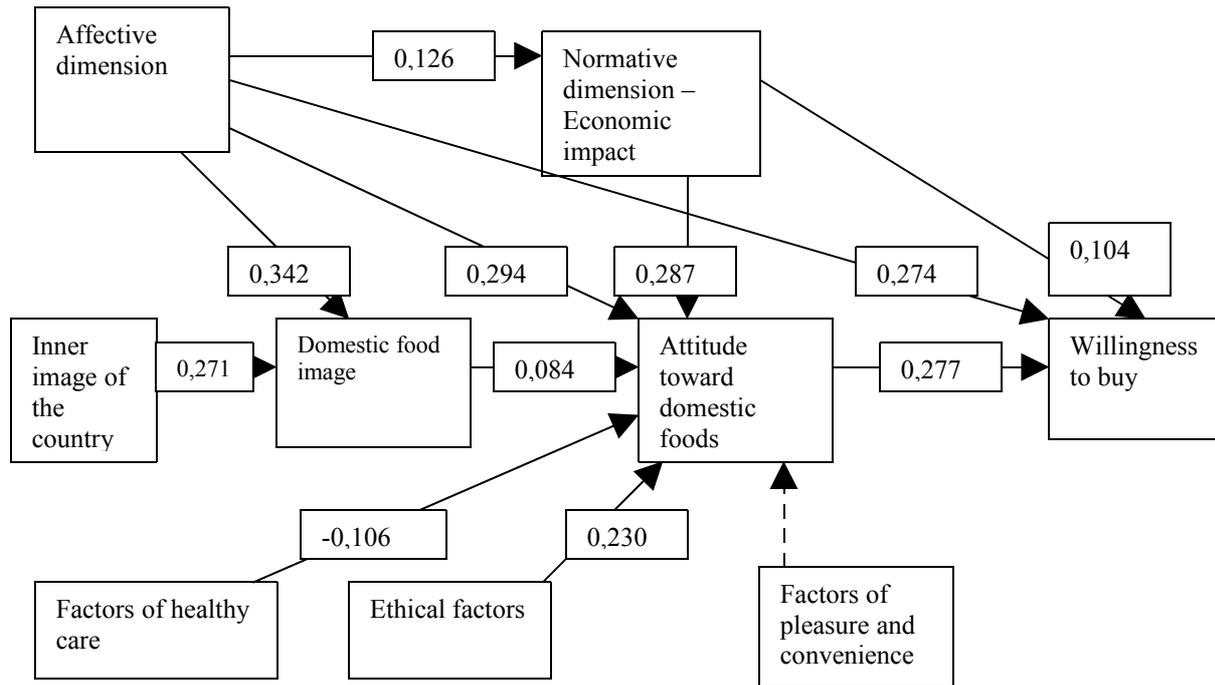


Figure 2. The path model of the influencing factors of domestic food preference – Hungarian sample Source: Own research (2009)

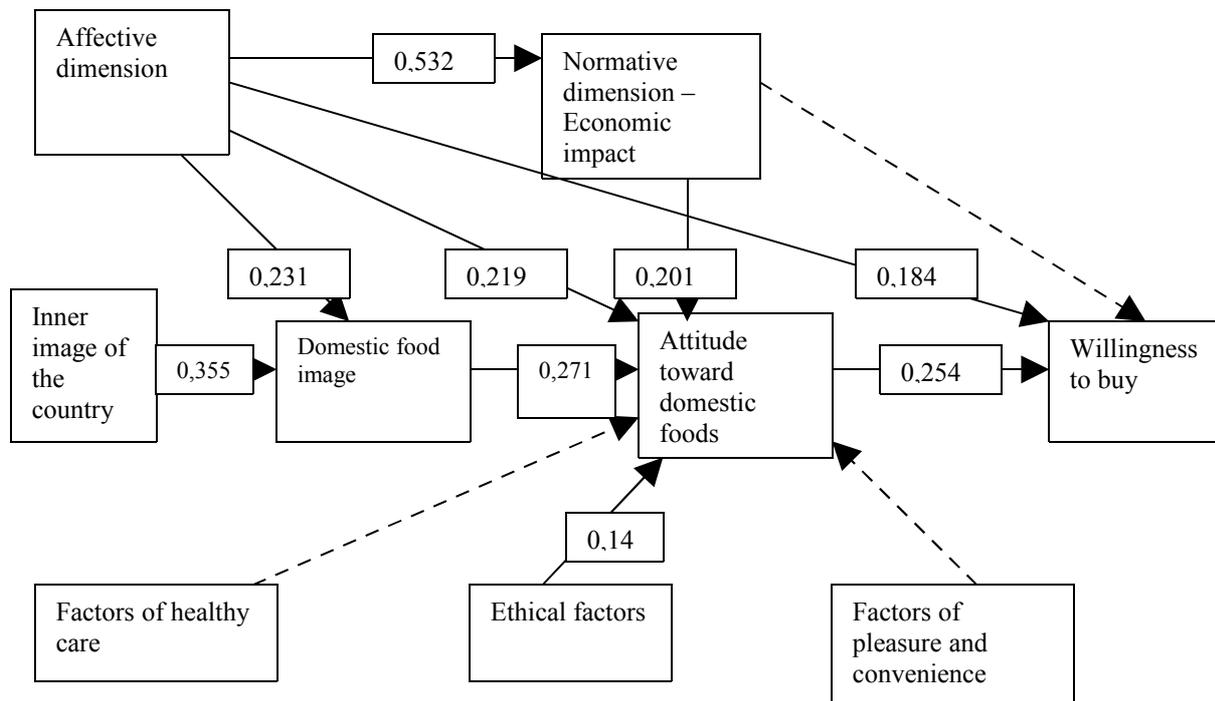


Figure 3. The path model of the influencing factors of domestic food preference – Polish sample Source: Own research (2009)

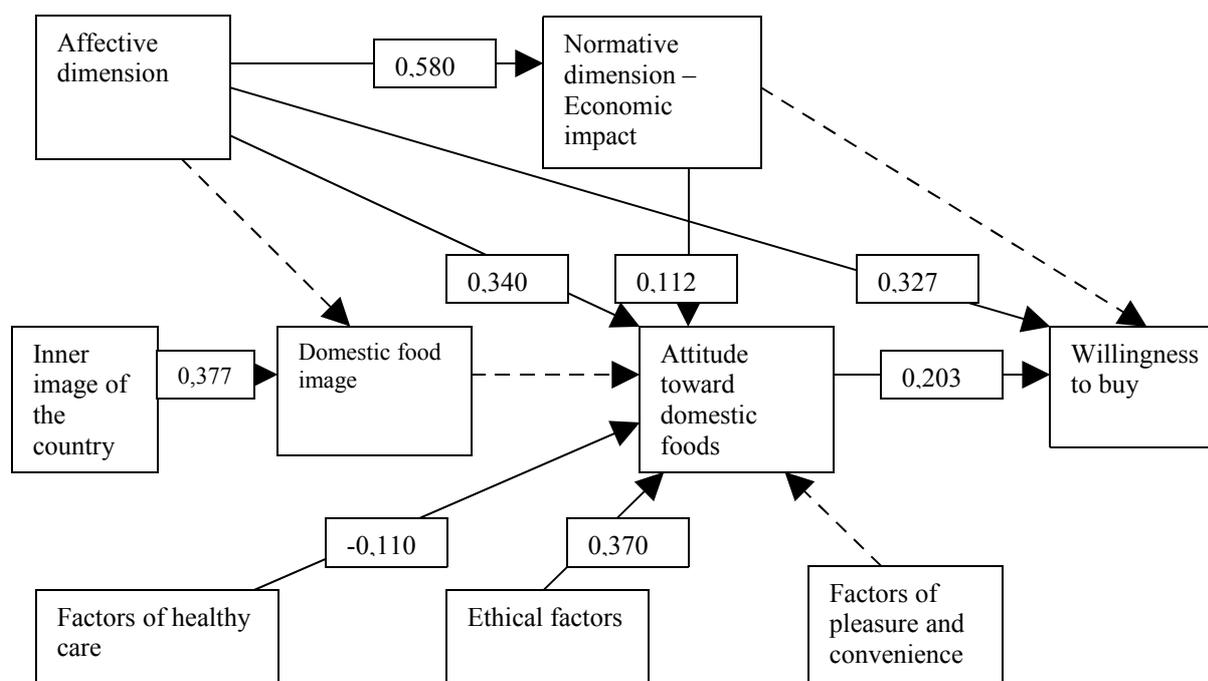


Figure 4. The path model of the influencing factors of domestic food preference – German sample  
Source: Own research (2009)

- As a result of the much food-safety scandal in the past, the local products are getting in focus as a possible risk reducing factor.
- According to the results we can say, that domestic food preference is a risk reducing factor in case of the German and the Hungarian respondents. In case of the Polish youth, we can not say this, presumably because they were less risk sensitive. Hungarian respondents were the most risk sensitive, what lead to a more conscious food choice. For the German youths local products are the best choice if they want to be sure of the safety of the products. **(T3, H12 accepted)**.

### C3b.: The segmentation of young adults by consumer ethnocentrism. (T4, H13, H14)

A szakirodalom és az eddigi kutatási eredmények alapján általánosan megállapítható, hogy a On the basis of the previous surveys, youths are less ethnocentric, than elders, because of elders' conservative attitude (Malota, 2003). This statement could be considered by the results of a representative survey from 2009, which showed, that amongst the ethnocentric consumers there is a group which was named „patriotic youths”. The preconception was that youths were not a homogenous group considering the ethnocentrism, was based on this result.

As a result of my study it can be said, that young adults of the three countries can be segmented by the affective, normative and cognitive dimensions of consumer ethnocentrism.

I could differentiate four segments in case of the Hungarian youths:

Ethnocentric segment N=158 (33,1%);

Rational, economically concerned N=133 (27,8%);

Ambiguous N=113 (23,6%);

Dismissive N=74 (15,5%). **(H13 accepted)**

- In case of the other two countries I have found four-four segments, too. But country specific characteristics were found in case of all the three countries. **(H14 accepted)**

As a result of the survey carried out in the three countries I have found several differences among the ethnocentric tendencies of each country's respondents. The ethnocentric tendencies in case of

the German respondents are lead by the preference of traditional food more, than the other two countries' respondents, which shows the positive result of their efficient collective marketing. While in case of the polish model the most dominant influencing factor on attitude is the product image, in case of the Hungarian model the most dominant factors which effects on attitude are the affective component and the economic impact. The effect of product image is rather small. This suggests an emotion based choice of domestic product, than a conscious product choice. The domestic food preference is a risk reducing factor for the Hungarian and mostly for the German respondents, but In case of the Polish youth, we can not say this, presumably because they were less risk sensitive.

#### *4. New and novel scientific results*

T1: Defining a statement list, which shows the consumers' ethnocentric tendencies in case food products. Systemising of the national food product preferences' influencing factors in a theoretical model and the validation of the model.

Based on the literature of place of origin, ethnocentrism and on the existing theoretical models, a statement list which measures the consumer ethnocentrism and a theoretical model was created, which synthesises the influencing factors of the preference of national products.

Based on the literature of the place of origin and the consumer ethnocentrism, we can say, that consumer ethnocentrism affects domestic food preference by affective, cognitive and normative dimensions. My theoretical model synthesises the influencing factors of the attitude and preference toward domestic foodstuffs, which are the followings: The main value factors of consumer behaviour; The dimensions of consumer ethnocentrism; The process of origin influencing food choice. For the validation of the model I used path-model method, which highlighted the differences of the three countries' respondents.

T2. Study of the main value factors of the food consumption (health care, ethical, convenience and pleasure) related to the Hungarian consumers.

As the result of the survey the main food consumption trends are exactly shown in the respondents' food choosing decisions. Judgement of the Hungarian food products' characteristics are connected to the pleasure, convenience and health value factors, while the judgement of ethical issues are ambiguous.

T3. Studying consumer ethnocentrism as a risk reduction factor in case of food choice.

According to the results we can say, that domestic food preference is a risk reducing factor in case of the German and the Hungarian respondents. Ethnocentric tendencies influence the selected risk reduction method.

T4. Structuring and defining consumer segments based on their ethnocentrism.

As a result of my study it can be said, that young adults of the three countries can be segmented by the affective, normative and cognitive dimensions of consumer ethnocentrism.

## VI. Results and proposals

My research has verified that different motivations lead to the preference of domestic food. The results help for the food producers to match their marketing activities to the demand of the targeted consumer group.

J1: Because confidence is a key factor in the motivation to prefer domestic foods, the reliable product labelling is very important. Moreover, it is important to emphasize the high quality of the Hungarian products in the marketing communication. Of course, this can be efficient in that case only, if the experimental characteristics of the foods confirm the safety and the high quality of the domestic foods.

J2: In case of the young consumers it is worth considering to develop the convenience and pleasure characteristics of the Hungarian foods, because this target group is rather hedonic. Moreover, the youths' values which defining their consuming behaviour is immature, it is important to form their values, which lead to the preference of domestic foods in the future.

J3: In case of those consumer groups, when the obstacle of the domestic food preference is the mistrust, and doubt in the domestic origin of the foods, the „Hungarian product regulation” presumably will have positive effect in forming confidence. But, that is important to emphasize in the marketing communication, what the defined categories mean.

J4: Beside of the bottom-up attitude formation, top-down attitude formation – which effects the consumer norms – is important, too. According to my results, a consumer group exists, which main motivation in domestic food preference the support of the domestic market. The ‘buy domestic’ campaigns can affect the willingness to buy without affecting the attitude toward the domestic foods.

J5: Buy the comparison of the consumers' ethnocentric behaviour of the selected countries we can observe the result of an efficient collective marketing activity in Germany since years: German youths choose domestic foods more consciously, and they committed for the traditional foods.

The possible ways of the continuation of the research:

J6: The validation of my theoretical model on a representative sample.

J7: The country specific correcting of the created statement list.

J8: The correction of the dimensions of consumer ethnocentrism with the help of qualitative research method.

J9: Testing my research model on a certain product category.

J10: The expansion of the model with the price and environment factors.

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