Chapter 1
A Cross-Generational Perspective on Green Loyalty in Romanian Retail

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Abstract In the century of social media, mobile technologies and online communication, retailers are faced with more and more complex challenges in their attempt to satisfy and maintain current consumers, and attract new customers. Faced with increasing challenges in the development of attractive offers for target groups, and with the need to implement sustainable business strategies, retailers choose to widen their appeal with environmentally friendly, green products and to approach customers according to their values, motivations, preferences and attitudes. In order to establish the extent to which food and non-food retailers in Romania are capable of building green loyalty among various generations of consumers (Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, Millennials and Gen Zers) against the background of consumers' green values, green propensity and green reuse motivation, the authors conducted a survey-based empirical exploratory study. By means of structural equation modelling, it is shown that consumers' green loyalty varies between generations, Millennials, Generation Z being a lot more oriented towards green loyalty than their parents or grandparents.

Keywords Green loyalty · Green consumer values · Romanian retail
Structural equation modelling

Clasificare JEL Q01 · Q55

1.1 Introduction

In today's society, the available resources and the way in which these are used have become a growing concern, due to people's increased access to information

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(Viswanathan et al. 2013) and the huge role of social media in the spread of online communication (Young 2015; Dabija and Grant 2016). Companies, as well as specialists, constantly seek new ways to address and satisfy people's needs and adapt to their ever-changing and evolving expectations and demands (Dabija and Pop 2008). Therefore, the identification of alternative, sustainable, green, environmentally friendly products, allowing mankind to preserve the planet's resources, reduce pollution, protect the environment and improve the population's health is as important and timely for companies as is the use of new production technologies, process innovation, the streamlining of activities and decision-making transparency and correctness (Pop and Dabija 2013; Postelnicu and Dabija 2015). Marketers constantly seek new solutions and techniques to change and adapt 'ordinary' products and brands by means of new technologies in the production of recyclable materials and components, and organic ingredients, which protect the environment and do not in any way undermine their integrity (Hamid 2014).

Many retailers view sustainable products as a niche variety, which cannot be widely marketed in stores or be part of their offers, due to low demand and the higher per unit production, transportation and storage costs, as a consequence of the smaller quantity of articles produced. The higher the visibility and degree of acceptance of such products, the lower the costs of maintaining such varieties, and the better the image of retailers among consumers, by focusing on sustainability strategies, which also brings them higher profits. Certainly, the promotion of a strong image plays an extremely important role in supporting such brands (Collins et al. 2007). Being aware of the behavioural patterns adopted when purchasing sustainable products, and of the fact that such purchasing is very likely to be repeated in the future, as the consumer again chooses green products in a new shopping context, retailers often expand their offers to include such products, even if they currently do not generate enough revenue.

To introduce and keep selling sustainable, green products, it is important for retailers to be aware of and understand the various antecedents (prerequisites) setting off consumers' behaviour and reactions, regardless of their age, in determining their preference for such products. At the same time, retailers have to discover the means whereby they can generate customer loyalty towards green products, be it in terms of recommending and re-purchasing environmentally friendly products or revisiting retailers which implement and support sustainability strategies and measures. The literature highlights that young people are more willing than their parents and grandparents to adopt green behaviour and choose retailers implementing green strategies (Singh 2013; Lan 2014; Young 2015).

The measures and tactics employed by retailers to attract consumers and earn their loyalty may vary considerably depending on the kind of goods marketed (food versus non-food), and the frequency with which such goods are purchased (Pop et al. 2011; Swoboda et al. 2014). The loyalty displayed in revisiting, re-purchasing from and recommending a retailer that implements a green strategy may be determined by a number of behavioural antecedents, which enhance the individual's preference for the store concerned. An individual's environmental protection-oriented personal and social values, his/her propensity to search for and prefer green, sustainable products, the desire to make a small contribution to the preservation of resources and the motivation to buy environmentally friendly products represent important factors behind young, adult or elderly people's choice of a particular retailer and its products. Starting with the generational theory (Williams and Page 2009) based on the segmentation of individuals into generations according to their year of birth, the authors investigate, within a quantitative research study, the factors generating 'green' loyalty to food and non-food retail stores among four generations of consumers. These factors are the green values, green propensity and green reuse motivation of the consumers.

Following the literature review on the behavioural antecedents (the green values, green propensity and green reuse motivation of the consumers) shaping consumers' green loyalty, the authors highlight the different degrees of green awareness among different generations. The quantitative empirical study conducted by the authors among older (Baby Boomers), adult (Generation X) and young (Millennials and Generation Z) people shows how the third group (young people) are more willing to develop green loyalty to retail stores by revisiting and recommending the retailer to other people. Conclusions and directions for future research are presented at the end of the paper.

1.2 Green Loyalty and Its Antecedents

It is not only the need to produce sustainable products that retailers are faced with but also the challenge of attracting and satisfying consumers, gaining their loyalty, having them re-purchase brands or products, and revisit and recommend the store. Endowing a product with environmentally friendly or organic elements does not necessarily modify its appearance nor make it more user-friendly or attractive to consumers. Cowan and Kinley (2014) point out that people do not change their preference, do not buy products and do not become more loyal to supplying companies merely because their products are made of 'green' components or ingredients. An important role in the building of customer loyalty to products made of environmentally friendly components is certainly played by word-of-mouth, brand trust and brand effect, as well as people's willingness to pay a higher price for their favourite product. Loyalty blends the attitudinal dimension with the cognitive dimension, prompting consumers to pay a higher price for the characteristics of a product, as well as for the brand fame, sometimes to the detriment of the quality/price ratio (Garcia de los Salmones et al. 2005).

Customer loyalty to a retail format, company, product or brand may be regarded as the highest reward on the part of the customer when his/her wishes have been fulfilled and expectations have been satisfied or even exceeded (Pop and Dabija 2014). Even if the slightly higher price and the relatively recent entry in the market of green products might be thought of as barriers to their purchase, recent studies show that consumers' personal values and sustainable orientation, together with their desire to have a share in protecting the environment and preserving resources, will not only make them prefer such products but also command their loyalty (Lin et al. 2017).

Consumers across continents show increased willingness to pay a premium price for sustainable, organic or green products (Davari and Strutton 2014; Pop and Dabija 2014), and they often decide to buy on the basis of positive experiences and feelings towards such products and the intrinsic and extrinsic advantages gained by purchasing them. The benefits of customer loyalty are evident not only in the form of repeat purchasing and the preference for a store or retailer but also in the form of consumers' positive advertising (word-of-mouth recommendation) of the store/retailer to other people and increased attachment to the brand (Pop and Dabija 2014).

Customer loyalty may also be engendered by retailers undertaking campaigns to promote social responsibility and raise awareness about the need to protect the environment (Singh et al. 2008). People usually show positive appreciation when a company is actively involved in the preservation of resources, provides support to the disadvantaged or devotes time, effort, staff and resources to solve environmental problems. Their appreciation will translate into revisiting, re-purchasing, word-of-mouth recommendation and preference for the same brands, stores or retailer. Meeting consumers' expectations assures retailers that they will return to their favourite stores (Pop and Dabija 2014). Conversely, falling short of expectations might encourage consumers to defect to the competition or spread negative word-of-mouth comments.

Each retailer wishes its customers were immune to the marketing efforts of its competitors, to the effect that they only buy from its stores and prefer only its brands which they re-purchase and recommend products (Dabija and Băbuț 2014). Despite retailers' increasing offers of green, organic or environmentally friendly products, such varieties are still for a niche only market, which makes their mass marketing and purchase by a greater number of consumers less feasible, particularly as they are marketed at a price higher than that of similar traditional products. The major challenge for any company trying to promote sustainable products and launch green brands in the market lies in building green consumer loyalty among its target segments (Dabija and Bejan 2017). This loyalty is based on a specific mindset (Pop and Dabija 2013) which prefers almost exclusively products made of sustainable, organic, green elements or ingredients contributing to environmental protection, and is the result of three essential antecedents: green consumer values, green consumer propensity and green reuse motivation (Garcia de los Salmones et al. 2005; Dabija and Bejan 2017).

Green Consumer Values. An individual's values represent principles learned over time, experience and circumstance. The importance of one's own values differs between individuals, being specific indicators used to assess a situation or decision. Consumer values influence the social norms guiding an individual in his/her actions (Solomon 2014), which in turn influence their beliefs and behaviour (Collins et al. 2007).

The literature has shown that there is a direct link between an individual's values, beliefs and behaviour displayed in connection with sustainability and his/her green orientation (Karp 1996; Schultz and Zelezny 1999; Stern et al. 1999). In fact, collectivism-oriented people show greater concern for sustainability and willingness to participate in environmental protection actions than individualism-oriented people. Likewise, people advocating universalism and feeling close to other people as well as to the environment show a proactive attitude by championing the protection of nature, and by supporting companies' sustainable strategies and actions. At the opposite end are people driven by their own self-interests and exhibiting a conservative attitude. Such people resist change and do not pursue the welfare of society, as they reject everything related to sustainability and green products (Collins et al. 2007).

Green Consumer Propensity. It is important for retailers pursuing a sustainability strategy to properly understand not only the values of their customers but also how these values can be used to influence their preference and propensity for green products (Hamid 2014). Retailers attempt to persuade green-oriented customers into making known the monetary and psychological advantages gained from purchasing and consuming the products offered among their friends, acquaintances and the target groups they identify with. The customers of retail stores often express environmental concern with respect to the products they buy, and this is a reflection of their green attitude and desire to adopt sustainable products (Cohn and Vaccaro 2015). Environmental concern has a positive effect and a major impact on consumers' attitude to green products, a good predictor thereof being the individual's collectivist orientation (Kirmani and Khan 2016). Environmental concern assumes the existence of a proactive attitude on the part of consumers and a desire to share in solving environmental problems, preserving resources, etc. Further, modern consumers tend to adopt green products due to social influence from the relevant reference groups they identify with or belong to. Membership of strong reference groups can lead to a change in consumers' opinions and attitudes, as they may search, prefer or buy green products with increased vigour (Varshneya et al. 2017).

Consumers generally resist change to the effect that any change in the characteristics of a product may lead to a short- or long-term drop in sales (Zentes et al. 2012; Foscht and Swoboda 2017). Therefore, marketers are tasked with persuading consumers to prefer and buy sustainable, green, environmentally friendly products. They also have to take on the difficult task of getting consumers to use/exploit the purchased articles/products for a longer period, and reuse or recycle them (Dabija et al. 2016; Dabija et al. 2017). However, an individual's green orientation may be the needed catalyst for generating a favourable attitude translated into the preference of not only sustainable products but also products meeting sustainability requirements.

Green Reuse Motivation. An individual's care and attachment to nature conservation may foster the adoption of sustainable products and spark the intention to buy green products (Bisschoff and Liebenberg 2015). It is the collectivism-oriented individuals who support environmental protection and conservation campaigns, as they are more willing to recycle, reuse or extend the lifespan of the products they buy (do Paço et al. 2013). Individuals' knowledge of the environment, their affinity for environmental protection activities, green values and proactive attitudes underlying their past actions often serve as good predictors of future green behaviour (Cowan and Kinley 2014). Individuals who recycle products are thought of as innovators when adopting green products (Haws et al. 2014) because they achieve maximum effect from existing resources by reusing old products in a creative way, in accordance with environmental protection norms. Product recycling and reusing is a form of sustainable consumption behaviour (Joshi and Rahman 2016). The adoption of green products and the support given to companies for environmental protection actions are major parts of sustainable behaviour, while recycling is a complementary element.

People's penchant for recycling is generally caused by their positive attitude to environmental protection and the individual's set of fundamental values (Roberts and Bacon 1997). A passive attitude to environmental problems and challenges, together with lack of convenience and other disruptions, may inhibit an individual's desire to recycle products. However, for many people, recycling behaviour is a moral norm (Tanner and Kast 2003).

In light of the previously mentioned aspects, we put forward the following hypothesis:

H_1, the incidence of green consumers' values, green consumers' propensity and green reuse motivation in building consumer loyalty to the retail formats considered varies.

1.3 Green Consciousness of Consumer Generations

The adoption of sustainable behaviour, looking diligently for organic or green products and taking part in environmental protection campaigns are behaviours shaped by individuals' value systems, attitudes, lifestyles, preferences, experience (Euromonitor International 2015a) and socio-demographic characteristics. Namkung and Soocheong (Shawn) (2014) conclude that age is an important element which might influence an individual's willingness to pay a higher price for green products. In fact, older people aged over 55 (Baby Boomers) consume more sustainable products than their younger peers because they have adequate financial resources and pay greater attention to their health (Hur et al. 2015). Baby Boomers' education and life experience (Gurău 2012; Young 2015) accounts for their greater concern for global warming and healthy diet as part of their effort to lower man's impact on nature and resources (DiPietro et al. 2013; Euromonitor International 2015a). However, typical of this generation is their loyalty to brands and products they have been familiar with since their youth. Older people are very reluctant to change consumption habits and buy new products, even if such products make a better contribution to environmental protection and conservation of resources (Hur et al. 2015). Many Baby Boomers now regret the choices they have made in life, as well as the fact that they may have contributed to excessive use of resources through the products they have bought or preferred. With this reality in mind, some Baby Boomers re-think their past choices, being at present more concerned with the issue of sustainability and environmental protection (Venn et al. 2017). In light of their values and attitudes, we believe that, H_2, Baby Boomers pay greater attention to green propensity than the younger generations.

Green products are keenly preferred, sought and bought by other generations as well: Gen Xers (born between 1965 and 1980), Millennials (1981–1994) and Generation Z (born after 1995) (Taken Smith 2011; Gurău 2012; Doster 2013; Eastman et al. 2014; Young 2015). Gen Xers are relatively well-educated, despite the hostile living conditions they have been through, especially in Eastern countries and the former communist bloc (Euromonitor 2009). They place great emphasis on family and social relationships, are flexible and pragmatic, and pursue spiritual values and intellectual development (Hernaus and Pološki Vokic 2014). On the other hand, Millennials are a lot more anxious to achieve their objectives (Howe and Strauss 2003) using, just like the next generation (Z), social media, mobile technology, smartphones, etc., to communicate and always keep abreast of the latest news (Shaw et al. 2008). Displaying an antagonistic attitude to Baby Boomers, Millennials and Generation Z members are a lot more straightforward and communicative, and concerned with ethnic and multicultural issues, but also loyal to the communities they belong to or identify with. Therefore, the problems and ideals of their friends and acquaintances are also their own problems and ideals (Bucic et al. 2012). Young people are aware of environmental problems and of their duty to diminish the human impact on nature, and, for this reason, they are willing to seek and buy green, organic products, contributing to the preservation of resources (Dunmore 2013; Singh 2013; Lan 2014). As they are concerned with their own future, they are willing to accept and pay a higher price for eco-friendly products/articles (Lu et al. 2013).

These aspects encourage companies to use green products as the main lever to earn the loyalty of Millennials, Generation Z and Baby Boomers. Capturing the attention of these customers and drawing them to the retailer's stores will result in their serving as opinion leaders and endorsers, influencing and persuading others into buying green, organic products which preserve resources (Singh et al. 2008).

1.4 Methodology of Research

A survey-based empirical exploratory study has been conducted to highlight the extent to which the members of the four generations considered (Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, Millennials and Generation Z) are able to build up their 'green' loyalty to the retail stores selling food, electronic and household appliances, DIY, furniture, interior design as well as fashion, footwear and sportswear items, driven by behavioural factors determining their green orientation (green values, green propensity and green reuse motivation). The investigated model is presented in Fig. 1.1.

During the research, over 100 interviewers (students of the authors) asked respondents for their opinions on the themes investigated. The data collected through questionnaires were systematically compiled, centralized and then interpreted with research-specific statistical software—SPSS and AMOS (for structural equation modelling) (Churchill 1991). To develop the questionnaire and its themes, each question was operationalized in accordance with the guidelines in the literature, while the statements were tailored to the context of the generations investigated and the various types of retail (Table 1.1). In fact, the scales used in the present research were also used in the context of food retail (Nasir and Karakaya 2014), concerning the factors affecting and determining green consumer behaviour (Lastovicka et al. 1999; Haws et al. 2014), and in the context of socially responsible consumption (Antil and Bennett 1979; Antil 1984).

Out of almost 3,500 interviews carried out in 2016, 3,382 were validated. The socio-demographic sample representativeness was ensured by the prior training of interviewees who had to select respondents by using the quota sampling method according to age and gender (Churchill 1991). These quotas were established for each interviewee according to the distribution of Romania's population in the Statistical Yearbook (2014). The interviewees had to conduct face-to-face interviews in public places, at the respondents' homes or workplaces and in the neighbourhood of different retail stores. Each interviewee was instructed to conduct ten interviews in these places. Only respondents having recent experience (last three months) of the stores concerned (fashion, footwear, food, electronic and household appliances, DIY, furniture and interior design) were invited to interview. The randomness of answers was ensured by each respondent having to name three stores in a category. The first respondent was asked to analyse the statements in Table 1.1 in relation to the first spontaneously named store, the second respondent analysed the second store, etc. In drawing the sample, efforts were made to ensure the territorial representativeness of answers, as interviews were carried out in rural areas (about 15% of questionnaires) as well as in urban municipalities of different population levels: small cities (less than 20,000 inhabitants), medium-sized cities (20,000–75,000 inhabitants) and large cities (over 75,000 inhabitants). Respondents expressed their level of agreement with respect to the statements in Table 1.1 on a five-point Likert scale. Questionnaires with more than 5% of missing answers were later excluded from the analysis.

After the data were collected, they were statistically tested to determine their correctness, reliability and internal consistency by means of Cronbach's α coefficient ($\alpha > 0.7$), the 'item-to-total' correlation, the KMO criterion (>0.7), Bartlett's test of sphericity (exploratory factor analysis) (SPSS) and structural equation modelling (AMOS) (Churchill 1991). The values of the tests exceeding the minimum acceptable thresholds are presented in Table 1.2.

Due to the high internal consistency of the dimensions of green consumers orientation (green consumer values, green consumer propensity, and green reuse motivation), these were integrated into a factor analysis (Walsh and Beatty 2007). The results (Table 1.3) confirm that the dimensions were clearly defined by respondents. The

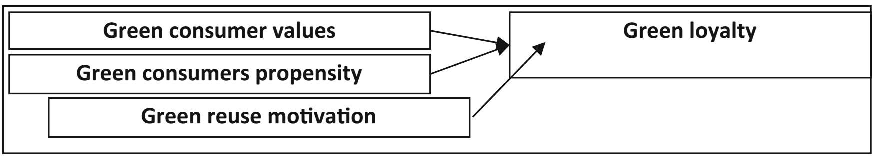

Fig. 1.1 The investigated general model *Source own research*

Table 1.1 Operationalization of investigated concepts

Construct	Items
Green consumer values (Lastovicka et al. 1999)	When I make a decision, I also consider the impact of my actions on the environment
	My shopping/buying habits are influenced by my care for the environment
	I describe myself as an environmentally responsible person
	It is important to me that fashion, sportswear and footwear articles should not harm the environment
	I am deeply worried by the waste of the planet's resources
Green consumer propensity (Antil and Bennett 1979; Antil 1984; Dabija et al. 2016)	I am concerned about compliance with environmental protection rules in the…. industry and trade
	I am concerned about the negative effect on the environment of the…. industry and trade
	The…. articles that I purchase must always have a low impact on the environment
	I always try to find out as much information as possible about the… articles that I purchase
Green reuse motivation (Lastovicka et al. 1999; Haws et al. 2014)	I am interested in recycling my products after I no longer use them
	Although they are still useful, many good fashion, sportswear and footwear articles are thrown away
	Optimizing the use of my resources makes me feel good
	If one takes care of one's own… articles, one will certainly make savings
	If I can reuse one of my … articles, then there is no point in buying a new one
Green loyalty (Nasir and Karakaya 2014)	In the next three months I intend to buy 'green' (organic) … articles
	I will recommend the 'green' … articles (organic fibres, etc.) to my friends and acquaintances
	I will buy more 'green' … articles in the future
	In the near future I will try out other 'green' … articles which I have not bought before
	If the 'green' … articles I need are not available, I will seek them in other stores, even if they are very far away from my home

Table 1.2 Results of testing validity and reliability of collected data

Dimension	No. of items	α[1] >0.7	KMO[2] >0.7	χ^2; df; p[3]	Eigenvalue	% variance
Green consumer values	5	0.883	0.857	8,801.13; 101; ****	3.409	68.174
Green consumers propensity	6	0.813	0.808	5,496.14; 123; ****	2.825	56.505
	5	0.842				
Green reuse motivation	4	0.788	0.742	2,074.39; 26; ****	2.078	51.96
Green loyalty	5	0.897	0.873	10,142.811; 10; ****	3.564	71.28

[1]—Cronbach's α coefficient (checking data reliability)
[2]—Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin criterion (exploratory factor analysis) for each dimension
[3]—Bartlett's test of sphericity (χ^2—hi square, df—degrees of freedom, p—probability
****$p<0.001$; *** $p<0.01$; ** $p<0.05$; * $p<0.1$)
Source own research

fit indices exceed the minimum thresholds considered (Churchill 1991; Forza and Filippini 1998; Ju et al. 2006): KMO = 0.911 > 0.7, χ^2 = 19,801.815****; df = 910).

The validation of the model proposed by the authors (Fig. 1.1) was achieved through structural equation modelling (AMOS) applied to all respondents, as well as to each of the four generations. In each case, the fit indices exceed the minimum acceptable thresholds (>0.8; ≤0.08) recommended by the literature (Forza and Filippini 1998; Ju et al. 2006). This allows the proper interpretation of results (Table 1.7).

Sample structure by retail formats

The breakdown of respondents by generations was based on their year of birth, according to the guidelines in the literature: Baby Boomers 1945–1964; Generation X 1965–1979; Millennials 1980–1994 and Generation Z 1995–2000 (Gurău 2012; Doster 2013; Eastman et al. 2014; Lan 2014; Young 2015; Dabija et al. 2017). The interviewees were instructed not to approach people under 15, due to the belief that they did not have proper experience in buying food, household appliances or DIY products. Respondents had to have some experience with the types of goods considered (clothing articles, including shoes; electronic and household appliances, IT and accessories; DIY, furniture and interior design; and food products); otherwise, they were eliminated from the sample (filter question).

Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample

As can be seen in Table 1.4, most respondents were Millennials (1,215 persons) divided into almost equal groups of men (638 persons) and women (577 persons). Gen Xers and Generation Z represent the next two groups in terms of sample size (862 Gen Xers and 868 Zs), while Baby Boomers were the smallest group of respondents in the sample (222 women and 215 men). The number of Baby Boomers in the

Table 1.3 Factor analysis of the investigated dimensions

Items factors	1	2	3
When I make a decision I also consider the impact of my actions on the environment	0.860		
My shopping/buying habits are influenced by my care for the environment	0.809		
I describe myself as an environmentally responsible person	0.755		
It is important to me that fashion, sportswear and footwear articles should not harm the environment	0.748		
I am deeply worried by the waste of the planet's resources	0.692		
I am concerned about compliance with environmental protection rules in the…. industry and trade		0.801	
I am concerned about the negative effect on the environment of the…. industry and trade		0.728	
The…. articles that I purchase must always have a low impact on the environment		0.650	
I always try to find out as much information as possible about the… articles that I purchase		0.599	
I am interested in recycling my products after I no longer use them		0.527	
Although they are still useful, many good… articles are thrown away			0.601
Optimizing the use of my resources makes me feel good			0.593
If one takes care of one's own… articles, one will certainly make savings			0.552
If I can reuse some of my goods, then there is no point in buying new ones			0.425
Eigenvalues	5.662	1.689	1.265
% of Variance	40.44	12,0	9.03
Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring; Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization			

Source own research

sample is relatively small because it was rather difficult for interviewees to contact them, and because they were reluctant to answer all the questions in the questionnaire. The analysis of respondents' income reveals that most of them earned between the minimum (205 EUR) and average (460 EUR) wage being paid at the time of data collection. Obviously, younger people, notably members of Generation Z, had an income below the minimum wage (234 persons), followed by Millennials (73 persons), while Gen Xers and Baby Boomers had higher incomes (wages) due to their experience and years of service. Most Gen Xers (75 persons—2.2% of the sample) and Millennials (50 persons—1.5% of the sample) had an income exceeding two national average wages (920 EUR). 18.5% of respondents refused to reveal their income.

The number of rural respondents broken down by generations is almost equal Gen Xers (130 persons), Millennials (149 persons) and Generation Z (157 persons), but strikingly less small in the case of Baby Boomers (81 persons). This is due to the manner in which respondents were approached, preferably in public places, at their workplace and in the proximity of stores (Table 1.5).

Over half of respondents (55.8%) lived in three- or four-person households. This is the case with about 550 respondents from each of the generations Z, Y and X (Table 1.5). It is expected, therefore, that they had a rich experience in purchasing food and non-food products and in visiting these retail chains. Such products were also purchased by people living in one-person households: 52 Baby Boomers (1.5% of the sample), 72 Gen Xers (2.1% of the sample), 208 Millennials (6.2%) and 134 Generation Z members (4.0%). These were periodically faced with the decision to buy food, clothing, shoes, electronic and household products, and were likely to be more critical of retailers due to their previous experience with them.

The share of net income allotted by the members of the four generations to spending on green or sustainable products was variable (Table 1.6). It has been noticed that, for the sample as a whole, more than half of respondents (1,743 persons—51.5% of the sample) allocated up to 20% of their available income to the purchase of various green food and non-food products, while one-third of them (1,016 persons—30% of the sample) used between 21% and 40% of their income to buy their favourite green products. This supports our belief that respondents had proper shopping experience and, therefore, a good knowledge of retail brands and formats, being able to build a proper image of the market approach strategies and measures implemented. A relatively small number of consumers (168 persons—4.9% of the sample) allocated over 61% of their available net income to the purchase of different food and non-food sustainable products.

A research study conducted in eight European countries has identified significant differences in the fulfilment of consumers' intentions to buy organic food when the organic food market is booming, with lots of offers from retailers and producers. As a matter of fact, a strong and significant correlation has been noticed in these countries between consumers' intentions to buy organic food and their actual buying behaviour. At the opposite end are the countries in which the development of the organic food market is at an early stage, and the correlation between buying intention and buying behaviour is weak, as either intention is lacking or behaviour is lacking

Table 1.4 The four generations by gender and income

Generations	Baby boomers		(X)		Millennials		Z		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gen										
Male	215	6.4	350	10.3	638	18.9	388	11.5	**1,591**	**47.0**
Female	222	6.6	512	15.1	577	17.1	480	14.2	**1,791**	**53.0**
Total	**437**	**12.9**	**862**	**25.5**	**1,215**	**35.9**	**868**	**25.7**	**3,382**	**100.0**
Net monthly income (lei)										
Below minimum wage*	25	0.7	24	0.7	73	2.2	234	6.9	**356**	**10.5**
Minimum*—average** wage	222	6.6	376	11.1	569	16.8	248	7.3	**1,415**	**41.8**
Between 1 and 2 average wages**	116	3.4	310	9.2	354	10.5	37	1.1	**817**	**24.2**
Over 2 average wages**	38	1.1	75	2.2	50	1.5	6	0.2	**169**	**4.9**
Undisclosed wage	36	1.1	77	2.2	169	5.0	342	10.2	**625**	**18.5**
Total	**437**	**12.9**	**862**	**25.5**	**1,215**	**35.9**	**868**	**25.7**	**3,382**	**100.0**

Note Net minimum wage and net average wage at the time of research were 925 RON (205 EUR) and 2,065 RON (460 EUR), respectively
Source own research

Table 1.5 Residence and household size of respondents

Generations	Baby boomers		X		Millennials		Z		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Residence										
Urban	356	10.5	732	21.6	1,066	31.5	711	21.0	**2,865**	**84.7**
Rural	81	2.4	130	3.8	149	4.4	157	4.6	**517**	**15.3**
Total	**437**	**12.9**	**862**	**25.5**	**1,215**	**35.9**	**868**	**25.7**	**3,382**	**100.0**
Household size (number of persons)										
One	52	1.5	72	2.1	208	6.2	134	4.0	**466**	**13.8**
Two	155	4.6	170	5.0	335	9.9	102	3.0	**762**	**22.5**
Three–Four	197	5.8	549	16.2	600	17.8	538	15.9	**1,884**	**55.8**
Five and over	33	1.0	71	2.1	72	2.1	84	2.8	**270**	**8.0**
Total	**437**	**12.9**	**862**	**25.5**	**1,215**	**35.9**	**868**	**25.7**	**3,382**	**100.0**

Source own research

Table 1.6 Percentage of shopping expenses and the categories of goods purchased by members of the generations considered

Generations	Baby Boomers		X		Millennials		Z		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
% shopping expenses										
Below 20%	252	7.5	469	13.9	637	18.9	385	11.4	**1,743**	**51.5**
21-40%	118	3.5	243	7.2	405	12.0	250	7.4	**1,016**	**30.0**
41-60%	52	1.5	108	3.2	132	3.9	163	4.8	**455**	**13.5**
Over 61%	15	0.4	42	1.2	41	1.2	70	2.0	**168**	**4.9**
Total	**437**	**12.9**	**862**	**25.5**	**1,215**	**35.9**	**868**	**25.7**	**3,382**	**100.0**
Category of goods										
DIY, furniture, interior design	104	3.1	195	5.8	291	8.6	154	4.6	744	22.0
Electronic, household appliances, IT	97	2.9	198	5.9	306	9.0	162	4.8	763	22.6
Food	93	2.7	191	5.6	217	6.4	306	9.0	807	23.9
Fashion, sportswear, footwear	143	4.2	278	8.2	401	11.9	246	7.3	1.068	31.6
Total	**437**	**12.9**	**862**	**25.5**	**1,215**	**35.9**	**868**	**25.7**	**3,382**	**100.0**

Source own research

or both (Thøgersen and Zhou 2012). Kirmani and Khan (2016) also conclude that consumers in the European markets where the offer of green products is beginning to take shape (Serbia) are willing to pay a higher price for organic, environmentally friendly products. Hence, consumers want to have a share in the protection of the environment.

Most respondents made purchases from stores carrying green or sustainable clothing, sportswear and footwear products (1,068 persons—31.6% of the sample), and an almost equal percentage of them from stores selling food (23.9%), electronic products, household appliances and accessories (22.6%) and DIY, furniture and interior design articles (22.0%). It is interesting that Generation Z members visited to a greater extent the food stores (306 persons) with which they seemed to have the richest experience, while the other three generations visited more the clothing, sportswear and footwear stores (Table 1.6). Certainly, the available net income allocated to shopping was smaller in the case of young people, but larger in the case of the older generations who were working, and thus able to make a living and allot greater amounts of money to the purchase of non-essential products.

1.5 Research Findings

The objective of the research, that is, highlighting the extent to which various behavioural factors (green consumer values, green consumer propensity, green reuse motivation) contribute to building the ‘green’ loyalty of the members of the four generations considered (Baby Boomers, Xers, Millennials and Z) in Romanian retail (Fig. 1.1) was the starting point for the calculation of the model using structural equation modelling. As the model was found to be stable and the fit indices (Table 1.7) exceed the minimum acceptable thresholds (CFI, AGFI, NFI, TLI, GFI $>$ 0.8; SRMR, RMSEA $\leq$ 0.08) specified in the literature (Forza and Filippini 1998, pp. 1–20; Ju et al. 2006, pp. 373–393), the authors proceeded with the interpretation of results.

One finding is that *green consumers’ propensity* for all generations generally had the strongest and most significant influence on building customer loyalty to the analysed retail formats. Naturally, this impact was stronger in intensity in the case of young consumers, members of Generation Z (0.510****), than in the case of Gen Xers (0.486****) and Baby Boomers (0.472***), which is a sign that young people are more aware of the need to protect the environment than older people, since they are the ones who will be confronted in the future with the problems and challenges raised by the lack of sufficient environmental protection. Therefore, young people seemed concerned to a greater extent with the impact on the environment of the food and other products they buy, and always try to buy those goods with the lowest impact on nature. Respondents were willing to re-purchase organic, environmentally friendly products with ‘green’ components or ingredients, recommend their consumption to other people or buy them in larger quantities in the future. Loyalty to these retail formats translated into preference for retailers adopting a green strategy over those which do not and visiting them even when one has to cover a longer distance.

Table 1.7 Behaviour incidence of consumers' green orientation in enhancing their loyalty towards the retail formats, broken down by consumer generations

Effects		Model fit	
Generation Z (1995-present)	n = 868	χ^2	2,235.342
Green reuse motivation → Green Loyalty	0.263****	df	629
Green consumers values → Green Loyalty	0.250****	χ^2/df	3.554
Green consumers propensity → Green Loyalty	0.510****	GFI	0.932
Generation Y (1980–1994)	n = 1,215	AGFI	0.918
Green reuse motivation → Green Loyalty	0.200****	NFI	0.928
Green consumers values → Green Loyalty	0.251****	CFI	0.947
Green consumers propensity → Green Loyalty	0.508****	TLI	0.943
Generation X (1965–1979)	n = 862	*$p < 0.1$	**$p < 0.05$
Green reuse motivation → Green Loyalty	$0.103^{n.s.}$	***$p < 0.01$	
Green consumers values → Green Loyalty	0.170***	****$p < 0.001$	
Green consumers propensity → Green Loyalty	0.486****	$^{n.s.}$—insignificant	
Baby Boomers (1945–1964)	n = 437	RMSEA (≤ 0.08)	
Green reuse motivation → Green Loyalty	$0.058^{n.s.}$	0.0270	
Green consumers values → Green Loyalty	0.194**	SRMR (≤ 0.08)	
Green consumers propensity → Green Loyalty	0.472***	0.0443	

Source own research

The values of the green consumer, i.e. the intrinsic drivers simultaneously shaping and influencing his/her attitudes, perceptions, thinking, buying behaviour and consumption habits, fostered by his/her green, organic orientation, exerted an influence of average intensity and had different significance across the generations considered. Therefore, their impact was almost identical in terms of intensity and significance for the members of Generation Z (0.250****) and Millennials (0.251****) (Table 1.7). In other words, young people had already cultivated a strong attitude about sustainable consumption and the impact of their actions on the environment, making attempts, whenever they use food and non-food products, to contribute to the preservation of natural resources. In this way, they exhibited environmentally responsible behaviour. On the other hand, green values contributed to a lesser extent to building green loyalty in the case of Gen Xers (0.170***) and Baby Boomers (0.194**). This is probably because they grew up in a time when less emphasis was put on sustainability, social responsibility, environmental protection, reduction in the consumption of packaged and raw materials, etc., as other research studies also confirm (Namkung and Soocheong (Shawn) 2014). However, it has been noticed that, in the case of the two generations, green values contributed to strengthening and/or building loyal behaviour towards the retail formats that manage to attain 'green' status and those that adopt a 'green' strategy or implement proper measures to diminish consumption of resources worldwide.

Unlike Gen Xers ($0.103^{n.s.}$) and Baby Boomers ($0.058^{n.s.}$), young people—Generation Z (0.263****) and Millennials (0.200****)—were motivated to avoid discarding and excessive consumption of products, and to reuse or recycle food, clothing and electronic products, household appliances and furniture, etc. The insignificance of influence in the case of adult people as compared to the impact of average intensity and great significance in the case of young people leads to the conclusion that young people are motivated not only to make financial savings and help companies reduce the consumption of resources, but also prefer the retailers, and develop loyal behaviour towards the store chains that promote recycling, reusing, reduction of consumption of raw materials and resources, etc., within their market-approaching green actions and sustainability strategies (Table 1.7).

1.6 Conclusions

The results clearly show that an individual's own green values and motivation to buy environmentally friendly products are much stronger among Millennials and Generation Z members. They are more willing to display loyal behaviour towards the retailers implementing a sustainability strategy than are their parents and grandparents. At the same time, young people buy green products more frequently because they want to contribute to the protection of the environment. Consequently, the hypothesis H_1 is confirmed, according to which *the incidence of green consumers' values, green consumers' propensity and green reuse motivation in building consumer loyalty to the retail formats considered varies*.

Sustainability and green products are obviously important to all consumers, regardless of age. Consumers are able to build their green loyalty and re-purchase from their favourite retailer, or recommend it to others based on their green orientation, their personal values fostering the search and consumption of organic products and their motivation to buy them. However, the results obtained disprove the hypothesis H_2 according to which *Baby Boomers pay greater attention to green propensity than the younger generations*. The results actually show that young people (Millennials and Generation Z) are more likely to exhibit green behaviour than Baby Boomers.

The results also reveal that young people are more motivated to contribute to reducing the consumption of products than the older generations. The insignificance of the relationship between the motivation to reuse products and the loyalty (Table 1.7) felt towards the analysed retail formats is accounted for by the fact that adult people were not brought up in a spirit of recycling and reusing and, as such, they are more likely to consume products without thinking about the impact of their own actions on the environment. Therefore, companies are charged with the demanding task of identifying appropriate ways to educate consumers in the spirit of consumption reduction and environmental protection.

The system of sustainability and environmental protection-oriented personal values underlies consumers' favourable attitude to organic, environmentally friendly products. Once the attitude is firmly established, the individual will prefer and purchase those products. Repeating the purchase will develop trust in the products and create a positive image of them. In the end, the individual will display loyal behaviour, purchasing more frequently the products which best satisfy his/her needs, comply with their values and make them happier and more content. Sustainability still remains a concept whose facets and implications are not fully understood by some retailers. They use sustainability to improve their reputation and image among the target groups, and less to provide added value, and effectively contribute to the protection of the environment through the products sold as sustainable.

The literature (Silva Braga Junior et al. 2015) points to situations in which articles not made according to sustainability norms, even if not harmful to health or the environment, are marketed as green products. They may have an attractive design contrasting with that of similar traditional products and are beautifully packaged to draw customers' attention but they do not contribute in any way to the protection or the preservation of the environment. The 'rush' for a sustainable image to attract customers preferring and purchasing such products may sometimes outweigh the actual implementation of such principles. In other words, sustainability is viewed by some retailers as a life and business principle, while to others it is only a marketing or PR 'tool' used to draw customers, sell products and make profits.

Future research will have to highlight the extent to which consumers' perception of retailers varies when the purchase is made from food versus non-food stores, and from electronics and household appliances versus fashion and footwear stores. The retail format may also be a major driver of loyal behaviour. Last but not least, another aspect calling for further analysis is the situation of notable differences between men and women in exhibiting green loyal behaviour towards the retailers considered.

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