

# **Consumer Purchase Behavior & Coping Strategies Study**

**in the context of rising prices**

**September 2022**



# WHERE HAVE WE BEEN?

**Economic growth**

**Post-2008  
financial crisis**



**REFORMED  
CONSUMER**



**SELF-INDULGENT  
CONSUMER**

**Post Covid-19  
pandemic**



**CAUTIOUS  
CONSUMER**

## CHANGES

# CONTEXTUAL

lockdown regulations impact  
post-pandemic changes  
increasing prices  
Ukraine-Russia war

# PSHYCOLOGICAL

the long term effects of recession,  
constant state of panic, stress, alert

leading to



**Coping  
strategies**



# WHEN QUANT & QUAL MEET, COOL THINGS HAPPEN!

## QUANTITATIVE



**1734 respondents** ●

**Hybrid methodology:** ●

**50% CAWI & 50% F2F** ●

**Timing: September 2022** ●



## QUALITATIVE

● **18 consumers**

● **self-applied ethnography**

● **Timing: September 2022**

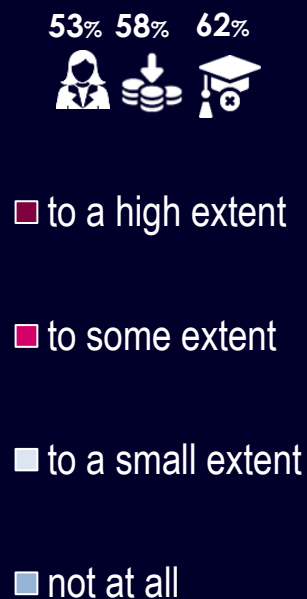


# THE MOOD



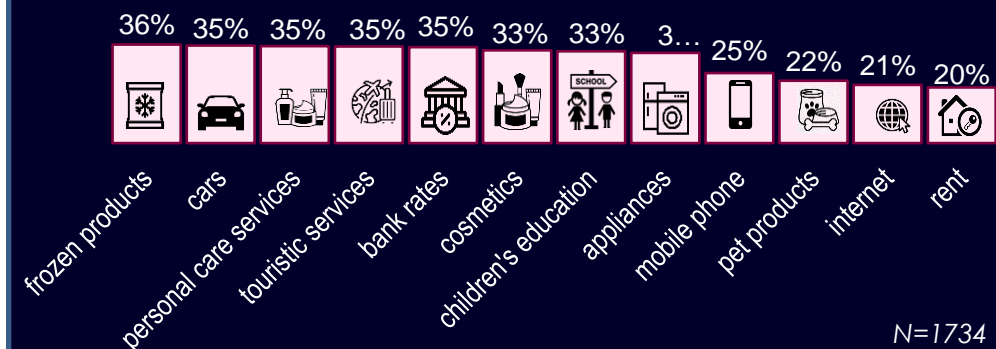
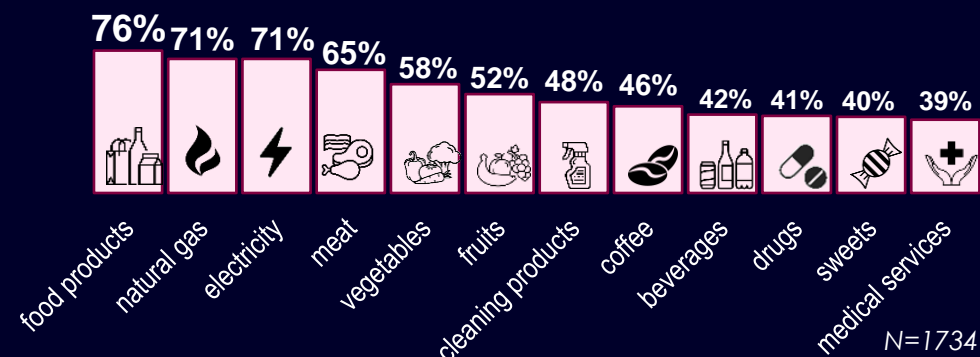
## THE NUMBERS SAY IT BEST

### Romanians are highly affected by increases of prices



B1. To what extent do you feel affected by the recent price increase?

### Food & utilities price rises have the strongest impact



B2. For which products/services did you feel the strongest impact of the price increase?

**STRESSED, ANXIOUS**

**WINTER IS COMING!**

**worried, burdened, troubled**

**MOODY**

**frustrated, deprived of small joys of life**

**thinking about  
SAVINGS**

**uncertain, insecure**









**Socio-economic status is the definitive factor for how people are dealing with the situation.**

**Lower income  
Elder age**



**ANXIETY**

*"I feel frustrated, overwhelmed by the prices, like everything is meant to keep us inside our houses and depressed."*

**WATCH &  
WAIT**



*"Neither pessimism, nor optimism. Rather a "state of alert", when you need to keep your eyes open, to be cautious because you don't know what tomorrow brings."*

**Mid & higher income & education  
Younger age**



**MODERATE  
OPTIMISM**

*"I feel limitation and stagnation like everybody else, but I also have hope for better times ahead."*

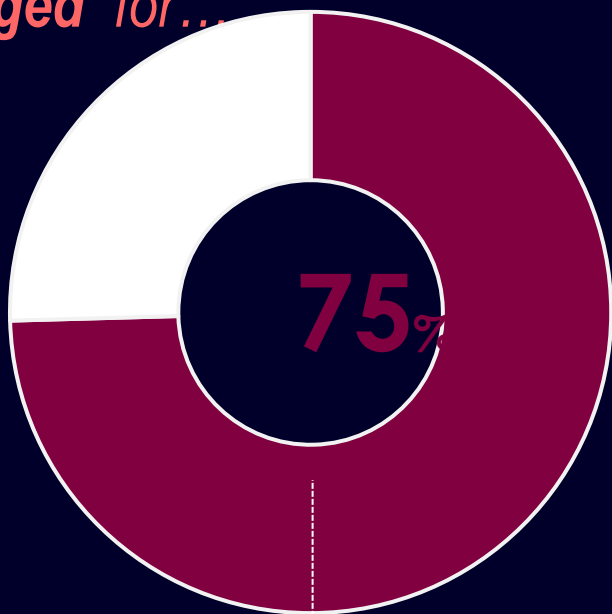


# SHOPPING



## THE NUMBERS SAY IT BEST

*buying behavior  
changed for...*



N=1293

78%



82%



80%



N=1734

*...but how it changed?*



Quantitative Results, N=1734

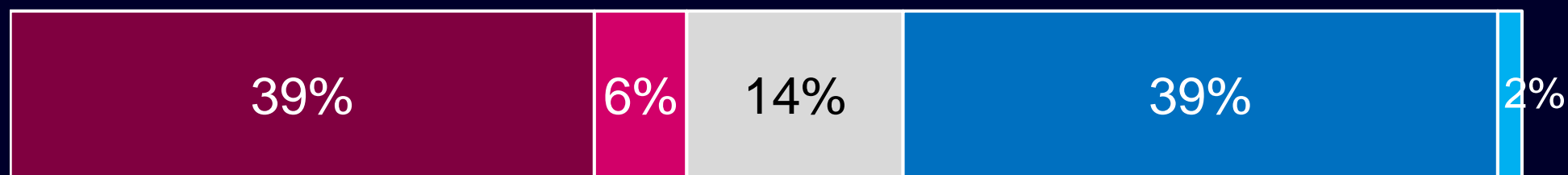
B3. Has your buying behavior changed in any way as a result of the prices increase?

B4. How has your buying behavior changed as a result of the price increase?



## THE NUMBERS SAY IT BEST

**45% have been buying cheaper brands, other 14% intend to.  
The less educated, the higher the need to switch to cheaper brands.**



■ yes, I buy cheaper brands

■ no, but I intend to change them

■ yes, I buy more expensive brands

■ yes, I tried cheaper brands, but I changed back

■ no, I buy the same brands as before

N=1734

B5. With the increase in prices, have you changed the brands you buy?

Quantitative Results, N=1734

## SHOPPING strategies (1)



### “Mindful” shopping

**Planned shopping trips to supermarkets/ hypermarkets, avoiding proximity stores** (*“I go to Mega one night to buy bread and I end up spending 100 RON”*)

**Shopping list true, only essentials, no impulse shopping**

**Lower shopping frequency**

**Smaller quantities bought at once**

**Cutting out indulgence/ non-necessary products** (e.g. sweets, juice, butter, certain cosmetics: hair mask)

**Walking to the store or combining shopping trips with other activities** (e.g. going to gym) **to minimize gas consumption**

**Careful planning of more expensive acquisitions** (e.g. gadgets): monitoring and comparing prices

**Buying higher quality products even if more expensive for a longer life duration**

## SHOPPING strategies (2)



### Price hunting

**Buying from discounters, higher interest towards private labels (esp. >40 y.o.)**

**Choosing wholesalers for non-food products because of higher quantities at more beneficial price (e.g. detergents, house cleaning products)**

**Looking for promotions**

**Checking the price more carefully at the shelf**

### Brand switch

Strategy employed mainly by **consumers with lower income and lower education level**

**Some would not compromise in terms of brands, except for the situation when the price would increase 2-3 times.**

**Others chose cheaper brands in foods, hygiene products, clothes but would not compromise when it comes to perfume, clothes, alcoholic beverages or cigarettes.**





# CONSUMPTION



## CONSUMPTION strategies



*"I cook more and I pay higher attention to the products in my fridge, I try to use them up before expiration or I cook with less fresh vegetables."*

### Alimentation

**More cooking, less food orders** (mainly when having guests or in need for a treat)

**Packed lunch for work instead of eating out**  
**Replacing expensive foods with more affordable ones** (salmon → trout, sea bream; beef → chicken)

**No more bottled water, using tap water filter instead**

**Replacing coffee capsules with R&G coffee** (for health reasons as well as price)

**Paying higher attention to food expiration date**

### Personal care

**Stock up when favourite brands are on promotion**

**Buying larger quantity packages**

**Choosing cheaper brands** (mainly shower gels)

**Using all the product before buying another one**



# LIFESTYLE





## LIFESTYLE strategies



*"For me vacation means Greece and I stuck to it, but I drove there, I looked for a villa with kitchen and stocked up with beer and water from Romania."*

### Going out

**Less frequent going out sessions** (1/ week – 2/ year), mainly with friends or at special occasions → replaced with friends visits

**Reduced consumption in HoReCa: one main course** (something that can't be prepared at home), **1-2 drinks** (beer instead of long drinks in case of men and wine/ mineral water/ lemonade instead of cocktails for women)

**More affordable places: cinema, malls, cafes**

### Vacations

**Few changes, little compromise**

**Keeping the preferred destination**, but within a more carefully planned budget

**Replacing hotels with apartments/ villas for self-catering**

**Cost-benefits analysis for choosing the destination**  
**Car travel instead of plane & sharing costs with friends**  
**Tent accommodation**



# KEY TAKE OUTS



- **9 out of 10 people are affected by the increasing prices.**  
**The highest impact is felt in terms of food products and utilities cost.**
- **Main coping strategy: limiting/ cutting out unnecessary expenses** in order to **save up for major expenses** (e.g. rent, utilities, bills)
- **How they do it: less frequent shopping sessions & lower quantities, no more non-essential products, “mindful” shopping, promotions hunt, home cooking, less going out and “rationalization” of HoReCa consumption.**
- **Brand loyalty seems threatened, as 45% of consumers have already tried cheaper brands, while 14% are tempted to do it.** The lower the income and the education, the higher the pressure to switch to cheaper brands.





**We would love to hear from you  
in case of any questions!**

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**Thank You!**  
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