

## SHOPPING HABITS OF THE INHABITANTS IN A TYPICAL SETTLEMENT OF THE SOUTH-EAST PLAIN

*Brigitta Zsótér*

University of Szeged, Faculty of Engineering,  
H-6724 Szeged, Mars tér 7. Hungary  
e-mail: zsoterb@mk.u-szeged.hu

### ABSTRACT

I examined the food purchasing habits of the inhabitants in the settlement by means of a questionnaire. I chose three, relatively busy food stores in the city centre as venues. The survey took three days and was done by interviewers in parallel with each other, in the three stores. Altogether 335 questionnaires were filled in.

Only a small amount of the inhabitants of the farmsteads do their shopping in the above mentioned three stores, though there are no stores in the outskirts, and, as we know, one third of the people of Mezőhegyes live there. I made interviews, altogether 14, with the inhabitants of the outskirts, in connection with their shopping habits.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In Mezőhegyes it was the tertial sector that employed the manpower that came partly from the industry and partly from the agriculture. Mainly commercial enterprises (for example groceries) were founded in great number (RUDL J. 2009) for which it was enough to have only a smaller sum of capital. They do not have a big income since people living in the settlement can buy only the basic goods which are necessary for everyday life.

I carried out a questionnaire survey and made interviews to map the shopping habits of the inhabitants of Mezőhegyes. A peculiarity of the settlement is that almost one third of its population live in the outskirts which means a fairly great number of consumers so I had to examine not only the habits of the inhabitants in the settlement but the habits of those in the farmsteads.

### 2. METHODS

I examined the food purchasing habits of the inhabitants by means of questionnaires as it is mentioned in the specialized literature (Bauer A., Berács J. 1999), (Porter, Michael E. 1993), (Tonndorf, Hans G. 1997). I chose three, relatively busy food stores in the centre as venues. The survey took three days and was done by interviewers in parallel with each other, in the three stores. Altogether 335 questionnaires were filled in. The interviewers personally gave them to the customers informing them about the subject of the research. I made interviews with people living on farms.

### 3. EXAMINATION AND RESULTS

The majority of the customers was skilled worker or pensioner, their age structure is similar to the age structure of the settlement.



To the question which asked how much they spend during one shopping as an average the significant part of the customers answered that a sum under 1.000 Fts (62%), or between 1.000 and 1.500 Fts (34%). They do their daily shopping there (67%). They buy the most important, basic foods in these shops, for example: milk, bread.

20% of the inquired ones go to other bigger settlements to do their bigger shoppings there every two week, while 9% do it on a weekly basis. A part of them (15%) go to the Penny Market to Mezőkovácsháza and to the TESCO to Orosháza. To the question which asked about the reasons most of them said that the TESCO is open non-stop and since they have to arrange their official affairs (at the Job Centre or at the Registry of Title Deeds) in Mezőkovácsháza, they can do the shopping at the same time, too. Some of them go there because of the sales. A few of them go to the market of Tótkomlós every week. 9% of the inquired ones go to Szeged every week or every second week. They are parents whose children go to school in Szeged and they bring or take their children there and in the meantime they buy the necessary goods.

70% of them lived in Mezőhegyes. Some of them came from Pítvaros, Ambrózfalva. Actually, the zone of attraction of these, relatively busy groceries is only as wide.

Only a small part of the people living on farms do their shopping in these shops, though there are not groceries in the outskirts and as we know, one third of the population of Mezőhegyes live there. I made interviews, altogether 14, about the shopping habits of people there. I applied the interview of mixed type which showed that farmsteads are supplied with the basic foods (eg. milk, bread) by a moving supermarket, besides the service of farm-warden was started some years ago. The farm-wardens, to whom different districts belong, help the inhabitants of the farms not only to buy foods and other consumers' goods but to carry these things home. The „wealthier” people here who have a car can go to the shopping centres of the neighbouring bigger settlements (eg. Orosháza, Mezőkovácsháza) every week. The market of Tótkomlós on Monday and on Saturday is the second source of fresh fruit and vegetables for the people living on farms, after their kitchen garden. Unfortunately, it cannot be disregarded that the solvent demand is very inconsiderable, since the majority of the population has a very low income.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Due to the results of this research we know that the majority of the inhabitants of farmsteads do not do their shopping in the settlement itself but they buy their foods at the moving supermarket and the farm-wardens help them do the shopping. The zone of attraction of the market of Tótkomlós covers both the inner and the outer areas of Mezőhegyes.

#### REFERENCES

1. Bauer A., Berács J. (1999) Marketing, Aula Kiadó, Budapest.
2. Porter, Michael E. (1993) Versenystratégia. Iparágak és versenytársak elemzési módszerei, Menedzsersorozat 2, Akad Kiadó, Budapest.
3. RUDL J. (2009): Foglalkoztatás és munkanélküliség a Dél-Dunántúl falvaiban. In: Gulyás L. (szerk.): Közép-Európai Közlemények. Történészek, geográfusok és regionalisták folyóirata. II. évf. 4-5. szám, pp. 29-35.
4. Tonndorf, Hans G. (1997) Kiskereskedelem európai színvonalon, Novorg Kiadó, Budapest