
SOCIAL CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING HOUSEHOLD CONSUMER SATISFACTION WITH THE ELECTRIC POWER SUPPLY SERVICES

Maria-Ana Georgescu¹ and Emilia Herman^{2*}

^{1) 2)} "Petru Maior" University of Tîrgu- Mureş, Romania

Abstract

The issue of the practical manifestation of corporate social responsibility towards consumers is highly important to the socio-economic reality in Romania. The present paper is the result of an investigation carried out in this field and it is distinguished by two aspects. The first aspect is its target audience used for research - household consumers of electricity, who can be called "vulnerable", captive consumers. The second aspect is the specificity of the electricity market.

The aim of the research was to study the relationship between corporate social responsibility, instantiated by the quality of services provided by S.C. Electrica S.A. – Electrica Distribution and Supply South Transylvania and the consumers' loyalty towards the company, in case other electricity suppliers emerge. A subsidiary aspect was the generation of a database having an impact on customer retention. We have carried out some quantitative research, based on the survey method, having a sample of 521 household consumers from the Mures County.

The study we carried out proves that consumer satisfaction, their degree of satisfaction under different aspects, is a way of gaining their trust on this particular market. Those consumers with a higher degree of trust in the company are more loyal. This will result in reducing migration to another electricity supplier, in the future, when all household consumers become eligible.

Keywords: Corporate social responsibility, the quality of electric power supply services, consumer satisfaction, consumer trust, loyalty.

Classification JEL: M14; L94; D12

Introduction

Following the initiation of Romanian electricity market liberalization (Government Decision no. 638/2007), the responsibility to consumers of companies in this area has become a priority. At the same time, the liberalization generates a different behaviour

* Corresponding author, **Emilia Herman** – emilia_herman@yahoo.com

among consumers because they must be “able to compare similar services and take their own decisions and choices, which turn out to be more profitable for them” (Dinu, 2013, p.310). The electricity market is nevertheless a particular one with specific regulations. Our investigation is unique in that it follows the relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR), customer satisfaction and loyalty in case of the liberalization of the electricity market, within a context where the price is regulated (ANRE Decision no. 40/2013). The focal point is given by the satisfaction level derived from the quality of services provided by the company and information on services and products. Consumer satisfaction attained from product / service quality is an important tool for retaining consumers (Ali et al., 2010).

The supply of electricity services, as well as of the gas ones, is part of the economic services of general interest. Consequently, their delivery usually takes place in monopoly or oligopoly markets (Miron, Petcu and Sobolevschi, 2013). The electricity market has two important characteristics: its product / service is homogeneous, but the group of consumers is very heterogeneous (Mare et al., 2013). Taking into consideration that these services are of vital importance in meeting the basic needs of consumers, the energy policies must pursue reconciliation between competitiveness, security of supply, as well as consumer protection and the environment (Pîrvu and Bădîrcea, 2013).

The household consumers’ situation on the electricity market is different from the situation of the other goods and services markets. Since 2007, another re-organization has taken place within Electrica, followed by the separation of the electricity supply and distribution (GD 675/2007). Consequently, household consumers are captive to one energy supplier. The electricity distribution activity is monopolistic, but is carefully monitored by the National Energy Regulatory Authority (ANRE) that sets the price as well. As for the supplier, it is expected that all household consumers become eligible, a process that started in 2012 and runs gradually, with the deadline of 31st December 2017 (Energy Law 123/2012, Article 22). Specifically, they will be able to choose their future supply company. For this reason, the supplier has a strong interest in the satisfaction of customers, in informing and resolving complaints received from them. Consumer satisfaction is an objective and a marketing tool, as well as a way to maintain as many clients as possible at the time when household consumers can choose electricity suppliers.

Based on the contracts signed with the supplier, all consumer complaints related to electric energy are sent to it. There are two categories of complaints:

- complaints for contractual relations with the supplier (way of payment, billing, bill clarity, understanding price billing, etc.).
- complaints about electric energy quality (i.e. continuity of supply, frequency and power voltage, length and number of power cuts, etc.).

The complaints circuit is made through the supplier. This has close relationships with the distributor and reports any dissatisfaction in the second category, pertaining to the distributor. It should be understood that CSR directly incorporates the energy supplier activities, which is obviously interested in establishing a good relationship with the customers, and indirectly the activities of the energy distributor, as well.

The current issue of how the quality of services is perceived represents a concern by means of which the company is trying to meet customer expectations. In order to get a complete picture of the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of customers, it is recommended to

conduct studies periodically, based on surveys in order to identify the "perceived quality" and the "quality that satisfies" (Achim, Hinescu and Popa, 2005, p. 128). This research was conducted precisely in this context, of measuring and controlling the services quality. We were also interested in consumer trust in the company.

1. Corporate social responsibility towards consumers - theoretical approaches

The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been analyzed by the experts in the field since the 1950s. A history of the evolution of meanings attributed to the concept is synthetically made by Ali et al. (2010). CSR can be defined as a business focus on the "triple bottom line" which includes not only economic, but also social and environmental goals (Bright et al., 2005).

It is important to approach CSR in an interdisciplinary way, vision within which the aspects of an economic origin (related to business and to profit maximization) interpenetrate with the specific aspects of moral philosophy and care for natural environment (Georgescu, 2010). In the context of a dynamic, globalized world, like the one we live in, at the beginning of the 21st century, in which technology, innovation and speed are keywords, the company's social responsibility comes as an answer to the society's critical need to assure a sustainable development. "The positive connections between the social performance and the financial one become more and more obvious, especially in the light of intangible active's growing importance, like reputation, brands and information" (Oprea, 2005, p.56).

The direction that we follow is not primarily aimed at the four dimensions of CSR, as established by Carroll (1991), namely the economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic, which are unanimously recognized. We note, however, that often in the Romanian literature, all four dimensions are treated like obligations, even if ethical and philanthropic responsibilities are not named like that, but assumed aspects. We may observe that only economic and law-respecting responsibilities are, for the moment, compulsory, for they depend on constraints that are external to the companies, and the next two, being at their latitude, represent voluntary, discretionary aspects, and not obligations (Georgescu and Herman, 2010).

What prevails in this study is how a company meets its customers' requirements. Almost every big company has CSR strategy to meet the requirements of customers (Gigauri, 2012), their satisfaction being highly important (Saeednia and Shafeiha, 2012, p.177). A lot of studies investigate how customers react and make decisions based on their perceptions of service quality and CSR (Guchait et al., 2011)

Trust is a fundamental element of the partnership present in developing any business. As Mohr, Webb and Harris state (2001, p.70) "It is also believed that it is important for socially responsible companies to work to develop consumer trust". Pornpratang et al. (2013) analyse the relationship between CSR and trust. There are three main perspectives of trust. The first one consists in Affect Based Trust or the emotional based trust, the second is the Cognition-Based Trust - an objective and rational one and the third is Dispositional-Based Trust which refers to the inclination of one person. In our paper, we deal with "cognition-based trust" or providing information.

The specialized literature shows that trust in the company is a way to gain customer loyalty. Definitions for customer loyalty in literature are presented and categorised by Pirsch et al.

(2007) into two groups: process or operational ones, focused on what consumers do to become loyal; psychological or theoretical definitions, focused on the deep rooted commitment or internal disposition on the part of the consumer to seek out the same brand in repeat purchase situations.

2. Objectives and research methodology

The research goal was to study the relationship between CSR, instantiated by the quality of services provided, and the consumers' loyalty towards the company, from the perspective of the emergence of new electricity suppliers.

The research objectives aimed at: (1) Studying the degree of providing information to consumers; (2) Knowing the requirements and consumer satisfaction; (3) Highlighting the relationship between consumer trust in the company and their loyalty. A subsidiary aspect was the generation of a database having an impact on customer retention.

Research design

We have designed some quantitative research, carried out through the direct survey method, based on a sociological questionnaire. This was applied to household consumers from the Mures County, who are beneficiaries of the services provided by S.C. Electrica S.A. - Electrica Distribution and Supply South Transylvania. The questionnaire contains 44 questions, from which we analysed 10, which were relevant for the present study. In developing the questionnaire, we introduced a type of questions that, apart from collecting data from subjects, are meant to inform the mass of consumers. We used non-random samples, on quotas, according to the structure of the household consumers provided with electricity. From the total number of households, a reference number of 220,069, the study was carried out on 521 of them (Table no.1).

Table no. 1: Sample description (N= 521)

Respondents characteristics	Frequency N	Percent %	Respondents characteristics	Frequency N	Percent %
Gender:			Studies:		
Male	219	42.03	Primary studies	65	12.48
Female	302	57.97	Secondary studies	41	7.87
Area of origin:			Vocational school	106	20.35
Urban	304	58.35	High-school	171	32.82
Rural	217	41.65	Post-secondary school	41	7.87
Age:			Higher education	97	18.62
18-24 years old	67	12.86	Ethnic groups:		
25-35	125	23.99	Romanian	369	70.83
36-45	100	19.19	Hungarian	128	24.57
46-55	100	19.19	Romany	24	4.61
56-65	72	13.82			
66 years and over	57	10.94			

Consumers surveyed were from 304 urban households in 7 cities (58.35%) and 217 from the rural area, 18 villages (41.65%); 42.03% were men and 57.97% women; according to ethnic groups the Romanians predominated (70.83%); as for the age groups, those between

25 and 35 years were predominant and as the level of education, the majority were high school graduates (32.82%).

Research Hypothesis

The research hypotheses (H) were formulated in relation to the objectives set, based on the specialist literature. These followed the logical thread from CSR, instantiated by the degree of information provided to consumers as well as by the quality of the services provided, to consumer satisfaction, towards consumers' trust in the company, with implications on loyalty.

(H1) The degree of consumer contentment towards the way the company informs them depends on their perception of the clarity or unclarity of the bill.

(H2) The consumers' option to file complaints depends on the degree of contentment regarding the way the company informs them on its services and on the clarity of the information.

(H3) The consumers' option to file complaints is different in relation to the degree of satisfaction regarding the price-quality ratio of the services.

(H4) Consumer trust in the company depends on the evaluation of the services provided.

(H5) Consumer trust in the company is different in relation to the perceptions on the price-quality ratio of the services.

(H6) Consumer loyalty towards the company depends on their degree of trust in it.

In order to test the research hypotheses, we used the nonparametric test of significance chi-square (χ^2) bivaried. This test is based on the null hypothesis (H_0), meaning that there are no statistically significant differences between two variables (Petcu, 2003). If $\chi^2_{\text{calculated}} > \chi^2_{\text{theoretic}}$ for a significance limit $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected then its alternative (H_1) is allowed. For processing and analyzing the data obtained by the questionnaire, the SPSS 13.0 (Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences) and Microsoft Office Excel were used.

3. Research results

3.1 Descriptive study of consumers' perception

3.1.1 Consumers' degree of information

The consumers' perception on the information provided by the company is reflected by the answers to the question: *Are you satisfied with the way the company informs you about its services and about the clarity of the delivered information?* (Q1). According to the responses to this question (figure 1), it appears that most household consumers are satisfied - 31.67% and together with those highly satisfied they account for 44.91%, which is close to half a percentage. However, quite a lot of them are undecided or express their discontent on the information received and its clarity.

To explain the differences between the answers given by consumers, statistical analyses were performed (based on nonparametric significance bivaried χ^2 test) in relation to socio-demographic variables: area of origin, age, education, ethnic groups and gender. As regards the way the consumer is informed, one can notice that there are statistically significant differences only according to one demographic variable, namely the *area of origin*, although we expected consumers' level of education to matter more. Rural respondents declare themselves more satisfied with how the company informs them about its services

and about the clarity of information as compared to those in urban areas. This can only be assigned to the more developed critical thinking of the inhabitants in cities and their desire to get more detailed information.

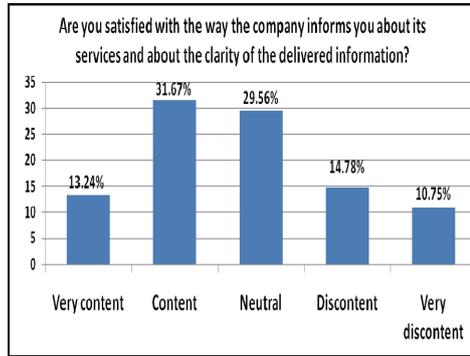


Figure no. 1: Perception of the provided information

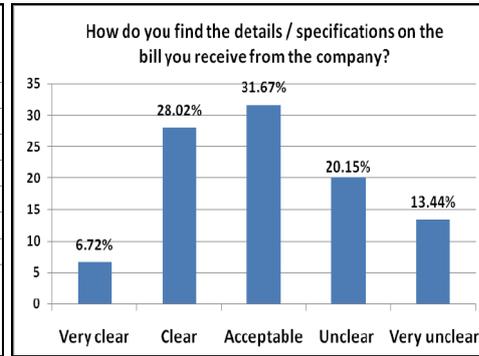


Figure no. 2: Perception of bill's clarity

According to the answers to the question: *How do you find the details / specifications on the bill you receive from the company?* (Q2) most consumers believe that the bills they receive are acceptable (31.67%) by their specifications (figure no. 2). The perceptions of the respondents significantly differ only with respect to the *ethnic group* the respondents belong to, namely in the case of those of Roma origin. For 70.8% of the subjects of Roma origin, the electricity bill information is very vague or unclear. In contrast, for Romanians and Hungarians the lack of clarity of the bill is much lower (32.8% for Romanians and 29.7% for Hungarians).

To the question: *Did you know that we announced in advance through mass-media longer lasting power-cuts due to maintenance that we perform?* (Q3) 57.20% of the subjects' state that they know about these ways of notifying the population and 42.80% say they do not know. The question has also informative character because too many consumers do not know when to expect interruptions in electricity supply and do not know where to look for this information. The need to check *if* and *where* ads appear in all the papers – in Romanian and Hungarian, on various radio stations, etc. is stringent.

3.1.2 Consumer satisfaction

Consumers' degree of satisfaction regarding the delivered services is highlighted by the responses to the question: *What is your opinion about the services provided by our company (problem-solving efficiency, simplicity of formalities etc.)* (Q4). Although most consumers have good opinion (figure no.3) efficiency and formalities, which are not exactly simple, leaves much to be desired according to 20.15% of consumers and a significant percentage of 32.05% situate themselves on a medium position. It may be noted that there are no statistically significant differences in terms of the perception of the services offered by the company (problem-solving efficiency, simplicity of formalities etc.) between consumers, according to the socio-demographical factors.

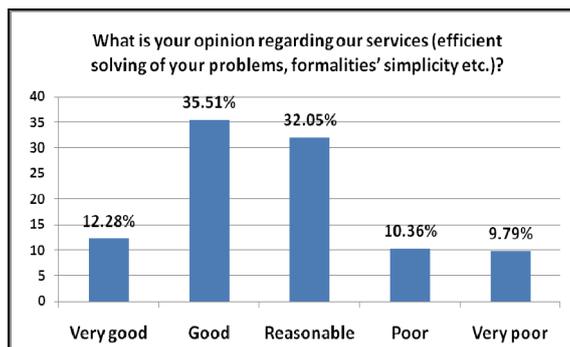


Figure no. 3: Consumer perception of the delivered services

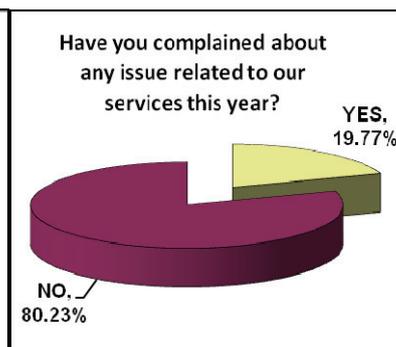


Figure no. 4: Consumer propensity to make complaints

To the question: *Have you complained about any issue related to our services this year?* (Q5), only 19.77% answered affirmatively (see figure no.4). The lack of a big number of complaints has a double significance: on the one hand, there is the satisfactory aspect of not having many causes to complain, but also the fact that few citizens are used to filing complaints. Area of origin, age, ethnic group and sex represent social-demographical variables which explain statistically significant differences regarding the answers to this question. Thus, a greater number of complaints have been filed by consumers in urban areas compared to those in rural areas (24.42% compared to 19.68%), the Roma compared to other nationalities (41.7% of the Roma have filed complaints compared to 18.97% of Romanians and 17.97% of Hungarians), the male consumers compared to the female consumers (23.7% of males compared to only 16,9% of women), the younger compared to the older (22.9% aged between 18 and 35 years compared to 12.4% of the people aged above 55). Again, consumers' education is not a statistically significant criterion.

Of all the questioned subjects, to the question: *If so, what was the object of your complaint?* (Q6), only 103 subjects filed complaints. But the total aspects they complained about is 151, as this question has multiple answer possibilities, which means that a person can complain about several aspects. From all of them, complaints regarding power cuts have the highest share 39.07% respectively (figure no.5). It must be noted that many consumers are unaware of the fact that interruptions are notified or they do not know where to find this information.

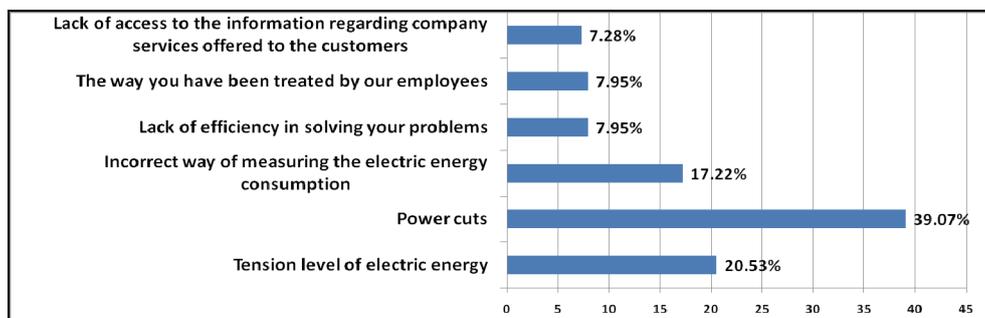


Figure no. 5: The object of complaints

The answers to the question: *Are you satisfied with the way your complaints have been solved?* (Q7) can be seen in figure no.6. The share of those very dissatisfied (13.59%) significantly outruns the percentage of the very satisfied subjects (4.85%) and the middle position has a really big percentage (41.75%).

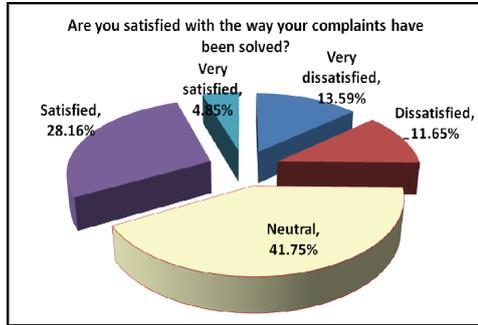


Figure no. 6: Complaint settlement

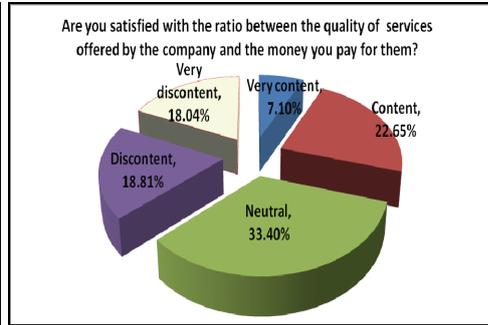


Figure no.7: Satisfaction regarding the service quality-price ratio

Through the question: *Are you satisfied with the ratio between the quality of services offered by the company and the money you pay for them?*(Q8) clients were asked to give evaluations, which are far from being positive, because on the whole, only 29.75% are content while 36.85% are discontent. The percentage of the *very discontent* compared to the percentage of the *very content* is 10.94% greater. More than 33% are situated on a middle position, declaring they are satisfied. (figure no.7). The results of the statistical analysis show that the consumers' level of contentment regarding the ratio between the services provided by the company and the money paid for these services have statistically significant differences only according to the *area of origin*. The rural consumers are more content regarding the quality-price ration than urban consumers. Thus, 35% of the rural consumers declared themselves to be content and very content, compared to 25.9% of the urban consumers.

3.1.3 Consumer trust in the company and consumer loyalty

To find out the degree of consumer trust, the subjects were asked: *Do you think we are a strong and reliable company that you can trust?* (Q9). Almost half of the respondents have high and very high levels of confidence in this company, a proportion which greatly surpasses the category of the clients who do not have trust, that is 48.94% compared to 20.72% (see figure no. 8). The consumers' level of trust in the company differs significantly according to the consumers' area of origin and sex. Consumers in the rural regions manifest a higher level of trust compared to consumers in urban areas (25.8% of consumers in villages have high or very high levels of trust in the company, compared to only 12.7% of the consumers in cities). Similarly, male consumers compared to female consumers (51.1% of the male consumers have high and very high levels of trust in the company compared to only 47.3% of the female consumers).

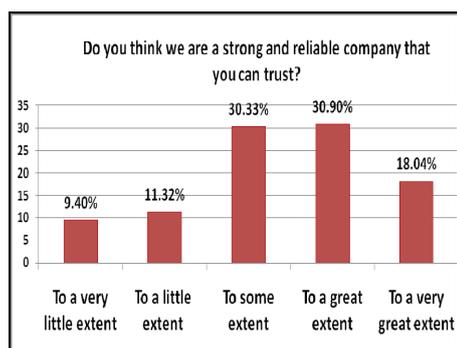


Figure no. 8: Consumer trust in the company

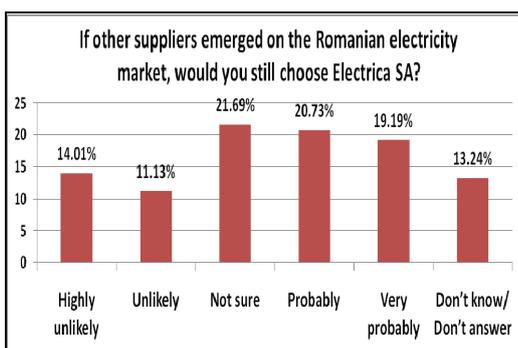


Figure no. 9: Consumer loyalty

The difficult problem of future competition on the electric energy supplier market was approached by studying whether the clients would migrate towards other suppliers: *If other suppliers emerged on the Romanian electricity market, would you still choose S.C. Electrica S.A.?* (Q10) According to the answers presented in figure no. 9, most of them would maintain the relationship with the company, but it is expected that 25.14% will look for different suppliers.

3.2 Analysis of the relationship between the corporate social responsibility and consumer loyalty

In order to highlight the relationship between the social responsibility of the electricity company and consumer, we present the analysis of the relationships and the confirmation of the researched hypotheses.

The relationship between consumer information and their perception on the clarity of the bill (H1)

The subjects who considered the information on the bill were unclear, even very unclear, declared they were dissatisfied and very dissatisfied with the way the company informed them on the services and the clarity of the information provided, their opinions accounting for 36%. This is a higher share compared to those who considered that information on the bill is clear or very clear, 18.78% respectively (see figure no. 10). At the opposite end, 58% of those who considered that the information on the bill are clear or very clear declared they were satisfied and very satisfied with the process of providing information and the clarity of the information provided and only 29.1% of those who considered that the information on the bill is unclear and very unclear.

Invoice unclarity represents a factor which determines consumers' dissatisfaction with regard to the level of information they receive, while bill clarity induces a higher level of consumer satisfaction regarding information. The results for χ^2 test bivaried from Table 2 demonstrate that there are statistically significant differences regarding the consumer level of satisfaction about the way in which the company informs them about its services according to their perception about the bill clarity or unclarity, which confirms hypothesis H1.

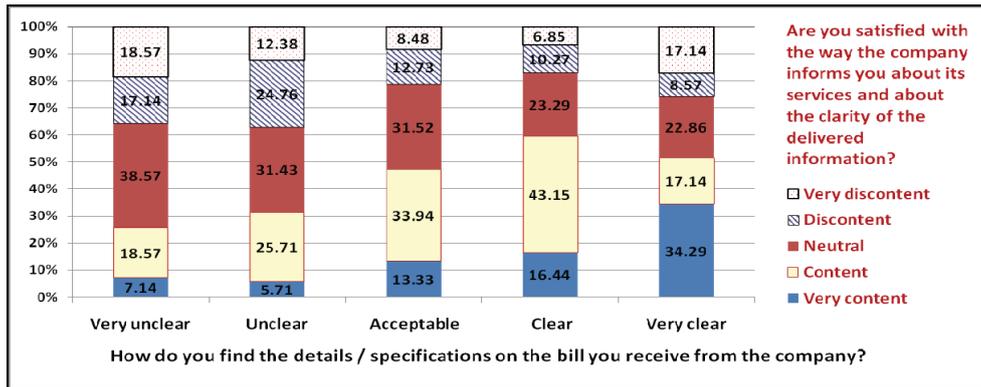


Figure no. 10: The relationship between provided information (Q1) and bill's clarity (Q2)

Table no. 2: Results for χ^2 test bivaried

	H1	H2	H ₃	H4	H5	H6
$\chi^2_{\text{calculated}}$	56.832	11,550	10.653	115.171	175.039	105.369
Df*	16	4	4	16	16	20
$\chi^2_{\text{theoretical}} (p < .05)$	37.65	9.49	9.49	37.65	37.65	31.41
Asymp. Sig.(2-sided)**	.000	.021	.031	.000	.000	.000

Note: * degrees of freedom; ** significance level; If $\chi^2_{\text{calculated}} > \chi^2_{\text{theoretic}}$, the null hypothesis is rejected then its alternative, H, is admitted; All hypotheses are confirmed with 95% assurance.

The relationship between consumers' information and their option to file complaints (H2)

The results of analyzing this relationship highlight the fact that the increase in the level of contentment regarding the way they are informed generates a reduction in the propensity to complain. Only 14.96% of the consumers who declared themselves to be content and very content filed complaints in the last year, compared to 27.07% of the consumers who declared themselves to be discontent and very discontent. The data in Table no. 2 and Figure no. 11 show that H2 is confirmed.. According to the consumers' level of contentment regarding the way in which the company informs them about their services and the information clarity, there are statistically significant differences regarding the consumers' option to file complaints.

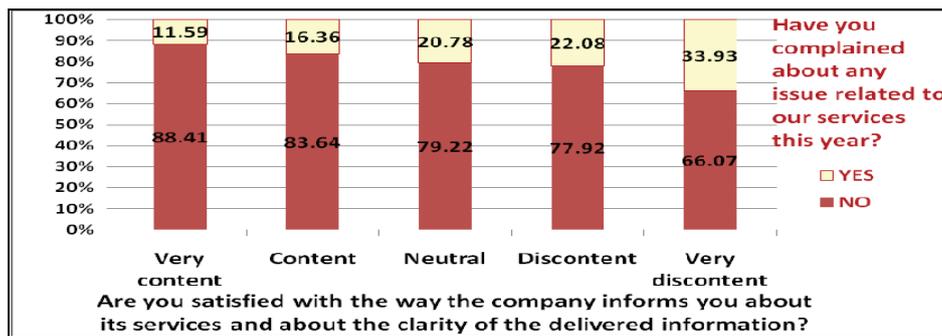


Figure no. 11: The relationship between provided information (Q1) and complaints (Q5)

The relationship between consumer satisfaction regarding the services quality – price ratio and their decision to file complaints (H3)

According to the data presented in figure no. 12, the higher the consumer’s satisfaction level regarding the services quality–price ratio, the lower his/her desire to file complaints, and vice-versa.

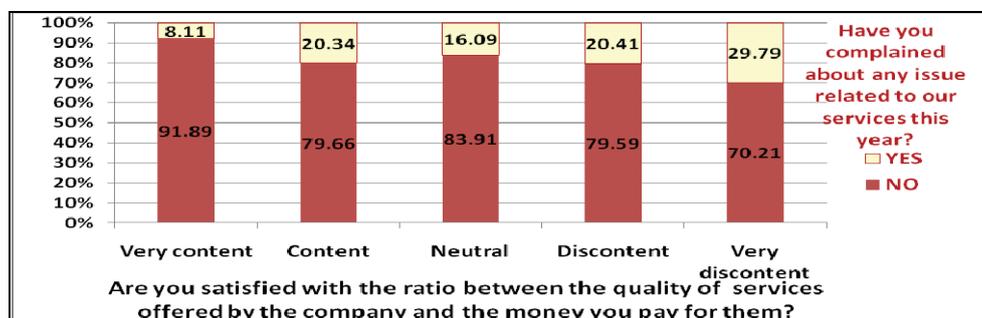


Figure no. 12: The relationship between the service quality - price ratio (Q8) and complaints (Q5)

The results for χ^2 test from (Table 2) demonstrate that there are statistically significant differences regarding the option to complain according to the satisfaction level concerning the service – price ratio, which confirms H3. Thus, only 8% of the consumers who declared themselves to be content filed complaints in the last year, compared to 29,8% of the consumers who declared themselves to be discontent.

The relationship between the service evaluation and consumer trust in the company (H4)

The analysis of this relationship among electric energy consumers highlights that 59.44% of the consumers with good or very good opinions about the services offered by the company have high and very high levels of trust in the company, which is the case for only 35.85% of the consumers with bad or very bad opinions. (see figure no.13).

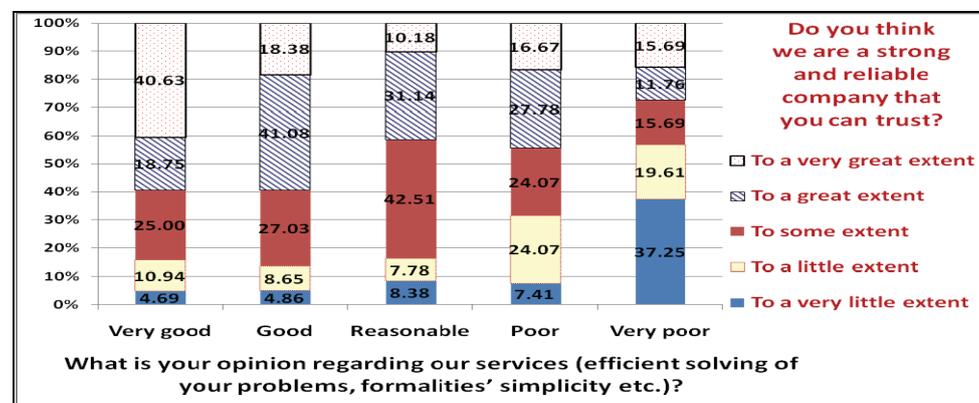


Figure no. 13: The relationship between service evaluation (Q4) and trust (Q9)

On the contrary, 46.67% of consumers with bad or very bad opinions about the services provided by the company have little or very little trust in it, which is the case of only 14.06% of the consumers with good and very good opinions. It results that the positive perception about the services provided by the company is the basis of a high level of confidence and vice-versa. Therefore, hypothesis H4 is confirmed – consumer trust in the company depends on the evaluation of the services provided from the perspective of “giving efficient solutions to problems, simplifying formalities etc” (Table 2).

The relationship between consumer satisfaction regarding the services quality – price ratio and their trust in the company (H5)

67.74% of electric power consumers with good and very good opinions regarding the ratio between delivered services – price, have high and very high levels of trust in the company, which is the case of only 14.06% of the respondents with bad and very bad opinions. On the contrary, a greater percentage of those who declared themselves discontent and very discontent have little and very little trust in the company compared to those who declared themselves content and very content, that is 34.37% compared to 12.25% (figure no.14).

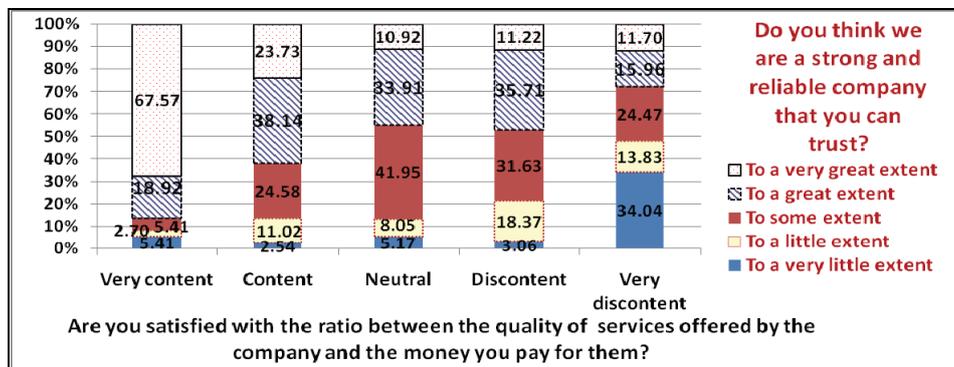


Figure no. 14: The relationship between services quality – price ratio(Q8) and trust (Q9)

According to the results for χ^2 test obtained from Table 2, there are statistically significant differences regarding the consumer’s level of trust in the company according to his/her perception of the quality – price ratio. H5 is confirmed . It can be noted that the higher the consumer’s level of contentment regarding the service – price ratio, the higher the consumer trust in the company and vice-versa.

The relationship between the trust in the company and loyalty (H6)

48.24% of the respondents with high and very high levels of trust in the company are more loyal to the company, as they expressed the strong possibility of choosing S.C. Electrica S.A., compared to only 27% of the respondents with little and very little trust. Conversely, a higher percentage of the respondents with a low level of trust in the company (42.59% compared to 20.78%) had a lower level of loyalty as they expressed the improbability of this choice (Figure no. 15).

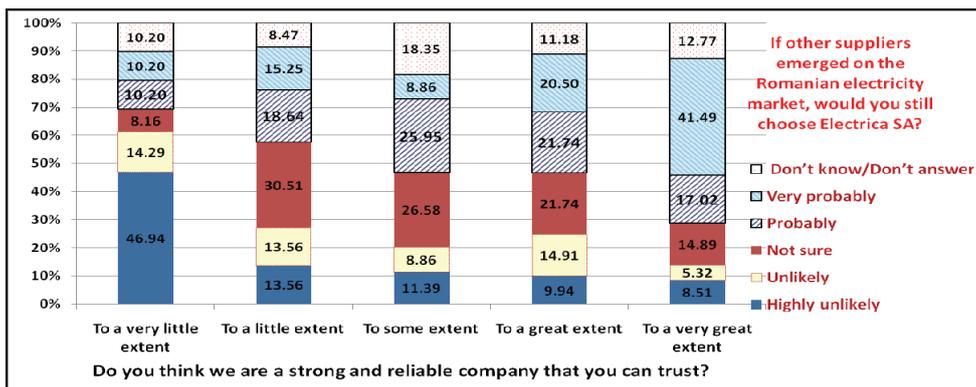


Figure no. 15: The relationship between trust in the company (Q9) and loyalty (Q10)

The results for χ^2 test bivaried from (Table 2) confirm that there are statistically significant differences regarding electric power consumer loyalty to the company according to the consumer's level of trust in the company. The increase in consumers' degree of trust in the company represents a way to generate consumer loyalty. Thus, hypothesis H6 is confirmed.

Conclusions and practical implications

Our study is specifically important in the current state of the Romanian electric energy market which has started the process of enabling domestic consumers, who are now captive, to choose their electricity supplier until the year 2017. Different suppliers will enter the electricity market, will perform wholesale energy purchases and will sell it as retailers to domestic consumers, who are the subjects of our research. The sharpest players on the market will sell cheaper merchandise, in larger quantities.

Within S.C. Electrica S.A. - S.C. Electrica S.A. - Electrica Distribution and Supply South Transylvania, CSR expresses itself less by means of philanthropic-discretionary actions, and mainly by focussing on providing correct information and quality services to consumers. According to the results, the informational effect of communication with the beneficiaries is perceived as positive, with 45% of the subjects declaring they are content with the way of communication. The quality and efficiency of the services offered are appreciated as good and very good by over 48% of the subjects, while 32.05% appreciate them as reasonable. The issue of price remains sensitive, which is regulated by ANRE for the moment, in relation to the services provided, which almost 38% of the subjects are dissatisfied with. Until the liberalization of prices, the main way to retain future customers is their satisfaction degree. The answers to most of the questions were not statistically significant influenced by any socio-demographic factors other than the subjects' area of origin and ethnic group. Surprisingly, subjects' education was not a significant differentiating criterion from a statistical point of view for the distribution of answers.

Our hypotheses were confirmed and consequently we can prove that CSR which aims for consumer satisfaction, their level of contentment with various aspects represents the way to gain their trust on this particular market. People with a higher level of trust in the company are more loyal. The consequence will be the diminution of migration to other energy suppliers, in case they become eligible consumers.

As courses of action of S.C. Electrica S.A., we suggest:

- providing consumers permanently with information on where they can find the notifications about power cuts, how they can find this information, because announcements in local newspapers or on the radios are not enough;
- simplifying information on the bills received by consumers so that they consider them clearer;
- in case competitors emerge on the electrical supply market, the company must convince customers of the quality of its services and particularly attract the 27% of undecided customers and those who still cannot or will not answer this question. However, the level of loyalty to S.C. Electrica S.A. is high, considering that, in case other suppliers make their entrance on the market, 40% of consumers would choose the present supplier.

As limitation, we mention that our study represents only a partial image of the issue related to household consumers, by the collection of data from a number of 521 households from the Mures County. Without generalizing our findings, the investigation can provide a powerful illustration of the relationship between CSR and the behaviour of local consumers. Subsequent research can be extended under both the quantitative aspect, on other consumers within the subsidiaries of S.C. Electrica S.A., and the qualitative aspect regarding consumers' proposals and complaints on the electricity market.

References

- Achim, M.I., Hinescu, A. and Popa, D., 2005. *Managementul serviciilor*. Cluj-Napoca: Risoprint.
- Ali, I., Rehman, K.U, Yilmaz, A.K., Nazir, S. and Ali, J.F., 2010. Effects of corporate social responsibility on consumer retention in cellular industry of Pakistan. *African Journal of Business Management*, 4(4), pp. 475-485.
- Bright, K., Egginton, E., Hopcraft, X., Lipsey, M. and Rales, M., 2005. *Consumer Responses to Corporate Social Responsibility in Middlebury, Vermont*. ENV5 401 Environmental Studies Senior Seminar.
- Carroll, A.B., 1991. The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility. Toward the Moral of Organizational Stakeholders. *Business Horizons*, 34 (4), pp. 39-48.
- Dinu, V., 2013. Protection of consumer rights in the field of economic services of general economic interest. *Amfiteatru Economic*, XV (34), pp.309-310.
- Georgescu, M.A., 2007. Ethical Responsibilities – from a theoretical approach to a behaviour in business and public relations. *Proceedings of The 31st ARA Congress*, Presses Internationales Polytechnique, Montreal, pp. 339-342.
- Georgescu, M.A. and Herman, E., 2010. The Ethical Dimension of Entrepreneurship Education. *Proceedings of the 6th International Seminar Quality Management in Higher Education*, Cluj-Napoca: Ed. UT Press, pp. 579-582.
- Gigauri, I., 2012. Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Consumer Purchase Decision. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 2(9), pp. 106-111.
- Guchait, P., Anner, M. and Wu, L., 2011. *Customer perceptions of corporate social responsibility of service firms: impact on customer attitudes and behavioral intentions*, Working paper, Pennsylvania State University, University Park. [online] Available at: <http://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1034&context=gradconf_hospitality> [Accessed 4 September 2013].

- Law 123/2012 for energy and natural gas. [online] Monitorul Oficial nr. 485/16.07.2012. Available at: <[http://www.enel.ro/ro/clienti/lumea/download/legea%20energiei 2012.pdf](http://www.enel.ro/ro/clienti/lumea/download/legea%20energiei%202012.pdf)> [Accessed 1 September 2013].
- Mare, C., Dragoș, S. L., Lazăr, D.T. and Dragoș, C.M., 2013. Consumer protection through prices: an analysis of the energetic sector in European Union countries. *Amfiteatru Economic*, XV(34), pp. 327-341.
- Miron, D., Petcu, M. and Sobolevschi, I.M., 2011. Corporate Social Responsibility and the Sustainable Competitive Advantage. *Amfiteatru Economic*, XIII(29), pp. 162-179.
- Mohr, L., Webb, D. J. and Harris, K.E., 2001. Do Consumers Expect Companies to be Socially Responsible? The Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Buying Behavior. *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 35 (1), pp. 45-71.
- Oprea, L., 2005. *Corporate Social Responsibility*. București: Tritonic.
- Petcu, N., 2003. *Statistică. Teorie și aplicații în SPSS*. Brașov: Infomarket.
- Pirsch, J., Gupta, S. and Grau, S.L., 2007. A Framework for Understanding Corporate Social Responsibility Programs as a Continuum: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 70(2), pp. 125-140.
- Pîrvu, R. and Bădîrcea, R., 2013. Historical study regarding the protection of consumers within the electric energy and natural gas markets. *Amfiteatru Economic*, XV (34), pp. 385-399.
- Pornpratang, K., Lockard, D.W. and Ngamkroekjoti, C., 2013. *The Impact of Corporate social Responsibility (CSR) on Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention*. [online] Available at: <http://www.caal-inteduorg.com/ibea2013/ejournal/091---Kaniya_Pornpratang&David_W_Lockard&Chittipa_Ngamkroekjoti---The_Impact_of_Corporate.pdf> [Accessed 10 September 2013].
- Romanian Energy Regulatory Authority, 2013. *Order ANRE no. 40/2013- Regulated tariffs for electricity supplied by providers of last resort to household consumers and those similar who have not exercised their eligibility right*. Monitorul Oficial no. 378/26.06.2013. [online] Available at: <http://www.anre.ro/documente_tot.php?id=212> [Accessed 1 September 2013].
- Romanian Government, 2007. *Government's decision no. 638/2007 regarding the complete liberalization of the electricity and gas market*. Monitorul Oficial no. 427/27.06.2007. [online] Available at: <<http://www.enel.ro/ro/clienti/lumea/download/Hotararepvdeschi dereaintegralaapieteideeenelHG638-2007.pdf>> [Accessed 1 September 2013].
- Romanian Government, 2007. *Government's decision no. 675/28.06.2007 regarding the reorganization by partial division of the electricity distribution companies, subsidiaries of "Electrica"- SA company*. Monitorul Oficial no. 462/09.07.2007. [online] Available at: <[http://www.lege-online.ro/lr-HOTARARE-675-2007-\(83451\).html](http://www.lege-online.ro/lr-HOTARARE-675-2007-(83451).html)> [Accessed 9 September 2013].
- Saeednia, H. and Shafeiha, S., 2012. Investigation the link between competitive advantage & Corporate social responsibility from consumer's view. *International Journal of Economics and Business Modeling*, 3(2), pp. 177-182.