

Study Concerning Consumer's Opinion on Biological Food Products

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Abstract

Biological agriculture is a dynamic sector that has known lately an increasing trend. One of the main conditions for biological agriculture to develop is the promotion of the eco concept to make the consumers aware of the advantages of consuming biological products. With the rise of the population interest in a more proper lifestyle and the awareness of the importance of healthy nutrition, biological products have started to replace part of the conventional products in the nutrition of more and more consumers.

Keywords: consumption, demand, market, offer, product.

1. Introduction

The modern concept of marketing starts from the premise that any economic activity should be oriented towards the satisfaction of real and potential requirements of the consumers, and with maximum of efficacy [1,2]. Knowing the needs, the desires of the consumer is not simple. It is possible that consumers do not always know the true motivation or to change his/her purchase decisions in the last minute, under the influence of certain factors [3-5]. Under these circumstances, analysing consumer's behaviour plays an essential role in the evaluation of market attractiveness, in the choice of market segments, in the rationalisation of the distribution and in the increase of advertising campaign efficacy [6,7].

In Romania, as well as in many other countries of the world, the level of consumption of biological products is low, but the production of biological products is increasing. Romanian consumers are willing to consume biological products for different reasons, yet they purchase imported

biological products from different hypermarket chains at very high prices.

Research shows that there is a discrepancy between declared population's consumption and statistics of authorities [8-10]. Though population's attitude is rather favourable to biological products, the first impediment is the difficulty of identifying biological food products, which occurs all over the world. People acknowledge being consumers of biological products and believe they are informed consumers of such products, yet many of them are not aware of the main features or of the certification system of biological products. Thus, they mistake biological products for similar products with similar benefits or with faked biological products. [11,12].

2. Materials and methods

This study aims at researching the consumer's opinion on biological food products and identifying the criteria on which rely the choice and purchase of biological food products with a view to establish demand and consumer's orientation towards a healthy lifestyle.

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To do so, we have used quantitative research that describes a population's behaviour towards the studied topic [7,13,14]. The tool used to collect information was the questionnaire [15].

3. Results and discussion

Responses to the first question of the questionnaire, "Do you purchase/Consume biological food products?", show that the respondents purchase/consume this type of products. More than three quarters of the respondents declared getting information on biological food products and that they were really interested in them.

The responses to the question "In your opinion, what makes the difference between biological food products and common food products?" show that 80% of the respondents believe biological food products taste good and are healthier than common food products.

Responses to the question "How do you tell biological food products from common food products?" show that the respondents identify biological food products after their labels. Aspect and high energetic content are not very important. Under "others", they mentioned features of the biological food products, which shows insufficient knowledge even in consumers that claimed well knowing biological food products.

Seventy percent of the respondents responding to the question "How often do you consume biological food products?" mentioned that they used to consume such products; 12% of the respondents responded they consume such products on a weekly basis, and 2% of the respondents claimed they consume biological food products on a daily basis.

As for the category of biological food products consumed in the last two months before the survey was applied, the respondents mentioned that the most consumed types of products were fruits and vegetables, cheeses, eggs, cereals, and staple foods.

The most important criteria guiding consumers in the purchase of biological food products are price, taste, producer, and country of origin.

As for the price the consumers are inclined to pay for biological food products, it depends largely on the incomes of the respondents.

The responses to the question "Where do you purchase your biological food products?" show that the respondents usually purchase this type of products from hypermarkets and markets.

As far as the age of the respondents is concerned, 46% of them were aged 26-40; as for the income, 58% of the respondents earned between 1,800-2,500 RON; 72% of the respondents were women; and 78% of the respondents had graduated from higher education institutions.

4. Conclusions

The study we have carried out concerning biological food products shows a favourable attitude of the consumers towards biological food products as well as their intent to purchase such products. No consumer rejected the idea of purchasing/consuming biological food products.

Consumers have knowledge of biological food products, yet they are not enough familiarised with the specifics of biological food products, of biological food processing or biological food certification.

The flow of information should be supported through systematic, clear information concerning the advantages and features of biological food products. Permanent, general, and trustful information concerning biological food products increase the volume of information and, hence, subjective knowledge, attitude, and intent of adopting ecological food products.

One of the main conditions for the development of ecological agriculture in Romania is the promotion of the concept of ecological agriculture aiming at raising awareness among the consumers of ecological food products and making them offer higher prices for clean food products whose quality is guaranteed by properly certified control bodies.

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