

RESEARCH OF BOTTLED WATER CONSUMERS' BEHAVIOUR IN EUROPE AND UKRAINE CONSIDERING CURRENT ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

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Abstract

Over the last decade the turnover for bottled water has been rising. Moreover, the quality of tap water in most European countries is high, while Ukraine shows an opposite trend. Considering these conditions, it is vital to study the bottled water consumption trends so as to provide its production and purchase. So, the aim of this article is to research and compare bottled water consumers' behavior in Europe and Ukraine.

The information research base were the materials presented by: European Federation of Bottled Waters, State Statistics Service of Ukraine, statistic portals, such as Statista and Euromonitor, and the data from scientists and publishers around the world. It was decided to use the method of bottled water consumers' markets comparison in leading European countries. Furthermore, the water consumption was processed via descriptive statistical analysis of personal online survey among 600 respondents aged 18 - 60 with higher education and own income source, who live in the most developed regions of Ukraine, Europe and the world.

The highest bottled water consumption rate among the European countries is fixed in Italy and Germany, which is the influence of old local traditions. Moreover, its consumption per capita in Western Europe is more than 3 times higher than in Eastern Europe. For example, Croatians are skeptical towards bottled water due to massive anti-plastic campaign and high quality of tap water. As for Ukraine, bottled water is a favorite soft drink for the majority of its population. Today the largest volume of its annual consumption per person (63 L) is recorded in Kyiv. However, this indicator across the whole Ukraine is 15 L on average, while leading European countries show the consumption of nearly 160 L a year per capita. It is explained by the weak bottled water drinking culture, lower income level compared to Europe and aversion to plastic. On the other hand, a quarter of surveyed Ukrainians drink bottled water for medical purposes, which is not typical of Europeans. Moreover, Ukrainians and Europeans have the common features concerning water selection. Firstly, most males prefer highly carbonated water, while females opt for non-carbonated one. Secondly, bottled water is mostly preferred by people older than 25, and its main brand selection criteria are taste and ability to quench the thirst.

Unlike Europe, Ukraine shows the weak level of bottled water consumption behavior. On the other hand, it is the favourite soft beverage among Ukrainians aged 26 and above. In addition to this, Ukraine's tap water has very low quality, but there are nearly 500 mineral water springs. Furthermore, the tastes and preferences of Ukrainians and Europeans are mostly the same. Due to these factors there are opportunities for bottled water consumption development in Ukraine.

Key words: *Bottled water, Consumption, Consumers' behavior, Europe, Ukraine, Comparison.*