

INFLUENCE OF DIFFERENT PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES ON ROMANIAN CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISIONS FOR ORGANIC DRIED BERRIES

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Abstract

Data collected in recent years has shown an enormous growth in overall consumer health consciousness. Nowadays the food industry is facing a new profile of consumers, and these consumers are demanding healthier options. Packaging claims are considered to have an influence on consumer purchase decisions for food products.

In our research we included 289 participants that answered to our questionnaire that have two parts. The first part of the questionnaire focuses on attributes like: price (7 Romanian leu - RON, 12 RON; 1 EUR = 4.59 RON, exchange rate on 30.08.2017), origin (Romania, European Union), drying method (microwave, sun-dried, air-dried), and nutritional claim (with or without nutritional claim) for a specific organic dried berries mix, to allow us to supply specific values for these factors to the research participants. The second part of the questionnaire focuses on evaluating a series of statements regarding consumers' attitudes towards: organic food, naturalness, healthy food, and novel processing technologies. Data were processed by conjoint analysis.

Conjoint analysis of responses from this 289 participants (representative sample for the Romanian urban population), with a margin of error of $\pm 6\%$ at a 95% confidence level) reveals that specific attributes affect consumer purchase decisions of organic dried berries mix ($P \leq 0.05$). We found that consumers' willingness to pay for microwave-dried berries is independent from values associated with price, origin and nutritional claim.

This study offers demographic information on Romanian consumer's attitude towards new technologies for organic berry-based products. Also, it is established that conjoint studies technique is a useful instrument in designing new products.

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Key words: *Organic berries, Conjoint analysis, Consumer purchase decision, Drying method, Origin, Price, Nutritional claim.*