

## ANALYSIS OF FOOD BUYING BEHAVIOR: A MULTINATIONAL STUDY FRAMEWORK

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### Abstract

To make everyday food choices is a complex process, involving decisions which are influenced by distinct aspects associated with, among other factors, purchasing ease, competitiveness of the market, advertising campaigns and marketing strategies, to mention a few related with aspects linked to commercialization. Hence, the objective of this study, which is integrated in the EATMOT project, was to assess some factors that influence food buying and food choice, in particular related with aspects such as price, convenience and marketing, as a function of some sociodemographic and geographic variables, namely, age, gender, marital status, level of education, living environment and country of residence.

This study involved a questionnaire survey undertaken on 11,960 participants from 16 countries. The instrument used in this study was validated and translated into the different languages of the participating countries, following double sided translation-checking methodology. The participants were from: Argentina, Brazil, Croatia, Egypt, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and United States of America. The sample was selected by convenience and the participation in the study was voluntary, being the questionnaire applied only to adult citizens. Basic descriptive statistics were used for data analysis and the associations between variables were investigated by crosstabs and chi square tests. Additionally, a tree classification analysis was performed to assess the relative importance of each of the sociodemographic variables (gender, age group, level of education, country, living environment or marital status). The analysis followed the Classification and Regression Trees (CRT) algorithm with cross validation and the minimum number of cases considered for parent or child nodes was 100 and 50, respectively. For all data analysis, the software SPSS from IBM Inc. (version 25) was used and the level of significance considered was 5%.

Results showed statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.0005$ ) between groups for all sociodemographic variables (gender, age, education, marital status, living environment, country) in terms of the value attributed to convenience, price and marketing when buying foods. In most cases, the associations between the variables were considered very weak, although with a little higher values for the associations between the country and variables "value convenience" ( $V = 0.179$ ), "value price" ( $V = 0.158$ ) and "value marketing" ( $V = 0.167$ ). Tree classification analysis confirmed for all three dependent variables that the most influential factor was country.

This work highlighted that people in different countries and from different sociodemographic groups show different motivations for buying food products.

**Key words:** *Food choice, Convenience, Price, Marketing, Buying intention.*