The Decision of Ecological Products Consumers

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Abstract
In Romania the ecological agriculture registered an annual growth rate over 20%, in present time there are 26.736 operators in the ecological agriculture system. Due to the fact that the ecological products are requested mainly on the external markets there was a study concerning the way the ecological products are perceived by the consumers and which are their information sources. The geographical area of the research was Timisoara city, the survey being realized in crowded places (markets, supermarkets, universities, etc). The questionnaire was filled in by 150 persons. From the researches we noticed that among the ecological products constantly purchased there are fruits and vegetables and on the second place in the consumers preferences are the ecological eggs purchased from the supermarkets.

Keywords: consumers, ecological agriculture, ecological products, markets,

1. Introduction

The consumers from Romania started to be preoccupied by the healthy nutrition and environment protection and want to learn more about these subjects. In Romania the ecological agriculture registered an annual growth rate over 20%, in present time there are 26.736 operators in the ecological agriculture system. Ecolife Bio company states that an agricultural product to be an ecological product it must be the result of an agricultural production method which is not using synthetic chemical products (chemical fertilizers and herbicides, insecticides and pesticides) and contains more than 95% ingredients with ecological agriculture origin [1]. The ecological products are marked with AE sign (MADR property), next to the community sign so that all consumers can recognize these products. The consumers who buy ecological products with the national sign and community logo can have the guarantee that 95% of the product ingredients where obtained in according to the ecological production method and have the producer’s, processor’s or dealer’s name and the name or code of the certification or inspection authority [2].

2. Materials and methods

The study is focused on people’s decision related to the consumption of ecological products. For this purpose we realized and applied a questionnaire on a sample of 150 representatives, divided in different categories based certain variables (age, sex, education, income) and afterwards we analyzed the answers [3]. The research was realized in crowded places (markets, supermarkets, universities, etc) from Timisoara and respected the following stages: preparation of the survey, organization of the action and results evaluation.

3. Results and discussion

Knowing that the ecological products are requested mainly by the consumers from foreign markets (North America and Europe), we realized a study related to the way these products are perceived by the consumers from Timisoara and
which are the information sources they have. The first question was: Do you know the term of ecological products?

We noticed that 92% of the persons are informed and know the term of ecological product and 8% answered that they don’t know this term.

![Figure 1. Percentage of persons who know the term ecological product](image1)

The second question was: Do you read often articles related to agriculture and ecological products?

Figure 2 shows the fact that 53% of the questioned persons are interested and read frequently articles and announcements related to agriculture and ecological products, 37% rarely read and 10% never read such articles. From the analysis of the geographical variables we noticed that those who answered that they frequently read about ecological products are persons with university degrees or students and those who never read are with lower education and mainly over 50 years old.

![Figure 2. The interest of the questioned persons toward the ecological products](image2)

Question: Do you frequently buy ecological products?

Form the analysis of the information (figure 3) we noticed that a percentage of 35% frequently buy ecological products, 56% rarely consume such products and 9% never consume. From the realized study we can highlight that most of the consumers buy very rarely these ecological products due to the fact that they are much more expensive that the other products from the supermarkets and markets.

![Figure 3](image3)
Next question of the survey was: From where did you get information about the ecological products you use? The ecological products consumers answered as follows (figure 4): 32% from the internet, 48% from friends and family, 14% from the media and 6% from advertising campaigns.

Question: which is the principle you apply when you buy ecological products?

89% of the persons answered (figure 5) that the most important factor which determines the ecological products consumption is the report quality – price, 9% answered that the packaging and only 2% are influenced by the products brand.

Question: The ecological products are tastier, have the same taste or less tasty than the usual products?

Most of the consumers (88%) say that the ecological products are tastier than the usual ones due to the fact that they don’t contain chemical substances but they deteriorate faster than the
usual ones, and 12% consider that they have the same taste.

![Pie chart showing 88% and 12%](image)

**Figure 6.** The distribution of answers related to the taste of products

The last question: Which is the place from where you consume ecological products?

45% of the questioned persons state that they consumed fruits and vegetables mainly from their own gardens or from the relatives gardens because they are sure that the products don’t contain chemical substances, 42% consume ecological products from the market and 13% from the supermarket because the products are much more expensive than the usual products.

![Bar chart showing 45%, 42%, and 13%](image)

**Figure 7.** Place of supply with ecological fruits and vegetables (%)

4. **Conclusions**

From the realized study we noticed that the majority of the Romanian people consume very rarely these products (56%) due to the fact that they are much more expensive than the other products from the markets or supermarkets.

From the analysis of the geographical variables we can observe that the persons with university degree frequently read articles about ecological products and those who don’t read such articles have a low educational level.

The most important decision factor which determines the consumption of ecological products is the relation quality – price; only 9% of the consumers are influenced by the packaging and 2% by the brand.

The questioned persons consume mainly ecological fruits and vegetables, and then ecological eggs, honey and dairy products.

The ecological products consumers (88%) state that these are tastier than the usual products due to the fact that they don’t contain chemical substances.

**References**

2. www.madr.ro
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