



JUDGEMENT OF COSTUMERS OF TRADITIONAL HORTICULTURE PRODUCTS IN HUNGARY

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ABSTRACT:

Consumers in every country expect healthy and safe foodstuffs. In our work we tried to find answer for the question how the Hungarian customers see the safety of the foodstuffs. It is our interest to eat healthy and safe foods, and as our old proverb says: "What we eat, that we are." Several surveys have been made about the food purchasing habits, but we have started to analyse food safety recently in Hungary. The economic relations of the food safety are very significant. Every household spends 20% of its income on foodstuffs in the European Union. Competitiveness of domestic and foreign foods is increasing because of the rise of consumer confidence, and production is also on the rise. Foodstuff safety policy put more and more weight on the government. They have to take effective measurements to guarantee the safety of the foods. Hungary cannot avoid working out a national strategy.

Keywords:

judgement of costumers, traditional products, foodstuff safety

1. INTRODUCTION

The demand for traditional products is on the rise in the world of globalisation. Therefore in the south Plain region an effort is made to sell special products that are specific to the region instead of producing mass products. These unique products are competitive even on the world market. Well selected marketing tools can enhance the popularity and the market volume of Hungaricums produced in the South Plain Region (Gályász, 2006). In the developed Western-European countries a process has started in the 1980s, in which the consumers' demand has increased for the top quality goods, which are typical of regions and produced traditionally (Józsa, 2003). In the world of globalisation nowadays more and more people realise the need to launch on the market those products with great tradition which are typical of regions and represent additional values. Products, suitable for strict requirements of origin-defence or certificate system of traditional, unique feature, can expect liberalised regulation on the EU markets (Juhász-Berde, 2006).

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

We made primary examinations in the autumn term of 2005 on the College of Kecskemét and the Food-industry Department of Budapest Corvinus University. Both of them have a nationwide attraction-zone, so the sample is almost representative. The questionnaires reached all parts of Hungary, and made sure the distribution age, qualification, occupation and residence.

The questionnaire is the most important device of the primary market research methods. During our quantitative research we used standardised questionnaires, which suited

to give numerical data. The standard characteristic of the questionnaire makes it possible that the answers of different consumers are comparable.

During the primary research collected data were evaluated by statistical-mathematical methods. We used the SPSS 10.0 for Windows and LISREL 8.30 program-package during the examinations. We used the following main methods: factor-analysis, multi-dimensional scales and Correspondence analysis.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The behaviour of consumers can be measured easily with the change in the relationship between risk and confidence. Risk is an inner and hidden feature of the foodstuffs. It is very difficult for the consumers to realise the risk. Confidence measures that people do not exploit each other's sensitivity. I make known the results of a qualitative examination which relates to the relationship of the risk and confidence in connection with the food safety.

The consumers' opinion about the food safety can be seen on Figure 1. It can be seen that the 13% of the respondents think the foods safe, and the 9.3% of them think them unsafe. I could not find significant difference between the "yes" and "no" answers. Those are also determining who answered that the foods are "generally safe".

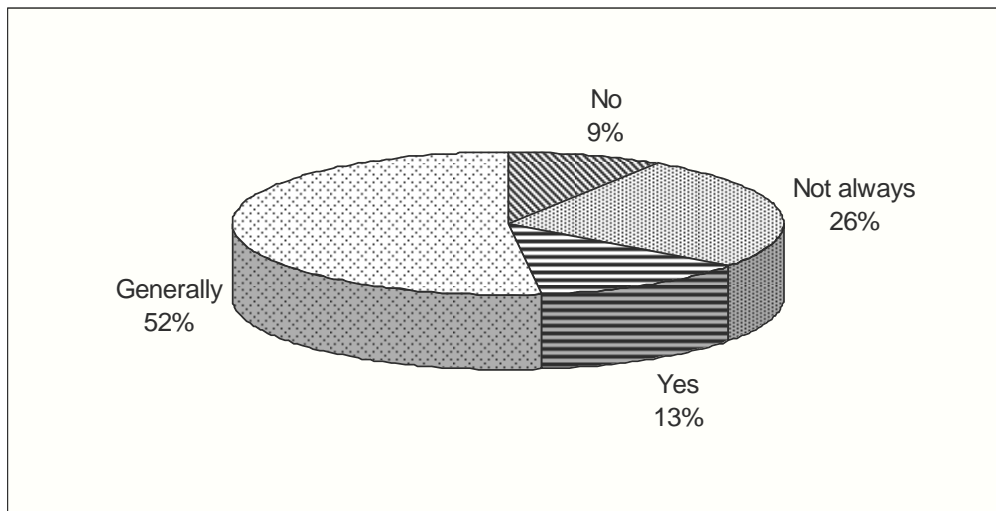


Figure 1: The safe of the traditional foods

On figure 2-3. I examined whether the customers know the products what they buy during the purchase. 70% of the respondents read very rarely the information about the components on the products, 4% do not read at all. Customers buy most of the products without knowing the materials in the products and knowing their proportion.

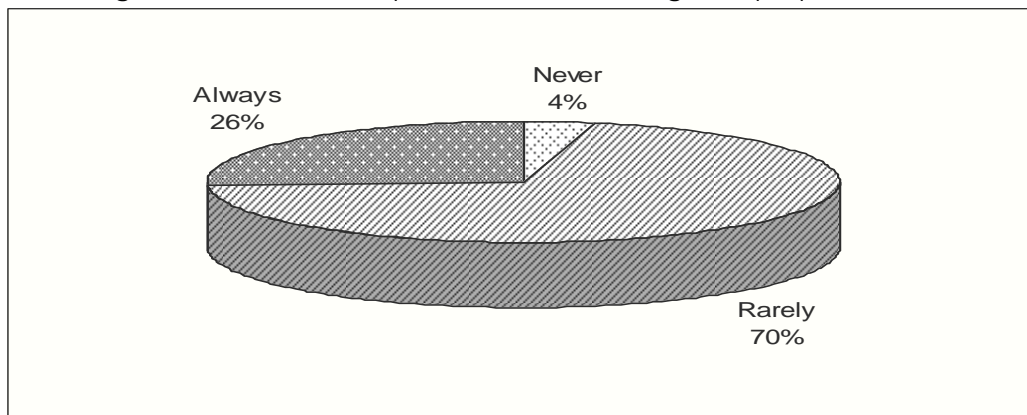


Figure 2: Knowledge of the components of foods

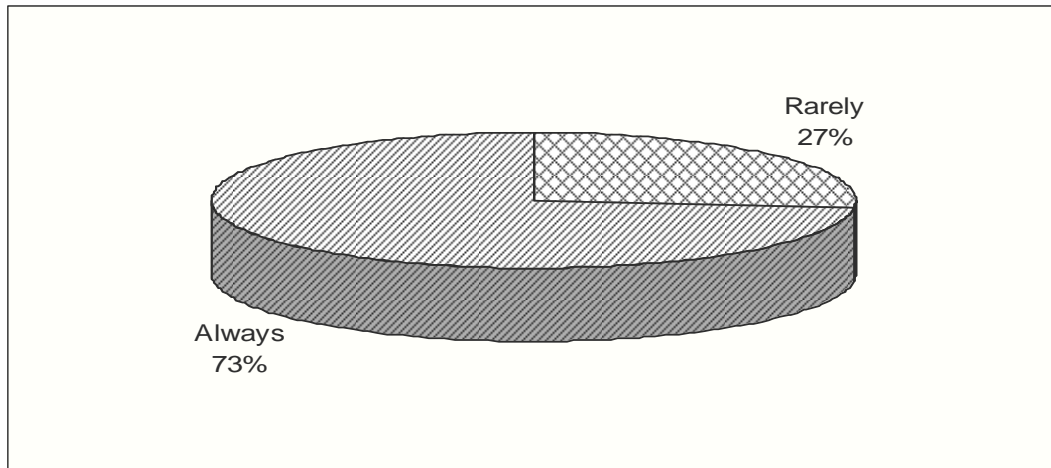


Figure 3: Knowledge of warranty time

On Figure 4, the rate of additional materials are come out of the scale. It is a very important requirement in connection with the additional materials, that they cannot be harmful for health, and their usage is connected to permission by the authorities. It is thought-provoking why toxins and poisonous materials get to the last place.

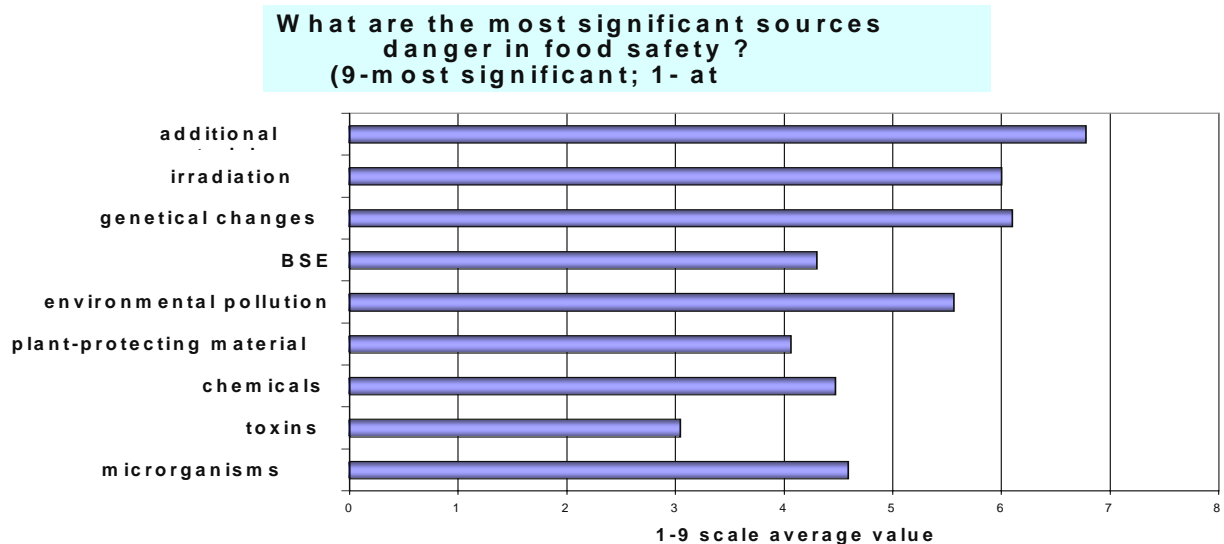


Figure 4: Rank of the sources of danger according to the Hungarian customers?

6. CONCLUSION

Nowadays, with penetration of globalisation become forgotten the food preparing skills that were transferred from one generation to another, and included safeness of the process, as well. Culinary habits and style of living of people, families have changed; tourism involves more and more people. Claim for unknown dishes, foodstuffs increased in Hungary, too.

Consumers in every country rightly expect to get safe and healthy food.

✚ Consumer's judgement of foodstuff safety is: only 13% of respondents answered with definite Yes to the question whether the foodstuffs are safe or not. Other respondents have objections relating to safety; they believe that with penetration of globalisation the uncertainty is more and more increasing. When classifying the dangers of the foodstuffs safety the respondents emphasized the role of additives; toxins were put on the last place. These results require further investigations (Deli, 2005).

- ✦ From among the factors influencing foodstuffs safety the respondents deemed hygiene circumstances to be of great importance; they identified as the largest problem the unprofessional application of chemical insecticides.
- ✦ The respondents prefer to purchase traditional foodstuffs in trade shops. From further answers it can be seen that most respondents deem the price to be as important as the foodstuffs safety (Totth, 2005).

The health safety of foods means that they do not cause any damage in the health of people, and foods have to be the basic factor of healthy environment and lifestyle. Illnesses caused by lack of food quality cause more and more problems today. Illnesses caused by the lack of food safety:

- ✦ Threaten the health and life of individuals,
- ✦ Mean great economic and social burden,
- ✦ Causes economic and health catastrophe,
- ✦ Threaten with the collapse of a product domestic and international market in hours.

In case of quality improvement of products:

- ✦ Costs of medical treatments are decreasing,
- ✦ Absence from work is decreasing,
- ✦ Productivity and export is increasing,
- ✦ Employment, social welfare and incomes are increasing.

In the next years the big issue of the Hungarian food industry will be stabilising and communicating of foodstuffs safety. This will require further, continuously updated, comprehensive and representative assessments and further research.

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