

**TRADITIONAL OR MODERN? PREFERENCES OF YOUNG
CONSUMERS IN THE FOOD MARKET- LITERATURE AND
RESEARCHES REVIEW**

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to identify young consumers' preferences on food market associated with their attitudes towards traditional or modern consumption pattern, based on secondary sources of information published over the period of 2001-2016. Article shows theoretical aspects of traditional and modern food behaviour, determinants of young people food preferences and researches conducted by chosen authors associated with young people preferences. A literature review methodology has been used and in particular the latest publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals has been analysed.

Across the studies covered by this paper it was found that on the one hand the globalization, fashion, social imitation and technological progress influence on their willingness to try or use modern ways of nutrition, such as convenience food, fast food, functional or dietetic food or takeaways and eating in restaurants. On the other hand, the ethnocentric attitudes, respect for tradition and desire to eat organic food are also indicated. However, the barrier such as price, ignorance and availability limit consumption of healthy and traditionally made products. It is necessary to promote these products in the mass media, organise social campaigns aimed at increasing consumer awareness not only about its quality, but also labelling of this type of food and distribution channels.

Keywords: consumers' preferences, young consumers, food market

Introduction

Young consumers constitute a substantial part of every society. Teenagers are considered as a separate segment of market consumers since the end of World War II, especially in the United States in America. Separate market of young consumers is appeared in increasing market activity of young people and in growth of sums of money, which is spent by them. It is also observed in forming and developing of many forms of adolescents' participation in market processes. Several groups of young consumers, such as children at the age of 4 (they are represented by mothers), at the age of 5-6, who start participating in market, children at the age of 7-8, who start understanding the concept of budget and are able to buy something for their own pocket money, teenagers at the age of 12-13, who buy commodities personally to satisfy their own needs, at the

age of 15-19 or more, who have individualized and permanent contacts with the market could be identified. It should be noted that more and more often young people have a significant influence on family purchasing decisions [1].

Young people, other than adults, feel the needs, perceive the reality, understand marketing messages, have different value system and ways of behaviour. The young generation is characterized by a great curiosity of the market, observation of its mechanisms, search and interest in innovations, the desire to imitate the lifestyle of the authorities or opinion leaders, the tendency to fashion and trends coming from other countries. They also have specific expectations from the market, regarding the product and service offer, its attractiveness, modernity and diversification, also relative to food market [2].

There are a lot of determinants, which could determine young consumer behaviour on food market. On the one hand, the globalization, fashion, social imitation and technological progress influence on their willingness to try or use modern ways of nutrition, such as convenience food, fast food, functional or dietetic food or takeaways and eating in restaurants. On the other hand, the ethnocentric attitudes, respect for tradition and desire to eat organic food are indicated.

The aim of this article is to identify young consumers' preferences on food market associated with their attitudes towards traditional or modern consumption pattern, based on secondary sources of information published over the period of 2001-2016. Article shows theoretical aspects of traditional and modern food behaviour, determinants of young people food preferences and researches conducted by chosen authors associated with young people preferences. A literature review methodology has been used and in particular the latest publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals has been reviewed.

1. Traditional food behaviour

Traditional food can be considered as food that is often consumed in some community or during celebrating special events, passed from generation to generation and known for their sensory properties [3]. The unique raw materials, technologies, the relationship with the region and its culture are intrinsic features that distinguish between regional and traditional products from mass-produced food in large processing factories. The high quality of the products is concerned by using traditional, often ecologically-friendly raw materials such as old fruit varieties, old cereal varieties and native livestock breeds. In many regions there are shops or chain stores specialized in selling regional and traditional products, which are increasingly popular with consumers [4]. Products made in regions and traditional methods are more and more often available at fairs and festivals [5]. Regional and traditional products are an increasingly important tourist attraction and often have a significant impact on the increase in the number of tourists visiting the region. Therefore, it contributes not only to increase of the producer's income, but also to the development of the region. Tourists can taste them during their stay on agritourist farms, participation in folklore or culinary events or exploration open-air museums [4]. Food and

religious norms have a major impact on food consumption, some psychological needs are satisfied in various ways in different cultures. The best examples are regional cuisines [6].

Traditional consumer behaviour is also characterized by the preference for a short food supply chain by consumers. The short supply chain in distribution systems is associated with producers, who exist as consumers, that is, consumers grow their own products. What is more there is a partnership among producers and consumers, in which case the final purchaser shares the risks and benefits related to production with the producers. In addition, manufacturers sell products directly to consumers at traditional marketplaces [7].

2. Modern food behaviour

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in modern food, such as fast food, convenience food, functional food or dietetic food, which are highly processed. Fast food is defined as convenience food which could be purchased in carry-out or self-service places [8].

Convenience food is defined as partially or fully prepared food items, where all or some culinary skills, preparation time or energy inputs are provided by food processor instead of home-maker's kitchen [9]. Food can be considered as functional if it has beneficial impact on one or more functions of the human organism, improve general and physical conditions or/and decrease the risk of the evolution of some diseases [10]. Dietetic food is defined as food which due to the special manufacturing process or the specific content is clearly distinguishable from another types of food and is dedicated for the particular use by people with impaired metabolic or digestive process, or for people who, while in specific physiological condition, ought to receive controlled nutrients [11].

The development of information and communication technologies has significant impact on the behaviour of consumers related to food purchases. More and more often busy consumers choose e-shopping. Consumers in developed countries, for instance in the USA or in some countries in Europe, use the Internet for everyday shopping and the popularity of purchasing grocery online is increasing annually in both the USA and Western Europe [12].

Nowadays, the fast development of servicization of food consumption phenomenon can be observed. Eating out is increasingly practiced throughout the world, significantly affecting the structure of household spending. This trend is particularly noticeable in China, France, the United States, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Norway. Between 2009 and 2012, in the UK there was an increase in consumer spending on out-of-home food consumption by 7%, which was € 11.40 per person per week, while take-out food expenses increased by 11%, to an average of € 2.28 per person per week, accounting for more than a quarter (26%) of total household spending on non-alcoholic beverages and food[13].

Among the examples of modern food behaviour, it is worth to notice the kind of transformation of consumer needs. Modern consumer more and more often prefers various experiences than

material possessions. Therefore, producers try to create new products with unique taste or appearance, such as chocolate with salt or coffee flavoured Coca-Cola [14]. Also restaurants are tried to be attractive for consumers, using unique menu, places or interior design [15].

3. Determinants of young people food preferences

Several determinants, which affect young people food preferences, such as globalisation, fashion, social imitation and technological process could be indicated. Globalization of consumption leads to the unification of patterns of consumption and consumer behaviour. Moreover, it contributes to the penetration of consumption patterns, the creation of global consumer culture and global consumer segments, which are distinguished based on values and attitudes towards objects and brands [16]. The psychosocial norms become particularly important in creating household consumption, determining the willingness to buy and emerging in such areas as social imitation and fashion. It is worth noting that fashion, on the one hand, allows people to express their individuality and, on the other, is an evidence of belonging to a particular group [17]. For example, after the popularity of coloured and aromatized food and industrial food production, natural products made in the traditional way are of particular interest [18]. What is more, globalisation of consumption contributes to create the phenomenon so-called ethnocentrism of consumers, which is manifested in the preference of buyers of native products [19]. Also regional products, made locally, in the traditional, organic way, are more and more important for consumers [20]. The development of information and communication technologies has significantly altered the behaviour of consumers related to food purchases. Increasingly, in addition to the traditional form, busy consumers choose e-shopping, look for product information in Internet [21]. What is more, manufacturers use new technologies to advertise their products. There are multiple techniques and channels which are used to reach youth, e. g. TV, advertisement, product placements in computer games or online marketing. It is observed that most of most of them concern snack food, breakfast cereals and fast food outlets [22].

4. Young consumer food behaviour and attitude towards food – researches review

A survey conducted by Jeżewska-Zychowicz in the form of a questionnaire interview was conducted in 2007 in Warsaw, at a group of 203 people aged up to 30 years. The aim of the research was to determine consumer attitudes towards traditional Polish products and dishes, knowledge and willingness to consume selected products and dishes representing Polish cuisine in the future, taking into account attitudes towards new food. The analysis show that the surveyed population of young consumers is characterized by a strong attachment to traditional Polish cuisine, which is demonstrated by their attitudes towards traditional Polish products and dishes and the choice of traditional products from multinational food goods. It is also identified that the level of neophobia was significantly correlated with the choices made. The higher level

of neophobia represented by consumers is linked with the greater acceptance of traditional food [3].

As it has been mentioned earlier, the development of globalisation contributes to create new phenomenon in consumer behaviour, called ethnocentrism. Siemieniako et al. conduct studies with students' participation, which goal was to explore the characteristics of Polish consumers' national and regional ethnocentric attitudes and behaviours. Authors identify factors which make a brand of beer being Polish oneto young people: it must be physically made in Poland, use traditional Polish recipe and Polish ingredients. Also image of a brand is very important for them. It has to be based on Polish culture, referring to symbols connected with a particular region or origin. This research shows that a product like beer and its regional character might play a very significant role in consumers' regional identity. It becomes a symbolic artefact, which materialise their sense of connection with a place and their moral obligation to buy local brands. It also creates a physical sense of belonging to a particular tribe, in which one was born and grew up [23].

Several researches show that young people generally have heart about organic food, however their knowledge about organic agriculture and food is low. Despite that fact, their attitude towards organic food is positive and becomes even more positive after reading its definition. Organic food is positively connected with animal welfare, environmental welfare and health. However, there is negative link between price, taste and eating organic food, with taste being regarded the most significant factor [24]. Another important factors that are identified as inhibiting purchase organic products are their high price as well as lack of knowledge about the organic food market sales and low availability of these products [25].

There have been some studies, which indicate that young people have extensive knowledge of probiotic foods. They generally know that probiotic products might have positive impact on human health, however, the frequency of its consumption depends on their financial condition. Young people, who describe their financial situation as very good or very bad, eat probiotic-rich products almost daily. The persons who describe their situation as good or satisfactory declare that they eat probiotic products several times a week. Most of young consumers declare that they choose these products due to their taste and half of respondents appreciate the health benefits of probiotic food [26].

Notwithstanding, there are several studies, which show, that young consumers prefer highly processed food. It is indicated, that convenience food in Poland is usually bought by young people. Young consumers indicate that they mostly consume poultry concentrates (broths, instant soups) and poultry carcass components. Most of them say that the offer of "convenience food" is satisfactory. Ease of meal preparation and time savings are the most important factors of choosing it. In their opinion, the lower price is the main determinant which could influence higher frequency of purchasing the convenience food [27].

Many authors conduct studies associated with young consumers' attitudes toward fast food restaurants. Story and Stang notice that during adolescence, teens spend more time with friends

and less time with their families. Young people try to be more independent, so they prefer eating away from home. Researches show that over half (52%) of out-of-home eating occasions take place at school, followed by fast food restaurants (16%), other locations (16%), and vending machines (6%). About 31% of all food eaten away is made in fast food restaurants. 83% of young people eat in fast food restaurants. They choose this kind of restaurants for several reasons. First of all, they offer a social, informal and comfortable atmosphere for them. What is more, they are relatively inexpensive, fast and offer socially acceptable choices. Moreover, fast food could be eaten outside, what perfectly fits into busy schedules of young people [28]. It should be noted that eating fast food is commonly associated with lower intake of vegetables, fruit, grains and serving of milk, and with higher intake of cheeseburgers, pizza, French fries and soft drinks. There is positive link between employment of young persons, availability of unhealthy food at home, television viewing, perceived barriers of healthy eating and frequency of fast food consuming [29]. There are also several studies of nutritional habits of pre-school children, which indicated that they choose and consume fast food products very often [30,31, 32].

Skidmore et al. find that both distance to and density of local food outlets are associated with food intake by young people. Close proximity to convenience stores and supermarkets is generally associated with a higher prevalence of reporting of unhealthy food choices, and reduced consumption of fruits and vegetables. What means that young people prefer to take away some food than cook it in traditional way [33].

The increasing process of virtualisation of consumption is connected with an increase in the number of purchases of products and services made via the Internet. Online shopping is more popular among younger generations (16-44 years old) than those older (45-74 years old) [34]. The most important determinant and advantage of online business success is the convenience of online shopping and the possibility of saving time. What is more, consumers avoid the limitations associated with localization or opening hours [35].

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to identify young consumers' preferences on food market associated with their attitudes towards traditional or modern consumption pattern. Across the studies covered by this paper it was found that determinants, such as globalisation, fashion, social imitation and technological progress induce young people to choose modern form of food behaviour. However, these trends might contribute to create traditional, ethnocentric and pro-health attitudes, which are a response for too artificial, fast and busy lifestyles. This argument could be also supported by another example of new phenomenon in young consumers' behaviour: cocooning. Cocooning, which in a free translation, can be described as homeostasis, domesticity or return to old, tradition way of life, seems to be the answer to the too intense lifestyles. Even young people need rest and detaching from reality, so they increasingly stay at home, isolating themselves from excessive momentum. However, they do not give up their

duties or pleasure, because many things can be solved by using new technology, such as the Internet or mobile technology [2].

As the literature studies show, generally young people prefer high produced food, which is associated with its price and comfortable aspects. The better availability, price and knowledge of healthy and traditionally made products could significantly influence on their food behaviour. However, it is necessary to promote these products in the mass media, organise social campaigns aimed at increasing consumer awareness not only about its quality, but also labelling of this type of food and distribution channels.

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