

BEHAVIORAL PARTICULARITIES OF CONSUMERS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

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***Abstract:** Purchasing and food consumption behavior represent the totality of individual or group decision acts in connection with the procurement and consumption of products design to meet current and future food needs, including both decision processes and those that determine the purchase of these product categories. In relation to agricultural and food products, both the purchasing and consumption behavior specific to the final consumer are distinguished, but also by the purchasing behavior of holdings having as their object of activity the production and marketing of agri-food products. The planned purchasing behavior responds to the needs of family members while the unscheduled one responds to needs of the moment as the result of impulses, which increases the role that external appearance, smell and taste have in the purchasing decision. Beyond these particular aspects of the purchasing behavior of agro-food products that are common to all families, there are also differences in this behavior determined by the economic, social, and cultural characteristics of family members.*

Key words: agri-food products, behavior, peculiarities, consumer.

INTRODUCTION

Most purchases of agri-food products are not planned for a long period of time, purchasing decisions of them being taken even in the product distribution unit, these decisions being characterized by one or more of the following characteristics: spontaneity, emotion, indifference with regard to consequences. The agri-food consumer may first choose the place and then the mark of the product or both consecutively. Choosing a commercial outlet depends on: [4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13]

- the geographical situation of the sale unit;
- product range;
- price level;
- sellers' behavior;
- serving mode;
- the inner environment of the sale unit of the goods;
- the quality of the customer;
- advertising made.

In accordance with the purchasing experience of the consumer of agri-food products, he will make a behavioral effort, by choosing one of the following options:

- routine behavior of purchasing;
- behavior regarding the limited resolution of the issue of choice;
- behavior regarding the modern solving of the issue of choice;
- behavior regarding complete solving of the problem of choice. [1, 2, 8, 10, 15]

The adoption of one of these four types of behavior depends on the consumer's cognitive capacity, product category and some situational factors. The degree of consumer involvement in solving the problem of choosing a product is determined by the amount of information about the product concerned that the consumer holds from previous purchasing experiences. In practice, the following situations arise, which highlight the link between the degree of consumer involvement and the way of solving the problem of choice

with obvious consequences on the entire decisional process: [3, 6, 14, 18]

- low involvement - little information;
- low involvement - rich information;
- high involvement - rich information;
- high implications - little information.

Involvement means the importance granted to a product-stimulus, brand or event, and expresses the degree in which the consumer feels attracted to this stimulus, involving both affective and cognitive elements. [16, 17, 19, 20]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Since buying and eating behavior represents the totality of group or individual decision-making in relation to the procurement and consumption of agri-food products to meet food needs including decision-making processes and those that determine purchasing within this scientific approach, we have undertaken studies because in the case of agricultural and food products, both purchasing and consumption behavior specific to the final consumer is distinguished, as well as the purchasing behavior of the enterprises whose object is the production or marketing of agri-food products.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The purchasing behavior and agro-food consumption represents, according to the specialists from the field, a set of acts which have as final purpose the intake of nutrients but not isolated but as foods, which are much more complex than nutrients, the image as a mark symbol, the behavior purchasing and consumption is influenced by:

- the reputation of the distributing unit;
- the distribution system for agri-food products;
- all information and messages;
- economic factors: purchasing power, revenue, product prices;
- factors of social nature: social status;
- cultural factors: traditions, customs, beliefs;
- demographic factors: age, gender, marital status, number of members, environment.

Many times the consumer does not know his physiological or nutritional needs of food, being attracted only by the pleasure of consuming/eating. Under this aspect, the sensory characteristics of food are very important in making the decision to buy them. Outside factors that account by the product, composition, sensory characteristics, quality.

Purchases of agri-food products are in the opinion of specialists largely the result of a purchase decision taken spontaneously. It is estimated that 40% of purchases of agri-food products are the result of a process:

- reflecting;
- are scheduled in advance;
- are performed by both members of the family.

The rest of the 60% purchases are the result of some of the following:

- spontaneous
- are determined by the sensations that their sensory properties trigger;
- are the result of impulses.

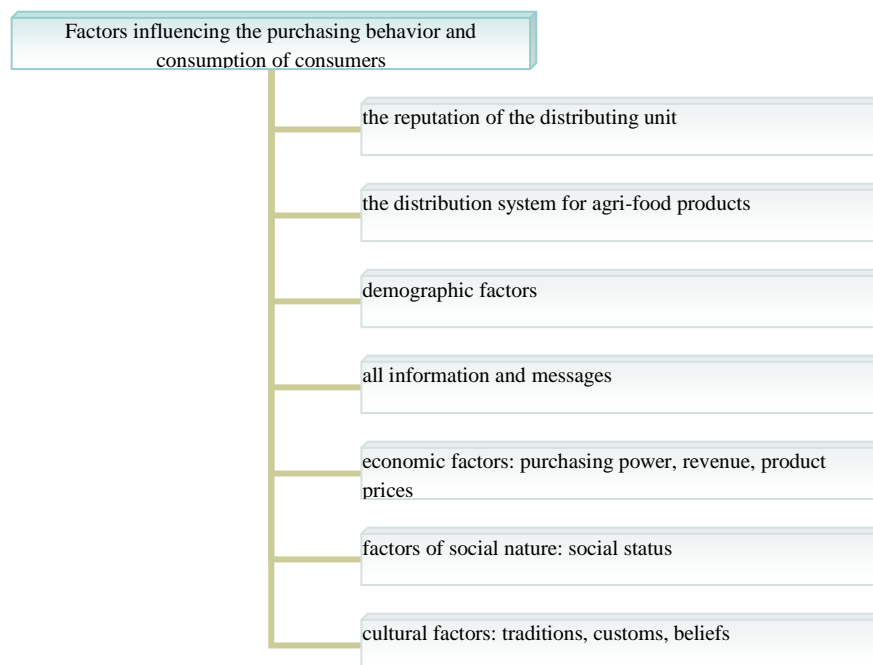


Figure 1. Factors influencing the purchasing behavior and consumption of consumers

From these reasons, we distinguish a purchasing behavior of agro-food products, unscheduled but also scheduled. The programmed purchase response responds first and foremost to the needs of household members, purchasing decisions, spontaneity, causing the sensations they trigger. The appointment of the purchase cover:

- type of product;
- choice of brand;
- making the purchase decision.

In this case the purchase decision is no longer the result of an evaluation or choice process, not a spontaneous process, the consumer knowing what to buy. If the object of the purchase represents an assortment, a brand, for which there is consume experience and to which the consumer is faithful, the purchase decision is no longer the result of evaluation or election. In addition to these particular aspects of the purchasing behavior of common food products, there are a number of behavioral differences determined by the following characteristics: economic; social; cultural.

For these reasons, the influence of incomes on purchasing and consumption behavior does not need to be analyzed separately, but by reference to reference market prices and purchasing power. These differentiations refer both to the nature of the purchased food, as well as to the effective way of consumption because by raising living standards it generates a displacement of needs to eat and food becomes a space of creativity in the preparation of products. Households with lower incomes are targeting through agri-food products with low processing and low added value, and a large number of preparation processes will take place in the household.

The culture of the area, manifested through traditions, food habits, consumption norms, has a decisive influence on consumer behavior and the purchase of some agri-food products assortments, identifying specific behavior patterns specific to nations. We can say that a nation's culture refers to:

- behavioral patterns;
- ideas related to the consumption of an agri-food product;
- short and medium-term economic and social activities and low possibilities of long-term change.

Beyond the strong traditional character of the purchasing behavior of their agri-food and consume products, the influence of culture in forming this intensity varies according to the membership of rural or urban environment, but also by age. But culture has the greatest influence in shaping the purchasing and consumption behavior of: elderly people, rural people, while young people are more receptive to the novelty. The religion as a fundamental component of culture, influences, both quantitatively and qualitatively food consumption in certain periods of one year, trying to orientate the behavior of agri-food consumption.

The age can influence the eating and consumption behavior, the elderly, having specific patterns oriented towards consumption of traditional products, but middle-aged and young people are more receptive to new products. Gender, however, determines the quantity and quality of food, women tend to consume lesser quantities of products, men focusing on products with high caloric value.

Depending on the area of origin of consumers, urban or rural, there are observed behavioral differences of the level of purchasing and consumption of agri-food products. These differences are generated by:

- the increased share of consumption in rural area;
- the existence of some products processed in a traditional system;
- lower living standards in rural area;
- the formation of some traditions in rural area, habits that are hard to change.

Social status influences the behavior of purchasing and eating, the belonging to a particular social class influencing on long-term the behavior through the formation of some specific, models hard-to-change. From this point of view, there are differences related to:

- the nature of the goods purchased;
- the place of purchase;
- the distribution system.

Also the reference groups can directly or indirectly influence purchasing and consumption behavior in terms of individual food consumption, the quality of agri-food products, and a strong influence on primary groups that come into permanent contact. Because family provides the cultural luggage of integrating into society: food consumption habits, traditions, norms, children are a true copy of family consumption habits, talking about the influence of consumer behavior and, to a lesser extent, buying in the purchase decision. The influence is not done only in one sense parents-children but also the latter can participate in making the decision to purchase an agri-food product by manifesting preferences and tastes in choosing the product. In addition to the primary groups to which they belong individually, a group of secondary groups also come in contact with a lower frequency and exercise a lesser influence on food behavior. Apart from the groups to which they belong individually, they identify one or more groups to which they aspire or wishes, their influence being indirect and aiming at:

- buying behavior and visible consumption;
- the aspiration to a particular group;
- the desire to build an image compatible to the group.

Groups to which they aspire individually will have an impact on purchasing places, foods purchased for consumption. The purchasing and consumption behavior is influenced by a number of factors, their changes will produce in time mutations in the behavior of the individual or group.

CONCLUSIONS

Purchasing and consumption behavior represents a set of individual or group decision-making acts in relation to food purchase and consumption, in order to meet the food demand in the case of consumption of agri-food products, distinguishing both a purchasing behavior and specific consumption for the final consumer. The degree of consumer involvement in choosing of a product is determined by the amount of information that the consumer has in his past experience of buying in practice is manifested in a number of situations that highlight the link between the degree of consumer involvement and the way the problem is solved with obvious consequences on the entire decision-making process. There is a programmed and unscheduled behavior in the purchase of agri-food products, the consumption being influenced by a number of cultural, social and economic factors, distinguishing specific behaviors depending on the cultural area, the reference groups influencing directly or indirectly the purchasing and consumption behavior.

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