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## Ice cream as innovative luxury products

### Summary

The concept of luxury is hard to define; usually it is combined with the richness, high price, and thus high quality. Food products belonging to luxury are variable in time; it is associated mainly with their price, limited availability and fashion. Purchases of luxury products are mainly related to the emotional side accompanying the purchase (emphasis on individuality, or belonging to a certain group). Nowadays the purchase attention is paid to other aspects of this prestigious consumption, e.g. sense, economic aspect. The aim of the study was to answer the question: Can ice cream be considered as luxury products? The observation method was used as well as analysis and criticism of the literature. The study verified this hypothesis positively by indication of the ingredients used in ice cream production, which are luxurious, expensive, rare, innovatively used, with new values: sensory, health, environment-friendly. Secondly, the article indicates the luxurious way of packaging, food serving, and the place where these products are sold and/or consumed. Thirdly, ice cream was presented as a seasonal product, not always available, consumed occasionally. All these features are typical for products considered as luxury: rationality, pro-health, and pro-environmental behaviour. The aspects indicated in this work can be used in practice in the luxury ice cream design.

**Key words:** luxury products, ice cream, premium ice cream market in Poland.

**JEL codes:** D49, E21

### Introduction

The concept of luxury is difficult to define. Most often it is synonymous with wealth, glamour, luxuries, high quality. Luxury products include goods brands considered as luxury, i.e.: cars, jewellery, cosmetics, works of art, as well as not available to most people private planes, yachts. However, the number one luxury goods are nowadays everyday objects: brand clothes, accessories, cosmetics and food products. A product is considered as a luxury changes over time and is related mainly to its limited availability, price and fashion.

The purchase of luxury products is inherently accompanied by emotions, the desire to emphasize their belonging to a specific social group or need to create its image and highlighting its individuality. Currently, however, special attention is paid to other aspects of prestige-oriented consumption. Common sense, individuality, economic rationality and health behaviours and pro-environment become more and more important.

A feature of the modern consumer is to create its own identity by ownership, because - falling into the trap set by the manufacturers, but also by himself - he believed that what he

possesses, proves its recognition and social prestige (Szul 2013). Currently, a possibility of rapid transformation in normal good became an important feature of the products classified as luxury, however the process depends largely on the level of income of the buyer (Newerli-Guz, Długosz 2012). Hajdas (2009) says that in the future luxury products are becoming more and more concerned as useful and commodity categories that are particularly related to health, food, ecology, tourism and recreation. For other foods, such as: fish, fish products, seafood the reverse process can be observed, the transformation of a normal good in a luxury good. This is due mainly to high price of these products, problems with the purchase, associated with decreasing resources and environmentally friendly operations - in the case of fish - fishing limits (Newerli-Guz, Szychowska 2014).

More and more often it is believed that apart from the economic side of luxury other sides are gaining in importance. Sikora (2002) distinguishes duality of understanding a luxury product and lifestyle, which is visible evidence of wealth. Luxury does not have to be only material goods, but also having free time to realize life dream or passion - a lifestyle (Taranko 2005). Newerli-Guz (2013) additionally mentions intangible satisfaction with cultural travellers and art as well as being in the selected company.

Bochańczyk-Kupka (2014) beyond the economic aspect of luxury, concerning the perception of luxury, depending on the currently held financial resources, lists its dependencies:

- regional - the availability of the goods in a specific geographical area,
- time - associated with time and changes in the perception of luxury with its expiration,
- cultural - related to the cultural determinants of desire the good,
- situational - depending on the situation, the presence of a particular time and place.

Vigneron and Johnson (1999) divide the motivations of consumers seeking luxury into 5 groups: demonstration, uniqueness, social motivations, hedonic and perfectionism. Motivations related to the demonstration of luxury are based on interpersonal effects and can be classified as those related to the material perception of luxury. Consumers of luxury following these motivations may think that luxury brands can bring them happiness, and they judge themselves and others on the basis of having a luxury - it is a classic approach to Veblen (1899) luxury goods.

Motivation of uniqueness can affect the choice of luxury products by the desire of consumers to distinguish themselves from others and search for products and services that make this possible. Hedonic motivations are linked very closely with the product, they are determined by pleasure associated with consumption. In the case of ice cream with taste, smell, smoothness, selection of components, general appearance. The high price referring to high-quality, better product features is an important motivation for purchase of luxury goods for the perfect consumer. Such a wide approach to luxury, beyond the stereotypical perception of it mainly from the perspective of the material was the inspiration for this paper.

The main goal of the paper was to systematize factors deciding if ice cream is a luxury products. The hypothesis was made as the question: Can ice cream be considered as luxury products? The hypothesis was verified by indication of the luxurious, expensive, rare, innovatively used, with new values: the sensory, health, environment-friendly ingredients, used in the manufacture of ice cream, a luxurious way of packaging, food serving and the place

where they are sold and / or consumed. In order to verify the hypothesis, observation method was used, as well as analysis and criticism of the literature.

## Ice cream as a luxury product

Ice cream can certainly be the luxury product. The essential ingredients of such a product must be for sure luxury components of the highest quality (on one side expensive ones and on another special properties, unique), the proper method of production, availability, and the visible characteristics ie. attractive appearance, packaging, the circumstances of the purchase and consumption.

According to the Polish Standards (PN-A-86431: 1999 Milk and milk products - ice cream - Requirements and test methods) "Ice cream is a product obtained from the emulsion of fat and protein with the addition of other raw materials and substance according to the relevant provisions and the products obtained from a mixture of water, sugar and other raw materials and substances, pasteurized, frozen, intended for direct consumption or storage" (PN-A-86431:1999).

These are frozen desserts, the main component of the air that determine their overrun, further components are water, sugar, fat, and other additives mixed in suitable proportions. Can ice cream be a luxury? Certainly yes.

Ice cream market in Poland is worth about 1.67 billion Polish zloty. Data from Euromonitor International shows, that the market for ice cream and frozen desserts rose by approx. 2.6% in 2015, while in 2016 the growth could amount to approx. 2% y/y (<https://www.euromonitor.com>). An increasing part of this market are the premium ice cream. Classifying ice cream to a group of luxury products decide, among other things: the method of production, the ingredients, place and manner of serving, packaging, way of eating. Equally important is the time dimension - seasonality and lack of regular availability of both components and terms of eating ice cream.

Context is particularly important. Lee and Hwang (2011) pay attention to the significant effect, besides high quality and price of food, factors associated with the context. Consumers emphasize the perception of the product and the service as a luxury for the high quality of service, a friendly atmosphere, attractive decor and emotions associated with the consumption of these attractive conditions called "High quality environment". Increasingly common trends in consumption, such as slow food, household centrism can be also included - you want to have the luxury at home and you can make it yourself (i.e. household production of ice cream), also so-called prosumption.

### *Innovations in ice cream*

There are seven categories classify the degree of newness of a product:

- creative products,

- innovative products,
- new packaging of existing products,
- reformulation of existing products,
- new forms of existing products,
- repositioned existing products,
- line extensions (Winger, Wall 2006).

There are many different definition of innovation, but the most popular and useful is this proposed in Oslo Manual (2005), which indicates four types of innovations, such as: product innovations, process innovations, marketing innovations and organizational innovations.

An innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organizational method in business practices, workplace organization or external relations. Innovation on ice cream market are connected mainly with product: its shape, colour, taste and ingredients.

The use of mentioned innovations division (OECD and Eurostat, 2005) in ice cream is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Ice cream innovation due to OECD division**

Product	Process
Technical specification/components Functional characteristic use of: prebiotics, probiotics, natural antioxidants, non-dairy products, local, natural ingredients without: gluten, lactose, cholesterol, GM, low fat	Techniques: encapsulation of probiotic bacteria, nanotechnology, encapsulation of other components Homemade, traditional production
Marketing	Organization
Design: shape, colour Packaging: new packages Co-branding- traditional, private labels	Methods in firm practice Workplace organization

Source: Palka et al. (2016, p. 545)

Recently, the increasing demand from consumers for healthier and functional food has led to produce ice cream containing special ingredients with recognized nutritional and physiological properties such as probiotics, prebiotics and natural antioxidants. (Aboufazi et al, 2016). Luxury ice cream can be made from luxury, rare, expensive ingredients ingredients, using new, innovative production method or conventional, traditional method from traditional ingredients, with or without special components.

### ***Luxury ingredients, production method***

Ice cream are considered to be luxurious if the used components are luxurious, expensive, rare, used in an innovative way, which gives new values: sensory, pro-healthy, pro-

environmental. The ingredients of ice cream can be organic, ecological and, now gaining in value, traditional and/or regional. They must be high quality ingredients, natural, without additives, preservatives and improvers.

High quality ice cream are also made from natural ingredients. There are new colourful ice cream coatings without E-numbers. Spirulina gives new opportunities for a new range of colours, and almost every colour shade is possible, delivered from natural sources like fruits and vegetables. In America, for example, there were new black ice cream made of ash from coconut popular in 2016. Producers offer new flavours, often never done or known before in ice cream, as vegetable or mushrooms, for example. Despite innovations that apply to healthy benefits of ice cream, there are many more.

Not only unprocessed natural ingredients, can be considered to be luxurious ice cream ingredients. Naturally, there are other foods that are considered luxurious, such as Belgian chocolate, macadamia nuts, vanilla pod and many others. These additives are used in a naturally produced ice significantly increase their production costs and the final price. Few people can afford such ice cream, this is definitely a luxury product.

Not only the components used in the production of luxury ice cream, but also the degree of aeration reflects both the quality and the amount of ice in the package relative to the amount of air therein, and hence the price. The luxury and premium ice cream aeration is at the minimum level required for proper texture and structure of the ice cream. Mid-range and lower-quality ice cream have a very high level of aeration, often exceeding the level of 200%. For the consumer, it means that in the package there is a large amount of air. As a result, the price of such ice can be correspondingly low.

### *Natural, craft ice cream*

Craft ice cream ice cream are produced by local manufactures, which are small factories specializing in the production of ice cream by conventional methods. The use of traditional recipes in the production of ice cream in such places has recently become very fashionable in Poland. Consumers often prefer to pay a higher price for a portion of ice cream from the higher-end, with a guarantee of producing a dessert using natural ingredients and traditional method. The owners of such ice cream shops bet on the highest quality ingredients and produce ice cream by natural methods. This is related to the higher costs and consequently, price. Such a product is not a product very popular because it is produced in smaller quantities and in a limited range. Typically, there are two - three regularly sold tastes and also two - three seasonal generated depending on the supply of natural ingredients which may be, for example, seasonal fruit.

The components used in this type of ice cream are not only fresh and natural, but often come from regional producers. It is difficult to expect that fresh milk and fresh fruit are subjected to a long-term transport. Smooth, fresh milk, or real hen eggs in shell, not powder are used here. Thus regionalism has also become very fashionable in the production of ice cream in terms of both - availability of components as well as restrictions on the consumption of

ice cream and a range of distribution. Producers of natural ice cream, also known as craft, met with very good acceptance in the market. This resulted in increasing supply of this type of ice cream in an increasing number of ice cream shops. Still, these are expensive ice cream and much less consumed by the most popular, industrial ice cream.

### *Home-made ice cream*

Lately a real winner is natural, homemade ice cream produced in small, local ice cream shops. One such example is the manufacture called Wytwórnia Lodów Prawdziwych „u Lodziarzy” (Label Real Ice Cream “At the Ice Cream Makers”). This is a nationwide network, which includes 10 ice cream shops, operating in many Polish cities on the a franchise basis. Ice cream served there are created on the basis of grandmother’s homemade ice cream pre-war recipe found at the attic. There are three basic flavours of ice cream: cream, chocolate and strawberry, as well as two, changing daily suggestions - ice milk and sherbet. Ice cream produced there are either consumed on the spot in the form of impulse ice cream, as well as being sold in large quantities, often ordered home. Most often these contracts involve socializing and do not end with the end of the season the typical ice cream.

The ever-growing popularity of ice cream as a dessert on the various events decide three elements. Firstly, we are dealing with something inventive, different from accompanying us, in principle, everlastingly cakes and desserts. Second is the ideal solution for everyone, it is probably hard to find a person who would refuse a portion of ice cream. The third reason perhaps is the most important. It is the quality of the product, and the home ice cream are made without any preservatives - only natural ingredients: milk, sugar, chocolate, fruit and vegetables - which is a key argument classifying this kind of ice cream in the premium class (<https://www.portalspozywczy.pl>).

In the topic of domestic ice cream, of course, fits also, and perhaps above all, ice cream made personally by the consumer. For this type of activity is needed, in addition to the desire and good quality ingredients, ice cream making machine. These devices are increasingly available, although still not cheap what causes limited availability of ice cream at home. Prosumption, however, is a field growing more and more and it seems that this kind of ice cream soon will stop to be a niche and inaccessible product.

### *Ice cream without lactose and gluten*

The main ingredient of traditional ice cream is cow’s milk. Lactose intolerance is a big problem nowadays, so people who suffer from this intolerance are outside this group of consumers. Replacing cow’s milk with vegetables milk such as soy milk would help. In addition, the lecithin of soybean extract may act as emulsifier and thus provide physical protection during freezing. Coconut milk is another vegetable extract that may be used to replace cow milk in making probiotic ice cream. It is simple to prepare, highly digestible and contains an abundance of nutrients (Wangcharoen, 2012). Instead of cow’s milk there is more

often use goat's milk which has a low fat and lactose, is appropriate for lactose intolerant or allergic to cow's milk. Non-dairy ice cream are further suitable for vegans and vegetarians.

There are another innovative ingredients used in ice cream, which often meet the health-related functions, e.g.:

- omega 3 fatty acids reduce the level of cholesterol, prevent heart diseases, strengthen nervous system, prevent cancer,
- aloe - contains approx. hundred valuable health substances
- biotin - favourable effect on hair and nails,
- guarana or caffeine - ice cream suitable for persons exposed to increased physical effort,
- L-carnitine - helps burn fat and increase physical fitness,
- ginseng - supporting the efficiency of the body and mind and body strength,
- fibre originating from sweet lupine varieties - plants, which consists of a fibre up to 15%, and also contains large amounts of protein; ice cream with fibre are less caloric, support intestinal and metabolism; moreover fibre contributes to the improvement of the structure of ice (Bulwarska, Florowska 2011; Śliwińska, Lesiów 2013; Wrońska 2006).

There is growing interest in natural and healthy products containing organic ingredients. There are ice cream having certificates which certify their production from organic raw material without pesticides and GMO. The milk used for production comes from cows fed without hormones and antibiotics (Polak 2009). The consumer should be aware that it may be, however, an greenwashing - presenting the product as a natural, organic product, with organic ingredients and ecologically packaged and what may not always be true.

Ice cream without lactose are already available in Poland. They can be consumed by people suffering from lactose intolerance. Lactose (milk sugar) intolerance, is one of the most common food intolerance. People affected by lactose intolerance are forced to eliminate from their diet all foods containing lactose. This list includes dairy products, ice cream also. Lactose-free ice cream can be produced on the basis of liquid milk, from which milk sugar is "removed" due to a process of hydrolysis of lactose into two simple sugars, glucose and galactose. This process reduces the lactose content to practically zero, causing the occasion of the rise characteristic of the two simple sugars, sweet taste. These ice creams are only available with vanilla flavour and packaging of 1L. They can be bought among others in Carrefour (Palka at al. 2016).

### ***Yogurt ice cream***

Traditional ice cream has nutritional properties but no health benefits. The increasing interest in innovation can change ice cream to functional food. Functional foods consider to provide benefits beyond basic nutrition and may play a role in reducing or minimizing the risk of certain diseases and other health conditions. The popularity of functional foods is recently increasing worldwide.

Recently, the increasing demand from consumers for healthier and functional food has led to produce ice cream containing special ingredients with recognized nutritional and

physiological properties such as probiotics, prebiotics and natural antioxidants. (Aboufazli et al. 2016). Ice cream is an ideal vehicle for delivery of probiotic bacteria in the human diet. Due to its neutral pH, synbiotic ice cream is also gaining popularity (Akin et al. 2007).

Preparation of fermented ice cream has a promising potential for utilization as functional product. The replacement of cow milk with soy or coconut milk improves the probiotic growth of *Bifidobacterium bifidum* in fermented ice cream compared to cow milk ice cream. Similarly, *Lactobacillus acidophilus* increases in fermented soy milk ice cream compared to cow milk ice cream. The growth rate of *Lactobacillus acidophilus* increases with soy milk concentrations increase in fermented composite milk ice creams. Both soy and coconut milk ice creams provide a richer growth medium of amino acids and sugar content (particularly lactose and sucrose) for *Bifidobacterium bifidum* and *Lactobacillus acidophilus* than cow's milk ice cream. Therefore, fermented vegetables milk ice cream could be a good vehicle for the delivery of *Bifidobacterium bifidum* and *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and can be used as new functional food. Further study is needed to evaluate the viability of *Bifidobacterium bifidum* and *Lactobacillus acidophilus* in vegetables milk ice cream during freezing storage (Aboufazli et al. 2016).

### ***Vegan ice cream***

On the market are also present vegan ice cream, made on the basis of fruit and vegetable juices, also using vegetable milk, which is coconut milk. Mixed fruit and/or vegetables, frozen fruit pieces are used, which rises the cost of manufacturing such ice cream. It can be concluded that these are niche ice cream.

### **Luxury ice cream market in Poland**

The growing interest in products from the premium group is also noticeable among frozen desserts, which are ice cream. Poles are open to new foods from the higher-end, willing to buy new premium despite the higher price of luxury products. Ice cream, which are still being a very seasonal product in our country, thanks to ice cream shops functioning all year round, including shopping centres, are available all year round. Luxurious ice cream, as produced from natural, fresh and unprocessed ingredients may be in the winter season less accessible, and their production more expensive. Availability of components and this season is limited, and bringing fresh fruit is problematic and costly.

Although it seems that the category of luxury ice cream on the Polish market is not attractive, it is the place for it, both in the store and in cafes. Some facts are evidence of this.

Among industrial manufacturers of ice cream, which can be classified into luxury, among others, the American ice cream Haagen Dazs can mentioned. Haagen Dazs ice cream appear and disappear, to again return to the Polish market probably for good. Haagen Dazs is a cult brand of premium ice cream, owned by US giant General Mills (GM), which several years

ago has tried to enter the Polish market its products both in the form of family ice-cream and ice-cream parlour in the form of a network operating on a franchise basis. At that time, the Polish consumer was not prepared for such an expensive ice cream and the company completely withdrew from the Polish market at the end of 2013 (Palka at al. 2016). Demand for these products was at a level sufficient for small imports from the Czech Republic, where the company has its own brand. Ice cream were distributed in Alma delicatessen. Since Alma has had problems Ice cream from this company are available in the delicatessen Piotr i Paweł and Tesco. The company recently made a decision to return to Poland and widely advertised at bus stops and billboards in Warsaw.

Polish producers of premium ice cream are ice cream production company Przedsiębiorstwo Produkcji Lodów Koral, which in 2014 launched a new brand, „Bracia Koral – lody jak dawniej” (“Brothers Koral - ice cream as in the past”) and Grycan - lody od pokoleń (Grycan - ice cream for generations). These brands, despite the fullness on the Polish ice cream market, especially in the premium class found the place for themselves and achieved success.

Producers operating in the premium segment can also include the company Consonni, which for 25 years has been a manufacturer of confectionery products of high quality. Consonni as the first and so far the only Polish manufacturer of confectionery products has been recognized by a worldwide organization Slow Food. The owners of the company have the goal of uncompromising quality, tradition, attention to the behaviour of the slow nature of the process of manufacturing and product liability.

## Package

Each product aspiring to be a luxurious apart from the special composition, properties and characteristics must be properly packed. Putting the word “premium” on the product packaging is associated with the fact that both the product and its packaging must make it is very prestigious. Packaging performs many basic functions, but in the case of premium products the most important of them is the function of quality. The packaging of luxury goods are produced are of very good materials, interesting colours, are durable and emphasize the high level of commodity. Esthetical packaging encourages the customer to buy it despite the high price. This feature is also extremely significant in food products. Luxury ice cream package has to tempt consumers to buy just this product, despite much higher price than the cheaper ice cream stored in the same freezer at the store. Therefore, the packages of luxury ice cream are characteristic not only by the type and quality of the material, but also by graphics.

## Conclusions

Problems presented in this paper concerning luxury products such as ice cream organize issues related to Design Thinking of those products. This leads to systematize the approach to the innovation process, which in their production can or should take place. Ice cream can

certainly be the luxury product. Luxury ice cream are available all over the world. There are about 10 brands of ice cream considered to be luxurious. Most of them are also most popular and bring the higher profits to their producers which are Unilever Group and General Mills Inc. There are few of them available in Poland, that is why the subject has been discussed. The analysis of the quality of these product, compared to polish ice cream premium brands will be the aim of future research.

The added value of the work is a presentation and an attempt to systematize innovation in ice cream, which testifies to their luxurious character. Probably the limiting factor is the continuous introduction of new ingredients and technological innovations in ice cream production.

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## Lody jako innowacyjne produkty luksusowe

### Streszczenie

Pojęcie luksusu jest trudne do zdefiniowania; najczęściej jest on łączony z bogactwem, wysoką ceną, a co za tym idzie wysoką jakością. Zaliczanie produktu spożywczego do produktów luksusowych jest zmienne w czasie, związane głównie z jego ceną, ograniczoną dostępnością oraz modą. Zakupy produktów luksusowych związane są głównie ze stroną emocjonalną towarzyszącą zakupowi (podkreśleniem indywidualności bądź przynależności do pewnej grupy); obecnie zwraca się jednak również uwagę na inne aspekty tej prestiżowej konsumpcji, tj.: rozsądek, racjonalność ekonomiczna, zachowania prozdrowotne i prośrodowiskowe. Celem pracy była odpowiedź na pytanie: Czy lody mogą być uznawane za produkty luksusowe? Zastosowano obserwacyjną metodę badawczą oraz analizę i krytykę piśmiennictwa. W pracy zweryfikowano tę hipotezę pozytywnie przez wskazanie składników wykorzystywanych w produkcji lodów, które są: luksusowe, drogie, rzadko spotykane, innowacyjnie wykorzystane, o nowych wartościach: sensorycznych, zdrowotnych, prośrodowiskowych. Po drugie, wskazano na luksusowy sposób ich opakowania, podania oraz miejsca, w którym są sprzedawane i/lub spożywane. Po trzecie, przedstawiono lody jako produkt sezonowy, niedostępny ciągle, spożywany okazjonalnie. Wszystkie te cechy są charakterystycznymi dla produktów uważanych za luksusowe. Wskazane w tej pracy aspekty mogą być wykorzystane w praktyce w projektowaniu lodów luksusowych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** produkty luksusowe, lody, rynek lodów premium w Polsce.

**Kody JEL:** D49, E21

## Мороженое как инновационный предмет роскоши

### Резюме

Понятие роскоши трудно определить; чаще всего ее ассоциируют с богатством, высокой ценой и, вслед за этим, высоким качеством. Отнесение продукта питания к предметам роскоши изменяется во времени, оно связано в основном с его ценой, ограниченной доступностью и модой. Покупки предметов роскоши в основном связаны с эмоциональной стороной, сопутствующей покупке (подчеркивая индивидуальный характер или принадлежность к определенной группе), в настоящее же время обращают внимание также на другие аспекты этого престижного потребления, т.е. рассудок, экономическую рациональность, поведение, характерное для заботы о своем здоровье и об окружающей среде. Цель статьи – ответить на вопрос: Можно ли мороженое считать предметом роскоши? Применили исследовательский метод наблюдения, а также анализ и критический обзор литературы. В работе эта гипотеза прошла положительную верификацию путем указания компонентов, используемых в производстве мороженого, которые считают предметами роскоши, дорого стоят, редко встречаются, используются инновационным образом, обладают новыми достоинствами: сенсорными, здравоохранительными, преследующими цель охраны окружающей среды. Во-вторых, указали роскошный способ упаковки, сервировки и место продажи и/или потребления мороженого. В-третьих, мороженое представили в качестве сезонного, непостоянно доступного и ocasionально потребляемого продукта. Все эти свойства характерны для продуктов, воспринимаемых как предметы роскоши. Указанные в работе аспекты могут использоваться в практике проектирования роскошного мороженого.

**Ключевые слова:** предметы роскоши, мороженое, рынок мороженого *premium* в Польше.

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