

Marzena Jeżewska-Zychowicz, Marta Sajdakowska
Szkoła Główna Gospodarstwa Wiejskiego w Warszawie

Małgorzata Jarossova
University of Economics in Bratislava

Consumers' approach regarding the offer of innovative food products on the example of pasta

Summary

The aim of the study was to determine the willingness of the respondents to consume innovative food products using the example of pasta. The technique of questionnaire survey with computer-aided (CAPI) was implemented. The research was conducted in the spring of 2015 among 1004 adults. The willingness to consume innovative products, such as pasta with the addition of fibre, pasta with reduced caloric value and one with short cooking time, was evaluated. The characteristics of consumers included sociodemographic features, a declaration on reading food labels and taking care of health. Frequency analysis, cross table, Chi-square test and ANOVA ($p < 0.05$) were used in the analyses. The study found that consumers declared relatively greater willingness to consume pasta with short cooking time compared to other abovementioned types of this product. Becoming familiar with the information on the packaging and attributing big importance to health was interlocked with declaring a greater willingness to consume pasta with the addition of fibre and one with reduced caloric value. The results obtained can be used in the design phase and the marketing of innovative pasta. This is a research article.

Key words: consumer, pasta, consumer perception.

JEL codes: H31, M31, R21

Introduction

The decision to purchase a food product is to a high extent influenced by its sensory characteristics, above all its flavour, but also aroma, visual appearance and texture (Heenan et al. 2008, pp. 989-997). Nevertheless the functional characteristics, such as the nutritional value, availability and previous experiences, are also important from the consumer's point of view (Carrillo et al. 2011, pp. 105-115). Apart from these factors, an increasing significance of added value, for example raised health values or higher comfort of use, can be observed. While making the choice of a product consumers primarily take into account their own expectations (Dewettinck et al. 2008, pp. 243-246; Gellynck et al. 2009, pp.16-23), and secondly their familiarity with the product and previous experiences they have had. In the case of a new product, recently introduced on the market the information on the packaging seems to have a vital influence on the decision to purchase it, especially in the context

of growing nutritional awareness of the consumers and vaster use of food for prophylactic goals. Besides that, the decisions continue to depend on consumers' sociodemographic characteristics (Jeżewska-Zychowicz et al. 2009, pp. 66-155).

The changes which occurred in the consumption of cereal products and bread in the years 2006-2014 in Poland involved above all the decline of consumption of all of such products, and also the decline in consumption of most of groups of products belonging to this category, apart from cookies and pasta. The income did not have a major effect on the consumption of pasta, however the highest level of consumption was noted in fourth and fifth quintile group (0,4kg/person/month) and the lowest one among the first quintile group (0,32kg/person/month) (Górska-Warsewicz, Świątkowska 2015, pp. 7-35). The absence of the fall of consumption of pasta, and even its small growth in some households, suggests that this product group may also in the future take up a big share in the consumption of cereal products. This phenomenon could encourage the producers to prepare a new offer of this type of product and to introduce it on the market.

Pasta as a food product is not considered to be particularly valuable, most of all because of its low biological content of protein and low content of fibre (Gallegos-Infante et al. 2010, pp. 1544-1545). Nevertheless because of its low glycaemic index pasta is perceived as a beneficial product in the diet of contemporary people. In countries such as Poland, where the consumption of fruits, vegetables and cereal products is relatively low, and therefore the amount of fibre provided is insufficient, enriching pasta with fibre is justified. Thus, the producers of pasta implement modifications to already existing products in order to obtain a product which is more comfortable for using and has a higher health value, while still staying acceptable for the prospective consumer (Howard et al. 2011, pp. 40-47; Kaur et al. 2012, pp. 467-474; Sobota et al. 2015, pp. 111-119).

The aim of the study was to evaluate the willingness of the consumers to consume innovative food products on the example of pasta. The sociodemographic characteristics varying the willingness to consume such products examined by this research were the following: gender, age, education, place of residence, an opinion about family income and the declarations considering reading of food labels and importance attributed to one's health.

Material and research methods

The study was carried out in February-March 2015 among the group of 1004 people who were 21 years old or older using computer assisted personal interviews (CAPI). The criteria for selection of the sample took into account the representativeness of the population due to the voivodeship (state), and the selection was of the quota nature taking into account gender and education. Only people who met the criterion for recruitment were qualified for the interview. The criterion was being making food purchases either on their own or in cooperation with other household members.

The study population consisted of slightly more women (52.2%) than men (47.8%). Almost 2/5 of the respondents (38.6%) had secondary education, 28.5% were people with higher education, and other respondents had vocational (25.1%) or elementary education (7.8%). People aged 25 years or less accounted for 11.2% of the study population; 26-35 years - 19.0%; 36-45 years - 16.3%; 46-55 years - 18.8% and respondents older than 55 years old - 34.7% of population. More than 1/5 of respondents lived in rural areas (22.0%), 24.7% of respondents represented the cities with up to 100 thousands residents, and 53.3% - the cities with over 100 thousands residents. Almost 1/3 of the respondents (31.4%) assessed the income of their family as "not at all satisfactory" or "it can satisfy only the basic needs"; 44.2% of respondents determined their income as "we can afford certain expenses" and the rest (24.4%) pointed to the answer "we can afford everything" or "we can afford everything and in addition we can save". More than half of respondents (50.2%) declared that they have no major health problems, 30.9% reported the existence of minor ailments, while 18.9% of respondents informed that they remain under constant control of a doctor.

The declared willingness to consume three types of pasta, including pasta with the addition of fibre, with reduced amount of calories, and pasta with short cooking time were evaluated. It was expressed on a 5-point scale, where each denoted: 1 - no, 2 - rather not, 3 - neither no neither yes, 4 - rather yes, 5 - yes. In addition, respondents were asked about their opinions on the food label reading and taking care of their own health, which was marked on the 5-point scales (1 - no, 2 - rather not, 3 - neither no nor neither yes, 4 - rather yes, 5 - yes). Questions about sociodemographic characteristics included gender, age, education, place of residence and assessment of income.

As part of the statistical analysis an analysis of the frequency was performed and cross tables were created. In order to determine statistically significant differences between the variables test Chi-square and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with a significance level of $p < 0.05$ were implemented. The statistical package IBM SPSS version 23.0 was used.

Willingness to consume innovative pasta

Higher interest in consumption was found for pasta with a short time of cooking in comparison to other types of pasta, i.e. pasta with the addition of fibre and pasta with reduced amount of calories (Table 1). This can be interpreted as a proof of vital importance of the comfort of use in determining the purchase of a product (Carrillo et al. 2011, pp.105-115). The mean values (3.76 - 3.88) express moderate interest in evaluated products, which was confirmed by other studies (Jeżewska-Zychowicz et al. 2009, pp. 66-86).

Relatively biggest number of respondents did not express the willingness to consume pasta with the reduced amount of calories, while the highest percentage of the respondents declared their willingness to consume pasta characterized by the short time needed for its preparation. A relatively bigger group of undecided respondents ("neither yes nor no") was found for pasta with the addition of fibre.

Table 1

The declared willingness to consume different types of innovative pasta among the studied population (%; \bar{x} ; SD)

Type of innovative pasta	Willingness to consume the product					\bar{x} ; SD ^a
	No (1)	Rather not (2)	Neither no nor yes (3)	Rather yes (4)	Yes (5)	
Pasta with the addition of fibre	6.6	7.0	24.1	27.9	34.4	3.76;1.18
Pasta with the reduced amount of calories	8.1	8.6	19.2	27.4	36.8	3.76; 1.25
Pasta with a short time of cooking	4.3	8.9	19.2	29.4	38.2	3.88; 1.14

^a \bar{x} – mean value; SD – standard deviation

Source: own study.

Impact of sociodemographic characteristics of the respondent on conditioning the willingness to consume innovative pasta

The sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents differentiated their inclination to consume abovementioned types of pasta, which reflects the pattern found in studies about other innovative food products (Carrillo et al. 2011, pp. 105-115; Gellynck et al. 2009, pp. 16-18). In the case of innovative pasta more differences were discovered in regard to the addition of fibre and the reduction of the amount of calories than in regard to the short time of cooking (Table 2, 3, 4).

Significantly more women than men were inclined to consume pasta with the addition of fibre, also more people with secondary and higher education declared the interest in such products. People who were 45 years old and younger were more interested in consumption of pasta enriched in fibre, when only half of the respondents who were 55 years old or older declared willingness to consume it. Education-wise significant statistical differences were found among the opinions of people with elementary and secondary education (Table 2).

Twice as many people representing rural environment did not declare the willingness to consume pasta with added fibre in comparison with respondents living in towns, especially ones with more than 100 thousands inhabitants. Relatively less people assessing their income as not satisfactory or high enough to satisfy only basic needs were inclined to consume pasta with the addition of fibre (Table 2).

Besides, significantly more women than men were willing to consume pasta with reduced amount of calories. Also more people with secondary or higher education declared willingness to consume this kind of product. The age did not differ significantly the declared willingness to consume pasta with lower caloric value (Table 3).

Table 2

The declared willingness to consume pasta with the addition of fibre according to sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents (%; \bar{x} ; SD)

Characteristics of the population	The willingness to consume ^a					
	1	2	3	4	5	\bar{x} ; SD
Total population	6.6	7.0	24.1	27.9	34.4	3.76;1.18
Gender ($p<0.05$)						
Female	4.6	6.5	21.0	29.5	38.4	3.91 ^b ;1.12
Male	8.8	7.5	27.7	26.0	30.0	3.61 ^b ;1.23
Education($p<0.05$)						
Elementary	12.8	3.8	33.3	23.2	26.9	3.47 ^b ;1.29
Vocational	8.3	5.6	29.4	29.4	27.3	3.62;1.18
Secondary	5.9	9.3	17.8	27.8	39.2	3.85 ^b ;1.21
Higher	4.2	5.9	25.9	28.0	36.0	3.86;1.10
Age ($p<0.05$)						
25 years old or less	5.4	9.8	19.6	30.4	34.8	3.79;1.18
26-35 years old	4.2	6.3	18.3	31.4	39.8	3.96 ^b ;1.10
36-45 years old	3.0	6.1	22.0	30.5	38.4	3.95 ^b ;1.06
46-55 years old	8.5	6.9	23.3	27.0	34.3	3.72;1.24
More than 55 years old	8.9	6.9	30.5	24.4	29.3	3.58 ^{bc} ;1.23
Place of residence ($p<0.05$)						
Rural area	12.2	13.6	23.1	23.1	28.1	3.41 ^{bc} ;1.35
Town with less than 100 000 residents	4.0	6.5	25.4	33.5	30.6	3.80 ^b ;1.07
Town with more than 100 000 residents	5.4	4.5	24.1	27.3	38.7	3.89 ^c ;1.13
Assessment of income ($p<0.05$)						
Not at all satisfactory or can satisfy only the basic needs	8.9	7.0	26.7	24.4	33.0	3.66;1.25
We can afford certain expenses	3.6	7.0	25.0	30.0	34.4	3.85;1.09
We can afford everything	9.0	6.9	19.6	28.6	35.9	3.76;1.26

$\bar{X} \pm SD$ – mean value \pm standard deviation

^a scores from the 5-point scale where 1- no, 2 – rather not, 3 – neither no nor yes, 4 – rather yes, 5- yes

^{bc} mean values indicated by the same letters differ significantly at $p < 0.05$ (ANOVA, Tukey's post-hoc test)

Source: like in table.

Substantially smaller number of people representing towns with up to 100 thousands habitants did not declare the willingness to consume pasta with lower caloric value in comparison to people from bigger towns and inhabitants of rural areas. This tendency was confirmed in differences between the means corresponding to the opinions of respondents from each environment (Table 3). Varying assessment of income did not seem to cause statistically important differences in the opinions of respondents, both in the distribution of indications, and the mean values.

In the case of pasta with a short time of cooking, there were no differences between the respondents found after taking into consideration their gender, age or education. However, the place of residence and the assessment of income differed the declared inclination to con-

sume pasta with a short time of cooking. The significantly biggest group of people from the rural environment (74,7%) declare such inclination (“yes” and “rather yes”), when in towns with less than 100 thousand residents 71,0% of the studied population declared willingness to consume it and in town with more than 100 thousand residents – 63,3%. After taking into account the mean values there was no difference found between the opinions of people from rural areas and small towns, nevertheless people from big towns were substantially less inclined to consumed pasta with a short time of cooking (Table 4).

Table 3

The declared willingness to purchase pasta with reduced caloric value according to the sociodemographic characteristics of the population (%; \bar{x} ; SD)

Characteristics of the population	Willingness to purchase ^a					
	1	2	3	4	5	\bar{x} ; SD
Total population	8.1	8.6	19.2	27.4	36.8	3.76; 1.25
Gender ($p < 0.05$)						
Female	6.7	7.6	14.7	29.8	41.2	3.91 ^b ; 1.21
Male	9.6	9.6	24.1	24.8	31.9	3.59 ^b ; 1.28
Education ($p < 0.05$)						
Elementary	14.1	3.8	21.8	23.1	37.2	3.65; 1.38
Vocational	8.7	8.7	20.6	33.3	28.7	3.64; 1.23
Secondary	7.5	8.7	17.0	28.9	37.9	3.81; 1.24
Higher	6.6	9.4	20.3	21.3	42.4	3.83; 1.26
Place of residence ($p < 0.05$)						
Rural area	14.5	10.9	21.6	24.0	29.0	3.42 ^{bd} ; 1.38
Town with less than 100 000 residents	2.4	6.9	25.0	26.6	39.1	3.93 ^{bc} ; 1.06
Town with more than 100 000 residents	8.0	8.4	15.5	29.2	38.9	3.82 ^{cd} ; 1.26

$\bar{X} \pm SD$ – mean value \pm standard deviation

^a scores from the 5-point scale where 1- no, 2 - rather not, 3 - neither no nor yes, 4 - rather yes, 5- yes

^{bc} mean values indicated by the same letters differ significantly at $p < 0.05$ (ANOVA, Tukey's post-hoc test)

Source: like in Table 1.

The more positive was the assessment of the income of the family, the smaller number of respondents declared willingness to consume pasta with a short time of cooking. The differences between mean values corresponded to the extreme assessments of income. Respondents describing their income as not at all satisfactory or satisfactory only for basics needs were more inclined to consume such type of pasta (Table 4).

The results of previous studies suggest that the role of sociodemographic variables in conditioning the acceptance of innovative foods is diverse. According to Dagevos (2005, pp. 32-39) age, gender and level of education differentiate the food choice and the acceptance of foods with enhanced health benefits to a smaller and smaller extent. Other studies suggest, however, that some of them, for example gender, age, education and place of

residence, significantly differentiate consumer's acceptance of various functional products (Ares and Gambaro 2007, pp. 148-158; Jeżewska-Zychowicz et al. 2009, pp. 66-86), which was also confirmed by the results of this study. Consumers of foods with health-promoting properties are mostly women, people with relatively better education, people representing higher levels of income and those aged between 35 and 55 years old (Rollin et al. 2011, pp. 99-111). In the case of pasta, which was the concern of the study, the results justify the consideration of socio-demographic characteristics in the research for the specifics of potential recipients of products placed on the market.

Table 4

The declared willingness to purchase pasta characterized by a short time of cooking according to sociodemographic characteristics of the respondent (%; \bar{x} ; SD)

Characteristics of the population	Willingness to purchase ^a					
	1	2	3	4	5	\bar{x} ; SD
Total population	4.3	8.9	19.2	29.4	38.2	3.88; 1.14
Place of residence ($p < 0.05$)						
Rural area	4.1	5.4	15.8	35.8	38.9	4.00 ^b ; 1.06
Town with less than 100 000 residents	2.8	4.8	21.4	30.6	40.4	4.00 ^c ; 1.03
Town with more than 100 000 residents	5.0	12.1	19.6	26.3	37.0	3.78 ^{bc} ; 1.21
Assessment of income ($p < 0.05$)						
Not at all satisfactory or can satisfy only the basic needs	4.8	6.0	17.2	27.6	44.4	4.01 ^b ; 1.14
We can afford certain expenses	3.6	8.8	21.2	28.6	37.8	3.88; 1.12
We can afford everything	4.9	12.6	18.4	33.1	31.0	3.73 ^b ; 1.17

$\bar{x} \pm SD$ – mean value \pm standard deviation

^a scores from the 5-point scale where 1 - no, 2 - rather not, 3 - neither no nor yes, 4 - rather yes, 5 - yes

^{bc} mean values indicated by the same letters differ significantly at $p < 0.05$ (ANOVA, Tukey's post-hoc test)

Source: like in Table 1.

Approximately twice more people who declared they read the information provided on food labels, compared with ones who did not read these information, were willing to consume pasta with the addition of fibre. Similar differences were found for declarations on taking care of health, thus most people who perceived themselves as somebody who cares about health declared the desire to consume this product (Table 5).

Approximately every second respondent who declared reading the information placed on the labels of food products was inclined to consume pasta with reduced amount of calories. In the case of respondents who did not fall into this category such opinions were represented by 1/3 of the population. Health-consideration-wise substantially the most people who considered themselves to be taking care of health declared willingness to consume this product (41.1%). Solely one in four people who declared they do not take care of their health was willing to consume pasta with reduced amount of calories. The distribution of comments ex-

pressing willingness to eat pasta with short cooking time showed no significant differences after taking into account declaration on being familiar with the information placed on the label and taking care of their own health (Table 5).

Table 5

The declared willingness to consume pasta with addition of fibre according to sociodemographic characteristics of the population (%)

Characteristics of the population		Declared willingness to consume				
		no	rather not	neither yes nor no	rather yes	yes
Pasta with addition of fibre						
Reading the information on the food label ($p < 0.05$)	yes	2.3	1.8	13.4	29.0	53.5
	neither yes nor no	3.5	3.1	19.2	31.4	42.8
	no	9.5	10.6	30.4	26.0	23.5
Considering oneself as someone who cares about their health ($p < 0.05$)	yes	4.1	5.1	19.0	31.9	39.9
	neither yes nor no	8.8	10.4	34.5	20.5	25.8
	no	18.3	10.8	33.3	19.3	18.3
Pasta with reduced amount of calories						
Reading the information on the food label ($p < 0.05$)	yes	4.6	3.7	19.4	22.6	49.8
	neither yes nor no	3.1	7.4	17.0	35.8	36.7
	no	11.5	10.9	20.1	25.8	31.7
Considering oneself as someone who cares about their health ($p < 0.05$)	yes	5.9	6.3	17.2	29.5	41.1
	neither yes nor no	10.0	11.6	24.5	24.5	29.4
	no	18.3	16.1	19.4	20.4	25.8
Pasta with a short time of cooking						
Reading the information on the food label ($p < 0.05$)	yes	5.5	9.7	22.6	29.5	32.7
	neither yes nor no	4.8	10.0	20.2	26.6	38.4
	no	3.6	8.1	17.5	30.5	40.3
Considering oneself as someone who cares about their health ($p < 0.05$)	yes	3.3	9.5	18.0	30.8	38.4
	neither yes nor no	6.8	6.8	23.3	26.2	36.9
	no	4.3	9.7	17.2	28.0	40.8

Source: like in Table 1.

Conclusions

On the base of the results can be stated that:

- The greatest interest concerned the consumption of pasta with a short time of cooking, while lower interest was found for pasta with the addition of fibre and pasta with a reduced amount of calories. In the case of the latter two products there was no difference in the declared willingness for their consumption;

- Both reading of information provided on food labels, as well as socio-demographic characteristics, taking into account gender, age, education, place of residence and assessment of income significantly differentiated respondents' opinions on their willingness to consume all types of pasta;
- Becoming familiar with the information provided on the labels of food products, and perceiving oneself as a person who cares about health contributed to declaring a willingness to consume pasta with the addition of fibre and pasta with a reduced amount of calories, thus having the features directly related to the favourable impact of the product on health;
- In the case of pasta with a short time of cooking significant differences in opinions on the willingness to consume the product was found only after taking into account the place of residence and the assessment of income;
- Socio-demographic characteristics differentiated declared willingness to consume pasta with reduced caloric value and pasta with the addition of fibre. Greater interest in both products was declared by women.

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Konsument wobec oferty innowacyjnych produktów żywnościowych na przykładzie makaronu

Streszczenie

Celem badania było określenie gotowości konsumentów do spożywania innowacyjnych produktów żywnościowych na przykładzie makaronu. Zastosowano technikę ankierskich wywiadów osobistych ze wspomaganie komputerowym (CAPI). Badanie zrealizowano wiosną 2015 roku wśród 1004 dorosłych osób. Ocenie poddano deklarowaną chęć spożywania innowacyjnych produktów, jakie stanowiły makarony z dodatkiem błonnika, o obniżonej kaloryczności oraz o krótkim czasie gotowania. W charakterystyce konsumentów uwzględniono cechy socjodemograficzne, deklarację dotyczącą czytania etykiet żywnościowych oraz dbania o zdrowie. W analizie zastosowano analizę częstości, tabele krzyżowe, test χ^2 oraz ANOVA ($p < 0,05$). Stwierdzono, że relatywnie większą gotowość spożywania deklarowano względem makaronu o krótkim czasie gotowania w porównaniu z pozostałymi rodzajami. Zapoznanie się z informacją na opakowaniu oraz dbanie o zdrowie sprzyjało deklarowaniu większej chęci spożywania makaronu z dodatkiem błonnika oraz o obniżonej kaloryczności. Otrzymane wyniki mogą być wykorzystane w fazie projektowania oraz wprowadzania na rynek innowacyjnego makaronu. Artykuł ma charakter badawczy.

Słowa kluczowe: konsument, makaron, percepcja konsumentka.

Kody JEL: H31, M31, R21

Потребитель перед лицом предложения инновационных продуктов питания на примере макаронных изделий

Резюме

Цель изучения заключалась в определении готовности потребителей употреблять в пищу инновационные продукты питания на примере макаронных

изделий. Применили технику личных интервью с помощью компьютера (CAPI). Изучение провели весной 2015 г. среди 1004 взрослых лиц. Оценили заявленное желание потреблять инновационные продукты, какими были макаронные изделия с добавлением пищевых волокон, с пониженной калорийностью и с коротким временем варки. *В характеристике потребителей учли социально-демографические черты, заявление о чтении ярлыков на продуктах питания и заботу о здоровье.* В анализе применили анализ частотности, кросс-таблицы, критерий хи-квадрат и ANOVA ($p < 0,05$). Выявили, что относительно более высокой готовности потреблять заявляли по отношению к макаронным изделиям с коротким временем варки по сравнению с остальными видами. Ознакомление с информацией на упаковке и забота о здоровье способствовали заявлениям о большем желании потреблять макароны с добавкой пищевых волокон и с пониженной калорийностью. Полученные результаты могут использоваться в фазе проектирования и ввода на рынок инновационных макарон. Статья имеет исследовательский характер.

Ключевые слова: потребитель, макаронные изделия, потребительское восприятие.

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Afiliacje:

prof. dr hab. Marzena Jeżewska-Zychowicz
dr inż. Marta Sajdakowska
Szkoła Główna Gospodarstwa Wiejskiego
Wydział Nauk o Żywieniu Człowieka i Konsumpcji
Katedra Organizacji i Ekonomiki Konsumpcji
ul. Nowoursynowska 159 c
02-776 Warszawa
e-mail: marzena_jezewska_zychowicz@sggw.pl
e-mail: marta_sajdakowska@sggw.pl

Dr Ing. Malgorzata Jarossova
University of Economics in Bratislava
Faculty of Commerce
Dolnozemska cesta 1
852 35 Bratislava 5
e-mail: malgorzata.jarossova@euba.sk