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The impact of education on the behaviour of the consumer of animal origin food products

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Abstract

The food style defines the behaviour of the consumer or the behaviour of a community function to the wishes and the significances regarding the food act; these are closely linked to the procurement, preparation and consumption of food. The impact of education on the consumers of animal origin food products was evaluated using a questionnaire structured on three categories of respondents: pupils, students and adults; all residents of the Timis County- Romania. The findings indicate a preference for meat of 98% of the respondents; mainly chicken, then pork and beef. The high percentage of milk consume is influenced by tradition, the age of the respondents and the reasonable price. Students prefer pork and meat products, followed by dairy products. Adults prefer chicken meat mainly due to its low price, or because it can be obtained in their own household. Beef is considered a dietetic product and does not have a high percentage in the consumers' preferences, as the tradition and the education received do not recommend it. The meat products are not in the preferences of the respondents with high school education, this place being occupied by milk and eggs obtained in individual farms. A rational diet implies the consumption of all food groups in balanced proportions, function to the age, daily activity and health state. An educated consumer is an informed consumer, constantly prepared to take decisions, to have a responsible behaviour as far as the quantity and the quality of the food products of animal origin are concerned.

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1. Introduction

The development and the improvement of the industry and agriculture, the implementation of the new discoveries of science and technology in all the fields of activity have increased the level of intellectual effort, out of the total effort made by the population. Therefore nutrition has to be structured in such a way as to satisfy mainly the needs generated by the intellectual effort at the expense of the physical one. The lack of time and the preference for processed products lead to the occurrence of a consumer sensitive to the sensorial food qualities, display methods, taste, aspect, etc. To save time many people prefer semi-prepared products or food products that require the shortest time to prepare and are very tasty (Marin et al. 2013, Sucan: 2012).

The demographic trends are characterized by an increase of the aged population to the detriment of the young population; fact illustrated in the food consumption patterns at the biologic structure. The behaviour patterns, characterised by an open systemic functioning, reflect the static or dynamic mechanisms, influenced by factors that can determine, or not, the existence of the connections between consumers. Data modeling provides information with respect to all the stages through which a product has to pass in order to be selected: the product range, types of products, different brands or the situations in which the consumer is in the position to select a store for the purchase of goods or services.

Nowadays, the behaviour of the consumer of food products is characterized by equilibrium and a rational manifestation. This development is based on traditions, food habits, inherited or acquired, with implications for meeting the nutritional needs of the body, but without neglecting the modernity and the innovation specific to the nutritional field (Petroman et al., 2008, our translation).

When there are imbalances, as far as the ratio between the amounts of food ingested, the nutrient intake and the satisfaction of the body needs, it is necessary to adopt measures to rebalance the diet and the nutrition regimes (Avramescu et al., 2015). In this regard, an important role has the research done by the experts in nutrition to identify through specific methods, the food need, function to some particularities of the consumer. In our opinion, the “role of education in a globalized world is to prepare the young generation for real life situations [...] you cannot confine yourself merely to your own country, you have to think globally, competitively” (Constantin, 2012, p. 4135). An important aspect is the role of education in promoting a healthy lifestyle by changing and modeling the eating behaviour; all these are closely related to information in making the choice of food products (Bela et al., 2012; Caba: 2008; Dumitrescu et al., 2012; Galison: 1997).

2. Material and method

A questionnaire was administered, in order to demonstrate the influence of education on the behaviour of the consumer of food products of animal origin. It was structured on three categories of respondents i.e.: pupils, students and adults in the Timis county, Romania.

In view of the analysis, the method for data collection was based on the standardization of the process in order to ensure the content and the coherence. The study based on the survey and the sampling method gave us the possibility to obtain accurate results based on the sample representativeness. The sample size for each category was 300 persons; the results obtained were analysed for each sample group by the univariate descriptive analysis, and the frequency tables were SPSS generated.

3. Results and discussion

The questionnaire administered to the pupils contains a number of 15 questions regarding the quantity, quality and structure of the consumption of animal origin food products and three questions referring to factual data. The results obtained have been compiled in tables with one-dimensional variable, showing the absolute and relative frequency of the occurrence of the responses ratio to the sample. It was found out that, out of the 300 students surveyed, 294 eat meat, i.e. 98%. The preference for meat was influenced by family, customs and the traditions of the region. Those who do not eat meat declared that the reason is either health, religion or other reasons. The meat preferences, function to the species, are the following: 86.5% prefer chicken meat, followed by pork, beef and other types of meat. As far as the consumer location is concerned, 83.8% consume chicken meat at home, and 14.20%

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