



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Food Quality and Preference

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/foodqual

Sustainable food consumption in the nexus between national context and private lifestyle: A multi-level study



John Thøgersen*

Aarhus University, Denmark

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 9 May 2016

Received in revised form 12 August 2016

Accepted 14 August 2016

Available online 16 August 2016

Keywords:

Food-related lifestyle

Sustainable consumption

Organic food

Consumer innovativeness

Multi-level latent class analysis

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates how country of residence and food-related lifestyle (FRL) interact in shaping (un)sustainable food consumption patterns. An online survey was carried out in ten European countries ($n \approx 335$ in each country), covering the five regions North, South, East, West and Central Europe. Multi-group CFA (AMOS22) was used to test the cross-national validity of the FRL instrument. After deleting a few items, it was found that the factorial structure of all five FRL domains is invariant with respect to factor configuration and factor loadings but not with respect to item intercepts. The segmentation analysis was performed by means of Latent Gold 5.1 and multi-level latent class analysis based on data from all ten countries and using the 23 FRL dimensions as input. A five-segment, three-country class solution was judged to produce the best compromise between fit and parsimony, confirming that cross-country FRL segments can be meaningfully identified, but that the segment structure differs across Europe's regions. The joint effect of country class and FRL on sustainable food-related consumer behaviour was analysed by means of GLM (SPSS22). Both country class and FRL significantly account for variation in meat and organic food consumption and FRL in addition for variation in sustainable food product innovativeness. Further, there is significant interaction between country and FRL for all outcome variables. Hence, the impact of FRL on sustainability choices partly depends on country of residence.

© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Contemporary food production and consumption are not sustainable (Reisch, Eberle, & Lorek, 2013) but they contribute substantially to global problems such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation (IPCC, 2014). Food is one of the three consumption domains responsible for the largest share of environmental impact (the other two being housing and transportation, cf., e.g., Steen-Olsen & Hertwich, 2015; Tukker, 2015). The shift seen in recent decades towards a more meat-heavy diet (Popp, Lotze-Campen, & Bodirsky, 2010), especially in middle-income countries (Speedy, 2003), also links sustainable food consumption to challenges such as food security, poverty and inequality (Field & et al., 2014; Reisch et al., 2013).

An emerging stream of research investigates the potential of lifestyle changes to drive the needed transition towards a low-carbon future (e.g., Mont, Neuvonen, & Lähteenoja, 2014; Neuvonen et al., 2014). Others have investigated how national context shapes the sustainability of consumption patterns (cf.

Thøgersen, 2010a). Also, lifestyle and national context are hardly mutually independent. For example, it is highly likely that national and cultural contexts are major factors shaping consumer lifestyles (Milfont & Markowitz, 2016). At the same time, there are forces that may "synchronize" consumer lifestyles across countries, such as mass media, advertising, international traveling, and the human tendency to emulate those that seem to be doing better, including those in other, economically more advanced countries (e.g., Cleveland, Laroche, & Papadopoulos, 2009; Thøgersen, 2010b; Wilk, 2002). Be that as it may, there is a lack of empirical research on the relative importance of, and the likely interplay between, a person's private lifestyle and opportunities and constraints afforded by the context with regard to the sustainability of consumers' food-related choices (cf. Milfont & Markowitz, 2016).

Against this backdrop, this paper reports a study of the extent to which differences in consumers' more or less sustainable food-related choices and their openness to new, more sustainable food products result from their private lifestyle versus the opportunities and constraints afforded by the wider context in which they live. Using Grunert and associates' thoroughly validated instrument for measuring FRL (e.g., Grunert, 1993; Scholderer, Brunso, Bredahl, & Grunert, 2004), national, and potentially cross-national, food-related lifestyle (FRL) segments are identified by

* Address: Department of Management, Bartholins Allé 10, 8000 Aarhus C, Denmark.

E-mail address: jbt@mgmt.au.dk

means of multi-level latent class analysis of survey data from representative samples of consumers from ten European countries. The approach employed enables both profiling the identified cross-national lifestyle segments and determining the joint impact of food-related lifestyle and national context for (self-reported) behaviour, in this case more sustainable food choices.

2. Lifestyle research

Lifestyle research in marketing is primarily used for market segmentation (Plummer, 1974; Vyncke, 2002). With the development of the affluent consumer society, demographic characteristics became less and less predictive of consumer behaviour, and “psychographic” (Demby, 1974) or lifestyle segmentation was proposed as a more effective way to divide consumers into relatively homogeneous groups. Lifestyle segmentation is usually survey-based, where lifestyle groups or segments are identified by first using a data reduction technique, such as factor analysis, multi-dimensional scaling or correspondence analysis, followed by a cluster analysis based on the dimensions found in the data.

In lifestyle research, it is increasingly acknowledged that people may not just have one, but can have several interconnected lifestyles. Researchers have suggested the existence of domain-specific lifestyles (van Raaij & Verhallen, 1994), of which especially food-related lifestyles have been thoroughly researched (Grunert, 1993). The basic proposition behind domain-specific lifestyles is that a person’s lifestyle need not be consistent across domains and therefore descriptions of lifestyles should be restricted to specific life domains (van Raaij & Verhallen, 1994). Grunert (1993) proposed a Food-Related Lifestyle (FRL) model, which has been further developed and applied in a wide range of countries all over the world (e.g., Grunert, Brunsø, Bredahl, & Bech, 2001; Grunert et al., 2011; Nie & Zepeda, 2011).

Grunert (1993) characterizes his FRL model as a deductive, cognitive approach to lifestyle research. Lifestyle is conceived as a mental construct, which is different from but explains behaviour. Specifically, he defines domain-related lifestyle as “the system of cognitive categories, scripts, and their associations, which relate a set of products to a set of values” (Grunert, Brunsø, & Bisp, 1993, p. 13).

Taking inspiration from psychological means-end chain theory (Gutman, 1982), Grunert’s (1993) FRL model views lifestyle as part of a hierarchical, cognitive-behavioural system functioning as an organizing and guiding construct in a person’s life. Lifestyles are conceived as a means to achieving personal superordinate goals or values (e.g., hedonism, tradition, self-direction), which are more abstract and trans-situational cognitive categories (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz, 1994). In specific situations, lifestyle is assumed to be the backcloth that frames a consumer’s perceptions of products and services and guides her choices and behaviours.

The system of cognitive structures that constitutes a FRL is assumed to include two types of cognitive schemas related to food, purchase motives and food quality aspects, as well as three broad cognitive scripts related to food provision, viz. ways of shopping, cooking methods and consumption situations. Together, these five cognitive elements are assumed to capture the key characteristics of an individual’s food-related lifestyle.

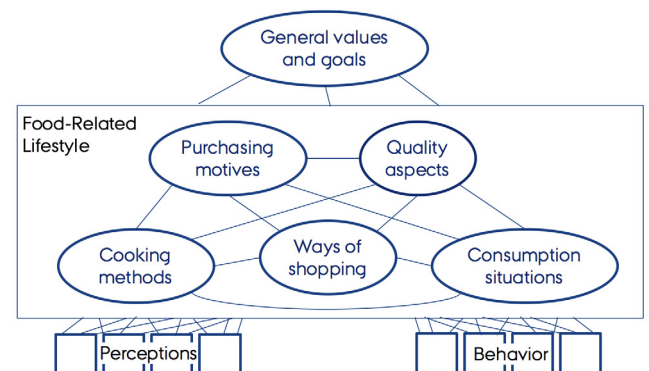
Specifically, purchase motives refer to the consequences a consumer anticipates from a meal, including, for example, social aspects, hedonism, tradition, and security (Brunso, Scholderer, & Grunert, 2004; de Boer, McCarthy, Cowan, & Ryan, 2004). Quality aspects refer to the general importance that consumers attach to food product attributes, such as healthy, tasty, natural, organic, and fresh (Brunso et al., 2004). Consumers use both purchase motives and quality aspects to justify their purchases. Ways of shopping refers to how consumers actually shop for food, that is,

do they find the task enjoyable, do they make shopping lists, do they deliberate extensively (or not) when making a decision, how much do they consider the price and other product information, or do they rely on the advice of experts, like friends or sales staff, do they prefer one-stop shopping or use specialty food shops? Cooking methods include preparation time and how the products purchased are transformed into meals, is the preparation characterized by efficiency or by indulgence, is cooking planned or spontaneous, is it a social event or the sole responsibility of one person? Finally, the consumption situation refers to issues such as the number of set meals, snacking habits, eating out and the social aspects of sharing a meal (Brunso et al., 2004; de Boer et al., 2004).

The overall FRL model (see Fig. 1) is thus a system of interacting elements in which personal values are (part of) the foundation from which purchasing motives are derived; quality aspects, consumption situations, ways of shopping and cooking methods frame our view of food products, services, and other food-related activities and thus affect our behaviour, including food choices and preparation and how we, for example, deal with food and food-related waste.

The cross-cultural validity of the Grunert and associates FRL instrument presented below has been thoroughly tested and confirmed (O’Sullivan, Scholderer, & Cowan, 2005; Scholderer et al., 2004). Specifically, these studies found that the FRL instrument possesses metric invariance in a European context, but scalar invariance only across limited samples of countries (O’Sullivan et al., 2005), not in general across all European countries (Scholderer et al., 2004).

As predicted by the model, food-related lifestyle has been found to completely mediate the relationship between basic value priorities and food-related behaviour (Brunso et al., 2004). On the behaviour side, FRL has been successfully applied to the study of the risk of general lifestyle diseases, such as obesity (Pérez-Cueto et al., 2010). FRL has also been found to predict a range of specific food-related behaviours, including how consumers respond to new food products (Cullen & Kingston, 2009), meat consumption (Grunert, 2006), and preferences for a vegetarian diet (Hoek, Luning, Stafleu, & de Graaf, 2004). However, up till now these empirical studies have mostly been carried out on a country-by-country basis. When multiple countries are studied, comparative analyses generally are of an add-on nature. To my knowledge, the present study is the first one to employ a multi-level analytical approach to a multi-country study of food-related lifestyles. The most important benefit of such an approach is the opportunity to obtain an integrated picture of how behavioural outcomes are co-determined by interacting personal-level (i.e., FRL) and broader contextual (i.e., country of residence) factors (Milfont & Markowitz, 2016).



Source: Adapted from Grunert (2006).

Fig. 1. The food-related lifestyle model.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/4316842>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/4316842>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)