

PREFERENCES OF MORAVIAN CONSUMERS WHEN BUYING FOOD

J. Turčínková, J. Kalábová

Received: December 17, 2010

Abstract

TURČÍNKOVÁ, J., KALÁBOVÁ, J.: *Preferences of Moravian consumers when buying food*. Acta univ. agric. et silvic. Mendel. Brun., 2011, LIX, No. 2, pp. 371–376

The paper presents results of research of preferences of Moravian consumers when buying food. The research focuses on characteristics of consumer behavior on the market with food, the preferences of product characteristics, price characteristics, convenient distribution and influence of selected marketing communication tools. The data collection was conducted via questionnaire in April through June 2010 on a sample of 2017 respondents by a research team of Department of Marketing and Trade at FBE MENDELÚ in Brno. The results suggest that Moravian consumers prefer retail stores with fresh food (mean = 7.99) and wider assortment (7.71), their choice of outlet is also influenced by the convenience of its location – the most preferred are the ones nearest to respondents' homes or job (7.31), nevertheless, there is greater variability in level of agreement with this behavior among respondents. Respondents develop a certain level of loyalty, most of them have their favorite store and do not alternate much (7.26). However, they tend to be as savvy as possible (6.89) and take their time to consider their final choice (6.52).

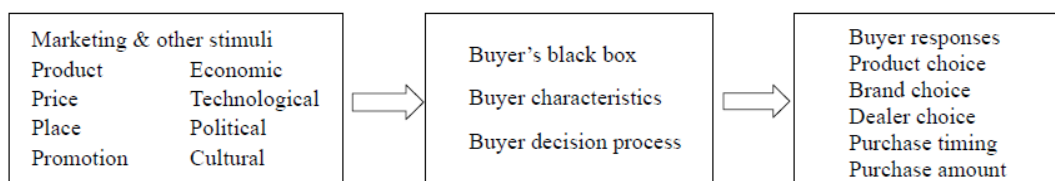
The model of consumer buying behavior you can see in Fig 1. The issue of purchasing decision-making process is important to provide insight into how consumers make a buying decision. Before resorting to the actual purchasing decisions, the customer must go through various stages of decision-making process. Kotler and Armstrong (2008) use the following model of buying decisions.

Every purchase means a compromise; the customer considers whether weaknesses of the chosen brand are still a better option than characteristics of the rejected brand. The customer always feels a post-purchase dissatisfaction (Kotler, 2007). For each firm, it is very important to monitor customer satisfaction, because new customers and repeat customers is the turnover of the company. Dissatisfied cus-

tomers react more strongly in their communications about the problems with the brand.

Bártová, Bárta, Koudelka (2007) suggest that the buying plan is not identical with the actual purchase. It is possible to impress the circumstances that may negatively impact on purchasing decisions. The authors also reported a group of reactions, which represent the buying decision: Purchase of a product, delaying the purchase, which will use to confirm the accuracy of such election and refusal to purchase at all.

Our research focuses on consumer behavior on market with food. Food market can be defined as "a marketplace where groceries are sold" (thefreedictionary.com).



1: Consumer buying behavior (Kotler, Armstrong, 2008)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The aim of this paper presents the results of primary research on differences in preferences of Moravian consumers when buying food. The study, which focused on design of more efficient customer segmentation on the Czech food market, was conducted by a team led by Turčínková. The objectives of the research are to identify preferences of Czech and Moravian customers when shopping for food, analyze differences and suggest a new shopper segmentation for the market with food in the Czech Republic (including description of defined segments). This paper refers to the evaluation of basic statistical indicators of the reference sample from data collection in spring of 2010, and aims to prepare data for further evaluation research.

Based on literary survey and earlier researches (e.g. Turčínková, 2008), Turčínková developed following model (Fig. 2) presenting variables the research would focus on.

The questionnaire focused then on learning preferences according to marketing mix and set of following statements was developed, as Tab. I displays.

These statements dealing with marketing mix preferences were supplemented with a set of statement that should help us learn about typical shopping behavior of our respondents (see Tab. II).

All the statements used scales of 1 to 10 asking respondents to indicate the level of their agreement with a given statement, where 10 represented

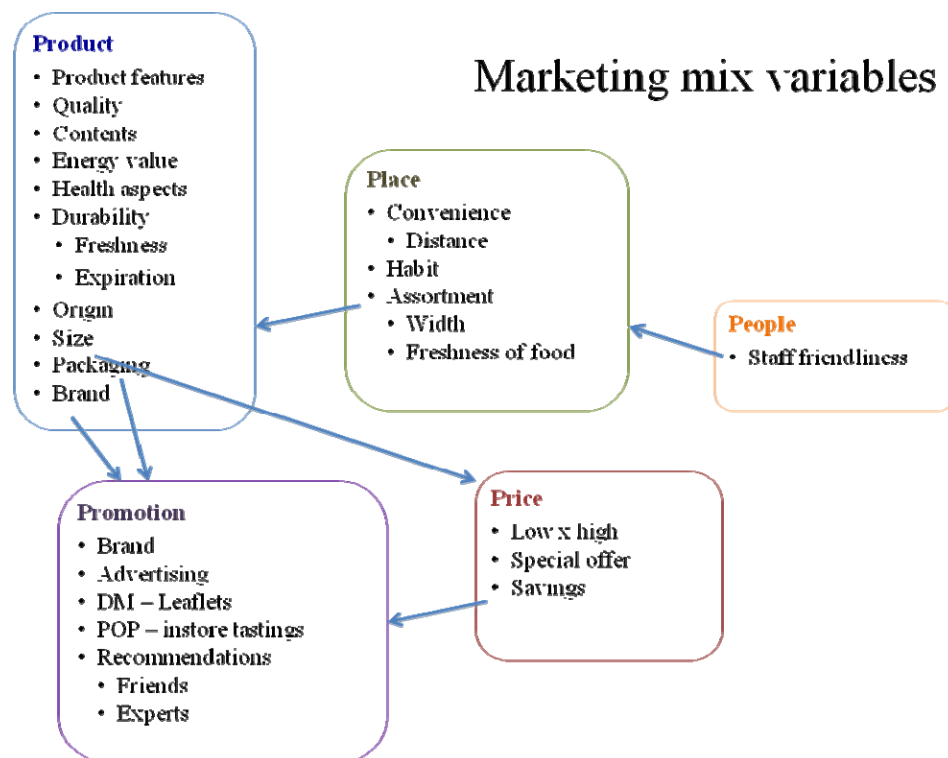
“I strongly agree”, and 1 stood for “I strongly disagree”.

The paper focuses on differences between men and women regarding their preferences when shopping for food. Research results are based on the first processing of primary data from the questionnaire, which was implemented from April to June 2010 by the Department of Marketing and Trade at FBE, Mendel University in Brno. The questionnaire had both printed and online version (text was identical) and after data collection was completed, both databases were merged for further data processing. Presented results are based on 2017 questionnaires (after elimination of questionnaires with incomplete identification data). Stratified sampling method was used, however, the perfect match with set strata was not achieved.

Online data collection was conducted via ReLa Questionnaire System (Research Laboratory), which originated as a project of researchers of the Institute of Marketing and Trade FBE Mendel in Brno. Statistical software STATISTICA, version 9 was used for calculations of the basic statistical parameters (mean, mode, median, variance, etc.).

The sample of respondents consists of:

- Different income groups. The largest group of respondents described their income level as satisfactory (49.73%), meaning that the household income covers all the needs in a reasonable range. The second largest group of respondents with sufficient income (31.69%), which only covers the basic



2: Model of marketing mix variables included in questionnaire survey

I: *Set of statements used to cover marketing mix variable*

a. Product	<p>I always prefer stores, where I can buy fresh food products.</p> <p>I prefer Czech food products to ones from abroad.</p> <p>When I have the choice, I prefer local food product (food products typical for region, where I live).</p> <p>(I prefer buying food products in bigger (cost-effective) to smaller serving-size products.)</p> <p>(I prefer food products with longer durability.)</p> <p>Importance of factors when in purchase choice:</p> <p>Features and product parameters</p> <p>Product contents</p> <p>The possibly highest quality</p> <p>Expiration date</p> <p>Product belongs to healthy nutrition</p> <p>Energy value (calories)</p> <p>(Low price)</p> <p>(Product is in a special offer)</p> <p>(Well known and respected brand)</p> <p>(Convenient and attractive packaging)</p> <p>(Czech) origin</p> <p>(Friends' recommendation)</p> <p>(Recommendations from experts)</p>
b. Distribution	<p>I prefer stores that are the nearest to my home or job, I don't prefer to travel there.</p> <p>I always prefer stores, where I can buy fresh food products.</p> <p>I prefer bigger stores with wider assortment.</p> <p>(I choose stores with respect to the friendliness of the sales personnel.)</p> <p>(I have already been inspired by food advertisements in media to buy them.)</p> <p>(I have my favorite store, where I shop for food regularly, I don't alternate much.)</p>
c. Price	<p>Importance of factors when in purchase choice:</p> <p>Low price</p> <p>(When shopping, I try to be as savvy as possible.)</p> <p>(I prefer buying food products in bigger (cost-effective) to smaller serving-size products.)</p>
d. Communication	<p>Before I go shopping, I get inspiration in store leaflets.</p> <p>I have already been inspired by food advertisements in media to buy them.</p> <p>In-store tastings usually influence me to start buying a particular product.</p> <p>I try new products only after my friends or family recommend me them.</p> <p>Importance of factors when in purchase choice:</p> <p>Well known and respected brand</p> <p>Convenient and attractive packaging</p> <p>Product is in a special offer</p> <p>Friends' recommendation</p> <p>Recommendations from experts</p>
e. People	<p>I choose stores with respect to the friendliness of the sales personnel.</p>

II: *Set of statements focusing on shopping preferences and shopper personality*

<p>I prefer to do shopping less frequently, in bigger volumes.</p> <p>When shopping, I try to be as savvy as possible.</p> <p>I prefer buying food products in bigger (cost-effective) to smaller serving-size products.</p> <p>I consider my decisions well when shopping, I don't hurry.</p> <p>When shopping, I prefer well-tried products, the new products don't attract me so much.</p> <p>I have my favorite store, where I shop for food regularly, I don't alternate much.</p> <p>I prefer food products with longer durability.</p> <p>I prefer buying food as a reserve, I don't like to wait till the moment when it is necessary, because I need them.</p> <p>When I have the choice, I prefer local food product (food products typical for region, where I live).</p> <p>I prefer Czech food products to ones from abroad.</p>

household needs. 10.91% of respondents identified their income as low, and 6.49% as high. Insufficient household income was stated only by 1.19% of respondents.

- Different groups according to location and number of people in their place of residence. The sample is almost equally divided in following three categories of town size: up to 3,000 inhabitants, from 3000 to 89,999 inhabitants, and municipali-

ties with 90,000 or more inhabitants. The largest group of respondents lives in South Moravian Region (53.79%), second largest group in the neighbouring Vysočina Region (15.27%) and third one in Zlín Region (8.33%).

- Different levels of completed education, while the largest group consists of people with secondary education (with leaving exam), 46.4%.
- Different social groups, 36.93% of the respondents were students, 33.96% were employees.
- Different age categories. The most represented category of respondents is 18–24 years of age (26.87%), second group is formed by people aged 35–54 years (22.61%) and the third one by respondents in age category 25–34 years (19.09%).

Men are represented in the sample in the absolute numbers by 901 respondents (44.67%), while women by 1116 (55.33%).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The conducted survey revealed the following findings (see Tab. III). For our respondents, very important role in their choice of retail is the availability of fresh food in their offer (mean value = 7.99). This statement is confirmed by the lowest value of vari-

ance revealing low variability of responses, respondents mostly unite in importance of this factor.

They also prefer wider product assortment so they have more option to choose from (mean = 7.71). A convenient location is another important criterion when deciding about choice of retail (mean = 7.31). It is probably lack of time that leads to a preference of stores closest to their place of residence or employment. Even this result is supported by the high level of homogeneity of respondents' responses. Nevertheless, there is greater variability in level of agreement with this behavior among respondents.

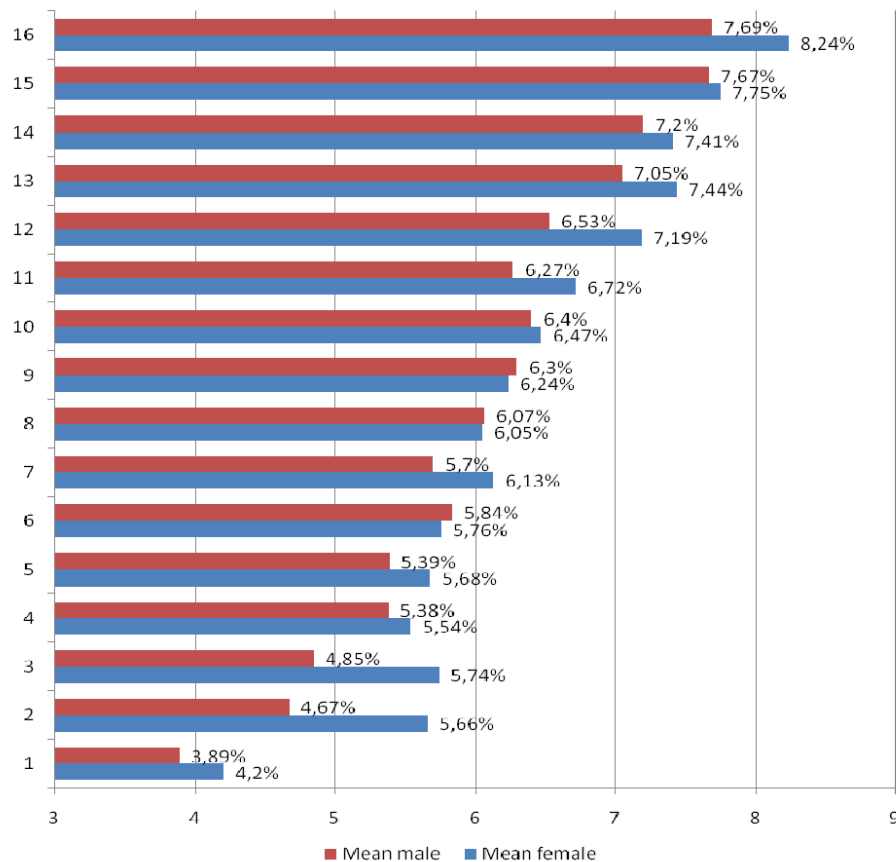
Respondents develop a certain level of loyalty, most of them have their favorite store and do not alternate much (7.26). However, they tend to be as savvy as possible (6.89) and take their time to consider their final choice (6.52).

If we try to analyze responses with the gender perspective, we can see some differences in the responses. The greatest difference between preferences women and men is visible when it comes to use of leaflets before going shopping. The mean value for the statement "Before I go shopping, I get inspiration in store leaflets." for women was 5.66, while for men 4.67 on the scale of agreement. However, we can also see that this variable has the highest variance, suggesting that there are diverse attitudes towards use of leaflets both among women and

III: Variances and means for given statements

Variable	Variance		Mean		Mean
	female	male	female	male	
1. In store tastings usually influence me to start buying a particular product.	6.45	6.79	4.2	3.89	4.06
2. Before I go shopping, I get inspiration in store leaflets.	8.32	8.41	5.66	4.67	5.22
3. I have already been inspired by food advertisements in media to buy them.	7.35	8.00	5.74	4.85	5.34
4. I choose stores with respect to the friendliness of the sales personnel.	6.25	7.11	5.54	5.38	5.47
5. I try new products only after my friends or family recommend me them.	6.20	6.30	5.68	5.39	5.55
6. I prefer buying food products in bigger (cost effective) to smaller serving size products.	6.86	6.85	5.76	5.84	5.8
7. I prefer buying food as a reserve, I don't like to wait till the moment when it is necessary, because I need them.	7.22	6.69	6.13	5.7	5.94
8. I prefer food products with longer durability.	5.74	5.84	6.05	6.07	6.06
9. I prefer to do shopping less frequently, in bigger volumes.	7.40	7.63	6.24	6.3	6.26
10. When shopping, I prefer well tried products, the new products don't attract me so much.	4.96	5.18	6.47	6.4	6.43
11. I consider my decisions well when shopping, I don't hurry.	5.23	6.33	6.72	6.27	6.52
12. When shopping, I try to be as savvy as possible.	5.78	6.12	7.19	6.53	6.89
13. I have my favorite store, where I shop for food regularly, I don't alternate much.	4.64	5.11	7.44	7.05	7.26
14. I prefer stores that are the nearest to my home or job, I don't prefer to travel there.	6.18	6.57	7.41	7.2	7.31
15. I prefer bigger stores with wider assortment.	4.80	4.72	7.75	7.67	7.71
16. I always prefer stores, where I can buy fresh food products.	3.67	4.82	8.24	7.69	7.99

Source: questionnaire survey, April to June 2010, n = 2017



3: Mean values for statements (Source: questionnaire survey, April to June 2010, n = 2017)

IV: Marketing mix variables and appropriate statements with their mode values

PRODUCT	PRICE	DISTRIBUTION	COMMUNICATION
I always prefer stores, where I can buy fresh food products. MODE 10	When shopping, I try to be as savvy as possible. MODE 10	I prefer stores that are the nearest to my home or job, I don't prefer to travel there. MODE 10	I have already been inspired by food advertisements in media to buy them. MODE 8
I prefer buying food products in bigger (cost effective) to smaller serving size products. MODE 5	I prefer buying food products in bigger (cost effective) to smaller serving size products. MODE 5	I always prefer stores, where I can buy fresh food products. MODE 10	I try new products only after my friends or family recommend me them. MODE 5
I prefer food products with longer durability. MODE 5		I prefer bigger stores with wider assortment. MODE 10	In store tastings usually influence me to start buying a particular product. MODE 1
		I have my favorite store, where I shop for food regularly, I don't alternate much. MODE 8	
		I choose stores with respect to the friendliness of the sales personnel. MODE 5	
		Before I go shopping, I get inspiration in store leaflets. MODE 1	
CATEGORY MODE 6.67	CATEGORY MODE 7.5	CATEGORY MODE 7.34	CATEGORY MODE 4.67

Source: Questionnaire survey, April to June 2010, n = 2017

among men. For some women and men, the use of leaflets is an important activity before the purchase. We can assume that this factor may influence not only choice of a purchased product, however, also the choice of a particular retail, where the product would be purchased.

Similar situation is in case of influence of advertising as a source of inspiration ("I have already been inspired by food advertisements in media to buy them."). The mean value of 5.74 for women is higher than the mean value of 4.85 for men. Surprisingly suggesting that inspiration from food advertisements may play even more important role in shopping for food than what is typically admitted.

The following Fig. 3 illustrates the differences in levels of mean value between male and female respondents. The numbers in the graph correspond with the numbers of statements in Tab. III.

When we breakdown of individual statements into the basic components of marketing mix (4P – product, place/distribution, price and promotion/communication) we can get the following result (see Tab. IV).

Category mode is adjusted for the value mode in each category and adds further understanding of nature of responses we have received and presented in earlier paragraphs.

SUMMARY

Based on calculations of statistical indicators (frequency calculations, means, variances and modes) we can see that there are no significant differences in preferences between men and women when shopping for food. Both genders prefer fresh food and adjust their choice of retail to the fact, whether it offers such assortment (preferably also wider in general). The growing importance of convenience for many consumers leads to a preference of closer outlets; however, the preference of nearest stores is not shared within the entire sample and should be further analyzed. Both men and women tend to return to their favorite stores, which of course cannot be understood as that they shop for food only in one grocery store or chain and don't switch at all. It is also supported by the fact that respondents describe themselves as consumers that tend to be as savvy as possible and don't want to rush their decisions before they make their final choice. The results show that women are more likely to examine the distributed store leaflets before going shopping than men, and also women admit in higher degree the influence of inspiration provided by food advertisements.

These partial results are part of an extensive research of consumer behavior on the food market in the Czech Republic which should result to identification of appropriate criteria for segmentation of Czech customers based on their preferences when shopping for food. The data from this first data collection will be supplemented with data from data collection from the other regions of the Czech Republic, conducted in November 2010 though January 2011, put through detail statistical analyses and compared with similar researches conducted abroad.

Acknowledgement

This research has been supported by the internal grant of MENDELU No. 53/2010 and also by VZ MSM 6215648904, subproject 03 "Development of relationships in the business sphere as connected with changes in the life style of purchasing behavior of the Czech population and in the business environment in the course of processes of integration and globalization."

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Address:

Ing. Jana Turčínková, Ph.D., Ing. Jitka Kalábová, Ústav marketingu a obchodu, Mendelova univerzita v Brně, Zemědělská 1, 613 00 Brno, Česká republika, e-mail: jana.turcinkova@mendelu.cz, jitka.kalabova@mendelu.cz