

## FACTORS OF PURCHASE OF BREAD – PROSPECT TO REGAIN THE MARKET SHARE?

Ladislav Skořepa<sup>1</sup>, Kamil Pícha<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Landscape Management, Faculty of Agriculture, University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, Branišovská 1645/31a, 370 05 České Budějovice, Czech Republic

<sup>2</sup>Department of Trade and Tourism, Faculty of Economics, University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, Branišovská 1645/31a, 370 05 České Budějovice, Czech Republic

### Abstract

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The aim of the article is to assess the consumers' buying behaviour and decision-making process when purchasing bread and to propose the ways of how to improve the position of bread in the market. 1601 properly filled questionnaires were used for the analysis. Results are presented under the form of frequencies of answers and statistical tests. The analysis included evaluation of statistical hypotheses about the independence (significance level  $\alpha = 0.01$ ) using the chi-square goodness of fit test and Pearson coefficient of contingency. The significance level was then compared with the value p-value, for p-value  $> \alpha$ , the null hypothesis was not rejected. The most important factors of choosing bread are freshness, appearance habit and price. The importance of the price grows with the increasing age of respondents and decreases with the increasing income of questioned consumers. The importance of the brand, as well as the reference or recommendation from the family and friends slightly strengthens with the increasing income of the consumers. Most of the respondents make no difference between both (yeast and rye leaven) technologies of baking bread when making their buying decision. We cannot say, however, the preference to the rye leaven bread grows with the increasing age of respondents to the detriment of the yeast bread or vice versa.

Keywords: buying behaviour, food choice, consumer preferences, bread, yeast, rye leaven, promotion, market

### INTRODUCTION

The consumers' choice of food and their buying behaviour in that case are subject to a permanent interest of scholars and researchers. Numerous essays deals with miscellaneous aspects and criteria derived from the consumer's beliefs and attitudes, such as food safety perception (e.g. Adam, Hiamy and Afenyo, 2014; Pícha and Brunel, 2003), quality perception (Dewettinck *et al.*, 2008; Stávková, Stejskal and Toufarová, 2008; Skořepa and Hes, 2005), health aspects (Wingert, Zachary, Fox *et al.*, 2014; Miškolci, 2011), environmental aspects or sustainability (Röös, Ekelund and Tjärnemo, 2014; Tamáš and Bečvářová, 2013), social responsibility (Schösler, de Boer and Boersema, 2014), price of food (Kubicová, Kádeková, Nagyová and Stávková, 2011), food origin (Štensová, 2013; Kleinová and Lušňáková, 2011), taste (O'Neill, Hess, and Campbell, 2014),

social status (Kubicová, Nagyová and Kádeková, 2013), trust to the claims on food products and their characteristics (Zagata and Lošťák, 2012), etc. An important role is played by the food's sensorial properties, as well as by consumers' demographic and socioeconomic characteristics (Turčínková, Brychtová and Urbánek, 2012). Generally there are three common factors standing behind the ten analysed variables: emotional component, rational behaviour and decision-making based on price (Stávková, Prudilová, Toufarová, and Nagyová, 2007). A part of consumers is sensible on the food origin and give preference to the local products (Pícha, Skořepa and Navrátil, 2013). Last but not least the consumers' attitudes to the positive effects of food on human health are studied (e.g. Roininen, Lähteenmäki and Tuorila, 1999; Verbeke, 2006; Boros, Fehér, and Kajári, 2012; Doležalová, Pícha and Hanzalová, 2016), even in cases when

the decision-making of a consumer is influenced by consumer's specific disease or a certain food intolerance/non-allergic food hypersensitivity (e.g. Suwannaporn, Linnemann and Chaveesuk, 2008; Šálková and Hes, 2015). Consumers with higher preference to local food and healthy food tend to be less price-sensitive (e.g. Röhr, Lüddecke, Drusch, *et al.*, 2005; Pícha, Skořepa and Navrátil, 2013; Bryla, 2015).

### Impact of Promotion/Communication

Numerous studies have found little or no evidence to support the view that advertising can affect the product composition of total food demand (Duffy, 1999). According to Turčínková and Kalábová (2011), the Czech consumers are mostly inspired by food advertisements in media to buy them.

### When Speaking of Bread

There are also scientific works developing specifically the problems of consumers' attitudes, choice criteria and shopping habits concerning bread (e.g. Gellynck, Kühne, Van Bockstaele *et al.*, 2009; Pestorić, Pojić, Mastilović *et al.*, 2009; Nagyová, Rovný, Stávková *et al.*, 2009).

Bread is a traditional food in various sorts all over the world with a very long history, being prepared for instance in Mesopotamia or Ancient Egypt at least 5,000 years ago (e.g. Samuel, 1996; Hansson, 1994; Chazan and Lehner, 1990). Some historians, however, find the genesis of bread older than 22,000 years (Rubel, 2011).

Consumer's quality perception of bread is mainly determined by sensory and health attributes (Stávková and Turčínková, 2005; Dewettinck *et al.*, 2008). Consumers widely base their bread preference on external subjective factors such as bread shape or crust colour (Nagyová, Rovný, Stávková *et al.*, 2009).

Since 1989 the Czech food supply chain underwent significant changes as for the structure of agricultural production as well as the food production (e.g. Bečvářová, 2004; Svobodová and Věžník, 2012; Klusáček *et al.*, 2013; Krejčí *et al.*, 2014). It has naturally influenced the consumers' choice, particularly thanks to widened variety of offered food. The bread consumption is continually decreasing in the Czech Republic (Chládková and Kudová, 2008; Štiková, Sekavová and Mrhálková, 2006), one of reasons being the increasing price (Chládková and Kudová, 2008). The paper from the Research Institute of Agricultural Economics documents that bread consumption is more price elastic than wheat bakery products (Štiková, Sekavová and Mrhálková, 2006). More precisely the consumption of bread decreased in the Czech Republic from 57 kg in 1989 currently to 40 kg to the benefit of other bakery products. The radical change of the eating habits is likely to be the most important reason of such a decrease. Bread is also competing with other products of the bakery industry, even in other countries (Gellynck, Kühne, Van Bockstaele

*et al.*, 2009). People spend more time out of home where the smaller pieces of bakery products are more convenient to eat (Brejlová, 2015). Additionally the increasing popularity of fast foods supports the growth of consumption of wheat bakery products. Bread is mostly purchased in a routine way, a small part of consumers consider the health effect when purchasing (Stávková and Turčínková, 2005).

The territory of the Czech Republic have had a long tradition of using rye yeast when baking bread, which is a health-positive element for consumers of such bread (e.g. Dewettinck, Van Bockstaele, Kühne *et al.*, 2008; Di Cagno, Rizzello, De Angelis *et al.*, 2008).

The aim of the article is to assess the consumers' buying behaviour and decision-making process when purchasing bread and to propose the ways of how to improve the position of bread in the market.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The paper is based on a questionnaire survey done among Czech consumers in 2012 and 2013. 1601 properly filled questionnaires were used for the analysis. Results are presented under the form of frequencies of answers and statistical tests. The analysis included evaluation of statistical hypotheses about the independence (significance level  $\alpha = 0.01$ ) using the chi-square goodness of fit test and Pearson coefficient of contingency. The significance level was then compared with the value p-value, for p-value  $> \alpha$ , the null hypothesis was not rejected.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Factors of Choosing Bread

As for the main factors of decision-making when choosing bread for purchase, the main criteria are freshness and appearance; the second group of important factors comprises habit and price (see Tab. I). The smallest importance is attached to the third group of factors – producer, reference obtained (recommendation), brand and ingredients, ingredients being the less important factor at all. Reference or recommendation was identified, however, to be a quite important factor of food choice by Turčínková and Kalábová (2011).

Not only the appearance is very important, 71.1% of respondents pay attention on the thickness of the bread crust (Tab. II); that fact corresponds with findings of Nagyová, Rovný, Stávková *et al.* (2009). There is always a group of consumers for whom it does not matter what the bread has a crust and whether or not it is crispy (Dewettinck, Van Bockstaele, Kühne *et al.*, 2008).

### Preference for the Technology of Baking Bread

Basically, the groups with a clear preference of bread baked by means of a concrete technology are of the same size. However, most of the respondents

I: Criteria of choosing ( $n = 1601$ ; Degree of importance: 1 = certainly yes, 4 = certainly no)

Degree of importance Factor	1	2	3	4
Appearance	59.2%	30.5%	7.0%	3.4%
Price	33.2%	32.7%	24.7%	9.4%
Producer	13.7%	29.9%	39.5%	16.9%
Brand	9.9%	26.7%	44.7%	18.7%
Reference/recommendation	10.2%	33.0%	38.9%	17.9%
Ingredients	10.8%	21.4%	42.7%	25.1%
Freshness	82.8%	13.8%	1.9%	1.5%
Habit	34.1%	39.8%	16.5%	9.6%

II: Preference for the bread crust

	Frequency	n
Thicker crust	25.9%	414
Stronger crust	45.3%	725
No preference	28.9%	462

make no difference between both technologies of baking bread. 18.7% prefers rye leaven breads, 19.1% give preference to the yeast bread. 62.2% do not pay attention to this element.

No significant relation between preference for a technology of baking bread and studied criteria of choosing was proven. There is a positive correlation with considering producer and ingredients of the purchased bread.

The number of the respondents with a clear preference for the technology of baking bread grows with the increasing age of respondents (Tab. III). We cannot say, however, the preference to the rye leaven bread grows with the increasing age of respondents to the detriment of the yeast bread or vice versa.

Those who shop more frequently in a bakery have more frequently formed an opinion as for the preference for a baking technology. The more frequently they buy their bread in a bakery, the more often they have a clear preference for rye leaven bread or yeast bread.

Consumers with a clear preference of the technology of baking bread are more often seeking for information (Tab. V). Consumers have often difficulties to obtain information about particular breads when shopping in supermarkets and

III: Preference for a sort of bread and the age of purchasers ( $\chi^2 = 68.13053$ , d.f. = 8,  $p = 0.000$ )

Preferred sort of bread	Age category of respondents				
	Up to 29	30–39	40–49	50–60	Over 60
Rye leaven bread	12.3%	15.3%	24.1%	22.9%	24.0%
Yeast bread	13.2%	18.9%	17.5%	28.4%	21.7%
Without preference	74.5%	65.8%	58.4%	48.7%	54.7%
n	463	313	291	271	263

IV: Preference for a sort of bread and the frequency of shopping in a bakery (1 = most often, 5 = the least often;  $\chi^2 = 36.92257$ , d.f. = 8,  $p = 0.00001$ )

Preferred sort of bread	Frequency of shopping in a bakery				
	1	2	3	4	5
Rye leaven bread	26.3%	17.5%	15.4%	15.1%	17.2%
Yeast bread	22.4%	22.1%	14.9%	17.7%	16.8%
Without preference	51.3%	60.3%	69.7%	67.2%	66.0%
n	388	348	350	265	250

V: Preference for a sort of bread and seeking information on the product ( $n = 1601$ ; Degree of seeking information: 1 = certainly yes, 4 = certainly no;  $\chi^2 = 34.30070$ , d.f. = 6,  $p = 0.00001$ )

Degree of seeking information Preferred sort of bread	1	2	3	4	n
Rye leaven bread	25.0%	21.7%	32.3%	21.0%	300
Yeast bread	28.5%	21.0%	30.2%	20.3%	305
Without preference	21.5%	24.7%	22.5%	31.3%	996

hypermarkets (Nagyová, Rovný, Stávková *et al.*, 2009). According to Kihlberg *et al.* (2005), consumers like the bread more when they find positive information about this particular product, for instance a welcome ingredient. Consumers rather prefer a good description of the content of the bread above a label or a brand (Gellynck, Kühne, Van Bockstaele *et al.*, 2009). Perception of the healthiness and nutritional value of bread is increased if information on the content is provided (Mialon, Clark, Leppard and Cox, 2002).

### Further Aspects of Purchasing Bread

Among the factors of choosing bread, supposed to be influenced by the age, only the price was identified (Tab. VI). The importance of the price grows with the increasing age of the studied consumers.

### The Impact of Consumer's Income

The income significantly influences the importance of the price, brand and reference or recommendation (Tab. VII). The importance of the price as a choosing criterion decreased with the increasing income. On the other hand, the importance of the brand, as well as the reference or recommendation from the family and friends slightly strengthens.

VI: Measures of association – Age ( $n = 1601$ )

Factor	contingency coefficient	p-value
Appearance	0.045022	0.071709
Price	<b>-0.109978</b>	<b>0.000010</b>
Producer	-0.027324	0.274555
Brand	-0.004118	0.869229
Reference/recommendation	0.040669	0.103809
Ingredients	0.054894	0.028064
Freshness	0.033031	0.186506
Habit	-0.051961	0.037630

VII: Measures of association – Income ( $n = 1601$ )

Factor	contingency coefficient	p-value
Appearance	-0.060130	0.016118
Price	<b>0.229409</b>	<b>0.000000</b>
Producer	-0.010422	0.676908
Brand	<b>-0.080922</b>	<b>0.001192</b>
Reference/recommendation	<b>-0.073579</b>	<b>0.003222</b>
Ingredients	-0.020202	0.419213
Freshness	-0.047654	0.056603
Habit	0.021435	0.391398

## CONCLUSION

Bread is mostly purchased routinely; consumers buy it out of habit and do not consider it as much. The overall consumption of bread permanently decreases to the benefit of an extending variety of other bakery products. Rye leaven bread is traditional bread in our region; the production technology is, however, more complicated and less flexible than the use of the yeast. This is the reason why many bakers, especially the large ones, produce better the yeast bread. The sensorial quality of the bread produced this way is more often improved by a variety of artificial ingredients. The unit production costs of the rye leaven bread are higher than in case of the yeast bread.

The rye leaven bread is promoted by many small and middle bakeries with the aim to differentiate themselves from large companies, and by many nutritionists as well.

The most important factors of choosing bread are freshness, appearance habit and price. The importance of the price grows with the increasing age of respondents and decreases with the increasing income of questioned consumers. Most of the respondents make no difference between both (yeast and rye leaven) technologies of baking bread when making their buying decision. We cannot say, however, the preference to the rye leaven bread grows with the increasing age of respondents to the detriment of the yeast bread or vice versa.

As concluded by several authors, consumers who prefer local and regional products might be less price-sensitive. This fact could be used by small and middle bakeries to promote their sales. Bread producers should also consider the size of a piece of bread with regard to the change of the eating habits. A repositioning of the bread could be also taken into consideration. Innovative effort is to focus on the higher-income groups of consumer as well.

As for the rye leaven bread, another way of augmenting the sales would be to persuade consumers about the health effects of eating the rye leaven bread. The individual way of each baker through the information related to each product is, however, quite delicate because of the special law concerning the so called health claims and a complicated process of approval within the European Union. An information campaign should take place to explain to consumers the positive effect of the rye leaven on the human health. That could be done by an ad hoc consortium of bakers or by the promoters of the health nutrition. Producers, in co-operation with retailers, need to inform thoroughly consumers about the occurrence of the rye leaven among ingredients of their products.



Further research is to focus for instance on the buying behaviour in purchasing bakery products in relation with the purchase of nutraceuticals, with special focus on nutraceuticals having a similar effect to that of the rye leaven. Another survey could deal with the potential of selling bread and especially the rye leaven bread using communication of its local character.

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#### Contact information

Ladislav Skořepa: ladislav.skorepa@gmail.com  
Kamil Pícha: kpicha@ef.jcu.cz