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CONSUMER SEGMENTATION BASED ON FOOD-RELATED LIFESTYLES AND ANALYSIS OF RABBIT MEAT CONSUMPTION

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ABSTRACT

Owing to the rapid changes in today's society, consumer lifestyle has become the ideal criterion for market segmentation. In this study, we employed the food-related lifestyle (FRL) model, which scholars have shown to be suitable and valid in several countries. Using data from a survey (with 3.53% error), we segmented the Spanish food market based on consumers' food-related lifestyles. For each segment, we identified the consumer profile and analysed consumers' consumption of rabbit meat. Factor analysis and cluster analysis yielded four segments. (i) 'Unconcerned' consumers (36.8% of the sample) value neither the freshness nor the price/quality ratio of their food items and they consume rabbit meat rarely (39.4%) or sporadically (29.3%). (ii) 'Cooks' (18.4%) are highly demanding and critical of the quality of food products. They like cooking and are regular consumers of rabbit meat (40.6%). (iii) 'Out-of-home consumers and convenience shoppers' prefer to eat out and consume convenience products. This segment has the second highest percentage of regular consumers of rabbit meat (36.9%). The segment also has the second highest percentage of consumers who rarely or never eat rabbit meat (43.9%). (iv) 'Rational purchaser with little interest in cooking' (16.2%) have the least interest in cooking, however, they show the greatest interest in the purchasing process, and the lowest consumption of rabbit meat (51.1% consume little or no rabbit meat). From a marketing perspective, this information is useful for the rabbit farming sector.

Key words: Market segmentation, food-related lifestyle, rabbit meat, marketing strategy, consumer profile.

INTRODUCTION

Market segmentation is the process of dividing the total market into smaller groups of buyers with distinct needs, characteristics or behaviour. Marketers have developed different ways of identifying consumers' characteristics, dividing consumers into groups and analysing consumer behaviour towards a certain product. The food-related lifestyle (FRL) model (Grunert *et al.*, 1993) provides information on decisive factors in consumers' perceptions of value. Here, the term consumers refers to end users – that is to say, the consumers who form the final link in the food value chain and who use and consume food items. Marketers can use this information to tailor marketing strategies (González-Redondo and Sánchez-Martínez, 2014) to consumer preferences (McNitt *et al.*, 2003; International Rabbit Reproduction Group, 2005), with the aim of improving commercial processes in the rabbit farming industry.

The aim of the present study was to use a simplified version of food-related lifestyle (FRL) model (Grunert *et al.*, 1993) to segment Spanish consumers and identify the aspects that determine consumer behaviour towards rabbit meat.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data collection and variables

The telephone interviews took place in Spain. We selected 25- to 74-year-old consumers who did the household shopping and consumed meat at least once every two months. The sample was comprised of 800 respondents, yielding an error of 3.53% and a confidence level of 95.5% (two sigma) with $p=q=0.5$. The questionnaire consisted of 24 questions; each comprising several items (55 variables in total) divided into nine blocks, measured on a 5-point Likert scale. We selected a 5-point scale, because Cea (2010) recommends not exceeding 5 options on a Likert scale for telephone surveys. The question on consumers' food-related lifestyle had 16 items. After collecting the data, we identified 51 cases with missing data in the lifestyle question block, thereby leaving 749 valid cases.

Statistical Analysis

The statistical data analysis techniques used in this study were as follows: (i) univariate analysis; (ii) bivariate analysis (specifically, correlation tests and cross tabulations) for the characterisation of the segments following Sánchez and Sanjuán (2002); (iii) multivariate analysis, used to reduce the 16 items related to the FRL block using factor analysis and yield clusters using cluster analysis. We used IBM SPSS Statistics 20 for the data analysis in this study. The results of the cluster analysis are the market segments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The process yielded four market segments:

1) Unconcerned (36.8%)

This segment contains the highest proportion of consumers who purchase rabbit from meat counters in supermarkets and hypermarkets (36.9%). 'The appearance of the meat' is their most important buying motive (52.7% 'Quite important', 33.9% 'Extremely important'). They consider 'Price' more important than consumers in other segments do (57.9% 'Quite important', 14.7% for 'Extremely important'). 17.0% purchase rabbit meat once a month; 12.3% once every two or three months and 39.4% at most once a year. As in all segments, they find rabbit meat tasty (72.4%). 35.9% consider rabbit meat to be healthy and 11.0% cheap, greater than other segments. The main reason for not consuming rabbit meat is being unaccustomed to doing so (28.3%) and disliking the taste (26.7%). The data on willingness to purchase new offers of rabbit meat reveal indifference from consumers in this segment, except for the item 'Ready meals'.

2) Cooks (18.4%)

51.8% prefer to purchase fresh meat from neighbourhood butchers, which is also the preferred place for purchasing rabbit meat (42.4%). 82.4% consider 'The appearance of the meat' 'Extremely important' and 13.5% 'Quite important'. 'The butcher's advice' is 'Extremely important' for 46.5% and 'Quite important' for 23.1%. Notably, this segment has the largest proportion of regular consumers of rabbit meat. Furthermore, these consumers know more about the different ways of preparing rabbit meat than consumers in other segments do. 68.3% of 'Cooks' enjoy rabbit meat because it tastes good. The main reason why 'Cooks' do not consume rabbit meat is that they dislike its taste (32.5%). Of all new products proposed, 'Premium rabbit' (i.e. higher quality or fed for a longer period) and 'Rabbits with the head removed' receive higher scores from consumers in this segment than from consumers in any other segment for the statement 'Extremely important' (31.0% and 18.3%, respectively). Hence, consumers in this segment are highly demanding and critical of the quality of the products they buy.

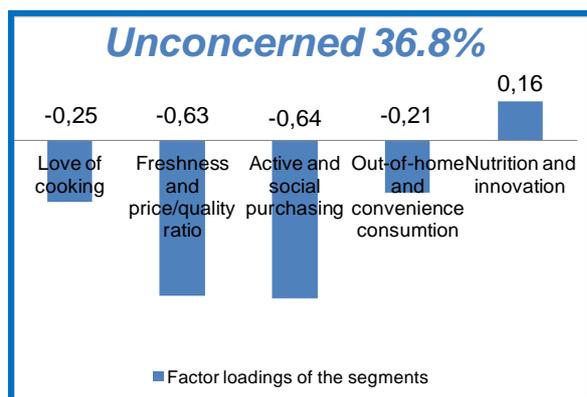


Figure 1. Unconcerned.

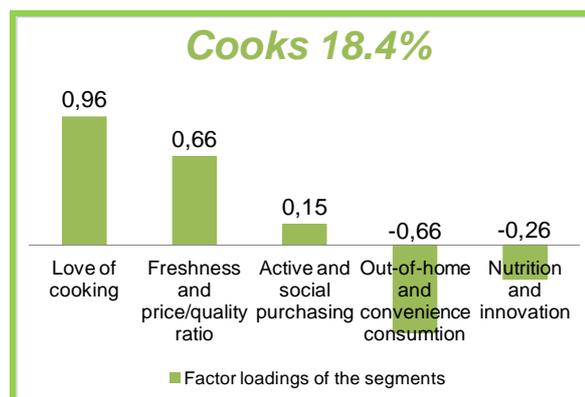


Figure 2. Cooks.

3) Out-of-home consumer and convenience shopper (28.6%)

They regularly purchase fresh meat in supermarkets and hypermarkets (46.7%). However, these consumers purchase rabbit meat from food markets (15.4%) more often than consumers from other segments do. 62.5% purchase rabbit meat ‘Sliced at the counter’ (7.1 percentage points lower than the mean) and 18.4% ‘Ready packaged’, the highest percentage in any segment. They cite the same motives for purchasing rabbit meat as consumers in other sectors do. This segment also has the second highest proportion of regular consumers of rabbit meat (36.9%). 77.9% report that rabbit meat is tasty and low in fat (28.1%), higher in this segment than in other segments. They are most open to changes in the way rabbit meat may be purchased, showing a greater willingness to purchase ‘Local rabbit meat’ than consumers from other segments. Regarding purchase options designed to make shopping and cooking easier, consumers in this segment rate these offers more highly than consumers in other segments do.

4) Rational purchaser with little interest in cooking (16.2%)

Consumers in this segment purchase more rabbit meat from neighbourhood butchers (58.1%) than consumers in any other segment do, but consume less rabbit meat than consumers in any other segment do. They report the highest scores in terms of purchasing whole rabbits (14.8%), the cheapest way of buying rabbit meat (in terms of price per kilogramme). ‘The appearance of the meat’ is ‘Extremely important’ for 72.8% and ‘Quite important’ for 23.8%, and ‘Information about the rabbit’ is ‘Extremely important’ for 44.4% and ‘Quite important’ for 33.4%. Their main reason to eat rabbit is that they find it tasty, 76.9%, the second highest scoring segment in terms of this motive. As a motive for non-consumption, they highlight ‘I don’t like the taste’ (30.3%) and ‘I prefer other types of meat’ (27.1%). This segment report low scores in all new proposals for purchasing rabbit meat, except ‘Rabbits with the head removed’, which receives a higher score than in any other segment, for statement ‘Quite important’.

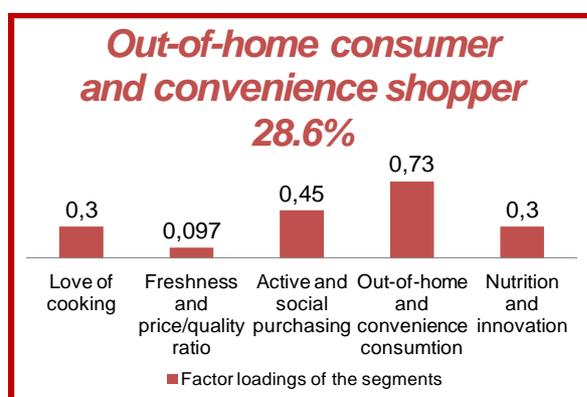


Figure 3. Out-of-home consumer and convenience shopper.

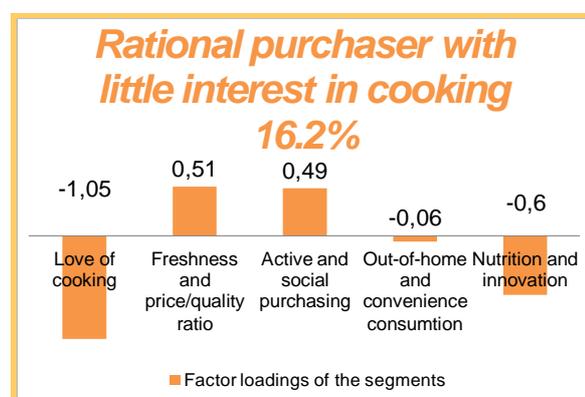


Figure 4. Rational purchaser with little interest in cooking.

CONCLUSIONS

This study presents a market segmentation of Spanish consumers comprising four segments differentiated by consumers' food-related lifestyles. For each segment, we explain the consumer profile and behaviour regarding rabbit meat consumption. From a marketing perspective, this information is useful for the rabbit farming sector.

First, the segmentation allows marketers to design specific products that target each segment. Second, marketers can use the segmentation to tailor advertising campaigns to each segment. Third, by knowing where consumers from each segment do their shopping, marketers can place the right product in the corresponding distribution channel. Fourth, using consumers' sociodemographic profile and product preferences, marketers are better informed about how to price their products. Finally, because we also know the size of each segment as a proportion of the sample, we could perform profitability analyses to assess how relevant, in financial terms, each segment is for a given firm.

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