

# **Analysis of Nutritional Principles Addressed and Nutrition in Romanians: A Case Study**

RALUCA-GIORGIANA CHIVU

Marketing Faculty

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies

Piata Romana, no. 6, Bucharest

ROMANIA

raluca.chivu0126@gmail.com

OTILIA-ELENA PLATON

Faculty of Economics and Business Administration

“Nicolae Titulescu” University

Calea Vacaresti, no. 185, Bucharest

ROMANIA

otiliaplanton@univnt.ro

*Abstract: With the evolution of technology, people have begun to become more and more informed about all the topics of interest, including regarding their eating habits. The lifestyle, the stress, the tendency of sedentarism has generated in the last years an increased interest in maintaining and improving the state of health. In the previous decades, there has been a tendency towards a "standardization" in the consumption habits of the people living in countries with advanced economic development. This was caused both by the change of the available products and by the lifestyle, as well as by the "power" acquired by the new distribution channels. Also, over the last ten years, however, there has been a growing interest in dietetics, health and hygiene products, characterized by high-quality production and content, which may or may not be strictly linked to the history or culture of territory (Chinnici, D'Amico si Pecorino, 2002). However, despite the knowledge and information available, people cannot capitalize on food and cannot maintain a certain food standard. In this article, we will show what the current situation in Romania regarding the consumption of food from a nutritional point of view is.*

*Key-Words: nutritional values, nutritional marketing, consumer behaviour*

## **1 Introduction**

Factors that influence consumers 'intention to buy organic food create environmental awareness and develop ecological preferences among consumers, which influence consumers' plan to buy. Consumer choice is influenced by many factors where concern for health was the primary concern of consumers and other factors such as environmental and nutrition concerns (Paul and Rana, 2012).

In addition to the nutritional values that people have learned to take into account, "the demand for environmentally friendly goods and services is continually growing. This demand conditions the behaviour of consumers and industries, and exerts its influence on the legislative framework. In recent years, there is an increasing interest among consumers for quality agricultural and food products "(Maniu and Gradinaru, 1994, p. 432). Tsakiridou et al. (2008) believe that health, concern for the environment, animal welfare and support of the local economy are the determinants of ecological consumption. Organic products cover a wide range of foods: from fruits, vegetables, meat, to drinks and dairy products.

## **2 The quality of food perceived by Romanians: a marketing perspective**

As Aertsens et al. (2011), assessing the impact of knowledge, as well as other factors on food consumption, creates a better understanding of food consumption behaviour.

On the other hand, consumers buy organic food to be in good health as the main reason for consumers to buy organic food. Attitudes toward organic vegetable consumption are generally positive. The most reliable

motivations for the use of organic vegetables are the fact that they are produced without synthetic pesticides, they are better for the environment, healthier, of a higher quality and a better taste (Aertsens et al. 2011). Other factors that may influence the consumption of organic foods have been identified in the relevant literature, namely, concerns for, concern for chemical residues in conventional foods, pesticides, nutritional concerns. Natural products are obtained by cultivation techniques that take into account the attributes of the final product and production methods. Thus, an increase in demand for organic foods is expected to continue in the future (Tsakiridou, et al. 2008).

Thus, when it comes to choosing healthy foods, consumers are still guided by myths. This criterion is always present due to the lack of adequate consumer information. That's why we still see in supermarkets and markets people who look after the worms for fruits or who are guided by texts such as: like at home, mother, peasant product, natural product. These are easy to use as a marketing strategy and not because the product is like the text, which leads to the loss of confidence in the producers and also in the sellers (Grigoraş, 2015). Awareness of the harmful effects of chemicals present in food is increasing among consumers.

According to Jensen et al. (2019) There is a research gap by investigating the perception of organic consumers on local foods and by associating these perceptions with purchasing behavior, in the idea that natural products are chosen as the research context, because the purchase and consumption of these products are determined by social considerations, such as consumers' self-concept, social feelings, social groups and social networks. Health considerations play a significant role in consumer preferences, followed by environmental and quality attributes. However, environmental concerns were the main reason for the consumption of organic products (Persaud and Schillo, 2017).

Moreover, Loizou, Michailidis and Chatzitheodoridis (2014), with several studies, argue that young consumers (under 45 years) have a higher tendency to consume organic products than older consumers.

What is neglected and influences consumers in purchasing organic products is the visibility, the fact that the products are not very visible on the market, they have little sales space, they cause consumers to resort to conventional foods, which have a broader market (Singh and Verma, 2017 ).

"Presentation, positioning, accessibility, the whole set of attributes and conditions that support spatial visibility by inducing commercial visibility, stimulating and stimulating for pro-ecological behaviours, are negatively valued by those investigated" (Florian et. Al., 2005).

A high price can be thought to negatively influence the attitude of consumers towards organic products compared to conventional ones, but what influences more is the degree of knowledge. The more you know, the more informed you are of higher education, the more you will resort to bioproducts because you know that this high price is reflected in the quality of the product and the benefits it offers (Singh and Verma, 2017 ).

Prior research on the decision-making process by consumers regarding the purchase of organic food is limited. These findings have implications for future sector-based communications to consumers and, possibly, for product development and labelling, Padel and Foster (2005) argue. "Consumers expect organic foods to contain no chemical pesticides and mineral fertilizers. In total, two factors affect consumers' expectations: how natural the products are; additional sustainability issues (such as, for example, saving resources). Although there does not seem to be a large gap between what consumers expect from organic foods and organic labelling products, specific attributes may not be the same for each consumer, they may be a source of disappointment (Meyer-Höfer, Nitzko and Spiller, 2015).

### 3 Level of nutritional consumption in Romania: Case Study

Thus, we can see that the use of the population is influenced by factors that tend to focus on the perceived quality of the food and less on the actual nutritional quality of it. According to INSSE studies, it is possible to highlight the dietary values consumed by the nutrition of the population in Romania, classified by nutritional categories (calories, proteins, lipids, carbohydrates) and by development regions.

Nutritional categories	Values	
	Average of Trimestrul I 2018	Average of Trimestrul I 2019
<b>Calories (number)</b>	<b>2413,7375</b>	<b>2442,0125</b>
Bucuresti - Ilfov Region	2218,6	2218
Center Region	2363,7	2405,3

North-East Region	2587,5	2601,8
North-West Region	2573,4	2503,9
South-East Region	2324,9	2374,8
South-Muntenia Region	2305,5	2281,7
South-West Oltenia Region	2520,4	2521,5
Vest Region	2415,9	2629,1
<b>Carbohydrates (grams)</b>	<b>293,2875</b>	<b>295,025</b>
Bucuresti - Ilfov Region	258,3	263,6
Center Region	289,2	294,3
North-East Region	314,2	312,9
North-West Region	305,8	296,8
South-East Region	286,1	285,5
South-Muntenia Region	287,6	282,5
South-West Oltenia Region	311,4	307,7
Vest Region	293,7	316,9
<b>Lipids (grams)</b>	<b>89,2625</b>	<b>90,6875</b>
Bucuresti - Ilfov Region	86,5	85,5
Center Region	87,5	87,8
North-East Region	94,4	95,7
North-West Region	101	98,2
South-East Region	83	87,1
South-Muntenia Region	81,5	81,5
South-West Oltenia Region	88,6	89,1
Vest Region	91,6	100,6
<b>Proteins (grams)</b>	<b>82,3</b>	<b>83,25</b>
Bucuresti - Ilfov Region	80,1	78,6
Center Region	79	80,2
North-East Region	87,4	88,4
North-West Region	84,3	82,2
South-East Region	81,4	84,9
South-Muntenia Region	80,5	79,5
South-West Oltenia Region	84,7	86
VEST Region	81	86,2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>719,646875</b>	<b>727,74375</b>

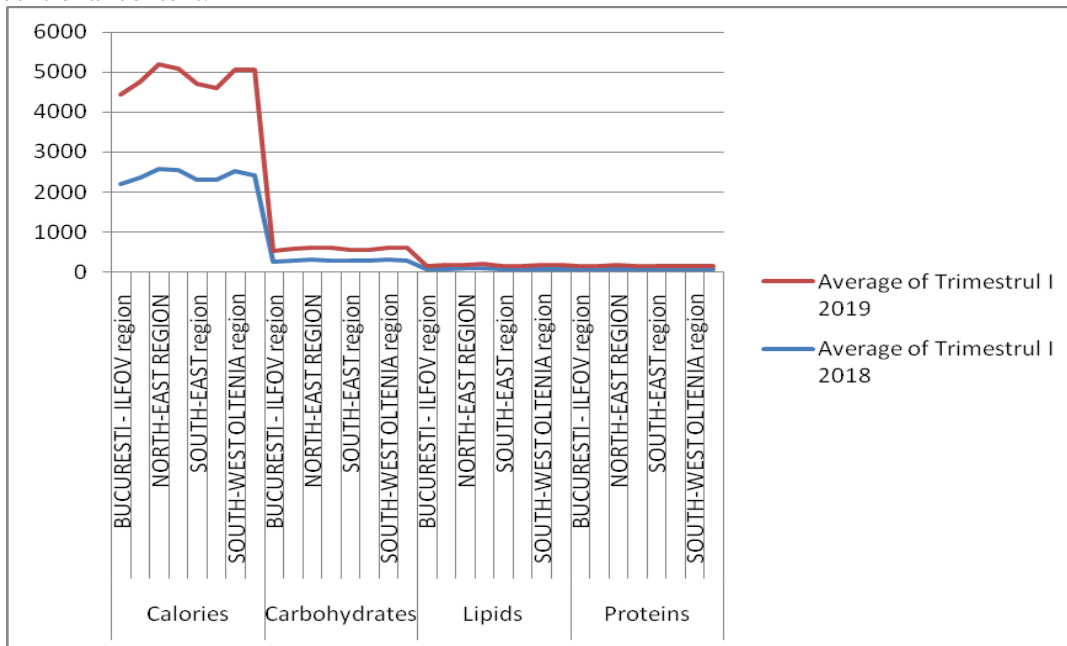
**Tab 1. Comparison between the quantity of nutritional values consumed by Romanians, by development regions, between Trim 1 2018 and Trim 1 2019**

From the analyzed statistical data, we can see that from the number of calories consumed by Romanians, no significant differences are depending on the region of development. Still, from the point of view of evolution over time, we can observe a slight increase in the number of calories consumed. In 2019 as compared to 2018. We can consider that the existing differences are due primarily to the level of stress that is higher with time, but also due to the diversity of food and the increasing accessibility. If a few years ago in certain areas the Romanians had to move even a few kilometers to have access to food (and in this case access was limited), nowadays the number of shops has increased allowing them to have almost unlimited access to a variety of foods.

Another reason that could have led to high food consumption is the impact of healthy eating, which in Romania was a significant one, noting the rapid development of organic agriculture. The turmoil in the urban environment and the unhealthy lifestyle determined the Romanians to be more concerned about their health.

Thus, they have adopted diets based on bio foods or nutritionally balanced, and more and more young people are about to follow this example. Nowadays, customers have become more and more interested in what they consume and are informed whenever possible. Often, it associates eco-products with the process of weight loss (Oroian et al., 2017). Sometimes, organic products even have a higher number of calories compared to processed foods precisely because of the elimination of the processing process was intended to degrease and pasteurize foods.

Another element that contributes to the impact of healthy eating on the Romanian market is the price that affects the attitude towards buying organic products. Specialized studies have shown that people are willing to pay a much higher amount for popular products (Petrescu, A.G., Oncioiu and Petrescu, M., 2017). Going on the principle of healthy foods, people no longer took into account the number of calories or their actual nutritional content.



**Fig 1. Comparison between the quantity of nutritional values consumed by Romanians, by development regions, between Trim 1 2018 and Trim 1 2019**

Regarding the number of nutrients consumed by Romanians (proteins, lipids, carbohydrates) we can also observe that their consumption level increased in 2019 compared to the same period of 2018, and we also find that there are differences between the consumption levels in the regions. North East and South West, where the level of consumption is higher compared to the other developing areas. And this is due to the temperatures and the level of physical exertion of the population within each development region. If, for example, in mountain areas, temperatures are low and people tend to consume more fat, in the plains, for instance, they tend to increase carbohydrate intake and decrease protein and fat intake.

However, a significant role in the nutrition of Romanians is the marketing strategies that exert influence on their consumption decisions through promotion, merchandising and sampling techniques.

#### 4 Conclusion

We can conclude by saying that regardless of the influencing factors we take into account in the analysis of Romanians' food consumption, marketing plays an essential role in their purchasing and consumption decisions. It is well-known that the level of income is a significant factor in the purchasing decisions, the Romanians preparing their shopping list according to the available income. Another consideration with considerable impact is the state of health, which most often determines the quality of the foods consumed and their quantity. However, in the absence of specific problems that impose a particular type of behaviour, marketing is the central pillar that determines the level of food consumption, their quantity and quality.

When shopping, a consumer may have a well-established list of food and goods they must buy. There are common foods on that list, but the brand you choose on the shelf depends on the TV advertisement you saw before you left home. Also, at the shelf next to the existing products on the shopping list, others are at the price offer, thus generating a new buying impulse. Besides all this, in the supermarket where they are shopping, there is a tasting session, and when trying a new product our consumer realizes that they like it and decides to buy it, thus getting home from most with a considerable number of compared foods. outside the shopping list and without feeling the need for them

We can, therefore, conclude by saying that the number of calories ingested by Romanians and the nutritional quality of the foods consumed by them is mostly due to the marketing techniques used by the producers.

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