

RESEARCH ON CONSUMER AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN THE PURCHASE OF MILK AND DAIRY PRODUCTS IN NORTH EAST DEVELOPMENT REGION (CASE STUDY S.C. ILVAS S.A. VASLUI)

Elena GÎNDU¹, Roxana-Ramona FLOREA¹, Benedicta DROBOTĂ¹, Gabriela POPESCU²

e-mail: egindu@uaiasi.ro

Abstract

In human nutrition, milk and dairy products play an important role together with products like meat, eggs, vegetables, fruits and bread, which make up the "daily food basket". The production and, hence, the consumption of milk and dairy products registered a constant increase at world level, but especially in the USA and in the European Union Member States. The global milk production is estimated presently at over 560 million tones, of which Europe realizes about 25%. The capitalization of milk produced in Romania is done differently. According to current estimates, the biggest share of the milk production is capitalized in people's household (through self-consumption) or it is delivered on the free market. The consumption of milk and dairy products is different, depending on habits, but also on the realized production, which is different by areas. The study of the consumer's behavior in the milk and dairy products purchasing process has become a concern for marketing specialists because they can find out which are the criteria for choosing a product, respectively which are the stimuli and factors that influence their option. The consumer's purchasing behavior, as a recent marketing research domain, refers to the behavior of final consumers, which purchase goods and services for personal consumption through which they satisfy current needs or indicate their role in society. In general, the behavior is an ensemble of external reactions through which the individual responds to stimuli. From a *sociological* point of view, the behavior is the subject's activity in a given social situation. Marketing deals with the notion of consumer behavior both in a *narrowly* and *broadly* sense, but most specialists are placed between the two extremes. On the basis of the purchasing behavior of consumers, producers and retailers, several items that should be taken into account have resulted: *the consumer's reaction to the company's marketing strategy, which impacts its success on the market;*

○ *the company marketing mix, which must satisfy the consumers; the possibility of predicting the way in which consumers will respond to the company's strategies; the high cost of this research, the difficulty of realizing it and the risk of obtaining incorrect information.* After the research of Ph. Kotler on the consumers' behavior, the factors that influence this process are grouped in four categories: 1 - *cultural factors* – represented by culture, subculture and social status; 2 - *social factors* – which include reference groups, family, roles and statuses; 3 - *personal factors* – which refer to age and the stage of the life cycle, occupation, lifestyle, economic circumstances, personality and self-opinion.

4 - *psychological factors* – represented by motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitudes. To respond to these aspects, the authors have realized a case study at S.C. ILVAS S.A. Vaslui, which has as a main activity the processing and marketing of milk and dairy products.

Key words: nutrition, consumption, milk and dairy products

In the field of marketing, the strategy is the art of directing a set of devices to achieve a goal.

M. Porter argues that strategy is "the art of building competitive advantages that can be defended in a long time".

R. A. Thietart considered that "strategic decisions and actions is all about articulating the means and resources to achieve a goal".

Competitive strategies do not arise from analysis, but in a special mood, the intelligence and solid desire to achieve a certain stake, induce a process of intuitive, creative and rational thinking (Badea C., 2006).

The strategy defines the ways and means which enable the firm to progress towards key objectives in better: the harmonious and closer connection with the current environment and future.

Overall business strategy is designed to adapt decisions in time and space, resources and business opportunities changing environmental risks (Bibiri E., 1992).

Strategic option at S.C. "ILVAS" S.A. Vaslui is to develop and improve the products. For this, the company will move to a new product

¹ USAMV Iasi

² USAMVB Timișoara

promotion action, representing an immediate action plan.

For a new product to be a commercial success, in addition to ensuring adequate technical performance, producing firm must consider the specific aspects of marketing. This requires careful study of existing information in relation to the product market (*based study*), and performing complex marketing research (*test of concept, brand and packaging*), using methods such as: *in-depth interview and meeting in groups, testing a representative sample of product acceptability*.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The research was conducted in S.C. ILVAS S.A. Vaslui, whose activity is processing and trading of milk and milk products since 2002 and is part of the group of companies RACOVA Vaslui. The unit is a Romanian legal entity, having the form of a joint stock company with its own balance sheet and privately owned (since 2000).

At present, the processing capacity of the plant is 120,000 hl milk / year. Company products are recognized and appreciated by consumers, and the company enjoys the trust of the business partners.

The research was conducted using the statistical survey with written questionnaire that included 20 questions. The set of indicators and the set of assumptions that have been established are lists of questions, problems, without which it is impossible to build the questionnaire.

The questions, regardless of the investigation should be clear, simple, concise and unambiguous.

The pre-test or pilot survey indicated that the questions are adequate to meet the optimal characteristics and must be eliminated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

To highlight the most significant aspects of the customers and their satisfaction in the purchase of milk and milk products by S.C. ILVAS S.A. Vaslui it had been selected the most important questions in the questionnaire, which will be presented below.

Sample subjects were represented by 57 stores and 231 consumers in Vaslui, Bacau and Iasi, belonging to the North-East Region of Romania.

The first question concerned the compliance of the "SC "ILVAS S.A." Vaslui of deadline for milk and dairy products (*date and time set*) ", which, in Vaslui and Iasi, most respondents (66.7 to 61.9%) said they were very satisfied, while in Bacau County, only 20% were satisfied and 40% satisfactory (*fig. 1*).

When asked if "**you found the reception that delivery was complete, fair and accurate to your order?**" in Vaslui County, 71.4% of respondents said they were very satisfied, while in Iasi, only 57,1% and in Bacau, only 26.7% said they were very satisfied, 66.7% satisfied and 6.6% satisfactory (*fig. 2*):

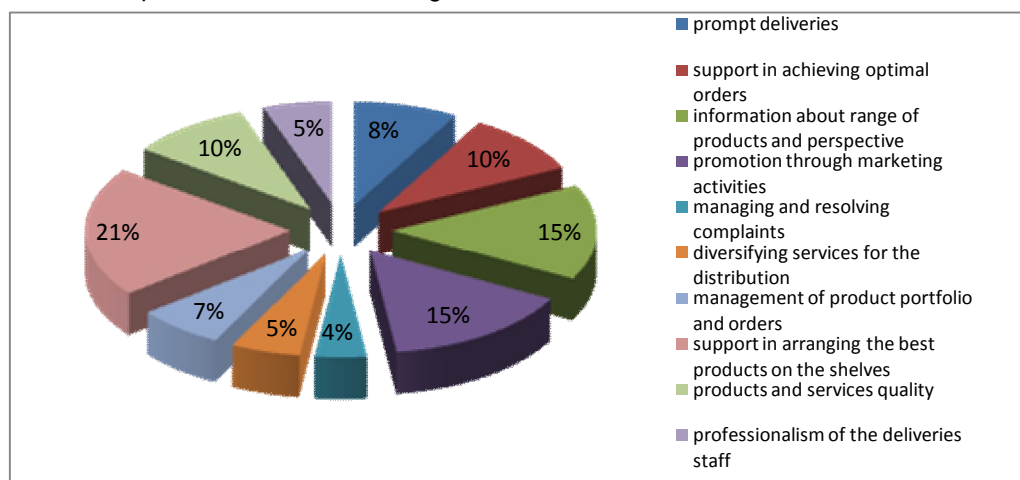


Figure 1 Response options

Another aspect referred to "**the condition of the receiver in terms of appearance**", which 62% of subjects appreciated as excellent and 38% said it was satisfactory (*fig. 3*).

Another question focused on "**assessing the quality delivery of products and services** by "SC ILVAS S.A.", Vaslui. It is interesting that 57% of respondents give satisfactorily rating and 43% excellent rating (*fig. 4*):

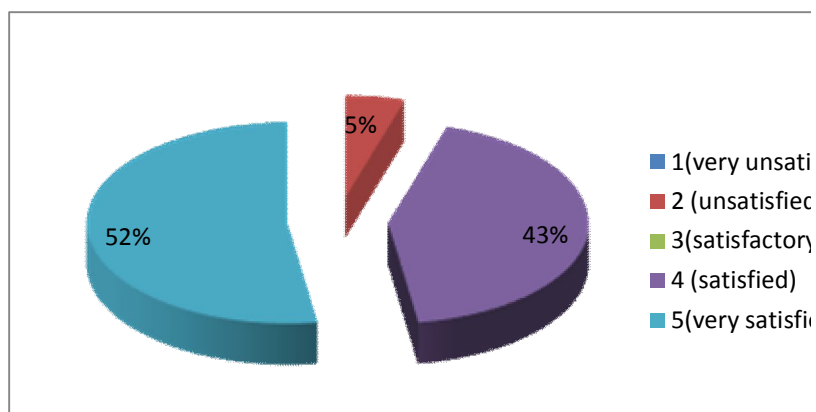


Figure 2 Response options

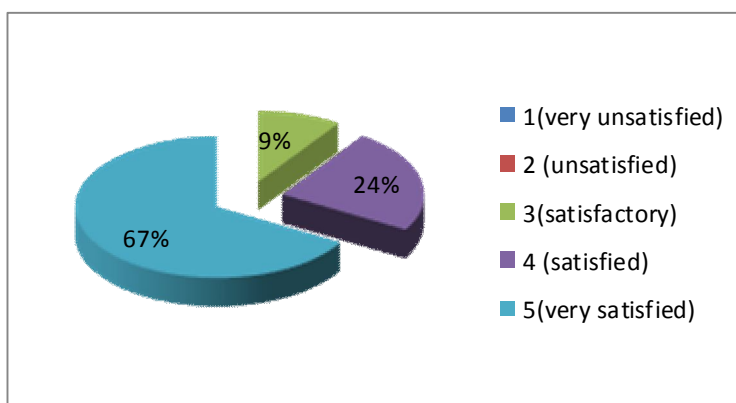


Figure 3 Response options

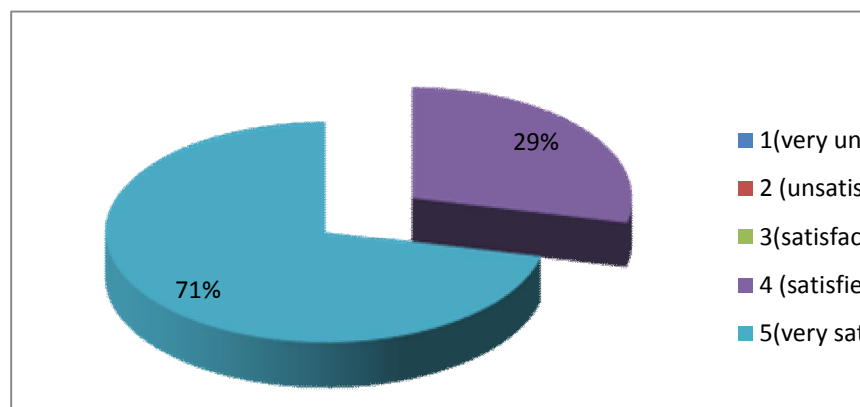


Figure 4 Response options

This shows that the unit is not performing in this respect, which results from the assessments of those interviewed.

An important problem was related to competition between companies in the purchasing

by consumers of milk and milk products. Of the subjects' response, result that, in Bacau County ranks first Napolact Company and in Iasi and Vaslui, in competition is the DANONE Company (fig.5).

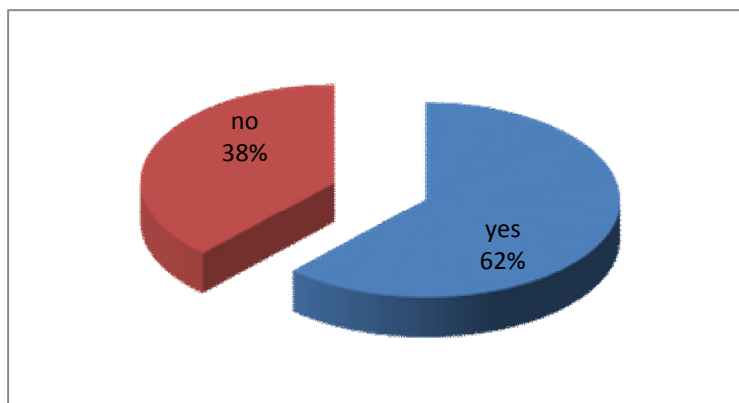


Figure 5 Response options

the first place is the price, while 38% is guided by the quality of the product (fig.6):

When asked "Appreciate the share of customer that is focused on purchase decision by: price, brand, quality", 52% answered that on

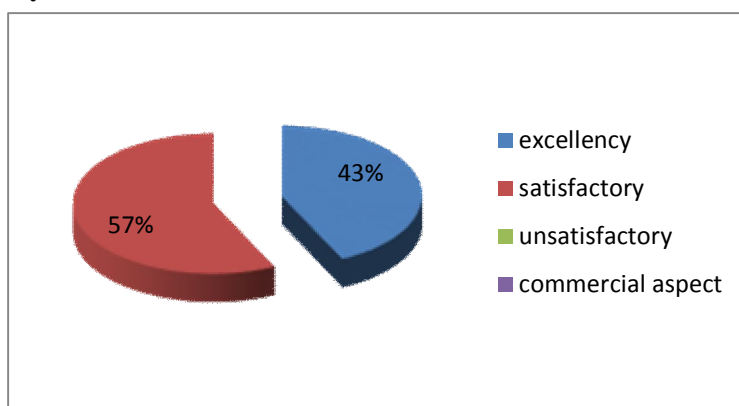


Figure 6 Response options

suggestions for improvements or additional breakdowns for SC "ILVAS" S.A. Vaslui products.

When asked "Please compose a top of the first three companies producing milk and milk products according to your company's sales", 76% of respondents felt that on the first place is SC ILVAS S.A. Vaslui, ALBALACT on 2nd place with 10% and on 3rd position DANONE Company with 9% (fig. 7).

What is relevant is the fact that 86% of respondents had no suggestions or further details, however, 14% were referred to the need of broadening its product range by introducing yogurt with fruit and also provide catalogs and leaflets with company products (fig. 8):

Another aspect analyzed referred to the presentation by the subjects in the sample of

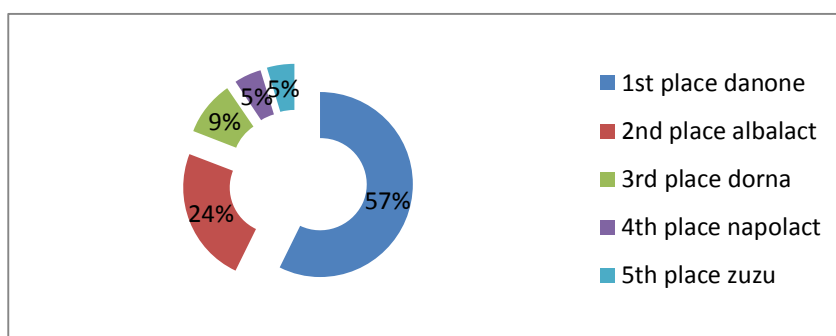


Figure 7 Response options

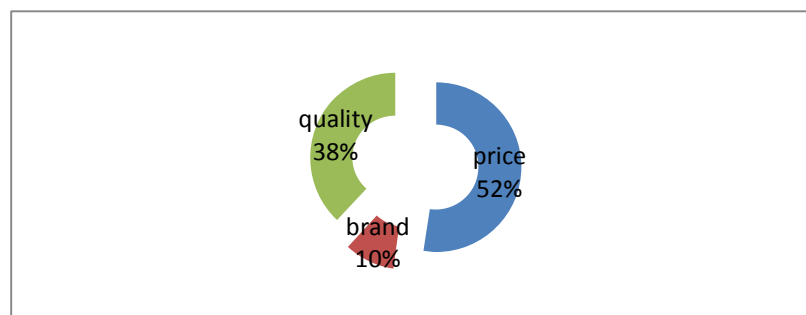


Figure 8 Response options

To the question: *"If you can make some suggestions for improvements or additional breakdowns for products SC Ilvas S.A. Vaslui, please specify them"*, most respondents in the three studied counties said no, while 30% answered yes. Among the suggestions made by respondents can include: improved product mix by introducing (also) yogurt with fruit, or providing catalogs and brochures with the company's products (fig.9).

In conclusion questions about the assessment of the degree of satisfaction of consumers of milk and dairy products purchased from SC "ILVAS" S.A Vaslui and overall relations with this unit, 71% of respondents said they were satisfied, while only 29% said they were very satisfied (fig.9).

Also in this case, that unit must still be concerned to switch the report in favor of very satisfied, now the difference being very large.

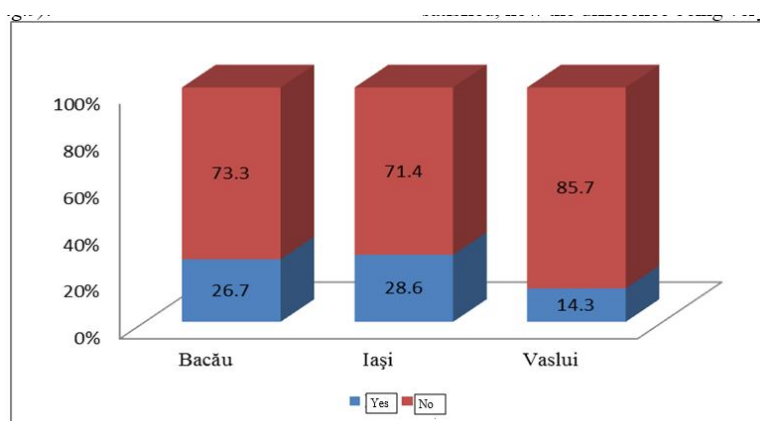


Figure 9 Response options

To the question: *"In conclusion, in terms of your relationship with SC Ilvas S.A. Vaslui, you affirm that you are: satisfied, very satisfied, dissatisfied and very dissatisfied"*, the majority of

respondents were satisfied with their relationship of cooperation with SC Ilvas S.A. Vaslui (fig.10):

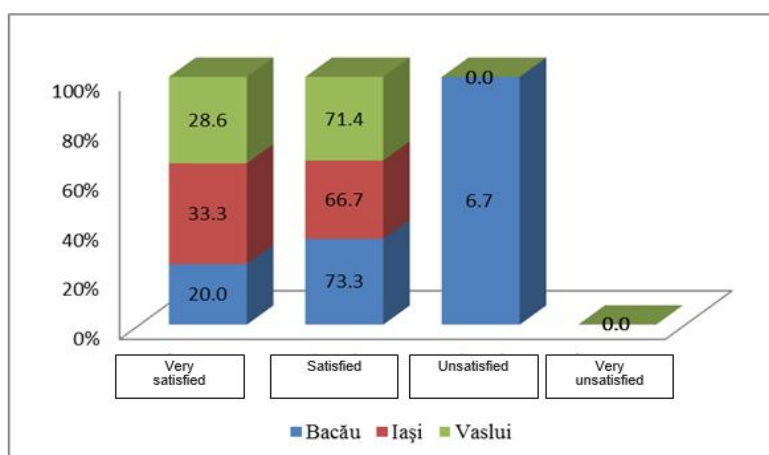


Figure 10 Response options

CONCLUSSIONS

Creating a marketing information system is a necessity and an obligation for oriented marketing firms, to organize a permanent flow of information absolutely necessary to substantiate a marketing decision in fierce competition on the market of various competitors that seek to gain profit generating advantages. Therefore the systematic exploration of internal and external market, the use of new scientific methods and techniques for investigating market opportunities to adapt to it and influence it, it cannot be achieve without using methods and techniques of marketing.

In the coming years, SC ILVAS S.A. Vaslui will have to adopt to a policy and market strategy leading to increased market share in Moldavia and national level.

Product list should include new products from milk, representing a resultant of research on consumer choice for varieties meeting their tastes and requirements.

In promotion strategy, SC ILVAS S.A. Vaslui will have to diversify its promotional activities, which require designing a promotional budget, leading to increased sales and, consequently, economic profitability.

For advertising objectives, SC ILVAS S.A. Vaslui have to invest more in specific marketing activities as milk and milk products are perceived by consumers as similar, differentiation is accomplished either by price or by promotion actions.

REFERENCES

Bibiri E., 1992 – *Comportamentul consumatorului și marketingul*. Rev. Marketing-Management, AROMAR, nr. 3-4., București

Bodescu D. - 2009 - *Economia serviciilor - suport de curs*, Editura Terra Nostra, Iași.
Boier Rodica, 1994 – *Comportamentul consumatorului*. Editura Graphix, Iași.
Chiran A., și colab., 2004 – *Piața produselor agricole și agroalimentare – abordare teoretică și practică*. Editura CERES, București.
Chiran A., Ciurea I.V., Gîndu Elena, Ignat Gabriela, 2006 - *Management, marketing și gestiune economică*, Editura Performantica, Iași.
Chiran A., Dima F.M., Gîndu Elena, 2007 - *Marketing în agricultură*, Editura Alma Print, Galați.
Chiran A., Gîndu Elena, 2007 – *Zooeconomie* - ediția a-II-a, Editura PIM, Iași.
Constantin M., Chiran A., Gîndu Elena, 2009, - *Marketingul producției agroalimentare*, Editura AgroTehnica, București.
Diaconescu M., 2002 - *Marketing agroalimentar*. Ed. Uranus, București.
Florea Roxana-Ramona, 2010 – *Aspecte privind oferta de lapte a principalelor produse lactate la S.C. ILVAS S.A. Vaslui. Lucrări științifice USAMV Iași, vol. 53, seria Zootehnie*.
Florea Roxana-Ramona, Gîndu Elena, Burlacu Adina-Alina, 2011 – *Aspects regarding the distribution and promotion of milk and dairy products - case dtusy at S.C. ILVAS S.A. Vaslui*. Analele Universității din Oradea, vol. XVII.
Funar Sabina, 1999 - *Marketing agroalimentar*. Editura Digital Data, Cluj.
Gîndu Elena, 2006 – *Marketing – organizare, strategii, decizii, comportamentul consumatorului*. Editura Tehnopress, Iași.
Kotler Ph., 1998 - *Managementul marketingului*. Editura Teora, București.
Kotler Ph., 2003 - *Marketing de la A la Z*. Editura Codecs, București.
Kotler Ph., 2008 – *Principiile marketingului, ediția a 4-a*, Editura Teora, București.
Mitu N.E., 2005 – *Metoda costului țintă*. Rev. Tribuna Economică, nr.6., București.
Pop Cecilia, 2004 – *Merceologia produselor alimentare*. Ed. Tipomoldova, Iași.
Zahiu Letiția și colab., 1998 - *Management marketing agroalimentar*. Editura, A.S.E., București.
Zaharia R., 2000 - *Marketing Strategic*. Editura. A.S.E., București.