

CONSUMERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ECOLOGIC VEGETABLE YIELD DEPENDING ON EDUCATION AND AGE

ATITUDINEA CONSUMATORILOR FAȚĂ DE PRODUȚIA LEGUMICOLĂ ECOLOGICĂ ÎN FUNCȚIE DE GRADUL DE INSTRUIRE ȘI VÂRSTĂ

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***Abstract.** The study of the attitude towards the ecologic vegetable yield was made on a population sample of 350 persons using our own questionnaire, elaborated according to the norms from the specialized literature. The obtained results show that consumers' attitude varied depending on the education level and the age of the interviewed persons.*

Key words: attitude, ecological vegetable, education, age

***Rezumat.** Studiul atitudinii față de producția legumicolă ecologică a fost realizat pe un eșantion format din 350 persoane, utilizându-se un chestionar propriu elaborat după normele prevăzute în literatura de specialitate. Rezultatele obținute ne relevă faptul că atitudinea consumatorilor a variat în funcție de nivelul de instruire și de vârsta persoanelor intervievate.*

Cuvinte cheie: atitudine, legume ecologice, pregătire, vârstă

INTRODUCTION

The pedoclimatic conditions of the Iasi County, the tradition and professional knowledge as well as the existence of a healthy sales market are favorable factors for the development and practicing of the ecologic vegetable growing (2,3,4), but the sustainable making of a vegetable yield is determined also by the consumers' attitude. The study of the consumers' attitude is a complex process that may be effectuated by the interview method using specific questionnaires related to the study goal. Such studies are made on relatively large samples comprising an as large as possible social-professional spectrum of the individuals expressing their attitude.

In this context, the goal of this paper is to highlight the consumers' attitude in terms of yield and consumption of ecologic vegetables depending on some elements of the social-professional profile of the interviewed people.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The studies on the attitude were made by interviewing 350 individuals and using a questionnaire elaborated according to the norms mentioned in the specialized literature (1,6). The questionnaire comprises 51 questions referring to the respondents' social-professional status, their attitude and preference related to the

ecologic vegetable yield. Within the questionnaire, we took into account two criteria of social-professional grouping, the level of education and age, and four questions referring to the attitude towards: the level of pesticides, the manner of obtaining vegetables, certification of ecologic vegetables and the state intervention to sustain the ecologic vegetable production.

For the field investigation we selected the towns of Iași and Tg. Frumos, as well as communes Belcești, Bosia, Focuri, Golăești and Răducăneni, well known localities for their tradition of cultivating and consuming vegetables. Respondents' answers were checked, validated and processed by specific methods using the SPSS programme (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), variant 16 (5). After validating answers, 316 questionnaires were processed to achieve the study. The answers regarding attitude were appreciated on a scale with five levels of answer from „I totally agree to that” up to „I totally disagree to that”.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Depending on the level of education, the individuals who participated to this study may be grouped as follows: individuals who finished only the secondary school – 6.3%, individuals who finished only 10 grades/vocational school – 20.3%, 25.0% of respondents finished high school, and 48.4% of the interviewed people graduated from college (college/faculty/post-academic studies). It is important to mention that 93.7% finished at least 10 grades or a vocational school what will ensure a high percentage of pertinent answers.

As for the age groups of the interviewed people, it results the following: 17.4% were young people between 18-25, 36.7% of respondents were people between 25-40, 36.4% were people between 41-65, and 9.5% were people aged more than 65. The grouping by ages of the studied sample shows a structure close to the normal values of the population structure, the age groups in the middle of the interval, namely 26-40 and 41-65 years old, representing more than 75%.

The attitude of the interviewed people regarding the pesticide level („I am really concerned by the level of pesticides (chemical products) in vegetables”) determines a grouping of answers at the level of the interviewed sample. Thus, 81% from the interviewed people manifested their concern regarding the level of pesticides in vegetables, declaring that they totally agree to the affirmation above (table 1). As for their grouping by levels of education, the people who finished eight grades at most declared they agreed or totally agreed, in a percentage of 55%, the people who finished 10 grades/vocational school in percentage of 70.3%, people who finished high school – 78%, and those who graduated from college – 90.2%.

As for the answers received by age groups, the percentage of the people who manifested their agreement to the problem mentioned above is the following: 18-25 years old – 81.8%, people between 26-40 – 79.3%, people between 41-65 – 83.5% and people aged more than 65 – 76.6%. From the presented data, we may draw the conclusion that most answers are positive and similar to those of the entire group.

Table 1

**Attitude towards pesticide level in vegetables depending
on the respondents' level of education and age**

Education level	Age group (years)	„I am concerned by the pesticide level (chemical products) in vegetables”					Total
		I totally agree	I agree	I am not sure	I disagree	I totally disagree	
Eight grades school	18-25	0	1	0	0	0	1
	26-40	1	1	2	0	0	4
	41-65	3	3	3	0	0	9
	aged more than 65	1	1	4	0	0	6
Total		5	6	9	0	0	20
10 grades/ vocational school	18-25	3	2	2	0	0	7
	26-40	6	8	2	0	0	16
	41-65	5	11	7	4	1	28
	aged more than 65	5	5	3	0	0	13
Total		19	26	14	4	1	64
High school/ post high school education	18-25	3	8	3	0	1	15
	26-40	7	11	12	0	0	30
	41-65	13	12	1	0	0	26
	aged more than 65	4	4	0	0	0	8
Total		27	35	16	0	1	79
College/faculty/ post-academic studies	18-25	18	10	4	0	0	32
	26-40	41	17	6	2	0	66
	41-65	33	16	3	0	0	52
	aged more than 65	3	0	0	0	0	3
Total		95	43	13	2	0	153
TOTAL		146	110	52	6	2	316

The results of the analysis of people's attitude in terms of production manner of vegetables („I do not know the difference between the vegetable products obtained normally and those obtained by ecological, organic or biological means”) are grouped as follows: 40.8% of respondents know the difference between the products obtained by the two systems (conventional and ecologic), 31.6% and not sure, and 27.5% acknowledge they do not know the difference (table 2). As for the individuals knowing the difference, depending on the education level, 61.2% graduated from college and 26.3% finished high school; in terms of age, the people aged between 41-65 and 26-40 respectively, represent the majority (40.3%, 37.2% respectively). The answers of the individuals declaring themselves not sure in this respect determine a clear-cut segmentation depending on the education level: 36% people who graduated from college, 21% who finished high school, 33% individuals who finished 10 grades or a vocational school and 10% individuals who finished eight grades at most. As for the grouping by age categories, answers are grouped in the central area of the interval: 26-40 years old (36%), 41-65 years old (35%) respectively. The people who declared not knowing this difference represent 27.5%, and answers are clearly segmented both by education level and age grouping.

Table 2

**Respondents' attitude towards the different ways of the vegetables obtaining,
depending by the education level and age**

Education level	Age group (years)	„I do not know the difference between the vegetable products obtained normally and those obtained by ecologic, organic or biologic means”					Total
		I totally agree	I agree	I am not sure	I disagree	I totally disagree	
Eight grades school	18-25	0	1	0	0	0	1
	26-40	0	2	1	1	0	4
	41-65	1	2	5	1	0	9
	aged more than 65	0	2	4	0	0	6
Total		1	7	10	2	0	20
10 grades/ vocational school	18-25	0	1	4	2	0	7
	26-40	0	3	10	2	1	16
	41-65	1	6	15	5	1	28
	aged more than 65	2	4	4	2	1	13
Total		3	14	33	11	3	64
High school/ post high school education	18-25	1	3	4	6	1	15
	26-40	2	8	11	7	2	30
	41-65	2	4	4	14	2	26
	aged more than 65	3	1	2	2	0	8
Total		8	16	21	29	5	79
College/faculty/ post-academic studies	18-25	2	6	11	8	5	32
	26-40	0	18	13	19	16	66
	41-65	1	10	12	21	8	52
	aged more than 65	0	1	0	1	1	3
Total		3	35	36	49	30	153
TOTAL		15	72	100	91	38	316

The analysis of the respondents' attitude in terms of the certified ecologic vegetables („I consider that the marketing of the certified ecologic products would be desirable”) highlights a grouping of answers at the level of the interviewed sample; 82.9% declared that they agree or totally agree to the marketing of certified ecologic products, 15.5% declared they were not sure and a very small percentage 1.6% disagreed to this affirmation (table 3). Out of the people manifesting their agreement, 51.5% graduated from college, and 23.6% finished high school. At the level of all respondents with academic studies, 90.2% manifested their agreement in terms of marketing these vegetables and 78.5% of the high school respondents. As for the age groups, the individuals who agreed or totally agreed to the affirmation that „I consider the marketing of the certified ecologic products would be desirable”, we may notice a classification by two age intervals: 41-65 years old (37.8%) and 26-40 years old (35.5%). Analyzing the answers to the question „Do you think the state should support the ecologic vegetable yield?” we may notice a clear-cut grouping of the individuals, 84.8% of the interviewed persons agreeing or totally agreeing to this question.

Table 3

**Respondents' attitude towards the marketing of certified ecologic products
depending on education level and age**

Education level	Age group (years)	„I consider the marketing of the certified ecologic products would be desirable”					Total
		I totally agree	I agree	I am not sure	I disagree	I totally disagree	
Eight grades school	18-25	1	0	0	0	0	1
	26-40	0	2	2	0	0	4
	41-65	1	5	3	0	0	9
	aged more than 65	1	4	1	0	0	6
Total		3	11	6	0	0	20
10 grades/ vocational school	18-25	3	3	1	0	0	7
	26-40	1	11	4	0	0	16
	41-65	0	19	8	1	0	28
	aged more than 65	4	7	2	0	0	13
Total		8	40	15	1	0	64
High school/ post high school education	18-25	4	7	4	0	0	15
	26-40	5	16	9	0	0	30
	41-65	11	12	3	0	0	26
	aged more than 65	4	3	1	0	0	8
Total		24	38	17	0	0	79
College/faculty/ post-academic studies	18-25	9	17	5	1	0	32
	26-40	28	30	5	3	0	66
	41-65	26	25	1	0	0	52
	aged more than 65	2	1	0	0	0	3
Total		65	73	11	4	0	153
TOTAL		100	162	49	5	0	316

Table 4

**Respondents' attitude towards the state support in the ecologic vegetable yield
depending on the education level and age**

Education level	Age group (years)	„Do you think the state should support the ecologic vegetable yield?”					Total
		I totally agree	I agree	I am not sure	I disagree	I totally disagree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Eight grades school	18-25	0	1	0	0	0	1
	26-40	1	2	1	0	0	4
	41-65	0	6	3	0	0	9
	aged more than 65	1	5	0	0	0	6
Total		2	14	4	0	0	20
10 grades/ vocational school	18-25	1	5	1	0	0	7
	26-40	4	9	2	0	1	16
	41-65	2	19	6	1	0	28
	aged more than 65	7	5	1	0	0	13
Total		14	38	10	1	1	64

Table 4 (continuation)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
High school/ post high school education	18-25	6	6	3	0	0	15
	26-40	7	15	8	0	0	30
	41-65	13	10	1	2	0	26
	aged more than 65	5	2	1	0	0	8
Total		31	33	13	2	0	79
College/faculty/ post-academic studies	18-25	10	16	6	0	0	32
	26-40	26	35	3	2	0	66
	41-65	26	21	3	1	1	52
	aged more than 65	2	0	1	0	0	3
Total		64	72	13	3	1	153
TOTAL		111	157	40	6	2	316

Within this percentage related to the education level, the majority is represented by the people with academic studies (50.7%), and 23.9% is represented by individuals who finished high school. As for the age grouping, most answers received fall into the central area of the interval: 36.9% is represented by the age interval 26-40, whereas 36.2% is represented by people whose age ranges between 41-65 years old.

CONCLUSIONS

1. More than 80% of the interviewed people manifests their concern regarding the pesticide level in the Romanian vegetables, regardless of the education level or age.

2. More than 40% of the respondents know the difference between the vegetable products obtained normally and those obtained by ecologic, organic or biological means.

3. The marketing of the certified ecologic products is agreed to by 82.9% of the interviewed people, especially those with academic studies and age between 26 and 65 years old.

4. 84.8% of the interviewed people opine that the state should support the ecologic vegetable yield.

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