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ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN FACTORS AND CONSUMERS’ PURCHASE DECISION ON THE LOCAL AGRI-FOOD MARKET

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Abstract

This study is addressing topics related to sustainable consumption and aims to identify and rank the decisional factors involved in the process of purchasing local eco-friendly agri-food products and to analyse to what extent the incidence of eco-friendly agri-food consumption is influenced by five factors: income, age, gender, education, living area. Thus, the paper presents the results of a market research regarding the consumer behaviour of agri-food and the willingness of adopting a more sustainable diet, in one of the developing regions of the European Union: the North-East Region of Romania, Iaşi County. Our substantive findings indicate that personal benefits (taste, perceived health benefits and freshness) are the main motivations driving sustainable consumption, while environmental conditions did not reach such a great significance. The results show that, in general, people are not well informed about the environmental implications of their diet. Their environmental attitudes are not aligned with their actual purchase practices: although the majority of people declare they are preoccupied with environmental protection, the driving motivations of agri-food purchase do not necessarily imply environmental concern factors, such as transportation, reusable/recyclable package or the wish to protect the environment. The study shows that women are more willing than men to change their consumption behaviour of agri-food products in order to contribute to a sustainable environment. Also, elderly people are more determined to purchase agri-food produced in an environmentally sustainable manner. Findings from this research lead to understanding the multiple factors that consumers consider in making purchase decisions of environmentally sustainable agri-food. Educational campaigns should be implemented in order to grow awareness about how our diet and food choices can address climate change.

Key words: agri-food, dietary habits, environmental attitudes, food pollution, sustainable consumption

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