ATTITUDE AND HEDONISM – COMPARING THE RESULTS OF TWO EMPIRICAL STUDIES

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Abstract - The aim of current study is to segment consumers based on internationally developed scales related to meat consumption and hedonism. The relevance of this topic can be explained by current customer trends, namely plant based diets are very popular or diets with minimal meat consumption independently the possible negative effects on health. Hungarian people are basically omnivores and meat is an important source of nutrition. The aim of this study is to explore the attitude towards meat consumption based on the one hand hedonism variables, and on the other hand based on MAQ (Meat Attachment Questionnaire). For main clusters of consumers can be distinguished based on their positive, negative or neutral attitude towards eating and different types of meat consumption: meat lovers, white meat lovers, omnivores and vegans. Three clusters can be identified based on hedonism, affinity, entitlement, and dependence: meat eaters, neutrals, and functional meat eaters. Health and health management are important topics both at macro- and microeconomic levels. Making white meat (fish and poultry) more popular and increasing the consumption of white meat is necessary with a marketing communication campaign. Emphasizing affinity can be a good way of differentiation when ethical questions are in focus.

Keywords - MAQ Scale, Meat Consumption, Clustering.

I. INTRODUCTION

The social and economic changes in the world such as the development in living standards, the intensity of urbanization processes and the increase of price level result in different attitudes towards meat and patterns in meat consumption. Due to current customer trends more people refuse meat either because of the risks of meat consumption or simply because of ethical and religious concerns. Plant based diets are very popular or diets with minimal meat consumption independently the possible negative effects on health(Kanerva, 2013).

A main global trend that can be observed in Europe is that meat consumption is constantly decreasing or stagnating. According to the prognosis of the European Commission this trend is going to be continued until 2023 however poultry (white meat) consumption is going to be increasing by 1.5% annually. Taking into consideration the report of OECD for 2018 American (101.3 kg/capita/year), Australian (94.2 kg/capita/year) and Argentinian (92.6 kg/capita/year) people consume the highest amount of meat. The EU stands in 10th position with an average consumption of 69.5 kg annually. Analyzing poultry consumption the EU takes the first place with 32.3 kg/capita/year. The lowest amount of meat is consumed in third world countries like Tanzania, Ethiopia, India and Bangladesh. This fact can be explained by the economic situation, the standard of living, climatic circumstances and religion. According to National Chicken Council (NCC) a global trend is the constant decrease of red meat consumption, especially beef and the constant increase of white meat consumption from the 90'ies till nowadays due to the spread of healthy lifestyle. At the same time relying on estimation for 2019 this trend is going to be moderating and red meat consumption (110.9 kg/capita/year) will be exceed white meat consumption (109.6 kg/capita/year) at a minimal level.

Due to the spread of healthy lifestyle people refuse meat or prefer only special meat (poultry and fish). Vegan, vegetarian and flexitarian diets are becoming more and more widespread (Gruenert, 2006 and Törőcsik, 2014). Relying on the latest researches of GfK Hungarian Research Institute (2016) Hungarian consumers put more emphasis on the healthiness of food products and this can be seen in the tendency that people refuse additives (artificial colors, flavoring, preservatives) in case of food. However people do not really care about content of fat and carbohydrate in case of food and bio products are not so popular. Healthiness in case of purchasing food is important mainly for middle-aged (over 40), higher educated women living particularly in the capital city or Western Pannon region and in Northern Hungary. The consumption of healthy product categories is increasing, namely poultry, rice, brown bread, and mineral water (GfK Research Institute 2016). The structure of meat consumption is changing and this can be explained by the changes of consumer values (Szakács, 2012 and Gruenert, 2006). Nowadays health concerns, ethical issues (circumstances of animal keeping, slaughter of animals), time (time saving, comfort) and hedonism (Szakács, 2012) are important factors when meat consumption is analyzed. In Hungary meat consumption has a great tradition and red meat is really important from gastronomical point of view (Zsarnóczay, 2009).The aim of this present research is to analyze the attitude towards meat consumption and to segment Hungarian

people based on hedonism and other aspect of attitude using internationally developed scales.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Before analyzing meat consumption the main food trends that will determine the life and consumption of people all over the world in the next 10-15 years should be considered (Törőcsik, 2014). Flexitarian diet is becoming more and more popular which means that people try to follow a plant based diet and basically refuse food originated from animals however sometimes they like eating meat especially white meat such as poultry and fish. Another food trend is ordering food via smart phone and free food delivery is a new business opportunity for restaurants. Accompanying and eating out are becoming less and less important. A new trend is the positive acceptance of animal fat and chefs prefer to use it as a basic ingredient. Food and eating is a kind of entertainment or adventure and has an effect on our brains. People like sharing photos, pictures about their food. On the other hand more and more people choose a more plant based diet (Graça et al., 2015) due to the meat scandals and health concerns.

Hedonic consumption is typical for people since they like eating.According to Hausman (2005) people sacrifice their long term goals because of short term gains like pleasure. When it comes about eating it is typical that people eat too much unhealthy food and they forget about the concept of 'healthy body healthy mind'. After their decision they spend a huge amount of money on losing weight. Food consumption is becoming a need for self-expression rather than a physiological need. According to Rappaport (2003) when people decide what to eat their choice is mainly based on hedonic cues. People decide on the taste of food and then health or nutrition concerns are taken into consideration. The author proved empirically that middle-aged women put more emphasis on eating healthy food and they are able to control their hedonic desires. Analyzing eating styles emotional and uncontrolled eating due to external stimuli can be problematic (Kemp et al., 2013). Psychologists identified a new eating style, especially hedonic hunger when people eat due to pleasure and overeat themselves with calorie-rich unhealthy food and they will be addicted (Berridge et al., 2010, Lowe and Butryn, 2007). The problem is that hedonic eating means the consumption of food rich in carbohydrate and fat and people cannot stop eating and due to pleasure and joy they regularly overeat themselves. All in all it can be said that there is a duality in food consumption since people realize the importance of healthy lifestyle but they like eating and enjoying food. A problem occurs when hedonism cause an overconsumption.

Meat consumption is a really controversial issue considering health and ethical concerns. It is known that red meat consumption is suggested for people suffering from anemiabut overconsumption can be harmful. Young, health-conscious females have negative attitude towards red meat and they try to avoid it in their diet (Graça et al., 2015).

French authors analyzed the affective attitude towards meat consumption among young (average age: 30.5 year) French women (Audebert et al., 2006). They conducted a complex research. First they asked about hedonism (overall, eating, red meat and white meat) and ethical and nutritional concerns. Secondly, respondents had to express their positive or negative attitudes towards meat. The researchers analyzed the correlation between hedonism, ethical and nutritional concerns and attitude towards meat. They measured eating hedonism (5 items), namely the pleasure in eating food, white meat hedonism (9 items) and red meat hedonism (9 items) on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1, 'completely disagree', to 7, 'completely agree'.From a marketing viewpoint it is interesting to analyze what kind of consumer groups can be distinguished based on meat consumption.

Most up-to-date studies (Graça et al., 2015) analyzed consumer willingness to reduce meat consumption and to adopt a more plant-based diet. Portuguese researchers developed a scales called MAQ (Meat Attachment Questionnaire) which is a new measure referring to a positive bond towards meat consumption. Four factors were identified: hedonism (4 items – meat consumption as a source of pleasure), affinity (4 items - affective attitude towards meat consumption), entitlement (3 items), and dependence (5 items). The scale was validated in more culturally different countries. The authors came to the conclusion that men scored higher than women in all dimensions of meat attachment. Consumers that were more attached to meat consumption were less inclined to change their eating habits.

The aim of this present research is to segment Hungarian people based on the attitude towards meat consumption (hedonism and meat attachment) and highlighting similarities and differences.

III. RESULTS

The aim of this complex research is to segment Hungarian adult population based on meat related hedonism and MAQto identify homogenous consumer, and characterize them based on gender. After the literature review the following research question was defined:

Is it possible to segment Hungarian people based on hedonism (eating, red meat and white meat) and MAQ (meat attachment) scale?

Thus the following assumption was tested:

- H$_A$: Hungarian consumers can be grouped into homogeneous groups based on their attitude towards meat. There is homogeneity within the group and heterogeneity between groups.

Relying on the literature review the assumption is that consumers can be classified into homogeneous customer groups and they can definitely be profiled.

To answer the research questions the authors chose the single cross-sectional research method. The empirical research was conducted in January 2016 and in April 2017. The researchers used the self-reported online questionnaire. To obtain the primary information, the online questionnaire was sent to different social media groups with the intention to reach people from different social classes, income levels and lifestyles. Finally 587 people (41.9% males and 58.1% females) could be reached with the survey measuring hedonism. One year later 1053 people (49.5% males, 40.5% females) were willing to fill in the whole questionnaire measuring MAQ. In this research gender differences are highlighted so other socio-demographic variables are not relevant.

The sample was not a representative one and the authors would like to emphasize this study is an exploratory one and the main conclusions are valid for this sample but not for the whole Hungarian population.

The data analysis was conducted with the help of SPSS 23.0 software. Cronbach's α coefficient was used to assess the internal consistency of the set of items within each factor. The values of Cronbach's α coefficient ranged from 0.63 to 0.69. These values are considered as modest and acceptable, because they are above 0.6 (Malhotra, 2010). The hypothesis was tested with multivariate statistical analysis. To test hypothesis A the authors used the method of cluster analysis, especially the method of Ward's hierarchical cluster analysis, namely the

agglomerative clustering (Malhotra 2010). Since the aim was to emphasize the main differences we used square Euclidean distance to measure the distances. After investigating the pre-conditions, the researchers considered different cluster solutions but finally they decided to apply the four cluster solution in case of hedonism and the three cluster solution in case of meat attachment. In order to analyze the connection between cluster membership and gender Chi-square analysis was conducted. In this case the authors took into consideration the expected value and the condition of variables measured on nominal scales.

3.1. Cluster analysis
The simple mathematical means of items belonging to one factor were the bases of cluster analysis.Standardization was not needed since the same type of scales (interval scales) were included in the process of clustering. The correlations between the included variables were checked. Since there was no strong correlation (over 0.9) between eating styles, the original conditions were not influenced.

Relying on the results of the empirical researches it can be stated that people can be grouped into homogeneous groups based on hedonism and attachment to meat highlighting the limitation of the study.The fourth cluster in case of hedonism scale developed by Audebert et al. (2006) is underrepresented in this sample. They are Vegans who refuse to eat meat and have really negative attitude towards meat both red and white. They do not like eating and they are basically females.In the future they should be analyzed in more details, especially in qualitative ways to investigate their motivations and eating habits and the role of meat substitutes. Table 1 is summarizing the results of cluster analysis based on hedonism and meat attachment factors (Dernóczy-Polyák – Keller, 2016, 2018).

Table 1: Clusters based on hedonism and MAQ

	Meat lovers	Omni-vores	White meat lovers	Vegans
Hedonism	50.4%	32.4%	14.4%	2.8%
red meat hedonism	positive	positive	negative	strongly negative
against red meat	strongly negative	negative	neutral	positive
white meat preference	strongly positive	positive	positive	strongly negative
against white meat	strongly negative	negative	negative	positive
hedonism	positive	positive	positive	neutral
gender	males	males, females	females	females
	Meat eaters	Neutrals	Functional meat eaters	
MAQ	32.7%	27.3%	39.9%	
dependent hedonism	positive	neutral	positive	

affinity	negative	neutral	neutral	
hedonic dependency	positive	neutral	neutral	
entitlement	strongly positive	neutral	positive	
gender	males	females	males, females	

Source: Own Research, Note: Distance: Square Euclidean, Ward's Hierarchical Cluster Analysis

In order to make a typology for the different clusters an analysis of the means was necessary. The method of one-way ANOVA was used to check the category means of eating styles in the case of each cluster and significant differences. There are significant differences between the groups in the case of all variables.

The first group of people based on MAQ scale agrees with entitlement dependent hedonism and hedonic dependency. They disagree with affinity. They are meat eaters and represent almost two thirds (32.7%) of the sample. Meat is an important source of food and they think that eating meat is a general and obvious right of people. They think that people were born to eat meat. Considering the hedonism scale meat lovers (50.4%) are the closest to meat eaters. They like eating and eating meat no matter whether it is white or red. They are typically males in both cases.

In the second group (27.3%) there are people who are neutral about meat attachment. They neither agree nor disagree with the statements of dependency, entitlement, affinity and hedonism. They are the neutrals and they are mainly females. In case of Audebert's scale they are the omnivores who are not against meat and accept this type of nutrient but they do not really have strong emotions towards meat. Gender differences cannot be highlighted.

The third group of people are pretty similar to the first group of people, namely to meat eaters. To test the homogeneity of variables Post-Hoc tests (Dunnett T3 and LSD) were conducted. Relying on the results there are statistically significant differences among the variables except affinity. Based on the results it can be stated that there are distinguished groups belonging to a special cluster on the basis of the examined variables (dependency, hedonism, entitlement). The largest difference is in case of hedonic dependency. This group of people does not agree with hedonism that is why they are the functional meat eaters. Gender differences cannot be highlighted. They agree with eating meat however they are not fond of meat eating and they cannot be characterized by hedonism. They represent 39.9% of the sample. They eat to live and not because of pleasure. Considering the other scale developed by French authors white meat lovers stand close to them. They have no special positive attitude towards meat however they have more favorable attitude towards white meat. They consider meat as a source of nutrition but they are not biased. They are typically females.

DISCUSSION

Measuring attitude towards meat is a popular and very current topic in the 21st century, however only a few studies have focused on the segmentation of customers based on meat consumption (Verbecke – Vackier, 2003).

Audebert and his co-authors developed a scale measuring eating, red meat and white meat hedonism. Hungarian people could be grouped into four groups based on hedonism: meat lovers, omnivores, white meat lovers and vegans. Considering meat attachment, the positive bond towards meat consumption (hedonism, affinity, entitlement, dependence) three groups of consumers can be distinguished: meat eaters, neutrals and functional meat eaters. We tried to compare the different homogeneous segments. In the future we plan to analyze the identified segments in a qualitative research to understand consumption patterns and motivations in a more detailed manner. Segmentation and targeting can mean a competitive advantage for business actors. The result of present research could be useful for food industry, especially for meat producers. STP marketing is useful and profitable for companies because they can plan their marketing mix and marketing strategy especially product policy and communication strategy.

Later the socio-demographic (income level, education level, place of living: urban vs. rural area) profile of each segment should be highlighted. The connections with lifestyle variables could be analyzed, too. The affective attitude towards meat especially hedonism, dependency, entitlement and affinity can be a base of segmentation. This can help marketing communication experts understanding attitude formation in case of meat. In case of marketing communication each consumer groups can be targeted in the same way. For example meat lovers and meat eaters are really emotional. Advertising meat and meat products or processed meat with emotional messages focusing on taste, flavor, and adventure is more effective in their case. In case of white meat lovers or functional meat eaters rational

appeals such as the nutrition and the benefit of meat consumption should be emphasized in a campaign.

On the other hand social marketing messages are important since making a more plant-based diet more attractive is important in the developed countries due to sustainable development. Omnivores and neutrals can be a good target group to change their attitude and highlight the health concerns. All in all it can be said that the results of present study can be useful for more stakeholders, namely farmers (stockbreeders), meat producers and retailers how to improve efficiency and develop the right product at the right price at the right place with the right communication.

In the future to verify these quantitative results the authors plan to extend the research and conduct a qualitative research, especially depth interviews or mini-focus groups to understand attitude formation in a more detailed manner. Beyond meat consumption we plan to analyze meat purchasing habits, especially what are the preferred types of stores and understand price consciousness. In the next phase of the research we plan to explore the connections between meat consumption and family life-cycle. Verbecke and Vackier (2004) highlighted that families with small children put more emphasis on quality when they purchase meat because of health concerns. Moreover we think that applying ethnographic research methods could additional contribution to survey method and understanding consumption in a better, a more in-depth way.

The present work is not without limitations. First of all the non-representative sample has to be mentioned. The sample was slightly biased in terms of age. Mainly young adults filled both questionnaires. People living in more developed regions of Hungary (Western and Middle part of the country) were overrepresented in the sample. The generalizability of the present findings to other samples needs to be assessed.

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