

FUNCTIONAL FOODS: A STUDY OF CONSUMER PERCEPTION AND PREFERENCES IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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The role of functional foods is extremely important in the prevention and treatment of such diseases as obesity, diabetes, cancer [1]. In the process of a new food product development and implementation, it is very important to assess consumer perceptions and preferences [2]. The aim of the study was to analyze the consumer perceptions of functional foods with antioxidant and anticancer potential as well as with hypoglycemic effect.

The methodology included two surveys developed in the Google Forms. The respondents were residents of the Republic of Moldova, invited to answer the questions via mailing list, social media announcements and personal invitations. The surveys included the evaluation of respondents profile, the level of awareness of functional foods, the identification of the main factors influencing their purchase, etc. The applied method made it possible to assess the information regarding the consumer and market needs in functional foods.

During the study 179 respondents took part in the survey aimed to the evaluation of consumer perceptions of functional foods with hypoglycemic effects [1] and 150 respondents showed interest in the second survey designed for functional foods with antioxidant and anticancer potential [2]. It was found that the majority of respondents were women (64%, 61%), mainly students undergoing the first cycle of study (70%) and people engaged in work (59%). A part of the respondents (63%, 44%) do not have sufficient information about functional foods and their benefits, however, 88% of the respondents (Survey 1) and 74% of the participants (Survey 2) would like to learn more about functional foods with antioxidant, anticancer and hypoglycemic properties. The 94% of respondents actively supported the idea of functional food products range extension on the territory of the country. The 56% of the respondents were interested in functional dairy products, 55% in sweets and confectionery products, 40% and 50% in functional pasta and bakery products.

Keywords: antioxidants, food with anticancer potential, food with glycemic index.

References:

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Acknowledgments: The authors acknowledge the networking activities carried out within the Global Harmonization Initiative working group on “Consumer Perception” (<https://www.globalharmonization.net/wg-consumer-perception>) and especially “Innovative and Future Food Development” group.