

## STUDY CONCERNING THE BUYING BEHAVIOUR FOR BREAD IN IAȘI TOWN

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### **Abstract**

*Bakery market research is a necessity because the knowledge of specific correlations determine positive effects both for producers who can properly size the activities, and consumers who can purchase their desired products in the quantities required, the price appropriate for their purchasing power and in the preferred range. Demand for bakery in general and bread in particular being inelastic, production companies must move towards diversification of the range and quality growth while focusing on the potential benefits to consumer health. Investigation on buying and consumption behaviour contributes to choosing appropriate strategies leading to market advantages both for producers and consumers but also for the grocery stores.*

*The present study emphasize the factors that influence the buying process for bread in the Iași town area, the trends and the main features both of the grocery stores taken into consideration by the buyer and of the buyer to which the stores' sales strategies adapt. It was elaborated a questionnaire applied on 34 grocery stores from different areas of the town the results indicating that 82.4% of the groceries representatives note that most customers are loyal to a brand of bread, the most frequently purchased being packaged sliced white bread weighing 500 g, the trend being consistent with the national trend, packaged products being more and more frequently purchased.*

**Key words:** consumer needs, bread weight, brand, packaging, buying frequency

### **INTRODUCTION**

Bread is a primary commodity with a high content of nutrients, important for human food and life (Șîrbu Alexandrina, 2009). Regarding the structure of food products weight in the consumption basket (37,3%), the statistics indicate for bread a participation of 15.55% in 2010 and of 14.71% in 2011, situation explained by the fact that bread is a basic product and consumer expenses has to cover first the basic needs even if price is increasing. (Viziteu Șt., 2012).

Chemical composition and energy value of some bakery products offer consumers a clear view of compliance with its preferences (Pop Cecilia et al., 2009). Consumer needs for food products evolves with economic and social development. In the structure of consumer needs, material needs are dominant, and within them the first place is occupied by food consumption needs (Constantin M, Chiran A. et al., 2009).

Is not enough to be considered only the quality of a product or service, it is advantageous to be analyzed also the correlation levels of firm pricing policy, advertising communication quality, way of distributing the product and making it available to the customer. (Trevisani, D. 2007).

The changes food markets have gone through in recent years has been mostly beneficial. It is necessary for the Romanian producers to adapt their offer in order to meet markets' demands including consumer desires in terms of packaging (Toma D., Alecu I. et al., 2011).

Brand may be a subject for strategic or tactical decisions that can express links between the enterprises policy and the consumer demand regarding its attributes (Chiran A. et al., 2007). Average monthly consumption in Iași county indicated in 2007 a consumption for bread and other bakery products of 7.6 kg per capita with a significant difference of 2.1 kg compared to the national average consumption per capita caused mainly by self-consumption (Viziteu Șt., 2012).

#### MATERIAL AND METHOD

The main method utilised was the socio-economic survey using the questionnaire. In order to analyze the buying behaviour for bread it was elaborated a questionnaire for collecting the necessary data. Even if the usual approach was to apply the questionnaire directly on consumers, the sample of the study consisted in 34 grocery stores from different areas of the city (through their representatives) because the best informed about the products purchased by the large number of customers are the sellers or the managers, approach that increase the accuracy and the representativeness of data. The questionnaire was applied on 3-10 september, 2012 in Iași town respecting the specific criteria of segmentation and the data were processed using SPSS software.

#### RESULTS AND DISSCUSIONS

This survey was conducted taken into consideration grocery stores from different areas in order to ensure accuracy of data (fig. 1).

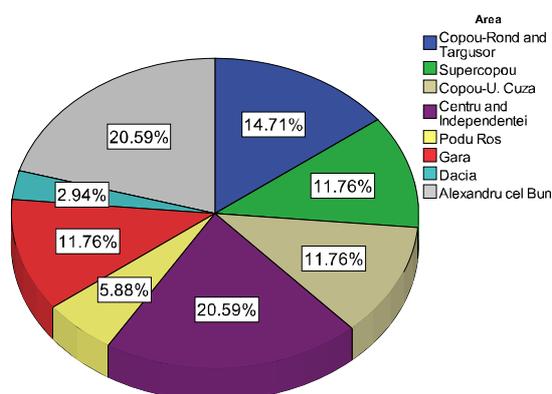


Fig. 1 Zonal spread of grocery stores concerned

Within the sample, the most of the stores had two (47,08%) or four (26,47%) employees, study aiming at small or medium stores excepting specialty stores (fig. 2).

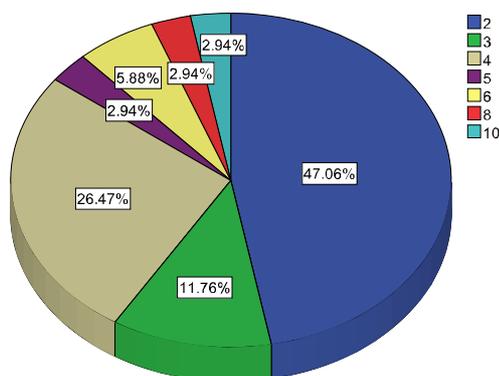


Fig. 2 Number of employees for the economic entities taken into consideration

Within the people (representing the grocery stores) who completed the questionnaire 31 (91.2%) were sellers and 3 persons (representing 8.8%) were managers of the stores. The main suppliers of bakery products for the stores are also the most important producers in Iasi county. Thus, for 41.2% of the stores bread and other bakery products are distributed by SC PANIFCOM SRL Iași, for 26.5% of them by SC VEL PITAR SA Iași and for 20.6% of the units included in the study by SC COMPAN S.A. Iași.

The type of bread most frequently purchased is white bread (for 55.88% of the economic units representatives), this type being present in the assortment range of every store. From this wide assortment the less was bought graham bread (fig. 3).

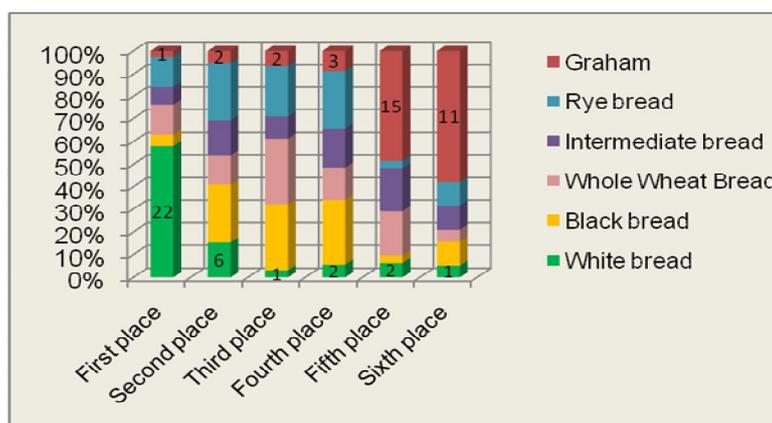


Fig. 3 The place occupied by different types of bread into stores' sales

Depending on the product presentation, the most frequently purchased was packaged sliced bread (50% of respondents) followed by unpackaged bread (35.3%) and by the packaged unsliced bread (14,71%) (fig. 4).

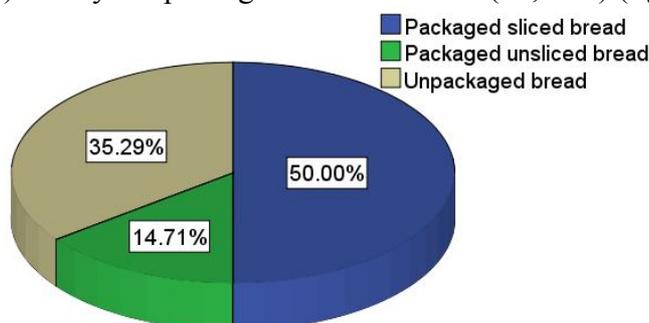


Fig. 4 Type of bread most frequently purchased related to the products presentation

The study, analyzing the grocery representatives perception shows that the weight that is purchased bread most commonly is 500 g for 18 business units (52.9% of total) (fig. 5).

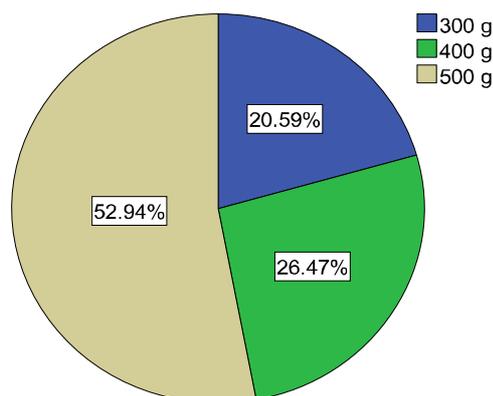


Figure 5 Weight the bread is bought most frequently

In 8 stores (23.5%) covered by the study can be found bread with seeds and in 3 (8.8%) bread without salt.

Motivation for buying bread was identified by 67.65% of respondents as the consumer need, product quality being identified by 44.12% of them. Main determinants of consumption pattern for bread were set to be the necessity (for 55.88% of respondents) and household income (by 52.94% of respondents). According to 35.29% of stores representatives visual identification of the products is very important in the buying process, while 20.59% note that this is less important. In appreciation of 44.1% of respondents the average quantity purchased by a person who is buying is two loaves and for 41.2% is one loaf (fig. 6).

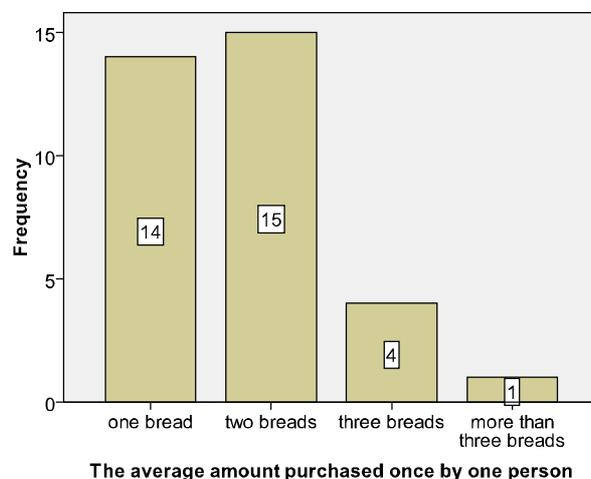


Fig. 6 The average amount purchased once by a person

According to the study results, most buyers buy bread once a day for 27 stores and once at two days for five stores included in the study. A share of 50% of the respondents consider that the average amount spent for bread to one purchase by a person is between 2 and 4 lei while 32.4% estimates that it is between 4 and 6 lei (tab. 1).

Table 1

The amount spent -lei-	Frequency	%	% cumulative
<2 lei	3	8,8	8,8
2-4 lei	17	50,0	58,8
4-6 lei	11	32,4	91,2
>6 lei	3	8,8	100,0
Total	34	100,0	-

Staff (sellers) attitude in the purchasing process is considered very important by 79.41% of respondents and quite important by 11.76% of them. Any promotional activities carried out within the store in liaison with the main supplier are considered less important or unimportant by 64.70% of respondents. A percentage of 91.2% of the stores have a stand set up exclusively for bakery products, products having a good visibility for the buyer and 70.6% of the stores have adequate storage capacity to allow storage of bread under the conditions specified by the manufacturer in order to ensure optimal quality for the consumer.

According to 47.06% of grocery stores representatives, products diversity is very important in the buying process(fig. 7).

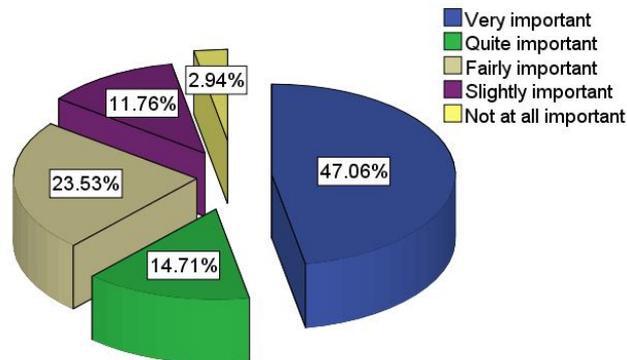


Fig. 7 The importance of products diversity in the buying process

A percent of 32.32% of stores representatives (11) note that the importance the buyer pays to the interior ambience is high (fig. 8).

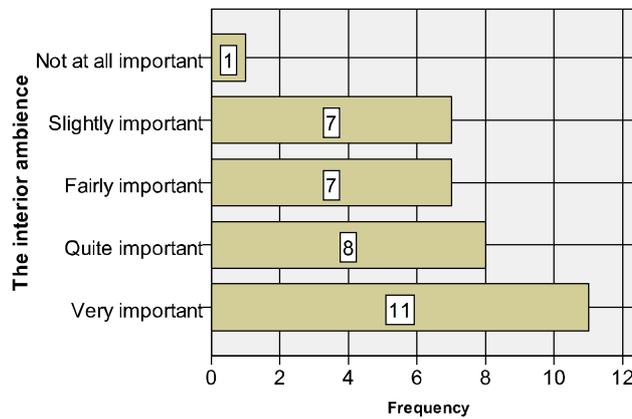


Fig. 8 The importance the buyer pays to the store's interior ambience in the buying process

The main criteria of customers in buying bread are particularly important in structuring the offer. According to 94.11% of the stores representatives, price is very important or quite important (fig. 9).

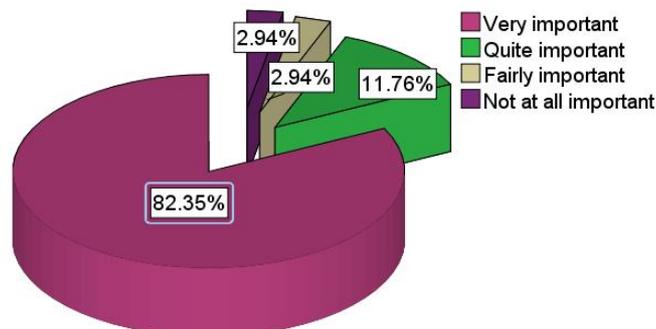


Fig. 9 The importance the buyer pays to the price in the buying process

Regarding the bread freshness, in the the buying process 91.18% of the respondents stated that it is very important and 8.8% that is quite important, with no appreciation below this level.

Making a correlation between the weight the bread is most frequent purchased and bread type most frequent purchased it was revealed that the most frequently purchased is packaged sliced breads of 500 g (29.41% of responses) (fig. 10).

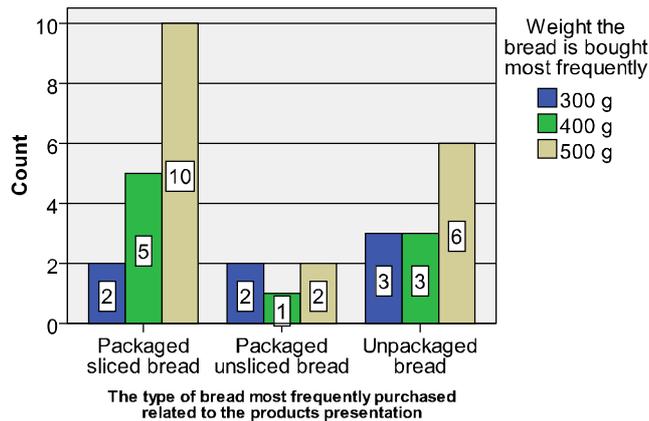


Fig. 10 Correlation between the weight bread is the most frequent purchased and bread type most frequent purchased

Within the respondents who indicated that visual identity is very important products only 32.35% had specified that the store has a stand set up exclusively for bakery products(fig. 11).

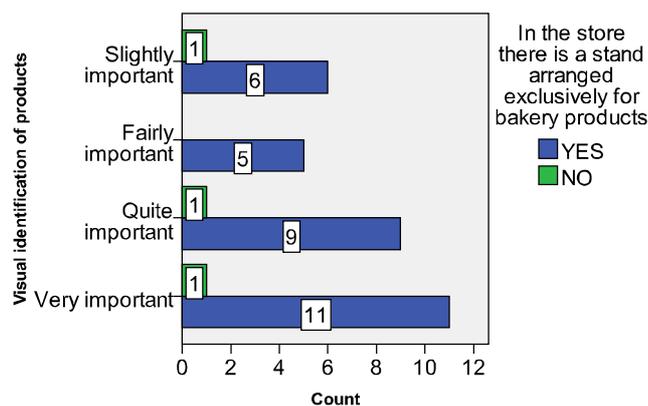


Fig. 11 Correlation between the importance of visual identification and the existence of a stand arranged exclusively for bakery products

In the study 85.3% of respondents stated that bread packages contain complete information and 23.5% mentioned that besides the products themselves, in the store, there are advertising items (posters, banners etc.).

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Understanding buying behavior for bread is essential for producers and grocery stores in order to respond to market requirements and to ensure consumer satisfaction.

2. The buying behaviour for bread in Iași town is influenced mainly by the need for consumption, price, visual contact with the product, family perceptions and income but also by the buyer's culture.

3. The most frequently purchased, by product presentation, was packaged sliced bread (50% of respondents) followed by unpackaged bread (35.3%) and by the packaged unsliced bread (14,71%).

4. For 32.32% of stores representatives the importance that buyer pays to the interior ambience of the store is high. The staff attitude in the buying process is considered very important by 79.41% of respondents and quite important by 11.76% of them.

5. The study indicated that 82.4% of grocery representatives noted that most customers are loyal to a brand bakery products, 91.2% of stores having a stand set up exclusively for bakery products.

6. In order to ensure customers satisfaction enterprises must adapt their sales strategies to new trends reagarding health, to continuously diversify their product range and to offer confidence by a complete information.

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