

BOOK REVIEWS

Wansink, B.
Marketing Nutrition: Soy, Functional foods, Biotechnology and Obesity Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005, 209 pages.

Marketing food and nutrition means attempting to change attitudes and habits of food consumption that are inherited in a culture and shaped by experience, conservative tendencies and beliefs. Food is more than a collection of ingredients that provide nutritional needs; it symbolizes values and is associated with social norms, culture and family values. It is therefore no wonder that choices about what to serve to one's family are complex and involve, in addition to economic considerations, emotions and norms that are sometime in conflict with nutrition. The complexity of changing nutritional habits was demonstrated in a recent *NY Times* (2006) article, which stated that the revenue of McDonald's increased by 33 percent between 2003 and 2006, and that most of the increase came from the inexpensive but less healthy menu items, in spite of McDonald's massive campaign to encourage customers to choose more of the healthy foods.

A recent book by Brian Wansink (2005) addresses the domain of food marketing, including soy products, nutritious foods and genetically modified foods (GMF). The objectives of this unique book are to enhance and refine decision makers' and researchers' understanding of the marketing of nutrition. The way the book addresses these issues is by integrating theory with illustrative, detailed business case studies.

The book is divided into five parts. The first part, chapters 1–3, focuses on the role of information in shaping food consumption. This part first demonstrates that there is a difference between nutritional knowledge and consumption, and shows that certain types of knowledge are more important than others in changing habits. Chapter 1 is about nutritional knowledge. This chapter demonstrates that consumers differ in their nutritional knowledge. While some consumers lack knowledge about functional foods, others know about some attributes, while yet others know about health benefits but not about other benefits, such as taste. This implies, according to the author, that most consumers do not have sufficient information to make health-promoting decisions.

Chapter 2 thoroughly describes the American campaign during World War II aimed at changing the demand for cattle organs. This is an inspiring business case, whose lessons can be applied to many current nutritional educational programs. The third chapter explores the roots of the myth that “if it sounds good it tastes good”. In this chapter the author shows that the perception of taste is affected by brands and labels. Labeling a dish in the cafeteria with a name that implied that it is “old fashion style” or “home cooking style” raised the score responders gave to the taste attribute.

The second part of the book, chapters 4–6, is about segmentation and targeting. Accepting the idea that consumers are heterogeneous helps one recognize that the key to designing a successful marketing program is to first identify the population segments that will be the target markets. Nutrition marketing programs would be most effective if they were tailored to each individual; since this is not practical, however, educators, marketers, brand managers and dietitians are referred to the techniques of segmentation and targeting. Segmentation is a technique that clusters individuals according to an important common characteristic. For example, if income is the most important variable, then the population is grouped according to income; if income, education and cultural background are all important factors, then all three factors are used for segmentation.

Targeting is selecting the segment(s) that will yield the most from the money invested in a marketing program and suit the company's capabilities and strategy. Chapter 3 shows that taste is subjective and it is influenced by perception and labeling. Chapter 4 shows how to profile consumers, chapter 5 describes the use of mental maps and chapter 6 is about targeting gatekeepers in the family. The techniques of part 2 are illustrated by a business case in which attitude, knowledge and consumption of soy products are used to show how profiling and building mental maps could improve the efficiency of marketing efforts.

The third part addresses four major nutritional challenges that are important to people in developed countries: obesity, increasing the proportion of fruits and vegetables in the diet, overcoming the resistance to genetically modified foods and handling food crises. This part analyzes three major public campaigns: de-marketing obesity (chapter 7), increasing the consumption of fruits and vegetables, the five-a-day program (chapter 8), and biotechnology (chapter 9). The last chapter of this part of the book, chapter 10, analyses consumers' responses to food crises.

Part 4 focuses on the role of information on changing eating habits and the optimization of information, that is, finding out how much is needed to achieve the greatest impact. Chapters 11 and 12 analyze the role of labels in communicating nutritional values and demonstrate how labels can be made more

persuasive. Chapter 11 explores the importance of FDA claims regarding food safety, and suggests ways of improving such claims in the future. Chapter 12 shows that different designs of labels affect their impact on consumers.

Part 5, which is the final part of this book, expands the micro-level knowledge imparted in the first four parts into a macro-level analysis, discussing how to market nutrition to entire countries or cultures. Chapter 13 shows that segmentation, which is based on cultural and perception of food (either utilitarian or hedonistic), may improve the design of marketing efforts in lunching unfamiliar foods outside the U.S. Chapter 14 concludes with implications for managers.

Though marketing of fresh, functional and genetically modified foods is of major importance, it has not received much attention in the marketing literature. This book contributes important insights to this under-researched area, helping the reader to better understand why so many educational programs aimed at changing nutrition habits have failed. Failures are associated with lack of information, neglecting or misunderstanding new information, wrong perceptions, and conservatism. Failures could be avoided if marketers better understood their consumers and planned their marketing programs more carefully, taking into account the reason for the consumers' resistance to changes in their nutritional habits.

Using several case studies of changes in the consumption of organ meats and soy products, as well as dieting, the book demonstrates that in order to change habits the barriers to the consumption of certain foods have to be removed. Some barriers are based on social norms, such as beliefs that eating certain foods is a signal of poverty or of belonging to an undesirable social class, while others are based on lack of knowledge how to handle or cook the food and what it would taste like. Two other lessons imparted by the book are that successful changes are made in small steps and that women are the gatekeepers for most of the foods and certainly the decision makers in the household with regard to the choices of food and meals. The book demonstrates that a lack of knowledge of how to market food and nutrition, in addition to the neglect of targeting and segmentation, account for the failure to induce non-Asians to adopt soy foods, the lack of acceptance of genetically modified foods (GMF), the insignificant changes in the habits of eating vegetables despite the "five-a-day" program, and the de-marketing of obesity.

The variety of evidence, business cases, and examples presented in the book should help the reader understand the differences between marketing food and other frequently purchased products. Managers in the food industry and policy makers would benefit from adopting the methodology for changing food consumption. The first step is to recognize the aspects of benefit. The second

step is to change the qualities of the desired foods to create a better match between these aspects and consumers' preferences. The third step is then to educate consumers. Policy makers, teachers and researchers could use their new understanding of why so many nutritional educational campaigns have failed and create better campaigns. The ideas presented in the book would make it easier to de-market obesity and encourage the consumption of genetically modified food, which has suffered from a series of marketing failures.

The book would probably be appropriate as a supplementary textbook in agribusiness classes and courses in food marketing for both graduate and undergraduate students.

References

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<http://www.nytimes.com/auth/login?URI=http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/19/business/19mcdonalds.html>.
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Motzafi-Haller, P. (ed.)
***Women in Agriculture in the Middle East* Aldershot,**
England: Ashgate Publishing, 2005, 177 pages.

In her introduction to this volume Pnina Motzafi-Haller says that “a lot of work had to be done to make the structure and style of the reports comparable”. She has certainly managed to achieve this goal, though not completely. Significantly, the only chapter that does not conform is in fact, her own contribution that deals with Israel. The chapter is only partly concerned with the main theme of the book that, as the title suggests, focuses on agriculture. In the concluding chapter the editor apologizes for this exception. She notes that Israel is indeed different from its neighbors. She stresses that unlike Jordan, Palestine and Egypt, the other three “partners” (the apolitical term she prefers to use), Israel is not part of the developing world. It has an agricultural sector, which employs only about 2.5 percent of its labor force.

Her chapter includes, therefore, a discussion of the wider issues related to the status of women. It differs from the others, however, also in other respects. It is based on an “expanded and updated” version of a previously published article (in the *Journal of Rural Cooperation*, 2001) rather than on original field research specially designed for the present volume.

The four essays are the result of a Danish-sponsored and funded project, that focused on the four “partners”, whose purpose was to focus on women who are employed in agriculture in Middle Eastern countries, but it represents, according to Motzafi-Haller, only a small part of the project’s findings. The unsettled political conditions throughout most of the research period, interfered with carrying out the study and especially with the editorial work. These difficulties are quite apparent, as will be illustrated in the following paragraphs.

The first of the regional chapters, authored by Laith Al-Rousan, focuses on Jordan. As the other two chapters that deal with Arab regions, this chapter starts by a survey of the political administration and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have some bearing on the role of women in the rural sector. It then goes on to discuss rural women and their various roles in farming and related activities. The problem of illiteracy (as much as 91% of the rural Jordan women who have ten or more children), is one that is repeatedly mentioned in the other chapters that deal with the Arab lands (Palestine and Egypt). The agricultural

tasks that are assigned to women are fairly similar in all the three lands. They include weeding, planting, and maintaining the fields, the gardens, and olive groves or fruit plantations. In all three areas the women are also engaged in some commercial activities, which often take the form of peddling, as well as preparing produce for sale. They also share the main reason for the growing involvement of women in farming: The need to care for the land and to take charge of the household while their husbands are absent. Women are engaged in agriculture.

While the purpose of the book is to focus on the need to empower women, it should also consider some of the root causes of the gender problems, particularly those associated with spatial mobility that are not necessarily related to cultural or legal constraints. Rural women have numerous household chores that must be carried out inside the home or very close to it. Their mobility is, therefore, restricted to places within walking distance to the house. Their husbands are not as restricted in their mobility, and can afford long distance travel. The most visible form of this problem is in art works depicting women as holding a hoe in their hands and infants on their backs. This difference in their migration accounts for the typical division of labor that is common in rural areas, which is evident in the attachment of their agricultural activity to their immediate surrounding even where the males are not engaged in outside employment. The only reference to this subject that I have encountered is found in Zeinab El-Tobshy's chapter where she lists the "inadequate infrastructure and support services" among the many constraints facing women (Table 5.13, p.132).

While most of the problems are shared by the three Arab 'partners' there are, obviously, also some specific characteristics that set them apart. The Palestinian chapter, authored by Rema Hammami, starts with a lengthy discussion of the difficulties of overcoming the restrictions imposed by Israel on free mobility and on the hardships that farmers experience as a result of land alienations and settlers' harassments. This includes a lengthy account of massive uprooting of olive trees and other damages to crops, partly as a result of spoilage associated with road blocks and the security fences erected by the Israeli military (Box on p. 50 and Table 3.2 on p.51). Not all of this discussion is directly related to the agricultural role of the rural women, but the hardships resulting with the unstable political conditions are clearly of great importance to the Palestinians. It is obvious, in any case, that the editor's efforts to avoid politically charged subjects has been only partly achieved.

The Egyptian account, by Zeinab El-Tobshy, is even more special. The vital dependence on water resources is clearly in evidence. Agriculture is synonymous with irrigation, and the discussion of gender focuses on activities associated with access to water resources and with resource management systems. In addition to

the various official and non-official institutions that control land and water allocation and its use, we learn that cooperatives and credit associations have an important role to play in helping women overcome the many problems of managing their farms and gardens, but no sufficient details on their character is provided. Even though the government is supportive, and there is official recognition of the needs of the farmers, the specific needs of the women, who are the major agricultural labor force, has hardly been considered, and their important contribution is not properly remunerated or even recognized by the official system. Furthermore, gender-related legislation is usually ignored even if it is formally published. We are informed that despite the fact that women are in full charge of farm operations and management the 'absentee husband' may still be, though not always is, the ultimate decision maker, while the wife's role is often restricted to that of 'advisor'.

El-Tobsey's discussion of the above subjects is mostly derived from the last section of her chapter that presents several detailed case studies. The cases effectively illustrate the conditions under which the women-farmers work. The cases are not based, however, on the author's own field study. They are adopted, rather, from findings of studies conducted by other researchers, but this does not diminish their value for comprehending the book's themes.

The existence of agricultural cooperatives is mentioned also in the discussion of the gender issues in the Palestinian context. However, the author, Rema Hammani, seems to have a low opinion about the prospect of having women-only cooperatives, even though such cooperatives do not exist in the Palestinian Authority areas. The involvement of women farmers in the agricultural cooperatives or in agricultural training colleges is poor. In fact, only two women holding low positions were encountered in them. On p.73 we are told, however, that "myriad small, cooperatively run" women "enterprises" are in existence. These businesses demonstrate that women have potential for high contribution to the economy. Social and cultural norms, low market prices for the food crops they grow, and low access to capital, technology and know how impede them from the using their full capabilities. As in the Egyptian case, they are also impeded by insufficient official support.

Laith Al-Rousan refers to cooperatives in a somewhat similar context. Like Rema Hammani, he has a low regard for their impact on women farmers, rating them among the "least important sources of information for rural women" (p.35). This echoes also Hammami's treatment of know how as a factor equivalent to capital and technology in importance. Information and know how should be given, probably, even greater importance, because they pre-condition the availability of the others. They are, in fact, the most vital tool for any

empowerment of women. What is important in this respect is to make a clear distinction between the type of intellectual facilities, starting with literacy, and various other forms of 'education' that may harm, rather than benefit people. Women must be equipped with forms of information that can teach them to learn how to judge information and how to make proper use of it in order to break the vicious cycle of poverty.

This brings us back to the introduction where Pnina Motzafi-Haller expresses her frustration with the Butheina Cheriet anti-paternalism and her negative views about development and progress. These frustrations are quite understandable, in view of her discussion of her anthropological approach, that is eloquently presented prior to her reference to Cheriet's opinions. This section of the book is, in my opinion, its best part. It lays the necessary foundation for the whole volume, giving it a clear and vital perspective.

Motzafi-Haller's approach is an antithesis to the anti-progress stand of Cheriet, whose views are certainly not exceptional among many intellectuals and academics in the Middle East countries. There is no doubt about the need to take into account indigenous knowledge and to cater to needy people by using local low-cost tools to overcome inadequate access to credit and other constrictions, but it is improper to ask the poor to be satisfied with their condition. All human beings should be entitled to strive for progress that leads to a better future. Without proper access to updated communication and information facilities, women and men alike are widening the already large gap between rich and poor and between haves and have-nots, thus increasing the risk of the use of violence to bridge the gap.

Unfortunately, the three chapters suffer from some shortcomings. The most visible ones are those that accompany the tables or discuss their content. Several tables are over-loaded with details and lack exact definitions or have misleading titles and key definitions. An example is Table 5.7 (p.124) whose title says that it deals with life expectancy "at birth" while the content suggests that it refers to age specific life expectancies. Other tables in the same chapter have confused columns (Table 5.2); missing terms (e.g. in Table 5.3 and 5.4: what kind of 'gaps?'), or omit mention of the sources of the data. The authors seem to assume that the readers are sufficiently intelligent to guess what the title or the content is all about. Table 3.9 (p. 65) contains problems of a similar nature. But problems of this nature also occur in the accompanying textual explanations. At the bottom of page 122, for example, the term 'rate' and 'ratio' refer to the same kind of data.

Unclear language often makes it hard to follow the exact meaning. Hammami's discussion of the Palestinian case has cumbersome language, which is occasionally difficult to comprehend. There are, in addition, some

geographical errors. Khan Younis, mentioned on the bottom of page 66, is said to be in Middle Gaza, while its correct location is in southern Gaza. Unclear and even misleading use of terms is also found in the chapter written by Motzafi-Haller. On p.103 her wording can be understood to confuse the “central committee that runs the moshav” with “Agudat Hamoshav”, while the latter term refers to the Moshav cooperative association itself, not to the committee that runs it. Only in the concluding chapter does she use this term correctly. In both places she insists that women have no right to vote. The correct statement should be that the voting rights are based on household units rather than on persons. A woman who holds a position of household head does have voting rights, but this is clearly a rather rare condition.

The writers tend to provide lists of recommendations. This is one of the editor’s directives, but I believe that such lists are of little use if no priorities are stated or where no account is taken of the potential means and costs that are available for their implementation. A case in point is the long list (a total of 19 items) at the end of Al-Rousan’s chapter on Jordan (p.42–43). A better way of concluding the discussion would be a shorter list that summarizes the underlining constraints and their cause.

Despite these shortcomings, Pnina Motzafi-Haller and her three colleagues deserve to be congratulated on this effort to add a pioneering work on gender in the Middle East. This is a worthwhile addition, which is long over-due. There is certainly room for more information of this subject. The Editor promises to publish additional material that is based on her data. We expect her to fulfill this promise shortly.

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