



SEGMENTATION OF CONSUMING MARKETS OF BEEF

Dario de Oliveira Lima Filho¹

Renato Luiz Sproesser²

Susana Carla Farias Pereira³

Amilton Luiz Novaes⁴

Jeovan de Carvalho Figueiredo⁵

ABSTRACT

One of the tasks most difficult in the planning of marketing has been the election of the market-target. Being thus, the market segmentation reveals of great importance. The objective of this study is to discuss a market segmentation model of meat consumers. For in such a way, a bibliographical research was conducted, adopting two basic conditions: (a) the proposals of segmentation of used consuming markets in excellent scientific studies can indicate insights for the presented theoretical construction; and (b) the excellent variable in the process of purchase of the consumers must be considered in the quarrel proposal. The following excellent variable had been identified, considering the purchase process: culture, motivation, perception, health, nutritional value, pecuniary acceptability, beliefs, intention, variable, attitude, style of life and preparation of the food. This allowed the identification of four segments of consumers: Guided by Meat Protein, Guided by Health, Indifferent and Sporadic. It is concluded, therefore, the product meat can not be considered as commodity, it exists other factors, beyond the price, that have great influence on the behavior of purchase of the consumer.

Key Words: segmentation, meat, Consumer behavior

BACKGROUND

Many researches have highlighted the relevance of market segmentation for the success of any organization (Richers & Lima, 1991; Megido & Xavier, 1993). Indeed, market segmentation as a component of a management strategy, may provide the necessary elements to guide companies in their way to conquer and establish their competitive positions in consumers' markets.

Segmentation can be done by the identification of the great groups (usually quite homogeneous when some specific variables are considered) that are willing to make any kind of effort to buy the product. The segmentation variables for the consumer markets are related to geographics, demographics, psychographics and behavioral dimensions. The analysis of these variables allows the elaboration of an "abstract and general description" of wide segments of consumers accurate enough to help the companies to choose their target markets. The effort to identify the segments of bovine meat consumer proposed in this study is justified for the absence of studies that approach this subject. Some studies have been developed based on the brand positioning in the meat market (Ferreira & Barcellos, 2001; Barcellos & Callegaro, 2002). However, this

¹ Professor Doutor do Programa de Pós Graduação em Agronegócio - PPAgro Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS) (e-mail: dolima@nin.ufms.br)

² Professor Doutor do Programa de Pós Graduação em Agronegócio - PPAgro Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS) (e-mail: drls@nin.ufms.br)

³ Professora da Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FVG/SP) (e-mail: SFPereira@fgvsp.br)

⁴ Mestrando do Programa de Pós Graduação em Agronegócio - PPAgro Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS) (e-mail: amiltonnovaes@gmail.com)

⁵ Doutorando do Programa de Pós Graduação em Administração Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV/SP) (e-mail: figueiredojeovan@yahoo.com.br)

study assumes the premise that, when determining the set of own characters of the bovine meat group of consumers, more suitable marketing strategies can be delineated and the consumers' desires will be reached in a more complete way.

Linsen (1984) shows the result of two surveys conducted in the USA from where a proposal for meat consumers' segmentation may be inferred (not specifically bovine). This proposal is not based on consumers' characteristics but in the determinant variables of their behavior. In this way a discussion on the consumer's bias towards product price or benefit/damage to his health can be established. The five segments identified are: (a) Meat Lovers, who believe that meat should be included in a main meal; (b) Creative Cooks, those who enjoy the time spent to prepare the meat, but they also prepare another kind of food; (c) Price Driven, spite of having a positive attitude for consuming meat in their meal, they are mainly driven by price; (d) Active Lifestyle, those who usually have their meals out of house and show a weak inclination to meat consumption; and (e) Health-Oriented, those who are highly concerned to health matters and the disadvantages/benefits that food consumption can cause.

Based on the attitudes of a sample of 3000 individuals, Becker, Benner & Glitsch (1998) have used clusters analysis to determine wide groups of meat consumers (not specifically bovine). The study was conducted in Germany, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom. The analysis resulted in three great groups: (a) Conventional Meat Consumers, those who give great importance to meat, mainly because of its nutritious values, besides they have a slightly superior concern than the other groups as referred to animal health; (b) Price Oriented Meat Consumers, give a significant importance to the price of the meat, leaving for second the other attributes that are also important for them, as meat nutritious value; and (c) Skeptical Meat Consumers, those who do not firmly believe in the advertised meat nutritious value and are not driven by price, being basically interested in the animal origin.

Storer, Soutar and Hawkins (1998) propose the use of eight segments to describe the consuming meat market (not specifically bovine): (a) Light Meat Eaters; (b) Moderate Meat Eaters; (c) Beef Eaters; (d) White Meat Eaters; (e) Lamb Eaters; (f) Chicken Eaters; (g) Heavy Meat Eaters; and (h) Mutton Eaters. The main component of this classification is the division of meat consumers in two groups: those who eat bovine meat and those who eat another kind of meat.

Goodson et al. (2002) conducted a study that specifically approaches the bovine meat consumer's satisfaction. They assume the existence of three segments of beef consumers: (a) Beef Loyals, defined as those consumers that eat a reasonable amount of all types of beef, and are not concerned with health or dietary subjects, although they have a positive attitude toward the consumption of chicken meat; (b) Budget Rotators, those who eat both beef and chicken meat and focus on budget restriction (once they possess larger homes and smaller education levels than those in the other segments); and (c) Variety Rotators, those who eat a significant amount of several types of meat. In the latter segment, consumers present an equally positive perception toward the bovine meat and chicken meat. They are also older and have higher education level than the others.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study is to discuss a market segmentation model of meat consumers.

METHOD

It was made a thorough revision of empiric and theoretical works aiming to determine the essential elements and the most relevant results of the analyzed studies. The research sources were the main international journals on the consumer's food products behavior. As it contains

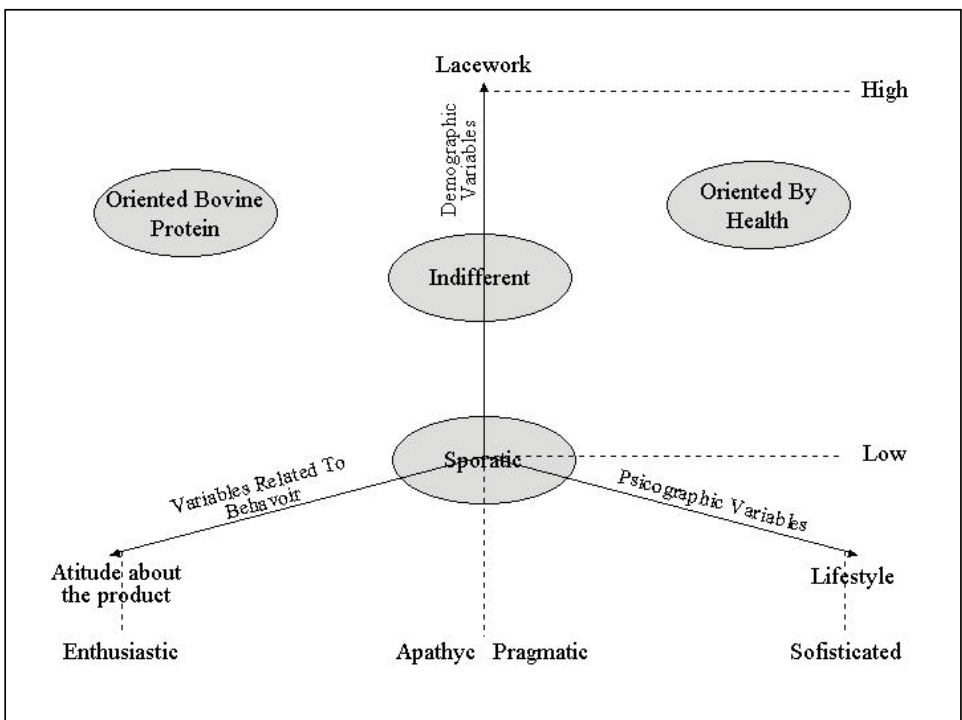


strongly descriptive elements and adopts an inductive approach on the data analysis, the exploratory characteristic of this research is assumed (Godoy, 1995).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The studies that present suggestions for the meat consumers markets segmentation have a common characteristic that is the importance given to the consumers’ answer, in terms of benefits and attitudes related to the product. This result allows to formulating an outline (Figure 1) that can be useful in the conduction of studies focused on the identification of market segments in Brazil and in another countries around the world. It was chosen the most important variables in the groups of the demographic variables, related to behavior and psychographics, to develop the profile of the identified segments. Each axis represents a group of the considered variables. In each group the most important variable is defined by this theoretical approach.

It is attributed to the income variable the role of central axis in this outline. Unlike the others countries where the studies were developed, a great part of the Brazilian consumers do not simply limit the buying of meat because of budget restrictions. When the confront between the variable “ Income” with the variable “ Attitude related to the Product “ is established, it is possible to obtain a more precise picture when the intensity of the Brazilian consumers desire is verified when they make some sorts of sacrifice to obtain his favorite product and when they can really pay to buy the product. By adding another axis in this outline, it is assumed that the “ lifestyle “ is also important to determine the consumers segments of meat. This variable can still be substituted by other psychographic variable that is considered more important for the Brazilian scenery, which has as a function, in the presented outline, the establishment of the relationship of the psychographics variables in the markets segmentation analysis and to mold a less generic profile of the segments in the meat consumers market.



Font: the authors.

Figure 1 – The segments of consumers of bovine meat.

Therefore, this study suggests the existence of four segments of meat consumers: (a) Guided by Meat Protein: the consumers of this segment really appreciate the bovine meat. They buy and eat the product when they want, and they present a medium or high lifestyle. The variable lifestyle is not very significant for the analysis of this segment, because there is a diversity of lifestyles in this group of customers; (b) Guided by Health: they essentially search for white meat and healthy food. They have medium or high purchasing power, they are always attentive to subjects related to the health and they ingest food supposedly free from fat and other elements considered bad. They present a tendency of relegating the bovine meat to a second plan, or simply not to buy it. (c) Indifferent: they are high income consumers, they do not simply care about bovine meat in a bigger or smaller degree than the other sorts of meats. They have a low commitment level with the product and consume other types of meats; and (d) Sporadic: they buy and consume the product when the budget allows them to do so. They do not present a high involvement level with the product, since they do not make regular meals with the same. They have low education level and larger families than the other segments

CONCLUSION

The theoretical development presented has the objective of providing more subsidies for researchers and students in the elaboration of studies about meat consumers' behavior. However, it suggests that empiric researches are needed to corroborate the results presented here. The empiric validation, in spite of the limitations that can emerge in terms of composition of the sample, geographical locus and moment of the collection of the data, can supply important contributions for the progress of the existent knowledge in the consumer's of bovine meat behavior in Brazil.

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