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Purchasing behaviours of Generation Z in the traditional food market – the impact of selected sociodemographic characteristics[1]

Zachowania nabywcze pokolenia Z na rynku żywności tradycyjnej – wpływ wybranych cech socjodemograficznych

Abstract

The traditional food market is a promising market and its position is expected to grow over a few years to come. Traditional food is positively perceived by consumers, mainly due to its quality characteristics. A review of the literature clearly shows that belonging to a particular generation (X, Y or Z) determines, among other things, the shopping approach, the way of shopping. Consumers from Generation Z declare purchasing traditional food, but their knowledge of it is superficial. The aim of the study was to identify the sociodemographic characteristics of purchasing behaviours of Generation Z representatives in the traditional food market. A diagnostic survey was conducted among 347 representatives of Generation Z. The indirect interview technique with authors' own online survey questionnaire (CAWI) was applied. The findings of the research provided detailed information based on which the importance and influence of selected sociodemographic characteristics on the purchasing behaviours of Generation Z representatives were established. Gender, place of residence and declared lifestyle differentiated the respondents' food choices. Gender had a major influence on food choice behaviour. On the other hand, taste of the product was the most significant food choice factor. The importance of health, environmental or economic values concerning this product category should be the object of educational and promotional activities.

Keywords

purchasing determinants, traditional food products, sustainable product, purchasing decision, Generation Z, consumer behaviour

Streszczenie

Rynek żywności tradycyjnej jest obiecującym rynkiem i oczekuje się, że w ciągu kilku lat jego pozycja będzie rosnąć. Żywność tradycyjna jest pozytywnie postrzegana przez konsumentów głównie ze względu na jej cechy jakościowe. Dokonany przegląd literatury wskazuje, że przynależność do konkretnego pokolenia X, Y, Z warunkuje m.in. podejście zakupowe, sposób dokonywania zakupów. Konsumenci pokolenia Z deklarują nabywanie tej kategorii żywności, jednak wiedza o niej jest powierzchowna. Celem opracowania było rozpoznanie socjodemograficznych uwarunkowań zachowań nabywczych przedstawicieli pokolenia Z na rynku żywności tradycyjnej. Przeprowadzono sondaż diagnostyczny wśród 347 przedstawicieli pokolenia Z. Zastosowano technikę wywiadów pośrednich z wykorzystaniem autorskiego kwestionariusza ankiety internetowej (CAWI). Wyniki badań dostarczyły szczegółowych informacji, na podstawie których ustalono znaczenie i wpływ wybranych cech socjodemograficznych na zachowania nabywcze przedstawicieli pokolenia Z. Płeć, miejsce zamieszkania oraz deklarowany styl życia różnicowały czynniki wyboru tej kategorii żywności. Największy wpływ na zróżnicowanie czynników wyboru, którymi kierowali się młodzi respondenci, miała płeć. Natomiast najistotniejszym czynnikiem wyboru był smak produktu. Znaczenie zarówno walorów zdrowotnych, jak i środowiskowych czy gospodarczych w odniesieniu do tej kategorii produktowej powinno być przedmiotem działań edukacyjnych i promocyjnych.

Słowa kluczowe

determinanty zakupowe, tradycyjny produkt żywnościowy, zrównoważony produkt, decyzja zakupowa, pokolenie Z, zachowania nabywców

JEL: D12, D19, D91

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Introduction

In today's dynamic market world, understanding consumer purchasing behaviour is crucial to the success of food businesses. One of the most interesting consumer segments with a significant impact on the food market is Generation Z, which comprises people born between 1995 and 2010 (Williams & Page, 2011). This group of consumers, having grown up in an era of the Internet, social media and a variety of choices, exhibits unique preferences and purchasing behaviours. They are a challenge for food producers since they behave differently from earlier generations, which leads to changes in consumer behaviour (Schlossberg, 2016). Generation Z people are regarded as the most impatient, individualistic, self-directed, demanding and materialistic generation to date (Agarwal & Vaghela, 2018). They are also regarded as the most environmentally friendly consumers when compared to prior generations (Williams & Page, 2011) and they are willing to pay more for organic products (Fromm & Read, 2018). Healthy eating habits are practised by Generation Z consumers and their purchasing decisions are tied to health and environmental aspects (Su et al., 2019). Traditional food products may be the answer to their preferences.

Traditional food products (TFP) are part of most nations' heritage and culture (Romagnoli, 2021, Lin et al., 2021). Existing regulations on traditional foods in the European Union clarify the criteria for the award of quality labels and the scope of their protection on the Community food market (Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012). However, the term "traditional food" is not protected and is sometimes interpreted differently. To recognize food products as traditional, their production process must take place in a defined area, which can be national, regional or local. It must be authentic in terms of the recipe, the origin of raw material and the entire production process. A traditional food product must have been on the market for at least 50 years and must be a part of the gastronomic heritage (Gellynck & Kühne, 2010). These products are simple to prepare, passed down from generation to generation and are renowned for their sensory and nutritional properties (Guerrero et al., 2009). Consumers associate traditional foods with products that were commonly consumed in the past and have evolved into products that are consumed in connection with special events or celebrations (Vanhonacker et al., 2010). In conceptualising, traditional food consumers refer more to culinary traditions than to specific products offered as traditional (Sajdakowska & Żakowska-Biemans, 2009). What distinguishes traditional food products are their production methods, quality labels and certificates. However, there are many products that are considered traditional without having any labels or markings. Therefore, there have been numerous initiatives to label traditional products, which would guarantee their quality and authenticity (Caputo et al., 2018).

The group of traditional food consumers is dominated by older people, who are concerned about their health and are more involved in planning and preparing meals. Less research has been conducted among representatives of younger generations of consumers. To fill this gap, this research aimed to identify the sociodemographic determinants of purchasing behaviours of representatives of Generation Z in the traditional food market.

Related works

Today's consumers are becoming multicultural, with a tendency to succumb to global trends and, on the other hand, a desire to preserve their cultural identity, which is demonstrated by a growing interest in local and traditional foods (Dudziak et al., 2023). In recent years, there has been a growing interest in traditional food products as a result of the development of trends related to healthy lifestyle and nutrition, as well as the dissemination of information about the harmfulness of certain ingredients found in mass-produced food (Stefańska, 2010). Nowadays, when sustainable production is one of the contemporary challenges in distribution chains, traditional food products take on particular importance due to their characteristics. Their local and ecological characteristics reflect two important components of sustainability: the ecological component, which refers to careful use of natural resources and care for the environment, and the component related to the economic and social care of producers and local people (Pivarski et al., 2022). The development of the traditional food market is much more noticeable and studied in Western European countries than in Poland, but growing interest in this food category is also observed in our country. Providing access to traditional food products in a greater number of outlets accelerates the development of this market, while a lack of mass distribution is seen as a major barrier to further expansion (Jakubowska et al., 2022). Producers and those who already offer traditional foods should pay attention to the diversity of buyers' expectations, as market competition will intensify with its increasing availability.

The literature review clearly indicates that belonging to a particular Generation (X, Y or Z)

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determines, among other things, the purchasing approach, as well as the way purchases are made. Consumers from Generation Z are relatively demanding, expect novelty and personalisation, eagerly reach for limited-edition products or collections, pay attention both to the values that a certain brand represents, and to environmental concerns (Adamowicz & Krasucka, 2016; Berg, 2017; Dąbrowska & Janoś-Kresło, 2017; Kucharska & Malinowska, 2019; Shipman, 2020; Topuzovksa & Popovska, 2020; Krzyżan-Stachowiak, 2021; Azimi et al., 2022). The choice of food products and consumers' attitudes towards the food offered to them are most often dictated by individual consumer needs and expectations, while at the same time resulting from their socioeconomic status. Many factors influence consumer purchase behaviours, including place of residence, gender, education and income (Forouzanfar et al., 2016). Regarding sociodemographic characteristics, there is an evidence of their impact on food choices, in particular for products linked to sustainability and health concerns (Akpinar et al., 2009, Witek & Kuźniar, 2021). Gender determined differences in the perception of the organoleptic characteristics of food products, while the level of education and income affected the evaluation of price and organic certification of the product (Akpinar et al., 2009). Higher education level of individuals was found to be associated with choosing fresher, organic fruit and vegetables. Women had a more positive attitude towards purchasing green products (i.e. organic food) than men, while young people were the most disbelieving towards ecological products (Witek & Kuźniar, 2021). Availability of food products is an issue for young consumers and certain actions from suppliers should be taken towards eliminating barriers in this respect (Vlontzos et al., 2018).

Research methodology

Data were collected through a non-probability sampling method – a convenience sample of 347 respondents recruited from an adult population (representatives of Generation Z) in the years 2020–2021. The research population consisted of people living in different parts of Poland, who declared they were buying and eating traditional products of different categories (Table 1).

Women dominated the respondents group in terms of numbers (60%, n = 208). More than 28% of respondents lived in villages (n = 99), 24% in cities with less than 50,000 inhabitants (n = 84), 19% in cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants (n = 67), 19% in cities between 50,000 and 200,000 inhabitants (n = 66), and 9% in cities between 201,000 and 500,000 inhabitants (n = 31). In terms of the respondents' declared lifestyle, the majority assessed their lifestyle as healthy (73%, n = 254), while for 18% it was hard to declare (n = 64), and only 8% admitted having unhealthy lifestyle (n = 29).

The study was performed using an indirect interview technique with a web-based survey questionnaire (CAWI). The research tool was a pilot-verified author's survey questionnaire. Respondents were asked to indicate the degree of significance of selection factors that guided them when purchasing traditional food products. The degrees of importance of each factor were tested using a seven-point Likert scale, where 7 meant definitely yes and 1 meant definitely no. The level of importance of a factor was expressed by respondents in relation to 12 choice factors, which included: health concern (A), clean label (B), taste of the product (C), environmental concern (D), animal welfare concern (E), the product's appearance (F), certificates and quality marks (G), traditional manufacturing recipe (H),

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of the study group (N = 347)

Variables										
Category counts and percentage shares	Gender		Place of residence					Lifestyle		
	women	men	village	city up to 50,000 inhabitants	city between 50,000 and 200,000 inhabitants	city between 201,000 and 500,000 inhabitants	city over 500,000 inhabitants	healthy	hard to say	unhealthy
n	208	139	99	84	66	31	67	254	64	29
%	59.94	40.06	28.53	24.21	19.02	8.93	19.31	73.20	18.44	8.36

Source: own studies.

local production (I), recommendation by friends (J), point-of-purchase information (K), availability (L).

To investigate differences in purchasers' behaviours related to sociodemographic characteristics such as gender, place of residence and lifestyle, two hypotheses were put forth in this study:

H_1: Selected sociodemographic characteristics (gender, place of residence and lifestyle of consumers) have an impact on Generation Z's purchasing behaviours towards traditional food products.

H_2: Gender, place of residence and lifestyle of Generation Z representatives differentiates factors affecting their choices of traditional food products.

The raw data obtained as results of the CAWI survey were subjected to coding, tabulation and processing. The effect of the selected independent variables (gender, place of residence and declared lifestyle) on the dependent variables was examined using the chi-square test. The differentiation of the mean values of the responses relating to the choice factors within the different variants of the independent variables was analysed using ANOVA, Fisher's NIR test and rank transformation. Statistical analyses were performed using Statistica 13.3 PL software at a significance level $\alpha = 0.05$.

Research results

The analysis of the collected data allowed us to conclude that most respondents (65%, $n = 225$) declared they had been purchasing traditional foods for more than three years. These declarations prevailed among rural residents (68%, $n = 51$) and residents of cities of over 500,000 (67%, $n = 45$), as well as among people who declared healthy lifestyle (75%, $n = 168$). Therefore, it can be assumed that the respondents are experienced and regular purchasers of traditional foods. No statistically significant differences were observed, as regards the declared period of purchasing traditional foods, in terms of gender, place of residence or lifestyle of respondents. Detailed data on the declared period of purchasing traditional food products in each group of respondents are presented in Table 2.

Respondents were also asked how often they buy traditional food products. There were no statistically significant differences due to the variable of gender, place of residence or lifestyle of the respondents. Detailed data on the declared frequency of purchasing traditional food products in each group of respondents are presented in Table 3.

The results showed varied frequency of buying such products by the consumers surveyed. Most women and men purchased traditional food

Table 2. Declared period of purchasing traditional food products by gender, place of residence and lifestyle

Variables		Gender		Place of residence					Lifestyle			Total
		women	men	village	city up to 50,000 inhabitants	city between 50,000 and 200,000 inhabitants	city between 201,000 and 500,000 inhabitants	city over 500,000 inhabitants	healthy	hard to say	unhealthy	
Over 3 years	*n*	137	88	67	51	42	20	45	168	37	20	225
	%	65.9	63.3	67.7	60.7	63.6	64.5	67.2	66.1	57.8	69.0	64.8
From 1 to 3 years	*n*	32	27	13	14	13	7	12	44	11	4	59
	%	15.4	19.4	13.1	16.7	19.7	22.6	17.9	17.3	17.2	13.8	17.0
From 7 months to 12 months	*n*	14	10	5	8	6	1	4	16	5	3	24
	%	6.7	7.2	5.1	9.5	9.1	3.2	6.0	6.3	7.8	10.3	6.9
Up to 6 months	*n*	25	14	14	11	5	3	6	26	11	2	39
	%	12.0	10.1	14.1	13.1	7.6	9.7	9.0	10.2	17.2	6.9	11.2
p for chi-square test		$p = 0.755$		$p = 0.870$					$p = 0.642$			$N = 347$ (100%)

Source: own studies.

products once a week (38%, n = 78 and 34%, n = 47, respectively). Such declarations prevailed among residents of rural areas (31%, n = 31), cities up to 50,000 inhabitants (45%, n = 38), cities between 50,000 and 200,000 inhabitants (35%, n = 23), and cities over 500,000 inhabitants (39%, n = 26). Most residents of cities between 201,000 and 500,000 purchased traditional food products once a month (32%, n = 10).

Among sociodemographic characteristics analysed, lifestyle occurred to have a statistically significant relationship with the place where traditional foods were purchased (p = 0.0117). Those who declared healthy lifestyle were more likely to purchase traditional foods in market squares (255, n = 63), compared to other groups of respondents. The least popular among those declaring healthy lifestyle and undecided respondents were small neighbourhood stores (13%, n = 34 and 6%, n = 4, respectively), while among those who declared unhealthy lifestyle – market squares (7%, n = 2) (Table 4).

Young respondents mainly indicated chain grocery stores as the places where they buy traditional food products (50%, n = 172). More than 20% of the respondents declared purchasing traditional food products on market squares (n = 75), 16% in producer stores, including directly from the producer and via its website (n = 56), while only 13% – in small neighbourhood stores (n = 44).

Table 5 shows the empirical chi-square values and the p-values relating to the influence of gender, place of residence and lifestyle on the choice factors that respondents used to purchase traditional food products (TFP). The p-values lower than the assumed level of significance (α = 0.05) indicate that gender influenced six choice factors; place of residence – two choice factors; and lifestyle – four choice factors. The findings of the study demonstrate that the respondents, depending on their gender, revealed different attitudes towards factors such as the clean label (a belief that TFP are free from artificial preservatives, additives and ingredients), environmental concern, animal welfare concern, local production, friends' recommendation and point-of-purchase information. On the other hand, depending on the place of residence, the importance of factors described as health concern and local production was rated differently. Moreover, respondents attached varying degrees of importance to health concerns, environmental concerns, traditional recipes and local production, depending on their lifestyles.

Table 3. Declared frequency of purchasing traditional food products by gender, place of residence and lifestyle

Variables		Gender		Place of residence					Lifestyle			Total
		women	men	village	city up to 50,000 inhabitants	city between 50,000 and 200,000 inhabitants	city between 201,000 and 500,000 inhabitants	city over 500,000 inhabitants	healthy	hard to say	unhealthy	
More often than once a week	n	32	35	22	16	11	7	11	50	11	6	67
	%	15.4	25.2	22.2	19.1	16.7	22.6	16.4	19.7	17.2	20.7	19.3
Once a week	n	78	47	31	38	23	7	26	93	22	10	125
	%	37.5	33.8	31.3	45.2	34.9	22.6	38.8	36.6	34.4	34.5	36.0
Once every two weeks	n	37	24	14	14	14	3	16	44	12	5	61
	%	17.8	17.3	14.1	16.7	21.2	9.7	23.9	17.3	18.8	17.2	17.6
Once a month	n	36	20	16	10	11	10	9	37	13	6	56
	%	17.3	14.4	16.2	11.9	16.7	32.3	13.4	14.6	20.3	20.7	16.1
Once every few months	n	25	13	16	6	7	4	5	30	6	2	38
	%	12.0	9.4	16.2	10.6	7.1	12.9	7.5	11.8	9.4	6.9	11.0
p for chi-square test		p = 0.244		p = 0.223					p = 0.959			N = 347 (100%)

Source: own studies.

Table 4. Declared places of purchasing traditional food products by gender, place of residence and lifestyle

Variables		Gender		Place of residence					Lifestyle			Total
		women	men	village	city up to 50,000 inhabitants	city between 50,000 and 200,000 inhabitants	city between 201,000 and 500,000 inhabitants	city over 500,000 inhabitants	healthy	hard to say	unhealthy	
Market squares	*n*	46	29	24	20	14	5	12	63	10	2	75
	%	22.1	20.9	24.2	23.8	21.2	16.1	17.9	24.8	15.6	6.9	21.6
Producer stores	*n*	30	26	26	11	11	2	6	45	7	4	56
	%	14.4	18.7	26.3	16.7	13.1	6.5	9.0	17.7	10.9	13.8	16.1
Chain grocery stores	*n*	105	67	41	41	33	20	37	112	43	17	172
	%	50.5	48.2	41.4	48.8	50.0	64.5	55.2	44.1	67.2	58.6	49.6
Small neighbourhood stores	*n*	27	17	8	12	8	4	12	34	4	6	44
	%	13.0	12.2	8.1	14.3	12.1	12.9	17.9	13.4	6.3	20.7	12.7
p for chi-square test		*p* = 0.769		*p* = 0.100					*p* = 0.0117			*N* = = 347 (100%)

Source: own studies.

Table 5. Significance of factors analysed for choosing traditional food products, according to gender, place of residence and lifestyle

Selection factors*	Gender		Place of residence		Lifestyle	
	chi-square	*p*	chi-square	*p*	chi-square	*p*
A. Health concern	4.814	0.568	40.439	**0.019**	32.298	**0.001**
B. Clean label	14.793	**0.022**	28.848	0.226	18.368	0.105
C. Product taste	6.171	0.187	14.585	0,555	5.445	0.709
D. Environmental concern	30.412	**0.000**	29.631	0.197	31.066	**0.002**
E. Animal welfare concern	39.688	**0.000**	23.176	0.509	8.188	0.770
F. Product appearance	8.287	0.218	17.217	0.839	7.305	0.837
G. Certificates and quality marks	10.750	0.096	25.122	0.399	8.753	0.724
H. Traditional recipe	10.596	0.102	17.091	0.845	24.980	**0.015**
I. Local production	12.778	**0.047**	36.595	**0.048**	22.985	**0.028**
J. Friends recommendation	12.691	**0.048**	24.307	0.444	9.203	0.686
K. Point-of-purchase information	21.377	**0.002**	18.221	0.792	5.778	0.927
L. Availability	4.837	0.565	30.747	0.161	11.631	0.476

* Ratings were made on a scale between 1 and 7, where 1 – strongly unimportant, 7 – strongly important.
Source: own studies.

Table 6 presents the mean values of the decision factors that guided respondents in purchasing TFP, according to the variants of the independent characteristics considered: gender, place of residence and lifestyle. Table 6 also shows the vertically assigned ranks (*R*) and homogeneous groups (indicated by superscript letters) resulting from Fisher's NIR test and the one-way analysis of variance, which were calculated within each variant. Overall, respondents considered taste (C) to be the most important factor in choosing TFP. Another important factor was the clean label (B), although its importance was rated slightly lower by men. Almost all the importance ratings given by men for the individual selection factors were lower

Table 6. Mean values, ranks, analysis of variance for sociodemographic characteristics

Selection factors	Gender				Place of residence										Lifestyle						Total	
	women		men		village		city up to 50,000 inhabitants		city between 50,000 and 200,000 inhabitants		city between 201,000 and 500,000 inhabitants		city over 500,000 inhabitants		healthy		hard to say		unhealthy			
	x	*R*	*x*	*R*	*x*	*R*	*x*	*R*	*x*	*R*	*x*	*R*	*x*	*R*	*x*	*R*	*x*	*R*	*x*	*R*	*x*	*R*
A	5.64^{de}	3	5.51^{f}	2	5.79^{f}	3	5.75^{e}	3	5.80^{fg}	2	5.10^{bc}	4	5.10^{bc}	5	5.75^{g}	3	5.30^{cde}	4	4.79^{bcd}	6	5.59^{ef}	3
B	5.87^{e}	2	5.50^{ef}	3	5.93^{f}	2	5.77^{e}	2	5.70^{ef}	3	5.45^{c}	2	5.49^{c}	2	5.81^{g}	2	5.61^{e}	2	5.21^{cd}	3	5.72^{f}	2
C	6.30^{f}	1	6.38^{g}	1	6.40^{g}	1	6.33^{f}	1	6.21^{g}	1	6.45^{d}	1	6.30^{d}	1	6.38^{h}	1	6.17^{f}	1	6.31^{e}	1	6.33^{g}	1
D	5.31^{c}	8	4.53^{ab}	10	5.15^{cd}	7	5.18^{bcd}	7	4.76^{ab}	10	4.87^{abc}	9	4.85^{b}	7	5.16^{de}	7	4.89^{bc}	8	3.86^{a}	12	5.00^{c}	7
E	5.44^{cd}	6	4.23^{a}	11	5.05^{c}	8	5.06^{bcd}	9	4.91^{abc}	9	4.90^{abc}	8	4.76^{ab}	9	5.02^{cd}	8	4.86^{bc}	10	4.59^{abc}	9	4.96^{c}	8
F	4.94^{ab}	10	4.91^{cd}	7	4.96^{bc}	9	4.85^{ab}	11	5.06^{bcd}	7	5.13^{bc}	3	4.78^{ab}	8	4.94^{cd}	9	4.88^{bc}	9	4.97^{bcd}	5	4.93^{bc}	9
G	5.03^{b}	9	4.65^{bc}	8.5	4.81^{abc}	10	5.00^{abc}	10	4.98^{abc}	8	4.81^{abc}	10	4.76^{ab}	10	4.91^{bc}	10	4.92^{bc}	7	4.52^{abc}	10	4.88^{bc}	10
H	5.47^{cd}	5	5.06^{d}	6	5.51^{de}	5	5.33^{cd}	5.5	5.24^{cde}	6	5.06^{bc}	5	5.13^{bc}	3	5.42^{f}	5	5.11^{bcd}	6	4.72^{bc}	8	5.30^{d}	5.5
I	5.57^{d}	4	5.17^{de}	4	5.76^{ef}	4	5.33^{cd}	5.5	5.47^{def}	4	5.00^{bc}	6.5	5.12^{bc}	4	5.47^{f}	4	5.47^{de}	3	4.76^{bcd}	7	5.41^{de}	4
J	5.43^{cd}	7	5.12^{d}	5	5.43^{de}	6	5.43^{de}	4	5.30^{cde}	5	5.00^{bc}	6.5	5.09^{bc}	6	5.30^{ef}	6	5.20^{cde}	5	5.52^{d}	2	5.30^{d}	5.5
K	4.76^{a}	12	4.22^{a}	12	4.63^{ab}	11	4.65^{a}	12	4.59^{a}	12	4.23^{a}	12	4.37^{a}	12	4.61^{a}	12	4.38^{a}	12	4.28^{ab}	11	4.54^{a}	12
L	4.79^{ab}	11	4.65^{bc}	8.5	4.51^{a}	12	5.15^{bcd}	8	4.68^{ab}	11	4.58^{ab}	11	4.67^{ab}	11	4.70^{ab}	11	4.73^{ab}	11	5.03^{bcd}	4	4.73^{ab}	11
p for chi-square test	0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000	

Explication: *x* – mean values (ratings were made on a scale between 1 and 7, where 1 – strongly unimportant, 7 – strongly important); *R* – ranks in the columns; a, b, c, d, e, f, g – mean values marked with the same lowercase letters in a column represent a homogeneous group.
Source: own studies.

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than those declared by women, except for taste (C). In particular, men were less concerned than women about respect for animal rights (E), respect for the environment (D), local production (I) and friends' recommendation (J). Regardless of gender, point-of-purchase information (K) was considered the least important factor in determining the purchase of TFP. For this factor again the mean score was lower for men than for women. Analysis of variance concluded that the variation in the responses was statistically significant in both groups, with Fisher's NIR test indicating six homogeneous groups among women and seven homogeneous groups among men.

Respondents from larger cities (between 201,000 and 500 000 inhabitants and over 500,000 inhabitants) paid less attention to the selection factors of health concern (A) and local production (I). Based on the mean and rank values, it can be concluded that health concern (A) was the most important factor in the opinion of respondents from cities between 50,000 and 200,000 inhabitants (mean 5.80; rank 2). On the contrary, local production (I) was the most important for the respondents living in rural areas (mean 5.76). Furthermore, based on the analysis of variance, statistically significant variation was found within all five variants of the place of residence, but it was smaller among respondents living in larger cities (between 201,000 and 500,000 and over 500,000), where only four homogeneous groups were observed.

In addition, based on the results presented in Table 6, it was observed that respondents describing their lifestyles as unhealthy tended to focus less than others upon health concerns (A), environmental concerns (D), traditional recipes (H) and local production (I). At the same time, unlike the others, they valued friends' recommendation (J) more, pointing it out as the second factor (rank 2) prompting them to buy TFP, right after taste (C), and also gave a higher rank to availability (rank 4). Nevertheless, it can be concluded that statistically significant differences were found in each of the lifestyle variants discussed. Indeed, groups in this variant were the least homogeneous. Rather similar responses were only found among those describing their lifestyle as unhealthy.

Discussion

Consumers' purchasing behaviours are the effect of numerous determinants having both economic and non-economic nature. Although the financial situation of buyers continues to regulate demand for goods and services, sociodemographic characteristics play an increasingly important role in differentiating buyer's behaviour (Mucha, 2017). In recent years, consumer attitudes towards food products have undergone noticeable changes. There has been a switch from so-called mass consumption toward healthy eating, promoting healthy lifestyles, sustainability and respect for the environment. To meet consumers' expectations, producers offer a wide range of food products, including those less processed, made using traditional methods, according to traditional recipes, based on cultural heritage. The choice of these products is most often dictated by consumers' individual needs and expectations concerning this food category and their own socioeconomic status. These behaviours may also vary according to selected sociodemographic characteristics, such as gender, place of residence and declared lifestyle. For example, young men tend to be less sensitive to health issues related to food consumption than women (Naughton et al., 2015).

The results of this study provide evidence concerning the statistical significance of impact of selected sociodemographic variables connected with purchasing behaviours of Generation Z in the traditional food market. These results confirm the findings of earlier studies conducted by other researchers. The declared frequency of purchasing traditional food products does not differ from the results presented in the literature (Wilczyńska, 2017), according to which more than 30% purchase traditional foods at least once a week. The study by Jakubowska and Sadilek (2023) examining the impact of knowledge of products, interest in sustainability and consumer characteristics on the frequency of buying sustainably produced butter, also found no statistically significant relationship between gender and the frequency of purchases. Based on a statistical analysis of collected data, it was shown that the consumers surveyed mainly paid attention to three factors when choosing traditional food products: taste of the product, the belief in the quality of the product and the health concern. These results do not differ significantly from the results presented in the literature (Grębowiec, 2010; Rejman et al., 2015), according to which a genuine taste of this type of products is the most common reason for purchasing decisions. On the other hand, according to Batyk and Smoczyński (2011), the most important factor inducing consumers to buy traditional food is its high quality, while according to Wilczyńska (2017), it is the conviction of high quality and tradition brought from home. Consumers' sensitivity to the issue of their own health and environmental protection is increasing. Therefore, they expect transparent and truthful information from food producers about their products. Modern consumers are not only

interested in the composition of a food product or its processing method, but also in the origin of the ingredients used in the production process (Kuźniar & Kawa, 2018).

Representatives of Generation Z are an important, yet rather distinct part of any society. They represent significant purchasing and decision-making power, which they manage according to their own needs. The expectations of this market segment regarding the product range, attractiveness and diversity are growing. The results of this research show that the purchasing behaviours of Generation Z representatives in the traditional food market can be implied by many factors. In the market activities of this group of buyers, sociodemographic characteristics play an important role, which is revealed with different strengths and intensities in the decision-making process, influencing its character. Gender, place of residence and declared lifestyle of the representatives of Generation Z differentiate the factors of choosing traditional food products. The assignment of ranks made it possible to conclude that the respondents considered taste to be the most important factor in choosing this category of food, followed by the belief that it is free from artificial preservatives, additives and ingredients. Based on the chi-square test, it was found that gender had the greatest influence on the variation in indications of the degree of importance of the choice factors considered, followed by lifestyle and then place of residence. It was noted that men generally attached less importance to selection factors than women, but paid more attention to the taste of the product. Those describing their lifestyle as unhealthy, on the other hand, gave more consistent (similar) answers, but differed from the answers of the other respondents as regards factors described as concern for health and the environment, the traditional recipe and the production of TFP by local producers. Respondents from larger cities (between 201,000 and 500,000 inhabitants and larger than 500,000 inhabitants) showed similar behaviours. They put less emphasis upon health concerns and the production of traditional foods by local producers. No differences were observed in the frequency and duration of purchasing traditional food products by gender, place of residence and declared lifestyle of respondents.

Differences were observed in terms of where traditional food products were purchased and of lifestyle declared by respondents. Those who declared healthy lifestyle were more likely to buy traditional foods in market squares, compared to other groups of respondents. Young respondents mainly indicated chain grocery stores as the place where they buy traditional food products (50%, $n = 172$). More than 20% of the respondents declared purchasing traditional food products on market squares ($n = 75$), 16% in producer stores including directly from the producer and via its website ($n = 56$), while only 13% in small stores in the neighbourhood ($n = 44$). This may be because in recent years Poland has seen a process of expansion of large-format chain stores. The choice of particular places to buy food largely depends on their availability in a given area determined by close location and easy access to the retail stores (Matysik-Pejas & Żmija, 2014). Also significant are the transformations that have taken place regarding the concept of discount stores. They involved a shift away from their previous image – that of places offering a limited range of products, low prices and mediocre product quality. Changes occurring in retail have modified consumers' behaviours regarding where and how they buy, giving them a greater choice of retail stores (Angowski et al., 2016).

Conclusion

This study allowed us to define differences in consumers' behaviour in the traditional food market by comparing different profiles of individuals defined by their socio-demographic characteristics. The results revealed different behaviours, mainly defined by the place of purchase and certain sociodemographic characteristics, such as age, place of residence and lifestyle. Interestingly, no statistically significant differences were observed in the declared period and frequency of purchasing TFP due to gender, place of residence or the lifestyle of respondents. Therefore, the research hypothesis H_1 was only partially fulfilled. In contrast, the research hypothesis H_2 was confirmed.

This study provides an insight into young Polish consumers' behaviour towards traditional food products. The empirical findings from this study not only contribute to the field of consumer behaviour but also have practical potential for traditional food market applications. Practical implications of the research include better understanding of purchasing behaviours of Generation Z towards traditional food products. The differentiation of consumers purchasing behaviours by sociodemographic factors should be a signal both to producers and distributors of traditional food products. Changing behaviours of consumers are worth analysing in order to formulate more efficient promotion strategies towards increasing a market share of TFP in Poland. Understanding these sociodemographic characteristics can help producers tailor their strategies to cater to the preferences and needs of Generation Z in the traditional food market. However, it is important to observe that individual preferences can still vary considerably within this generation, so a comprehensive approach that considers multiple factors is necessary for effective targeting.

There are some limitations related to this study. Given the research was limited to three sociodemographic characteristics, we will have to investigate it more broadly in the future by expanding the analysis of variables (both behavioural and related to individual lifestyle) describing individuals. As the survey data was gathered from a convenience sample, these results should only be generalised with caution. To ensure the generalisability of the findings, replication of this research on other purchase determinants is recommended. This study does not cover the entire complex process of purchasing traditional food products, hence it is advisable to conduct further research related to the issue of Generation Z behaviour in the traditional food market. Differentiation of consumers according to selected sociodemographic characteristics indicates the need for education and proper adjustment of marketing communication methods in the field of attributes of traditional food products. The importance of health, environmental or economic values concerning this product category should be the subject of educational and promotional activities.

Notes/Przypisy

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Adiunkt w Katedrze Przyrodniczych Podstaw Jakości w Instytucie Nauk o Jakości na Uniwersytecie Ekonomicznym w Poznaniu. Obecnie prowadzi badania z zakresu zachowań konsumentów i producentów związanych ze zrównoważoną konsumpcją, ekologizacją konsumpcji oraz projektowaniem innowacyjnych produktów ukierunkowanych na wprowadzanie i upowszechnianie rozwiązań prozdrowotnych.