

**Summary of the PhD thesis written in the Department of Consumption Research**

**under scientific guidance of**

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**Title: New trends in food consumption and nutritional behaviours of Polish consumers**

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Consumption is the process by which consumer goods, such as food goods, non-food items and services, are consumed. The main purpose of consumption is to satisfy human needs, but today consumption is also an important manifestation of the standard of living and a criterion for structuring society and a method of communicating the identity of consumers. Consumption allowing to satisfy the needs and expectations of individuals may also be a factor stimulating activity and creativity. The complexity of the issue of consumption, its conditions and consumer attitudes makes it a subject of interest in many fields of science, such as economics, sociology, psychology, politics or health and nutrition sciences<sup>1</sup>.

Food is an essential condition for the proper functioning of the human body, therefore the nutritional needs in accordance with the most important concepts and theories of human needs prioritization, proposed by Maslow, McClelland or Alderfer, are classified as viscerogenic needs and considered to be the most important needs of every human being, the fulfilment of which significantly influences the development of further needs<sup>2</sup>.

Food consumption is characterised by specific characteristics. On the one hand, the human body determines a certain minimum level of food consumption necessary for survival, on the other hand, human consumption capacity is limited, so food consumption is distinguished by a certain degree of saturation. Moreover, the socio-cultural environment in which people function, expands their nutritional needs with elements related to prestige or imitation. Therefore nutrition, besides satisfying hunger, satisfies many other needs, such as security, belonging and respect<sup>3</sup>.

Consumers' nutritional behaviour is one of the forms of consumption behaviours and means the attitudes and behaviour of individuals directly related to meeting nutritional needs. They include

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<sup>1</sup> J. Baudrillard, 2006, Społeczeństwo konsumpcyjne. Jego mity i struktury, przekł. Królak S., Warszawa: Sic!, s. 94-99; Cz. Bywalec (2007), Konsumpcja w teorii i praktyce gospodarowania, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2007, s. 14-15;

<sup>2</sup> Zalega T. (2011), Spożycie żywności w gospodarstwach domowych z osobami bezrobotnymi w województwie mazowieckim, Zeszyty Naukowe SGGW - Ekonomia i Organizacja Gospodarki Żywnościowej, nr 93, s. 119

<sup>3</sup> K. Gutkowska, I. Ozimek, Wybrane aspekty zachowań konsumentów na rynku żywności – kryteria różnicowania, Wydawnictwo SGGW, Warszawa 2005, s. 20; B. Sojkin, Determinanty konsumpcji żywności. Analiza hierarchiczna, Zeszyty Naukowe – seria II, Prace habilitacyjne, Zeszyt 135, Wyd. AE w Poznaniu, Poznań 1994, s. 96

the choice of food and meals, the way of buying, planning and preparing it for consumption the place, time and people with whom they are normally consumed<sup>4</sup>.

The social, economic and technological changes that have taken place in the last decade have significantly modified the nutritional behaviour of consumers. On the one hand, the effects of the economic crisis are still felt, while on the other hand, changes in consumers' lifestyles, as well as in their attitudes towards health aspects of products or food in general can be seen. A large number of consumers look for convenience and time savings by minimising the attention paid to cooking and increasing use of ready-to-eat dishes. Others show interest in food with a high nutrient content, which are more complicated to prepare. Some consumers prefer foreign brands and globalised products, while some prefer to trust domestic producers, actively supporting their development. Some choose to prepare a sophisticated dishes at home, while others regularly visit unique restaurants. Many of them take care of their health through regular physical activity and consumption of unprocessed food naturally rich in valuable vitamins and minerals, while others use functional food for this purpose. Consumers' dietary choices are therefore very diverse. They are shaped by many social, demographic and economic factors, including income, education, age, place of residence, household size and current fashion. This results in a very complex picture, which is not easy to interpret.

Intensive changes in consumer behaviour mobilise economists to monitor new phenomena taking place on the food market in Poland systematically. It makes it possible to verify the effectiveness of the country's health policy, set its current directions, as well as set out safe areas of enterprises from the food and catering industry's operations.

The main purpose of this research was to identify and characterise new trends in food consumption and nutritional behaviour of Polish consumers and the factors shaping them.

The realization of the cognitive goal formulated this way required:

- synthesis of scientific achievements and identification of knowledge gaps in the area of food consumption and nutritional behaviour of consumers,
- knowledge and assessment of changes in the level and structure of food consumption of Polish households,
- identification of demographic determinants influencing changes in food consumption and nutritional behaviour of consumers,
- identification of the economic determinants influencing changes in food consumption and nutritional behaviour of consumers,

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<sup>4</sup> Goryńska- Goldmann E., Ratajczak P. (2010), Świadomość żywieniowa a zachowania żywieniowe konsumentów, *Journal of Agribusiness and Rural Development* 4 (18), s. 41-48

- to award social determinants that influence changes in food consumption and nutritional behaviour of consumers.

Methodological objectives included the identification of sources, methods and techniques for collecting, processing and analysing information on food consumption and consumer dietary behaviour.

In order to develop methodologically correct tools for measuring new trends, it was necessary to select appropriate sources of information, develop an empirical database, select appropriate measures, as well as to construct a measurement tool to identify new trends in food consumption and nutritional behaviour of Polish consumers through direct research.

The aim of the application was to formulate recommendations that could be used in marketing activities of food and catering companies in Poland. The results of the research can also be used by entities dealing with education and food policy in the country.

Taking into account the specified objectives, the research interests included the level and structure of food expenditure of households and food consumption per person expressed in natural units and, consequently, new trends in the consumption of food products and nutritional behaviours of individual consumers, as well as the factors determining and differentiating them. Therefore, the analysis concerned two basic research entities, i.e. households (taking into account their socio-economic group and place of residence) and individual consumers deciding on their own diet (over 18 years of age). The research covered the area of Poland and covered the period 2006-2016 (secondary research) and 2018 (primary research).

The survey was based on figures from statistical yearbooks and household budget surveys published by the Central Statistical Office, as well as Eurostat, the Food and Nutrition Institute, the World Health Organisation, the Social Opinion Research Centre and many other sources dedicated to economic and social statistics. The knowledge has been enriched by direct surveys conducted on a sample of 660 people.

The paper attempted to verify the main hypothesis, according to which new trends in the consumption of food products and nutritional behaviours of Polish consumers manifest primarily through rationalisation, ecologisation and servitisation of consumption, as well as consumer ethnocentrism. They are determined by a combination of many social, demographic and economic factors, the most important of which are consumer incomes, education and current nutritional fashion.

The paper also verified detailed hypotheses, according to which:

- changes that occurred in the consumption of Polish households' food in the years 2006-2016 testify to the nutritional rationalization of Polish consumers,

- the phenomenon of ethnocentrism and ecologisation is most often manifested in the dietary choices of the elderly,
- the influence of the phenomenon of cocooning on consumers' eating habits increases with the age of consumers,
- higher educated consumers have a greater interest in convenient and fast food and more frequent purchases in international retail chains,
- the consumption and nutritional behaviour of urban and rural households differ, and these differences are particularly pronounced in terms of the share of natural consumption and the seriousness of consumption,
- as consumers' wealth increases, the consumption of catering services, organic and convenient products increases,
- among the social factors, the current nutritional fashion, shaped by social imitation and globalization of consumption, is important.

The concept of dissertation has been expressed in its structural system. The work consists of an introduction, six chapters and an end. The first two chapters are the theoretical part of the dissertation, the third is methodical, and the following two are analytical.

Chapter I, which introduces the subsequent analyses, provides definitions and divisions of concepts related to consumer consumption and behaviour contained in compact literature and scientific journals in the fields of economics, marketing, psychology and sociology. In addition, the subjects of consumption were listed and characterized, and concepts related to food consumption and consumers' nutritional behaviour were interpreted. The chapter also describes the factors influencing food consumption and consumers' nutritional behaviour.

Chapter II deals with the Polish food market. Various types of food, the food market in Poland against the global background and its development prospects are discussed.

Chapter III is methodical. The first part presents the sources of data on food consumption and nutritional behaviour of consumers, then the research methods used in the research on that issue and the methodology of own empirical research are discussed. The chapter ends with the characteristics of the studied population and the research sample.

The content of chapter IV is completed with an analysis of food consumption based on the results of research on household budgets, in particular changes in food expenditure in Polish households and changes in the level, structure and dynamics of quantitative consumption of food products in Poland. Moreover, trends and forecasts of changes in food consumption in Poland are indicated.

Chapter V is devoted to the discussion of Polish dietary behaviour on the basis of the results of direct research. In particular subchapters the analysis of Polish' dietary choices and the importance of selected factors determining them, organisation of food purchases and meals, as well as the quality of food consumed by Polish consumers are discussed. Moreover, new trends in Polish dietary behaviour are presented.

Chapter VI summarizes all previous reflections on new trends on the food market in Poland, distinguishing both the most visible and emerging phenomena. Moreover, the possibilities of using the knowledge about consumers by food and catering companies to create marketing strategies are discussed.

The end of the work presents the most important conclusions resulting from the research and presents the effects of verification of the research hypotheses.

The results of the conducted research indicate that after years of saturation with economic and social freedom, openness to Western novelties, consumers were uncertain about the quality and health value of food produced on a mass scale by multinational corporations. This has contributed to the development of rationalisation of consumption and the search for alternatives to conventional food, which has led to an increase in the popularity of organic food. Moreover, products manufactured by indigenous producers have also begun to enjoy greater confidence. The ethnocentric attitude, which is an expression of non-conformist attitude towards globalisation, gives purchasers the opportunity to demonstrate their individualism and resistance to the ubiquitous unification of cultures. Consumers increasingly use catering services tailored to their needs, as well as appreciate the possibility of ordering food by the Internet, in particular products not yet available on the local market, but necessary to prepare a sophisticated dish at home. These behaviour and technological progress, as well as a higher standard of living of consumers, influence the dynamic development of trends of servicing and cocooning of consumption on the Polish market. Globalisation is a particular driving force of all of the changes on the market. Globalisation causes that new trends in food consumption and nutritional behaviour of consumers, first visible on Western markets, gradually spread all over the world.

It should be noted that the considerations presented in the paper do not exhaust the entire catalogue of trends on the food market, but they allow for the presentation of those most clearly visible in the current conditions of a turbulent environment.

Katowice, 6.03.2019 r.