

Attitudes of a group of young Polish consumers towards selected features of dairy products

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Abstract. Consumer opinion surveys include key elements of improving the food market and assessing consumers' approaches to current issues related to access to high-quality food. In the survey, which aimed to find out the opinions of young Polish consumers about dairy products, the focus was on issues related to the assessment of selected features of dairy products and their packaging, evaluation of regional products and innovations in dairy production. The methodology for assessing the significance of the features of dairy products and their packaging was based on the proposed feature significance index (FSI). In the carried out research, young respondents pointed to the importance of taste and quality of dairy products, and indicated the small role of packaging, determining the choice of products concerned. The ease of product identification based on packaging has gained the greatest importance among the assessed packaging features. Over two-thirds of respondents indicated that they did not pay attention to the biodegradability of dairy product packaging. When asked about regional dairy products, respondents paid most attention to their value resulting from natural methods of production without preservatives, and least to freshness. In the opinion of young consumers, access to regional products increases the certainty of using raw materials from a given region and facilitates the development of local agricultural business. A small percentage of young respondents showed knowledge of the idea of dairy production 'from grass to glass', which would indicate insufficient interest in innovative solutions in the dairy sector.

Key words: biodegradation, consumer preferences, dairy products, packaging, regional products, young consumers.

INTRODUCTION

Milk produced on farms and used as a raw material in manufacturing processes creates one of the most desirable and also developed food economy sales products (Bórawski et al., 2020). Trade in dairy products, milk processing as well as dairy farming and breeding constitute an important place in the economy of many countries in the world (Bojnec & Fertó, 2014). The importance of milk production for generating the profits of agricultural producers and the role of dairy products in human nutrition make the dairy sector one of the most significant branches of the food economy both in Poland and worldwide (Gerosa & Skoet, 2012; Wojdalski et al., 2013). The main task of dairy,

as well as the entire food industry is primarily to provide the population with products of high nutritional and dietary value. Milk as a raw material with a relatively short shelf life must be properly transported (Chokanat et al., 2019). Protection of products can be provided directly by preventing the commodity from contamination and indirectly by extending its shelf life. The most significant principles in the undertaken activities should be consumer protection and food safety assurance (Gaworski, 2006). In addition to the protection, transportability and storage capability are also primary functions of packaging (Kaiser et al., 2018).

The dairy market is a rapidly growing food market, and milk and dairy products are widely consumed worldwide. Dairy products are particularly valued for their taste and special nutritional properties. Despite the large variety of dairy products available on the market, there is still space for development in this sector. The development of the dairy sector and market is related to the recognition and understanding of consumer expectations regarding the specific properties of dairy products and their qualities (Wolf et al., 2011). An example of recognizing the specific expectations of consumers in the dairy market is access to milk-based products from grass-fed cows (Peira et al., 2020), or from regions with traditional dairy production, taking into account the impact of feeding and machine milking on cows' welfare and milk quality (Nicolosi et al., 2021).

Growing consumer awareness resulting from access to information on dairy products and production is an important element in shaping sustainable consumption in the dairy sector. Sustainable consumption is associated with responsible consumption, and this may include buying products with a lower environmental impact, which translates into a reduction in climate change (Canavari & Coderoni, 2020).

The preferences of consumers on the dairy market can be shaped by many factors. The most important factors are the elements that are associated with the product. Its main role is to satisfy the desires and needs of recipients in terms of quality, functionality, availability and taste (Bakke et al., 2016). An important element of the product is also its packaging. It has a key impact on its quality, fulfilment of protective and marketing functions. The most important task of packaging is to encourage consumers to buy goods and provide all information about a given product. Consumer behaviour is stimulated by the attractiveness of the packaging and its design, on which the eye focuses when assessing and making purchase decisions (Becker et al., 2011). Packaging, and especially the material from which they were made, can arouse emotions, being an important sign of acceptance at the stage of purchasing the product (Clark et al., 2021). Currently the ecological function of product packaging seems to be particularly important. Packaging should contribute to the improvement of the working environment associated with their production and also leave as little waste as possible. According to Żelaziński et al. (2019) it is therefore better to replace a part of products with modern biodegradable materials especially in the food industry, where products of a short life cycle are used. Packaging design methodology should be in line with the principles of sustainable development (Verghese & Lewis, 2010). Customers perceive biodegradable packaging as environmentally friendly and see in it the potential associated with eco-safety (Amos et al., 2017). Along with the global population growth, the amount of solid waste generated is growing, and plastic waste pollution is now one of the major problems in many countries (Borowski, 2017). The ecological aspect of the management of dairy product packaging in research realized on a group of young respondents may constitute valuable knowledge in the assessment of the dairy product supply system.

Modern dairy production reflects a number of problems that are specific to the entire food market in general (Wang, 2013). Willingness to pay (Kovalsky & Lusk, 2013), preferences for specific groups of products and their features, the use of specific types of packaging and their management, food quality and safety, its diversity and availability underline the wide range of consumer research that can be carried out (Silayoi & Speece, 2004).

It is very important that entrepreneurs know consumers, especially their preferences (Roubík & Mazancová, 2017) and behaviour, needs, attitudes and criteria taken into account when choosing products (Riivits-Arkonsuo et al., 2017). The purchase of dairy products is influenced by various conditions, e.g. social, economic or psychological. Therefore, the main research problem of the completed research was to find out in the group of young consumers (20–29 years) the preferences and criteria they use when buying dairy products, including products accessible in Polish dairy market. In addition, the authors examined whether there is a link between education and decision-making, and whether residence also plays a role in making decisions about dairy products. Developing the issue of consumer preferences, the scope of research also covered the approach of young consumers to dairy products offered on a regional scale. A survey of consumer interest in regional products is a response to the current discussion in Poland regarding the preference for domestic and regional products in times of crisis. Consumers' access to regional products is, in addition to access to organic products (Żakowska-Biemans, 2009) and knowledge about them (Kamińska et al., 2016), a key element of balancing the food market in Poland.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research methods used in the conducted study were the primary research and desk research. In social and marketing research related to management and decision making, quantitative and qualitative methods are used, in which questionnaire study is one of the elements. This type of research is the most adequate to obtain information about consumers, their preferences and market behaviour. In the framework of initial research (pilot study), surveys were sent to 20 customers in order to precise questions in the survey form. After obtaining and analysing the results of the pilot survey, the questionnaire format was revised into a more suitable one. After the revision of the survey, the large-scale survey was carried out. The large-scale research was conducted basing on a survey method using the Internet and lasted from 1 to 30 April 2019. The CAWI (Computer-Assisted Web Interview) method was used to conduct the survey, which allows the respondent to answer via a web panel. The survey results were pre-processed using the Google Forms tool and compiled in an Excel spreadsheet, which in the next stage allowed for descriptive statistics, statistical analysis and figures.

In the survey 102 customers took part. The target group of respondents aged 20 to 29 was selected for the research. The condition of meeting the age limits was set in the initial question of the completed survey. If the person did not meet the age criterion, the possibility of moving to the next questions in the survey was blocked. Among the respondents there were 30 men and 72 women. In addition to the research questions, in the anonymous part of the survey, the respondents were asked to provide their gender, education and place of residence (from among the options for rural areas and cities with different populations).

The following research questions were put forward:

Q1: Do customers consider the features (quality, taste, price, ingredients) of dairy products during the purchase process?

Q2: Do customers consider the overall appearance of the packaging?

Q3: Do consumers attach importance to protecting the environment, preferring biodegradable packaging?

Q4: Does a group of young consumers have knowledge about an innovative approach to improving the quality of dairy production?

The study also included a group of questions about regional dairy products and their evaluation.

In the studies regarding the assessment of selected dairy product features (Q1 question) and dairy product packaging features (Q2 question), the respondents could indicate the importance of individual features on a scale of 1 to 5, taking into account the following gradation: 1 – very poor, 2 – poor, 3 – average, 4 – good, 5 – very good. On this basis, average values of scores for individual features were calculated for comparison. To compare respondents' assessments regarding considered features of dairy products and their packaging, a feature significance index (FSI) was proposed. In order to determine the index, the percentage share of very poor and poor ratings (1 and 2 on the rating scale) and the percentage share of good and very good ratings (4 and 5 on the rating scale) were included. The formula for calculating the feature significance index (FSI) is as follows:

$$FSI = \frac{ps_{4,5}}{ps_{1,2}} \quad (1)$$

where $ps_{1,2}$ – percentage share of very poor and poor ratings, %; $ps_{4,5}$ – percentage share of good and very good ratings, %.

The essence of the proposed FSI index (feature significance index) consists in the fact that it shows how many times the number of good and very good ratings for the given feature exceeds the number of poor and very poor ratings for this product feature. Thus, the FSI index provides information on the differentiation of positive and negative assessments of the considered product feature. The value of the FSI index exceeding 1.0 informs about the advantage of the positive assessment (good and very good ratings) over the negative ratings (poor and very poor ratings). On the other hand, the value of the FSI index below 1.0 indicates that negative assessments of the considered feature dominated over positive assessments.

The Statistica v.13 software (StatSoft Polska, Kraków, Poland) was used to analyze the survey results, including descriptive statistics. For statistical data analysis, we applied a non-parametric test, which is applicable to the analysis of data from groups of unequal size (Borowski, 2020). We used the chi-square (χ^2) test and assumed statistical significance at the level of 0.05. The grouping variables in the test were the respondents' place of residence (taking into account four options of residence) and their education (taking into account four levels of education). In order to assess the correlation between variables from surveys, a correlation matrix was compiled. The Spearman's r correlation coefficient was determined. The significance level of the correlations was set at $p = 0.05$. Correlation coefficients between variables were used in the discussion of research results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of the surveyed group of respondents

The study was carried out in a group of young people. The group of respondents was people between 20 and 29 years old. In Poland, according to Population Pyramid, the age group mentioned above constitutes about 12%, which is why in our research we chose a group of 102 respondents. For the age criterion of the respondents, such a sample was considered representative for subsequent statistical analysis. The population of people participating in the survey was not representative in terms of gender. Most of the study participants were women (70.6%). When collecting the questionnaires with the answers, we did not introduce the criterion of balancing the number of answers from women and men. Our previous surveys carried out as part of the diploma theses at our University indicated the dominant share of women in purchases of food products. Such a dominant share of women in the evaluation of dairy products was also characteristic of the presented research. A detailed description of the group of people participating in the study takes into account the percentage of respondents in terms of education and place of residence. In the structure of respondents participating in the survey regarding preferences on the dairy products market, the largest share was constituted by people living in the city of over 300,000 inhabitants (37.3%) and in the countryside (36.3%). The remaining part of the respondents (26.4%) were people from cities with up to 300,000 inhabitants. More than half of the respondents (57.8%) were people with higher education, while the second most numerous group (35.3%) consisted of people with secondary education. The smallest number of respondents was in the group with basic education (primary and vocational), i.e. 6.9%. By completing the survey, a group of young people had the opportunity to demonstrate their approach to the use of healthy food, evaluation of biodegradable packaging and other packaging features, as well as dairy products.

Assessment of selected features of dairy products in the study

In the first part of the survey, the question of assessing the general preferences of young consumers regarding selected features of dairy products offered on the market was raised. The results of the research in this area are shown in Fig. 1.

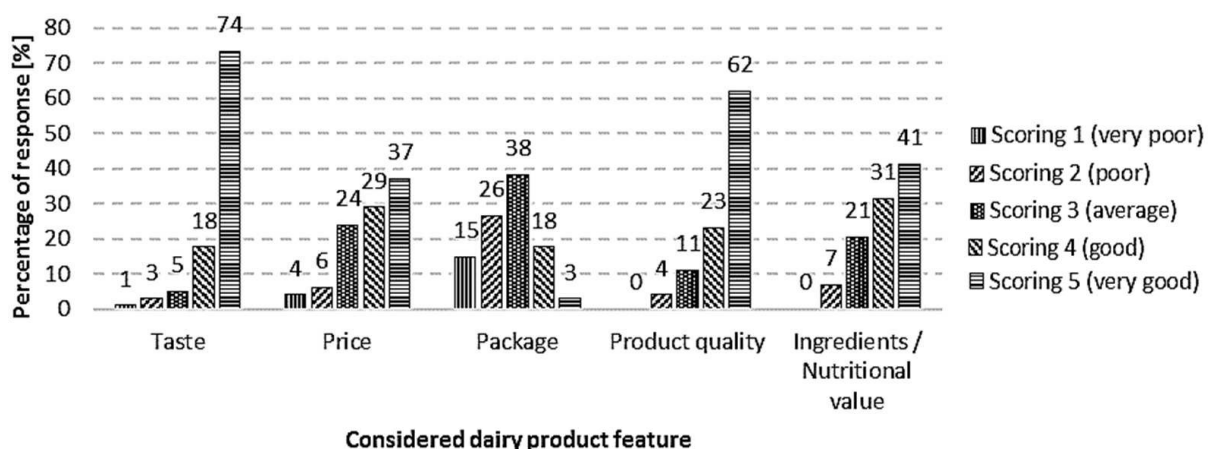


Figure 1. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding the importance of dairy product features, taking into account the scoring scale from 1 to 5.

Respondents could indicate the importance of individual features of dairy products on a scale of 1 to 5, taking into account the following gradation: 1 – very poor, 2 – poor, 3 – average, 4 – good, 5 – very good. The analysis of survey results shows that the highest average point value (4.60) was given by the respondents to taste, and slightly lower (4.43) to the quality of the dairy product. In contrast, packaging was considered the lowest rated feature by the respondents participating in the study - the average number of points awarded in this case was 2.68.

Included together percentage of responses in the very poor and poor evaluation group was on average for all considered features of dairy products (mean \pm SD) 11.96% \pm 13.22%. Such a large standard deviation (SD) results from the fact that while in the case of four features the percentage of ‘very poor and poor’ responses did not exceed 10%, so in the case of packaging evaluation, the percentage of ‘very poor and poor’ responses was as high as 41% (15% very poor + 26% poor). The average percentage share of responses in the group of average scores was across all the considered features (mean \pm SD) 16.78% \pm 12.40%. By far the highest average percentage of responses was found in the group of good and very good grades. For good and very good grades considered together it was (mean \pm SD) 56.93% \pm 32.09%, while the spread of the percentage share of good and very good grades in this case ranged from about 21% (feature: packaging) to about 91% (feature: taste).

Analyzing the distribution of responses for the assessed features of dairy products (Fig. 1), one can point to a trend of a growing percentage of points awarded on a scale of 1 to 5 points. This trend is not only about the assessment of one feature, i.e. packaging of dairy products. In this case, the distribution of percentage share of points on a scale of 1–5 is similar to the normal distribution.

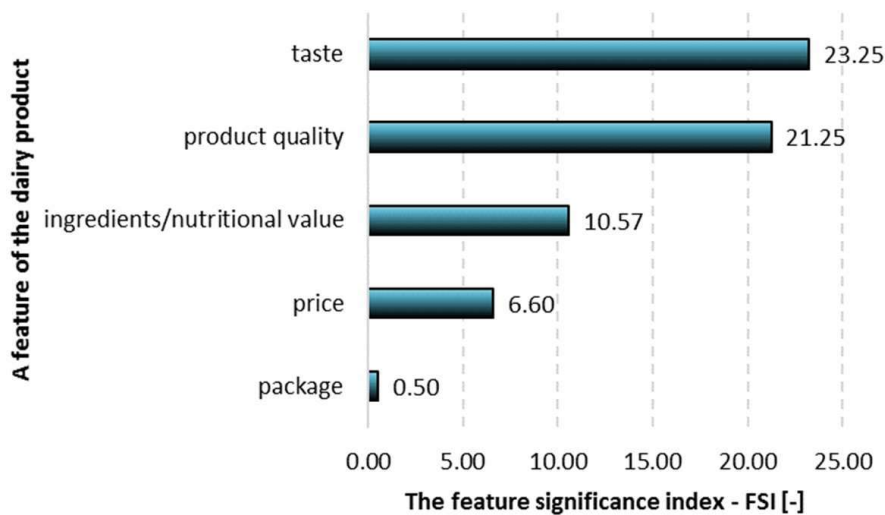


Figure 2. Ranking of selected features of dairy products based on the feature significance index (FSI) in the study of young consumers.

For the detailed analysis of the results of this part of research, the feature significance index (FSI) was also used. On the basis of the relation of the percentage share of responses in the group of good and very good opinions to the percentage share of responses in the group of poor and very poor opinions, a ranking of dairy product features was established (Fig. 2). The highest relation (23.25) was found in the case of

taste, and the lowest (0.50) for the package. While in the case of a direct comparison, the average taste rating was about 1.7 times higher compared to the packaging rating (4.60 versus 2.68, respectively), in the ranking based on the feature significance index (FSI) this difference was more than 46 times.

The problem of the overall appearance of packaging in the study

Similarly to the assessment of dairy product features, respondents could indicate the significance of individual packaging dairy product features on a scale of 1 to 5, taking into account the following gradation: 1 – very poor, 2 – poor, 3 – medium, 4 – good, 5 – very good. A summary of the importance of features regarding the packaging of dairy products in the opinion of respondents is presented in Fig. 3.

The diversity of the assessment of individual packaging features of dairy products by respondents (Fig. 3) can be summarized by comparing the average point value given to the considered features in the research. The highest average point value (3.89) was found in the case of easy identification of a dairy product based on packaging. Whereas the lowest average point value (3.34) among the assessed features of dairy product packaging was obtained in the shape of the packaging. Taking into account the point scale included in the survey (from 1 to 5 points), the significance of each packaging feature of dairy products was assessed by respondents above the average value resulting from the point range, i.e. 2.5 points.

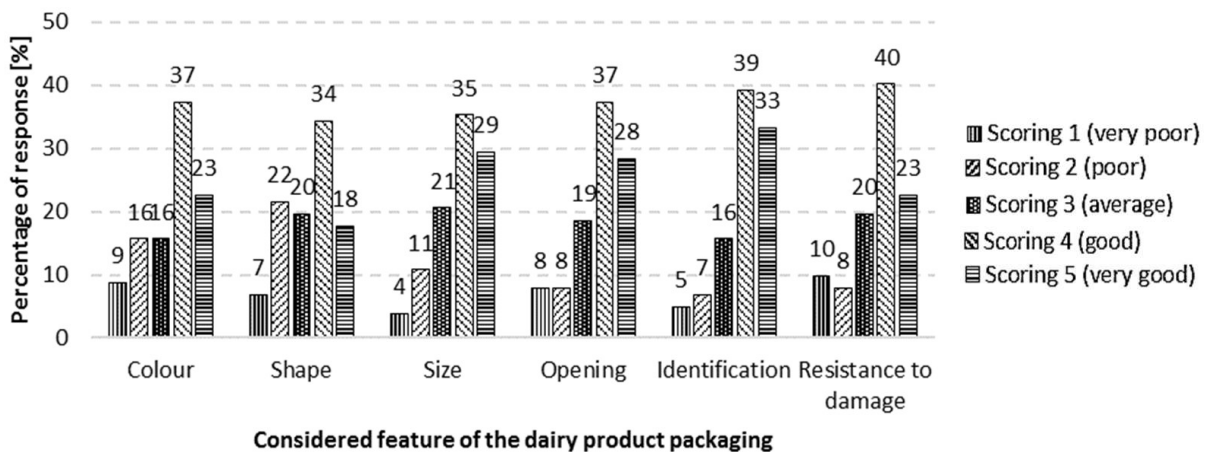


Figure 3. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding the importance of packaging product features, taking into account the point scale from 1 to 5.

Analyzing the results of the research (respondents' answers), the considered features of dairy product packaging were divided into two categories, i.e. visual and functional features. The average rating of the importance of packaging visual features (colour, size and easy identification) was 3.71 and was higher compared to the average rating of the significance of packaging functional features (shape, ease of opening / closing the packaging and resistance to damage), which was 3.54. In the study, young people paid more attention to the importance of information features than the functional features of dairy product packaging.

Analyzing the results of the survey, the percentage share of three groups of responses was determined for the assessed features of dairy product packaging. It was a group of answers with grades 1 and 2 (very poor and poor), grade 3 (average) and grades

4 and 5 (good and very good). Considering all examined features of dairy product packaging, the percentage share of poor and very poor scores was (mean \pm SD) $18.79\% \pm 5.81\%$, average scores $18.30\% \pm 1.93\%$, and good and very good scores $62.91\% \pm 6.24\%$.

The analysis of survey results regarding the features of dairy product packaging was also carried out taking into account the feature significance index (FSI).

Based on the feature significance index, a ranking of importance of the examined features was made (Fig. 4). The highest index value (6.17) was found for easy product identification, and the lowest (1.83) for the shape of the packaging. The same features were included in the comparison of the highest and lowest average point values (3.89 vs. 3.34) in the assessment of individual packaging features of dairy products. The feature significance index (FSI), however, showed a greater differentiation between considered features of dairy product packaging assessed by young respondents in the survey.

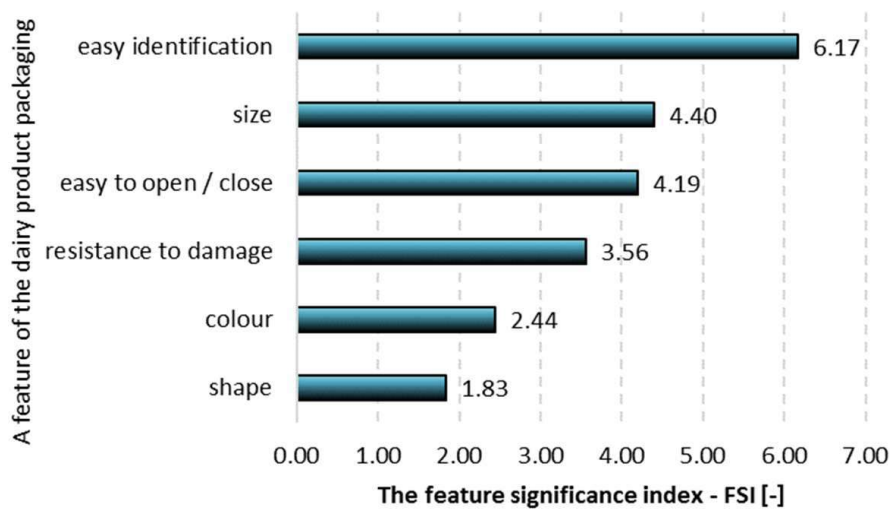


Figure 4. Ranking of feature of the dairy product packaging based on the feature significance index (FSI) in the study of young consumers.

Approach to packaging biodegradability

Referring to the question of environmental protection in the survey, respondents were asked about their approach to packaging as a material for management after use. The intention of the question asked in the survey was to determine whether at the stage of purchasing a dairy product, respondents pay attention to the biodegradability of its packaging. Answering the question: ‘Do you pay attention to whether the dairy product packaging is biodegradable?’ respondents had the opportunity to choose one of four answer options, namely: ‘definitely not’, ‘rather not’, ‘rather yes’ and ‘definitely yes’. It turns out that more than half of the respondents (68.6%) do not pay attention (rather not, definitely not) to what the packaging is made of and whether it is environmentally friendly. Only 10.8% of respondents say that in addition to paying attention to the quality, price and brand of products, they also definitely pay attention to the material from which the packaging is made. This distribution of answers is unfortunately worrying because the majority of respondents are people with higher education (57.8%) and secondary education (35.3%) who would seem to have a slightly greater environmental awareness.

Regional dairy products in opinion of respondents

The following question was asked in the survey: When buying dairy products, do you suggest the size of the company and its recognition on the market? According to the survey, over half of the respondents (53.9%) did not suggest the size of the dairy company and its recognition on the market when purchasing dairy products. The size of a dairy company can be considered in the context of regional production. Therefore, in the next question, regional product issues were developed in the opinion of consumers. Respondents were to express an opinion as to whether the offer from less-known dairy plants is characterized by higher prices due to the possible lower production potential. In the opinion of 57.9% of respondents, the offer of less known dairy plants ‘rather not’, and according to 3.9% of respondents ‘definitely not’ is characterized by higher prices of dairy products.

If, in the opinion of more than 60% of respondents, dairy products from smaller regional companies generally do not exceed the prices of products from larger companies, then the following question could be raised: What features of dairy products from smaller companies may encourage greater interest among consumers? The ranking of responses that the respondents could indicate is presented in Fig. 5.

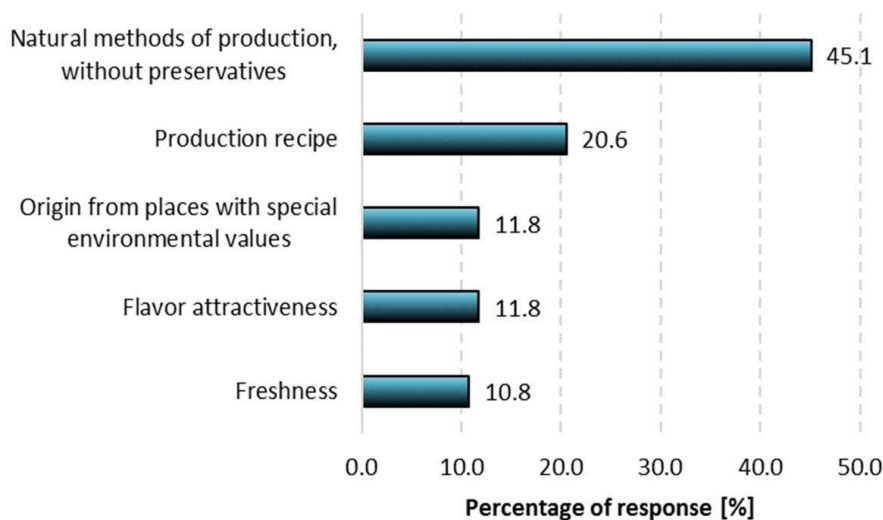


Figure 5. Ranking of features of regional dairy products indicated by respondents in the survey, which may decide about consumer interest in these products.

The results of the survey showed that in the case of dairy products from small, regional factories, the main factor prompting respondents to buy these products are natural methods of production, without preservatives (45.1% of all responses). Respondents paid less attention to freshness (10.8% of all responses), which could distinguish dairy products from regional plants against the background of dairy products from plants with a larger production scale.

Continuing the problem of regional dairy products in the survey, the question was raised how to increase consumer interest in this group of products and their market recognition. Respondents were asked to choose one of four response options, which are listed in Fig. 6, summarizing the result of the opinion survey.

Most respondents (41.2%) said that the best solution would be to create special stands in stores where customers could only find regional dairy products. According to a third of respondents, promotions and tasting at the point of sale could increase sales and interest in regional dairy products. Less than 20% of respondents believed that an increase in advertising expenditure could have a positive impact on the recognition of products manufactured on a limited regional scale. Only a small group of people (5.9% of all respondents) indicated that there is no need to take any action to increase interest in regional dairy products.

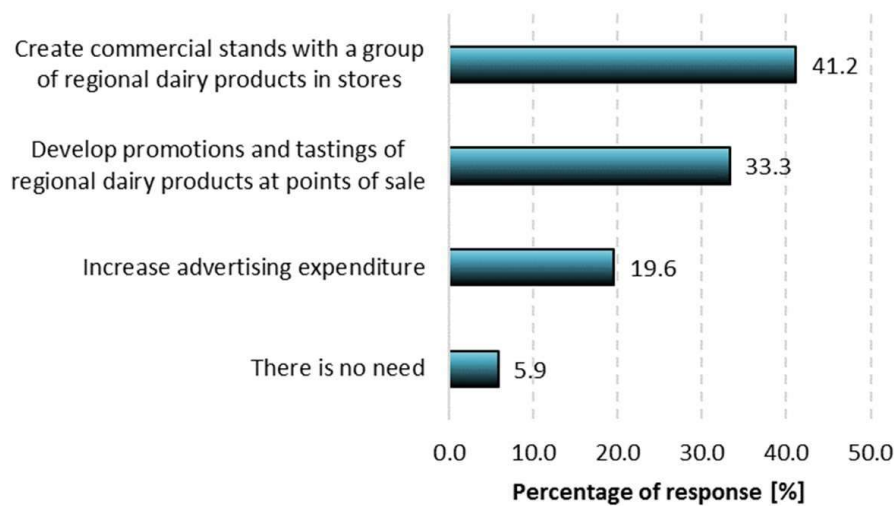


Figure 6. Ranking of responses in the survey on how to raise consumer interest in regional dairy products and their market recognition

Respondents' knowledge of the idea 'from grass to glass'

The last question in the survey was to check the knowledge of respondents about innovation approach to increase quality of dairy production. The question was formulated as following: Do you know the idea 'From grass to glass', associated with milk production? If so, explain how you understand it.

Only 16 people tried to answer this question. Most of the respondents' answers unfortunately deviated completely from the true meaning of this idea. According to some respondents, this idea applies only to glass packaging in which they sometimes buy milk.

A small part of the respondents aptly described what this idea is about. According to respondents, this idea refers to milk production, which is not based on feeding cows only by roughage in the barn, but with fresh grass as a result of grazing animals on pastures, which may help improve milk quality.

Based on the statistical analysis of the survey results, the chi-square test (χ^2) showed a result lower (0.0384) than the statistical significance level (0.05) for the packaging feature - ease product identification for the grouping variable - respondents' place of residence. In the case of the other assessed features of packaging and dairy products, *p*-values exceeded the level of statistical significance (0.05); a slightly higher (0.0560) *p*-value was found for the product feature - price. On the other hand, for the variable grouping education for all the assessed features of the packaging and dairy product, the level of statistical significance was higher than 0.05.

Package size and its material are the most important visual elements for purchasing milk products whereas results of investigations carried out by Kuvykaite et al. (2009) showed that form, colour and graphics could be treated as unimportant elements of package. Features of food packaging, including packaging quality, colour and labels stimulate consumer behaviour on the market (Raheem et al., 2014). Research also indicates the impact of packaging and its features on consumer decisions related to purchases (Underwood et al., 2001). The presented results of own research have shown that preferences regarding selected packaging features can be varied depending on the social group being considered.

Statistically significant differences in the overall assessment of packaging for respondents from cities with different populations may result from access to a variety of dairy products. For residents of big cities, the overall image of packaging is important, while for residents of small towns and villages, the overall image of packaging is less important due to the limited range of products available. A huge selection of dairy products in big cities prompts customers when making purchasing decisions, taking into account the overall image of the packaging.

The empirical results show that attitudes toward visual packaging directly influence consumer-perceived food product quality and brand preference. Perceived food product quality also directly and indirectly (through product value) affects brand preference (Wang, 2013).

Table 1. Correlation matrix of selected variables in the survey

	Education	Package colour	Package shape	Product taste	Product quality	Product ingredients	Product price
Education	1.000	-0.066	-0.143	-0.217	-0.244	-0.176	0.038
Package colour		1.000	0.647	0.328	0.312	0.046	0.264
Package shape			1.000	0.333	0.276	0.031	0.218
Product taste				1.000	0.632	0.301	0.287
Product quality					1.000	0.575	0.084
Product ingredients						1.000	0.060
Product price							1.000

The significance level $p = 0.05$.

Analysing data from the correlation matrix (Table 1) including the examined dependent and independent variables, it can be indicated that the strongest correlations were found between the shape and colour of the packaging ($r = 0.647$), as well as between the quality and taste of the assessed dairy products ($r = 0.632$) and between the quality and ingredients of dairy products ($r = 0.575$). Especially the last result (linking the quality with the ingredients of the product) confirms the importance of choosing the right recipe for preparing the product in the context of its attractiveness on the market, when consumers pay significant attention to product quality. It can be noticed one more interesting correlation which is only on the medium level ($r = 0.287$) between product taste and product price which inform that consumer join taste of the products with the price but they don't join to much quality and ingredients with the price ($r = 0.084$ and $r = 0.060$).

The respondents in our study showed no particular interest in biodegradable packaging (question Q3). It seems advisable to include knowledge about biodegradability and the management of packaging and other household waste in the education programs of young people in various types of schools. In particular, it would be necessary to pay attention in educating young people to make them aware of the impact of biodegradability of food packaging on environmental protection and the need to reduce waste (Dilkes-Hoffman et al., 2018). The issue of food packaging and the risks associated with its management can be linked to another important aspect in the education of young people, i.e. avoiding food waste in households (Williams et al., 2020).

Question Q4 from the research concerning innovation production and ecological aspects of dairy products shows that the issue of grass to glass is lack to known to most respondents. Nowadays, most farms have abandoned the daily grazing of animals in favor of a cattle-like lifestyle (Fernandes et al., 2014). According to many experts, this is not a favorable trend, because grazing cows can bring many benefits, including improving cattle health, welfare and environmental sustainability (Yang & Renwick, 2019), improving milk quality, and preserving the traditional countryside landscape. Thus, this idea encourages especially milk producers - farmers, as well as buyers of dairy products to deepen their knowledge of the factors that may affect cattle breeding and milk quality, and in the next stages also the attractiveness of dairy products. Milk production from grazing cows on grassland, compared to the system of keeping cows in cowsheds all year round, is an important element in consumer surveys (Tempesta & Vecchiato, 2013). In addition to the criterion of dairy production technology on the farm, the cited studies also highlighted other consumer evaluation criteria. They were the region of dairy production (divided into different regions of the country or other European Union countries), as well as the area of dairy production (mountainous or lowland). The highlighted criteria are a valuable proposition for developing consumer surveys and their preferences on the market for dairy products derived from milk obtained under various conditions. Consumer behaviour on the market for products from pasture animals is an important factor in assessing the food market. Consumer preferences for products from cows, fattening cattle, sheep and goats kept on pastures are considered in the context of health and assessment of the state of the environment (Stampa et al., 2020). Questions about grazing cows and thus access to grass in a chain that ends with milk consumption are an important element in assessing consumer preferences in the dairy market; the results of this assessment translate into an approach to the dairy cow management system (Jackson et al., 2020). Access to grass does not have to be associated with walking cows to pasture. The idea of zero-grazing, i.e. feeding cows with mechanically harvested fresh grass (Holohan et al., 2021) also fits in the grass-to-glass chain. The examples of interest in whether cows are fed fresh grass confirm the importance attached by consumers to the quality of milk as a raw material for processing. Access to grass and a grazing area also meets the requirements of cows' welfare. The knowledge of young people about animal welfare, as confirmed by the research by Gaworski & Turbakiewicz (2020), may be related to their education and sensitivity to contemporary problems of improving animal production. The small share of people in our study who were able to explain the idea of 'From grass to glass' indicated a low level of awareness of the modern approach to dairy production.

Developing the problem of regional products in the discussion, when consumers decide to buy regional products under their own brands, they are generally sure that these products actually come from the well-known producers. According to research (Profeta & Hamm, 2019), the factors motivating to purchase local food products may also be the need to support the local economy, greater trust in local food products, belief in eco-friendliness of products from one's own region, awareness of supporting animal welfare by purchasing local food products. However, in the case of domestic products sold in large chain stores, it is not uncommon for foreign products to be marked as domestic, so that customers who want to support domestic production and prefer these products buy them in the belief that they are really domestic products. In such a case, the office of Competition and Consumer Protection imposes severe financial penalties on stores networks that use unfair information. The problem of assessing regional products, not only in terms of their availability, price and quality, but also the certainty of the source of raw materials for the production of dairy products may be the subject of further consumer research.

CONCLUSIONS

Majority of young respondents do not pay attention to whether dairy packaging is environmentally friendly. This may result from a lack of knowledge about environmental hazards or the perception of individual participation in environmental protection as negligible.

For all the features of dairy product packaging included in the study, very good and good grades prevailed over poor and very poor grades. The smallest difference in the number of ratings between the good and poor categories was in the shape and colour of the package. The positive attitude of consumers in contact with the packaging of the products offered on the market may confirm the acceptance of the continuous improvement of the attractiveness of the products.

When assessing selected features of dairy products, the young respondents appreciated, first of all, the taste and quality of the products. Nowadays, in view of the rich market offer, these features determine the competitiveness of dairy products. The issue of current research is the assessment of the relationship between the taste and quality of products, both on the basis of laboratory tests and consumer opinions.

In the case of regional products, respondents highlighted as the most important natural methods of their production without preservatives. In the opinion of young consumers, promotional activities and tasting at sales points provide an opportunity for greater interest in regional dairy products.

Few respondents are interested in milk production trends and were able to explain the idea 'From grass to glass'. The conducted research indicates the need to raise the awareness of young consumers about the factors determining high-quality production and dairy products. It is possible to propose organizing trips to dairy farms, especially for young people from cities.

Strengthening the links between consumers and the sphere of dairy production now and in the future may contribute to the systematic improvement of the effectiveness of the dairy economy system. In future research, it will be worth considering the selection of respondents who are interested in healthy food and environmental protection,

including the management of food packaging. In this way, it will be possible to conduct an in-depth analysis of consumer behaviour in the food market.

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