Attitudes towards sustainable food and cooking: Consumer segments and marketing implications

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Attitudes towards sustainable food and cooking: Consumer segments and marketing implications

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Introduction
Food consumption patterns in prosperous societies increasingly constitute sustainability problems (Reisch et al. 2013). For consumers it is not only the important to change dietary patterns into consumption standards that are not only sustainable but also healthy (Aschemann-Witzel 2015). Health and sustainable behaviors are very much related (Magnusson et al. 2003; Grunert 2005; Aschemann-Witzel 2015). Even though there are several studies examining the relationship between cooking practices and health (Caraher et al. 1999; Brunner et al. 2010; van der Horst et al. 2011; Hartmann et al. 2013; Chu et al. 2013; Ducott et al. 2015; McGowan et al. 2016; Burton et al. 2017), the link between sustainability commitment and cooking remains weakly explored.

Objective
The aim of the current contribution was to determine the factors that influence consumers’ attitudes towards sustainable foods and cooking. In specific, the objective of this paper is to identify subgroups of consumers with similar patterns of attitudes towards sustainable foods and cooking.

Methodology
A consumer survey was conducted with 595 consumers in Germany. Consumers were recruited via a market research institute, according to quotas representative for the German population. Data collection was conducted online, using a computer-assisted self-interviewing technique.

Results
All variables had valid Cronbach’s α ranging from 0.60 to 0.90. Items with negative meanings were transcoded (e.g. “I don’t care about cooking”). The factor analysis on attitudes towards sustainable foods and cooking resulted in two factors. One factor captured all positive statements on attitudes towards sustainable foods (organic, fair traded, regional and seasonal foods). The second factor contained all statements on cooking attitudes. All items could be used, as they yielded a satisfactory fit (Cronbach’s alpha=0.7).

Table 1: Age and gender distribution within consumer target groups for cooking and sustainability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Uninvolved males</th>
<th>Passionate cooks</th>
<th>Adventurous activists</th>
<th>Kitchen evaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age (in years)</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions
The segments showed significant differences in their attitudes towards sustainable food products and cooking. Consumer groups also showed differences in sustainable food consumption patterns and cooking practices as well as in socio-demographics (ref. to Table 1) and in background characteristics.

The cluster analysis segmented consumers into four groups: uninvolved males, passionate cooks, adventurous activists, and kitchen evaders (ref. to Fig 1). The segments showed significant differences in their attitudes towards sustainable food products and cooking. Consumer groups also showed differences in sustainable food consumption patterns and cooking practices as well as in socio-demographics (ref. to Table 1) and in background characteristics.

References

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