

## PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF CONSUMERS FROM ROMANIA REGARDING POTATOES PURCHASING

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**Abstract** The aim of the paper is to investigate the Romanians perceptions and experiences regarding potatoes purchasing. In this respect, an online questioner was created and distributed using the SurveyRock platform in order to evaluate the main aspects that consumers from Romania find to be relevant when it comes to potatoes purchasing. The questioner focused on the importance of potato presenting in the context of marketing. 120 persons have answered the on line questioner. Most respondents consume potatoes 1-2 times per week i.e. 72 %. When the Romanian consmers purchase potatoes, they value the place of origin, size of the potatoes and if they are washed.

**Key words:** potatoes, consumers, purchasing, perceptions

### INTRODUCTION

According to Agricultural Marketing Resource Center “potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum*) are the fourth most important food crop in the world” [1], therefore potatoes marketing represent a key factor. In general, “potatoes aren't known for being very profitable, but with the right approach you can take advantage of the many varieties and possibilities” [2], but there are several marketing methods that can make this business quite profitable. Here are six ways: 1.Sell New Potatoes, 2.Sell Marble Potatoes, 3.Sell Them In Sacks, 4.Sell In Bulk, 5.Sell Specialty To Chefs, 6.Make Value Added Potato Products [2]. Another method is to apply a function that determines the competitiveness level of a product (potatoes in our case) in order to help the decision making process in marketing [3]. This function helps with the dynamical evaluation of the competitiveness level of a product (existing or new) at a given moment. Romania is one of the European countries that has a high average consumption of potatoes (in 2013 is ok 98.6 kg per capita [4, 5]). Thus, the purpose of the study is to evaluate the perceptions and experiences of consumers from Romania regarding potatoes purchasing in order to establish the criteria which the consumers fallow in purchasing.

### MATERIALS AND METHOD

A survey was conducted using an online questioner. 120 adults from Romania were selected using the non-random method, of unbound quotas, by gender adage. For the online questioner the SurveyRock platform was used.

### RESULTS

120 persons have answered the online questioner. 40 % of them have completed the questioner using a mobile device and 60 % using a desktop. All of the persons that filled out

the questioner have answered positive to the question whether or not they enjoy eating potatoes.

Most respondents consume potatoes 1-2 times per week, 72 % or 3-5 times a week, 22% (Fig. 1).

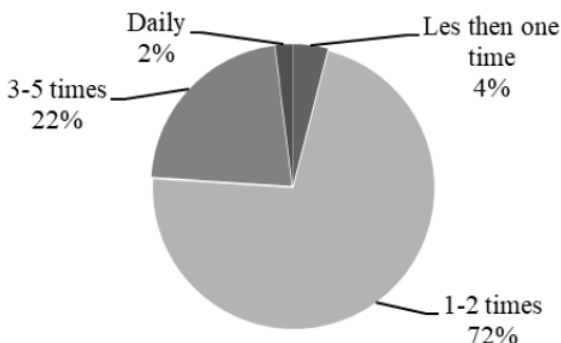


Figure 1. Average weekly consumption of potatoes in Romania

Only 2 % of respondents knew any type of potato variety, most of the respondents answered the “Which potato varieties you prefer?” question with “white” or “red”. Equal amounts of respondents choose white or red potato so there was no significant difference in preferences regarding the general white or red potatoes varieties. 38 % of respondents have chosen the place of origin as the aspect that matter most when purchasing potatoes, 30 % size of the potatoes and 12% if they are washed. Accessibility was important only for 9 % of the respondents, price only 7 % and packaging 2 % (Fig. 2).

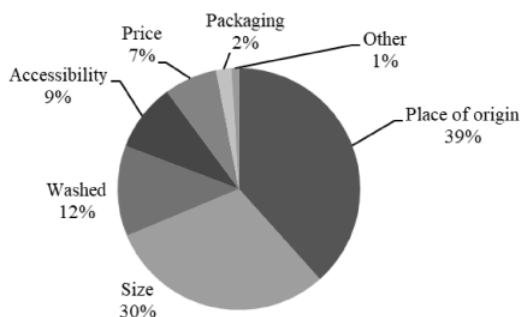
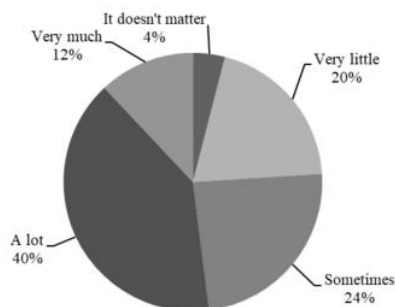


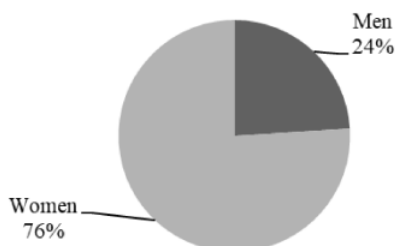
Figure 2. Issues that matter most for the consumers when purchasing potatoes

When directly asked how much does it matter to buy washed potatoes, without earth and impurities on their surface, 40 % of the respondents said a lot, 24 % sad sometimes and only 4 % sad that it didn't matter at all (Fig. 3).

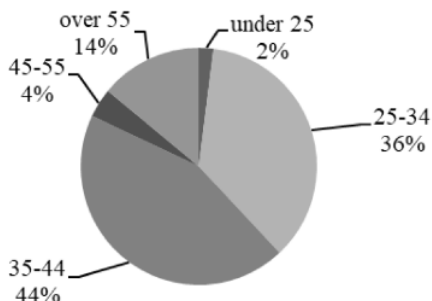


**Figure 3.** Level on importance for buying potatoes washed without earth and impurities on their surface

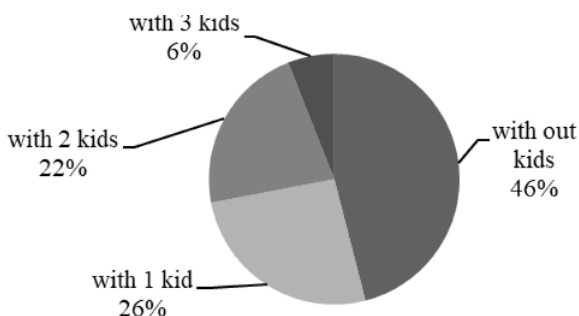
Most of the respondents were women 76 % (fig. 4), with the ages between 25-44 years (80 %) (Fig. 5) married (80 %, Fig. 6) with 1-3 children (60 %, Fig. 7) and have a PhD (46 %, Fig. 8).



**Figure 4.** Distribution of men and women that responded to the questionnaire



**Figure 5.** Distribution of respondents, according to age



**Figure 6.** Distribution of respondents, according to number of kids

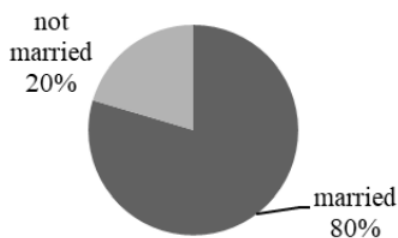


Figure 7. Distribution of respondents, according to marriage status

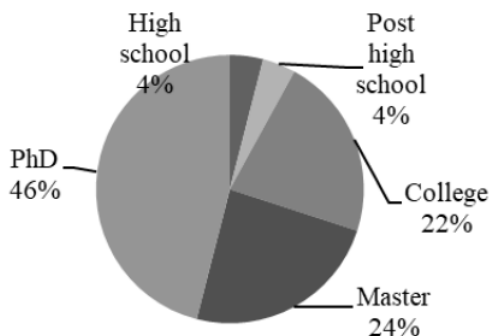


Figure 8.

## CONCLUSIONS

According to the obtained results:

1. The average consumption of potatoes, in Romania, is 1-3 times a week;
2. The most important aspect when purchasing potatoes, for the respondents of the questioner, is the place of origin of the potatoes.
3. Washed potatoes have extra marketability properties than unwashed potatoes, since 40 % of respondents said that buying potatoes washed without earth and impurities matter a lot.

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