

Study of the importance of emotional factors connected to the colors of fresh-cut cactus pear fruits in consumer purchase choices for a marketing positioning strategy

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Abstract

Cactus pear has always aroused curiosity because of its shape and its particular structural characteristics (plate and spiny cladodes, oval fruits of different colors and flowers of an enchanting beauty). This plant evokes the territory where it grows, characterized by a sub-tropical climate, which in Europe is represented by the region of Sicily (Southern Italy), that is one of the main producers of the Mediterranean area. Sicily has three native cultivars with different colors of the fruit: red, yellow and white. The variety with the yellow fruit is the most widespread, although all of them are commercialized. The chromatic variety of these fruits might be an important element of attraction for consumers. Starting from this assumption in this study it was measured the attractiveness for consumers of the colors of the Sicilian cactus pear fruits. There were investigated the unconscious emotional impulses that lead consumers to the desire of satisfaction of the underlying needs, instead than primary needs, that depend on the view of the fruit colors. We also investigated secondary needs' connections with the typical elements of cactus pear's territory of origin. These connections would appear crucial for Sicilian cactus pear repositioning in the international retail market. A sample of consumers was surveyed in some European Union Countries; using a stratified sampling scheme We showed pictures of Sicilian cactus pear plants and fruits, in their growing territory and in different life contexts. Also a consumer sensory test on fresh-cut fruits was made. Data were processed with multivariate statistics methods. Color was one of the main drivers for consumers to buy these fruits, combination of colors, with presence of red fruits, was preferred. Thanks to evocative pictures of plants and fruits of cactus pear, the consumer's secondary needs associated to its territory of growing were revealed. Consumer profiles were identified.