

GENERATION MARKETING IN STRATEGIC MARKETING MANAGEMENT: CASE STUDY OF HONEY MARKET

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Abstract: The aim of the paper is to apply generation marketing in the development of strategies in honey marketing. The research is based on primary data obtained by questionnaire survey conducted in 2018. The research sample contains 1100 honey consumers between 18-70 years. The questionnaires were distributed online (via e-mails and social media tools) and in paper version. For achieving the results, data were processed and analysed by descriptive statistics, chi-square test of independence, Mann-Whitney U test and Categorical Principal Components Analysis. Significant differences were detected among generations in terms of their preferences, their consumer and purchasing behaviour. The results of the research might be an useful situation analysis for beekeepers who should consider these differences when designing marketing mix strategies. The different generations of consumers need promotion tools, so in their promotion strategy, beekeepers should consider forming of event marketing as well, such as excursion to apiaries, observation hives, honey festivals, seminars with honey degustation or honey breakfast at schools.

Key words: honey market, consumer behaviour, age cohorts

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Introduction

Euroregions Each generation of consumers possesses unique needs, wants, desires, opinions, values or vision, therefore they should not be treated in the same way, and the existing differences should be considered by the marketers, producers and companies. Segmentation based on age cohorts/generation is frequently used mainly due to the fact that consumer's needs, wants, desires differs by age (Hoskisson et al., 2008) and the new perceptions and attitudes of different age groups create new relationship patterns between companies and consumers (Vrontis and Yhrassou, 2007). This process, besides finding the appropriate interaction and marketing interface with the consumers, will call the attention of businesses to outline and apply new value creation and business models (Grönroos, 2011; Pabian and Pabian, 2014; Seroka-Stolka et al., 2017).

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Today, the food market is experiencing a huge attention from the side of consumers in regards preferring healthy and natural products and also from food safety aspects (Popp et al., 2018). Many consumers are attracted by healthy lifestyle and healthy eating habits in order to maintain their health. The increasing popularity of honey as a multifunctional product which can be used either as food, medicine or in cosmetics, causes that honey consumers have different consumption patterns, preferences, expectations and perception of this product. This variability in consumer behaviour can be influenced by different factors, including differences across age cohorts.

Literature Review

Generation marketing divides age cohorts to many categories and uses various names such as toddlers, small children, teenagers, adults, Baby boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z. It represents an important tool in marketing for identification of market potential (Lamb et al., 2009). Age cohorts are differentiated according to the needs and desires based on common experiences, skills and practices marked by living and bringing up in the same period, at a specific historic location, having common traits, life courses, value orientations, and behavioral patterns (Becker, 1992). The people of the same generation were influenced by the same social factors, and their lifestyle, opinions, and values were shaped by the same historical and social events (Ting et al., 2017). Generational theory builds on that an age cohort who experienced similar events in a similar way will develop similar values, attitudes and expectations, but the definition of a generation should consider characteristics of “social space” i.e. the geographical location or gender of the cohorts (Parry, 2014). Nevertheless, most scholars and practitioners adopt the American definition of generations, which is considered globally applicable. According to this definition, consumers are divided into four main age cohorts:

Baby boomers are those consumers who were born between 1946 and 1964; their main values are connected to family, health, responsibility and work. The main part of the group is still active players of the labour market, but some of them are pensioners. Their most favoured and most suitable communication is verbal with simple facts. Consumers of this generation believe in the opinion and recommendations from specialists. In advertising, they are more attracted by text than pictures. This generation is price-sensitive; they are not attracted by luxury or prestige products. (Williams and Page, 2011) and prefer real life experiences (Borges-Tiago et al., 2016).

Generation X is consumers who were born between 1965 and 1977. Their most preferred values are high quality, premium price, personal satisfaction and enjoyment. In terms of technology, they prefer mobile banking, online shopping (Berraies et al., 2017) and enjoy searching and surfing through various offers on the internet. This generation is more technically oriented and focuses more on product properties and its utility. During purchase, they are motivated intrinsically

(Krahn and Galambos, 2013) and use traditional decision-making methods with risk avoidance (Lissitsa and Kol, 2016).

Generation Y (or Millennials) were born between 1978 and 1994, they grew up in a world full of electronic devices, and their psychological and cognitive needs were influenced by technology and most of their communication is via internet and social media (Gnaldi and Del Sarto, 2017). They are the generation that has received the most marketing attention and they have a tendency to spend money on experiences rather than material possessions. Generation Y is faster informed than older age cohorts – although there is a sub-group of the generation who grew up in a pre-digital world and they adapted later to our day's technology – and tries to be more independent. Moreover, they have own vision of a new world and wants to change traditional approaches to innovative ones (Verma, 2017).

Consumers of *Generation Z* were born in 1995 and later. These are consumers born in the digital age with inclination to virtual reality and the online environment; they are comfortable with technologies as they grew up in the current environment of instant mobile communications. Moreover, younger members of the cohort may not remember any other environment. They are mostly oriented on new technologies, retail stores or brand loyalty. This generation is characterised as innovative and creative with strong desires for experiences filled with enjoyment. They are often seeking to feel safe by running from the real world to virtual reality (Priporas et al., 2017).

The main objective of the paper was to identify and describe consumer segments on the honey market in Slovakia by application of generation marketing, with a special focus on their needs, preferences, consumption patterns and marketing tools, which might serve as a key element for beekeepers to be effective target market segments by designing consumer-driven marketing strategies.

Methodology

The consumer research and mapping complex consumer behaviour on honey market was based on questionnaire survey conducted in the period between December 2017 and February 2018. Survey was focused on honey consumers between 18 and 70 years living in Slovakia. For the research, six hypotheses were formulated:

H1: There is a dependency between annual consumption of honey and selected demographic variables (gender, age, education, place of residence)

H2: There is a dependency between honey consumption frequency and generations

H3: There is a dependency between consumption habits in the childhood and generations

H4: There is a dependency between purchasing behaviour and generations

H5: There is a dependency between honey preferences and generations

H6: There is a dependency between the preference of selected flavoured honey (honey with cacao and nuts) and generations.

The representative sample size of 1100 respondents was estimated on regional level according to the age structure of Nitra region with an acceptable margin of error $\pm 2.95\%$ at a confidence level of 95%. Questionnaires were distributed both in printed and online version via emails or social media (Facebook).

Obtained research sample contains 57.2% females and 42.8% males, with secondary (51%) and higher (49%) education, 62.2% live in towns and 37.8% in villages. The main data of the sample are summarized by Table 1.

Table 1. Data of the research sample

Monthly salary	up to 400 €	30.5%
	401-600 €	23.0%
	601-800 €	18.4%
	above 800 €	28.1%
Economic activity	Employed	50.5%
	Pensioner	15.7%
	Student	21.3%
	Entrepreneur/Freelancer	8.8%
	Maternity leave	2.1%
	Unemployed	1.5%
Household structure	Live with spouse and children	32.5%
	Live with parents	28.3%
	Live with spouse/partner without children	21.1%
	Live alone	13.1%
	Live only with children	5.1%

According to the age cohorts, respondents were divided into four categories: 11.8% Generation Z (18-24 years), 33.6% Generation Y (25-40 years), 20% Generation X (41-50 years) and 34.6% Baby boomers (51-70 years). Data were processed and analyses in statistical software SAS Enterprise Guide 7.1, by applying the following statistical tests: Chi-square goodness of fit test, Chi-square test of independence, Mann-Whitney U test. In addition, the Categorical Principal Components Analysis (CATPCA) was performed in SPSS 25.0.

Results and Discussion

Representativeness of the sample was tested by Chi-square goodness of fit test and the results showed that research sample is representative regarding the age structure of Nitra region. In case of *H1* hypothesis, the results of chi-square test of independence, only the age has statistically significant impact on annual honey consumption ($p\text{-value} = <0.0001$). The consumption patterns of the different generations summarized in Table 2, and as it is shown, older generations (Baby boomers and Generation X) consume higher amounts of honey than Generation Y and Z. *H2* hypothesis was proven ($p\text{-value} = <0.0001$) and it could be concluded that the consumption frequency of honey is higher in the case of Baby boomers and Generation X than Generation Y and Z. The lowest frequency indicates Generation Z – consumers between 18-24 years (see Table 2). The third hypothesis *H3* were

proven as well (p-value = <0.0001). The majority of respondents in Generation Z group used to consumer honey in their childhood only occasionally (see Table 2). By applying Chi-square test of independence and Mann-Whitney U test, *H4* hypothesis (purchase habits – p-value = <0.0001; purchase frequency – p-value = 0.0151 and amount of purchased honey – p-value = 0.0111), *H5* hypothesis (honeydew honey – p-value = <0.0001; creamed honey – p-value = <0.0001 and trademarks – p-value = 0.0006) and *H6* hypothesis (honey with cacao – p-value = <0.0001 and honey with nuts – p-value = 0.0281) were confirmed.

Table 2. The consumption patterns according to generations

Honey consumption		Baby-boomers (70-51 yrs)	Generation X (50-41 yrs)	Generation Y (40-25 yrs)	Generation Z (24-18 yrs)
Consumption frequency	everyday	30.5%	25.9%	18.9%	16.2%
	few times per week	38.4%	42.7%	33.0%	32.3%
	once a week	11.8%	11.8%	17.8%	16.2%
	once a month and less	19.2%	19.5%	30.3%	35.4%
Annual consumption	up to 1 kg	21.3%	25.5%	45.4%	57.7%
	1 kg	15.5%	13.6%	13.5%	14.6%
	≥ 2 kg	63.2%	60.9%	41.1%	27.7%
Consumption habits in childhood	regularly	59.52%	54.42%	55.34%	30.23%
	occasional	40.48%	45.58%	44.66%	69.77%

Based on analysis of the six hypotheses, it could be concluded that statistically significant differences exist related to the consumer behaviour, purchasing behaviour and preferences between generations. By applying contingency tables, four age segments (generations) were characterized and profiled.

Baby Boomers

The first segment represents both pensioners and employed people between 51-70 years, most of them have secondary education and they earn up to 600 € in net per month. They are situated in a household with a spouse without children or living alone. Baby boomers are daily consumers of honey with annual consumption equal or more than 2 kg. In this segment, honey is consumed throughout the whole year, both in the morning and evening as a sweetener to beverages or in pure form directly from the jar. Honey is not only a type of food, but also it is consumed as a special medicine. Regarding the purchasing behaviour, this cohort represents regular buyers who prefer to make honey reserves by purchasing 2 and more kg of honey per purchase. For Baby boomers, the most important criteria during purchase are quality and country of origin. The majority of the cohort is aware of imported honey and they especially prefer to buy honey with the trademark “Slovak honey”. The least important feature of the products is packaging and price. In terms of preference, from monofloral honeys, this age group mostly prefers

acacia, linden, and they have a positive attitude towards honeydew honey as well. As for flavoured honey, they showed positive preference to honey with ginger and honey with nuts as well as to creamed honey which is a special form of honey. The most frequent place of purchase is directly from the beekeeper and farmers' markets with optimal price 6 € per kg. Pharmacies and hospitals are also considered as possible places for honey purchase. Baby boomers gain information about honey mostly from beekeepers, family, acquaintances and friends, internet and press, while honey promotion is frequently found at exhibitions, fairs, farmers' markets, honey degustation, internet (webpage, blogs and vlogs) and television.

Generation X

The second segment is represented by employed respondents between 41-50 years mostly with secondary education, earning more than 800 € in net per month and living in a household with a spouse and children. A typical member of generation X consumes honey few times per week which represents 2 and more kg per year. Honey is consumed all the year, both in the morning and evening in form of sweetener in beverages or directly from the jar. Honey is considered and used as medicine, too. Generation X belongs to regular buyers of honey and purchases honey if necessary or makes honey reserves. The typical amount of honey bought is 1 to 2-5 kg per purchase. The most important criteria during purchase are quality, taste and country of origin, while packaging and price are the least important. This age cohort is also aware of adulteration of imported honey and prefers to buy honey with the trademark "Slovak honey", which ensures high quality and Slovak origin. From monofloral honeys acacia and linden honey are preferred and a positive attitude is shown towards honeydew honey. Regarding the flavoured honey strong preference is shown for honey with nuts, honey with pollen and honey with honeycomb. Creamed honey is known by the majority, however only one third is purchasing this form of honey. Generation X mostly prefers to buy honey directly from beekeepers or at farmers' markets with optimal price 7-10 € per kg. Pharmacies and vending machines were mostly indicated as opportunities for preferred purchase places. The most frequent source of information about honey are beekeeper, family, acquaintances and friends, internet and festivals or exhibitions while the main source of promotion are exhibitions, fairs, farmers' markets, honey degustation and social media (Facebook, Instagram), internet and local posters or billboard.

As a first conclusion, it may be stated that there are many similarities between the two older generations, in purchasing habits, and traditional, almost everyday consumption of honey. These consumers have a strong attitude towards locally produced honey with national trademark.

Generation Y

The third segment includes employed or studying respondents between 25-40 years with higher education, earning either more than 800 € or up to 400 € in net per month and living in a household with parents. Generation Y is characterised with

less frequent consumption of honey, as annual consumption is 1 kg and less. Honey is consumed mostly during winter season, involving Christmas, both in the morning and evening. The most frequent form of consumption is as a food additive in a form of sweetener in beverages or spread. The most important criteria are quality, taste, country of origin and the least are packaging and price. More than a half of respondents is not aware of honey adulteration and do not know about the trademark "Slovak honey". In terms of honey preference, acacia and linden honey are preferred. Compared to the results of the older age groups, it is interesting, that respondents of this segment have a neutral attitude towards honeydew honey or do not know this type of honey. From flavoured honey, the most preferred are honey with nuts, pollen, honeycomb, or honey with cinnamon, while creamed honey is unknown for most respondents. In general, honey is frequently purchased from a beekeeper, at farmers' markets or in retail stores with optimal price 7-10 € per kg. Generation Y would prefer to buy honey from pharmacies or vending machines. Information about honey is obtained mainly from family, acquaintances and friends, beekeeper, internet and festivals or exhibitions. The most frequent form of honey promotion is observed in exhibitions, fairs, farmers' markets, honey degustation, social media (Facebook, Instagram) and internet.

Generation Z

The last generation involves mostly students between 18-24 years with secondary education (unfinished higher education), earning up to 400 € in net per month and living with parents. This age cohort represents consumers with the lowest frequency of consumption where the yearly consumption is less than 1 kg. Generation Z mostly does not purchase honey, because the other member of family does it. Those, who purchase honey for themselves, prefer to buy 1 kg of honey once in 3 months. The purchasing criteria are the same as in case of Generation Y. Respondents mostly consumed honey as a food additive during the winter both in the morning and evening in a form of sweetener in beverages or spreads. The majority of respondents is not aware of honey adulteration and does not know the trademark "Slovak honey". The most preferred monofloral honey is acacia and linden honey. Honeydew honey has neutral image or is unknown for this segment. Interesting results were obtained in terms of flavoured honey, where the most preferred ones are honey with cinnamon, cacao and coconut. Generally, the creamed honey is unknown to this generation. Honey is purchased directly from a beekeeper, at farmers' markets, retail stores or at specialty food stores with optimal price 7-10 € per kg. The possible place of purchase would be pharmacies or vending machines. Generation Z mostly gains information about honey from family, acquaintances and friends, beekeeper, internet, festivals or exhibitions. The most frequent form of promotion are exhibitions, fairs, farmers' markets, honey degustation, internet, local poster and billboards, social media (Facebook, Instagram...) and leaflets and brochures. As a common feature of the younger age cohorts (Generation Y and Generation Z), they consume honey mainly during the winter season and they have no knowledge about national trademark labels and

they are not aware of foreign honey and honey products. In addition, the Categorical Principal Components Analysis (CATPCA) was applied to analyse the importance of 7 criteria (factors) which are being considered by respondents during the purchase of honey. These factors are the following: form, origin, packaging, price, quality, taste and type. Respondents evaluated these factors on 7-point grading scale (1- the most important, 7- the least important). CATPCA with Kaiser normalisation and varimax rotation was able to extract 2 components. Based on the loading patterns (Table 3 and Figure 1), the factors were determined as follows: F1 (price, type, form and packaging) and F2 (quality, taste and country of origin).

Table 3. Categorical Principal Components Analysis and Factor Loadings: overall criteria during honey purchase

Dimension/ Factor	Packaging	Form	Type	Price	Quality	Taste	Origin
1	0.821	0.779	0.724	0.698	-0.082	0.065	0.268
2	-0.104	0.163	0.299	0.013	0.894	0.844	0.696

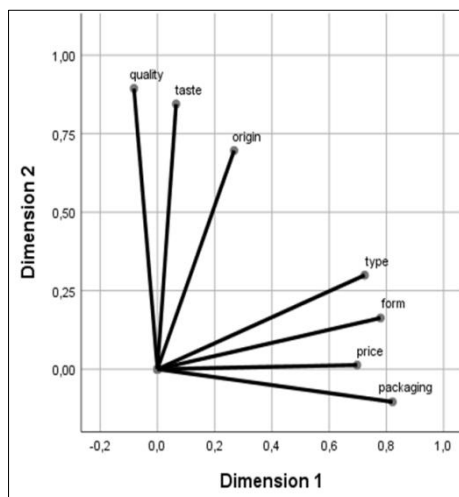


Figure 1. Rotated component loadings

Second factor F2 could be labelled as overall quality, due to the fact that consumers usually evaluate quality of honey according to its taste which was proved in the recent consumer blind sensory test conducted in Slovakia where the quality of honey samples were mostly based on the taste (Šedík et al., 2018). Furthermore, origin, especially the products of domestic origin may be perceived as high quality products. In the international literature, there are several studies regarding honey consumers, which apply market segmentation according to various determinants. For example, a study conducted in Romania, identified three clusters: (1) the common honey consumers who consume honey as basic, everyday product, (2) the younger consumers who are indifferent to honey and (3) enthusiastic

consumers who search honey for its healing properties (Krystallis et al., 2007), while authors Pocol and Marghitas (2008) divided honey consumers in Romania according to attribute of importance such as natural product, sweet taste or medical benefits. Another study in Ireland segmented honey consumers in terms of price and purchasing criteria involving packaging, texture, colour and utility (Murphy et al., 2000). Segmentation of consumers was made in Australia based on the purpose of use revealed four clusters: multi-purpose group, cooking group, beverage group and breakfast group (Batt and Liu, 2012). In addition, Italian consumers were grouped according to their attitudes towards honey into the following categories: environmentally friendly consumers, prointensive production consumers and organic consumers (Cosmina et al., 2016). The different consumption behaviour and preferences of the new generations in different consumption sectors were highlighted by Sago (2010), Gurau (2012), Pomarici and Vecchio (2014). Authors underlined that the young generations will require for new marketing tools and methods and the impacts of new media uses may change consumer behavior (Sago, 2010). The only research mapping consumer behaviour regarding honey and segmenting consumers involving age categories was conducted in Romania (Arvanitoyannis and Krystallis, 2006), however, neither of the above mention research focused on age cohorts and generation marketing. In general, generation segments provide deeper understanding of consumers and honey producers can better target their customers and tailor marketing strategies more effectively (Gyau et al., 2014).

Conclusion

The study highlights differences between four age cohorts/generations in terms of honey preferences, consumer and purchasing behaviour. Baby boomers and Generation X – i.e. older customer groups – represent frequent honey consumers with annual consumption 2 kg or more, who regularly purchase honey and prefer to buy 2 – 5 kg per purchase. These generations are aware of high honey adulteration; therefore they search for honey with the trademark Slovak honey, which declares higher quality and Slovak origin. In terms of honey preference, besides acacia and linden honey, they have a positive attitude towards honeydew honey and creamed honey. From the non-traditional type of flavoured honey, they prefer honey with ginger, nuts or pollen. They buy honey directly from a beekeeper or at farmers' markets but also consider pharmacies as possible place of purchase. Generation Y and Z represent occasional honey consumers with the annual consumption up to 1 kg. Probably due to their young age and family background, the majority of these consumers does not purchase honey and are not aware of honey adulteration. The most important criteria during the purchase are quality and taste. They prefer acacia and linden honey and do not know creamed honey and have a neutral attitude towards honeydew honey. From flavoured honey, they prefer honey with cinnamon and cocoa.

Beekeeper, farmers' markets and retail stores are typical places of purchase while vending machines or pharmacies are considered as the possible place for purchase in the future. All generations obtain information about honey from family, acquaintances and friends, the beekeepers and internet. The most important and frequent way of honey promotion are honey degustation and exhibitions, fairs, farmers' markets. It could be concluded that honey producers should consider the differences between these generations and implement it to their product, price, distribution and promotion strategies. Furthermore, by targeting the younger generation (Generation Z), which represents occasional honey consumers and potential market opportunity, beekeepers may increase their sales in the future. In general, honey consumers are attracted by honey festivals, exhibitions, fairs, farmer markets, which offer certain experience for them. Therefore, beekeepers and beekeeping associations should focus more on offering the experiences and added value in a form of event marketing which can serve as an effective tool of marketing communication in honey promotion among young consumers. Elements of event marketing in the honey sector may involve: honey festival, seminars with degustations, excursion to apiary, observation hives, honey sampling and honey breakfast in schools with educative character. The main purpose is to attract the attention of young segment and according to an American study, the event marketing serves as the effective lever to engage the consumers and offers added value to the consumption experience (Close et al., 2006).

The limitations of this study are based on regional sample of consumer research which is considered as a pilot survey. Due to the limitations, further studies can be conducted on national and international level by increasing sample size and adding questions regarding the consumers' perception of honey and its health issues.

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MARKETING GENERACJI W STRATEGICZNYM ZARZĄDZANIU MARKETINGEM: STUDIUM PRZYPADKU RYNKU MIODU

Streszczenie: Celem artykułu jest zastosowanie marketingu generacji w opracowywaniu strategii w marketingu miodu. Badanie opiera się na danych pierwotnych uzyskanych w badaniu ankietowym przeprowadzonym w 2018 r. Próba badawcza zawiera 1100 konsumentów miodu w wieku 18-70 lat. Ankiety były rozpowszechniane online (za pośrednictwem poczty elektronicznej i narzędzi mediów społecznościowych) oraz w wersji papierowej. Aby uzyskać wyniki, dane były przetworzone i przeanalizowane przez statystyki opisowe, test niezależności chi-kwadrat, test U Manna-Whitneya i analizę podstawowych składowych głównych. Istotne różnice wykryto między pokoleniami pod względem preferencji, zachowań konsumenckich i zakupów. Wyniki badań mogą być przydatną analizą sytuacyjną dla pszczelarzy, którzy powinni wziąć pod uwagę te różnice przy opracowywaniu strategii marketingu mix. Różne pokolenia konsumentów potrzebują narzędzi promocji, więc w swojej strategii promocyjnej pszczelarze powinni rozważyć także formułowanie marketingu wydarzeń, takich jak wycieczka do pasieki, ule obserwacyjne, festiwale miodowe, seminaria z degustacją miodu lub śniadanie miodowe w szkołach.

Słowa kluczowe: rynek miodu, zachowania konsumentów, grupy wiekowe

战略营销管理中的生成营销 – 以蜂蜜市场为例

摘要: 本文的目的是将发电营销应用于蜂蜜营销策略的发展。该研究基于2018年进行的问卷调查获得的原始数据。该研究样本包含了18-70岁的1100名蜂蜜消费者。调查问卷在线分发(通过电子邮件和社交媒体工具)和纸质版本。为了获得结果,数据是过程并通过描述性统计,独立性卡方检验, Mann-Whitney U检验和分类主成分分析进行分析。几代人在他们的偏好,消费者和购买行为方面发现了显着差异。对于养蜂人来说,研究结果可能是一个有用的情况分析,他们在设计营销组合策略时应该考虑这些差异。不同代的消费者需要推广工具,因此在他们的推广策略中,养蜂人应该考虑形成活动营销,例如游览蜂房,观察荨麻疹,蜂蜜节,蜂蜜品尝研讨会或学校的蜂蜜早餐。

关键词: 蜂蜜市场, 消费者行为, 年龄群体