

Consumer Perceptions and their Willingness to Pay for Food Products' Traceability: Some Evidence from Greece - Abstract

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Summary

Traceability is deemed to be a significant factor of perception of food product quality and safety, as it ensures valuable data for consumers. Recent studies show that in the post-COVID-19 period, the traceability considered to be a major issue regarding the foods customers choose to buy. Food product traceability is also considered as a crucial tool for food safety management that inhibit mainly the food fraud and other safety issues (e.g. food contamination). This study investigates the consumers' perception on traceability in order to find out: (a) the customers' perception on traceability meaning, (b) the specific information consumers require for the purchase of food products, (c) the sufficiency of information on the package of six food products, and (d) the consumer willingness to pay for food product traceability. Traceability was tested using variables related to customers' perception on its meaning and package information of food products. Also, customer willingness to pay for food product traceability technology was investigated. The study is based on a self-response questionnaire survey on a sample of 190 participants through the Google platform. The surveyed participants' ages ranged between 18 and 60. From the 190 participants, 44.2% were male and 55.8% female. Regarding the level of education, most of the participants had higher education (61.1%), and only 4.2% had completed primary school. The monthly income of the surveyed participants mainly ranged between € 400 and 1200, which accounted for 65.8% of the total. The results show that the consumers consider that traceability is obligatory according to the General Food Law Regulation accounting for 35.8%. Furthermore only 33.0% of the participants admit traceability is used in order to trace suppliers and raw materials or is used for food product recalls. Considering the customers' perception on package information, the majority of the participants find the information about the expiration date (69.6%) and country of origin (38.7%) to be very important, while a significant portion finds the information concerning the country of origin (38.7%) to be very important. Safety issues on package information such as storage conditions and allergens seem to be a quite important information that concerns customers by 70.6% and by 60.5% respectively. The willingness to pay represents the maximum amount of currency a customer is ready to pay for the product. In these terms, the majority of consumers seems that have not the willingness to pay more for the application of a traceability technology that provide more information on food quality and safety attributes. This finding needs to be further studied in order to understand consumers' willingness to pay for specific food product attributes.

Keywords

Food products, Traceability, Food safety, Willingness to Pay, Greece

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