

## The Analysis of Consumers' Perception of the Confectionary Products in the Serbian Market – (Case Study of Chipita Products)

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**Abstract:** In this research the consumers' perception and satisfaction with the confectionary products of Chipita are presented. The aim of the research is to measure the satisfaction of the consumers, regarding the qualitative and appearance attributes of the products, to measure the effects of the commercial advertising of the products on the consumers as well as to measure the consumers' loyalty to the brand. The research was conducted through survey, by collecting data via questionnaire disseminated to the target groups (children, students and the middle-age consumers). All three target groups of the respondents evaluated five clusters of criteria related to the frequency of consumption, qualitative attributes of the products, appearance attributes of the products, ad association of the products and the general consumers' satisfaction and loyalty. The results of the research showed that the consumers' perception is primarily age dependent as well as that the general satisfaction and loyalty to Chipita brand is very satisfactory, leading to the conclusion of the research that the Chipita confectionary range presents one of the leading brands in Serbian market.

**Key words:** confectionary products, marketing, consumers

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Evaluation of consumers' perception of quality of products for marketing purposes can be defined as the evaluation of the ability of the product to meet the consumers' needs and desires. Nowadays, the market competition is very strong and the consumers are much more informed than they were previously, so therefore there is not enough space for the companies to make omissions. Creation of consumers' loyalty implies trust to the supplier, product and the brand, and a special part of creating loyalty applies to the trust to the distributor, sales representation, the specific retail chain, retail and seller. According to Filipović (2008), the key factors towards which companies must orient themselves are development of new revenue streams that are based on completely new ideas and, above all, strengthening relationships with consumers. Some authors argue that "Loyalty Management tools grow a business's revenues and profits, by improving retention among its customers" (Rigby, 2015, p.48).

Considering that there are many domestic confectionary products present in Serbian market (Bambi-Banat, Jaffa d.o.o. Crvenka, Banini Kikinda, Pionir Subotica etc.) as well as international confectionary products (Nestle-Switzerland, Milka-Switzerland, Ferrero-Italy), it is essential for the Chipita company to evaluate the position of its products, the brand and the commercial advertising among different target groups in the high competition market and to establish an appropriate marketing strategy in order to meet the needs and desires of the consumers and therefore to maintain the consumers' loyalty. Moore and Reid (2008) argue that marketing strategies should be focused on the basis of the product position in the eyes of the target groups, based on the competition on the market. Other authors also argue that "Customer Segmentation is a subdivision of a market into discrete customer groups that share similar characteristics. Customer Segmentation can be a powerful means to identify unmet customer needs" (Rigby, 2015, p.28). The basic premise of product positioning, which is also the cause of the change in the earlier ways of thinking in marketing, is the change that has occurred in communication in contemporary society. By researching consumer behavior, the information about the consumers are collected, i.e. the information about the consumers' needs and desires according to which the production program and the production range are harmonized in order to increase sales and profit. Research of the consumer behavior consists

of various, systematic techniques that are used by the marketing people with the aim to find out the internal and the external factors which impact on the consumer decisions and the exchange process in the market (Maričić, 2008).

The paper comprises of four parts. The first part presents the literature used for the theoretical background. The second part is reserved for the methodology of the research. The third part of this paper consists of the research results and discussion of the results. Finally, the fourth part of this paper is the conclusion. The main purpose of this study is to research the behavior of the consumers and the positioning of Chipita confectionary range in Serbian market. The objectives of the research are: 1) to measure consumer perception and satisfaction; 2) To measure consumer loyalty to the brand.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Evaluation of consumer behavior – perception and satisfaction

Consumer behavior is a complex and multidimensional process. Hawkins (2007) points out that, according to research conducted in the US, people spend more time by purchasing products rather than, for example, working or sleeping. Although it appears to be esoteric (unintelligible), consumer behavior is something we can see every day. Many aspects of the behavior of consumers are evident in the market, while a good number of the aspects are outside of the observation power and the subject to psychological and socio-psychological research. While including and explaining these basic concepts of consumer behavior, this young marketing interdisciplinary science is accentuated (Maričić, 2011, p.11). According to Maričić (2011, p.33), there are basically two approaches in consumer behavior analysis; The first approach is more widespread and comprehensive in the analysis and in addition to stage decision – making process it includes the investigation of external and internal factors that determine the behavior of consumers. The second approach, that is older, is narrower in its scope because it only treats consumer decision making process to purchase goods and services through the analysis of individual phases of the process. In the hypercompetitive environment there is an increase of the need for valid and usable information on motivation and behavior of consumers. There is a requirement on obtaining information that should enable a better understand-

ing of consumer needs and desires, which is complex and multidimensional process. Majority of businesses fail due to underestimation or overestimation of the market demand. Anticipating trends in consumer behavior provides companies the key strategic advantages. If a company discovers a specific market need first among the competitors, it will be the first one to serve that market. The second advantage is that it can create a specific market opportunity in controlling the latent needs and desires of consumers. Finally, the third advantage is anticipating trends in the needs and preferences of consumers and their proper fulfillment that makes a positive image and reputation of the company in the eye of general public as a company that is attentive and willing to always meet demands of consumer (Maričić, 2011, p.43).

According to Kotler and Keller (2006), managers who believe that a customer is the only real „profit center“ of the company, believe in the old system; pyramid with the president at the top, the management in the middle and the employees as the ‚first-line‘ with the customers at the bottom is the system that is out of date. The successful marketing companies chart is reversed. Consumers are on the top of the pyramid, following by relevance are employees who contact the consumers in practice, serve them and meet their wishes. Below them are managers. Some authors debate that consumer orientation is strongly associated with marketing mission of a company. Marketing mission of a company helps in building consumer confidence which is the basis for consumer loyalty (O’Shaughnessy, 1995, pp.17-18). According to Maričić (2011, p. 46), companies should analyze and predict consumer behavior, they have to orient their strategies towards consumer satisfaction and safety, respectively, they have to impress (delight) constantly. The specific challenges in marketing will be to identify inarticulate needs (new products and new markets) and the disobedient (new) consumers. Marketing managers have two tasks in the quality oriented company. „First, they have to participate in the formulation of strategies and policies that will help the company to fully achieve the perfection of quality. Secondly, they must deliver marketing quality along with the quality of production. Each marketing activity - marketing research, training vendors, advertising, customer service, etc. - must be carried out to high standards“ (Kotler & Keller, 2006, p.147). Consumer perception is fundamental for understanding of demand, purchase, use and disposal of products and services. Therefore, the marketing people correctly understand that the subjective perception

of the process is essential to formulate effective marketing strategies. By using perception, consumers get to know and choose products and services. Well-known marketing experts, Ries and Trout, from the US, prove that “marketing is not a battle of different products and services; it is rather fight of consumers’ perception in the market. The perception largely depends on the „quality“ of marketing stimuli” (Maričić, 2011, p.338). The concept of the perception of a new product includes an analysis of what consumers think that’s really new in the core attributes and characteristics of the product. Consumers perceive the attributes of a new product comparing them to the attributes of existing products as certain value, compatibility, complexity, availability, communication, etc. “Companies apply the strategy of product differentiation in order to stimulate consumers to buy new products” (Maričić, 2011, p.341).

Some authors debate that although consumers behave differently in the purchase of products and services in different market situations, it is possible, according to consistency in their purchasing habits to classify consumers according to some general (common) characteristics. According to Woods (1960), depending on the motive, consumer of goods can be classified into the following groups, namely: 1) a group determined by habit (consumer loyalty to certain brand), 2) a group determined by knowledge (rationally motivated), 3) a group determined by the price of the product, 4) impulsive group determined by physical or aesthetic attributes of a product (relatively insensitive to the brand of product), 5) a group that is led by emotional motives (symbol, image, etc.), and 6) a group of so-called new consumers who are not yet stabilized in behavior in the market. Maričić (2011) argues that understanding the needs and desires of consumers is one of the main postulates of the marketing concept. Consumers are at the center of marketing research because it represents an essential input in formulating marketing strategies and tactics of companies. Practically, all marketing strategies and tactics are based on assumptions about consumer behavior. Regardless of whether the company wants to keep existing consumers or to “steal” customers from competitors or to attract new customers or simply to increase its sales in existing markets, by using different marketing strategies companies seek to influence consumers. “Rating of a product or of behavior of consumers after the purchase is a key issue for marketing oriented company, especially for those companies that are marketing oriented and those that apply market-

ing relationship with their consumers” (Maričić, 2011, p.469).

Satisfaction will depend on the product and service quality. “Quality is the sum of the attributes and characteristics of a product or service that is related to their ability to meet the expressed needs. Total quality is crucial for assessing the creation of value and customer satisfaction” (Kotler & Keller, 2006, p.146). Consumer satisfaction is an important feeling that happens during the evaluation phase of purchased or consumed product or service. Customer satisfaction is the key to retaining existing and attracting new consumers. It is believed that the satisfaction of consumers with products and services affect their future behavior and loyalty to a given manufacturer or company. Therefore, „creation of value and satisfaction for consumers is the heart of modern marketing thinking and practice.“Satisfied consumers „are real, intangible economic assets.“ (Maričić, 2011, p.471).

According to Maričić (2011), the imperative of business to create a satisfied consumer binds to its continuation. There is a positive correlation between the degree of satisfaction of consumers and long-term performance of companies. The satisfaction of consumers by purchased products and services results in two primary benefits for companies: increasing consumer loyalty and positive word of mouth propaganda about the product/service. There is no doubt that there is a significant correlation between the degree of customer satisfaction and loyalty. With increasing level of satisfaction increases the degree of loyalty to a particular consumer brands (brand) of product. ‘Current research shows that the satisfaction of a totally satisfied consumer gives six times more chance that the consumer will buy products of the same company in the coming period than the satisfaction of just a „satisfied customer“’ (Maričić, 2011, p.477). According to Marinković (2012), if a consumer has a weak attitude and a weak behavior towards a particular product brand purchase, it is clear that the consumer is not going to be loyal. A weak attitude means that the consumer does not have a habit to purchase that particular product, while the weak behavior means that the consumer commits sporadic purchases. The task of marketing is not only to attract new consumers, but above all to keep the existing ones and therefore to increase their loyalty to the company. Consumers’ loyalty has greater significance than the other measures, such as visual and tactile quality of the brand and can often be evaluated based on the ability to influence others (Aaker, 1996, p.106).

According to some authors, “Results obtained by the marketing conquest are often only short-term successful and they lack the loyalty of the consumers” (Hoffman & Bateson, 2012, p.389). Complexity of quality measurement includes intangibility but also a fact that consumers often take part into service and production process, therefore they have a direct impact on service and product quality (Marinković & Senić, 2012). Consumer perception of a brand product is important for analysis of competitors on the market. According to some authors, “a product brand is an invisible, but a key component in business. The image of the brand is also exceptionally important, meaning the way in which the product is positioned in the minds of consumers” (Veljković, 2009, p.186). According to Maričić (2011), product positioning is closely linked to the segmentation of the market. Most companies even do not try to develop a product that will satisfy the needs of all consumers. Therefore, they opt for the segmentation of the market and analysis of competition. The approach is based on selection of target markets that are profitable in the way they can offer adequate products and services to better meet consumer needs and desires than the competitors. The result of successful product positioning is a distinctive brand image based on which consumers make their choice. Good positioning of products involves identification of how consumers perceive the product of certain companies, on one, and how companies formulate and implement marketing strategies to achieve the desired position on the market, on the other hand. Kotler and Keller (2006), also argue that competitors are those companies that meet the same customer needs. The consumers’ behavior factors can be internal (personality characteristics, age, gender) and external (geographic, economic, social). However, the factors do not affect all target groups in the same way. They make similarities and differences in consumers’ behavior. Therefore, “an analysis should be carried out in order to measure the biggest impact on consumers’ behavior towards particular products” (Maričić, 2008, p.155-156).

Many authors have tried to understand the process through which a consumer goes while making decision about a purchase of a particular product. Some experts debate that there are five phases in that process: “identification of need, seeking for information, assessment of an alternative, decision making about a purchase and behavior after the purchase” (Kotler & Keller, 2006, p.191). According to Maričić (2011), consumer orientation obliges the company to verify the expectations of consumers in relation to the per-

formance of the products or services that are in the market. The balance between expectations and performance of the purchased product or service provides an insight to managers into degree of satisfaction of consumers. Marketing people should also be cautious in setting expectations of consumers. Kotler and Keller (2006), also argue that some customers inevitably become inactive and waste. The key lies in the analysis of the causes for the outflow of customers via surveys of their perceptions. “It is not sufficient to attract new consumers; the company must keep them and increase their business. Too many companies suffer from ripples (fluctuations) customers - their outflow” (Kotler & Keller, 2006, p.155).

For Kotler and Keller “Perceived value for customers (Customer Perceived Value - CPV) is the difference between all the benefits and all the costs of supply and possible alternatives that are considered and assessed by potential consumers” (2006, p.141).

### Confectionary products

The name of confectionery products is derived from the Latin verb *condire*, meaning to sweeten or to spice. These are very attractive products and vary according to: composition, durability and processing. Their main characteristic is sweetness. In addition to sweet, there are savory and other products with different flavors and spices also called confectionery products. The confectionary industry is a branch of the food industry engaged in processing of sugar beet and sugar production, and thus the production is confectionery (chocolate, biscuits, etc.). The products of confectionery industry can be of different looks, shape, size, color, aroma, taste, consistency and structure. Sweets are a general term for sweet taste food that contains sugar or sweeteners, and are referred to more and confectionery products. Sweets that are most popular among children are usually manufactured industrially. Confectionery products are sold in grocery stores or in specialized stores for sweets products. In order to be placed on the market and consumed, the most important thing for the confectionary products is to be designed and processed from the raw materials according to the latest technological processes. The confectionery product may be used only those raw materials that meet the requirements of quality and health safety (Toković, 2015). According to Gavrilović (2011), the confectionaries usually consist of grains such as corn, wheat rice and cocoa beans that are the most important and the most common raw material in the production of confec-

tionary products. In the production of confectionery products the primary technology for processing cocoa beans, cocoa compound production, and compound production of chocolate and chocolate products is used. Modern technological processes in the processing of cocoa beans and chocolate mass production are focused on the optimal level of processing cacao flavor and aroma of chocolate and chocolate spread products (Gavrilović, 2011, p.173). Biscuit and related wheat flour based products technology is based on modern technology for creation of different dough shape and consistency. The main characteristics of the dough for biscuits and croissants apart from the flavor is the appearance that depend on the type of baking and cooling as well as on aroma that is added – savory or sweet (Gavrilović, 2011, p. 461). Chipita confectionery products are basically filled or coated in chocolate or other sauces. During the selection of the raw material, nutritious and energy values are the basic factors. The confectionaries also belong to energy food, mainly of a sweet flavor but also savory ones. They are used in daily diet depending on the individual desire and habits (Gavrilović, 2011).

### About Chipita

Chipita Company was established in Greece in 1973 as a company producing and marketing savory snacks. Chipita's main products back then were their extra cheese-flavored corn snacks, subsequently followed as of 1988 by potato chips. In 1991 7 DAYS croissant, individually packaged baked snack with long shelf-life, were introduced and followed shortly by the 7 DAYS mini croissant. A few years later, in 1995, innovative savory Bake Rolls hit the markets, rapidly establishing themselves as consumers favorite. At about the same time, Chipita started to establish itself as the international company it remains today, either by setting up its own subsidiaries or by entering into strategic partnerships either with major international or with strong local companies. Thus, Chipita has been operating outside Greece since 1995 by setting up manufacturing plants in Bulgaria, Portugal and Egypt, followed by Mexico, Poland, Romania, Russia and Saudi Arabia and more recently India, Turkey and Ghana. At the same time, Chipita also set up commercial offices in 6 countries: Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine. Chipita is currently present internationally in 4 major product categories - croissants and similar dough products, savory snacks (Bake Rolls), cakes and confectionery. Chipita's goods, produced in 19 manufacturing plants

in 11 different countries, are delivered to consumers in a total of 66 countries, either directly or through strategic partnerships.

Regarding the mission of the Chipita Company, it constantly strives to develop, produce and market safe, innovative products of high nutritional value, ensuring the best possible quality: cost ratio. "A mission defines the company's business, its objectives and its approach to reach those objectives" (Rigby, 2015, p.40). The main objective of Chipita is to provide value added for all company stakeholders whilst retaining and strengthening the company's leading position in the market. Chipita's values are reflected in the responsibility we feel towards our employees, consumers and the environment, determining our every corporate decision and activity. According to Rigby (2015), elements of mission and vision are often combined to provide a statement of the company's purposes, goals and values. However, sometimes the two terms are used interchangeably. As per quality, Chipita uses only the finest raw materials in order to provide the consumers with products of high nutritional value. Chipita enforces rigorous control systems certified internationally by reputable global organizations. "Total quality management (TQM) is a systematic approach to quality improvement that marries product and service to customer performance. This creates a virtuous circle of continuous improvement that boosts production, customer satisfaction and profits" (Rigby, 2015, p.58). Chipita aims to establish trust and integrity through building relationships of mutual trust with its consumers as well as its associates both inside and outside the company. One of the basic aims is also to create innovative products tailored to the new dietary needs and contemporary lifestyle of its consumers. It ensures the on-going improvement of our products and processes by investing in research and technology. The company's presence in a wide range of countries allows its products to be well-known worldwide.

## 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Methodology

This research used quantitative approach. Patton (2002) has argued that a quantitative research methodology can help researchers approach fieldwork without being constrained by any predetermined categories of analysis. Moreover Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009) explained that the strength of quantitative research is the opportunities that it provides researchers

to interact and gather data directly from their research participants to understand a phenomenon from their perspectives. On the other hand, qualitative research carries the uniqueness because it does not give conclusion in advance. It is often regarded as a scientific methodology of management sciences research (Taylor, 1998).

### Sample structure and size

In the research, data were collected through a structured survey that use pre-designed questionnaire for the simultaneous testing of all the target groups of the consumers (Maričić, 2011). In order to achieve the objectives of the research, 15 questionnaires were distributed within each target group of respondents: children (parents answered for them), students, and the middle-aged respondents. This distribution followed the logic that “tastes in food, are often associated with age” (Kotler & Keller, 2006, p.181). Therefore “a company can use customer segmentation as the principal basis for allocating resources to produce development, marketing, service and delivery programmes” (Rigby, 2015, p.28). The survey was anonymous. In response all 45 questionnaires were returned. The response rate was 100%. Among all consumers who were respondents, 45 of them or 100% were convenience and fixed sample (Table 1).

**TABLE 1:** The structure of the samples

variable	no. of respondents	%
<b>Children</b>	15	33.3
<b>Students</b>	15	33.3
<b>Adults (middle-aged)</b>	15	33.3
<b>Gender:</b>		
male	24	53.3
female	21	46.7
		N=45

### Instrument

The questionnaire was designed for evaluation of the criteria related to frequency of consumption, quali-

tative attributes of the products, and appearance attributes of the products, the ad association with the products and the general satisfaction of the consumers/respondents. “A research is the most real, essential way of testing the behavior of consumers. The assumption is that consumers can give the best answer on the questions related to their spending of money on purchases. It is often referred to as survey methods, because it is based on research of a certain sample through questionnaires. There are structured surveys that use pre-designed questionnaires for the simultaneous testing of all consumers in the sample and unstructured survey with great freedom of the interviewer in questioning consumers” (Maričić, 2011, p.84). In order to measure the difference in evaluation based on the age and gender of the consumers/respondents, the data were analyzed through SPSS.

### Data Collection

The required information for the research was collected through questionnaire. The questionnaire is used in order to allow the respondents to answer in a standard way, with an unbiased approach and with an objective orientation. The use of questionnaire provides the information to be presented in a numeric way. Many companies are trying to obtain the relevant information on how consumers use the product via surveys using standard questionnaires or focus groups. “Such surveys can lead to the development of new products, including new ways to use or new markets for existing products and finding new ways to communicate with consumers” (Maričić, 2011, p.470).

### Methods

Descriptive statistics was used to measure the difference in evaluation of the criteria by the consumers/respondents, that were grouped into five clusters: frequency of the Chipita products consumption, qualitative attributes of the Chipita products, appearance attributes of the Chipita products, the ad association with the Chipita products and the general satisfaction of the consumers/respondents with the Chipita products (Table 2).

The One Way ANOVA results show whether there are significant differences with regard to the evaluation based on age and gender of the consumers (Table 2).

**TABLE 2 –** (Significant) differences in evaluation based on age and gender of the consumers

		Difference based on age	Difference based on gender
S1	How recently they consumed the products	0.002	0.118
S2	How often they consume the products	0.004	0.526
S3	Will they consume the products again	0.004	0.195
S4	Evaluation of the flavor of the products	0.037	0.583
S5	Evaluation of the nutritious value of the products	0.046	0.190
S6	Evaluation of the energy value of the products	0.027	0.217
S7	Evaluation of the price of the products	0.192	0.445
S8	Evaluation of:		
	-7Days Croissants	0.728	0.476
	-7Days Bake Rolls	0.475	0.982
	-Finetti	0.086	0.166
	-Chipicao croissants	0.005	0.151
S9	Evaluation of appearance of the products	0.033	0.003
S10	Evaluation of the appearance attributes of the package	0.001	0.080
S11	Evaluation of how the package links to the product	0.026	0.094
S12	Evaluation of the story of the ad	0.114	0.748
S13	Evaluation of the brand of the products	0.015	0.325
S14	Evaluation of how the ad links to the product	0.447	0.347
S15	Evaluation of Chipita vs. other similar brands	0.010	0.096
S16	Evaluation of the possibility to chose other similar brands	0.000	0.127
S17	Evaluation of the general satisfaction with the products	0.016	0.013

$p < 0.05$

## 4. DISCUSSION

### Evaluation of frequency of consumption

According to Maričić (2011), based on the frequency of consumption, the consumers can be classified into: potential consumers, regular consumers, patrons and attorney of consumers.

According to the results of the research, 8.9% of the respondents never consumed Chipita products, 40.0% of the respondents haven't consumed Chipita products recently, 26.7% of the respondents have consumed the Chipita products recently and 24.4% of the respondents have consumed the Chipita products very recently. Considering the difference among the groups based on gender and the age, there is a significant difference in the age of the respondents in terms of how recently they have consumed the products ( $p=0.002$ ) but there is not a significant difference based on gender ( $p=0.118$ ).

Considering the frequency of the consumption of the Chipita products, 11.1% of the respondents never consume the Chipita products, 48.9% of the respondents consume the Chipita products rarely, 26.7% of the respondents consume the Chipita products fre-

quently, while 13.3% of the respondents consume the Chipita products very frequently. Taking into consideration the age and gender of the respondents, there is a significant difference based on the age of the respondents ( $p=0.004$ ), but there is not a significant difference based on gender ( $p=0.526$ ), meaning that the frequency of the consumption is age dependent but not gender dependent.

The results of the research show that 4.4% of the respondents will never consume the Chipita products again, 2.2 % o the respondents are not sure if they will consume the Chipita products again, 42.2% of the respondents will probably consume the Chipita products again and 51.0% of the respondents will consume the Chipita products again for sure.

Taking the age and gender of the respondents into consideration, there is a significant difference between the groups in the age ( $p=0.004$ ), meaning that the evaluation of this criteria is age dependant, while there is not a significant difference in gender between the groups ( $p=0.195$ ), meaning that the future frequency of consumption does not depend on gender of the consumers.

**Evaluation of qualitative attributes of the products**

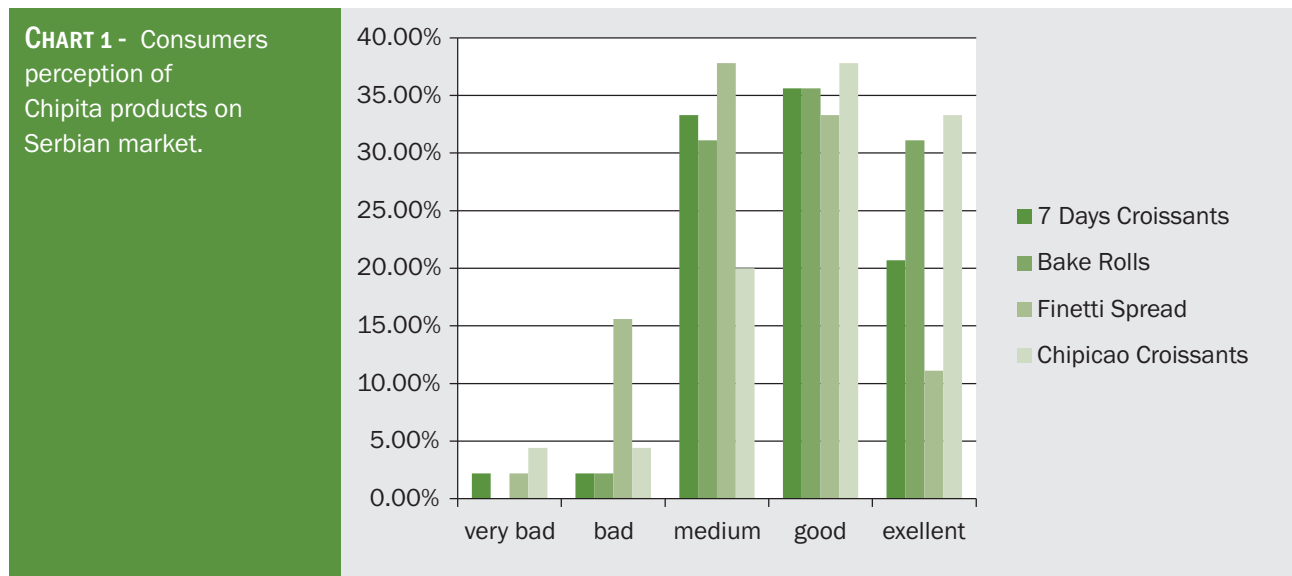
For Maričić (2011), the sense of taste affects the consumer experience on most products. According to the results of the research, 31.1% of the respondents evaluated the flavor of the Chipita products as medium, 44.4% of the respondents evaluated the flavor of the Chipita products as good, while 24.4% of the respondents evaluated the flavor of the Chipita products as excellent. Considering the age and gender among the groups, there is a significant difference in the evaluation of the flavor based on the age of the respondents ( $p=0.037$ ), while there is not a significant difference based on gender of the respondents, meaning that the evaluation of the flavor of Chipita products is age dependent and not gender dependent.

Regarding the evaluation of the nutritious value of the Chipita products, 2.2% of the respondents evaluated the nutritious value of the Chipita products as very bad, 51.1% of the respondents evaluated the nutritious value of the Chipita products as medium, 20.0% of the respondents evaluated the nutritious value of the Chipita products as good, while 6.7% of the respondents evaluated the nutritious value of the Chipita products as excellent. As per the age and gender difference between the groups, there is a significant difference in evaluation of the nutritious value based on the age of the respondents ( $p=0.046$ ), while there is not a significant difference in evaluation of the nutritious value based on gender ( $p=0.190$ ), meaning that the perception of the nutritious value of the Chipita product is age dependent but not gender dependent.

The results of the research show that 13.3% of the respondents evaluate the energy value of the Chipita products as very bad, 55.6% of the respondents evaluate the energy value of the Chipita products as bad, 26.7% respondents evaluate the energy value of the Chipita products as medium while 4.4% of the respondents evaluate the energy value of the Chipita products as excellent. Considering the difference between the groups, there is a significant difference based on the age of the respondents ( $p=0.027$ ), but there is not a significant difference based on gender of the respondents ( $p=0.217$ ), meaning that the evaluation of the energy value is age dependent but not gender dependent.

Based on the research results, 8.9% of the respondents think that the price for the Chipita products is bad, 31.19% of the respondents think that the price of the Chipita products is medium, 57.8% of the respondents think that the price for the Chipita products is good, while 2.2% of the respondents thinks that the price for the Chipita products is excellent. Taking into consideration the age and gender difference between the groups, there is not a significant difference neither in the age of the respondents ( $p=0.192$ ) nor in gender of the respondents ( $p=0.445$ ), meaning that the evaluation of the price of the Chipita products is neither consumers' age nor consumers' gender dependent.

Regarding the overall evaluation of the individual Chipita products in Serbia, 2.2% of the respondents evaluated 7 Days Croissants as very bad, 2.2% as bad, 33.3% of the respondents evaluated the croissants as medium, 35.6% respondents evaluated 7 Days Croissants as good, while 20.7% respondents evaluated 7



Days Croissants as excellent. The research results show that there are not significant differences in evaluation based on age of the respondents ( $p=0.728$ ) and based on gender of the respondents ( $p=0.476$ ), meaning that the perception of the 7 Days Croissants is not age or gender dependent.

Regarding evaluation of the Bake Rolls, 2.2% of the respondents evaluated Bake Rolls as bad, 1.1% of the respondents evaluated Bake Rolls as medium, 35.6% of the respondents evaluated Bake Rolls as good, while 31.1% of the respondents evaluated Bake Rolls as excellent. The research results show that there is not a significant difference in evaluation based on the age ( $p=0.475$ ) or gender ( $p=0.982$ ), meaning that the consumers' perception of Bake Rolls is not age or gender dependent.

Regarding the Finetti chocolate spread, 2.2% of the respondents evaluated Finetti as very bad, 15.6% of the respondents evaluated Finetti as bad, 37.8% of the respondents evaluated Finetti as medium, 33.3% of the respondents evaluated Finetti as good, while 11.1% of the respondents evaluated Finetti chocolate spread as excellent. The research results show that there is not a significant difference in the respondents' age ( $p=0.086$ ) neither in gender ( $p=0.166$ ), meaning that the perception of Finetti spread is not age or gender dependent.

Regarding consumers' evaluation of Chipicao croissants, 4.4% of the respondents evaluate Chipicao croissants as very bad, 4.4% of the respondents evaluated Chipicao croissants as bad, 20.0% of the respondents evaluated Chipicao croissants as medium, while 37.8% of the respondents evaluated Chipicao croissants as excellent. The research results show that there is a significant difference based on the age of the respondents ( $p=0.005$ ), but there is not a significant difference based on gender of the respondents ( $p=0.151$ ), meaning that the perception and evaluation of Chipicao is not gender dependent, but it is significantly age dependent – the most favorite among children (Chart 1).

### Evaluation of appearance attributes of the Chipita products

Packing presents all activities of designing and manufacturing the product packaging. The first encounter of the consumers with the product is meeting with its package, and that is exactly what can attract or repel customers (Kotler & Keller, 2006, p.393).

According to the results of the research, 2.21% of the respondents evaluated the appearance attributes

of the Chipita products as bad, 53.3% of the respondents evaluated the appearance attributes of the Chipita products as medium, 20.0% respondents evaluated the appearance attributes of the Chipita products as good, while 24.4% of the respondents evaluated the appearance attributes of the Chipita products as excellent. Considering the age and gender of the respondents, there is a significant difference in evaluation of the appearance attributes of Chipita products based on the age ( $p=0.033$ ) and a significant difference based on gender ( $p=0.003$ ), meaning that the consumers' evaluation of appearance attributes of Chipita products is age and gender dependant.

Considering the evaluation of the package attributes of Chipita products; color, name, key information on the package, 2.2% respondents evaluated as bad, 13.3% of the respondents as medium, 62.2% of the respondents as good, while 22.2% of the respondents evaluated this criteria as excellent. Regarding the age and gender difference between the groups, there is a significant difference in evaluation of this criteria based on the age of the respondents ( $p=0.001$ ) as well as significant difference based on gender ( $p=0.080$ ), meaning that the evaluation of the package attributes of Chipita products are age and gender dependent.

According to the results of the research, 8.9% of the respondents evaluated the packages link to Chipita products as bad, 13.3% of the respondents evaluated that the packages link to the Chipita products as medium, 57.8% of the respondents evaluated that packages link to the Chipita products as good, while 20% of the respondents evaluated that the packages link to the Chipita products as excellent. Considering the age and gender of the respondents, there is a significant difference in evaluation based on the age of the respondents ( $p=0.026$ ), but not a significant difference based on gender of the respondents ( $p=0.094$ ), meaning that the evaluation of whether the packages link to Chipita products is age dependent but not gender dependent.

According to Maričić (2011), the visual effects are widely used in marketing (activation of sight) in the advertising, design and packaging.

### Evaluation of the commercial advertisement

“Understanding the message does not mean its acceptance. A consumer can understand a message of a company perfectly well, but due to many reasons, it does not mean the consumer will accept or purchase a particular brand of product” (Maričić, 2011, p.359). “Many believe that the lack of understanding of marketing

messages is far more often than successful communication with consumers" (Blythe, 2008, p.171-177).

The respondents also evaluated how clear the advertisement for Chipita is. According to the results of the research, 4.41% of the respondents evaluated this aspect as bad, 13.3% of the respondents as medium, 51.1% of the respondents as good, while 31.1% of the respondents evaluated it as excellent. Considering the difference between the groups based on the age and gender of the respondents, there is not a significant difference neither for the age of the respondents ( $p=0.114$ ) nor for gender ( $p=0.748$ ), meaning that the evaluation of the consumers of whether the Chipita ad is clear is not age and gender dependent.

Based on the results of the research, 22.3% of the respondents evaluated the impression about brand, product and image they get from the ad as medium, 48.9% of the respondents evaluated the expression as good, while 28.9% of the respondents evaluated the expression as excellent. Considering the difference in evaluation based on the age and gender of the respondents, there is a significant difference based on the age of the respondents ( $p=0.015$ ), but there is not a significant difference based on gender of the respondents ( $p=0.325$ ), meaning that the consumers' expression about the brand, product and the image they get from the ad is age dependent but not gender dependent.

The results of the research show that the respondents evaluated the criteria about whether the ad is linked to the products in the following manner: 2.2% respondents evaluated it as bad, 17.8% as medium, 51.1% as good and 28.9% as excellent. Regarding the difference based on the respondents' age and gender, there is neither a significant difference in age ( $p=0.447$ ) nor in gender ( $p=0.347$ ), meaning that the consumers' evaluation of how the ad is linked to the products is neither age nor gender dependent.

### Evaluation of the consumers' general satisfaction and loyalty

"The challenge is not always to ensure that customers are satisfied; many competitors are able to do so. The challenge is to create enthusiastic and loyal customers" (Kotler & Keller, 2006, p.155).

The results of the research show that the respondents evaluated the Chipita products in comparison with the products of the similar brand with 2.2% as bad, 15.6% of the respondents evaluated it as medium, 15.6% as good, while 24.4% of the respondents evaluated Chipita in comparison to other brands as excellent. Regarding the difference in evaluation

based on the age and gender of the respondents, there is a significant difference based on the respondents' age ( $p=0.010$ ), but there is not a significant difference based on gender ( $p=0.096$ ), meaning that the comparison to other brands is age dependent.

The respondents were also asked about the possibility to choose a product of a similar brand rather than a Chipita product if there is a choice. 2.2% of the respondents rated this possibility as very bad, 40.0% as bad, 31.1% as medium, 15.6% as good and 11.1% as excellent. Regarding the difference in the age ( $p=0.000$ ) and gender ( $p=0.127$ ), we can conclude that the loyalty to the brand is age dependent and not gender dependent.

According to the results of the research, 2.2% of the respondents evaluated the overall impression and satisfaction as bad, 20.0% of the respondents evaluated the overall impression and satisfaction as medium, 60.0% of the respondents evaluated the overall impression and satisfaction as good, while 17.8% of the respondents evaluated the overall impression and satisfaction as excellent. Regarding the differences in evaluations between the groups based on the age and gender, there is a significant difference in the evaluations based on the age (0.016) and based on gender ( $p=0.013$ ), meaning that the overall impression and the satisfaction with the Chipita products are age and gender dependant.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Companies should not only evaluate their production process but also their consumers' perception of quality of the products and the way they promote their products in order to be innovative, which can have a key role in attracting consumers to chose that particular brand in the contemporary market. This research contributes to the conclusion that Chipita brand present leading confectionery range in Serbian market, where Bake Rolls and Chipicao croissants present the products number one.

The research results show that the consumers' perception of the Chipita products regarding the frequency of consumption, qualitative attributes, nutritious an energy values of the products, comparison to other brands of similar products and the overall satisfaction with the products are basically age dependant. For Maričić (2011), differences in age of consumers are treated as important factor in determining the target groups (segments). For marketing purposes, the most interesting segments are particularly the consumers

aged between 20-40 years old; who make up the so-called emerging markets (markets in expansion). This does not mean that the other segments are not attractive from marketing point of view, which depends on age group of consumers whose needs are the goal of marketing activities of a company. According to the results of the research, the package attributes (key information) and the appearance of the packages of the Chipita products is gender dependent as well, especially for women and children. "Women require more information and they explore more than men. They have a long list of relevant criteria, which often are not final but are expanding and modifying. Women are linked to the brand and they are loyal consumers" (Maričić, 2011, p. 292-293).

According to Kotler and Keller (2006), as consumers, children arouse and attract more and more attention of marketing experts and practitioners, especially taking into account the fact that they present a complex, dynamic and challenging market. Kids today spend more than ever. Children have a strong influence on the purchase of products, whereby in a good number of cases they decide by themselves. Children quickly accept the innovations and use the most modern ways of purchase such as on-line shopping. Children are the most important consumers of growing e-sales. Regarding the results related to perception of the commercial advertisement, it is generally not dependent on gender, although, according to Maričić (2011), studies show that women differ from men in terms of the way they behave in products purchasing when it comes to the impact of the media, reacting to advertising messages and evaluation of products / services. Women around the world have changed in a very significant way so that the propaganda agencies have to adapt the strategy and tactics of marketing if they want to win this „new market, especially taking into consideration that women make 80% of decisions on purchases in families. Women prefer personal contacts and exchange of information. The perception of the commercial advertisement is age dependent especially if we compare children's and adults' impressions

of the advertisement. Great power of television can reach children and marketers use television to attract children younger than ever before. "Children around 2 years old are often unable to distinguish between letters, logos and specific brands. Marketers attract this audience related advertisements placed within sight of the child, and it applies to almost all of the vitamins to juices" (Kotler & Keller, 2006).

The research results also show that Chipicao croissants are evaluated as the best one by all the children respondents. In fact, children as consumers make different markets: primary; when they purchase and decide independently, influential; when they directly and indirectly affect the family members regarding the purchase of certain type of products and services, and the future; when their influence becomes stronger as they grow up and therefore leads to their independence and any active behavior as consumers (Maričić, 2011, p.298-300).

According to the results of the research, we can conclude that there is a correlation between the satisfactions of the consumers with their loyalty to the brand. The loyalty of consumers to Chipita products is age dependent but not gender dependent, where we can state that children are the most loyal group among the focus groups of the respondents. Overall impression and satisfaction with the Chipita products are age and gender dependant that confirms the debate that men and older people are much more satisfied with the purchased products and services than the female population. Emotions also play a major role in determining the degree of satisfaction of consumers (Maričić, 2011).

The disadvantages of this research are the fact that questionnaire method has several limitations, for example lackadaisical attitude of respondents, non-attendance and lack of cooperation. One more limitation of the research is the fact that it did not involve all the confectionery producers on our market and possibly insufficient number of samples that is reserved for some of oncoming researches related to food industry products in Serbian market.

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## Sažetak:

### Analiza percepcije potrošača konditorskih proizvoda na srpskom tržištu (studija slučaja Chipita proizvoda)

Sanja Dalton

Ovo istraživanje je usmereno na ispitivanje percepcije i satisfakcije potrošača konditorskim proizvodima "Chipita". Cilj istraživanja je merenje satisfakcije potrošača kvalitativnim svojstvima i spoljnim atributima proizvoda, merenje uticaja promocije proizvoda na potrošače kao i merenje lojalnosti potrošača brendu. Istraživanje je sprovedeno anketiranjem, na osnovu prikupljenih podataka putem upitnika koji je podeljen ispitanicima iz ciljnih grupa (deca, studenti i potrošači srednjih godina). Ispitanici iz sve tri ciljne grupe su ocenjivali kriterijume svojstva proizvoda,

spoljne attribute proizvoda, asocijacije na proizvode iz propagandnih poruka, kao i ukupnu satisfakciju i lojalnost potrošača brendu. Rezultati ispitivanja su pokazali da percepcija potrošača u prvom redu zavisi od starosne dobi, kao i da je opšta satisfakcija i lojalnost potrošača brendu Chipita veoma zadovoljavajuća, što dovodi do zaključka istraživanja da brend Chipita konditorskih proizvoda predstavlja jedan od vodećih među brendovima na srpskom tržištu.

**Ključne reči:** konditorski proizvodi, marketing, potrošači

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