# 1st International Meeting on I&D in the Food Sector

## 3º Workshop de I&D no Setor Agroalimentar

05 - Jun - 2018

*Auditorium ESTGV*

# ABSTRACT BOOK

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Caixa Geral de Depositos

CI&DETS

# Editorial information

*Edition*
CI&DETS – Centro de Investigação em Educação, Tecnologias e Saúde
Instituto Politécnico de Viseu
Viseu, Portugal

*Editorial Coordination*
Raquel Guiné

*Authors*
Raquel Guiné, Ana Cristina Ferrão

*Composition*
Raquel Guiné

*Cover*
Raquel Guiné

ISBN 978-989-96937-4-6



May 2018

ISPV - Escola Superior Agrária de Viseu

Centro de estudos
em Educação, Tecnologias e Saúde

# Conference Website

*www.esav.ipv.pt/idfs*

*Design & Contents*
Raquel Guiné

*Creation & Maintenance*
Tiago Moreira

# CONSUMER PROFILE AND BEHAVIOUR TOWARD GOURMET PRODUCTS

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**Abstract**

The gourmet culture is present in the daily lives of urban consumers. According to Paulino and Ribeiro (2011), the gourmet concept includes products of superior quality, which have rare and differentiating characteristics of the others, fitting in a more exclusive market of consumption and that provide personal pleasure and satisfaction to the consumer. The concept can also refers to people who enjoy sophisticated and exclusive delicacies. Ribeiro and Fernandes (2015) define gourmet products as high quality products, with specific origin certification, unique characteristics and produced in small quantities. These are luxury goods that appeal, in particular, to sophisticated consumers with above-average socio-economic status. According to Barroso and Madureira (2006), luxury is associated with a premium price. That is, consumers are willing to pay more for differentiated products to which they perceive higher quality.

The present research intends to identify the profile of the consumer of gourmet products in Bragança and describing their purchasing behaviours. Thus, a cross-sectional, quantitative, observational and descriptive study was developed. Data were collected through a questionnaire applied directly to the population of Bragança in 2015, resulting in an accidental sample composed of 300 individuals aged between 17 and 84 years. Data was treated with SPSS 22.0 software, and it includes in the calculation of absolute and relative frequencies since the variables were qualitative.

The sample includes only 109 respondents' consumers of gourmet products, which in some way reveals the elitist character of the consumption of this type of products. As can be seen in Table 1, the majority of consumers were female (59.7%), single (54.0%), belonging to households with 3 and 4 elements (62.0%), had higher education level (43.0%), a monthly income of between 500 and 1000 Euros (50.0%) and resided in the city of Bragança (59.0%).

Table 1. Profile of Surveyed Consumers.

| Variable | Groups | Frequencies (%) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Relative | Absolute |
| **Gender** | Male | 40.3 | 121 |
| | Female | 59.7 | 179 |
| **Educational stage** | 1st Cycle uncompleted | 0.3 | 1 |
| | 1st Cycle (1st to 4th grade) | 5.0 | 15 |
| | 2nd Cycle (5th to 6th grade) | 5.0 | 15 |
| | 3rd Cycle (7th to 9th grade) | 9.0 | 27 |
| | Secondary Education | 37.3 | 112 |
| | Higher Education | 43.0 | 129 |
| | Missing | 0.3 | 1 |
| **Marital status** | Married or in a similar union | 37.0 | 111 |
| | Single | 54.0 | 162 |
| | Divorced | 6.0 | 18 |
| | Widowed | 3.0 | 9 |
| **Household size** | 1 person | 10.0 | 30 |
| | 2 people | 16.3 | 49 |
| | 3 people | 29.0 | 87 |
| | 4 people | 33.0 | 99 |
| | 5 or more people | 11.0 | 33 |
| | Missing | 0.7 | 2 |
| **Monthly household income** | Less than 500 Euros | 7.0 | 21 |
| | From 500 to 1000 Euros | 50.0 | 150 |
| | From 1001 to 2000 Euros | 31.3 | 94 |
| | From 2001 to 3000 Euros | 6.3 | 19 |
| | More than 3000 Euros | 4.0 | 12 |
| | *Missing* | 1.3 | 4 |
| **Residence** | City of Bragança | 59.0 | 177 |
| | Suburbs of the city of Bragança | 14.0 | 42 |
| | Municipality of Bragança | 10.7 | 32 |
| | Other municipality | 16.3 | 49 |

As it is shown in the table above, the gourmet products consumed by respondents are mainly of national origin (66.4%), from Trás-os-Montes region (88.2%), with certification label (91.7%) and producer brand (77.1%). Of the 109 respondents who consume gourmet products, 50.9% of them do it 1 to 4 times a week. Plus, the most consumed gourmet products are olive oil (67%), traditional sausages (62.4%), wine (60.6%) and cheeses (58.7%). The most valued characteristics are flavour (92.7%) and aroma (58.7%). The surveyed consumers perceive as distinguishing attributes of this type of products the trust in its flavour (64.5%) and its unique characteristics (52.7%).

Regarding the purchasing behaviours, it was possible to verify that family purchases are mainly carried on by the woman (46.0%) or by the couple (41.3%). The price is the most valued criteria for the selection of the place of purchase by surveyed consumers (61.7%). Perhaps, that is why the hypermarket is the preferred retail food stores to purchase this type of product (58.7%). Regarding the selection of gourmet products, it is also made on the basis of price (66.2%). Surveyed consumers are looking for products with practical packaging (62.3%) whose main advertising media is television (89.3%) and Internet (63.7%) and whose promotion is based on tasting events (77.6%). Of the 300 respondents, only 119 were willing to pay more for gourmet products. Of these, 47.1% are willing to pay up to 25% more, and 31.9% of respondents are willing to pay between 25 to 50% more. This reveals the growth potential of the gourmet product market.

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