

Consumer perceptions of farmed fish

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A cross-national segmentation in five European countries

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Machiel J. Reinders

LEI Wageningen University and Research Centre, The Hague, The Netherlands

Marija Banović

*MAPP Centre, School of Business and Social Sciences,
Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark*

Lluís Guerrero

*Department of Food Technology,
IRTA Tecnologia de los Alimentos, Monells, Spain, and*

Athanasios Krystallis

*MAPP Centre, School of Business and Social Sciences,
Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark*

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate possible cross-cultural consumer segments in the EU aquaculture market and provide direction and focus for marketing strategies for farmed fish products.

Design/methodology/approach – Selected psychographic constructs (i.e. category involvement, domain-specific innovativeness, subjective knowledge, suspicion of novelties and optimistic bias) are tested as segmentation basis with the objective of defining a number of cross-border consumer segments with distinctive and clear-cut profiles in terms of consumer perceptions towards farmed fish.

Findings – Based on the consumer psychographic profiles, three distinct segments are found: involved traditional, involved innovators and ambiguous indifferent, of which the first two constitute especially interesting targets for market positioning strategies for aquaculture products.

Practical implications – The results of the segmentation analysis opens new horizons in terms of positioning and differentiation of fish products from the aquaculture industry according to the most important potential market segments.

Originality/value – The current research brings insights into different pan-European consumer segments and their characteristics that allow for a corresponding differentiation strategy within the aquaculture industry. The fact that the segments tend to be uniform across all countries suggests a relatively homogeneous or converging European fish-related culture.

Keywords Segmentation, Consumer perceptions, Involvement, Fish (food)

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Because of the health benefits of eating fish, fish consumption has been increasing over the past decades (FAO, 2014). Additionally, studies show that consumer perceptions of safety, environmental benefits, taste and nutritional value play a role in determining



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