Consumer & Market Insights Research Programme

Insights & Behavioural Research

For information on the Food Marketing Research Unit’s (FMRU) Consumer & Market Insights Research Programme, please contact:

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ADAPTING THE DANISH FOOD RELATED LIFESTYLE CONSUMER MODEL TO MARKETS FOR IRISH CONVENIENCE FOODS
**Project Title:** An In-depth Investigation of Irish Consumer and Industry Acceptability of Novel Food Technologies

**Duration:** 2008-2011

**Funding:** Food Institutional Research Measure

**Partners:** Mary McCarthy (UCC), Gwilym Williams (DIT)

**Project Description:**

The Irish Government has invested significantly in novel technologies research in recent years. However, novel technologies cannot be expected to yield economic benefits unless they are acceptable to consumers and are adopted by industry. The overall aim of this research project is to examine consumer and industry acceptability of novel technologies in order to develop industry strategies and government policies to support a knowledge bio-economy. First, in-depth interviews will be conducted with principal research investigators to elicit experts’ opinions of the benefits and risks to both industry and consumers associated with novel technologies. Second, debate-style discussions between experts and consumers will be held to explore both the attitudinal and perception-based views of consumers, as well as the level of understanding of these views held by scientific experts. The ‘social influence’ of these group discussions on consumers’ and scientific experts’ knowledge and opinions of novel technologies will be evaluated through in-depth interviews and surveys conducted before and after the group discussions.

Following this, 60 postal questionnaires will be administered to industry, and 20 in-depth interviews will be conducted with management personnel to identify and characterise the perceived market drivers-barriers that influence early stage technology investment decisions by Irish food enterprises. Finally, a representative sample of 1000 Irish consumers will be surveyed to investigate the acceptability threshold of people who display neophilic or neophobic behaviours, and the extent to which consumers are willing to accept novel technologies in the presence of information on consumer-relevant benefits and potential risks. Dissemination strategies will be identified to inform industry of consumers’ responses and trade-offs to novel food technologies, and to show how consumers’ concerns can be minimised to overcome the risks associated with these new technologies. It is expected that this research will form the basis for policy documentation in the area of consumer and industry acceptance of new food technologies.

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Sinead McCarthy, FMRU: sinead.mccarthy@teagasc.ie
Project Title: An Econometric Analysis of Irish Household’s Expenditure on Food Away From Home (FAFH)

Duration: 2003-2007

Funding: Teagasc Walsh Fellowship Programme

Partners: Carol Newman, (TCD)

Project Description:
Consumers’ shopping patterns are not static but rather evolve over time as a consequence of changes in consumers’ lifestyles, general attitudes and perceptions. Published secondary data remains an underutilised consumer knowledge base, and represents a complementary cost effective approach to gathering consumer and market insights for SMEs, large firms and retailers. In particular, an in-depth analysis of consumers’ shopping habits and behaviours can provide valuable insights and trends at the category level, which firms can exploit to make more effective strategic business decisions. The main objective of this study was to identify the economic and socio-economic factors that influenced Irish household’s expenditure on Food-Away-From-Home (FAFH), and specifically meals obtained at commercial facilities solely. This study applied sophisticated econometric techniques to the most recently available Household Budget Survey Data (HBS) from 1999/2000, together with the 1994/5 dataset collated by the Irish Central Statistics Office (CSO) to analyse the determinants of FAFH expenditure.

The study revealed that the main determinant of demand for quick-service expenditure appeared to be convenience, and the core segment typology was characterised by younger, working, urbanised households with low levels of income, education and health awareness. In contrast, the core segment typology for full-service dining was characterised by households with higher levels of income, social class and education. Larger households appeared to benefit from economies of scale in household production and were less likely to consume FAFH at either outlet. However, with declining household size in the country this is not likely to negatively impact on growth in FAFH expenditure. Overall, the results implied that the most time pressed household managers were more likely to favour quick-service over full-service. More so, the research revealed that a health-convenience trade-off was a strong determinant whether or not FAFH were consumed by households. The research reveals valuable trends and insights into consumers’ shopping behaviour, which could assist the food service industry in the creation of actionable strategies, targeted at specific consumer segments, for long-term financial performance.

Final Report: The end of project report (Project Armis No. 5862) can be downloaded here

Contact: Maeve Henchion, FMRU: maeve.henchion@teagasc.ie
**Project Title:** Food Related Lifestyle (FRL) Segments and Speciality Foods Market in Great Britain

**Duration:** 2004-2006

**Funding:** Food Institutional Research Measure

**Partners:** Mary McCarthy (UCC), Julian Smith (Bord Bia)

**Project Description:**
Improved market segmentation can lead to improved strategic marketing effectiveness through an in-depth understanding of consumers’ needs, values and lifestyles. For example, the speciality food consumer has often been described as affluent, highly educated with higher than average household income, and from an ABC1 socio-economic background. However, while demographic variables can be useful descriptors for segment typologies, their relevance in food markets for the purposes of developing marketing strategies is diminishing. Consequently, traditional methods of market segmentation are becoming less effective and less practical in the analysis and prediction of consumer behaviour. It is therefore not surprising that psychographic and benefit segmentation are now commonplace, with consumers’ lifestyle and value systems being used by marketers due to the insight they can provide about the target market. The overall objectives of this research were: to apply the Danish Food Related Lifestyle (FRL) instrument to predict British consumers’ attitudes and behaviours for speciality foods; and to identify and profile new speciality food lifestyle segments based on the speciality food orientation of British consumers.

A nationally representative sample of 1037 consumers was surveyed in Great Britain in 2005. British food consumers were allocated into six pre-identified FRL segments arising from a previous study (See p5). Two distinct segments, the adventurous and the rational were identified as being the speciality-oriented segments based on their attitudes and behaviour towards speciality foods. Identifying and targeting cognitively and attitudinally differentiated market segments presents a major challenge for companies, and as consumer needs become more diverse, decisions on which segments are best to serve need to be made. These decisions have implications with regard to the allocation of scarce resources in terms of the operationalisation of the marketing strategy. However, this study illustrates how a deep understanding of the attitudes and motives of targeted segments could increase the likelihood of creating and delivering customised products or services and consequently improve a company’s competitive advantage.

**Final Report:** The end of project report (Project Armis No. 5361) can be downloaded [here](#).

**Contact:** Maeve Henchion, FMRU: maeve.henchion@teagasc.ie
**Project Title:** Lifestyle Segmentation of Food Consumers in Great Britain, with Specific Reference to their Convenience Orientation

**Duration:** 2001-2003

**Funding:** Food Institutional Research Measure

**Partners:** Mary McCarthy (UCC)

**Project Description:**
Market segmentation is the management tool that enables a firm to serve groups of consumers with specific but similar wants, needs and behaviour with respect to a product. For example, the archetypical consumer group to target with innovative convenience foods according to conventional market and consumer analysis is adults aged 25 to 44 years, and those belonging to the ABC1 social class groupings. This assessment is based upon the relatively high levels of product adoption and usage frequency amongst these consumers, and their relatively high disposable incomes. However, this generalised approach to market segmentation presents potential pitfalls for companies, owing to attitudinal differences in consumer acceptance and preferences for convenience foods. The main objective of this research therefore was: to report on the attitudes and reported behaviour of food consumers in Great Britain based on a review of their convenience food lifestyle (CFLs); and to segment consumers’ into distinct market segments based on their attitudes towards convenience foods and food-related lifestyles.

A survey was applied to a nationally representative sample of 1000 consumers (defined as the persons primarily responsible for food shopping and cooking in the household) in Great Britain in 2002. Segmentation analysis, based on the identification of 20 convenience lifestyle factors, identified four CFL segments of consumers: the ‘food connoisseurs’ (26%), the ‘home meal preparers’ (25%), the ‘kitchen evaders’ (16%) and the ‘convenience-seeking grazers’ (33%). In particular, the ‘kitchen evaders’ and the ‘convenience-seeking grazers’ were identified as convenience-seeking segments. The research illustrates how identifying and targeting viable consumer segments can best be achieved through psychographic segmentation whereby consumers are grouped according to the benefits or values they perceive or derive from a product, which best fits their lifestyle. The study also provides a more in-depth understanding of the lifestyles of food consumers in Great Britain, and provides food manufacturers with a deep insight into what motivates specific consumer segments to purchase convenience foods.

**Final Report:** The end of project report (Project Armis No. 4972) can be downloaded [here](#).

**Contact:** Maeve Henchion, FMRU: [maeve.henchion@teagasc.ie](mailto:maeve.henchion@teagasc.ie)
**Project Title:** Adapting the Danish Food Related Lifestyle Consumer Model to markets for Irish Convenience foods  

**Duration:** 2000-2002  

**Funding:** Food Institutional Research Measure  

**Partners:** Mary McCarthy (UCC)

**Project Description:**
The Irish food industry is constantly changing with high levels of new product development (NPD) activities, particularly in prepared foods, driving growth in the marketplace. As markets become more concentrated and competition intensifies, meeting the present and future unmet needs of consumers becomes even more important for firms. Given that convenience foods are primarily positioned and differentiated on the basis of a convenience orientation, it would seem most logical to segment a market through identifying and profiling those consumer groups that are lifestyle or needs driven, and perceive value from convenience. Psychographic segmentation is one such marketing management tool that can assist firms segment the market more effectively by grouping consumers according to lifestyles, attitudes, opinions and values. The main objectives of this study were: to segment Irish food consumers using the Danish Food Related Lifestyle (FRL) instrument; to extend the FRL instrument to relate to convenience foods; and to profile convenience-oriented segments in terms of purchase preferences and socio-demographics.

In total, 1024 Irish consumers were recruited to participate in this study. Six consumer segments were identified and these included: the hedonistic consumer (28%), the extremely uninvolved consumer (16%), the adventurous consumer (8%), the conservative consumer (21%), the enthusiastic consumer (14%), and the moderate consumer (13%). Each of the six segments varied in their attitudes towards various aspects of food and convenience food, and these segments differed significantly in both their socio-demographic background as well as their purchase preferences. This study contributed to industry’s understanding of consumers’ attitudes towards convenience foods. The research also illustrated a more accurate means of identifying convenience-driven market segments, and importantly, those segments with the potential to purchase more convenience foods through differentiated product and market strategies.

**Final Report:** The end of project report (Project Armis No. 4556) can be downloaded here

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