

Consumers' attitudes towards ethnic food consumption

Stavovi potrošača o konzumaciji etničke hrane

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Abstract

Globalization, international migration and food promotion via media platforms have led to increased consumption of ethnic food. The main aim of the research is to explore the relation between attitudes and behaviour in the ethnic food consumption. An on-line survey was conducted on a sample of 230 respondents. Most respondents consume ethnic food, mostly on a weekly basis, at home and in restaurants. The largest share of respondents has neutral attitudes towards ethnic food. Respondents with positive attitudes towards ethnic food consume ethnic food more often at home, those with neutral attitudes consume such food in restaurants, while respondents who have negative attitudes about ethnic food consume ethnic food mostly at friend's. The respondents with positive attitudes towards ethnic food give higher importance to all ethnic food attributes. Results of this research can serve producers and distributors of ethnic foods to better suit the demands of modern consumers.

Keywords: attitudes, consumers, ethnic food, survey

Sažetak

Globalizacija, internacionalne migracije i medijski pristup promociji hrane doveli su do rasta konzumacije etničke hrane. Osnovni cilj provedenog istraživanja bio je utvrditi povezanost stavova i ponašanja u konzumaciji etničke hrane. On-line anketno ispitivanje provedeno je na uzorku od 230 ispitanika. Većina ispitanika konzumira etničku hranu, najčešće na tjednoj razini, kod kuće i u restoranima. Najveći udio ispitanika ima neutralne stavove o etničkoj hrani. Ispitanici s pozitivnim stavovima o etničkoj hrani u većem udjelu konzumiraju etničku hranu kod kuće, oni s neutralnim stavovima učestalije konzumiraju takvu hranu u restoranima, dok ispitanici koji imaju negativne stavove o etničkoj hrani u većem udjelu konzumiraju takvu hranu kod prijatelja. Ispitanicima s pozitivnim stavovima o etničkoj hrani važnija su sva ispitana obilježja etničke hrane. Rezultati ovog istraživanja mogu poslužiti proizvođačima i

distributerima etničke hrane u svrhu uspješnije prilagodbe zahtjevima suvremenih potrošača.

Ključne riječi: anketa, etnička hrana, potrošači, stavovi

Introduction

Ethnic food includes foods and dishes characteristic for a particular region or culture (Verbeke and Poquiqui López, 2005). According to Camarena et al. (2011) ethnic food can be defined as a comprehensive picture of a country's culture in terms of its tradition, heritage, religion or national origin. Kwon (2017) emphasizes that every ethnic group has their own traditional ethnic food, with unique flavours and tastes. Ethnic food does not only include specific taste, but also a specific way of preparing or consuming such food. Kwon (2015) emphasizes the importance of local ingredients, thus defining ethnic food as a food based on the heritage and culture of a particular ethnic group, knowledge and local ingredients of plant or animal origin. According to the same author Greek, Italian or Thai food is considered ethnic food outside of these countries. Different religions have their ethnic food so there is traditional Christian or Muslim food.

In the context of migration, the diverse ethnic population in Europe and other countries have brought their own food eating habits and increased the diversity of food available in the host country (Khokhar et al., 2013). Therefore, there is growing interest in ethnic food on the global level (Sloan, 2011; D'Antuono and Bignami, 2012; Tey et al., 2018). Furthermore, the increased frequency and experience of travel often brings greater interest in ethnic food (Mintel, 2012). According to Jang (2017) there are five motivational factors for UK costumers' to visit Asian ethnic restaurants; novelty, learning and culture, general restaurant attributes, sensory appeal, health concern, change and escape. Moreover, consuming ethnic food provides consumers not only adventure but also emotional mobility (Ting, 2017).

Thanks to the growing interest in ethnic food, the supply of ethnic food has been increasing throughout Europe over the past 30 years (Khokhar et al., 2010). The trend of ethnic food consumption is also recorded in America. According to the National Association of Restaurants (2015), 66% of respondents emphasize that they consume more diverse ethnic food now than five years ago, and 80% of them eat at least once a month ethnic food. One third of respondents try new types of ethnic food every month, mostly in restaurants. According to the results of the Statista (2015), 13% of Canadian consumers (aged 45-54) frequently consume ethnic food. Regarding the type of ethnic food, in 2017, consumers in Canada usually prepared Italian and Chinese food at home, and consumed Chinese food in the restaurants (Statista, 2017a). Consumers from the United States mostly consume Mexican, Chinese and Italian ethnic food (Pilcher, 2012). According to Leung (2010), the consumption of ethnic food has a long tradition in the United Kingdom (UK). The most commonly consumed ethnic foods in the UK are Italian, Chinese and Indian (Statista 2017b).

The chain stores also try to get closer to their customers by refreshing their usual daily supply with a range of products needed to prepare ethnic food (Vorberger,

2016). The consumption of ethnic food is increasing, which is confirmed by the growth of sale. The sale of ethnic food in 2013 in the United States was \$ 11 billion, while in 2018 it is predicted that sales would reach \$ 12.5 billion (Statista, 2017c). According to the same source, the share of US consumers who want a wide range of ethnic food in stores is 69.2%. In Italy, sales of ethnic food have increased by 93% since 2007 (Russo, 2015).

The results of research conducted in Asia on a sample of 654 female consumers (Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia and New Zealand) shown that the price is the most important attribute in ethnic food purchase in Japan, while consumers in New Zealand consider sensory characteristics as most important attributes of ethnic food. Taiwanese and Malaysian consumers have assessed that the most important motives for selecting ethnic food is their perception of whether the ethnic food is "healthy", more precisely the ingredients, nutritional value and convenience of preparing/consuming such food (Prescott et al., 2002). Ting et al. (2017) found that health consideration and sensory appeal have a positive effect on the Malaysians intention to consume ethnic (Dayak) food.

The consumption of ethnic food is more frequent if the name of food is related to health or history. Therefore, interventions in the name of the product certainly give effective, consistent and economical results. Kim et al. (2017) have shown that the new, unfamiliar names of the food as well as its ingredients significantly increase consumer perception of the authenticity of ethnic food and cause a positive emotion as well as increase of the buying/consuming intention. Likewise, known names and ingredients in some ethnic food, which are common in other kitchens, cause negative emotions associated with boredom and indifference. Thongyim et al. (2011) have concluded that the most important criteria for deciding to visit ethnic restaurants are taste and service while price, atmosphere and convenience are less important to consumers. Authenticity is also very important motive for dining in ethnic restaurant (Sukalakamala and Boyce, 2007; Jang, 2012).

However, not all consumers are inclined to the consumption of ethnic food, which can also be associated with negative attitudes towards ethnic food. Attitudes are relatively permanent and stable organization of positive or negative emotions, evaluation and response to an object (Petz, 1992) and play an important role in consumer behaviour. It is therefore expected that negative attitudes towards ethnic food will lead to lower intention to consume ethnic food. Tey et al. (2018) emphasize that in past researches the tendency of consumers towards ethnic food is mainly related to the perception of particular attributes of ethnic food, such as freshness, taste, quality, purity and authenticity.

Camarena et al. (2011) indicate that the situation in the market of ethnic food in Europe is very heterogeneous. On the one hand, Belgium, France, the UK and the Netherlands have a long tradition of immigration and thus the tradition of consuming ethnic food. On the other hand, Mediterranean countries, including Croatia, are still less attractive to immigrants, and the ethnic food market is still underdeveloped. However, the number of immigrants is growing, and thus the supply of ethnic food. Additionally, earlier research in the area of ethnic food does not include attitudes, which are important in consumer decision making as key consumer behaviour predictors (Aronson et al., 2005).

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to determine behaviour and attitudes towards the consumption of ethnic food in Croatia, a country that represents a less developed ethnic food market, and to determine whether there is a relation between attitudes towards ethnic food and behaviour in consumption of such food.

Materials and methods

Based on earlier research for the purpose of this paper, ethnic food definition created by Verbeke and Poquiviqui López (2005) was used, where ethnic food is defined as food that characterizes a particular region or culture.

Survey

The total of 230 respondents took part in the on-line survey. The survey link was sent to the students via e-mail and Facebook pages. The survey was conducted in the period from March 20, 2017 to May 1, 2017. Participation in the survey was voluntary and respondents were informed about the goal of the study. The time needed for filling in the questionnaire was 5-7 minutes.

Snowball sampling technique was used for getting a convenience sample. Snowball sampling relies on referrals from initial subjects to generate additional subjects (Breakwell et al., 2000). Survey questions were grouped in the following categories:

- sociodemographic characteristics
- behaviour in the consumption of ethnic food
- the importance of certain attributes of ethnic food and
- consumers' attitudes towards ethnic food.

Open-ended and closed-ended questions were used in this survey.

Sociodemographic characteristics included gender, age, education, status, individual monthly income, number of children younger than 10 and residence.

Ethnic food consumption behaviour was measured by a number of questions (whether ethnic food is consumed, the frequency and place of ethnic food consumption, the type of consumed ethnic food, how much are they willing to pay for a meal in the ethnic food restaurant and the occasion to eat ethnic food). The importance of certain attributes of ethnic food (taste, price and quality ratio, price, origin/country of origin, packaging, seller/service, appearance) was measured by five-point Likert- scale (1 - not at all important, to 5 - very important).

Equally, the attitudes towards ethnic food were measured by a set of seven statements that were created for the purpose of this research, for which the respondents showed a level of agreement on the five-point Likert- scale (1- completely disagree, 5-completely agree). Based on the mean value of all statements for measuring ethnic attitudes, respondents were divided into three groups. The average value of all statements for measuring the attitudes of ethnic food was 23.63 and the standard deviation was 4.23. For the division of the respondents into the groups, deviation of a standard deviation from the mean of the whole sample was used (according to the methodology used in the work of authors Tuorila et al., 2001).

Respondents whose mean of all seven statements for measuring attitudes towards ethnic food was 7-19.4 were "respondents with negative attitudes towards ethnic food". Respondents with a mean value of 19.41-27.86 were classified as "respondents with neutral attitudes towards ethnic food" while those with a median value of more than 27.86 were called "respondents with positive attitudes towards ethnic food".

The questionnaire data was coded and entered into software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 21. Univariate and bivariate methods of data analysis were used.

Univariate analysis (frequency and distribution) was used to analyse sample description, behaviour in ethnic food consumption, importance of certain attributes of ethnic food and attitudes towards ethnic food. Bivariate analysis was used in order to analyse the relation of attitudes and behaviour in the consumption of ethnic food (chi square test). Furthermore, bivariate analysis (ANOVA followed by LSD test) was used to identify the relation between consumers' attitude and importance of certain attributes of ethnic food. Obtained results are presented in the form of tables and figures.

Respondents who did not consume ethnic food responded only to socio-demographic questions and statements for measuring the attitudes of ethnic food.

Sample description

The study involved more females (60.9%) than males (39.1%). As shown in Table 1, most respondents were aged from 18 to 29 years (52.6%), while the lowest share of the respondents were older than 60 (2.6%). Furthermore, over half of the respondents have completed high school (53.5%), followed by faculty (42.2%), while only 0.9% of the sample was without education. The number of employed respondents was highest (57%), while the lowest percentage of them were retired (3.9%). Almost 40% of respondents had income lower than HRK 3,500, while 3.9% of them had an income from HRK 8,001 to 9,500. Respondents without children younger than 10 years (84.3%) dominated in the sample. Even 57% of the respondents lived in the City of Zagreb, followed by residents of the Zagreb County (13.5%).

Table 1. Sample description

		N	%			N	%	
Gender	Male	90	39.1		Brod-Posavina	5	2.2	
	Female	140	60.9		Dubrovnik-Neretva	5	2.2	
Age	18-29	121	52.6		Istria	3	1.3	
	30-45	55	23.9		Karlovac	5	2.2	
	45-60	48	20.9		Krapina-Zagorje	2	0.9	
	60+	6	2.6		Požega-Slavonia	6	2.6	
Education	Without education	2	0.9	Residence	Primorje-Gorski Kotar	3	1.3	
	Elementary school	8	3.5		Sisak-Moslavina	5	2.2	
	High school	123	53.5		Split-Dalmatia	9	3.9	
	Faculty	97	42.2		Varaždin	1	0.4	
Status	Unemployed	15	6.5		Virovitica-Podravina	1	0.4	
	Employed	131	57		Vukovar-Srijem	1	0.4	
	Student	75	32.6		Zadar	22	9.6	
	Retired	9	3.9		Zagreb	31	13.5	
Individual monthly income	HRK <3,500	89	38.7		City of Zagreb	131	57	
	HRK 3,501-5,000	44	19.1	Children younger than 10	Yes	35	15.2	
	HRK 5,001-6,500	42	18.3		No	194	84.3	
	HRK 6,501-8,000	30	13					
	HRK 8,001-9,500	9	3.9					
HRK >9,500	16	7						

Results and discussion

Behaviour in ethnic food consumption

Even 88.3% of the respondents consumed ethnic food, while the remaining 11.7% haven't consumed such food. Most respondents consumed ethnic food at least once a week (44.1%).

The obtained results are in line with the previous research published by Verbeke and Poquiviqui López (2005), according to which consumers in Belgium consumed ethnic food 1.5 times a week. There were 35.8% of respondents who consumed ethnic food several times a month, while 10.8% of them consumed such food once a month (10.8%). The smallest shares of the respondents consumed ethnic food only several times a year (9.3%).

Most respondents consumed ethnic food at home (77.9%), followed by consumption in restaurants (18.1%), whereby the lowest share of respondents consumed ethnic food at friends (2.5%) or somewhere else (1.5%) - Figure 1. The results of research conducted in Spain (Camarena et al., 2011) showed that consumers preferred the consumption of ethnic food in restaurants. The obtained differences may be related to the fact that consumers in Spain had a habit to often consume food outside the home (Euromonitor, 2017), while Croatian consumers consumed food mostly at home. Verbeke and Poquiviqui López (2005) found that most consumers in Belgium (89%) consumed ethnic food at restaurants, but also 77.3% prepared such food at home.

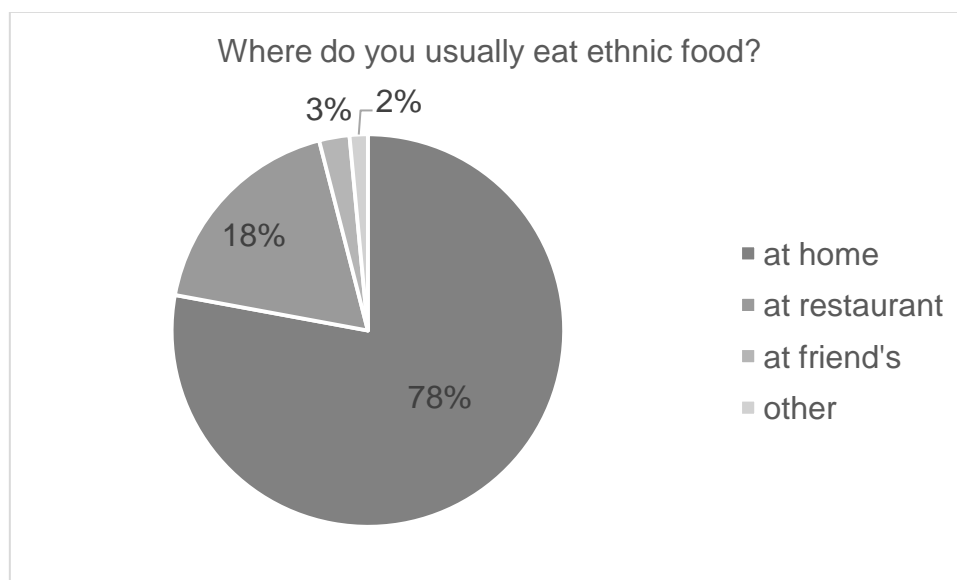


Figure 1. Place of ethnic food consumption

Table 2 presents the type of ethnic food the respondents most often consumed. Most respondents reported that they mostly consumed Bosnian food (61.5%) and Italian food (40%). Almost a third of the respondents (31.4%) consumed Mexican food, while the lowest number of respondents consumed Turkish food (7.9%).

Mexican and Italian food has frequently been consumed in Canada and the United States (Pilcher, 2012; Statista, 2017a), which indicated to global trends on the ethnic food market. On the other hand, frequent consumption of Bosnian food in the domestic market can be related to similar eating habits of neighbouring countries.

Table 2. Ethnic food type

	N	%
Bosnian food	126	61.5
Italian food	82	40
Mexican food	64	31.4
Chinese food	29	14.3
Macedonian food	19	9.3
Turkish food	16	7.9
Other	15	6.5

The respondents have been asked how much they are willing to pay for per meal in the ethnic restaurant. The majority of respondents were ready to pay HRK 51 to 80 (30.2%). Only 15.1% of respondents were willing to pay more than HRK 100 per meal, while only 2% would pay less than HRK 30 per meal in the ethnic restaurant- Figure 2.

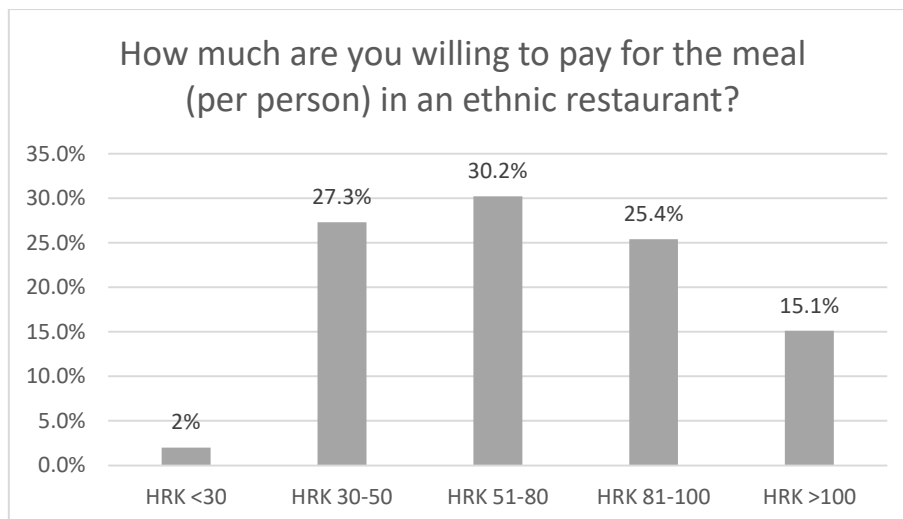


Figure 2. The price the respondents are willing to pay for a meal in the ethnic restaurant (per person)

Almost 90% of respondents (89.3%) consumed ethnic food without special occasions, while the remaining 10.7% of respondents consumed ethnic food on special occasions such as birthdays and anniversaries. The same results were obtained in an earlier study (Sarah, 2001, cited in Ting et al., 2016), which showed that consumption of ethnic food became more and more common, i.e. consumed without special occasions.

Importance of certain attributes of ethnic food

Given that the respondents mostly consume ethnic food at home and in restaurants, they were specifically asked about the importance of certain attributes of ethnic food in stores (for home consumption) and in restaurants.

The results of the research (Table 3) showed that the most important attribute for consumers who purchased ethnic food in stores were the taste of ethnic food (mean 4.41) and price/quality ratio (mean 4.25). The less important attributes were price (mean 3.86) and the origin/country of the food (mean 3.71), while the least important was the seller in the store (mean 3.02).

Table 3. Importance of ethnic food characteristics in stores

	Mean	Standard deviation
Taste	4.41	0.87
Price/quality ratio	4.25	0.89
Price	3.86	0.98
Origin/country	3.71	1.19
Packaging	3.46	0.95
Seller	3.02	1.2

Concerning the importance of ethnic food attributes in restaurants (Table 4), the most important attributes were taste (mean 4.53) and the price/quality ratio (mean 4.2). The obtained results confirmed the results of earlier research (Thongyim et al., 2011), which also emphasized the importance of taste in choosing ethnic food in the restaurant.

Unlike a store where the seller was less important, service was more important in restaurants (mean 4). The results of research conducted by Qu (1997) also emphasized the importance of the service, i.e. the caterers while visiting Chinese restaurants. For respondents, the origin/country from which food originates (mean 3.5) was the least important attribute of ethnic food in restaurants (Table 4).

Table 4. Importance of ethnic food characteristics in restaurants

	Mean	Standard deviation
Taste	4.53	0.83
Price/quality ratio	4.2	0.84
Caterer (service)	4	0.96
Appearance	3.99	0.85
Price	3.68	1.03
Origin/country	3.5	1.21

Attitudes towards ethnic food

As the data in Table 5 shows, respondents agreed mostly with the statement that ethnic food is authentic (mean 3.83) and has good taste (mean 3.72). Respondents showed the middle level of agreement with the statement that ethnic food is easy available (mean 3.35).

Furthermore, the respondents expressed a neutral attitude towards high nutritional value of ethnic food (mean 3.14) and that ethnic food is affordable (mean 3.12).

Based on previous findings, no research on attitudes of ethnic food has been conducted so far. However, Leung (2010) emphasized that the main attributes in ethnic food choice are the costs, authenticity and familiarity with the food, but also the nutritional value of such food. Furthermore, Verbeke and Poquiqui López (2005) have established that Latino Americans living in Belgium believe that Belgian food is delicious, safe and available, while on the other hand, Belgians regard Latin American food as tasty, practical and spicy. In addition, the popularity of ethnic food has led to the research of the nutritional value of the most frequently consumed ethnic food in Europe, precisely because of their contribution to total nutrition intake (Khokhar et al., 2010; Khokhar et al., 2012).

Table 5. Attitudes towards ethnic food

	Mean	Standard deviation
Ethnic food is authentic.	3.83	0.96
Ethnic food has good taste.	3.72	0.85
Ethnic food is easy available.	3.35	0.98
Ethnic food is safe for consumption.	3.3	0.82
Ethnic food is heathy.	3.17	0.78
Ethnic food has high nutritional value.	3.14	0.8
Ethnic food is affordable.	3.12	0.86

The results of the research showed that the largest share of respondents had neutral attitudes towards ethnic food (77%) followed by those with positive attitudes (13%), while the lowest share of respondents had negative attitudes towards ethnic food (10%) (Figure 3). In order to make the attitudes towards ethnic food more positive, it is necessary to educate consumers about ethnic food and to promote it. Similar recommendations were given by Ayyub (2015) where greater exposure and greater knowledge of Islamic culture leads to a decline in negative attitudes towards Halal food.

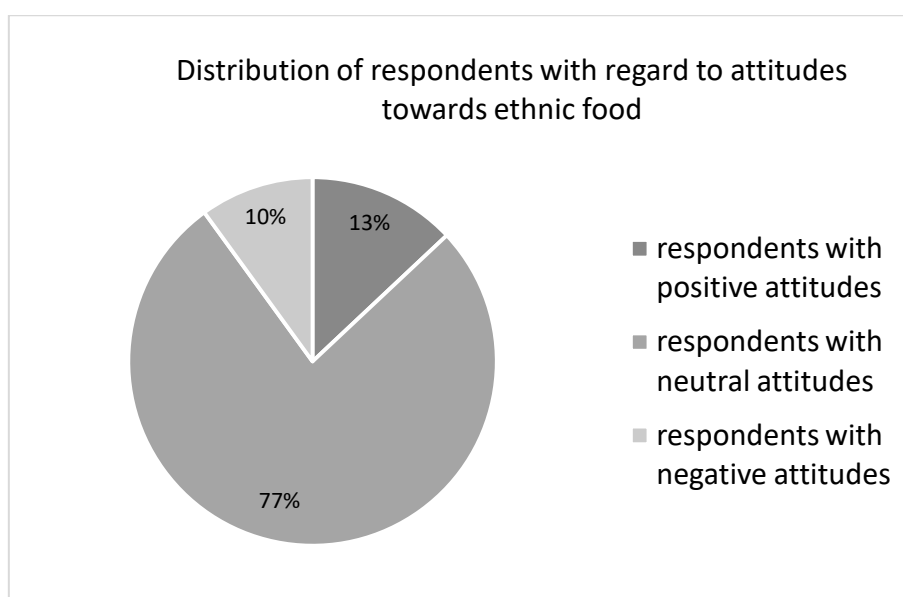


Figure 3. Distribution of respondents with regard to attitudes towards ethnic food

The relation of attitudes and behaviour in the consumption of ethnic food

The results of chi square test have shown that there is a statistically significant relation between attitudes towards ethnic food and place of ethnic food consumption ($P < 0.05$). Respondents with positive attitudes towards ethnic food in a larger proportion consumed ethnic food at home compared to those with neutral and negative attitudes towards such food. Such results may be related to the fact that preparing food at home requires greater involvement and it is to be expected that consumers with positive attitudes are those who are willing to make efforts to prepare ethnic food for home use. Respondents with neutral attitudes towards ethnic food preferred to choose restaurants for the place of ethnic food consumption, which may be related to the fact that consumers are more inclined to tasting new food in restaurants (FAO, 2004). Finally, respondents who had negative attitudes towards ethnic food consumed more of such food with their friends. It is expected that consumers with negative attitudes towards ethnic food will consume such foods only if they have no choice or because of social norms, i.e. the influence of friends on their consumption decision.

Results presented in Table 6 showed that respondents with negative attitudes towards ethnic food were more willing to pay less than HRK 30 per meal per person in ethnic food restaurant, while those with the most positive attitudes were ready to pay even more than HRK 100 per person in ethnic food restaurant ($P < 0.05$). Earlier research also showed that consumers with more positive attitudes are willing to pay more (Ahmad, 2010, cited in Ting et al., 2016).

There is no statistically significant relation between attitudes towards ethnic food consumption and frequency of ethnic food consumption ($P > 0.05$). However, respondents who had positive attitudes towards ethnic food in a larger proportion consumed such food on a weekly basis compared to those with negative and neutral attitudes.

The obtained results confirmed the important role of attitudes in consumer behaviour. Furthermore, the results presented in Table 6 showed that there is no statistically significant correlation between the attitudes towards ethnic food and the type of ethnic food consumed by respondents, as well as between attitudes and occasions when respondents most frequently consumed ethnic food ($P > 0.05$).

Table 6. Relation between attitudes and behaviour in the ethnic food consumption

		Negative attitudes (N=26)	Neutral attitudes (N=181)	Positive attitudes (N=23)	P		
Do you consume ethnic food?	Yes	75	90.4	86.2	>0.05		
	No	25	9.6	13.8			
How often do you consume ethnic food?	At least 1 time per week	47.4	41.5	57.7	>0.05		
	Few times per month	42.1	35.8	30.8			
	Once a month	5.3	12.6	3.8			
	Few times per year	5.3	10.1	7.7			
Where do you usually eat ethnic food?	At home	77.8	75	96.2	<0.05		
	In restaurant	5.6	21.9	3.8			
	At friend's	11.1	1.9	0			
Which ethnic food do you usually consume?	Other	5.6	1.3	0	>0.05		
	Bosnian	yes	63.2	59.4		73.1	
		no	36.8	40.6		26.9	
	Italian	yes	21.1	45.6		19.2	<0.05
		no	78.9	54.4		80.8	
	Mexican	yes	15.8	34.6		23.1	>0.05
		no	84.2	65.4		76.9	
	Which ethnic food do you usually consume?	Chinese	yes	15.8		13.9	15.4
no			84.2	86.1	84.6		
Macedonian		yes	10.5	7.5	19.2		
		no	89.5	92.5	80.8		
Which ethnic food do you usually consume?	Turkish	yes	10.5	8.2	3.8	>0.05	
		no	89.5	91.8	96.2		
In what occasions you consume ethnic food?	In special occasion	5.3	11.3	11.5	>0.05		
	Without special occasion	94.7	88.8	88.5			
How much are you willing to pay for meal (per person) in an ethnic restaurant?	HRK <30	21.1	0	0	<0.05		
	HRK 30-50	26.3	26.9	30.8			
	HRK 51-80	31.6	31.3	23.1			
	HRK 81-100	0	28.8	23.1			
	HRK >100	21.1	13.1	23.1			

The relation between consumers' attitude and importance of certain attributes of ethnic food

The results of the ANOVA test presented in Table 7 show that there is a statistically significant relation between consumer attitudes towards ethnic food and the importance of certain attributes of such food in store ($P < 0.05$). Consumers with positive attitudes gave more importance to all attributes of ethnic food in store (price, packaging, taste, origin/country, price/quality ratio, and seller) compared to respondents with negative and neutral attitudes towards ethnic food.

Table 7. Relation between attitudes and importance of ethnic food attributes in store

		Respondents with negative attitudes (N=26)		Respondents with neutral attitudes (N=181)		Respondents with positive attitudes (N=23)		P*
		M	S.D.	M	S.D.	M	S.D.	
The importance of certain attributes of ethnic food in store	Price	2.7 ^a	1.4	4 ^b	0.8	4.1 ^b	1.1	<0.05
	Packaging	2.5 ^a	1	3.5 ^b	0.9	3.89 ^c	0.9	<0.05
	Taste	3.2 ^a	1.5	4.5 ^b	0.7	4.7 ^b	0.5	<0.05
	Origin/country	2.7 ^a	1.2	3.8 ^b	1.2	4.1 ^b	1	<0.05
	Price/quality ratio	2.7 ^a	1.3	4.4 ^b	0.6	4.5 ^b	0.6	<0.05
	Seller	1.9 ^a	1.1	3.1 ^b	1.1	3.2 ^b	1.4	<0.05

M – Mean; S.D.- Standard deviation; * ANOVA; ^{a,b,c} – LSD test, values in same row with different superscript are significantly different ($P < 0.05$).

Furthermore, the results of ANOVA test showed a statistically significant correlation between attitudes towards ethnic food and the importance of certain attributes of ethnic food in restaurants ($P < 0.05$). Respondents with positive attitudes gave greater importance to the majority of ethnic food attributes in restaurants, more precisely the price, the appearance, the origin, i.e. the country from which the ethnic food originates, the price/quality ratio and the service compared to the respondents with neutral and negative attitudes towards ethnic food. Respondents with neutral attitudes towards ethnic food gave greater importance to the taste of ethnic food in the restaurant in opposition to respondents with negative and positive attitudes - Table 8.

Table 8. Relation between attitudes and importance of ethnic food characteristics in restaurants

		Respondents with negative attitudes (N=26)		Respondents with neutral attitudes (N=181)		Respondents with positive attitudes (N=23)		P*
		M	S.D.	M	S.D.	M	S.D.	
The importance of certain attributes of ethnic food in restaurant	Price	2.9 ^a	1.4	3.7 ^b	0.9	3.8 ^b	1.2	<0.05
	Appearance	3.3 ^a	1.2	4 ^b	0.8	4.2 ^b	0.9	<0.05
	Taste	3.5 ^a	1.4	4.7 ^b	0.6	4.5 ^b	0.9	<0.05
	Origin/country	2.6 ^a	1.2	3.5 ^b	1.2	4 ^b	1.1	<0.05
	Price/quality ratio	2.9 ^a	1.3	4.3 ^b	0.7	4.5 ^b	0.6	<0.05
	Caterer/service	2.7 ^a	1.3	4.1 ^b	0.8	4.5 ^b	0.6	<0.05

M- Mean; S.D.- Standard deviation; *ANOVA; ^{a,b,c} – LSD test, values in same row with different superscript are significantly different (P<0.05).

Conclusions

Research findings have shown that most respondents consume ethnic food at least once a week, mostly at home and in restaurants. Regarding the selection of ethnic food, respondents mostly consumed Bosnian, Italian and Mexican food and stated that such food is mostly consumed without special occasions.

Respondents considered that the most important attributes when choosing ethnic food in restaurants and stores are taste and price/quality ratio. Service was more important to consumers in ethnic restaurants than in stores.

The largest share of respondents had neutral attitudes towards ethnic food, followed by those who had positive attitudes, while the least respondents were those with negative attitudes towards ethnic food. Respondents with positive attitudes towards ethnic food consumed ethnic food more often at home, those with neutral attitudes consumed such food in restaurants, while respondents who had negative attitudes towards ethnic food consumed ethnic food mostly at friends. Respondents with positive attitudes towards ethnic food were willing to pay more for ethnic food meal than those with negative and neutral attitudes.

Given the relation between attitudes and the importance of certain attributes of ethnic food, respondents with positive attitudes gave greater importance to all aspects of ethnic food, both in restaurants and in stores. Results of the research can serve producers and distributors of ethnic foods to better suit the demands of modern consumers.

Furthermore, the obtained results can be used by marketing experts to create marketing strategies for ethnic food. For future research it is recommended to examine the relation of socio-demographic characteristics and the consumption of ethnic food, as earlier studies have shown that socio-demographic characteristics affect the behaviour in ethnic food consumption, but also the influence of fear of tasting new food (food neophobia) on behaviour in ethnic food consumption. Additionally, future studies should include larger sample in order to generalize the results to the wider population and to better understand consumers' attitudes and behaviour in ethnic food consumption. Although online surveys offer many advantages over traditional surveys, there are some disadvantages like sampling concerns. Some individuals will respond to an invitation to participate in an online survey, while others will not, leading to a systematic bias. Furthermore, on-line surveys are more represented by younger and more educated respondents.

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