

The role of (foreign?) culture on consumer buying behaviour: What changes when living abroad?

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Abstract

Contemporary notions of marketing - such as international subcultures, the Information Society and the global village - would lead us to believe that consumers have access to and consume an abundance of products from different countries. In the light of increasing standardisation by global corporations, it follows the assumption that there will be a gradual convergence in consumer behaviour. This study explores the consumer behaviour of Anglo-Saxons living in the Rhône-Alpes area of south-east France - with reference to country-of-origin (COO) effects when shopping for food produce. Building on studies of acculturation, the research sets out to explore the extent to which specific factors such as price, gender, age and length of residence in a foreign country may have an influence on consumer choice when purchasing groceries, in relation to the COO.

Keywords: Consumer behaviour, cultural difference, international marketing, country-of-origin.

Introduction

Over the last 25 years, the forces of global expansion have contributed to an increase in the number of people living and working outside their country-of-origin (COO). This is especially true across Europe since 1992 with the opening up of national borders; “The changes in international secondary and higher education in certain regions, such as the European Union, facilitated the emergence of a large transnationally mobile student segment” (Sirkeci, 2013: 30). Indeed “migration is seen as evidence that a city is ‘capital of the world’ or ‘the most culturally diverse city in the world’, with the implication that this is a good thing. New migrants are believed to strengthen the economy and also provide a signal of the city’s global reach” (LSE, 2007: 6). As international mobility increases, it follows that new patterns of consumer behaviour will emerge. New arrivals in a host country can be described as a subgroup of consumers with different purchasing habits.

A body of literature puts forwards the various factors that can influence the extent to which new settlers will integrate into the host society or isolate

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themselves with ex-patriots and immigrants from a similar cultural background. Many studies are based on comparisons of national culture that often begin by highlighting difference in social behaviour (Varnum *et al.*, 2009). However, there seems to be a lack of research into the consumer behaviour of foreign or non-natives consumers within a host country (Borjas, 2003). In other words, it can seem that academic literature (see Zukin and Smith Maguire) tends to concentrate on consumer behaviour of a particular population without taking into consideration the cross-section of nationalities and cultures that form the consumer group.

The purpose of this exploratory paper is to examine one particular cultural group of consumers within a foreign cultural setting when confronted with buying either products from their home country or substituting these products with foreign ones. Through an exploratory study using semi-structured interview method, we examine the consumer behaviour of Anglo-Saxons living in the Rhône-Alpes area of France with specific reference to the purchase of groceries. We examine their general views about routine food shopping in France. Respondents described the products that they could find easily and various items that were difficult or impossible to locate, thus indicating the extent to which they have adapted their consumer behaviour by including local products into their food purchases.

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When marketing to niche segments – such as ethnic or minority consumers – it is particularly important to have a detailed insight into their consumer behaviour, including knowing what non-native consumers want and how much they are prepared to pay for these items, along with knowing how to communicate this information to them. Ongoing changes in today's globalised marketplace call into question the traditional worldview set out in academic textbooks – such as the frameworks of cultural difference put forward by the essentialists – Hofstede (1980), Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1993) and Hall (1976). Since their publication, cultures have crossed languages and languages have crossed cultures (Risager, 2008). This view is the genesis of our study. The results of our enquiry point to the multi-dimensionality of international consumers and provide evidence of the context-specificity of marketing to cultural subgroups such as immigrants. We put forward suggestions for the practical application of the data and also avenues for further research.

Literature review: an evolution in thinking

The importance of understanding consumers from different national backgrounds is not a new field of research but it has attracted growing interest over the past quarter century as marketing activities have become more globalised (Hermeking, 2005), multicultural and transnational. The following chronological literature review reflects a deepening in our understanding and an evolution in our awareness of why consumers seem to view foreign products differently from domestic products.

Popular paradigms developed in the 1970s focused on the notion that the importance of country-of-origin appeal is greater for some products than for others (Gaedeke, 1973; Lillis & Narayana, 1974); that it is not unusual for consumers to rate their own countries' products relatively higher than the foreign ones (Nagashima, 1970); that the French consumer has a very strong preference for domestic products (Baumgartner & Jolibert, 1978) which - as Dubois (1972) points out - is not unexpected in light of the values inherent in the French culture, notably individualism and nationalism.

The leading frameworks of culture – Hofstede (1980), Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1993), and Hall (1976) - that form the backbone of cultural training disseminate the notion of national difference based on cultural traits. These cultural frameworks are taught in business schools worldwide, often without referring to the work of the critics such as McSweeney who point out that globalisation and ICT (information and communication technologies) have had a profound impact on consumer behaviour by reducing disparity between countries. Johansson (1989: 47) holds that “country of origin effects are of minimal importance in the larger scheme of things”. This points to a “made-in paradox” (Ahmed & d’Astous, 1999: 122) concerning the frequently observed inconsistency between consumers' account of the low importance they give to country-of-origin when making purchases of products and the actual significant impact of country-of-origin in research studies where such information is made available. As Oszomer & Cavusgil (1991) have noted, the country-of-origin concept has not been clearly defined by the great majority of researchers. Baker & Currie (1993) put forward that “the country of origin concept should be considered a fifth element of the marketing mix along with the product itself, its price, promotion and distribution” (Al-Sulaiti & Baker, 1998: 173).

According to Ahmed & d’Astous (1993) “brand name and country of origin are both significantly related to consumer product evaluations” (p. 48) – more so than price which is an important argument when studying buying behaviour of ‘non-natives’ in a foreign country. Developing this notion, they suggest that extrinsic cues (brand name, country of origin) are often used by consumers to judge foreign products, particularly when it is not easy to assess the intrinsic value: taste, design and performance (Ahmed & d’Astous, 1995), but this of course depends on the type of product being purchased. In fast-moving markets such as ICT, for example, mobile communications are thought to symbolise different values in different cultures (Cannon & Yaprak, 2002) which would challenge the idea that there is indeed convergence in consumer behaviour. In contrast, in the food market when consumers cannot adequately assess product quality or safety, even after experiencing the goods, they tend to rely on trust in the information provided (e.g. product labels). The work of Kim (2008: 56) found that:

“When consumers are faced with a choice situation in which they are forced to assess trade-off between the extrinsic and the intrinsic cues, they appear to rely on a specific ex-

trinsic cue (i.e. country of origin) more heavily, which may suggest that consumers are using this information as a risk reduction strategy.”

Towards the end of the 1990s, there was rapid expansion of international trade in food into global markets (Philippidis & Hubbard, 2003). At the same time, advances in ICT enabled consumers to have access to product information that had previously been withheld or unavailable. The net effect of these two factors - developments in international trade and widespread adoption of ICT - was that consumers became more informed and increasingly demanding concerning product knowledge. They asked for more detailed information about the quality, safety and production attributes of their food (Caswell, 1998). Country-of-origin information is often used in various countries to protect their own products from international competition. Kelly-Holmes (2005) suggests that advertisers emphasize nationality as a “unique selling proposition” (p.27). Marketing messages reinforce this connection through the use of symbols and references to countries, culture and language, for example Irish soda bread, English breakfast tea, Scottish porridge oats, New York bagels, etc.

Taking into account the increasing number of food scares in recent decades, research by Puduri *et al.* (1999) found that the majority of consumers would like markets to provide a certain amount of country-of-origin information for fresh food produce. It is thought that this need for information “may flow from consumer concerns about safety and their preference for buying more local produce” (p.1185). The work of Koschate-Fischer *et al.* (2012: 32) puts forward that “consumers are willing to pay higher prices for branded products from a COO with a favourable country image than for products from a COO with a less favourable image (e.g., for products from France vs. Austria or products from the United States vs. South Korea)”. In other words, country-of-origin effects are thought to influence consumers’ perceptions of quality and purchase value (Lim & O’Cass, 2001). It is worth noting, however, that “consumers often do not know the true origin of many (even well-known) brands and that they frequently categorize a brand to the wrong COO” (Balabanis and Diamantopoulos, 2011: 95). It would seem that although customers demand reliable information on country-of-origin, they are prone to misinterpreting this information.

A large body of literature describes the cultural and psychological changes - acculturation - that take place when people migrate from one country to another. According to Berry (2005) the process of acculturation can take a long time; it can result in cultural changes both in dominant as well as non-dominant groups. Berry’s notion is based on the extent to which individuals value and wish to maintain their cultural identity, together with the extent to which individuals value and seek out contact with those outside their own group, and wish to participate in the daily life of the larger society. The pro-

cess of acculturation usually involves learning each other's languages, sharing each other's food preferences, and adopting forms of dress and social interactions that are characteristic of each group. In this process of change, people tend to maintain some pre-migration patterns of food consumption. Cleveland *et al.* (2009) found that the food habits of migrants are highly resistant to change. Food can be described as one of the key modes of expression of ethnic identity and culture (Ogden *et al.*, 2004; Jamal & Chapman, 2000). This tendency to consume food from 'home' can generate an ethnic market segment within the country of settlement (Goldfrank, 2005) and, as such, could open up a number of opportunities for producers and marketers in the host country. Likewise, there are marketing opportunities for exporters of the country of origin of the migrants.

Today's consumers are not only better informed, many have experienced foreign products *in situ*, taking advantage of low-cost air travel introduced after deregulation in the early 1990s (DTI, 2004). Changing patterns of work have also contributed to greater international mobility – either through personal choice or through professional obligation (Cleveland & Laroche, 2007; Sirkeci, 2013). International mobility requires many people to spend considerable time living, working or studying in a foreign culture. For families, switching from one environment to another has an impact on every member of the family and in particular on younger consumers who have not yet had time to form opinions.

The outcome of this new trend can be seen in the emergence of a segment of consumers who have acquired global consumer knowledge, commonly known as "TCK (third-culture kids) that is to say, adolescents who have lived at least one of their formative years in another country" (Lam and Selmer, 2003: 109). These consumers have usually developed distinct special characteristics and perceptions as a result of their daily interactions and experiences during their adolescence where mental and physical developments are prominent. In other words, they are more sensitive to cultural difference and are likely to continue being internationally mobile and unbiased. People are gradually becoming international citizens, not merely movement-wise but also consumption habits-wise.

People generally move between countries to take advantage of different environments. This includes migration from colder to warmer climates, and from areas with lower wages to areas with higher wages. The intensification and expansion of international trade has accelerated the movement of people beyond borders. Globalisation "has increased linkages between countries, and made more people aware of differences between them" (Martin, 2009:14). It has increased the flow of migrants and, as such, shifted societies from 'mainstream' to multicultural with different languages and in some cases highly diversified ethnic and religious groups within the national boundaries. It follows that, in the current environment, it is no longer adequate to study *national* groups in order to analyse consumer behaviour; many cities in Western Eu-

rope, Australia and North America have larger immigrant populations than native-born citizens (Price & Benton-Short, 2007; Boman, 2011). In order to make important and valid contributions to market research in this field, it is necessary to segment a population into the sub-groups that take into consideration the complex intra-cultural context of the consumer (Chung & Fisher, 1999). "Of all the cultural conventions that structure daily life in the consumption domain, the most important is probably eating habits" (Usunier & Lee, 2009:73) - indeed, "food is both substance and symbol; providing both physical nourishment and a key form of communication that carries many kinds of meanings" (Wilk, 1995:372).

For the purpose of this study, we distinguish between expatriates and immigrants. Expatriates can be described as a group of people who have taken the opportunity to work or study outside their country of origin for an undetermined period of time (Farquhar, 2009); in contrast, immigrants can be defined as individuals who have chosen to leave their homeland in order to settle in another country. Several studies have been undertaken on people who have moved away from their home country as immigrants (Belk, 1992). However, it was only at the beginning of the 1990s that research turned to expatriates and their consumer behaviour (Gilly, 1995) with particular attention being paid to American expatriates (Dawson *et al.*, 1991). As Anglo-Saxon companies - in particular American corporations - expanded their activities across the globe, an increasing proportion of Americans moved abroad for work (Gregersen & Black, 1992). Many expatriates failed to make a success of their new life partly due to the lack of basic consumer products from home - in this case Jell'O, ready-made food and sliced bread - suggesting that the importance of ethnic food may very well contribute to how long foreign people and in particular, expatriates remain in a host country (Black & Gregerson, 1991).

In terms of consumer behaviour, the general consensus is that these expatriates are usually highly educated, well paid and benefit from various fiscal incentives (Farquhar, 2009) that many immigrants may not have. Expatriates are often cosmopolitan consumers (Hannerz, 1990; Caldwell *et al.*, 2006) who retain certain habits of their cultural and ethnical background (Thompson & Tambyah, 1999). These findings seem to challenge research carried out by Venkatesh (1995) who put forward that consumer behaviour, albeit an individual identity, is derived from interaction within a socio-cultural environment. In other words, all human beings are normally social and thus their actions (including consumption and purchasing activities) are clearly enhanced by the company they keep. Upon arriving in a host country, most newcomers seek to integrate by joining several socio-cultural subgroups simultaneously (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2002). These affiliations are believed to have an impact on consumer behaviour, for example influencing purchase behaviour.

On an international level, consumer research has often centred on comparative studies of shopping trends across different countries (Nicholls *et al.*, 2000; Seock, 2011) or within the same countries (Robertet, 1997; Chebat &

Morin, 2007). It would seem that less academic research has been published on international migrants who originate from one particular culture and are then immersed into another culture, and then sometimes a third. We nevertheless acknowledge the research that has been undertaken on consumer behaviour and the importance of purchasing familiar food or comfort food in times of change or upheaval (Wood, 2010); and the fact that immigrants from the same ethnic origin should not be regarded as a single homogeneous group of consumers (Vijaygopal & Dibb, 2012). This context must be taken into account when considering the consumer behaviour of migrants, since familiar choices are made in new environment, in some cases to reduce negative aspects (Duhachek & Oakley, 2007) or due to nostalgia/ homesickness or culture shock which may occur at any time of the period in a foreign country (Friedman *et al.*, 2009).

It is clear that more research is needed into the consumer behaviour of people living in foreign countries and who have chosen to leave their country of origin or birth. Existing studies have looked into how consumers acclimatise to a new environment, for example how American wives adapt and keep their buying habits in Spain (Gilly 1995); how the shopping environment and other factors such as opening hours, retail mix and atmosphere can influence foreign consumer behaviour in the Netherlands (Wijnen *et al.*, 2011) and so on. Little is known, however, about how foreign food products are perceived on the market by the various groups of international or transnational migrants. This gap in our understanding calls into question a number of issues surrounding country-of-origin appeal, ethnocentrism and acculturation.

Building on the pioneering work of Sirkeci (2013) today's society is a constantly changing environment characterized by the increasing mobility of goods, finances and people. Evolving trends are being reinforced by the enormous speed and variety available in communication and transportation. It follows that the consumer behaviour of an increasingly mobile population will gradually evolve as each new culture is embraced. If this notion holds true then new frameworks are needed to explain the consumer behaviour as it adapts to a new environment. There are also implications for the food industry to provide products that respond to the needs and desires of these sub-groups.

Research question

This enquiry stands at the intersection of three areas of literature: consumer behaviour as a cultural phenomenon, ethnic studies and cross-cultural research. Two main assumptions can be drawn from the literature available in the public domain: firstly, that Anglo-Saxon consumers show varying degrees of adapting to a new cultural environment; secondly, that latent factors (such as time-scale or nostalgia) may influence the perception of 'foreign' food and the motivation for buying food produce from a second or third culture. Our

research question is therefore: to what extent do Anglo-Saxons both from within and outside of Europe maintain or modify their original food buying habits - and if they modify their consumption, to what extent does gender, age and length of residence have an impact?

Methodology

For the purpose of this exploratory study, the authors chose to use a written questionnaire with closed questions, based on the belief that closed questions are more suitable for obtaining factual and common information, and that “this would be difficult to achieve via a self-administered, computer-based questionnaire” (Chestnutt *et al.*, 2004: 416). The questions were purposely broad yet simple.

The questionnaire was written in plain English; both researchers are of British origin and it was important to reduce the risk of language discrepancy in semantics (given that the participants come from various socio-cultural backgrounds and use one of the many different forms of the English language). The clarity of the language was checked with a pilot study. The pilot study revealed several semantic shortfalls in the design of the questions. Although the interviewees were all native English speakers, misunderstandings of several lexical items showed that there were different meanings of certain questions and specific terms which could lead to gathering false data and introducing bias in the interpretation of the data. Terms such as ‘pickles’, ‘fort-night’ and ‘food produce’ did not have the same significance for say the American participants as for the South African or Irish participants. This problem was addressed by modifying the vocabulary in the questionnaire in order to reduce the risk of confusion. It is important to take into account the fact that although the researches are native English speakers there may still be some errors in the interpretation of the answers given by the participants since native English speakers from all parts of the world took part in this research.

The final draft of the questionnaire included questions concerning the products purchased, frequency of purchase and reasons for purchase. Once the questionnaire had been designed it was administered by the researchers on a one to one basis. This was done for two major reasons. Firstly, it achieved an improved rate of return rather than conducting a self-selecting survey; and secondly as outlined earlier, problems of syntax and semantics could be explained and thus reduce the error factor in the response to the questions.

The questionnaires were anonymous. Personal information was gathered on age, gender, profession, membership to English-speaking clubs and societies, and number of years that the participant had been living in France. Although participants were not required to provide details on ‘family status’, the researchers acknowledge that consumer behaviour can be influenced by the size and composition of the family and the nationality of the parents. It was

decided *not* to include ‘family status’ in this initial enquiry, although the food buying behaviour of “singles” may be investigated in a further study, depending on the outcome of this preliminary research. At this stage, the main focus is to explore the buying habits of Anglo-Saxons living in south-east France.

Further information on Anglo-Saxon food consumption was gathered in a parallel study. Various shop managers and shop owners were interviewed at retail outlets where Anglo-Saxon products are traditionally sold. This information was further supplemented by direct observation at retail outlets and on both expat websites and traditional outlets’ websites in order to verify product availability and price range.

The face-to-face questionnaires were administered to customers who were in the midst of purchasing groceries at Anglo-Saxon food retailers in the Rhône-Alpes region. The data was collected over 4 months, from February to May 2012. Once all the data was collected, it was classified and processed by SPHINX software in order to discover the existence of common themes in the food buying habits of native Anglo-Saxons in France.

Limitations

Given the sample size, caution must be exercised when interpreting the data. Generalisations must be avoided. The study focuses on a specific cross-cultural context (France and Britain) regarding the food purchasing habits of a small sample of native English-speaking families living in the Rhône-Alpes region. ‘Families’ in this study refers to at least two generations – parent and child - living in the same household. It is acknowledged that single individuals would have a different consumer behaviour from families. For simplicity, these consumers are collectively referred to as ‘Anglo-Saxons’ in this study but they do *not* represent the consumer behaviour of all Anglo-Saxons. Neither are the results generalizable to other cultural contexts, activities or sectors.

Findings

The survey yielded 75 completed surveys from participants aged between 18 and 60+ years old. The sample comprises 28 male and 47 female participants - see below (Figure 1). The aim of the enquiry is to explore how various factors such as price, gender, age and length of residence in a foreign country may have an impact on consumer choice. The survey generated descriptive data which can be used to build a profile of consumer behaviour. The participants in this enquiry reflect the composition of the Anglo-Saxon population of the Rhône-Alpes area (i.e. a broad cross-section of individuals of working age or recently retired).

Figure 1: Participants by age and gender

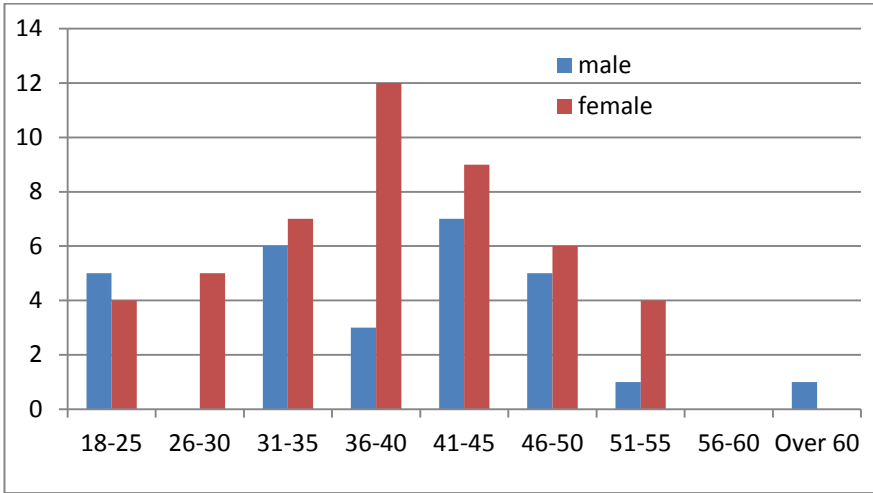
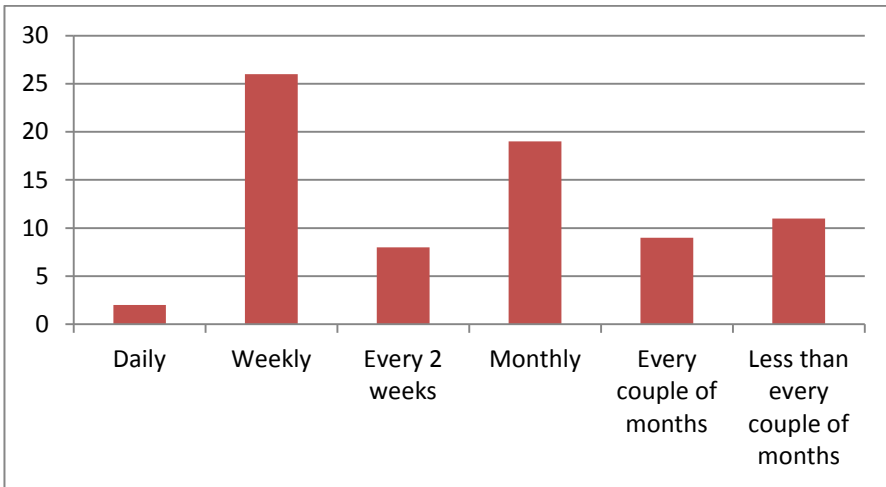


Figure 2: How often do you buy food products of Anglo-Saxon origin?



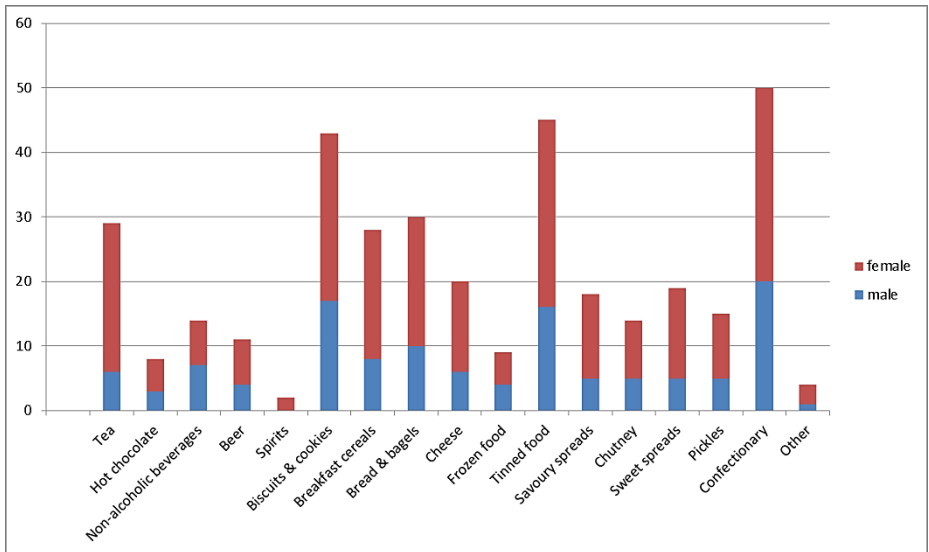
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Although the participants presently reside in the Rhône-Alpes area, they were born in different English-speaking countries: UK (n=35), Ireland (n=2), USA (n=28), Canada (n=3), South Africa (n=2), Australia (n=3) and New Zealand (n=1). In this study, many of them buy Anglo-Saxon food produce weekly (n=26) or monthly (n=19) (Figure 2).

Culturally speaking, food shopping in France is usually undertaken often and locally, supporting local or national producers. The choice of products consumed by Anglo-Saxons, however, reflects a noticeable liking for what can

be described as convenience food (see Figure 3) bought often but not from local or national producers.

Figure 3: Which Anglo-Saxon products do you prefer?



Exploring the association between ‘purchase frequency’ and ‘price paid’, an analysis of the data shows that there is no significant relationship between the two variables. This finding is supported by responses from participants; when shopping for Anglo-Saxon products, consumers in this sample seem prepared to pay high prices, namely “Over twice the price you pay in your home country” (n=14), “Twice the price you pay in your home country” (n=19) and “50% more than the price you pay in your home country” (n=42). The willingness to pay high prices for certain Anglo-Saxon products is justified by participants as “nostalgia” (n=47), “taste” (n=62), “no French equivalent” (n=48), “simple to prepare (n=22), “convenience” (n=8) and “other” (n=5). “Other” refers to purchases related to tradition and custom, thus of a cultural nature – such as buying ingredients for a “traditional Sunday roast” and a “full English breakfast”.

Chi square testing was used to compare observed data with data we would expect to obtain based on the literature. The results show no significant relationship between gender and preference for Anglo-Saxon products, and no significant relationship between gender and willingness to accept French substitute products. Neither is there a relationship between gender and price paid. Likewise, there is no significant relationship between age and preference for Anglo-Saxon products, or between age and willingness to accept French substitute products. Concerning length of residence in France, there is no significant relationship between the length of residence and preference for Anglo-

Saxon products, but there *is* a significant relationship between the length of residence in France and willingness to accept French substitute products, suggesting that the longer people stay in a host country, the more likely they are to adapt to and adopt 'local' produce. This reaction is logical since local products will be perceived, in time, as less 'foreign', more economical, more convenient than tracking down 'home' produce either online or via an importer. Taken as a whole, age and gender have little impact on consumer behaviour but length of residence in a foreign country does seem to exert a certain influence on consumer behaviour. However, there is plenty of anecdotal evidence from the interviews with store owners and shop managers to suggest that regular customers of Anglo-Saxon products are women.

The majority of the respondents (n=45) do NOT belong to any English-speaking clubs and societies – this was an unexpected result since the literature had suggested that new-comers either try to integrate into the new culture by joining socio-cultural groups *or* try to prolong the comfort zone by trying to stay within a familiar environment. Chi square testing reveals a significant relationship between membership of Anglo-Saxon cultural societies and gender ($\chi^2=23.99$). In the sample, female participants claim to be regular members of English-Speaking Mothers' Group (n=14) and Women's Professional Networking Group (n=9). In contrast, male respondents claim to belong to the Anglican Church group (n=7), the Monday Club (n=5), the American Club (n=2) and Association France-Grande Bretagne (n=5).

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Participants listed various products that they prefer to be of Anglo-Saxon origin; biscuits and cookies (frequency=57.3%), tinned food (frequency=60%) and confectionary (frequency=66.7%). This result seems to confirm a cultural - or generational - bias towards a 'grazing' habit that can be observed in so many Anglo-Saxon activities such as amusement parks, seaside resorts, city centres ..., as opposed to the more traditional French way of life based on eating a balanced meal and not snacking between meals.

Discussion

The overall results support the notion that a growing number of people move between different countries, particularly within the EU. For Europeans, the increase in mobility can be explained by the legal framework which has simplified formalities for living and working in a second cultural environment. In addition, pan-European and international mobility have increased as a result of the globalisation of the corporate world; companies require their staff to be more and more mobile. ICT has contributed to this increase (or acceptance) of mobility as it has demystified 'foreign' environments. People can now obtain information much easier about the second culture to which they will become a part of and thus it is now possible to familiarise oneself with not only the customs and habits of a potential host country but also with the consumer habits, as well as the availability of products and prices.

For Anglo-Saxons living in the Rhône-Alpes area of south-east France, this enquiry suggests the existence of different levels of integration with French society while maintaining a greater level of attachment to Anglo-Saxon food culture. The respondents have assimilated many of the food habits of the host country but endeavour to maintain the integrity of Anglo-Saxon food consumption patterns. This supports the integration strategy described by Berry (2005).

Living and working abroad has become more of a chosen way of life for many Anglo-Saxon migrants. Based on the interview data gathered in this study, it would seem that the members of this subgroup have taken with them many traits of Anglo-Saxon consumer behaviour to France. Some of these traits are likely to subside as migrants adopt certain habits in the new culture. The data seems to support the notion that in time, the 'host' culture will, to a certain extent, influence their newly acquired buying habits on products from their original culture.

The responses given by Anglo-Saxon migrants reveal that there are similar consumer behaviour traits between expatriates and immigrants. The analysis of the findings suggests that age and gender have little impact on consumer behaviour regarding food shopping but that the length of residence in a foreign country does appear to influence consumer behaviour; the longer the time spent in a new culture, the more readily migrants accepted 'foreign' substitute products. The study also opens up questions on the consumer behaviour of migrant populations who cross borders *freely* owing to the political and economic actions of nation states and extended free trade communities (as opposed to migrant populations who are forced to move to a new country for their own safety).

Concluding remarks

The study tests the relationship between age, gender and length of residence in France for a small sample of Anglo-Saxon families residing in the Rhône-Alpes area of south-east France, by looking at the food buying habits of these residents. The findings of the study suggest firstly that there is no significant relationship between gender or age and preference for Anglo-Saxon products and secondly that there is no observable willingness to accept French substitute products. The only significant relationship in this sample seems to be between the length of residence in France and willingness to accept French substitute products – which is somewhat logical as new comers settle in over time.

It may seem paradoxical that there is no significant relationship between the length of residence and preference for Anglo-Saxon products, but that there is a significant relationship between the length of residence in France and willingness to accept French substitute products. This can be partly ex-

plained by the fact that the Anglo-Saxon community living in the Rhône-Alpes area is a tight-knit network within which much attention is paid to peer advice thus influencing food preferences over time. There is also loyal support for local retailers who sell food of Anglo-Saxon origin. While there is a certain tolerance of French substitutes, the overwhelming preference is for the original version from 'home'. It may also be that occasionally, consumers will buy a French substitute without realising since the packaging is often deceptively similar, or they may buy simply through curiosity to compare.

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