

CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS ABOUT BENEFICIAL EFFECTS ON HUMAN HEALTH OF MEAT PRODUCTS PROCESSED WITH NATURAL INGREDIENTS

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I. OBJECTIVES

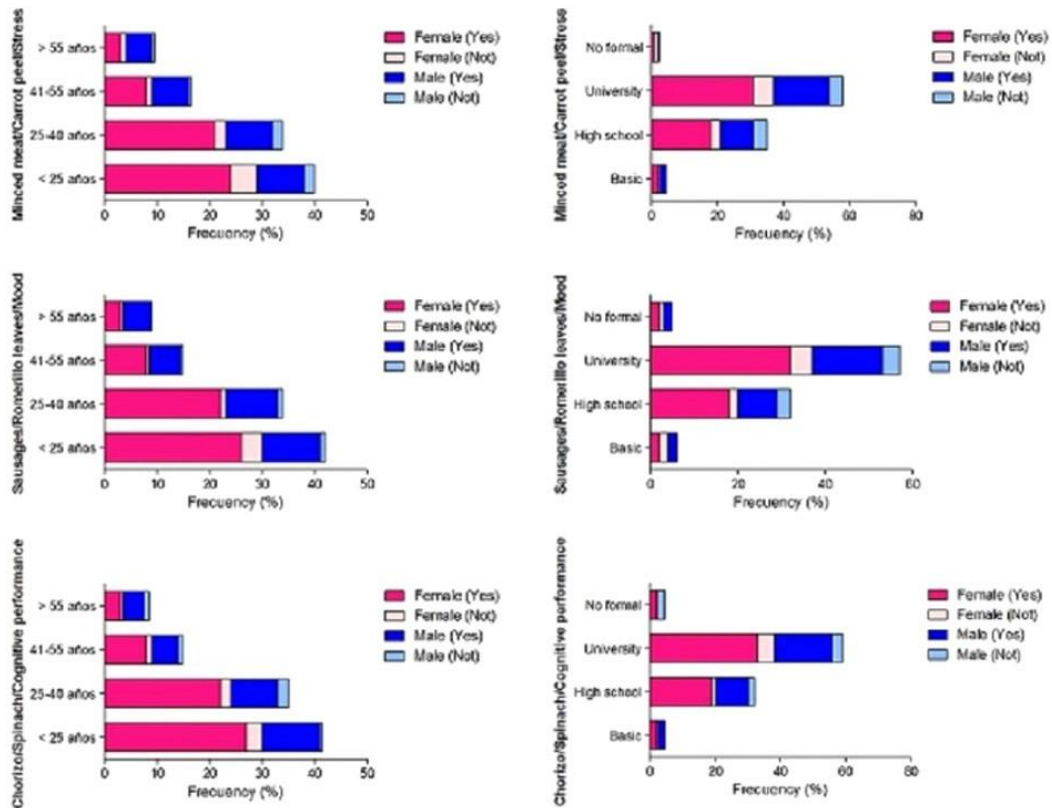
To study objective was to learn about consumer perceptions about alleged health benefits of meat products formulated with natural, functional ingredients.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

An exploratory consumer survey was conducted in a sample of meat consumers ($n = 192$) of the municipality of Hermosillo, Sonora State, Mexico. The questionnaire was previously approved by a small group of experts in the area of human psychology and food technology and was administered in person (face to face) using the paper-and-pen mode to randomly selected meat buyers in local supermarkets. Besides demographics (gender, age, and scholarship), consumers responded to a total of 9 questions—3 about their knowledge and perceptions of functional foods and 6 regarding the acceptance of functional meat products and their alleged effects on mental health and well-being. Data were subjected to analysis of variance and a Tukey test ($P < 0.05$) for mean separation.

III. RESULTS

More women than men, between 25 and 40 y of age, participated; the majority of individuals aged 25 y or younger had completed college education ($P < 0.05$). At the start of the interview, more than 60% of the consumers expressed that they did not know the meaning of functional foods, but once this concept was explained to them, more than half of the interviewees indicated that they had consumed these products, and >80% believed that its consumption could help to improve human health ($P < 0.05$). In regard to consumer acceptance of functional meat products (Figure 1), all women younger than 25 y of age and men between 25 and 40 y of age with a college background indicated that they would be willing to consume meat products processed with carrot peel and romerillo leaves to mitigate stress and improve mood ($P < 0.05$). Also, the results indicated (Figure 1) that they would be willing to consume chorizo processed with spinach because it would increase cognitive abilities ($P < 0.05$).



IV. CONCLUSION

The local consumer's perception of functional foods, as well as their willingness to accept meat products processed with natural ingredients, are based on the positive belief that these products would improve physical and mental health. These attitudinal responses represent valuable information for designing marketing strategies of meat-based functional, natural foods.

Keywords: consumer acceptance, functional foods, health, meat