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<input type="checkbox"/>	Doctor's thesis

Subject	International business	Date	2.11.2006
Author	Laura Soranko	Student number	
		Number of pages	130
Title	Consumer behaviour related to functional food in Russia Case: Actimel		
Supervisors	Ph.D. Kari Liuhto, M.Sc. Kaisa-Kerttu Hannula		

Abstract

The object of this research was to analyse consumer behaviour related to functional food in Russia. Actimel was used as an example brand in this research. The emphasis of the research was on studying the attitude towards functional food and the buying criteria of Actimel among Russian consumers. When attitude was studied, the relationship between it and buying of functional food was under interest.

Functional food is a rather new trend, what brought some challenges for the research. However, several earlier studies on the theme and the empirical findings of this research proved that Russian consumers are, in fact, rather familiar with the functional food concept. The most well-known fact among Russian consumers is that functional food is health-promoting.

The attitude of Russian consumers seemed to be somewhat positive in general and consumers were willing to buy functional food products. Healthiness and previous experience seemed to be important factors in determining the attitude of Russian consumers. Also price was important, when the attitude was formed. Here it seemed that consumers are ready to pay 10% more for functional food than for ordinary food.

Regarding the buying criteria of Actimel, it was found that healthiness seemed to be an important criterion. In addition, availability and price related issues were of importance. Here, however, it was found that lower prices of Actimel do not necessarily bring more customers, as price reductions were not perceived as incentives for an Actimel purchase. Here trust and knowledge over the particular brand were considered as essential factors influencing the choice of Actimel.

The main empirical finding of this research was that the most positive attitude can be found among female consumers aged over 40 years. This same group evaluated that the measured criteria for buying Actimel are more important, than what is was evaluated by the other groups. Among this group of female consumers aged over 40 years of special importance seemed to be previous experience over functional food and the particular brand, Actimel. Also healthiness was perceived to be an essential criterion for the purchase. Here this importance of healthiness is partly assumed to come from the fact that healthiness is considered to be an essential part of functional food in general. Also the importance of healthiness increased with age in this research. This can be assumed to come from the fact that aged consumers are more interested in preventing various diseases, because the likelihood of diseases is assumed to increase with age.

Key words	Functional food, consumer behaviour, attitude, choice behaviour
Further information	