

Brand knowledge and Satisfaction Explained by the Attributes of a Regional Food Product

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to analyse the role of brand attributes of a regional food product in the knowledge and satisfaction levels of its consumers. Factors influencing consumer choice, that is, sociodemographic and behavioural factors were also contemplated. This study was based on a quantitative research approach. The questionnaire was built in partnership with the organization of the event and was validated by a pilot group, and a logistic regression and generalized linear models were applied (GLM) to treat the sample. The main results of this research showed that, in terms of the profile of consumers who already know the brand, the consumer segment is somewhat narrow (in terms of sociodemographic variables); there is a relevant problem with the brand awareness; of the eleven brand attributes analysed, only four were identified as main influencers for buying the brand's products: brand trust, brand liking, recommendation and quality; and, finally, regarding the level of brand satisfaction, in relation to the products of the brand, was confirmed as being very high. Finally, this research contributes to the marketing theory development because it identifies some antecedents and suggests contingencies applied to a brand of a regional food product and is one of the first which attempts to contribute to the explanation of brand knowledge and satisfaction considering the attributes of a regional food product. This research will also contribute to develop a better profiling of the consumer of such food products, thus fulfilling a gap in the academic literature.

Keywords: Brand satisfaction; brand attributes; traditional food products; logit; GLM.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In all kinds of sectors, the role of brands has a lot of importance for the success of the brand strategies' development (Ahn, Back & Choe, 2019; Haigh & Knowles, 2004; Shafiee, Sanayei, Shahin & Dolatabadi, 2014). Conceptually and practically, there are different notions of product and brand. Some consumers select a brand without giving attention to the product, while others choose a product without acknowledging the brand (Chen-Yu, Kim & Lin, 2017).

Considering that Davcik, Silva and Hair (2015, p. 4) found that in “contemporary organizational realities a number of different ‘brand’ definitions, understandings and approaches may co-exist and compete for acceptance”, in this paper we adopted two brand definitions proposed by the academic literature: the brand considered as “a cluster of values that enables a promise to be made about a unique and welcomed experience” (De Chernatony, 2009, p. 104), and as a complex, multidimensional and evolutionary entity, seen as a system of meaning and mechanism to gain, maintain and reinforce a competitive advantage that is sustainable in the long run (Tavares, 2015).

The academic and practitioner literature reveals also that there is still a limited knowledge on approaches and mechanisms for branding, including the main factors that determine brand equity, and a lack of a consensus over the theory of brand equity applicable to different business contexts (Davcik et al., 2015). Consequently, these authors suggest that an “emphasis should be on the critical importance of brand equity formation to the organization...” (p. 4). There is, also, a lack of studies concerning the evaluation of the moderating influence of socio-demographic factors (Shukla, Banerjee & Adidam, 2013), namely for profiling regional food product's consumers.

The level of brand satisfaction obtained is of extreme importance, not only in marketing, but also in communication, design, and in the definition of the offer, adapting it to the demand

and the level of investment decisions by the brand (Chen & Lin 2019; Chen-Yu et al., 2017; Fornell, Johnson, Anderson, Cha & Bryant, 1996). More specifically, regarding brand satisfaction, the brand strength (the set of attributes of the brand – brand trust, brand attitudes, and brand image) is considered together with some social-demographic variables of consumers (Aaker, 1991; Alhaddad, 2015; Anic, Rajh & Rajh, 2014; Bianchi, 2016; Çabuk, Tanrikulu & Gelibolu, 2014; Keller, 1993; Song, Wang & Han, 2019; Wang & Tang, 2011).

Factors influencing consumer choice, that is, sociodemographic and behavioural factors are also contemplated in the present study. We have formulated three main questions:

- *What is the profile of the brand connoisseur?*
- *What are the main attributes of the brand?*
- *What influences the level of satisfaction with the brand?*

This research contributes to the marketing area because it identifies some antecedents of brand satisfaction and brand knowledge, and suggests contingencies applied to a brand of a regional food product. It is one of the first of its kind, which attempts to contribute to the explanation of brand knowledge and satisfaction by the attributes of a regional food product. This research will contribute to develop a better profiling of these types of products. This knowledge is very important to practitioners because such factors influence the reaction of consumers to marketing strategies. Furthermore, it provides an orientation to brand managers in devising food product development and marketing strategies, as suggested by several authors (Slama & Tashchian, 1985; Belz & Schimdt-Riediger, 2009; Sharma, Davcik & Pillai, 2016).

Based on its findings, sectorial companies may pay due attention to the interrelationship between segmentation and positioning, as well as their interrelation with demographic variables, to implement appropriate marketing strategies.

The paper is ordered as follows: literature review considering the relevant concepts of brand strength (a group of brand attributes – brand trust, brand attitudes and brand image), brand knowledge, and brand satisfaction. Next, we describe the methodology, and after that we present the main results and compare them with other studies. The paper ends with the discussion, conclusion and some important managerial implications, identification of limitations and suggestions for further research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Brand knowledge

As emphasized by Keller (2008), brand knowledge is of crucial importance to the creation and management of brand equity over time, as it exists in the minds of consumers. For this author, brand knowledge is conceptualized as a node in the memory of consumers with several associations linked to them, and is composed by two components corresponding to two stages of development of brand equity: brand awareness (including brand recognition and brand recall) and brand image.

According to Li (2004), brand knowledge is a multidimensional construct that helps consumers process and recall relevant product information, and is relevant to marketers who practice brand leveraging. Consequently, one of the main features of brand literature is its notorious emphasis in the experiences that consumers have with the brand and the main effects of those experiences may have on consumer perceptions and brand knowledge (Supphellen, 2000).

For Rossiter and Percy (1987), brand awareness is conceptualized as the buyer's ability to be able to identify the brand in some detail to purchase it, and for Aaker (1991) it has the important role of reducing consumer ambiguity and developing intimacy with the brand, and it is also a measure of consumer knowledge of the brand.

Brand awareness, being a necessary but not sufficient condition, should be the first step in the process of brand building and it is a critical dimension of brand equity (Aaker, 1996; Buil, Martinez & de Chernatony, 2013). In fact, brand awareness is an essential aspect for all kinds of brands, with large or small market shares (Romaniuk, Wight & Faulkner, 2017), and is a crucial metric for new brands (Çifci, Ekinci, Whyatt, Japutra, Molinill & Siala, 2016), representing the lowest level of brand knowledge (Li, 2004). Therefore, it is understandable that it is the most referred metric of consumer-based brand equity being used by companies to measure their brand performance (Ambler, 2000), and a topic that has received wide attention from researchers (Pappu, Quester & Cooksey, 2005).

In the academic literature, regarding the operationalisation of the concept of brand awareness, the main brand awareness measures are identified as top-of-mind, unaided and aided awareness (Romaniuk et al., 2017). According to Keller (2008), brand awareness depends essentially on brand salience (the depth and breadth of brand awareness) and the strength, favourable nature and singularity of its associations, and the desired brand awareness structures must be properly articulated. Brand awareness is created through consumer brand

experiences using advertising, promotions, sponsorships and event marketing, public relations and outdoor advertising, among others.

It should be noted that, as revealed by Chinomona and Maziriri (2017, p. 143), “brand awareness has a positive and significant influence on brand loyalty, brand association has a positive and insignificant influence on brand loyalty, product quality has a positive and significant influence on brand loyalty and brand loyalty exerts a positive and significant influence on purchase intention”.

The brand image concept is still being studied at a management and marketing level as an important feature for consumer behaviour (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2001). Academic research interest is growing about the antecedents and outcomes of brand image (Anselmsson & Bendesson, 2013; Hsieh & Li, 2008; Park & Rabolt, 2009).

Brand image is defined by Keller (1993) as the consumer brand perceptions expressed by brand associations in the memories of consumers, requiring the company to have a complete understanding of the past, current and future brand image in the perceptions of customers, and what the brand represents in the marketplace. For Yagci, Biswas & Dutta (2009) brand image is a mixture of perceived quality and esteem dimension, a perception of a brand held in the consumer’s memory that reflects their overall brand impression.

A strongly positive brand image allows companies to obtain competitive advantages and a strong market reputation (Keller, 2001; Porter & Claycomb, 1997). Some favourable outcomes emerge from a strong brand image like the increase of consumer satisfaction (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2001; Song et al., 2019), brand loyalty, and purchase intention (Da Silva & Alwi, 2008; Lai, Griffin & Babin, 2009).

If brand knowledge is formed in the consumers mind, it can be inferred that this knowledge is influenced by the sociodemographic characteristics of the individuals. Then, we can posit the following research question:

Q1: What is the profile of the brand connoisseur?

and formulate the hypothesis:

H1: The brand knowledge is affected by the sociodemographic characteristics of the consumers.

2.2 Brand satisfaction

Satisfaction is one of the main important concepts in marketing. Oliver (1980) considers satisfaction as a mental state when the expectation meets the consumers’ feelings of their consumption experience. In the same vein, Fornell et al. (1996) consider consumer

satisfaction as how the perceived quality of the brand matches up with the consumers' expectation. For Chen and Lin (2019, p. 24), satisfaction "refers to customers' comparison of the satisfaction after the service and the expected satisfaction based on standards produced by the accumulation of previous experiences".

The factors of consumer satisfaction can be considered in two categories; according to Czepiel, Solomon, Suprenant and Gutman (1985), those are the satisfaction with the brand and the satisfaction with the service provided by the retailer.

Consumers found the level of satisfaction for the product/brand/service according to the comparison between the satisfaction experienced for the product/brand/service and the previous one (Chen & Lin, 2019; Chen, Yen & Hwang, 2012; Chen-Yu et al., 2017). Other authors enhance the importance of the consumers' experience satisfaction through the experience with the salesperson (Choi, 2003; Choi & Choo, 2016; Chang, Yang & Yu, 2006; Crosby, Evans & Cowles, 1990; Poujol, Siadou-Martin, Vidal & Pellat, (2013).

Consumer satisfaction is related to the extent to which consumers are dissatisfied or satisfied with the product/brand and depends on a set of factors: personal experience, the fit between expectation and reality, perceived quality, product/brand attributes, brand trust, brand awareness and even socio-demographic variables (Colicev, Kumar & O'Connor, 2019; Szymanski & Henard, 2001; Snell, Yi & Chak, 2013; Agnihotri, Dingus, Hu & Krush, 2016). In this context we can formulate the hypothesis:

H2: Brand satisfaction is affected by sociodemographic characteristics of the individuals.

Satisfaction is not just composed by cognitive components, but also includes an affective component (Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). According to these authors, the emotions elicited during consumption leave an affective memory in consumers' minds, which are available for the consumers to be integrated into their satisfaction assessments. In this sense, we present the following hypothesis:

H3: Brand satisfaction is affected by consumers brand liking.

Most satisfaction models consider that when consumers realize that the benefits of the attributes offered by one brand are superior to other similar brands, consumers are satisfied (Snell et al., 2013). In the same vein of research, Agnihotri et al. (2016) argue that satisfaction is related to the confirmation of the consumers' expectations. For Cengiz (2010), brand satisfaction is a post-consumption experience which involves the comparison between perceived quality and the expected quality of the brand.

In a globalized world, consumers give particular attention to food quality, and look for more

information about the processes and the nature of food production, with a particular emphasis on quality assurance (Capmany, Hooker, Ozuna & Tilburg, 2000; Cerjak, Karolyi & Kovacic, 2011). Thus, when a brand guarantees the quality of the food brand, brand satisfaction will tend to increase. In this scope we formulated the following hypothesis:

H4: Brand satisfaction is affected by brand quality.

Brand satisfaction is important to maintain the consumers, forming a future purchase intention, brand loyalty and improving cost-effectiveness (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994; Anderson & Sullivan, 1993). Brand satisfaction increases when consumers feel at ease when they use a brand (Lee, Moon, Kim & Yi, 2015). Several factors have a strong influence on brand satisfaction as the self-image congruence (Jamal, 2004; Sirgy, Grewal, Mangleburg, Park, Chon, Claiborne, Johar & Berkman, 1997), and brand preference (Jamal & Al-Marri, 2007).

Then, we can posit that brand satisfaction is directly influenced by the brand strength in the consumers' minds. Brand strength is often synonymous of brand equity. For Aaker (1991) brand equity has to do with the strength of a brand in the consumers' minds, and it considers aspects such as loyalty, perceived quality, awareness, associations, and other brand assets. In this research, we consider a set of brand attributes (brand trust, brand attitudes and brand image) as the main aspects of the brand strength of a new regional food brand. This can be posited as a second research question:

Q2: What are the main attributes of the brand?

2.3 Brand attributes

Keller (2008) and Li (2004) have developed important brand attribute models. Attributes may be conceptualized as specific features that characterize a product or service, what is included in its purchase or consumption, and what a consumer thinks about a product or service.

Because a brand is integrated in some product category, a set of several category associations may be linked to the brand (Keller, 2008). For this author, for a brand to create customer-based brand equity, it is decisive that brand associations are strong, favourable and unique, and may assume different forms and fall into three broad categories: *attributes* (related and unrelated to the product); *benefits* (functional, experiential, and symbolic, meaning the personal value and meaning that consumers ascribe to the attributes of the product), and *attitudes*. Brand attributes include intrinsic and extrinsic attributes, and they differ from each other by considering how they are related to the product or service

performance. Product-related are *intrinsic brand attributes*, and non-product related attributes are *extrinsic brand attributes* (external aspects of the product that are related to its purchase, namely, user imagery, price, brand personality, feelings and experience), and may serve as a metric of product quality. However, Li (2004), doesn't consider feeling experience as a component of brand attributes but as one of the brand attitudes.

Finally, it should be noted that Fandos and Flavián (2006), research on the importance of perceived quality of a protected designation of product origin on consumer loyalty, found that there is a positive relation between the attributes of extrinsic nature of a traditional food product and consumer loyalty. However, the perceived quality linked to intrinsic attributes of the product has a positive influence on consumer buying intentions.

2.4 Brand Trust

Brand trust is a concept based on the difference between transactions and relationships. All kinds of relationships, such as a business relationship, between an individual/consumer and a brand will imply trust (Hess & Story, 2005). Ashley and Leonard (2009) posit that trust considers honesty, certainty and ability in the relationship between a brand and a consumer.

In the academic literature, brand trust is seen as having two dimensions: the cognitive and the emotional dimension (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Alhaddad, 2015; Song et al., 2019). The first incorporates the technical nature and is based in competency, indicating to what level a brand can fulfil its commitments and satisfy a certain need of the consumers. The second dimension incorporates the consumers' perceptions of a brand's goodwill in the interaction between welfare and benefits for the consumers (Sahin, Zehir & Kitapci, 2011).

Yannopoulou, Koronis and Elliott (2011) consider trust as a subjective construct, which is based on consumers' beliefs. Delgado-Ballester, Munuera-Alemán and Guillén (2003) posit that consumers tend to trust brands which they feel are reliable and believe that these brands have the consumer first interest. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001, p. 82) consider brand trust as "the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function".

These authors highlight that trust reduces risk and uncertainty. However, for Veloutsou (2015) there is still has a long way to go to understand trust, both in terms of marketing research and consumer research. However, academic research concluded that trust affects consumer brand satisfaction in the long term (Chiou & Droge, 2006; Kim, Ferrin & Rao, 2009).

2.5 Brand attitudes

Within the scope of consumer behaviour research in the food industry, the attitude towards a product or a brand is a popular construct that is used by marketing academics (Anic et al., 2014; Bianchi, 2016; Çabuk et al., 2014).

For Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), an attitude is related to the beliefs about the consequences of the acting behaviour. For Keller (2008), brand attitudes are considered as the consumers' overall evaluations of a brand, reflecting how consumers respond to a brand, and for Petty & Cacioppo (1981), they are seen as enduring positive or negative feelings involving some object, person or issue. Consequently, the more favourable a person's attitude towards a brand, the more likely the person will choose (or recommend) the brand (Li, 2004). In summary, brand attitude is the overall evaluation of the brand made by the consumer with respect to his ability to provide an important buying reason.

Whatever the definition that is used for brand attitude, a differentiation between a perspective that views attitudes as cognitive propensities in the consumer's mind and a constructionist perspective that faces attitudes as judgments that are created *in loco*, must be made, according to Bohner and Dickel (2011). It is important to make this distinction because consumers can use stored evaluative structures as an internal standard against which products/brands are compared (Lemmerer & Menrad, 2017).

Ercis, Unal, Candan and Yildirim (2012) found that brand satisfaction has an important impact in terms of affective commitment, and that trust had an effect on affective commitment and continuance commitment. They also identified an effect of affective commitment on repurchase intention.

After this, we can posit the third research question:

Q3: What influences the level of satisfaction with the brand?

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design

With this study, in the first phase we intend to make a profile of the *connoisseurs* of the Fumeiro de Montalegre brand. The study was applied at the 28th edition of the fair, which took place at Montalegre city between the 24th and the 27th of January of 2019. The first edition took place in 1992 and, after 10 years, the Associação de Produtores de Fumeiro da Terra Fria Barrosã (APFTFB) joined the Montalegre Municipal Council in the organization

of the event, which takes place annually in the first month of each year. The fair has acquired a strong popularity among the consumers of this traditional product and has always been adapted to the requirements of the market and the preferences of the visitor. According to Marôco (2018), this event has the objective of valorising resources and local heritage and the commercialization of traditional smoke and other products (e.g. “salpicão”, “alheira”, “chorizo de carne”, “bloodthirsty” among others) of recognized quality, thus fostering entrepreneurship and the development of the region. The evaluation of the brand knowledge and brand satisfaction is carried out through the application of a survey to the public that visited the fair. This information is of great importance because it will enable decision making to improve the functioning and orientation of actions and communication, thus allowing the definition of the marketing strategy of APFTFB.

3.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was built in partnership with the organization of the fair and was validated by a pilot group (with different ages, qualifications and professions) and also an assessment by an expert of the brand and the tourism sector. In total, feedback was collected from a group of 25 people that allowed us to improve the questionnaire and to verify the variability of the questions.

In this article we used a two-part questionnaire. Part A includes sociodemographic characteristics: gender, age, marital status, nationality, activity in the labour market, and academic degree. Part B, covers the level of knowledge of the brand “Fumeiro de Montalegre”, brand satisfaction (through the application of the Likert scale of five points of satisfaction of 1 - very dissatisfied; 2 - unsatisfied; 3 - neither too nor dissatisfied; 4 - satisfied; 5 - very satisfied of Garbarino & Johnson (1999), and the level of importance for a set of attributes of the brand (through the application of the Likert scale of five points of importance of 1 = not important, 2 = little important, 3 = indifferent, 4 = important and 5 = very important) in relation to brand trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001), to brand attitude (Hampel, Heinrich & Campbell, 2012), and to brand image (Martínez & Chernatony, 2004) scale (all the statements are explained at table 1).

The data were collected during the two days of greater public affluence in the event (Saturday and Sunday), considering the time of the fair. The interviewers were prepared for this purpose and the convenience sampling method was applied.

3.3 Data analysis

In the statistical treatment of the data, we begin with descriptive statistics of the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, the level of knowledge, satisfaction, and the brand attributes. After that we applied a logit model to describe the segmentation of respondents who indicated they knew the brand. The logit model assumes the dependent variable as dummy, more suitable than the least square models (Wooldridge, 2013). For the brand attributes we ran a factorial analysis to observe the main dimensions considering the consumer's perspective. For consumers who indicated they already knew the brand, it is evaluated the level of satisfaction with the brand "Fumeiro de Montalegre" by applying the generalized linear models (GLM). GLM is more suitable than the ordinary linear regression because the dependent variable (satisfaction) does not assume the normal distribution (Nelder & Wedderburn, 1972).

3.4 Description of the sample

A sample of 715 valid answers was collected (50.2% on Saturday and 49.8% on Sunday). It should be noted that given the population of approximately 50.000 participants, the sample should have at least 375 valid responses, with a 95% confidence level and a sampling error of 5%, which leads us to state that the sample represents the population under study.

The variables considered in the two econometric models and the statistic descriptions are presented in table 1. The sample collected is representative of the study population as there is a preference for the Portuguese public and the male audience to participate in the event. The average age was 53,5 years old and regarding the marital status, most of the participants were married.

Regarding the professional situation, it is verified that the most frequent situation is that of employee (35,8%), followed by retired (31,1%) and self-employed workers (19,6%). Finally, most respondents (53,4%) completed the basic level of schooling (a percentage already expected due to the demographic profile of the respondents), while 20,1% completed at least the degree education.

In the evaluation of the knowledge of the brand "Fumeiro de Montalegre", 49,3% of the respondents answered that they were not aware of the brand, while 47,5% stated that they already knew the brand "Fumeiro de Montalegre". It should also be noted that 3,2% of the respondents only became aware of the brand in the event itself, which also reveals the importance of the event for the promotion and dissemination of the brand.

In terms of satisfaction, in relation to the products of the brand, an average satisfaction of 4,49 was registered, which indicates an excellent satisfaction level. Globally, 87,5% of brand *connoisseurs* have been satisfied or very satisfied with the products.

In relation to the brands, there was a high degree of importance with all the statements (always higher than 4,15 on the scale of 1 to 5), which indicates the positive image that the participants have of the brand. The high degree of importance attributed to each item is justified by the frequency rate of “4 – important” and “5 - very important” responses. It was observed that the answer “5 - very important” was, in all the items, the most answered, in the items “The brand must have a good value for money”, “The consumer is more likely to buy this brand than other brands” and “The brand must be different from competing brands” there was not a response rate higher than 50% of the total. It is also important to highlight the “quality of the brand”, which had the highest rate of responses “5 - very important”, which attests to the perception of product quality by the participants. This analysis corroborates the positive degree of perception that the participants hold regarding the “Fumeiro de Montalegre” brand. It should also be noted that the response levels “1 - no importance” and “2 - little importance” always had response frequencies lower than 5%, which reinforces the positive image of the brand.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Knowledge of the brand “Fumeiro de Montalegre”

In order to analyse the profile of the *connoisseur* of the brand “Fumeiro de Montalegre” in relation to the sociodemographic characteristics of the visitor, it was considered a dummy variable in which 1 assumes the respondents who stated they knew or heard about the brand during the fair, and 0 is for those that revealed they did not know the brand.

A Logit model was applied to assess the knowledge of the brand "Fumeiro de Montalegre" considering the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents.

Through the results of the table below, we can conclude that the variables that presented levels of significance were age, married civil status, Portuguese nationality; in the position before the work stood out the self-employed, and the schooling for the degrees of bachelor, master or PhD. Brand knowledge may lead to consumption and sociodemographic characteristics (such as gender, age, among others) play a key role in choosing different types of food markets (Li & Houston, 2001).

Table 1. Description of the variables

Variable	Description	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. dev
<i>Socio-economic characteristics</i>					
Gender	Dummy, 1 – female and 0 – male.	0	1	0,419	0,4937
Age	Continuous variable.	16	87	53,470	16,473
Marital	Marital status. 1 – single, 2 – married, 3 – divorced and 4 – widow.	1	4	2,059	0,775
Nationality	Nationality of the individual. Dummy, 1 – Portugal, 0 – abroad	0	1	0,980	0,139
Work	Work position. 1 – employed (on behalf of others), 2 – self-employed, 3 – unemployed, 4 – retired, 5 – domestic, 6 – student	1	6	2,623	1,537
Degree	Degree of education (completed). 1 – Basic, 2 – secondary, 3 – Degree, 4 – Master or PhD	1	4	1,689	0,838
<i>Level of knowledge of the brand “Fumeiro de Montalegre”</i>					
Know	Did you know or have you heard about the brand "Fumeiro de Montalegre"? Options: 1 – Yes, 0 – No and 2 – I only heard about this fair	0	2	0,539	0,560
Level of satisfaction with the products of the brand "Fumeiro de Montalegre" (only for the respondents who know and have heard about the fair)					
Satisfaction	Satisfaction with the brand. 5-point Likert scale, 1 - very dissatisfied; 2 - unsatisfied; 3 - neither too nor dissatisfied; 4 - satisfied; 5 - very satisfied	1	5	4,493	0,811
<i>Attributes of the brand “Fumeiro de Montalegre” considering the level of importance in relation to trust, to the attitude and to the image of the brand</i>					
Likert scale, 1 = not important, 2 = little important, 3 = indifferent, 4 = important and 5 = very important, was applied on the following statements:					
Brand trust					
ATR1	The trust in the brand	1	5	4,428	0,779
ATR2	The brand should convey all the necessary information	1	5	4,390	0,753
ATR3	The brand should meets expectations	1	5	4,392	0,772
Brand Attitude					
ATR4	The brand must be appreciated	1	5	4,438	0,784
ATR5	The brand must be positively evaluated	1	5	4,465	0,737
ATR6	Recommendation of brand	1	5	4,438	0,724
ATR7	The brand must have good quality	1	5	4,473	0,765
ATR8	The brand must have a good value for money	1	5	4,275	0,879
Brand Image					
ATR9	The consumer is more likely to buy this brand than other brands	1	5	4,176	0,963
ATR10	The brand must have an attractive image	1	5	4,313	0,833
ATR11	The brand must be different from competing brands	1	5	4,222	0,935

The hypothesis 1 is supported partially. Thus, it is observed that the main *connoisseurs* are the consumers with ages over 45 years old, the marital status married, with Portuguese nationality and the highest level of schooling. More specifically, the level of brand knowledge increases with the age by 14,3%, with the marital status married by 17,7% when compared to singles, with Portuguese nationality by 12,6% in relation to the foreign consumers, with self-employed by 4,0% when compared to the employed and with a degree, master or PhD by 9,8% and 27,7%, respectively, when compared with the basic level.

Table 2. Logit coefficients and average marginal effects to explain the profile that know “Fumeiro de Montalegre” brand

Independents variables	Coefficients	Average marginal effects
Gender		
Male	-	-
Female	-0,069 (0,163)	-0,017
Age	0,047*** (0,001)	0,143
Marital status		
Single	-	-
Married	0,314** (0,205)	0,177
Divorced	0,046 (0,363)	0,011
Widow	-0,303 (0,391)	-0,072
Nationality		
Abroad	-	-
Portugal	0,686*** (0,502)	0,126
Work position		
Employed	-	-
Self-employed	0,167*** (0,02)	0,040
Unemployed	-0,184 (0,390)	-0,045
Retired	-0,044 (0,253)	-0,011
Domestic	-0,034 (0,384)	-0,008
Student	-0,024 (0,463)	-0,006
Degree of education		
Basic	-	-
Secondary	-0,088 (0,206)	-0,022
Degree	0,402** (0,231)	0,098
Master or PhD	0,312* (0,0222)	0,277
Constant	0,352*** (0,032)	-

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$ ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Number of observations 715.

LR $\chi^2(14) = 21,81$, Prob > $\chi^2 = 0.0000$.

4.2 Satisfaction level with the brand "Fumeiro de Montalegre"

The eleven attributes of the "Fumeiro de Montalegre" brand were examined and subjected to a principal component's analysis with varimax rotation to categorize the main constructs. We got one factor that explained 79,30% of the total variance of the data. The conditions for the acceptance of the results were specified by the academic literature (Marôco, 2014). We designated the factor as "brand strengths" as we highlighted four attributes: brand trust, brand liking, recommendation and quality. These attributes may influence the future purchase intention of the products "Fumeiro de Montalegre".

Table 3. The construct of brand attributes: factorial analysis

Statements	Brand Strengths
ATR4 - I like the brand	0,904
ATR7 - The brand has good quality	0,898
ATR6 - I recommend the brand	0,888
ATR1 - I have trust in the brand	0,872
Eigenvalues/Rotation Sums Squared Loadings	3,172
% Variance	79,302
KMO	0,894
Bartlett's test	693,984 (p=0,000)

GLM were applied to understand the satisfaction level with "Fumeiro de Montalegre" brand considering the sociodemographic characteristics of the consumer and the factor extracted from the factor analysis.

Table 4 presents the results of the GLM model and it is possible to see that the level of satisfaction with the products of "Fumeiro de Montalegre" increases with age. We also observe that being married (in relation to single) and self-employed (in relation to employed) increases the level of satisfaction. In the opposite side are the retired, domestic and students that have a negative impact with satisfaction, when compared with employed consumers. In relation to the degree of education, the satisfaction with "Fumeiro de Montalegre" products increases with the consumers that have a degree, Master or PhD in relation to those who have a basic level. The hypothesis 2 is supported partially.

Finally, the Brand Strengths have a positive impact at the satisfaction level with the brand products "Fumeiro de Montalegre". The hypothesis 3 is supported.

Table 4. Predicting the level of satisfaction with the brand “Fumeiro de Montalegre”

Independents variables	Coefficient
Gender	
Male	-
Female	-0,176 (0,132)
Age	0,025*** (0,007)
Marital status	
Single	-
Married	0,071*** (0,034)
Divorced	-0,217 (0,323)
Widow	0,005 (0,375)
Nationality	
Abroad	-
Portugal	0,884 (0,408)
Work position	
Employed	-
Self-employed	0,304*** (0,193)
Unemployed	0,041 (0,514)
Retired	-0,470** (0,039)
Domestic	-0,734*** (0,265)
Student	-0,953 (0,534)
Degree of education	
Basic	-
Secondary	-0,214 (0,188)
Degree	0,621*** (0,203)
Master or PhD	0,187** (0,072)
Brand Strengths	0,082*** (0,065)
Constant	5,006*** (0,579)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$ ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Number of observations 363

5. DISCUSSION

With this research, we intended to evaluate the consumer’s knowledge and brand satisfaction with a regional food brand – “Fumeiro de Montalegre”.

First, we intended to evaluate the brand knowledge analysing the profile of the brand

regional food consumer. For that, we used a set of social-demographic variables. The results show that the level of brand knowledge increases with the age. This may occur because older people have more knowledge about the habits and traditions of the region/country. And the same occurs with respect to the nationality. The Portuguese consumers have a wider knowledge about the brand comparing to the foreigners.

Another interesting result is that the brand knowledge rises with the increase of the education level. This may occur because the consumers with higher levels of education have access to more information. Those results confirm the research of Li and Houston (2001), who stated that socio-demographic variables affect the brand knowledge.

Second, we intended to analyse brand satisfaction considering the brand strength and the profile of the consumer.

The same results were obtained concerning the age. The oldest consumers have more satisfaction with the brand. Brand satisfaction depends on personal experience as posit by several authors (Colicev et al., 2019; Szymdinski & Henard, 2001; Snell et al., 2013; Agnihotri et al., 2016). Therefore, the older the consumer is, the more contact and personal experience he will have with the brand, thus allowing the rising of the satisfaction level.

We also observe that being married and self-employed increases the level of satisfaction. This is in line with some authors who state that brand satisfaction depends on socio-demographic variables (Snell et al., 2013; Agnihotri et al., 2016).

One interesting result was that the domestic and the students have a negative impact with satisfaction, when compared with employed consumers. This may occur because of lower income levels. One study carried out by Bianchi (2016) about exploring urban consumers' attitudes and intentions to purchase local food in Chile verified that the majority of studies about consumers' intentions to purchase local food was done in developed countries and according to these studies, "older, more affluent, and well-educated female consumers are the most likely purchase of local food" (Bianchi, 2016, p.3).

A similar result regarding the knowledge brand was obtained for the satisfaction with "Fumeiro de Montalegre" products concerning the level of education. The brand satisfaction increases with the consumers that have a degree, Master or PhD in relation to those who have a basic level. These results can be explained by the fact that the consumers have more information when their level of education is higher. On the other hand, a higher level of education probably increases the concerns about the food quality, a notion corroborated by Capmany et al. (2000) and Cerjak et al. (2011).

Finally, the brand strength has a positive impact on the satisfaction level with the brand products “Fumeiro de Montalegre”. In this research the brand strength was considered as a set of attributes of the brand – brand trust, brand attitude and brand image. This result is in accordance with the results of several different authors, namely Colicev et al. (2019), Szymanski and Henard, (2001), and Snell et al. (2013). Academic research found that trust affects brand satisfaction in the long term (Chiou & Droge, 2006; Kim et al., 2009). A strong brand image like this will increase the consumer satisfaction (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2001; Song et al., 2019).

6. CONCLUSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The aim of this research was to analyse the role of brand attributes of a regional food product in the knowledge and satisfaction of its consumers.

Considering that this was the first time that this local brand was evaluated, the results obtained will be of great use for the strategic decision making of the brand, with a view to an improvement of its operation and communication, allowing the definition of marketing programmes for the brand over time. The acquired knowledge is also of extreme importance in terms of design and definition of the future brand positioning and offer.

In terms of the overall brand evaluation which was carried out, we may conclude that the “Fumeiro de Montalegre” brand has still a long way to go regarding its future development.

In fact, the results of this research showed that:

- in terms of the profile of consumers who know the brand, the consumer segment is somewhat narrow (in terms of sociodemographic variables): they are predominantly male, ages over 45 years old, married, self-employed, with Portuguese nationality and the highest level of schooling. In this situation, taking in due account the shifts in consumer behaviour, it will be necessary and appropriate to broaden the consumer base of the brand, to include mainly consumers under 45 years old, female, and foreign;
- Furthermore, there is a relevant problem with the brand awareness, because 49,3% of the respondents were not aware of the brand. Consequently, to increase brand awareness (in terms of breadth and depth), there is a need to make sure that current and potential consumers have the desired brand knowledge structures and improve consumer brand experiences, namely through advertising, promotions, sponsorships and event marketing, public relations and publicity, personal selling, outdoor advertising, among others, as recommended by Keller (2008);

- Of the eleven brand attributes analysed, four of them were identified as main influencers for buying the products of “Fumeiro de Montalegre”: brand trust, brand liking, recommendation, and quality. These brand attributes, some of the key sources of brand equity, should be guarded and nurtured carefully;
- Regarding the level of brand satisfaction, in relation to the products of the brand, it was found that it is very high (an average of 4,49 in the Likert scale of 5 points), and 87,5% have been satisfied or very satisfied with the products of the brand. It should be noted that the brand satisfaction increases with age, being married and self-employed, and with the degree of Master or Phd. It was also found that the brand image is very positive (always higher than 4,15 on the scale of 1 to 5). Considering that brand equity must be managed in proactive terms over time, brand owners must reinforce the brand meaning, maintain brand consistency of the marketing support that the brand receives, and leverage secondary brand associations.

Therefore, this research contributes to the marketing theory development because it identifies some antecedents and suggests contingencies applied to a brand of a regional food product and is one of the first which attempts to contribute to the explanation of brand knowledge and satisfaction considering the attributes of a regional food product. This research will contribute to develop a better profiling of the consumer of this type of product, thus fulfilling a gap in the academic literature.

In summary, the following salient needs and opportunities were identified regarding the brand “Fumeiro de Montalegre”: invest in increasing brand awareness and loyalty; strengthen brand differentiation and innovation; improve consumer perceptions of value (in terms of quality/price), leverage product brand to destination/territorial brand, and target a younger segment (less than 45 years old).

6.1 Limitations and further research

The limitations of this research are related with the brand evaluation scope: an emphasis was placed on the analysis of four extrinsic brand attributes (brand trust, brand attitude/liking, recommendation and quality). Because it was the first time that the brand was evaluated, it is limited to the respondents who were present at one of the events.

It would be interesting to analyse if the results hold when different groups of people in different contexts are asked the same questions.

This research did not address intrinsic brand attributes/product-related attributes and other extrinsic brand attributes related to its purchase or consumption (e.g., price, usage imagery,

brand personality, feelings and experience), as conceptualized by Keller (1993, 2008). These attributes should be included in future research.

This study was based on a quantitative research approach. There is also a need to develop other quantitative studies that replicate the research carried out. Moreover, it would be relevant to conduct research on brand strength based in the perceptions and buying behaviours of consumers and other stakeholders that allow the brand to sustain a competitive advantage in the long run relatively to competing brands in the same product category. A blended method approach or qualitative research could also be considered, in order to capture the views of the brand consumers, thus allowing the evaluation of the power of the brand (namely, brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand attitudes, brand personality and brand experience), from a longitudinal perspective. For a better analysis of brand attitudes, the use of Rossiter's (2014) measures is recommended.

Finally, this research should be replicated in the evaluation of other similar regional product brands.

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