



**7th Annual Conference of the  
EuroMed Academy of Business**

**The Future of Entrepreneurship**

**Edited by:** Demetris Vrontis,  
Yaakov Weber,  
Evangelos Tsoukatos

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## **The Future of Entrepreneurship**

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All full papers and abstracts submitted to the EMRBI Conference are subject to a peer reviewing process, using subject specialists selected because of their expert knowledge in the specific areas.

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## FOREWORD

The Annual Conference of the EuroMed Academy of Business aims to provide a unique international forum to facilitate the exchange of cutting-edge information through multidisciplinary presentations on examining and building new theory and business models for success through management innovation.

It is acknowledged that the conference has established itself as one of the major conferences of its kind in the EuroMed region, in terms of size, quality of content, and standing of attendees. Many of the papers presented contribute significantly to the business knowledge base.

The conference attracts hundreds of leading scholars from leading universities and principal executives and politicians from all over the world with the participation or intervention of Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ministers, Company CEOs, Presidents of Chambers, and other leading figures.

This year the conference attracted over 260 people from over 68 countries. Academics, practitioners, researchers and Doctoral students throughout the world submitted original papers for conference presentation and for publication in this Book. All papers and abstracts were double blind reviewed. The result of these efforts produced empirical, conceptual and methodological papers and abstracts involving all functional areas of business.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Many people and organizations are responsible for the successful outcome of the 7th Annual Conference of the EuroMed Academy of Business.

Special thanks go to the Conference Chair Dr Rotem Shneor, the Conference Organising Committee and the University of Agder, in Norway, for accomplishing an excellent job.

It is acknowledged that a successful conference could not be possible without the special co-operation and care of the Track Chairs and Reviewers for reviewing the many papers that were submitted to this conference. Special thanks to the Session Chairs and Paper Discussants for taking the extra time to make this conference a real success.

The last but not the least important acknowledgment goes to all those who submitted and presented their work at the conference. Their valuable research has highly contributed to the continuous success of the conference.

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# **BOOK OF CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS**

## STUDY ON CONSUMERS' BEHAVIOR CONCERNING BERRIES CONSUMPTION IN ITALY

**Crescimanno, Maria; Farruggia, Domenico; Galati, Antonino; Ingrassia, Marzia; Siggia,  
Dario**

Department Of Agricultural And Forest Sciences, University Of Palermo, Italy

### ABSTRACT

In Italy, the cultivated land of berries shows a positive trend, nevertheless berries still remain a productive segment of niche and luxury in the Italian agri-food system. In the world, the interest for these productions is high for their healthy aspects that have a strong appeal to the consumers. The objectives of this study are to know the consumers behavior of berries and the determinants of purchase in Italy in order to improve the management of the producing and retailers companies for increase the competitiveness of the supply chain. The results obtained through a multivariate analysis show some difference among the consumers interviewed. The most important results of this study is that good taste and flavor and nutritional properties are the most important motivation to buy berries as fresh fruit. Among the three geographical Italian macro-regions (Northern, Central and Southern) have not been revealed relevant differences. These are related mainly to the type of fruit consumed, the place and frequency of purchase. Furthermore, consumers living in big capitals, compared to those living in the small cities, can easily find berries at supermarket and consider label a very important element for traceability of product. Moreover, they usually buy berries for special occasions as fresh fruits or to prepare particular dishes. Several implication both for companies and Institution have been identified.

### INTRODUCTION

We define "Berries" a small group of species within the genus *Rubus*, *Ribes* and *Vaccinum* that are grown in recent years in different sites of the world because of the strong demand of the agri-food, pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries (Crescimanno et al., 2013). In Italy, the cultivated land of berries, in the most recent official statistics, amounted to 402 hectares with a production of 27,900 tons (72% are raspberries), and recording, compared to 2005, an increase of 49.5% for cultivated land and of 28.2% for the quantities obtained (ISTAT, 2010). These numbers, however, make that berries still remain a productive segment of niche and luxury in the Italian agri-food system, that recently are present also in protected cultivation. This is a good opportunity for some areas of Southern Italy to enhance marginal areas not usable for agricultural purposes. The limited quantities produced make

Italy a country strongly importer (especially during non-production period) as shows the trade balance data for 2012 that is negative both in terms of quantity (-30,335 tons) and value (-62.7 million euro) (INEA, 2012).

In the global context, Blueberries, Cranberries, Raspberries, as a whole, reach a production value of \$2.6 billion with a production of 1.5 million tons. Among the major world producers there are US, Canada, Poland and Russian; in particular, US and Canada are the world leading exporters of blueberries (FAOSTAT, 2012). The interest shown by the world market to the cultivation of berries is due in particular to the specific health properties of exceptional importance that these fruits contain, to varying degrees depending on the species. The healthy aspects of berries have a strong appeal to the consumer; for example, James et al. (2002) argue that the intense colors of this products are associated with substances undisputed preventive value against some diseases of our time, such as cardiovascular diseases, stroke, cancer, and the color is one of the characteristics that the consumer takes into consideration when choosing of Fruits and Vegetables (F&V) consumption. In the cranberry industry e.g. growers are paid by the tonnage of product modified by the quality, that is partially determinate by the color and the pigment content that increases the coloring of the fruit; so the growers would like harvest early to reduce risk of frost but the processor later to increase pigment content (Francis, 1995). In the light of the healthy properties of berries are added to the indications of the World Health Organization (WHO) that for several years has put together an information campaign on the benefits of F&V consumption of the recommended intake of a minimum of 400g/day for the prevention of chronic disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity, as well as for the prevention and alleviation of several micronutrient deficiencies, especially in less developed countries (World Health Organization, 2004). To improve F&V consumption in populations, many countries have developed and adopted a variety of healthy policies and intervention; among all China, USA, Canada, Australia (Yang Li et al., 2011), and in the American urban new forms of community gardening (Alaimo et al., 2008).

Many studies have been conducted to understand the consumers behavior of food products and in particular of F&V consumption, but there aren't study about the berries consumption, particularly in Italy. In this scenario, the aim of the paper is to identify the main intrinsic and extrinsic attributes affecting berries' consumption in Italy, and also to analyze which differences emerge among Italian geographical macro-areas (Northern, Central and Southern) and between big and small capitals regions ( $\geq 200,000$  and  $< 200,000$  residents, respectively). The first hypothesis of this study is that consumers are driven mainly by intrinsic attributes in their choice (taste, flavour, nutritional properties) and that this behavior is more marked in the Northern regions. Our second hypothesis is



that in the big city consumers show more attention to the products traceability, indeed and they buy berries mainly in the large scale retail trade.

To achieve the aim we did a telephone survey to 200 consumers of berries residents in the 20 Italian regional capitals. Results of this survey have been analyzed through a multivariate statistical analysis (cluster analysis) in order to identify the main factors influencing consumers behavior. The variables that we studied in our work are intrinsic, like the taste, the color of the fruit, the health properties, and extrinsic properties, such as price and the traceability (or origin). Others variables concerning the choice of the place of purchase, the mainly occasions and modalities of consumption (fresh or prepared).

This paper after the introduction follows with the Literature Review on F&V and berries behavior consumption, with the methodologies of the work and the results of the analysis; the conclusions close the work.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Many variables like personal characteristics can play an important role in explaining fruit consumption, as life experience or socio-demographic variables, and they are significant determinants of behavior (Guillaumie et al., 2010).

Translating these statements in the F&V consumption, Menozzi and Mora (2012) argued that there are differences between countries, because the Southern European countries show a higher consumption of fruits and vegetables compared to those of Northern Europe, or between gender and age, because women consume more fruit than males and older people consume more fruits of the younger. Other Authors, in addition, explain the relationship between fruit consumption and life style as physical activity (Menozzi and Mora, 2012).

Stark Casagrande and Gary-Webb (2010), studied the trends of F&V consumption in the U.S. in relation to the suggestion which have been given in recent years by the WHO, combined with other factors. They argue that a lack of improvement in F&V consumption can be attributed to a variety of factors. First food preferences and cultural backgrounds, second environmental barriers, and then that the price of snack and unhealthy foods are relatively cheap compared to the fresh ones. Furthermore the advertising for F&V is less than for nutritionally poor food.

By getting more into the heart of the debate, the literature is rich in contributions that emphasize the consumption of goods that are relevant to their intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics. In particular, on the consumption of fresh fruit there is a specific literature and in particular the concept of quality has been deeply analyzed; Espejel et al. (2007) argued that the concept of product quality can be analyzed under two main different perspectives: the objective and the perceived (subjective) quality.

Many authors and among them, Oude Ophuis and Van Trijp (1995) and Steenkamp (1997) think it is pertinent to classify the subjective quality into two groups that drive the consumer to evaluate the intrinsic (e.g. color, flavor, form, appearance) and extrinsic attributes (e.g. brand name, country of origin price, packaging and production information) of the products (Bernues et al., 2003). We think that, in the case of berries, it will be ever more important, among intrinsic attributes, the healthy properties of the products and that this attribute is the most important lever in the world market of berries. Berries are important dietary sources of fiber and essential vitamins and mineral (Schnettler et al., 2011); among them blueberries are an excellent source of phytochemicals in fact they are believed to have significant biological activity (Schmidt, 2005), and also in vitro of *Vaccinium* genus, berries were found antioxidant and anti-carcinogenic (Rimando, 2004). So one of the major reason for the blueberry increasing popularity in the human diet is their higher antioxidant capacity among berry fruits (Seeram et al., 2006).

Regarding the others intrinsic attributes, color among the appearance, is one of the major attributes which affect the consumer perception of quality. In particular, as argued James et al. (2002) to the intense colors of berries are associated substances with preventive value against some diseases of our time, such as cardio-circulatory diseases, ictus, cancer. Furthermore color function in several ways is considered an indicator of freshness (Francis, 1995). In relation to freshness, a survey conducted in the European Community countries showed that the primary factor influencing food choice of European consumers was quality/freshness (Péneau et al., 2006), according to a survey carried out in Germany with more than 2000 consumers: freshness was the most important criterion takes into account when buying a fruit or vegetable (AgV, 1981). These factors are very important because the berries present a very short shelf life (around 3 days) and this could be a strong limitation for the fresh fruits market.

Among the extrinsic attribute Espejuel (2007) suggests that these among the consumer's behaviors can play a role in presence of Protected Denomination of Origin (PDO), because the intrinsic attributes are guaranteed by the rigorous quality control by the Regulatory Councils of PDO; we think that in all other cases they could be decisive as the intrinsic attribute.

The price of the products could have an important role in the consumer behavior, in particular for low-income populations (Williams et al., 2012), and many studies carried out the role of the price in the consumption survey (Campbell et al., 2004; Onwezen and Bartels, 2011), or the opinion of consumers on the cost of fresh F&V (Chen et al., 2014). In relation to other extrinsic attributes packaging e.g. has not been considered in our study, because, now, there are few solutions to packaging berries, considering the characteristics of the products; but we agree with Koutsimanis et al. (2012), which think that packaging is constantly being developed and updated to meet changing consumer demands. Regarding trays labeled (e.g. producer and country of origin), study carried out

on this aspects Papanagiotou et al. (2013) and Font et al. (2011), show that product origin is one of the attributes that has a strong influence on consumer choice, in fact it represents a guarantee of product quality.

It is very interesting, for fresh fruits, their easy way to process into juice o jams that has considerably expanded its consumption. We think in agree with Ragaert et al. (2004) that a wide assortment of minimally processed vegetables and fruits has been developed to meet consumer to benefit from F&V benefit healthy image.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Sampling scheme and survey

The reference Population, for this pilot survey, is the number of residents in the 20 Italian regional capitals, with age between 20 and 80 years, that is  $N = 7.062.958$  (ISTAT, 2012). The calculated sample dimension is  $n = 200$ , with  $p = 95\%$  and  $\varepsilon = 7\%$ . Since this Population is divided into homogenous strata (regional capitals), with a low variability inside, the *Stratified-proportional* sampling scheme was applied. Because of the different Population size of each capital, 20 sub-samples of a calculated dimension proportional to each stratum of the Population were created (Vianelli and Ingrassia, 2011). Table 1 shows Population size and calculated sub-samples size for each stratum. Extraction of units (respondents) from each stratum was made by random procedure (Cicchitelli, 2012), using telephone directories of each regional capital. In this study, to reach 200 consumers of berries we have carried 506 telephone interviews.

Table 1. Reference population and sample of survey

Regional Capitals	Resident population (No)	Sub-sample sizes (No)	Italian geographical macro-regions	Capital size
Torino	671,995	19	Northern	Big
Aosta	25,980	1	Northern	Small
Genova	447,758	13	Northern	Big
Milano	950,791	27	Northern	Big
Trento	85,397	2	Northern	Small
Venezia	199,982	6	Northern	Small
Trieste	155,191	4	Northern	Small
Bologna	285,947	8	Northern	Big
Ancona	75,989	2	Central	Small
Firenze	272,444	8	Central	Big
Perugia	123,096	3	Central	Small
Roma	2,005,303	58	Central	Big

Napoli	712,180	20	Southern	Big
Chieti	39,877	1	Southern	Small
Campobasso	37,356	1	Southern	Small
Bari	242,338	7	Southern	Big
Potenza	51,839	1	Southern	Small
Catanzaro	68,124	2	Southern	Small
Palermo	492,073	14	Southern	Big
Cagliari	119,298	3	Southern	Small
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,062,958</b>	<b>200</b>		

For the telephone interviews it was used a questionnaire properly created for this survey and divided into two parts. The first one contains questions about respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and consumers behavior (age, gender, job profession, possibility to buy fresh fruit or processed into fresh-cut, points of purchase). After these questions it was asked to respondents if they consumed berries: only those who answered affirmatively would continue the questionnaire. In the second part it was asked to respondents to give an order of preference (from 1, as the first, to 18, as the last) to 18 qualitative variables describing both intrinsic qualities attributes of berries (commodity and sensory aspects), extrinsic attributes and other variables (Table 2). Preferences had to be given by consumers according to their motivations for buying and consuming berries (what do you take into consideration when you choose berries).

Table 2. Variables utilized in the Cluster analysis

N.	Variables' description	Label
1	Quality/price ratio	Good _price
2	Flavor and taste	Good _taste
3	Visual appearance (color, shape)	Good _shape
4	Benefic nutritional properties (vitamin C, anthocyanin, antioxidants)	Nutritional _properties
5	Possibility to choose among different types (raspberries, blueberries, currants, strawberries, blackberries)	Different _types
6	Trays labeled with information on quality traceability (date of decay, producer, Country of origin, distributor)	Labelled
7	Easy to find	Easy _to _find
8	Place of purchase: supermarket	Buy _at _Supermarket
9	Place of purchase: fruit and vegetables shop	Buy _Fruit shops
10	Place of purchase: local market	Buy _Fruit markets

11	Place of purchase: short-chain (Km 0)	Km0
12	Used to make sweets, desserts or ice cream	Use_for_sweets
13	Used for preparation of dishes (side dishes, seal plates)	Use_for_dishes
14	Eat as fresh fruit	Use_Fresh fruits
15	Very decorative	Very_decorative
16	Used as a fruit to be offered at lunch or dinner with family and friends	Offered_at_meals
17	Suitable for special occasions and celebrations (Christmas, New Year, Easter, anniversaries, birthdays)	Special_occasions
18	Used to make yogurt, smoothies, jams etc.	Use_for_yogurt_mousse

### Clustering Methodology

Cluster Analysis<sup>1</sup> is the multivariate statistical method more suitable for the objective of this research (Mueller and Hamm, 2014; Fabbris, 1997; Heiser and Meulman, 1995). This analysis, as it is known, is used when faced with the problem of creating relatively homogeneous groups in a set of variables. It is a multivariate analysis technique through which it is possible to combine statistical data, so as to minimize the distance between data inside groups and between groups. This distance is quantified by measures of similarity/dissimilarity between the data. Cluster Analysis puts together elements of a certain set into groups (clusters) that are non-predefined before, in order to have, in each cluster, units as homogeneous as possible (elements belonging to different groups are, thus, heterogeneous). So the Clustering, unlike other techniques of analysis, highlights sets of homogeneous groups which can be obtained in absence of knowledge about shape and number of them. Several methods are used to calculate the distance between two or more variables. The *Euclidean distance* method is often applied for Hierarchical Clustering (Beale, 1969) with the standardizing of variables to have comparable values and distances (in case of different units of measurement). For this analysis the *Average Linkage Hierarchical Clustering* resulted the more appropriate and the *Euclidean distance Method*, with the *non-determined* number of clusters, was chosen (all variables are in the same scale of measurement, so standardizing is not required). The *Dendrogram* shows each stage of the agglomeration and levels of aggregation with increasing order (vertical lines are the links of clusters, the positions of those lines, in the scale of reference, show different levels of hierarchical aggregations from the most homogeneous to the less one). In addition, *Agglomeration program* Tables were used to compare coefficients of homogeneity. It was built a matrix ( $m \times n$ ) with rates given to the 18 variables from the 200 respondents. For the market segmentation (Farley et al., 1987; Wedel and Kamakura, 2000) clustering was made with data collected from all the regional capitals considered. Also, Cluster Analysis was made splitting the data-set into parts, in order to compare regional capitals according to: (1) the Italian

<sup>1</sup> Statistic Software SPSS.

geographic zones, which are: Northern Italy, Central Italy and Southern Italy (ISTAT disaggregation); (2) the demographic population's dimensions, considering big capitals with resident population > or equal to 200.000 and small capitals with resident population < 200.000. So it was possible to have a market segmentation basing on different consumer profiles and purchase behaviors (Table 2).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Consumers profile

The socio-economic characteristics of the consumers contacted by telephone are shown in table 3. The sample consisted of women with 67.82%, and men with 32.18%. The most of the respondents have an age between 45 and 64 years (42.57%), follows the range 25-44 years (31.68%), more than 64 years (21.29%) and finally the range 20-24 years with only 4.46% (Tab.3). People younger than 20 years were not selected for the telephone interviews.

With regard to employment, the 39.60% is employee, the 23.27% is retired, the 16.34% is self employed, the 13.37% is housewives and 1.49% is unemployed (Tab. 3). 40.59% of respondents are located in Northern Italy, 35.15% in the Central and 24.26% in the Southern regions. The respondents consume fresh fruit mainly after lunch/dinner (64.36%), and after dinner (23.76%), and less frequently only after lunch (2.48% ) and between meals (9.41%). With regard to berries, the majority of respondents (87.13%) say they do not eat frozen berries but prefer fresh fruit. Among the species, results show an high consumption of blueberries (24.41%), blackberries (21.34%), raspberries (20.83%), wild strawberry (12.62%), red currant (10.85%) and white currant (9,95%).

Tab. 3. Socio-economic characteristics of the interviewed (%)

		Sample (n=200)
Gender	Male	32.18
	Female	67.82
Age (Year)	20-24	4.46
	25-44	31.68
	45-64	42.57
	More than 64	21.29
Occupation	Housewife	13.37
	Employee	39.60
	Retired	23.27
	Self employed	16.34
	Unemployed	1.49
	Other	5.93
Distribution	Northern Italy	40.59

Central Italy	35.15
Southern Italy	24.26

Source: Our elaboration on survey data.

81.68% of respondents say they consume berries only in seasons of production, 11.39% throughout the year and 6.93% on special occasions (parties, dinners with friends, etc.). With regard to the frequency of purchase, 59.90% of respondents claimed to buy berries on a monthly/yearly basis, 40.10% daily/weekly. 61.88% said to prefer consuming mixed berries and 38.12 % of one typology. With regard to the place of purchase, 70.79% of respondents claimed to buy berries in supermarkets and hypermarkets, 15.84% in the local market and 12.38% in the specialist retailer. Only 0.99% buy through direct sales between producers and consumers.

Compared with the overall national trend, the main differences between the Northern and the Southern regions concerning the consumption of particular products. In these last regions, in fact, higher is the consumption of wild strawberries (14.38%) than in the Northern regions (9.77%). In contrast, in the Northern regions there is a higher consumption of raspberries (23.37%) compared to the Southern regions (16.52%), where there is also a high consumption of blackberries, thanks to the possibility to find it spontaneous. Another important difference concerns the frequency of purchase of berries that are higher in Northern Italy (56.1% of purchased weekly and monthly) compared to the regions of the Center and South where prevailing monthly and annually purchase (85.71%). Another difference among the three geographical areas is relative to the preference to consume mixture of berries or single types of this fruits. Indeed, in the Northern and Central areas prevails the consume of a mixture, while in the Southern regions the people prefer to consume only one typology of berries.

### **Cluster analysis**

Cluster Analysis grouped variables together basing on consumers scale of judgments, given according to their personal opinion on this produce. Consumers gave priorities (first places) to variables that they estimated as the most important ones, so that scores and logical associations resulted very similar/homogeneous like, also, in the case they evaluated the less important ones (lower positions).

Results revealed groups of homogeneous variables according to consumer's motivations for purchasing berries and choices for consumption. The best selling places where to find berries more easily and the main use consumers do of these fruits were grouped. From the first general clustering, three very big clusters' groups can be seen by the Dendrogram (Fig. 1). In particular, the Dendrogram shows the hierarchies gradually generated by the clustering process; the Agglomeration program (Table 4) shows the homogeneity coefficients.

According to consumers' preferences (statistics of scores frequencies for each variable have been omitted for reasons of printing) the most important motivations for buying berries are produce intrinsic qualities attributes, such as: good taste and flavor, good shape, benefic properties. Variables

belonging to group "Place" had lower positions, it means that special occasions, meals with friends or celebrations are not the main motivation for them to buy berries; sometimes the ease of finding becomes relevant. The lowest places were given to variables "Price", good quality/price ratio and possibility of finding the product through the short chain, it means that consumers think that berries are expensive fruits and it is difficult to find them through the so called short-chain (Km 0), which could, instead, be a means to buy food products at a lower price. The analysis by geographical zones show some differences in the judgments of the respondents, in relation to variables analyzed; however, these differences were not particularly high.

It resulted also, a greater ease of retrieval of the product in the North, on the contrary, in Southern Italy (Fig. 2 and 3) consumers have more difficulty in finding the product on the market, therefore preferring to use of this product on special occasions for the preparation of dishes, sweets or desserts or just as a fresh fruit, as they are very decorative.

Fig. 1 – Dendrogram (Average linkage between groups)

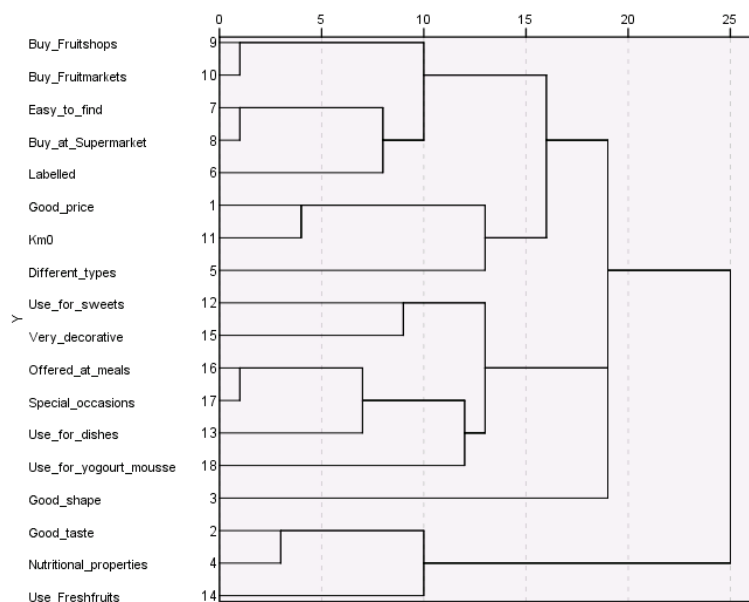


Table 4 – Agglomeration Program (Average linkage between groups)

Stadium	Linked clusters		Coefficients
	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	
1	9	10	42.591
2	7	8	42.895
3	16	17	44.362
4	2	4	51.971
5	1	11	54.369



6	13	16	64.080
7	6	7	67.542
8	12	15	69.921
9	6	9	74.032
10	2	14	74.785
11	13	18	79.710
12	12	13	83.084
13	1	5	84.756
14	1	6	93.920
15	3	12	102.814
16	1	3	104.378
17	1	2	125.181

Fig. 2 – Dendrogram for geographic zone – Northern Italy (Average linkage between groups)

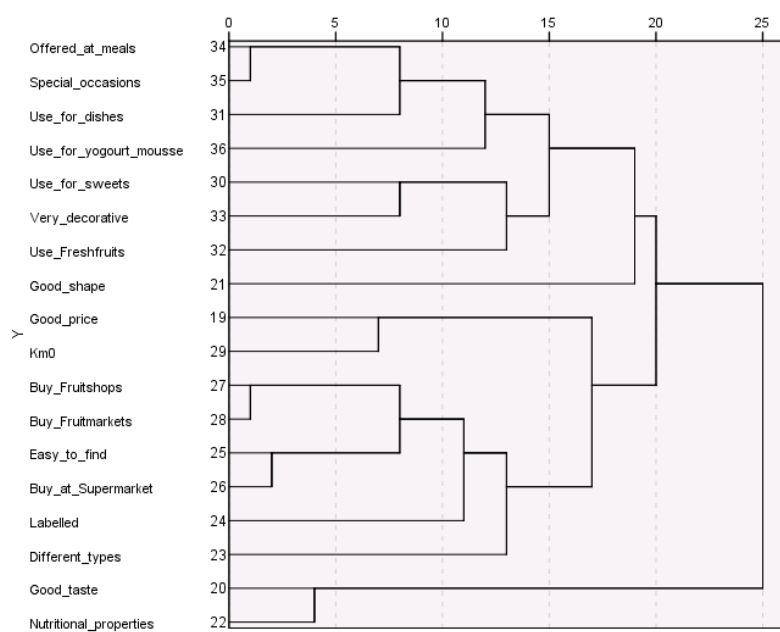
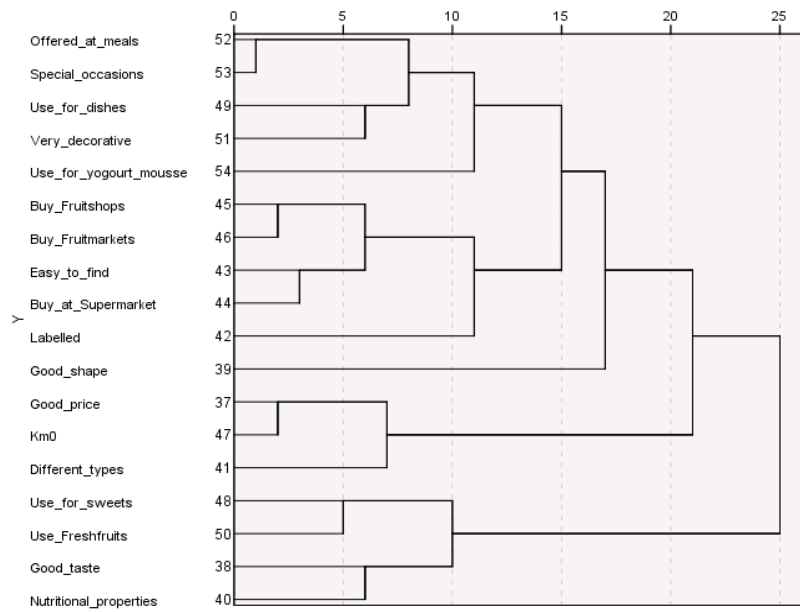
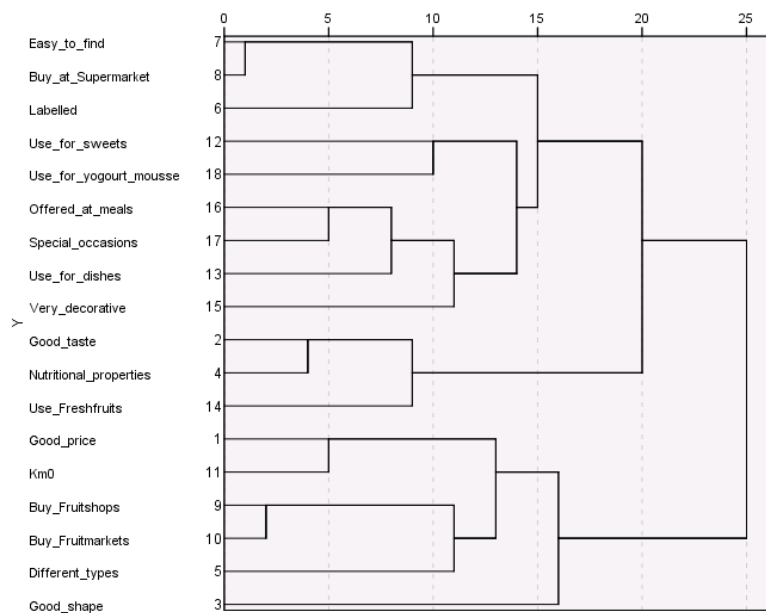


Fig. 3 – Dendrogram for geographic zone – Southern Italy (Average linkage between groups)



In Central Italy (Fig. 4) consumers seem to make a greater use of berries for preparing dishes. In all cases consumers said they like these fruits and think they are very healthy.

Fig. 4 – Dendrogram for demographic size – Central Italy (Average linkage between groups)



Finally, from the analysis by regional capital sizes it was highlighted an interesting difference in consumer's behaviors (Fig. 5 and 6).

Fig. 5 – Dendrogram for demographic size – Big capital (Average linkage between groups)

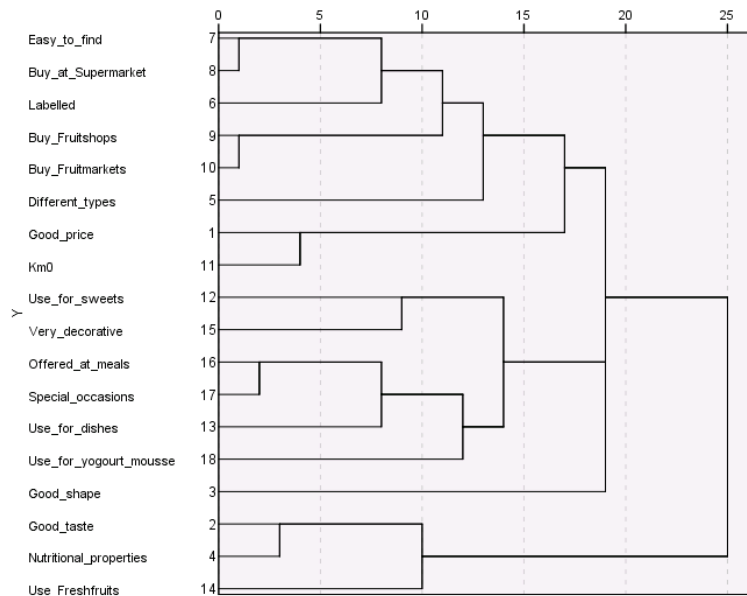
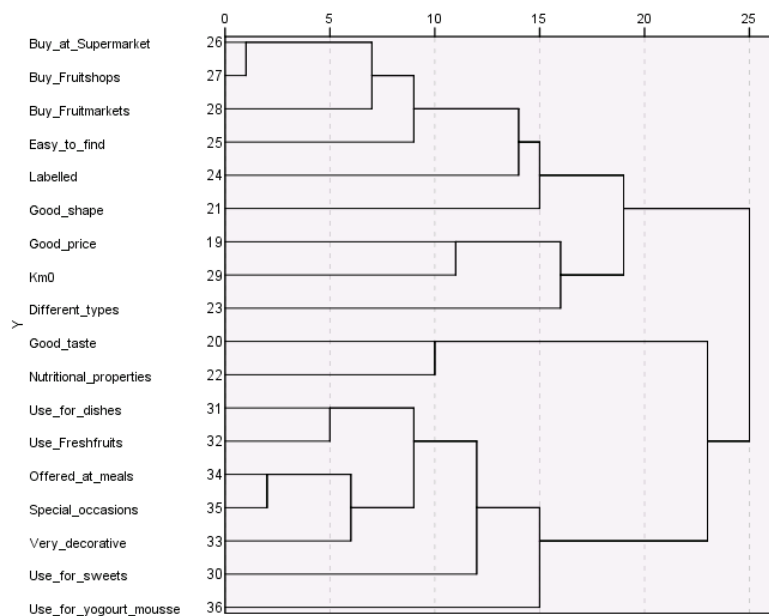


Fig. 6 – Dendrogram for demographic size – Small capital (Average linkage between groups)



It resulted that consumers living in big capitals can easily find berries at supermarket and consider labeling a very important element for traceability of product; moreover they usually buy berries for special occasions as fresh fruits or to prepare dishes. Good taste and nutritional properties are the most important motivation for buying berries as fresh fruit. Consumers living in small capitals do not find differences in buying berries at supermarkets or at fruit-shops or fruit markets, so label become less important for them. They use to consume berries not only for special occasions, as fresh fruits because berries are "very decorative", but also as any other kind of food like ice creams, sweets, yogurts, mousse, etc.. Good taste and nutraceutical properties are relevant but haven't the same

importance than for residents in big capitals, it may be, also, because most part of small capitals are natural producers of berries, so consumers residents in these cities are used to eat these fruits.

## CONCLUSIONS

The objectives of this study are to know the consumers behavior of berries and the determinants of purchase in Italy in order to improve the management of the producing and retailers companies for increase the competitiveness of the supply chain.

According to the first hypothesis of our study, the results show that intrinsic attributes of the berries as taste, color and health properties, are the most important lever to purchase, while the price of this products (extrinsic attribute) is the lowest factor. As suggested by Benjamin et al. (2004) and Francis (1995), color is an attribute that is typically important to consumers when they purchase fruit. This is even more true for berries because as argued James et al. (2002) the intense color of berries is associated with the presence of substances that possess preventive value against some diseases of our time. Regarding the nutraceutical properties, the results of our study indicate that the health aspect is important but that it isn't the best, probably, because like other survey carried out by Schnettler et al. (2011) has shown, among consumers the knowledge of the nutritional characteristics of berries is very lack. However, among consumer's behavior some differences emerge with regard to the results of the interviews in the three geographical Italian areas, concerning the place of purchase and the ease of finding the product in the market. In particular, the consumers who live in North Italy, find more easily berries in the large scale retail trade and for this reason the frequency of purchase is greater than in the other areas and the results of cluster analysis remark this information. In the Southern Italy we can note that the consumers have more difficulty in finding the product on the market; in this area, more than in other two, the role of the specialized retail is important enough. The cluster analysis evidences the link between the variables that indicate that berries is used to special occasions and offered to friends or family for convivial meetings.

The results obtained by cluster elaboration data, show that the consumers living in big city are more attracted by the information on the products' traceability (labelled); indeed, they purchase berries mainly in the large scale retail trade. This results confirm our second hypothesis, according to which consumers in the big city are very careful to the informations about the products and buy berries mainly in the large distribution channels. On the contrary, in the small city, that are localized in many berries production areas', consumers behavior is different and lower linked to the benefit aspects.

Regarding the main limitations of this study we think that these are linked to the sample size and its localization among regional capitals only. However, our findings offer valuable insight both for producers and retailers, to identify the main priorities and improving managerial strategies, and for

Institutions, in order to define effective measures for the enhancement of the production chains. Taking into account that most of the domestic demand is met by imported product, we recognized real opportunities for the berries sector' growth in Italy, through an increase of the harvested area and for the development of the entire supply chain. In particular, the results of our study show a great attention of consumers towards the taste and nutraceutical properties of the berries, that we can be consumed fresh or prepared, but that is not easy to find in some Italian regions. Therefore, we suggest that both the companies and the Institutions carry out promotional and informational campaign in particular concerning the nutraceutical properties and the advantage for health. With this in mind, this strategy could help to increase the domestic demand and therefore the main presence of the product in the different distribution channels, even in those areas in which nowadays is less straightforward find the product (Southern Italy). Furthermore, considering that among the consumers there are differences on the types of product purchased (mixture of berries and single type), in particular between Northern and Southern consumers, companies could expand their product line, offering packages with a single type of berries, mixture of fruits, and different size of package in order to reach different segments of consumers. It would be advisable in the future to carry out similar research in other places, not only in the capital regions, to confirm or disconfirm the hypothesis formulated and to identify the life style's influence, through the analysis of main socio-demographic characteristics, on the berries consumption in Italy. Everything, could contribute to improve the knowledge on the consumers' motivation and intention and to create a stable market of berries in Italy.

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