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PERCEPTIONS OF THE SLOW FOOD CULTURAL TREND AMONG THE YOUTH

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Abstract

As they become increasingly aware of the importance of healthy eating and of the serious food imbalance caused by the overconsumption of industrial, ultra-processed and super-organoleptic food, consumers are now beginning to turn their attention to food choices guaranteeing both individual health and also of the environment. Thus, in recent years we are witnessing the rise of a cultural trend – Slow Food.

Slow Food has become an international movement that advocates for satisfying culinary pleasure, protects biological and cultural diversity, spread taste education, links "green" producers to consumers and believes that gastronomy intersects with politics, agriculture and ecology. Slow Food proposes a holistic approach to food problem, where the economic, socio-cultural and environmental aspects are interlinked, being pursued as part of an overall strategy.

In order to highlight the manner in which the principles of this cultural trend are perceived by the representatives of the new generation of consumers in Romania, exploratory research marketing was conducted among the students in the second year of the master's program Quality Management, Expertise and Consumer Protection, from the Faculty of Business and Tourism from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies. The results of this research have shown an insufficient knowledge of Slow Food phenomenon and, especially, the Slow Food network activity in Romania. To show that the Slow Food type of food is a healthier option towards which the future consumer demand should be guided, especially those belonging to the younger generation, an antithetical comparative analysis of the nutritional value of two menus was performed: a suggestive one for the Slow Food feeding style and other one, specific to the fast food style. Slow Food style was considered antithetical to the fast food because many previous studies have shown a preference of the young for the fast-food type products, despite the nutritional imbalance they generate. Comparative analysis of nutrition was produced by using the coverage degree method and the results have shown that the Slow Food type menu is a balanced food option. Given the issues that we highlighted, this paper can be a reference point in our endeavor to increase the awareness of the Romanian young people regarding the need to create a sustainable food system, in economic, environmental and socio-cultural point of view, as well as their orienting towards natural and healthy food options.

Keywords: Slow Food, Fast Food, healthy food, consumer perception, analysis of the nutritional value, coverage degree method

JEL Classification: L83, M31, Z32

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Introduction

Slow Food movement has captured public attention and it has spread across the planet because it folds on one of the basic human desires, which is to eat tasty and healthy food. Increasingly more people began to avoid foods with a taste of chemicals, without authenticity or history and with no connection to nature, and those who are beginning to want something better, have learned to slow down the pace of daily life.

Slow Food movement was initiated in 1986 in the town of Bra (Italy), as the ArciGola. The founder of ArciGola association was the journalist Carlo Petrini. ArciGola became Slow Food in 1989, following a protest by Carlo Petrini organized against the opening of the first McDonald's restaurant in "Piazza di Spagna" in Rome. On November 9th, 1989, representatives from several countries signed the Slow Food manifesto at "Opera Comique" in Paris. Thus, Slow Food has become an eco-gastronomic nonprofit organization, it was established as a response to contemporary life consumed in high speed, which led to the abandonment of the local gastronomic traditions and the decrease of people's interest in authentic food.

Slow Food movement has chosen as its the emblem the snail, precisely for its ability to suggest the idea of slowing down everyday life.

By praising slowness, the passion for authentic and support of local communities, Slow Food movement is fighting for biodiversity and although it appears to be an enemy of global capitalism, it is not, however, against globalization per se, but on the contrary, campaigning for a "virtuous globalization" based on commercial agreements that allow artefacts from various corners of the world to find markets in other countries, in order to prosper (Honore, 2004).

Slow Food has helped create a true cultural trend, which not only addresses food through fashion, market trends or economy, but also focuses on the joy of communion with others (Slow Food, 2015a).

Slow Food makes food a means of active political resistance and rediscovery of the vital traditions. Aiming at a slower and more harmonious pace of life, Slow Food is working on educating the public about "eco-gastronomy" bringing to the fore issues like cultural and biological diversity, sustainability of food production and protection of the global environment (Parasecoli, 2007).

Therefore, in line with its international status, Slow Food works to promote the right to pleasure, respect for the rhythms of life and a harmonious relationship with nature. Also, Slow Food seeks to explore, describe and improve food culture, develop appropriate education of taste and preserve each country's food heritage. Slow Food promotes the good quality food, a correct attitude towards the environment and protects consumer rights. Recognizing that food is fundamental to human health and welfare and promoting appropriate use of food, the Slow Food movement helps harmonizing the relationship between people on the one hand and the relationship between people and the environment, on the other hand (Jones et al., 2003).

In order to achieve its purpose, the work was divided into several sections, the first being devoted to review the literature, in order to identify the most relevant issues on the principles of the Slow Food movement, its philosophy regarding food quality as well as the projects implemented by the Slow Food network at international and national level. The

next section presents the objectives and methodology used. The third section includes the results and discussion, and at the end of the work briefly the conclusions drawn from the research conducted are outlined, future research directions being also indicated for educating and informing the new generation of consumers on the philosophy of Slow Food movement and on the benefits of adopting Slow Food nutritional style.

1. Literature review on the extent of the international Slow Food movement

The supporters of the Slow Food movement believe that the future of food is the future of the planet. Because a better, cleaner and fairer world starts with what is on the plate, according to the Slow Food movement, the food quality concept is defined by three interconnected principles (Slow Food, 2015b):

- *Food should be "good"*. Slow Food aliments are both delicious and nutritionally valuable. However, in case of Slow Food aliments, it is not the nutritious function the one that prevails for the consumer, but rather that of cultural symbol.
- *Food should be „clean“*. Slow Food products come from plants and animals grown using methods that do not harm the environment. The devotees of the Slow Food movement often choose the locally produced organic food because it is fresh and has a higher nutritional value. By buying local products farmers are supported and encouraged to cultivate a variety of crops, biodiversity being thus promoted, whose environmental benefits are undeniable (reducing the spread of disease, maintaining the soil health and preservation of rare plants threatened with extinction).
- *Food must be „ethical“*. Healthy food should be accessible to all, regardless of wealth and social status worldwide. Equitable food is produced by people who are well paid and treated.

To provide "good, clean and ethical" food the initiatives and actions of the Slow Food movement go towards defending biodiversity, spreading taste education and connecting food producers with consumers. These are, in fact, the defining elements of the Slow Food mission (Petrini, 2007).

- Consumer education through various activities: visits to local farms and producers of food, food and wine tastings, workshops, dinners with the producers, school gardens, exchanges between older and younger generations;
- Building a close connection between the producer and co-producers by encouraging the small farmers near towns presence in local markets;
- Protecting biodiversity through the conservation and protection of endangered plant and animal breeds.
- Considering all the above aspects that define the central philosophy of the Slow Food movement, we can say that it advocates the creation of a sustainable food system in the following points of view (FAO, 2013):
 - environmental – involves maintaining quality and regenerability of the natural resources while preserving biodiversity and ensuring the integrity of ecosystems;
 - economic – intended to generate income and long-term jobs and the creation of a competitive environment, through the prevalence of quality over quantity and price coverage of the true value of food;

- social-cultural – it is based on safeguarding the fundamental rights and equitable access to welfare conditions for the members of a community in order to provide opportunities for communities to create and develop internal and external relationships and recognition of the cultural value of food.

Slow Food therefore suggests a holistic approach to food problem, where the economic, social-cultural and environmental aspects are interlinked, being pursued as part of an overall strategy.

Slow Food can be described as an umbrella organization composed of several entities, including non-profit associations and commercial enterprises. Slow Food organization has over 100,000 members in over 150 countries.

The main components of Slow Food network are (Voinea, 2013): Slow Food International; The Local associations; National associations; Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity; a Publishing House; Pollenzo Agency, which includes: University of Gastronomic Sciences; Pollenzo hotel; Pollenzo restaurant; a wine Bank (an archive of Italian wine production); Slow Food Italia Promotion.

The Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity projects are implemented everywhere, but the least developed countries are particularly concerned. Over time, the Foundation has conducted several projects, the most important being: „Ark of Taste”, „Presidia” and „Narrative Label”.

In 1996 the *Ark of Taste* project was launched, whose mission is to identify, catalog and advertise the worldwide endangered foodstuffs. For inclusion in the Ark of Taste, products must meet a series of criteria as follows: to be of outstanding quality in terms of taste; to come from a specific geographical area; to be made in small quantities by small artisanal producers; to be obtained using sustainable farming methods; to be endangered; to have a real economic viability and commercial potential (Slow Food Foundation of Biodiversity, n.d.a).

In 1999 project *Presidia* was launched, when The Slow Food foundation decided to go one step further by direct involvement in world production, by knowing the places, meeting producers, promoting their labor and products and valuing their wisdom (Slow Food Foundation of Biodiversity, n.d.b).

In 2011 *The Narrative Label* project was launched. The Narrative Label serves to emphasize first the authenticity of a product by providing detailed information about the history behind it. In addition, it is a way to restore the true value of food, distinguishing it and giving it a competitive advantage over mass-produced food, whose labels cannot answer some fundamental questions, such as those related to origin, respect to the environment, respect for workers' rights or insuring animal welfare (Baldereschi et al., 2014).

In order to promote their mission, to expand their membership base and to raise funds for its operations, Slow Food organizes national and international events. The most important events organized by Slow Food are: *Salone del Gusto*, *Terra Madre*, *Slow Cheese*, *Slow Fish*.

Salone del Gusto, first held in 1996, is the biggest fair of high quality food and wines in the world, being the event with the greatest impact organized by Slow Food, which takes place every two years (even years) in October in Lingotto Exhibition Centre. Also, *Salone del*

Gusto is an opportunity for cultural exchange and promoting regional production. The purpose of the event is to raise public awareness about the risk of homogenization of food and the need to protect species of plants and animals threatened with extinction and to support small producers of traditional foods, which are threatened by total oblivion (Slow Food Promozione, 2016).

Terra Madre is an international network of food communities - groups of small producers and not only, united to produce a particular foodstuff and closely linked to a geographical area. The network brings together food producers, fishermen, herders, cooks, academics, youth, NGOs and representatives of local communities, working to establish a system of good, clean and fair food (Slow Food, 2015c)..

Terra Madre Network was launched by Slow Food in 2004 to provide visibility to producers from around the world whose approach to obtaining food protects the environment and the communities.

Slow Cheese is an international festival dedicated to cheese of good quality all over the world, organized every two years (odd years) in September in the town of Bra, which aims at raising the awareness on the traditional products made of local raw unprocessed milk. The first edition of the event took place in 1997.

Slow Food believes cheese made from raw unprocessed milk is a food deeply embedded in the best Italian tradition, its preparation is an art, a way of life, a culture, a legacy. As artisanal production of cheese is disappearing because the values they express are opposed to the homogenization generated by the mass production of food, Slow Food is fighting for consumers' freedom and the right of farmers to produce and sell superior quality cheese made of raw milk (Slow Food, n.d.).

Slow Fish is an international exhibition that promotes sustainable fishing, organized every two years (odd years) in May, in the city of Genoa. The Slow Fish exhibition aims increasing the public awareness on the benefits of eating fish and seafood, as well as developing projects to support responsible communities practicing artisanal fishing.

In Romania there are local Slow Food organizations called convivium / convivia, as in the other countries where the movement is present, the most important being: The Slow Food Alba Transilvania, The Slow Food Bran Moeciu, The Slow Food Braşov, The Slow Food Brusturoasa Palanca, The Slow Food Bucureşti Valahia Gusturilor, The Slow Food Cluj Transilvania, The Slow Food Târnava Mare, The Slow Food Turda, The Slow Food Țara Bârsei, The Slow Food Țara Făgăraşului (Slow Food, 2015d).

In the following the most outstanding activities of the local Slow Food associations in Romania are exemplified.

Slow Food Târnava Mare is the first convivium in Romania, founded in July 2005 by the British Jim Turnball. The creation of this local organization was determined by the 2005 visit of a Slow Food Italy delegation to Târnava Mare, initiated by Prince Charles of Great Britain. The most important project developed in Târnava Mare is the "Saxon Village Preserves" ("jams from Saxon villages"), a project supported by the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity, which aims at the ancient traditions of producing jams, marmalades and comfiture.

The activity of the *Slow Food Bran Moeciu* organization is closely linked to Bucegi Farm, located in the town of Moeciu de Sus, Brasov County, which acquired a reputation due to the matured cheese in pine bark included in the Ark of Taste. The farm operates a milk processing center with access for all producers in the region.

The *Slow Food București Valahia Gusturilor* Convivium organizes activities for the promotion of the traditional products, which are part of the cultural heritage of our country. The organization supports the *Peasant Fair*, the first Slow Food tourism market in Romania dedicated to small producers.

Slow Food Turda Convivium has at the center of its concern the education of the young generation, and to this purpose, visits to local producers are regularly organized, where the young people learn how to make traditional products and discern the secrets of ancient occupations. The main projects of the Slow Food Turda are: "Life in the Green Garden", "Tasty and Healthy", "Summer Gourmet" and "YES Food!".

A unique product promoted by Slow Food Turda convivium is the red onion confiture which is recommended to be consumed mainly as entree, near cheese and meats. Slow Food Turda started a project that involves creating a red onion confiture processing center. The center will also produce onion pickles and the onion peels will be capitalized through a special process, being converted into natural food colouring.

The *Slow Food Brașov* Convivium has as main ideals the protection of the national and local authentic products, the traditional gourmet recipes and educating the consumers. The most important project of the Slow Food Brasov organization is the "*Fruits of the Earth*", *Fair*, one of the most popular fairs of the producers, held without interruption since 2009.

2. Objectives and research methodology

In order to highlight the manner in which cultural trend principles promoted by Slow Food are perceived by the representatives of the new generation of consumers in Romania, an exploratory research was conducted among second year marketing students of the master's program Quality Management, Expertise and Consumer Protection, from the Faculty of Business and Tourism from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies. This was followed by an analysis of the nutritional value of a typical menu for Slow Food nutritional style, in antithesis with the nutritional value of Fast Food menu.

Assuming that although Slow Food nutritional style is a healthy food option, the principles and philosophy in the area of food quality promoted by the Slow Food movement are insufficiently known by the young people in Romania, this study aims the following main objectives:

- Highlighting the importance of healthy eating for young people in Romania;
- Highlighting the awareness degree of young people about the Slow Food movement and the main sources of information about the Slow Food movement;
- Finding the extent to which young people are informed about the activity of Slow Food network in Romania and their awareness degree regarding the Slow Food type products of Romanian origin;

- Slow Food products consumption among respondents;
- Highlighting the availability of youth to allocate income to purchase Slow Food products;
- Highlighting the high nutritional value of the Slow Food products, through an analysis of the nutritional value of a menu Slow Food antithetical to that of a fast food type menu (on the assumption that fast food nutritional style is widespread among young people from everywhere).

The research methodology combines the marketing exploratory research using "the technique of structured interview" for the consumer perception investigation stage regarding the Slow Food nutrition and "the covering degree method" for conducting the nutritional value analysis phase.

The Technique of Structured Interview involved drawing up a list of questions to which a number of possible responses were formulated, so that interviewers could easily note in which category falls the answer of each respondent.

The investigated sample consisted of 50 former students in the second year of the master's program Quality Management, Expertise and Consumer Protection, from the Faculty of Business and Tourism from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies, 34 respondents women and 16 respondents males, come from urban areas, aged between 22-30 years, who volunteered to participate in the interview. The research was conducted in the first semester of the academic year 2015-2016, taking place in the areas of education.

The Covering Degree Method was applied to analyze the nutritional profile of a menu consisting of Slow Food products antithetical to that of a menu consisting of Fast Food items, the main purpose being to show that Slow Food type food is a healthy alimentary option. This method is effective in case of food products or complex menus, obtained from several raw materials. Knowing the raw materials included in each menu, the quantity of each, as well as their chemical composition, calculations can determine the energy and biological value.

The energy value is calculated using the following formula (Dima et al. 2006):

$$Q = (4,1 \times P) + (4,1 \times GI) + (9,3 \times L)$$

Q – the energy value (kcal)

P, GI, L – total amount of proteins, carbohydrates and lipids (g)

The coverage of daily energy requirement is determined by division of net energy value to energy needs of the consumer group.

$$G = Q/N \times 100$$

G – the coverage degree of the recommended daily energy intake (%)

Q – energy value (kcal)

N – recommended daily calorie intake (kcal)

To check how the daily requirement of protein, carbohydrates and fat is covered, the partial coverage levels for each of these trophies is calculated.

The biological value is determined by summing the intake of animal origin proteins, the vitamins and the raw material's share of mineral elements in the recipe. To determine the coverage, the potential of vitamins and minerals recommended is reported to the daily / everyday requirements for the group of consumers (Voinea, 2013).

The coverage degrees of the macro and micro nutrients requirements will be calculated by reference to the following values, considered to be an adequate average for the needs of most people: Energy – 2200 kcal, Carbohydrates– 270 g, Proteins – 80 g, Lipids – 80 g, Calcium – 800 mg, Phosphorus – 1000 mg, Iron – 18 mg, B1 Vitamin – 1.2 mg, C Vitamin – 100 mg (Kelly, Hughes and Chapman, 2009; Darmon et al., 2009).

3. Results and discussions

3.1 Analysis based on the structured interview

To highlight the perception of the young consumers on Slow Food nutrition, the responses recorded in the interview data files were centralized and processed using Excel spreadsheet.

After filling in the socio-demographic data (gender, age, place of residence), the interview began with a question about the importance of healthy eating. The respondents were asked to indicate on a Likert-type scale, *the importance of healthy eating* for them. At this question, over half of the respondents (55.1%) said that healthy food is very important. Also, a percentage of 26.5% of those polled consider it important to have a healthy diet, while the rest are neutral or attach little and very little importance to healthy food. The fact that more than half of those surveyed said they were concerned about a healthy diet, indicates a good opportunity to change the unhealthy habits of food consumption among young people, this being possible through proper information, education of taste and by reorienting the demand towards healthy food choices.

A very important aspect of the research is *the awareness of the respondents about the Slow Food movement*, therefore they were asked if they had heard of the Slow Food movement. To this question, 66% of the respondents said yes, while 34% stated that they have never heard of it.

When asked about the *main sources of information about the Slow Food movement*, most of those surveyed (56%) indicated the Internet as a primary source of information. This is understandable given that, as statistics show, the Internet is now the most affordable and faster means of getting information used by the new generation of consumers. The remaining 44% indicated as main sources of information friends / family, school / college, television.

Students were further asked if they know which *the country of origin of the Slow Food movement is* and were asked to state their name. Although 66% of those interviewed had previously said they had knowledge of the Slow Food movement, only 10 people (20%) gave the correct answer, indicating Italy. So, 80% of respondents gave a wrong answer.

Another question focused on whether respondents *are informed of the Slow Food network activity in Romania*. The responses showed that most respondents are not very well informed about the work of Slow Food network in Romania. A 32% of respondents believe they have a medium level of information on network activity, 21.3% are informed in a small proportion, while 25.5% are informed at a very small extent. The analysis of the answers shows that although the Slow Food movement is also present in Romania, its work

is not well known to the public, especially the young, which are, however, best informed. It appears, therefore, that there is an obvious need to intensify actions to promote local organizations Slow Food activities operating in Romania.

Another question was aimed at *highlighting the awareness of the Slow Food type products of Romanian origin*. In this regard, the respondents were asked to mention the names of some Romanian Slow Food products they know. Of all the respondents, 40 people (80%) said they did not know such products, and the remaining 9 people (18%) said they were aware of the following Slow Food products: cheese in pine bark, Topoloveni marmalade, comfiture, green cheese with dill, syrups (berries, pine tree, roses), gingerbread, cold-pressed oils, cow and sheep cheese, hearth-baked bread, honey. One respondent (2%) stated that, in his opinion, Slow Food is the traditional foods homemade with natural ingredients.

At the question regarding *the places considered most appropriate for marketing the Slow Food products in Romania*, following the centralization of responses, an equal percentage of 42% was obtained by the specialized departments in hypermarkets and supermarkets and specialized stores. Only 10% of the respondents believed that these products should be sold in fairs and farmers' markets, and the remaining 6% mentioned other places, such as specialized restaurants and public places (figure no.1).

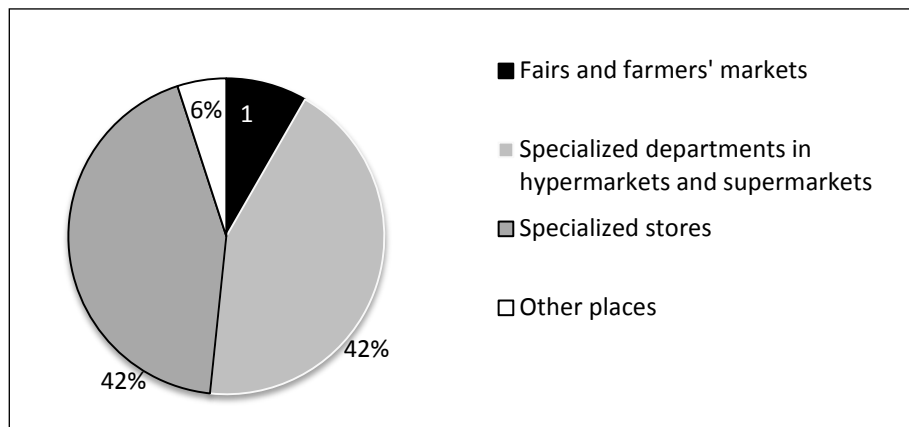


Figure no.1: Consumers perception about the places where the Slow Food products should be marketed in Romania

At the question whether *they consumed Slow Food products during the past year*, of all respondents, 86% (43 people) answered that they haven't consumed Slow Food type products during this period, and 14% (7 persons) responded affirmatively. The 7 people who answered yes to this question are part of the 9 people who said to an earlier question that they knew Romanian Slow Food products and listed a number of products that they knew.

At the question about the *amount of money they would be willing to allocate to the monthly purchase of Slow Food products, in case their income would increase*, 36% of respondents (18 people) would allocate an amount below 100 lei a month for the purchase of Slow Food products, 32% (16 persons) would allocate an amount between 100 and 200 lei per month, a rate of 18% (9 persons) would be willing to allocate an amount between

200 and 300 lei per month, while only 14% (7 persons) would allocate an amount higher than 300 lei per month, in case of revenue growth (figure no. 2).

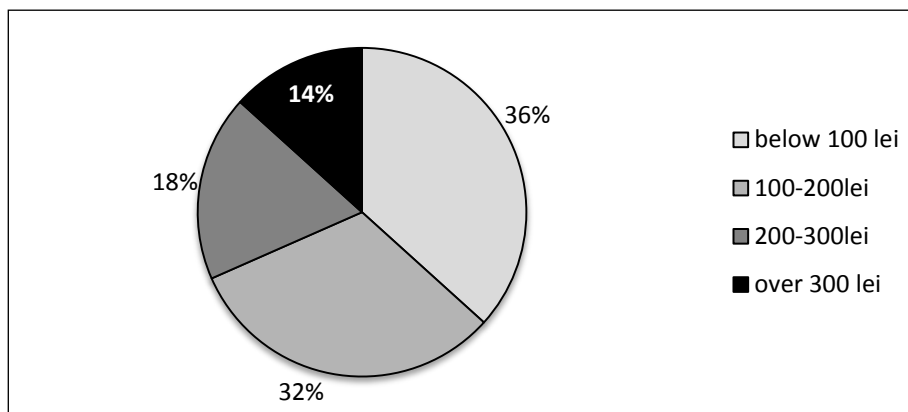


Figure no. 2: The amount of money monthly allocated to the Slow Food products, in case of revenue growth

3.2 Analysis of the nutritional value based on the covering degree method

As the results of the interviews conducted among students showed an insufficient knowledge of the principles promoted by the Slow Food movement, to illustrate in a very significant way that the Slow Food style of nutrition is a healthier option, to which the attention of consumers should turn to, especially those belonging to the younger generation, an antithetical comparative analysis of the nutritional value of two menus was performed, one suggestive of Slow Food alimentary style and another specific to Fast Food style.

The reason of this antithetical research lies in the particularly large popularity of the fast-food style among young people all over the world, in spite of the nutritional imbalance which they generate. An explanation of the preference for fast food we can find in the research conducted by Davis and Carpenter (2009) and George and McDuffie (2008), which shows that young people associate eating healthy food with the control exercised by parents and the idea of "living with parents", while eating Fast Food is associated by them with the idea of independence, fun with friends and being away from home.

If the Fast Food type products can be characterized by a raised sensory value, they are very unbalanced in nutritional point of view, showing the particular risk of a high energy contribution, based on empty calories (most of them coming from the saturated fats and sugar), which give the feeling of satiety for a little while, but that cannot sustain the effort throughout the day. Many of the raw materials which are used in Fast Food restaurants' menus contain large amounts of fat (fries, meat, cheese). In addition, these foods contain numerous ingredients cooked by a frying process, a procedure where raw materials incorporate a large amount of harmful fats (trans fatty acids) and other potentially carcinogenic substances, resulting from the heating of fat at high temperatures (acrolein and acrylamide). Fast Food products, however, are deficient in vitamins and minerals, as they only contain fixed and only very small portions of fruit and vegetables or not at all. Thus,

the biological value of the typical Fast Food products can only be very low or even zero (Voinea, 2013).

Tables no. 1 and no. 2 show the chemical composition of the two chosen menus, whose nutritional value will be analyzed comparatively. In order to identify the chemical composition of the products composing these menus, the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) database has been used, available by <http://ndb.nal.usda.gov/ndb/search/list>.

Table no. 1: The chemical composition of Fast Food menu

Product	Amount	Proteins	Carbo-hydrates	Lipids	Animal proteins	Calcium	Phos-phorus	Iron	Vit B1	Vit C
Big Mac	200 g	25,58	42,20	23,14	25,58	34,8	260	4,28	0,75	-
French Fries	200 g	7,0	38,0	0,30	-	18	196	0,4	0,22	0,2
Coca Cola	400 ml	-	31,36	0,20	-	4	4	0,36	0,61	0
Cherry pie	170 g	13,87	112	1,76	-	28,8	115,65	0,89	0,08	1,5
TOTAL		46,45	223,56	25,4	25,58	85,6	571,65	5,93	1,66	1,7

Source: adaptation of <http://ndb.nal.usda.gov/ndb/search/list>

Table no. 2: The chemical composition of Slow Food menu

Product	Amount	Proteins	Carbo-hydrates	Lipids	Animal proteins	Calcium	Phos-phorus	Iron	Vit B1	Vit C
Prosciutto crudo	88g	21,12	0,88	15,6	21,12	7,04	93,64	0,1	0,28	-
Focaccia	80 g	7,01	38,65	7,31	-	28	107,4	3,53	0,276	-
Mozzarella	28 g	6,12	11,70	7,59	1,5	162	127	0,06	0,005	0,13
Cherry tomatoes	100 g	0,88	8,89	0,22	-	9	24	0,37	0,037	4,7
Rucola	100 g	2,6	8,7	0,7	-	146	56	0,6	0,02	6,3
Olive oil	30 ml	-	-	30	-	-	-	0,3	-	-
Balsamic vinegar	16 ml	0,08	3,72	-	-	4	3,2	0,17	-	-
Lemonade with honey	400 ml	1,4	39,6	0,96	-	24	36	0,32	0,076	7,8
Strawberries	50 g	0,29	10,68	0,30	-	8,5	14,5	0,14	0,015	3,5
Bananas	50 g	0,55	13,42	0,17	-	2,5	12	0,16	0,016	3,35
Kiwi	50 g	0,57	11,33	0,26	-	12	17	1,21	0,014	3,64
TOTAL		48,62	147,57	39,01	22,62	403,04	490,14	8,3	0,73	29,42

Source: adaptation of <http://ndb.nal.usda.gov/ndb/search/list>

Because both menus were designed to be consumed at lunch, in calculating the degrees of coverage we shall consider that the lunch should cover about 50% of the daily energy and essential nutrients. In this regard, the above mentioned requirements will be considered in a 50% proportion.

Table no. 3 shows the results obtained after calculating the energy value and the degrees of coverage of the daily recommended intakes of energy and macronutrients (proteins, carbohydrates and lipids) in the two menus.

Table no. 3: Calculation of the energy value and the degrees of coverage of the daily recommended intakes of energy and macronutrients

<i>Fast Food menu (Big Mac)</i>	<i>Slow Food menu</i>
$Q = 4,1 \times P + 4,1 \times G + 9,3 \times L$ $Q = 4,1 \times 43,45 + 4,1 \times 223,56 + 9,3 \times 24,4 = 178,145 + 916,596 + 226,92 = 1321,66 \text{ kcal}$ $G = Q/N \times 100 = 1321,66/1100 \times 100 = 120,15 \%$ $G_P = P/N_P \times 100 = 46,45/40 \times 100 = 116,12 \%$ $G_{GI} = GI/N_{GI} \times 100 = 223,56/135 \times 100 = 165,5 \%$ $G_L = L/N_L \times 100 = 25,4/40 \times 100 = 63,5 \%$	$Q = 4,1 \times P + 4,1 \times G + 9,3 \times L$ $Q = 4,1 \times 48,62 + 4,1 \times 147,57 + 9,3 \times 39,01 = 199,342 + 605,037 + 363,63 = 1168,009 \text{ kcal}$ $G = Q/N \times 100 = 1168,009/1100 \times 100 = 106,18\%$ $G_P = P/N_P \times 100 = 48,62/40 \times 100 = 121,55 \%$ $G_{GI} = GI/N_{GI} \times 100 = 147,57/135 \times 100 = 109,33 \%$ $G_L = L/N_L \times 100 = 39,01/40 \times 100 = 97,53\%$

In case of the Fast Food menu, the coverage degree of the energy needs for lunch is 120.15%, a value which indicates an excessive intake of energy for lunch. Analyzing the values of the recommended amounts of nutrients coverage degrees, greater imbalances are observed: the coverage degree of the necessary of carbohydrates is 165.5%, which indicates excessive carbohydrates intake, especially from added sugar and the coverage degree of necessary lipids is 63.5%, which indicates an insufficient intake of lipids. Proteins come from ultra processed materials (roasted meat and cheese) and have a coverage degree of approximately 116%, which means too high a contribution for lunch.

For the Slow Food type menu, the coverage degree of the energy needs is 106.18%, which indicates an optimal coverage of needs in terms of quantity. Regarding the coverage degree of macronutrients needs, it can be observed that only in case of proteins there is an excess of about 21%, but which cannot be considered a major imbalance; the carbohydrates and fat intake may be considered appropriate, the levels of coverage being 109.33%, respectively, of 97.53%.

Table no. 4 shows the results obtained by calculating the biological value and the coverage degree of the daily recommended intakes of micronutrients (vitamins and minerals), in case of the two menus.

Table no. 4: Calculation of biological value and the coverage degree of the daily recommended intakes of micronutrients

<i>Fast Food menu (Big Mac)</i>	<i>Slow Food menu</i>
$G_{Ca} = Ca/N_{Ca} \times 100 = 85,6/400 \times 100 = 21,4\%$ $G_P = P/N_P \times 100 = 571,65/500 \times 100 = 142,94\%$ $G_{Fe} = Fe/N_{Fe} \times 100 = 5,93/9 \times 100 = 65,89\%$ $G_{B1} = Vit B1/N_{VitB1} \times 100 = 1,66/0,6 \times 100 = 276,66\%$ $G_C = Vit C/N_{VitC} \times 100 = 1,7/50 \times 100 = 3,4\%$	$G_{Ca} = Ca/N_{Ca} \times 100 = 403,04/400 \times 100 = 100,76\%$ $G_P = P/N_P \times 100 = 490,14/500 \times 100 = 98,03\%$ $G_{Fe} = Fe/N_{Fe} \times 100 = 8,3/9 \times 100 = 92,2\%$ $G_{B1} = Vit B1/N_{VitB1} \times 100 = 0,73/0,6 \times 100 = 121\%$ $G_C = Vit C/N_{VitC} \times 100 = 29,42/50 \times 100 = 58\%$

As far as the components without which a metabolism cannot function normally are concerned, the vitamins and the minerals, it is noted that the **Fast Food menu** has an insufficient contribution of calcium, of only 21.4%, with a very unbalanced calcium / phosphorus ratio, and the iron contribution covers only 65.89% of the body demand for lunch, which is half of the daily requirement, which means that it should be the most substantial meal, but also the richest in minerals and vitamins. Regarding the vitamins contribution to the menu, there are other imbalances: unfortunately, vitamin C covers only 3.4% of the demand and vitamin B1 has a contribution of about 3 times higher than normal.

The **Slow Food menu** has a sufficient contribution of calcium, with a coverage degree of 100.76% and a very balanced calcium / phosphorus ratio. Iron intake is close to a lunch demand, covering 92.2%. Although in case of vitamin B1 the intake is higher than the daily

requirement, with approximately 20%, this is not worrying, because the excess does not remain in the body but, after its metabolic use, it is excreted in urine. In the case of vitamin C, which has a powerful antioxidant role, we observe a coverage degree of 58% in the Slow Food menu, about 20 times greater than in case of Fast Food menu. Although menus are similar in structure, they are different in terms of nutritional profile.

Slow Food menu is a healthy alternative for lunch because nutrient intakes substantially cover the needs of a meal of this type. In addition, Slow Food menu contains simple ingredients, fresh, and beyond the fact that it is tasty, it is also easy to prepare.

Conclusions

The exploratory research we conducted proved that although most of the respondents are familiar with the concept of Slow Food, the main means of information is the Internet, the overwhelming majority knows neither the country of origin nor the activity of the Slow Food network in Romania. It is therefore necessary to more intensely promote the activities taking place in the Slow Food network, both internationally and nationally, to increase the consumer awareness about the need to know the origin of raw materials, plant cultivation and animal raise ecologic procedures, the traditional techniques for processing raw materials, to preserve cultural traditions and biodiversity.

Another contribution of the research conducted in this paper is the comparative analysis of the nutritional value of two menus, one specific to the Slow Food nutritional style and another specific to the fast food style. The Slow Food style was antithetically analyzed with the fast-food one, preferred by representatives of the young generation of consumers despite the nutritional imbalance it generates. Comparative nutritional analysis has shown that the Slow Food type menu can be a balanced food option.

As the need to strengthen the consumer education in Romania concerning the principles promoted by the Slow Food movement is obvious, we believe that the issues presented in the paper could stay at the basis of drawing up a guide meant to educate and inform consumers on Slow Food phenomenon. This guide can be a useful tool in our endeavor to make Romanian youth aware about the need to create a sustainable food system in economic, environmental and socio-cultural point of view as well as their orientation towards natural feeding options.

In addition, we consider the inclusion of some case studies and debates on the issue of the Slow Food movement in the topic of some lectures and seminars for Master's Degree, as appropriate. Acquiring of thorough knowledge in this area by students in masters will contribute to the development of entrepreneurship among them and stimulate the initiation of future business in the Slow Food area, which could have significant beneficial implications both economically and at social or environmental level.

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