



## Factors influencing consumer purchase behaviour when buying superfoods

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**Abstract:** The article provides up-to-date information on consumers' attitudes towards superfoods. The study analyzed consumers' behaviours and researched their awareness when deciding to buy superfoods. We explored mutual correlations between selected purchasing factors and their impact on consumer purchase decisions when buying superfoods in Slovenia. We conducted quantitative research, a survey with an online questionnaire (by snowball principle), which has shown that two most important buying factors related to superfoods are consumers' care for their health and nutritional properties of superfoods, because consumers believe they have a positive effect on health. Our research also indicated that superfoods consumers typically consider imported superfoods to be of better quality than indigenous ones, thus, they are willing to pay a 10-20% higher price for the imported superfoods

**Keywords:** superfood, consumer behaviour, consumer purchase decisions, buying factors

**JEL:** M31

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DOI 10.32015/JIBM.2022.14.1.4

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Mednarodno inovativno poslovanje =  
Journal of Innovative Business and  
Management

ISSN 1855-6175

## Dejavniki nakupnega vedenja potrošnikov pri nakupu superživil

**Povzetek:** Članek podaja aktualne informacije o odnosu potrošnikov do superživil. V raziskavi smo analizirali vedenje potrošnikov in preverili njihovo ozaveščenost pri odločitvi za nakup superživil. Proučevali smo medsebojne korelacije med izbranimi nakupnimi dejavniki in njihovim vplivom na nakupno odločitev potrošnikov pri nakupu superživil v Sloveniji. S pomočjo izvedene kvantitativne raziskave, s spletnim anketnim vprašalnikom (po principu snežene kepe) smo izvedli raziskavo, ki je pokazala, da sta med najbolj pomembnimi nakupnimi dejavniki razloga za nakup superživil potrošnikova skrb za zdravje ter prehranske lastnosti superživil, ker verjamejo, da imajo superživila pozitiven učinek na zdravje. Za potrošnike superživil je značilno tudi to, da uvožena superživila smatrajo bolj kakovostna kot pa avtohtona, za katera so pripravljeni plačati 10-20 % višjo ceno

**Ključne besede:** superživila, vedenje potrošnikov, nakupne odločitve, nakupni dejavniki.

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## 1 Introduction

Nowadays, there are more and more products on the market that meet consumer needs. In recent decades, it has been a great challenge for many manufacturers, retailers and, ultimately, marketers as well as advertisers to become familiar with consumer behaviour and the factors that influence people's purchase decisions. Last but not least, this knowledge is also interesting and useful for us, consumers, because it offers us an insight and understanding of our own consumer thinking and behaviour. The study leads us through consumer desires, motives, perceptions, inclinations and, ultimately, the decision to buy - whether the consumer decided to buy a product or not. In order to understand consumer behaviour properly, it is necessary, in addition to their behaviour on the market, to be aware of the causes of a specific behaviour in a certain situation and the reasons for different behaviour in another situation. Knowing consumer behaviour and factors that influence a purchase decision not only benefits marketers and consumers, but is also beneficial to those in charge of consumer protection.

In this article, we will present consumer awareness and explore consumer behaviour when deciding to buy superfoods. For more than 100 years the term superfood has been almost synonymous with supposed health benefits. With the help of the Internet and social networks, retailers can advertise the benefits of so-called superfoods at viral speed. In recent years, consumer interest in the health benefits of various exotic food products made of exotic fruits, etc., which are in the form of juices, capsules, seeds, powders, etc., is growing rapidly. Some of the most common of these foodstuffs in recent years are: Goji and Acai berries, Chia seeds, Spirulina and many others. According to Lunn (2006) the term superfood is used for several different foodstuffs with different properties. Lunn also explains that the term superfood was originally used for a functional food that has health effects and/or disease-preventing properties above normal nutritional value.

In the context of functional foods, we reviewed a number of studies where researchers have found that if customers perceive health benefits in a product, they are willing to buy such a product (Ares and Gámbaro, 2007; Cerjak and Tomić, 2015; Dean et al., 2012; Grunert et al., 2009; Krutulyte et al., 2011; Miroso and Mangan-Walker, 2018; Schnettler et al., 2015; Tomić et al., 2014; Van Kleef et al., 2005; van Trijp and van der Lans, 2007). A study on the perception of functional foods has shown that advertising has a great impact on younger consumers, who recognize a relatively large proportion of them based on what they see in a television advertisements (Markovina et al., 2011). As there is an increase in the supply of functional foods, according to the authors, everyone has consumed functional food at least once, resulting in almost no non-buyers (Franz and Nowak, 2010).

The research will analyze consumer behavior and check their awareness when deciding to buy superfoods. The aim of this paper is to explore consumer perceptions of superfoods - thoroughly analyse attitudes and perceptions and consumers' willingness to buy superfoods in the future. In particular, we will explore the impact of food marketing labelled as "superfood" on consumer purchasing decisions.

We will first talk about the theoretical background on superfoods and the findings of previous research. Secondly, we will describe the methodology and sample of our research. In the next chapter, we will present the results of the research and key findings, and test the research hypotheses. The conclusion will discuss the contribution of the research to the profession and science, list the limitations of the research and provide suggestions for further research.

### 1.1 Literature review

Food is a fundamental part of people's lives all over the world and our attitude towards it goes far back in history. However, superfood is a relatively new construct. Exposing or declaring food as superfood began in the early twentieth century, when United Fruit Company launched an aggressive advertising campaign to boost its increased banana imports, promoting bananas as superfood in a series of brochures and advertisements.

Despite the tremendous demand for superfoods, a standard definition does not yet exist. The term superfood has no official definition; the concept of superfoods is not well defined and neither are the criteria for classifying superfoods, but the word "superfood" is used as a term to describe foodstuffs that are said to have high nutritional value, beneficial effects upon health and/or health-promoting properties and properties that prevent diseases. Is that really so? Due to the lack of rules and regulations on what a superfood is, the European Union banned the labelling of products as "superfood" in 2006. There is also a legally binding act in this area, in this case Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006, which states

that such marketing terms may be used, but the foodstuffs must have an approved nutrition or health claim (Official Journal of the European Union, 2006). The same is confirmed by various authors (Lunn, 2006; Meyerding et al., 2018; Oude Groeniger et al., 2017; Tacer-Caba, 2019) who say that there is no official definition and that the term “superfood” is used for several different foodstuffs with different properties.

Despite much controversy and debate regarding superfoods, there is surprisingly little research described in scientific literature; and there is much less or, in fact, almost nothing about consumer perceptions or the factors and mechanisms that influence consumer perceptions of superfoods. There is also no evidence that superfoods are healthier than equivalent alternatives, so there are doubts and criticisms regarding the promotion of superfoods (MacGregor et al., 2018). The authors are of the opinion that, given the unconvincingness and lack of evidence, there is merely a perception of the health benefits that superfoods may have, which has triggered their popularity. Based on research, it can be concluded that consumers are increasingly concerned about their healthy diets and they care about what they put into their body (Medina, 2011; Oude Groeniger et al., 2017; Szakály et al., 2012). In addition to perceiving positive health effects, according to the author, superfoods have a positive effect on well-being and energy (Ekesa, 2017). However, some authors believe that high prices of these foodstuffs may have strengthened the exclusivity of the perceived super healthy products (Oude Groeniger et al., 2017).

The authors believe that there are no official guidelines on what superfoods are. The term is used for food products that contain large amounts of specific nutrients (e.g. antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, etc.) that have only been marketed to the general public in recent years. These are mainly products of Western countries (Oude Groeniger et al., 2017), according to the author (Tacer-Caba, 2019), while superfoods are often considered as part of the cultures and traditions of distant populations. Lunn (2006) explains that the sales and consumption of products labelled as “superfoods” is increasing and cites the example of blueberry sales doubling between 2005 and 2007 because of the advertising claims that blueberries are superfoods. Superfoods such as Goji berries coming from China and Tibet, Açai berries, Maca, Chia, and Quinoa from South America are advertised as foodstuffs of pristine nature (Lunn, 2006).

Foodstuffs and nutrition as such are very important to people and play a key role in their lives. Even when we are not eating, we think about and crave food because, according to the authors, people make more than 200 food decisions on a daily basis (Wansink and Sobal, 2007). For decades, we have not seen nutrition as merely something that meets the primary, biological need of satisfying hunger, and for a number of reasons, the biggest of which is health care and the impact that certain foodstuffs have on health. Research has shown that in order for consumers to perceive the health benefits of certain products, manufacturers and marketers use a variety of health and nutrition claims, such as reducing the risk of disease or improving and maintaining health (Lalor et al., 2011). A recent study in Switzerland found that consumers interested in superfoods believe that they have positive health effects (Franco Lucas et al., 2021) again, in another study, the authors revealed that for the sake of their health awareness and willingness to compromise on taste, Belgian consumers adopted Spirulina and included it in their diet (Moons et al., 2018). The author Starrenburg (2015) finds that the so-called “halo effect” occurs in the consumer when evaluating product claims in conjunction with health effects. In addition, the use of superfoods is often an expression of social disparities and is more prevalent among higher socio-economic groups (Oude Groeniger et al., 2017).

## **2 Methods**

### **2.1 Research methodology**

For the purpose of quantitative research, we collected primary data by means of a structured questionnaire. Using the deductive method, we developed a questionnaire based on theoretical definitions by various authors and previous research (Franco Lucas et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2021; Meyerding et al., 2018). We sent out the questionnaire by e-mail. The questionnaire was distributed according to the snowball principle, by e-mail (personal contacts) and via social networks (Facebook, Instagram). Respondents over the age of 18 were included in the survey. The final usable sample consisted of 116 respondents. The data were collected in August 2020.

### **2.2 Survey questionnaire**

With the help of a questionnaire, we studied various factors that affect the attitude towards superfoods and the perception, knowledge and purchase of such products in Slovenia. The questionnaire included questions representing three different strands of the survey, namely the socio-economic profile of

consumers, their purchasing behaviour towards superfoods and their perceptions of different product characteristics. The first set included questions related to the socio-economic information of the respondents, such as gender, age, level of education, region of residence and employment status. The second set dealt with consumer buying behaviour and covered issues related to the frequency of consumer purchases and their perceptions of superfoods. To understand the characteristics of the product (the third part of the research), questions were asked regarding the different characteristics of the product. To analyze their relative importance of product properties, consumer perception of properties was assessed using a Likert scale of “1 = not important at all”, and “5 = extremely important”. An important element of the research is the focus on determining how the naming or labelling of foodstuffs as “superfoods” influences a consumer’s decision to purchase them.

To ensure an understanding of the concept of “superfoods” and because we had only been interested in those who are familiar with and buy superfoods, we inserted two filter questions in the questionnaire right at the beginning of the questionnaire, namely: “Are you familiar with superfoods?” and “How often do you buy superfoods?”. Those who indicated that they were not familiar with superfoods were automatically finished answering the questionnaire, and so were those who indicated that they were familiar with superfoods but did not buy them.

### 2.3 Data analyses

The answers were processed, graphically presented and interpreted with the help of the SPSS statistical programme. The data obtained with the help of the survey questionnaire were analyzed by means of a univariate analysis in order to check the frequency distributions and to detect possible errors that occurred during the research and/or data entry. The results and individual variables were compared and presented. The comparison level was set to  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

The reliability of the measuring tool mainly refers to the accuracy of the results. The reliability shows accuracy, confidence, stability and repeatability of test results. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient was used in the study. The method used to determine the reliability of a test based on internal consistency was the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient methods.

Table 1: Reliability of the measuring tool

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
, 637	17

Source: author’s calculation, 2022

For Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient we used the criterion given by Ferligoj et al. (1995, p. 157). The reliability of the measurement which has  $\alpha$  coefficient  $\geq 0.80$  was marked as exemplary; if the coefficient was at the interval  $0.70 \leq \alpha < 0.80$ , it was very good; at the interval  $0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.70$ , it was moderate; if the alpha coefficient was less than 0.60, it was barely acceptable. The reliability analysis of the research gave Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.64, which means that the reliability of the questionnaire is moderate or acceptable.

### 2.4 Hypotheses and hypothesis development

The purpose of the research is to examine a number of research hypotheses about the profile of Slovenian consumers of superfoods which were formed based on the literature presented in the introductory part. The research hypotheses and their development is discussed in more detail below.

Existing literature suggests that claims stating nutritional and health promoting properties of foodstuffs have a positive effect on the perception of various aspects of the product (Franco Lucas et al., 2021; Mintel Group Ltd., 2016; Plasek et al., 2020; Plasek and Temesi, 2019; Steinhauer et al., 2019). According to one author (Starrenburg, 2015) such statements and claims can affect consumers’ perceptions of what a good price for a product is. When it comes to consumer perception of prices, studies have revealed interesting findings. The results of one study (Mortimer and Weeks, 2011) show that price is less important to men than to women, that men buy fewer food products on average than women, spending more money on each product they buy. In the light of these findings, the price of superfoods is not expected to be equally important to men and women:

*H1: The price of superfoods is not equally important to men and women.*

The distinctions between male and female consumers are the results of a survey conducted among German- and French-speaking residents of Switzerland and related to health awareness. In this case, women have been shown to be more health-conscious as they are more open and interested in buying food with health claims (Delley and Brunner, 2019; Franco Lucas et al., 2021; Menezes et al., 2011). Similar results have been revealed by research indicating that women are more likely to buy functional foods, perceiving them more positively (Karelakis et al., 2020; Vecchio et al., 2016; Vicentini et al., 2016). A diametrically opposite result has been given in a study (Thomé et al., 2020) conducted in Brazil. This study provides significant correlation between gender and the purchase of superfoods, where men predominate. According to the authors, consumers who are aware of the health benefits and understand the nutritional properties of a particular food are looking for such foodstuffs, e.g. functional and superfoods (Franco Lucas et al., 2021). Gender is expected to affect the frequency of superfood purchases:

*H2: Consumer gender has a positive effect on the frequency of superfood purchases.*

The sales and consumption of products labelled as “superfoods” is increasing, as evidenced by research (Mintel Group Ltd., 2016). In the analysis of superfood perception and consumer awareness, we found a common ground with the authors (Oude Groeniger et al., 2017) who have stated that superfoods are mainly imported products, which are often considered part of the cultures and traditions of remote populations. Consumers are of the opinion that imported superfoods are of better quality than indigenous ones. It follows that there is a positive correlation between imported superfoods and their perceived quality:

*H3: There is a positive correlation between imported superfoods and their perceived quality as opposed to indigenous superfoods.*

Various studies have also shown that consumers are willing to pay more for products when the consumer perceives a positive impact on health, etc. The results of a survey conducted among Dutch consumers have shown that consumers are not willing to pay more for bread labelled as (Starrenburg, 2015). Moreover, the authors (Owusu and Anifori, 2013) of a study on consumer willingness to pay a premium price for organic fruit have found that consumer education has a significant impact on willingness to pay more or a premium price for organic fruit. Similar results have been shown by a study of functional foods where highly educated women are among the most frequent consumers; most consumers are willing to pay up to 20% more (Karelakis et al., 2020). Based on these starting points, we assume that a consumer's education and the frequency of purchases are correlated. In addition, we assume that consumers are willing to pay more for superfoods:

*H4: Consumer education and frequency of superfood purchases are correlated.*

*H5: Consumers are willing to pay a 10-20% higher price for superfoods.*

## 2.5 Description of the sample

150 respondents completed the questionnaire. There were 33 respondents who did not know the term "superfood" and 25 respondents who knew superfoods but did not buy them. Our purpose was to investigate the purchasing behavior of superfood consumers so we were interested only in those respondents who knew superfoods and also bought them. Thus, our total sample of analyzed questionnaires consisted of 92 respondents.

Based on the analysis of the data shown in Table 2, it can be seen that 72.8% (67) of the respondents were women and 27.2% (25) were men.

Table 2: Structure of respondents by gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Men	25	27.2	27.2	27.2
	Women	67	72.8	72.8	100.0
	Total	92	100.0	100.0	

Source: author's calculation, 2022

The respondents were classified into several age groups. The largest share of the respondents (64.1%)

who completed the survey questionnaire was in the age group 36-54 (Table 3).

Table 3: Structure of respondents by age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 19-35 years	24	26.1	26.1	26.1
36-54 years	59	64.1	64.1	90.2
55 years and older	9	9.8	9.8	100.0
Total	92	100.0	100.0	

Source: author's calculation, 2022

The respondents were also ranked according to the highest level of their achieved formal education. The largest share of the respondents (33%) who participated in completing the questionnaire had a secondary education (Table 4).

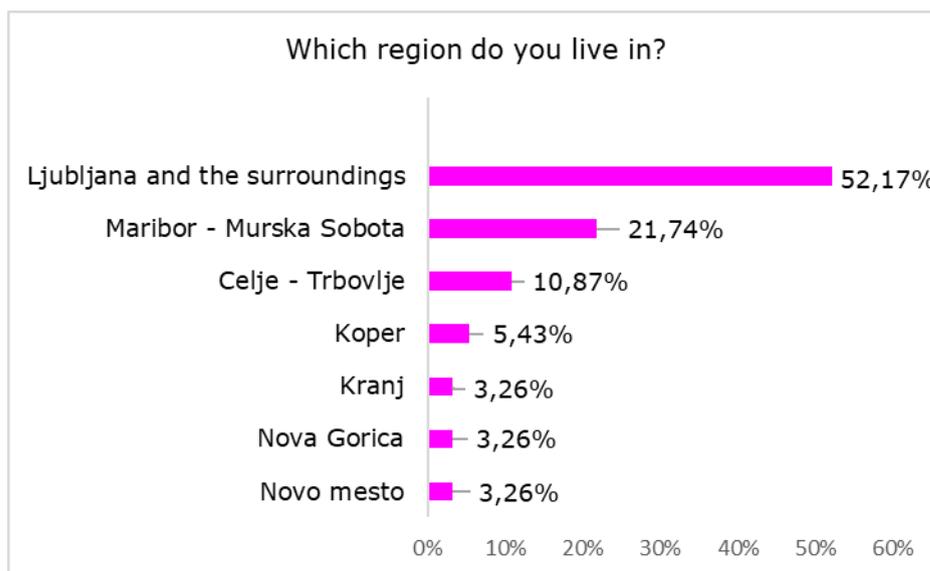
Table 4: Formal education of respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid PhD	4	4.3	4.3	4.3
Master's degree	12	13.0	13.0	17.4
Secondary education	33	35.9	35.9	53.3
Professional higher education	29	31.5	31.5	84.8
Short-term higher education	14	15.2	15.2	100.0
Total	92	100.0	100.0	

Source: author's calculation, 2022

The respondents were also asked about the statistical regions of their residence. The starting point for forming these statistical regions was the directory of the Republic of Slovenia. The majority of the respondents lived in 01 Ljubljana and surroundings statistical region - this accounts for 52.17% (48) (Graph 1).

Graph 1: Region of residence of respondents



Source: author's calculation, 2022

We also checked the status of the respondents (Table 5). The largest share of the respondents were employed, which was 85.9% (n = 79), and the lowest share had the status of a housewife, which was 2.2%

(n = 2).

Table 5: Status of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Unemployed	5	5.4	5.4	5.4
Housewife status	2	2.2	2.2	7.6
Student	3	3.3	3.3	10.9
Retired	3	3.3	3.3	14.1
Employed	79	85.9	85.9	100.0
Total	92	100.0	100.0	

Source: author's calculation, 2022

### 3 Results

Initially, we were interested in how often respondents buy superfoods. Table 6 shows that 38% (n = 35) of the respondents bought superfoods on weekly basis, and 20.7% (n = 19) bought them once a month.

Table 6: Frequency of superfood purchases

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid weekly	35	38.0	38.0	38.0
once a month	19	20.7	20.7	58.7
twice a month	13	14.1	14.1	72.8
less frequently	25	27.2	27.2	100.0
Total	92	100.0	100.0	

Source: author's calculation, 2022

Among the questions / claims related to the properties of superfoods, where multiple answers were possible, consumers most agreed with the statement that the consumption of superfoods had a good effect on health and well-being (mean = 4.36, Std. Dev. = 0.897), they also agreed with the statement that superfoods contain high nutritional values (mean = 4.26, Std. Dev. = 0.863), but least agreed with the statement that imported superfoods are of better quality than domestic superfoods (mean = 1.92, Std. Dev. = 1.061).

Several answers were also possible on the questions or statements related to purchasing factors. The respondents most agreed with the statement that the purchase of superfoods is influenced by health care (mean = 4.38, Std. Dev. = 0.693), a considerable agreement was also with the claim that the reason for the purchase were nutritional values and properties of superfoods (mean = 4.09, Std. Dev. = 0.821), they least agreed with the claim that the purchase was influenced by the brand (mean = 2.92, Std. Dev. = 1,040).

We also checked the willingness to purchase superfoods in the future (Table 6), with 35.9% (n = 33) agreeing, 33.7% (n = 31) fully agreeing, 2.2% (2) fully disagreeing.

Table 7: Future purchases

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid I don't agree at all	2	2.2	2.2	2.2

I disagree	3	3.3	3.3	5.4
I neither agree nor disagree	23	25.0	25.0	30.4
I agree	33	35.9	35.9	66.3
I totally agree	31	33.7	33.7	100.0
Total	92	100.0	100.0	

Source: author's calculation, 2022

### 3.4 The price of the superfoods and the gender of the consumers

As can be seen from Table 9, the p-value is  $0.926 > 0.05$ , which means that H1 hypothesis, "The price of superfoods is not equally important to men and women", is rejected. We conclude that, on average, the price of superfoods is equally important to men and women (male mean = 3.32, female mean = 3.30).

Table 8: Influence of the price of superfoods by gender

	Gender of the respondent	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Price	male	25	3.32	1,180 th most common	, 236
	female	67	3.30	, 905	, 111

Source: author's calculation, 2022

Table 9: Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Price Equal variances assumed	2,345 th most common	, 129	, 093	90	, 926	, 021	, 231	-, 438	, 481
Equal variances not assumed			, 082	35,064 th most common	, 935	, 021	, 261	-, 508	, 551

Source: author's calculation, 2022

### 3.5 The influence of gender on the frequency of superfoods purchases

The result of the chi-square test (Table 9) shows that the variables are not correlated at 5 % significance level (Sig = 0.562). Thus, H3 hypothesis, "consumer gender has a positive effect on the frequency of superfoods purchases", is rejected.

Table 9: Chi -square test results for the Gender and Frequency of purchase variables

	Value	df	Asymp . Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2,048 <sup>a</sup>	3	, 562
Likelihood Ratio	2,041 th most common	3	, 564
N of Valid Cases	92		

a. 1 cells (12.5 %) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.53.

Source: author's calculation, 2022

### 3.6 Consumer awareness

We have checked whether there is a linear correlation between the perceived quality of imported superfoods and higher price of imported superfoods variables, which means a higher quality of imported

superfoods compared to indigenous ones. As can be seen from Table 12, there is a positive correlation between the variables. The strength of the correlation is medium / moderate (Pearson Correlation = 0.550). H3 hypothesis, "there is a positive correlation between imported superfoods and their perceived quality as opposed to indigenous superfoods," is confirmed.

Table 10: Correlation of imported and indigenous superfoods variables

		Higher prices of imported superfoods correspond to a higher quality compared to indigenous superfoods	Imported superfoods are of better quality than indigenous ones
Higher prices of imported superfoods correspond to a higher quality compared to indigenous superfoods	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1  92	, 550 **  92
Imported superfoods are of better quality than indigenous ones	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	, 550 **  92	1  92

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: author's calculation, 2022

### 3.7 Correlation between education and the frequency of superfood purchases

Based on the chi-square test (Table 10), H4 hypothesis, "consumer education and frequency of superfood purchases are correlated", is rejected, as the variables are not correlated at the 5% significance level (Sig = 0.541).

Table 8: Chi-square test results for the Education and Frequency of purchases variables

	Value	df	Asymp . Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10,857 <sup>a</sup>	12	, 541
Likelihood Ratio	11,900 th most common	12	, 454
N of Valid Cases	92		

a. 13 cells (65.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is, 57.

Source: author's calculation, 2022

### 3.8 Willingness to pay more for superfoods

We asked consumers if they were willing to pay more for superfoods and if so, how much more. 42.4% (n = 39) of the respondents answered that they were willing to pay more for superfoods, from 10-20%, 22.8% (n = 21) of the respondents answered that they did not know if they would pay a higher price for superfoods, and 15.2% (n = 14) stated they did not want to pay a higher price for superfoods. H5 hypothesis, "consumers are willing to pay a 10-20% higher price for superfoods", is confirmed.

Table 11: Consumers' willingness to pay more for superfoods

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid I do not want to pay a higher price for superfoods.	14	15.2	15.2	15.2
I do not know if I would pay a higher (premium) price for superfoods.	21	22.8	22.8	38.0
I would pay a 10-20% higher price for superfoods.	39	42.4	42.4	80.4
I would pay a 21-30% higher price for superfoods.	11	12.0	12.0	92.4
I would pay a 31-50% higher price for superfoods.	6	6.5	6.5	98.9
I would pay a 51-100% higher price for superfoods.	1	1.1	1.1	100.0

Total	92	100.0	100.0
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Source: author's calculation, 2022

## 4 Discussion

Understanding consumer motivation in choosing a diet is of considerable help to producers as well as marketers, and can also be an overall contribution to a positive impact on consumers' eating habits. Sikka (2017) believes that the promotion of superfoods varies according to the consumer's gender. In magazines, blogs and websites that are aimed primarily at women (or women represent the largest number of visitors), the emphasis is mainly on the promotion and reporting of the vast majority of superfood brands. The focus on the beauty norms of the West, weight loss, and connecting celebrities is especially evident with regard to the manner superfoods are framed. Increasingly, superfoods are also advertised in health magazines aimed at men, but in a much different way than in media aimed at women. Promotions of superfoods for the male population refer to or focus on all foodstuffs, not branded products. The emphasis is mainly on the marketing of the superfoods in the areas of health, energy and sports endurance. With our research, we came to the conclusion that one of the leading factors in the purchase of superfoods is the perceived health benefit. Consumers buy superfoods because they recognize the health benefits of superfoods. The same results were shown by studies (Ares and Gámbaro, 2007; Cerjak and Tomić, 2015; Dean et al., 2012; Franco Lucas et al., 2021; Grunert et al., 2009; Krutulyte et al., 2011; Mirosa and Mangan-Walker, 2018; Schnettler et al., 2015; Siegrist et al., 2015; Tomić et al., 2014; van Trijp and van der Lans, 2007) in which they also came to the conclusion that health motivation is the driving force in the purchase of functional as well as superfoods.

## 5 Conclusion

Food and nutrition are very important to people and play a key role in our lives. Even when we are not eating, we think about and crave food. According to Wansink and Sobal (2007) people make more than 200 food decisions a day. For decades, we have not seen nutrition as merely something that meets the primary, biological need of satisfying hunger, and for a number of reasons. The biggest of these reasons is health care and the impact that certain foodstuffs have on health. According to various authors, eating, in addition to its biological function, is also a major social and cultural activity (Cornil and Chandon, 2016; Rozin, 2005). Based on the research, we have come to the conclusion that among the purchasing factors, the most important reasons for buying superfoods in Slovenia are health care and the importance of nutritional values and properties of superfoods, because they have a positive effect on health. As such, these factors should be strong elements or component parts in any communication or marketing aimed at strengthening or increasing the frequency of purchases.

A limitation of our research lies in its geographical dimension. The research of consumer purchasing behavior for the study and measurement of correlations among the selected factors was performed on a sample of respondents from Slovenia who have their own purchasing habits and demographic characteristics. This sample is representative only in terms of gender, age and region, but not other demographic variables.

This article offers the latest insight into consumer purchase behavior when buying superfoods and consumer attitudes towards superfoods in Slovenia. The results of this research could be used to plan further marketing activities. According to the results of the research, which are important key factors for educating consumers about healthy eating (the emphasis is mainly on indigenous foodstuffs in Slovenia, which are more affordable and nutritionally equivalent to the imported foodstuffs), suitable marketing activities, especially promotional activities at the point of sale, and clear labelling of such products.

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