What meat attributes do consumers in Afghanistan value the most? – An analysis of choice attributes

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Abstract

Global meat production continues to expand to meet rising demand, spurred mainly by population and income growth in developing countries. With the increased production, the demand for meat quality and safety is also rising due to growing consumer concerns and awareness. To make quality inferences, consumers evaluate certain meat attributes, which in turn, influence purchase decisions. Moreover, understanding preferences for meat attributes is crucial for producers, traders, and government to enhance marketing strategies, trade and public policies. This study examines the relative importance of thirteen mutton meat attributes in a choice experiment study using the Best-Worst Scaling (BWS) method. The data was obtained through a laboratory-based survey from 230 male (60 %) and female (40 %), young and educated consumers in Kabul, Afghanistan during Jan – Mar 2021. The data was analysed based on the maxDiff method of BWS, utilizing both counting and modelling approaches. Results revealed that food safety certification, freshness, Halal-label, taste, cleanliness, and origin are consecutively the most important attributes. Furthermore, food safety as the most important attribute was nearly 12 times as important as color which was the least important attribute, suggesting that food safety is not just a concern for the developed country consumers, but rather a global health concern. The study also incorporated individual specific characteristics; socio-economy, risk-taking attitudes, and place of purchase into the model to study the effect of these characteristics on the mean parameters. Results revealed that preferences for meat attributes are heterogenous among different consumer groups. Food safety certification, Halal-label, brand, freshness, and animal-breed are of significantly higher importance for consumers with higher level of education and income. Food safety and freshness are also of significantly higher importance for young aged consumers. Furthermore, risk loving individuals place significantly higher value for freshness, while significantly lower value for food safety. Additionally, butchery shoppers place significantly higher importance on animal welfare, food safety, and quality appearance. The study may help domestic meat producers enhance their marketing strategies, and government in planning trade and public policies in developing countries given the growing trend for modernisation of meat industry in these countries.

Keywords: Best-Worst Scaling, choice experiment, food safety, freshness, Halal-label, meat attributes, origin, preferences

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