

## THE INFLUENCE OF ASSORTMENTS AND QUALITY OF BEES HONEY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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**Abstract:** *Honey is a food high in nutritional value, which at the same time has medicinal properties constituting an excellent natural antibiotic. Honey is very effective in correcting nutritional deficiencies, its nutritional value being given by its composition: easily assimilable carbohydrates (glucose and fructose), mineral salts, ferments and vitamins. The paper makes a study on the impact of the assortment and the quality of bee honey on the consumption behavior of a group of subjects, using the survey method, applying the questionnaire as an investigative tool.*

**Key words:** *bees honey quality, survey method, consumption behavior*

### INTRODUCTION

Honey is a special product, this name can not be given to another product, its production exclusively involves bees. Honey has a special sweet taste, a high energy and nutritional value. [9, 11].

According to the European Honey Standards developed by the FAO/WHO Committee in the Codex Alimentarius, "honey is the sweet substance that bees produce from nectar of flowers or from living parts of plants that the bees collect, convert and combines with certain specific substances, and stores them in honeycombs". [13, 14]

Physically, honey is a semifluid, viscous or crystallized, with specific flavor, color and characteristic sweet taste. From a chemical point of view honey is a food with a very high content of carbohydrates and an important source of other substances: minerals, vitamins, enzymes, organic acids, etc. [5, 11, 12]

Honey is the food with the most therapeutic properties. Can be used as food energizer in cases of fatigue, neurasthenia, heart disease, liver disease, defending the body against infections. [5, 6]

Since ancient times honey has been an important ingredient of medicine because of its curative properties. Honey is more than a food, being a valuable source of antioxidants: caffeic acid, coumaric acid, phenolic acids and their derivatives, carotenoid compounds, vitamin C [1, 3, 8]. The use of natural remedies for treating infections is a very old method and honey is one of the oldest traditional medicines considered to be important in the treatment of many human diseases. Honey also has antiseptic and antibacterial properties [2, 7, 15].

The major ingredients of honey are water and carbohydrates, which account for about 96% of honey. Typically, honey harvested, processed and preserved in good condition has a moisture content of between 17-18%. [4, 11]

The sensory characteristics specific to bee honey are: foam-free appearance, no visible foreign bodies, color ranging from light yellow, continuing with yellow-gold, yellow-orange, dark yellow, ruby, yellow-brown, dark brown. The smell and taste of honey differs according to the type of honey, with honey with a slight or more pronounced flavor, a sweet taste, homogeneous, fluid or viscous, crystallized consistency. Honey produced by bees that are fed with sugar syrup does not have honey-specific flavor due to the lack of volatile substances from nectar. [4, 10, 11].

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

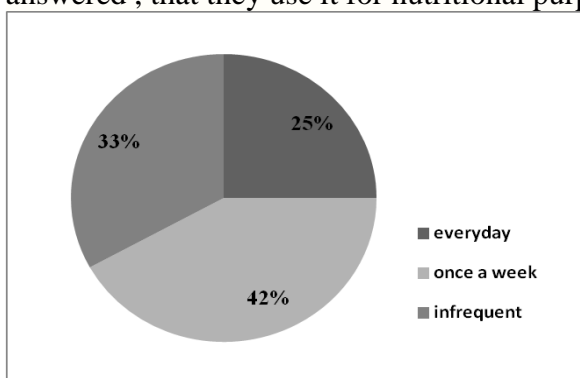
The present paper draws a study on honey consumption and the importance that Romanian consumers attach to its quality. For this purpose, a questionnaire was developed and administered and distributed to a sample of 100 consumers, adolescents and adults.

Since it is a natural sweetener, but also has therapeutic properties by comparing the results of the survey, the importance of honey for a healthy and complete diet is highlighted.

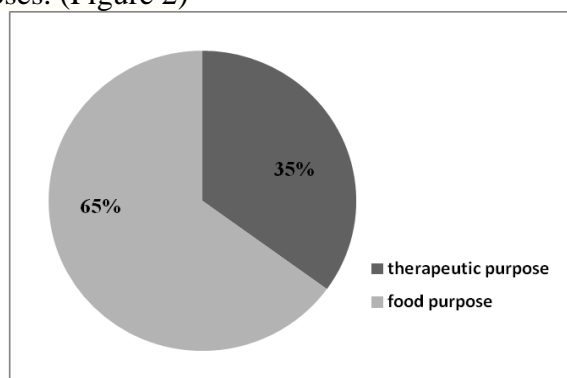
## RESEARCH RESULTS

To the question "How often do you consume bees honey?" 25% of the subjects said they consume daily, 42% once a week, and 33% say they used infrequently. (Figure 1)

To the question "For what purpose do you use bees honey?" 35% of them responded that they consume bees honey due to its therapeutic purposes and 65% of them answered , that they use it for nutritional purposes. (Figure 2)



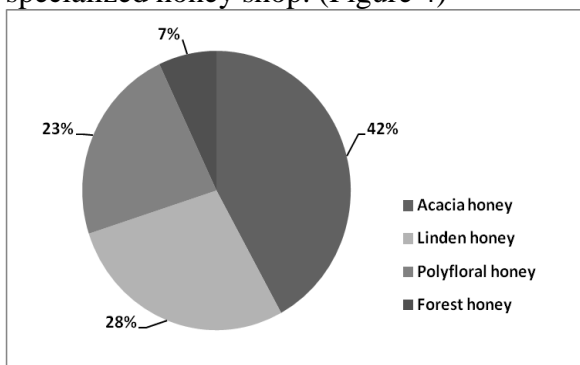
**Figure 1. Frequency of consumption of honey**



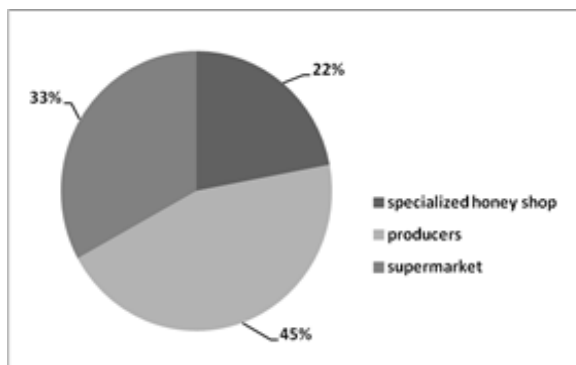
**Figure 2. Purpose of consumption of honey**

To the question, "What honey are you preferring?" the subjects had multiple variants to which they responded, and 42% said they preferred acacia honey, 28% linden honey, 23% honey poliflora and only 7% of subjects preferred honey from the forest. (Figure 3)

To the question " From where do you aquire the bees honey?" 45% responded that they prefer to buy it directly from the producer, 33% of the supermarket and 22% of the specialized honey shop. (Figure 4)



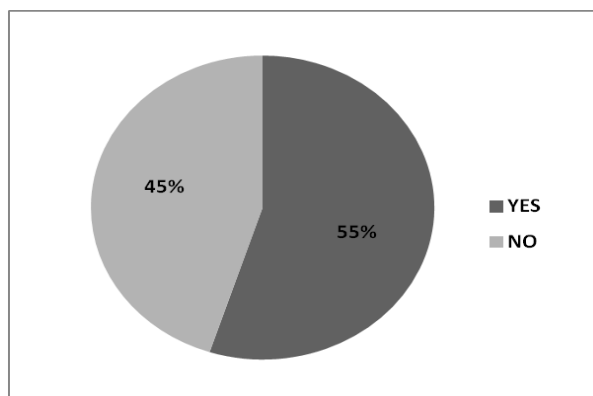
**Figure 3. Honey varieties consumed by the subjects**



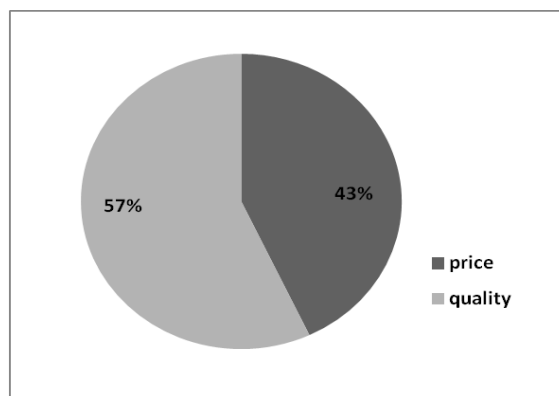
**Figure 4. Place of purchase of honey**

To the question "Do you prefer honey as a substitute for sugar in food?" 55% of the subjects said Yes and 45% answered No. (Figure 5)

To the question "When buying honey, the decision to buy is related to the price or the quality of the product?" for 57% of the respondents, quality is most important and for 43% the price is important. (Figure 6)



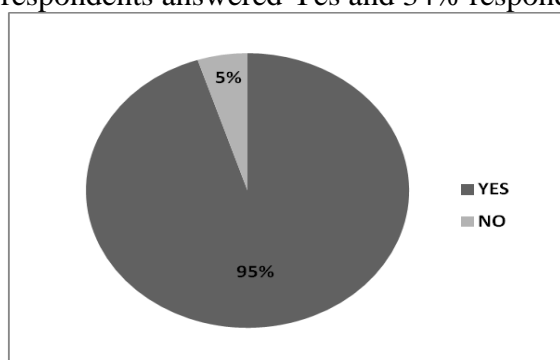
**Figure 5. Honey in the dishes**



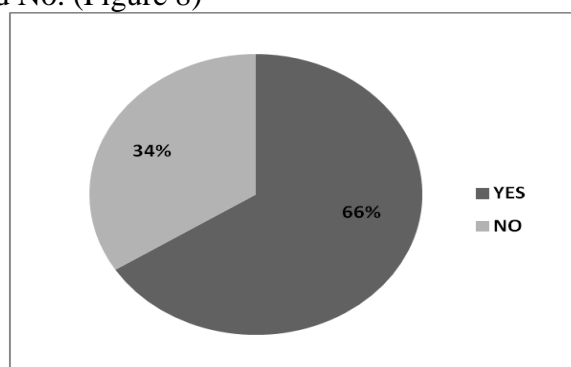
**Figure 6. The decision to buy honey**

To the question "Is it important that the honey you consume is natural?" 95% answered Yes, and 5% responded No. (Figure 7)

To the question "Do you know that there are fake honey on the market?" 66% of respondents answered Yes and 34% responded No. (Figure 8)



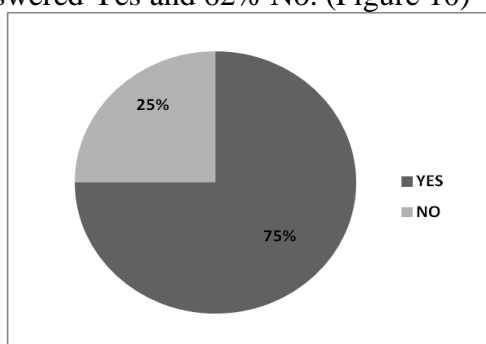
**Figure 7. Importance of consumption of natural honey**



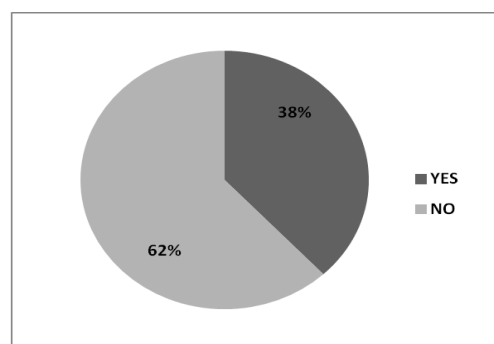
**Figure 8. Informing subjects about fake honey**

To the question "When do you buy honey, do you use the information on the packaging?" 75% said Yes, and 25% No. (Figure 9)

To the question "Do you buy a honey that is crystallized?" 38% of the subjects answered Yes and 62% No. (Figure 10)



**Figure 9. Customer interest in the information on the packaging**



**Figure 10. Consumption frequency of crystallized honey**

### CONCLUSIONS

Analysing the data obtained through the questionnaire, you can detach the following conclusions:

- 25% of the respondents consume honey daily, 42% consume honey once a week, and the remaining 33% consume infrequent.

- Most of the respondents use honey for food, ie 65%, and the remaining 35% use it for therapeutic purposes.
- Acacia honey is preferred by 42% of the respondents, 28% prefer linden honey, 23% honey poliflora, while forest honey is among the preferences of only 7% of the respondents.
- Since there are many beekeepers around the area where the survey was conducted, 45% of respondents buy honey directly from the producer, while 33% prefer to shop in supermarkets and 22% of specialized honey shop.
- 55% of the respondents prefer honey as a sweetener, 57% of the respondents are interested in the quality of the product, while 43% choose the product according to its price.
- For 95% of respondents it is very important that honey consumed is natural.
- Only 66% of respondents are aware that there are fakes on the market supply and 34% do not know of their existence.
- 75% of respondents give importance to reading the label on the packaging of the product, and when talking about honey crystallized honey, only 38% would buy this product.

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