

## FEATURES OF WAFERS MARKET IN ROMANIA

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**Abstract:** *On an extremely competitive market, where companies have to face challenges all the time, one needs to find new ways of anticipating and meeting through innovation both in product and communication ever-changing consumers' demands. Influenced by the consumers' purchase power and by the frequent changes of preferences, sweets market keeps it ascending trend of development. Wafers are part of the market dynamics with increases year after year. With a long-lasting tradition in Romanian consumption, wafers belong to the sweets category preferred by the Romanians and a point of interest for sweets producers. Innovation plays an important role in market development since consumers are continuously in search for something new.*

**Key words:** *market, demand, offer, consumption, strategy*

### INTRODUCTION

Wafer image has evolved with value increases so that nowadays cheap-product label is less and less associated with this type of sweets. The merits belong to those that have made product innovation and sustained promotion efforts – a must in the present context. In this situation, competitiveness, communication and innovation are attributes that change substantially the place of the segment on the total sweets market, a situation of which the players are aware and that they appreciate as an opportunity for development at individual level also.

### MATERIAL AND METHOD

This study presents wafers market, consumption evolution and the evolution of the factors influencing purchase decision. Results can be used in making forecasts on offer and demand.

### RESEARCH RESULTS

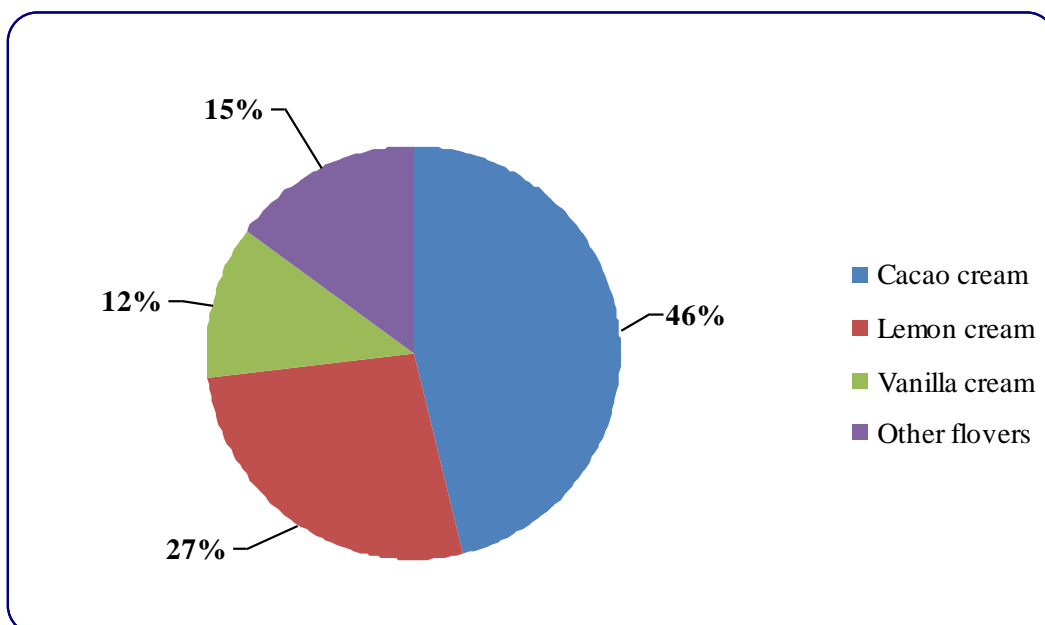
Wafers market has been estimated at over 46,000,000 EUR; [12] it is a dynamic, very competitive market with an ascending trend these last years. Wafer offer is rich and characterised by a diversity of weights, which has strongly impacted consumer behaviour. [14, 15]

On the current market, both domestic and foreign suppliers bring to the shelves a wide variety of products from the perspective of shape, cream, flavour, pack and price.

Wafer sales in Romania reached over 17,000 t and 306,000,000 RON in 2017. [12, 15]

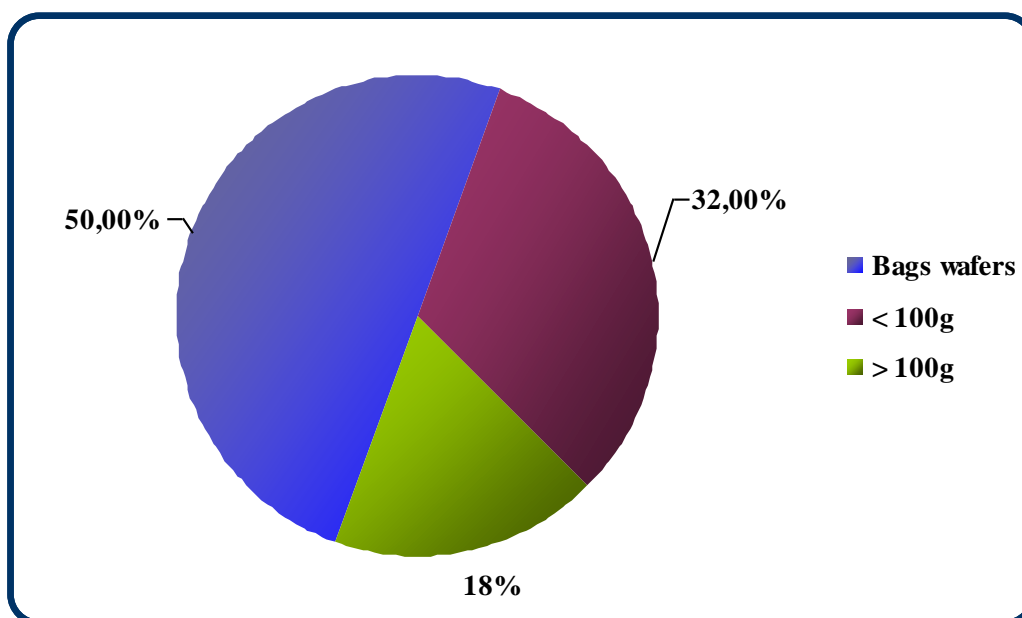
Wafer sale in Romania in 2017 are shown in the graphs in Figures 1, 2 and 3 below.

As far as cream type is concerned, the most searched for are cacao (46.0%) followed by lemon (15.2%) (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Segmentation depending on the type of cream**

The market of packed wafers in Romania has been estimated at over 10,000 t, with 50% of the wafers being packed in amounts larger than 100 g (Figure 2).

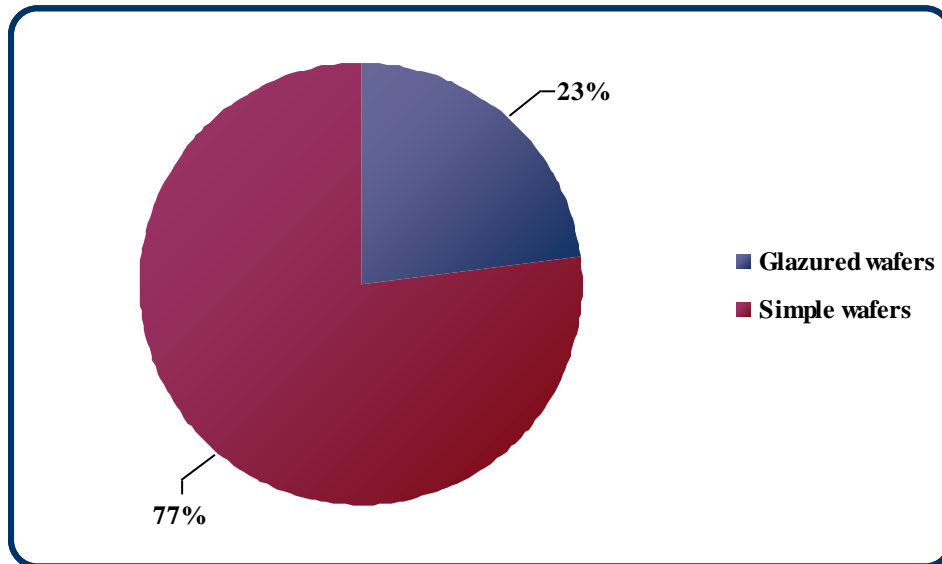


**Figure 2. Segmentation depending on the amount packed**

At present, the volume and value of sales in wafers reflect consumers' preferences for packed products; however, wafer wholesale increases considerably during fasts, with differences in value from one geographic region to another.

The share of wholesale wafers versus packed wafers (bags, packages, impulse packages) is about 30%, slightly lower in the urban area and reaching 35-36% in the rural area.

Over three fourths of the wafer market belong to simple wafers (no icing) (Figure 3).



**Figure 3. Segmentation depending on the type of product**

As for consumer behaviour, studies show that the image of unsophisticated, accessible, and always available sweet with a balanced taste and easy to share with the friends and/or family is associated with simple wafers, while iced wafers are associated rather with a treat time thus competing with chocolate and cakes.

The first six suppliers (including retailers with their own brands – a total of 19%) share about 90% of the market; this includes wholesale from consecrated manufacturers (a total of 32%). The most important players on the wafers market are Alka, Nestlé, Tecsă Business, European Food and Ferrero. [12]

Wafers manufacturers in 2017 are shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.**

**Wafers manufacturers in 2017**

Manufacturers	Cumulated share of the volume	Cumulated share of the value
Alka	90,2%	88,1%
Nestle		
Own brands		
Tecsă Business		
European Food		
Ferrero		
Others	9,8%	11,9%

Source: Vektor marktforschung

Innovation plays an important role in market development because consumers are always in search for something new. [2, 3, 5, 7] Consumers choose wafers as an easier alternative for sweets, so that this category of sweets increases with the increase of the trend “lightness”.

The development of the local market has been influenced by several determining factors among which the low wafers manufacturer price and the development of the sale system. [5]. Since the manufacture process is more accessible, shorter and involving small investments, a large number of domestic players have appeared and then disappeared influencing mainly the wholesale market. However, the development rate is ascending: the annual increase is about 10%, particularly within the segment of packed products.

Romanian consumers have always seen wafers as the cheapest of the sweets, which points to price as a main criterion in product choice. While the market evolved, purchase decision changed and consumers became receptive to other factors as well.

Wafers belong to the “impulse” category of products, and brand, price, pack attractiveness notoriety are among the factors influencing purchase decision. [1, 2, 10]

Other factors are product flavour, offer price, merchandising, presentation, and promotional materials. For wholesale products, price and commercial aspect are still the most important criteria in purchase decision.

### CONCLUSIONS

Wafer market in Romania is increasing in both value and volume due to weight and flavour diversity, and to the marketing practiced by the great wafers manufacturers.

Competitiveness through good price, very good quality, careful manufacturer – consumer communication, and innovation are attributes that substantially change the place of wafers on the sweets market, a situation of which all manufacturers are aware and that they appreciate as a development opportunity at individual level.

Consumers’ tastes are varied and their expectations are increasingly greater. The wafer category is a relatively conservative one: consumers look particularly for a product they are accustomed with and for the flavour they like; it is an unsophisticated category of something sweet and simple, easy to reach – and this is why consumers expect the product to be tasty yet very price accessible.

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