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CONSUMER ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS JUJUBE (*ZIZIPHUS JUJUBA* MILL.): A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN ROMANIA AND ITALY

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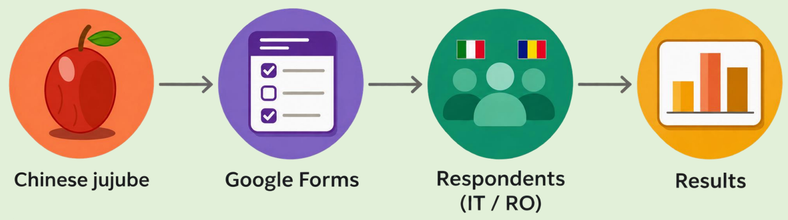
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Abstract: *Jujube, native to China, has been present in Europe for about 2,000 years is traditionally consumed in Italy but remains largely unknown in Romania. A questionnaire survey compared consumer awareness, preferences, and purchasing intentions in both countries, offering insights for targeted promotion and market development of jujube in Europe.*

- **Introduction:** Jujube, cultivated in China for over 4,000 years, is an ancient, highly nutritious and resilient fruit, yet still a niche product in Europe. Deeply rooted in Italian traditions but almost unknown in Romania, it offers a unique case for studying how cultural familiarity shapes consumer acceptance.

- **Aims:** The aim of this study was to compare consumer awareness, preferences, and purchasing intentions toward jujube in Romania and Italy, in order to evaluate its market potential and support targeted promotion strategies.

- **Material and method:** An online questionnaire was distributed to 50 respondents from Romania and from Italy.



- **Results and discussions**

The comparative results reveal both differences and similarities in consumer attitudes towards jujube.

1. Consumer awareness and previous experience

Awareness of jujube was considerably higher among Romanian respondents (88%) than among Italian respondents (60). Previous consumption was reported by 82% of Romanian participants, compared with 40% of Italian participants (Figure 1).

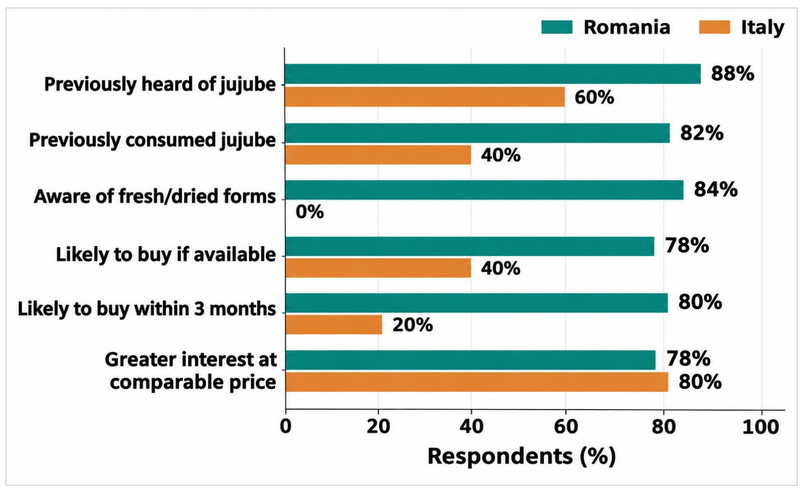


Figure 1. Consumer awareness and purchasing intentions

2. Factors influencing purchasing decisions

Taste and freshness were the most influential purchasing criteria in both countries. Romanian respondents assigned higher importance to taste (4.36/5), freshness (4.22/5), and nutritional value (3.96/5), whereas Italian respondents rated taste and freshness equally (3.80/5), followed by nutritional value (3.40/5).

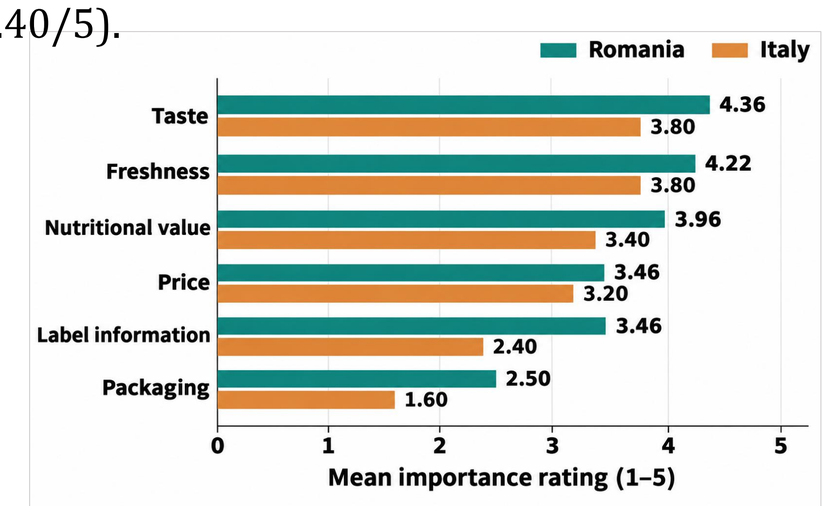


Figure 2. Factors influencing purchasing decisions

3. Market accessibility and purchasing barriers

Limited retail availability represented the most frequently reported purchasing barrier in Romania (**56%**) and was also identified by **40%** of Italian respondents. Insufficient knowledge of the fruit was reported by 22% of Romanian respondents and 20% of Italian respondents.

4. Factors encouraging jujube purchases

Improved availability in regular retail stores was the leading purchasing incentive in both countries, selected by 50% of Romanian respondents and 80% of Italian respondents. Free product tastings were also considered important, particularly among Italian participants (60%), compared with 44% of Romanian respondents. Affordable prices were selected by 38% and 40% of respondents, respectively.

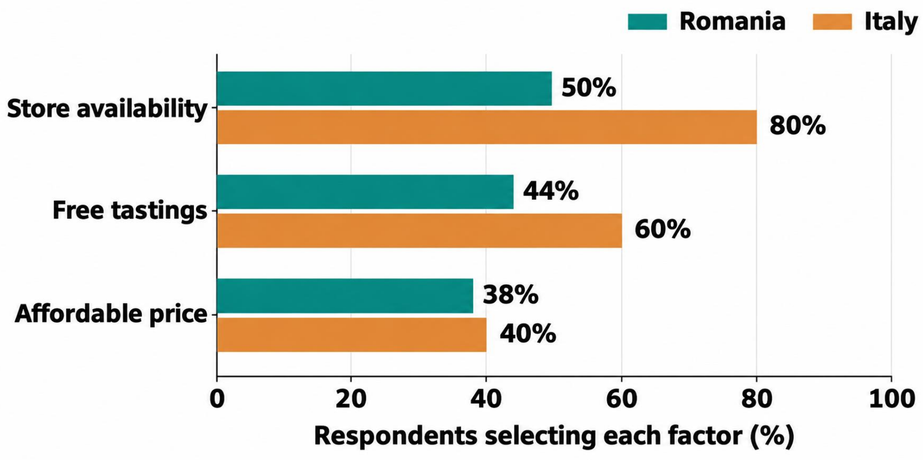


Figure 3. Factors encouraging jujube purchases

5. Purchase intentions and commercial potential

Romanian respondents demonstrated stronger purchasing intentions than Italians. A high likelihood of purchasing jujube if available was reported by 78% of Romanian respondents, compared with 40% of Italian respondents.

- Conclusions

Commercial potential

- **Higher consumer familiarity in Romania;**
- **Shared purchasing priorities;**
- **Common market barriers;**
- **Promising promotional strategies;**
- **Different purchasing intentions.**

