



Nutritional rationales as the key determinant in classifying ice cream

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Various sources of statistical information do not enable access to industry consumption and turnover data that can be truly deemed to provide a useful economic picture for operators. The reliability of turnover and consumption figures is crucial for assorted business considerations and decisions, but very few sources seem to fall under such benchmark.

Actually, in the world of ice cream, product diversification does not even allow for its clear classification: in particular, as for the distinction between “artisanal” and “industrial,” to date there are no selective rules apt to compile differentiated statistics between above types.

Along with the difficulty of starkly determining the market shares for different types of ice cream, there is the large proliferation of ingredient and additive distribution centres which supply without any distinction of the entire production sector comprising both “industrial” derivatives and the ones “more or less artisanal.” This is because consumption quotas overlap and quantifying consumption through billing data becomes indistinguishable and inaccessible to those who are searching for definite information.

Upon an initial analysis, it can be said that precisely **the differentiation between artisanal and industrial has no factual reason to subsist**, firstly because criteria for making a distinction – at present non-regulated – do not offer any concrete categorization whatsoever, and secondly because, since the 1950s, no selective criterion, either based on nutritional, technological or qualitative factors in terms of process definition, or on analytical evaluations, has ever been proposed by anyone, not even by official bodies.

While it is true that ice cream originated in China, it is also a fact that only the latter could be considered artisanal ice cream, given the high level of manual manufacturing processes and the presumable absence of additives in the course of production; but after the list of additives permitted by standards was ratified, it has effectively been impossible to distinguish between



“artisanal” and “industrial” designation, specifically due to the indiscriminate use of additives in ice creams of the two so-called categories. Nor, moreover, would it be logical to attribute features of “genuineness” preferably to the category of those commonly referred to as “artisanal” ice creams, even if they alone were actually entitled to the additive-free characteristic.

Therefore, the lack of a formalized demarcation line as per objective criteria does not authorize anyone to place either of the two fictitious categories on different scales of value. Whereas ice cream from a highly automated process enjoys a privileged image from a microbiological point of view, although produced with the support of additives, it is equally true that in the field of ice creams manufactured in smaller environments and in smaller batches, there is a wide diversification of “quality” features (both hygienic and technological), which do not allow the use of a generalized seal of “goodness” attributable according to the absence/presence of additives.

Given the not negligible trend that has recently arisen of producing ice creams which fulfil not only hedonistic functions, but also “food” functions in a notably nutritional sense, one should however avoid classifying certain formulations as “artisanal” without having available validated and documentable information concerning the tangible benefits of craft production. In addition, mistaking the characteristic of “more genuine” (?) with the one of “artisanal” draws us far away from the sphere of so-called serious considerations.

For the reasons plainly expounded above, Brazzale S.p.A. considers its ice cream production beyond the idea of artisanal or industrial, simply positioning it in the group of “food preparations” with a nutritional purpose.

In such productions the essential ingredients are all those which clearly contribute to re-evaluating and enhancing the nutritional image of milk and dairy products, and are therefore made without additives, albeit legally permitted, **also regardless of any artisanal or industrial type classification.**

Only by **analogy of manufacturing process**, the series of production notes that follow and which provide a very approximate notion of the ice cream market, turns out to be justified: the data serve to merely give an indication about the market development potential of the food preparations “ice-cream-nutri-like” that Brazzale offers.



Even by analogy of manufacturing process with ice cream, “ice-cream-nutri-like” productions can serve a much more concrete function, that is the nutritional one. In essence, these productions do not aim to be confused with or emulate the product typically classified as artisanal, not least because it is yet unknown what “artisanal ice cream” effectively signifies today: indeed, it is groundless to identify as artisanal solely what is produced without the use of adjuvants chemically defined, due to the fact that most “artisanal” ice creams have the same additives and adjuvants employed by the largest ice cream manufacturers.

Looking at some of the available market data, though attaching very relative reliability to them, and taking into account just the figures which can with reservations be referred to the production of “ice cream parlours and points of sale,” it is worth noting the following:

The number of ice cream parlours and points of sale in Europe is estimated at 65,000 (approx. 300,000 employees).

The number of ice cream parlours and points of sale in Italy is estimated at 36,000 (approx. 75,000 employees).

This estimate dates back to the year 2018.

According to a 2021 European Food Agency estimate, the value of the European artisanal ice cream market stands at 8.7 billion euro. According to the same Agency and for the same year, the value of the Italian artisanal ice cream market amounts to around 2.3 billion euro. In reporting these figures, it is assumed that artisanal ice cream can mean the product marketed by bars and generic points of sale, thus excluding truly industrial manufacturing.

The numerical considerations presented above allow us in conclusion to state that there is a market for reconversion of a good deal of production to the rank of nutritionally useful production: the most accredited trend at the moment is de facto to increasingly trigger consumers interest in the consumption of ice cream as a “meal replacement” or as a part of it. However, the Brazzale Group and its BSC (Brazzale Science Center) believe that the drive toward the consumption of ice cream as a “meal replacement” is only possible by creating serious nutritional rationales: for these reasons, Brazzale exclusively makes formulations developed on functional health benefits aimed at re-evaluating and enhancing the image and nutritional value of milk and dairy products.



The fundamental goal is to return to the use of dairy raw materials through their enhancement. Believing that butter is an indispensable raw material in healthy nutrition, Brazzale promotes butter as a primary ingredient in the production of confectionery specialties, as well as of ice cream which can be denominated “**ice-cream-nutri-like.**”

A must-have component for the “home” production of Fior di latte Brazzale (milk ice cream) is the use of Burro Superiore Fratelli Brazzale (premium butter): this ingredient enables the production of “ice cream food preparation” with the use of premeasured mix-formula containing the milk and glucose ingredients, basically also milk fats, without the use of emulsifiers, thickeners, or stabilizers. The emulsifying activity of Burro Superiore Fratelli Brazzale is the result of the special production technology which allows the structuring of milk fats by respecting the minor natural fractions (protein and carbohydrate) that form an essential and integral part of butter. The special stabilizing power on the air/fatty matter emulsion of milk is due to the presence of such natural fractions.

As a further reminder, given the above, it is possible to factually reckon the processing of dairy raw materials into ice cream as unified, distinguishing only between “ice cream” and “ice-cream-nutri-like,” and leaving behind the meaningless and not codifiable distinction between “artisanal” and “industrial.”

This is the opportunity to dispel the myth of what is “artisanal,” owing to the real impossibility of making a classification in one or the other field just on the basis of “production size” and “presence/absence” of additives.

The unique differentiation that can be concretely proposed in the light of realistic considerations is the one related to the “function”: **unlike ice cream, ice-cream-nutri-like is a food preparation** with specific or general nutritional activity, subject to Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP). It must not contain structuring additives, flavourings substances, or artificial colorants and must be the result of a defined set of ingredients that should have a significant nutritional or health purpose.

Let us therefore dismiss the conviction of the preferable image (or value) of self-designated “artisanal” ice cream as it cannot be substantially differentiated from so-called industrial ice cream, which has undeniable characteristics of genuineness, to a greater or lesser extent conditioned of course by the compliance with production technologies appropriate to



microbiological quality and the use of raw materials responding to Good Manufacturing Practice.

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