

## Market study on eating habits of meat products from Slobozia county

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### Abstract

The present study was carried out at the level of the inhabitants of Slobozia city, Romania, regarding the consumption of meat products from a city supermarket. The purpose of the study was to find out what are the preferences of consumers in the area, in terms of rhythmicity of the purchase, producers agreed by consumers, the quantity and quality of meat products purchased. The study was conducted through an online platform and consisted of the socio-statistical survey based on a standardized questionnaire on a strictly defined exhaustive community. The sample of respondents consisted of 203 people from Slobozia city who answered the questionnaire submitted during April 2020. The centralized data were analysed to establish the preferences of the inhabitants of the area regarding the consumption of meat dishes purchased from this chain of stores.

**Keywords:** sociological analysis, questionnaire, respondent, consumer preferences, label

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### 1. Introduction

Modern food is characterized by the consumption of large amounts of protein, meat and meat products, meat products being preferred. Meat products are the most consumed, having a high nutritional value. They can be consumed as such, without additional preparation and can be stored for a longer time in refrigerated form.

The category of meat products includes products such as specialties (muscles, pastrami), salamis, sausages, smoked products [1]. Today there is a growing interest among consumers to buy high-quality products, organic, with good flavor, interest supported especially by the family, and especially by the education of children to ensure a healthy diet [3]. Product labeling and, more recently, nutrition labeling is defined as ensuring a minimum of information on the nutrient content of the food [2]. That because it is desired to sell food safe for consumption, on the one hand, and have an appropriate nutritional value, to meet the body's energy needs [6].

### 2. Materials and Method

A questionnaire consisting of 15 questions on the consumption of meat products from one of the Slobozia city supermarkets and a question with passport data was completed. Organization of the team of operators and their training was the next stage of work. The operation of sending the questionnaire was done online, with the help of the online platform for making questionnaires applicable online (<https://www.survio.com/l-ro-1-hp-creati-cestionar>). The socio-statistical survey based on the questionnaire included a sample of respondents consisting of 203 people from the area of Slobozia, who answered the questionnaire submitted by students during April 2020.

In the end, the data was centralized, collected using the online questionnaire platform <https://www.survio.com/> and the centralized data were analyzed in order to establish the preferences of the inhabitants regarding the consumption of meat products purchased from this chain of stores. It was estimated that the sample of online respondents

consisting of 203 people who answered the questionnaire was sufficient for a qualitative case study.

### 3. Results and discussions

The centralized data were analyzed in order to establish the preferences of the inhabitants of the area regarding the consumption of meat dishes purchased from this chain of stores. The sample of online respondents was analyzed according to passport data: social environment, age, employment, income, level of education, health, gender.

It was found that the vast majority of those who took part in the study were women, approximate 84%, which highlights that this segment of buyers is, most of the time, more interested and more analytical in terms of what they buy, especially for food. Mostly the respondents live in the urban area, respectively 75.27%. Most of those in this sample have secondary education (31%) and higher education (59%) (Fig.1.), and approximate 70% are employed.

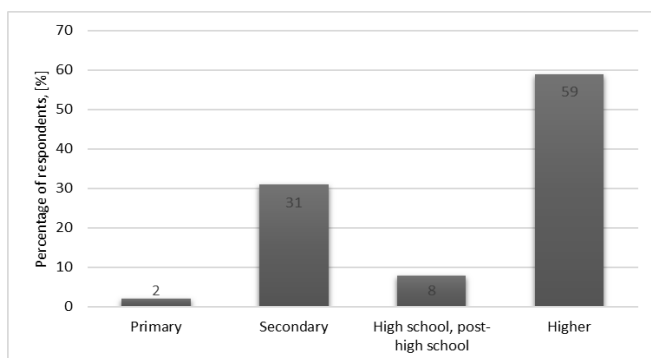


Figure 1. Education of the respondents (%)

Mostly the age of the interviewees was between 18 and 40 years (Table 1), with a general average of 32.8 years. The health of the respondents was assessed as good by 62% and satisfactory by 30% of them. The average monthly income/family member is located in most cases in the range of 2000 - 4000 lei (Fig. 2), an aspect that will greatly influence the choice and appreciation of meat assortments.

Table 1. Age of online respondents (%)

Age (Years)	Percentage, %
18-30	58
30-40	21
40-50	10
50-60	7
60-70	4
Average	32.8

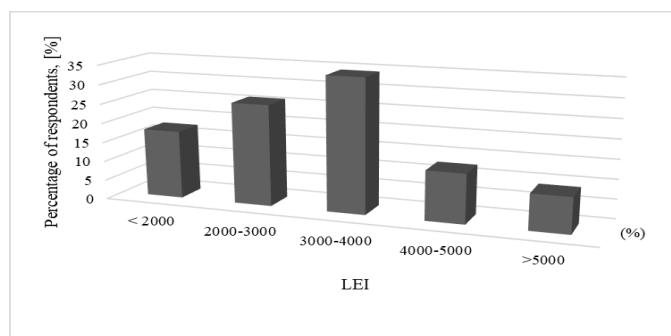


Figure 2. Income family member (lei)

Approximative 67% of respondents declared they consume meat products every week, about 12% consume daily and about 37% every 2 - 3 days (Fig. 3).

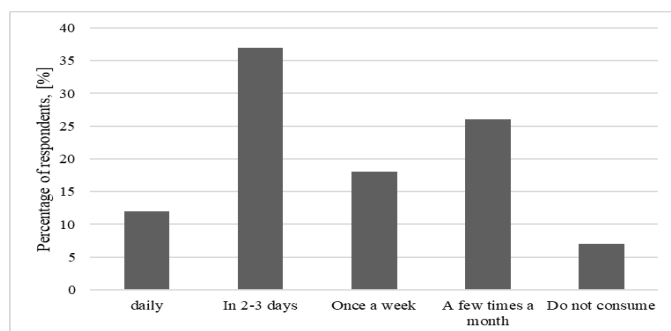


Figure 3. Consumption of meat products

The rhythmicity of the purchase showed that 43 of the respondents make their supply weekly and 25% every two weeks, the others less often and 7% do not buy.

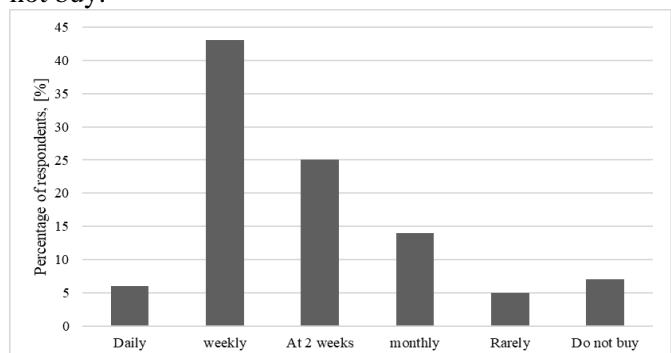


Figure 4. Buying of meat products (%)

The consumption quantity was, for most respondents, between 0.250 - 0.500 Kg (42%), for 23% of them was less than 0.250 Kg, for all their family [4, 8]. The most preferred assortments are the specialties (pressed ham, fillet muscle, gypsy muscle) with 41%.

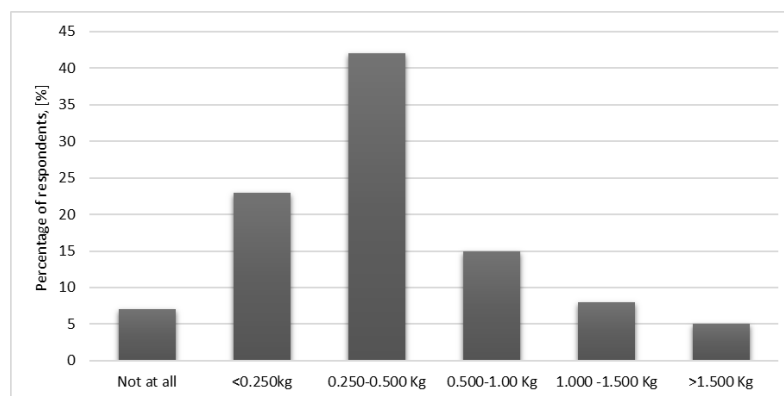


Figure 5. Week family consumption in quantity (%)

Table 2. Meat products assortments preferred by the respondents (%)

Product	Percentage (%)
Smoking: Smoked bacon, ribs, smoked ham, pressed ham	26
Specialties: Pressed ham, fillet moss, gypsy moss, mountain moss	41
Salami, sausages, frankfurters, mortadella, others	22
Canned meat	4
Do not consume meat	7

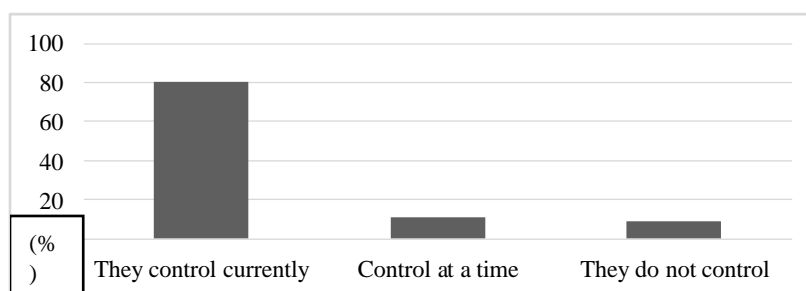


Figure 6. Control of the shelf life from the label of products

Smoked products like bacon and smoked ribs were preferred by 26% of respondents (Table 2). Salami, sausages, and fresh ones (frankfurters, mortadella), others were consumed by approx. 22%, while about 7% do not consume meat products. Romanian producers are preferred with a percentage of 62%, although the rest of the consumers do not have clear preferences. Over 50% of respondents prefer products in natural membranes and about 36% prefer vacuum packed. For the first time, the basic criteria that the interviewees have in mind when they choose to buy a meat product are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Basic criteria of selection for meat products (%)

Criteria	Percentage (%)
Color	29
Smell	12
Shelf life	39
Just the price	2
Just the ingredients	18

It is observed that the most important criterion is the validity term, with 39%, followed by color with 29% and ingredients with 22%. Smelling and price are not so important in this scale of values. According to the answers received, consumers appreciate the role of the label. They control the content in meat of the products and other information. A large part of them consults the label regarding the salt and fat content, namely 69%. A large part of the respondents, approx. 73% of them, declare they do not want to buy products that have an ingredient that they have not heard of and who could affect their health. The validity term of the products is an important element [5].

It is remarkable that over 80% of consumers control the label regularly, only 11% at a time, the rest not being interested in this quality element [7]. This means that in our country consumers have understood the importance of this element of food quality and apply it regularly.

At another question, the respondents declared that the influence of price on buying is quite important for them, the analysis of the questionnaires reveals that most consumers consider that price is a very important criterion when they want to shop (Table 4). For 27% of them the price is decisive and for 39% is important. For 34% of the respondents, these criteria have small importance, which means the consumers of meat products have sufficient incomes to buy.

**Table 4.** Influence of price on the consumption (%)

	Percentage (%)
Decisive	27
Medium	39
Small importance	34

#### 4. Conclusions

Meat products are consumed with high frequency in all regions of the country, with relatively small differences between different groups of populations. This type of products is easy to buy, in the mind of the consumers, it exists the perception that these products are easy to store and use, without any other preparation. The most frequent buyers of meat products are young and active people, aged between 25 and 44 years, who have sufficient income. With the growth of the income of the population and the easier access to information, the public has become more selective, thus increasing the requirements for products of superior quality and smoking. According to the study, we can say that meat products purchased from supermarket are appreciated by the buyers, who know better and better how to check the label and the quality.

**Compliance with Ethics Requirements.** Authors declare that they respect the journal's ethics requirements. Authors declare that they have no conflict of interest and all procedures involving human or animal subjects (if exist) respect the specific regulation and standards.

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