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Research on the habits, attitudes and motivations underlying craft food choice by consumers in Ukraine

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Abstract. There is a global demand for local craft food. Craft food production is promoted in most countries because it contributes to solving a number of socio-economic and environmental problems. The number of craft food producers in Ukraine is also growing, but the craft food market is still understudied. Therefore, the purpose of the research was to study through a survey the habits, attitudes and motivations that determine the choice of craft food products by consumers in Ukraine. The survey was conducted in two regional centers of Ukraine – Lutsk and Mykolaiv – among consumers of different age, gender, income levels and education levels. About 84.3% of the respondents are consumers of craft food. Respondents indicated that they buy craft food periodically and occasionally. Most consumers believe that craft food is tastier and of better quality than mass-produced food. Respondents noted that craft foods are more expensive than mass-produced foods, but 29% of respondents are willing to pay 10% extra for them. The most popular craft food products among Ukrainian consumers were identified, including baked goods, confectionery, meat and dairy products. Ukrainians buy craft food mainly directly from producers, in chain and specialised stores. Respondents indicated that they do not have enough information about craft food producers and their products. They would like to see more craft food advertising on online resources. Thus, the results of the survey made it possible to determine the habits and attitudes of Ukrainian consumers regarding craft food, as well as to investigate the motives leading to its purchase. The obtained results will be useful for producers of craft foods, as they will allow them to create a profile of the consumer of their products and to make the information about their products more effective

Keywords: local foods; craft producers; consumer preferences; craft food market; consumer survey

Introduction

In Ukraine, the small family business of production of craft foods, made according to special recipes and authentic or unique technologies, has become very popular. In particular, the production of craft foods such as bread, bakery products, confectionery, jams, beer, wine and other traditional spirits, meat products, dairy products, cheese is widespread. The development of such business is facilitated by a good raw material base and significant demand for such products. The same opinion is shared by the authors O. Komlichenko *et al*. (2023).

Traditionally, short food supply chains have been a popular form of food distribution channels in Ukraine.

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Those face-to-face channels consist of farm shops farmers' markets, roadside sales, and also craft stores. The popularity of short supply chains is growing as consumers demand fresh, nutritious and healthy foods from local farmers or craft food producers. Foods made with organic, plant-based ingredients from local farmers are especially valuable to consumers. Consumers are increasingly interested in knowing more about where their food comes from, who and how it is produced, and how it gets to their plate (Percival Carter & Welcomer, 2021). The authors S. Lingham *et al*. (2022) pointed that craft food often has higher production costs, so it needs to stand out from mass-produced food, then the purchaser will be willing to pay more for craft food. As noted by C.T. Cirne *et al.* (2019), consumers are willing to pay more for craft foods, because they believe these foods taste better, are healthier, and help support small, family-owned businesses. J. Cadby (2021) found that to achieve a high level of quality, craft food producers often use a direct trade model to source higher quality ingredients directly from the origin. To promote their products in the marketplace, craft producers should use contemporary marketing techniques to reach customers who are making decisions based on information from websites and social media (Quinn & Seaman, 2019). It is important to brand a craft food product with an emphasis on the name, symbols, origin (place of production, geographical name), special characteristics in order to distinguish it from similar competing products, which will make it easier to promote the product and increase its recognition among consumers (Danko & Kolodiazhna, 2023).

The term "craft" is becoming increasingly popular, and food with this label can be found in supermarkets and restaurants. In this way, as S. Rivaroli *et al*. (2020) pointed out, food producers are trying to ride the wave of the "craft" trend to attract more consumers. However, consumers need to be careful because products labeled as "hand-crafted" are often nothing more than "crafty marketing", a deceptive marketing practice used by industrial food and beverage companies to introduce "craft-like" brands. The problem is that there is no clear definition, especially in existing low and regulations, of what a craft product is. Consumers of craft food need to be sure that the products they buy are made according to local culinary traditions and that they have an authentic taste that distinguishes them from mass-produced foods. Craft food producers send various signals to consumers that their product is not mass-produced. In order to solve this problem, the legislation of some EU countries (Italy, Spain, Belgium) includes an explanation of which food or beverage can be considered as craft. In particular, the criteria for defining a food product or beverage as craft are the ingredients used, the production process and the scale of production. Ukraine is also taking the first steps in this direction, in particular, the law on craft producers of strong alcohol has been adopted. According to the Law of Ukraine No. 3193-IX (2023), a small producer of distillates is a producer who manufactures distillates on equipment with the capacity of no more than 20,000 decaliters per year (in terms of 100% alcohol) and alcoholic beverages using distillates of its own production no more than 10,000 decaliters per year. Other legislative changes have been developed that will contribute to the development of craft food and beverage production in Ukraine (Kalinichenko, 2022). In order to further increase the number of craft producers, the government should support craft food producers by taking initiatives to promote the consumption of such foods, encourage the production of craft food at the place of origin of raw materials and stimulate small-scale farmers.

Craft food production is associated with a number of socio-economic benefits, including the valorisation of local resources, agricultural diversification, local economic development, especially in rural areas, skilled employment. The production of craft foods also has a positive effect on the development of gastronomic tourism in Ukraine.

The scientists E. Percival Carter & C. Welcomer (2021) noted that, small-scale farmers and craft food producers are creative in their approach to product recipes and design and positioning decisions. They can quickly generate a new idea, develop a new product, produce a prototype, and test the new product in the local market. This is because small producers know well both the production process and the preferences of local consumers. However, small craft producers may face financial problems caused by incorrect costing and pricing of products, poor record keeping, and owners who consider profit as their income instead of paying themselves a salary and investing profits in the business.

Consumers' food choices are the result of a complex set of interrelated subjective and environmental factors that include many conscious aspects and subconscious motivations. Therefore, it is important to analyse the target group in order to create a consumer profile and to identify the attributes of the food that are important to consumers and the factors that guide consumers when choosing food products. Some of the universal product attributes include safety, readiness, affordability, environmental friendliness, aesthetics, usefulness, uniqueness, and sensory appeal. Factors that motivate consumers to purchase foods include the product's effect on health and mood, cooking time, sensory properties, naturalness of ingredients, price, ethical and religious factors. For consumers of craft foods, food waste management is also a very important factor (De Boni *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, studies to determine the motivation of Ukrainian consumers to buy craft food products and to determine their perception of this group of food products are important.

The purpose of this research was to study the attitudes of consumers towards craft food and to determine their vision of the development of the craft food market in Ukraine.

Materials and Methods

Research conducted through target-group surveys in different segments of the craft market makes it possible to determine what motivates consumers to prefer craft products, what criteria they use to choose them, and what the trends are in this market.

The survey was conducted in May, 2024 in two cities of Ukraine: Lutsk (Volyn region), Mykolaiv (Mykolaiv region). The consumer survey was conducted by interviewers at the entrance of supermarkets. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire designed in Google Forms. Consumers were able to download Google Forms by scanning the QR code provided by interviewers. Respondents were instructed by interviewers on how to complete the survey and how long it could take.

In the conditions of martial law in Ukraine, as a result of internal and external migration of the population and the presence of the males in the armed forces, it is difficult to accurately determine the size of the population of cities, the sex-age structure of the population and other characteristics of the population. Therefore, based on data from open sources of information, the following assumptions were made when calculating the sample size: the population of Lutsk is 217000 people (214,000 people in 2021 (Timonina, 2021)); the population of Mykolaiv is 430,000 people (471,000 people in 2021 (Timonina, 2021)). The size of the sample of consumers in the cities was calculated according to the method with a confidence probability of P = 0.95 and an error of ±7%, resulting in a sample size of 200 people for each city (Marmoza, 2009). Hence, in the survey, 400 consumers were interviewed, including 200 people in each city. Respondent demographics are shown in Table 1.

Consumers were selected using a quota sampling method, with age and gender as quota control variables (Table 1). Due to the impossibility of determining the sex-age structure of the population under martial law, the following assumptions were made:

1) in the structure of the population of both cities, the percentage of females and males is 60% and 40%, respectively (in 2021, the population of Lutsk consisted of 44.8% male and 55.2% female; in 2021, the population of Mykolaiv consisted of 45.4% male and 54.6% female (Timonina, 2021));

2) in both cities, all age groups are equally represented (20% each).

The sample was also included consumers with varying levels of income and education. It was taken into account that in Ukraine more than 70% of the population has higher education (Strategy of development..., 2020). Accordingly, the percentage of consumers surveyed with higher education was 74-75% (Table 1).

Table 1. *Demographic characteristics of respondents included in the study, expressed as a percentage (N = 400)*

Location	Age (years)	%	Gender	%	Income level	%	Education level	%
Lutsk	18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 > 56	20 20 20 20 20	Male Female	40 60	High Medium Low	11 59 30	Higher Professional Secondary	75 7 18
Mykolaiv	18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 > 56	20 20 20 20 20	Male Female	40 60	High Medium Low	16 44 40	Higher Professional Secondary	74 6 20
Total (Lutsk and Mykolaiv)	18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 > 56	20 20 20 20 20	Male Female	40 60	High Medium Low	13 51 36	Higher Professional Secondary	75 6 19

Source: *developed by the authors*

The percentage of respondents with professional and secondary education, as well as the distribution of respondents by income level, was determined on the basis of the results of the survey. The questionnaire was designed to understand consumer habits, attitudes and motivations toward craft foods. The questionnaire contained 19 questions of four types (Table 2): open-ended, dichotomic Yes/No, check-one-that-applies (COTA), and check-all-that-apply (CATA). The questionnaire was structured in four parts as follows: characteristics of craft food (questions Q1-Q3); consumer habits, attitudes and motivations toward craft foods (Q4-Q11); obtaining information about craft food (Q12-Q14); demographic characteristics of respondents (Q15-Q19). Income level was defined as follows: low level – monthly income is equal to or less than two minimum monthly salaries in Ukraine (16000 UAH); medium level – monthly income of UAH 16000-32000; high level – monthly income over UAH 32000. The word cloud was created using Word It Out. A word cloud is a visual representation of the words that appear more frequently in the respondents' answers.

Table 2. *Survey questionnaire*

The first part	The third part
Q1. Do you know what craft food is?[b] Q2. What words can you use to describe craft food?[a] (2-4 words) Q3. What is the difference between a craft food and a mass-produced food?[a] (2-4 words/phrases that characterise the difference)	Q12. Do you recommend craft food to relatives/friends/colleagues?[b] Q13. Do you have enough information about craft food and producers in Ukraine?[b] Q14. How would you like to receive information about craft food?[d]
The second part	**The fourth part**
Q4. Do you buy craft food?[b] Q5. How often do you consume craft food?[c] Q6. What craft food do you buy?[d] Q7. Where do you buy craft food?[d] Q8. Why do you like/dislike craft food?[a] (2-4 words/phrases) Q9. What is the most important factor(s) you consider when choosing craft food?[d] Q10. Are you willing to pay more for craft food?[c] Q11. Is the assortment of craft food sufficient in your region?[b]	Q15. How old are you?[c] Q16. What is your gender?[c] Q17. What is your level of education?[c] Q18. How would you rate your current monthly income?[c] Q19. What is your city of residence in Ukraine?[c]

Note: *[a]Open-ended question; [b]Yes/No question; [c]COTA; [d]CATA*
Source: *developed by the authors*

All data from the completed consumer surveys have been stratified by location, gender, age range, income and education levels. Absolute frequencies and percentages were used to describe the quantitative survey data (Garcia-Alvarez *et al.*, 2014). Survey results were displayed using Excel 2016 software. The study was conducted in compliance with the norms of The Declaration of Helsinki (2013).

Results and Discussion

Craft products in Ukraine are experiencing a significant rise in popularity, reflecting a growing consumer demand for high-quality, artisanal goods. These products, often produced by small-scale, local manufacturers, are made using traditional methods and natural ingredients, which contribute to their unique flavours and authenticity. From handcrafted cheeses and sausages to locally produced honey and baked goods, craft items offer a taste of regional heritage and craftsmanship. Many consumers are drawn to these products not only for their quality but also for the story behind their production and the connection to local culture. As a result, craft products are becoming an essential part of Ukraine's evolving food and drink scene, highlighting the rich diversity of its culinary traditions.

Table 3 shows the results of a survey on consumer awareness of craft food. All respondents in both cities, males and females, aged 18 to 55, know what craft food is. Males and females over the age of 56 are less familiar with the term "craft food". Moreover, in both cities the percentage of females over the age of 56 who know about craft food is higher than that of males. This may be due to the fact that females are more familiar with the range of food products on the market, as they tend to buy them for the family. It should also be noted that the percentage of Mykolaiv residents over the age of 56 who are familiar with craft food products is slightly lower than in Lutsk. Thus, 97.5% of male residents of Lutsk and 96.2% of male residents of Mykolaiv know what craft food is. The percentage of females who are unfamiliar with craft food is very low in both cities.

Table 3. *Percentage of respondents who know what craft food is (the results of answering the question Q1)*

Age (years)	Percentage (%) of respondents who know what craft food is			
	Male		Female	
	Lutsk	Mykolaiv	Lutsk	Mykolaiv
18-25	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
26-35	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
36-45	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
46-55	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
> 56	87.5	81.3	91.7	87.5
All ages	97.5	96.2	98.3	97.5

Source: *developed by the authors*

The survey aimed to identify the words used by each group of consumers to describe craft food products (question Q2). The total number of non-repeated words was 47.5 words were discarded because they didn't fit the topic of the study. Two responses from respondents did not contain any words. Three responses included the names of craft products (cheese, bread, beer, ice cream, spirits), which were also disregarded. Females were more likely than males to use a variety of words to describe craft foods. Table 4 illustrates the words that respondents used to describe craft food products, and only words that appeared in the responses of more than 5% of respondents are included. The most commonly used words to describe craft food were tasty, fresh, small-batch, natural, domestic and handcrafted. Females most often described craft food with the words tasty, fresh, and small-batch. Males most often described craft food with the words tasty, fresh, and natural.

Table 4. *Words used by consumers to describe craft foods (the results of answering the question Q2)*

Words used by consumers to describe craft foods	Percentage (%) of respondents who used the following words			Words used by consumers to describe craft foods	Percentage (%) of respondents who used the following words		
	Male	Female	M & F		Male	Female	M & F
Authorial	8.1	2.9	5.0	Innovative	10.6	4.6	7.0
Costly	13.8	17.5	16.0	Local	38.8	20.8	28.0
Delicate	9.4	6.3	7.5	Natural	45.0	38.3	41.0
Domestic	35.0	38.3	37.0	Original	15.0	3.3	8.0
Elite	6.3	5.0	5.5	Small-batch	40.6	42.1	41.5
Family	28.8	32.5	31.0	Special	18.1	7.1	11.5
Fresh	53.8	42.5	47.0	Tasty	61.3	57.5	59.0
Handcrafted	48.8	27.5	36.0	Traditional	40.0	35.8	37.5
Healthy	12.5	6.7	9.0	Unique	10.6	7.9	9.0
High-quality	40.0	45.0	43.0	Useful	13.1	21.3	18.0

Note: *M & F – all respondents*
Source: *developed by the authors*

Consumers used a variety of words and phrases to describe the difference between craft foods and mass-produced foods (question Q3). The words that appeared in the responses of more than 5% of the respondents are shown in Table 5. In addition, 2 responses contained words unrelated to the topic of the survey, and 3 responses contained only symbols. According to the respondents, the main characteristics that distinguish craft foods from mass-produced foods are better taste and higher quality of craft foods. However, according to consumers of both genders, craft food is more expensive than mass-produced food. Craft food also differs from mass-produced food because it is made in small batches, is more natural, and is made according to original recipes, as noted by 42.5%, 39.0%, and 18.5% of respondents, respectively. The percentage of male respondents who used the phrase "craft food has an original recipe" was significantly lower than the percentage of female respondents. Perhaps this is because women in Ukraine are more familiar with cooking methods and recipes. In response to the Q4 question, about 84.3% of all respondents indicated that they are purchasers of craft foods. In addition, 89.5% of respondents in Lutsk and 79.0% of respondents in Mykolaiv buy craft foods. Among those who buy craft foods in Lutsk, about 63.1% are females and 36.9% are males. And among those who buy craft foods in Mykolaiv, about 62.0% are females and 38.0% are males. Thus, the ratio of male to female buyers of craft foods in the two cities is similar. Table 6 shows the distribution of craft food buyers among respondents by age category.

Table 5. *Words and phrases used by consumers to describe the difference between a craft food and mass-produced foods (the results of answering the question Q3)*

Words used by consumers*	Percentage (%) of respondents who used the following words			Words used by consumers*	Percentage (%) of respondents who used the following words		
	Male	**Female**	**M & F**		**Male**	**Female**	**M & F**
Craft food tastes better	85.0	81.7	83.0	Craft food is small-batch product	40.0	44.2	42.5
Craft food has high quality	75.0	80.0	78.0	Craft food is more natural	38.8	39.2	39.0
Craft food has higher price	59.4	64.6	62.5	Craft food has an original recipe	5.6	27.1	18.5

Note: *M & F – all respondents; *words and phrases used by consumers to describe the difference between a craft food and mass-produced foods*
Source: *developed by the authors*

Table 6. *Percentage craft food buyers (the results of answering the question Q4)*

Age (years)	Percentage (%) of craft food buyers			
	Male		Female	
	Lutsk	Mykolaiv	Lutsk	Mykolaiv
18-25	50.0	56.3	83.3	54.2
26-35	93.8	68.8	100.0	87.5
36-45	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
46-55	100.0	100.0	100.0	95.8
> 56	68.8	50.0	87.5	70.8

Source: *developed by the authors*

Regardless of the education level, the vast majority of respondents purchase craft food products (Fig. 1a). The percentage of medium- and low-income buyers who purchase craft foods is also high (Fig. 1b).

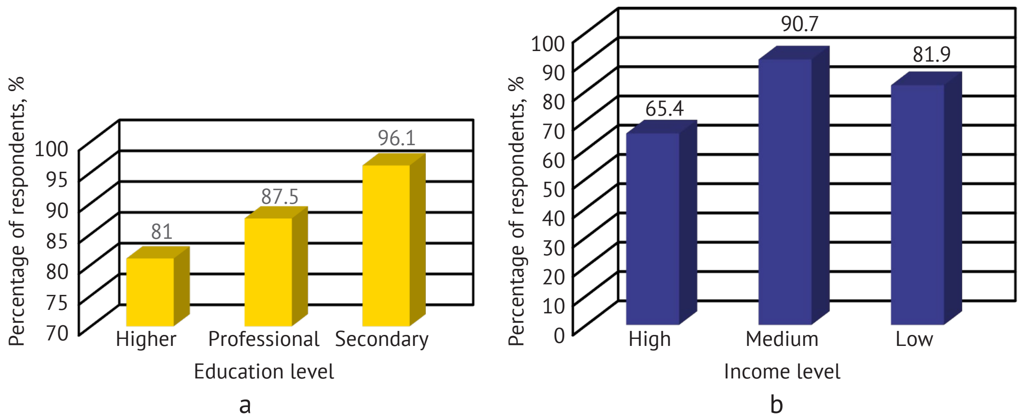

Figure 1. *Percentage of craft food buyers with different levels of education (a) and income (b)*
Source: *developed by the authors*

The number of respondents who periodically consume craft foods is 41.0% (Table 7), and among them females and males – 45.8% and 34.0%, respectively. In Lutsk, more residents periodically consume craft food, than in Mykolaiv. In both cities, the percentage of respondents who regularly consume craft foods is low. The largest percentage of respondents indicated that they occasionally consume craft foods. Never consumed craft foods about 7.0% of respondents, and most of them are males and residents of Mykolaiv.

Table 7. *Frequency of craft food consumption (the results of answering the question Q5)*

Frequency of craft food consumption	Percentage (%) of respondents				
	in two cities combined			in each city separately	
	M & F	Male	Female	M & F*	M & F**
Regularly	8.0	6.0	9.2	8.0	8.0
Periodically	41.0	34.0	45.8	46.0	36.0
Occasionally	44.0	50.0	40.0	43.0	45.0
Never	7.0	10.0	5.0	3.0	11.0

Note: *M & F – all respondents; *all respondents from Lutsk; **all respondents from Mykolaiv*
Source: *developed by the authors*

Among the variety of craft foods on the Ukrainian market, consumers buy mainly baked goods (56.0%), confectionery (52.0%), meat products (48.0%) and dairy products (42.0%), semi-finished products (24.0%) and alcohol (21.0%). Meat products (56.3%), baked goods (48.1%), confectionery (46.3%) and alcohol (38.1%) are most popular among males. Females prefer craft baked goods (61.3%), confectionery (55.8%), dairy products (48.8%) and meat products (42.5%) (Fig. 2).

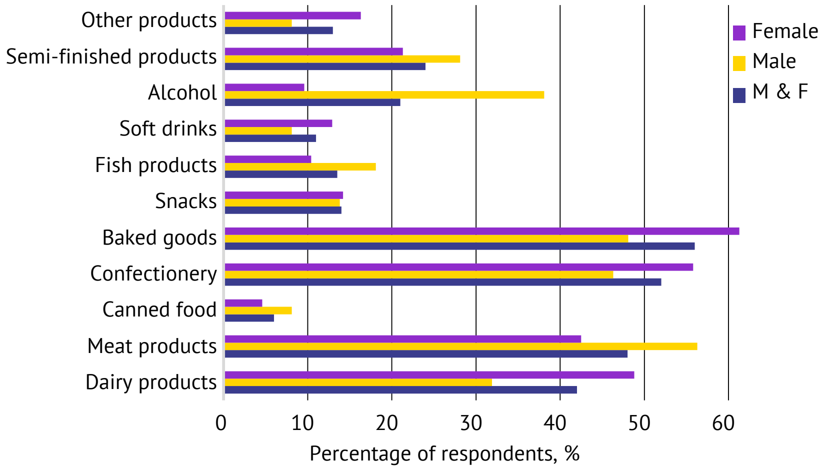

Figure 2. *Craft food preferred by consumers (the results of answering the question Q6)*
Note: *M & F – all respondents*
Source: *developed by the authors*

Consumers aged 18-25 mostly buy craft foods directly from producers (31.3%), in specialised stores (31.3%), and in chain stores (33.8%) (Fig. 3). Respondents aged 26-35 prefer to purchase craft foods directly from producers (40.0%) and in chain stores (40.0%), and a significant percentage of consumers in this age group purchase foods online (31.3%). For consumers aged 36-45, the main place to buy craft foods is from the craft producer (46.3%). This age group is also characterised by buying food online (37.5%), in specialised and chain stores (32.5% each), and at the market (31.3%). Respondents in the 46-55 age group indicated that they prefer to buy craft foods directly from producers (50.0%), but they also buy food from chain stores (43.8%) and specialised stores (37.5%). Consumers aged > 56 years mainly buy craft foods at fairs or markets (75.0%) and in chain stores (56.0%) (Fig. 3).

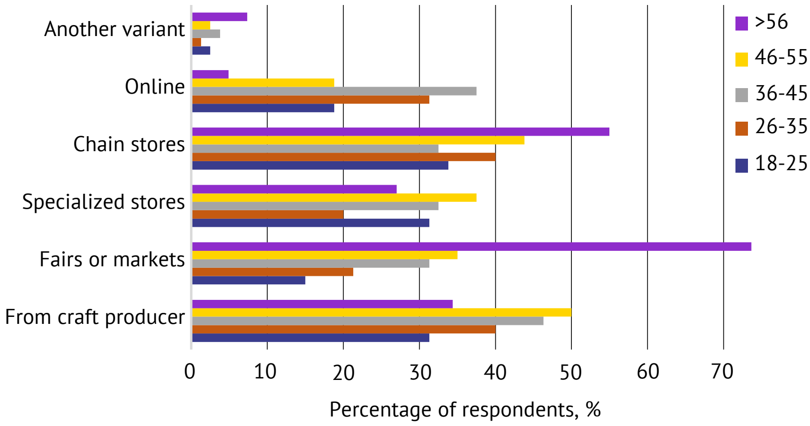

Figure 3. *Places where customers buy craft foods according to their age (the results of answering the question Q7)*
Source: *developed by the authors*

Figure 4 shows a word cloud created from the list of words most frequently used by respondents to characterise their commitment to craft food. The size of a word indicates how important it is and how often it appears in respondents' answers. The larger the font size of the word, the more often respondents used it to answer question Q8. Quality, delicious and natural were the most common words used to describe the commitment to craft food. Expensive was the most common word used by respondents to describe their dislike of craft food. When choosing craft food, surveyed consumers pay the most attention to its taste, ingredients and appearance. In addition, the most important factor for males is taste and for females it is food ingredients. The price of craft food is an important factor for low-income people. Food ingredients are the most important factor for people with high and medium income levels. When choosing products, 31.0% of consumers consider the producer. Males pay more attention to what is new on the market than women

(Table 8). Among all respondents, about one-third of respondents are willing to pay up to 10% extra for craft foods, and about one-quarter of consumers are willing to pay 11-20% more (Table 9). About 11.7% of consumers are willing to pay any price for quality craft foods, and most of these people are high-income consumers. It should also be noted that a quarter of consumers aged 18-25 are also willing to pay any price for craft foods. Only 17.0% of respondents are unwilling to pay more for craft foods, and the largest number of these people are consumers over the age of 56. Consumers who are uncertain about their willingness to pay more are most likely to be in the 26-35 age group and among low-income people. Low-income consumers are also unwilling to pay 21-30% extra for craft foods, but 15.4% of high-income consumers are willing.

Figure 4. *Word cloud characterising respondents' commitment to craft food (the results of answering the question Q8)*

Source: *developed by the authors*

Table 8. *Factors to consider when choosing a craft food (the results of answering the question Q9)*

Factors to consider when choosing a craft food	Percentage (%) of respondents					
	M & F	Male	Female	Income level		
				High	Medium	Low
New craft product	25.5	38.1	17.1	32.7	28.9	18.1
Appearance	45.3	51.9	40.8	30.8	42.2	54.9
Craft food producer	31.0	30.0	31.7	30.8	33.3	27.8
Taste	77.0	76.3	77.5	73.1	71.1	86.8
Ingredients	71.5	56.3	81.7	84.6	73.5	63.9
Price	36.5	48.1	28.8	11.5	24.5	62.5
Other factors	7.0	10.0	5.0	11.5	6.9	5.6

Note: *M & F – all respondents*

Source: *developed by the authors*

Table 9. *Consumer willingness to pay more for craft foods (the results of answering the question Q10)*

Characteristic of respondent group	Percentage (%) of respondents					
	Willing to pay			Any price for high quality	Unwilling to pay more	Uncertain I'm ready to pay more
	up to 10% extra	up to 11-20% extra	up to 21-30% extra			
Age (years)						
18-25	25.0	20.0	1.2	25.0	11.3	17.5
26-35	30.0	20.0	5.0	10.0	10.0	25.0
36-45	33.8	25.0	3.7	16.3	8.7	12.5
46-55	31.3	43.7	7.5	5.0	5.0	7.5
> 56	25.0	10.0	2.5	2.5	50.0	10.0
Income level						
High	19.2	5.8	15.4	57.7	0.0	1.9
Medium	30.9	27.0	3.9	17.6	6.9	13.7
Low	21.5	15.3	0.0	8.3	21.5	33.4
M & F	29.0	23.8	4.0	11.7	17.0	14.5

Note: *M & F – all respondents*

Source: *developed by the authors*

More than half of the respondents in both cities noted that the assortment of craft foods in their region is insufficient (Table 10). In addition, the percentage of such respondents is higher in Lutsk than in Mykolaiv. In both cities, males are more likely than females to be dissatisfied with the assortment of craft foods in their region.

Table 10. *Consumer satisfaction with local assortment of craft foods (the results of answering the question Q11)*

Answer to question Q11	Percentage (%) of respondents						
	M & F	M & F*	M & F**	Lutsk		Mykolaiv	
				Male	Female	Male	Female
Yes	43.8	39.0	48.5	36.3	40.8	38.8	55.0
No	56.2	61.0	51.5	63.7	59.2	61.2	45.0

Note: *M & F – all respondents; *all respondents from Lutsk; **all respondents from Mykolaiv*
Source: *developed by the authors*

Some 81.8% of consumers recommend craft food to relatives, friends and colleagues (Fig. 5). Moreover, more females (87.1%) than males (73.8%) make such recommendations.

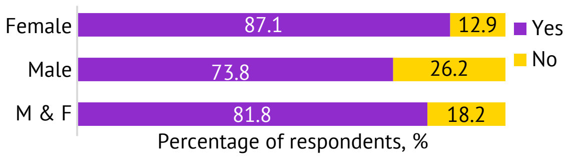

Figure 5. *The results of answering the question Q12 (Do you recommend craft food to relatives/friends/colleagues?)*
Source: *developed by the authors*

The majority of respondents indicated that they do not have enough information about craft foods and their producers in their region (Fig. 6). In addition, more females than males reported this. Only 34.0% of respondents in Lutsk and 44.0% of respondents in Mykolaiv stated that they have enough information about craft producers and their products. In order to draw attention to their products and to differentiate them from mass-produced foods, craft food producers try to send information to consumers and use the labels such as "artisan", "small-batch", "handcrafted" (Leissle, 2017). As noted by L. McKitterick *et al.* (2016), craft enterprises also disseminate information about the traditional food and food culture of regions, which enhances the reputation of the regions. A. Bouma *et al.* (2014) found that small craft food producers try to do everything possible to popularise their products, even if they have the financial problems that arise, especially at the beginning of their activity.

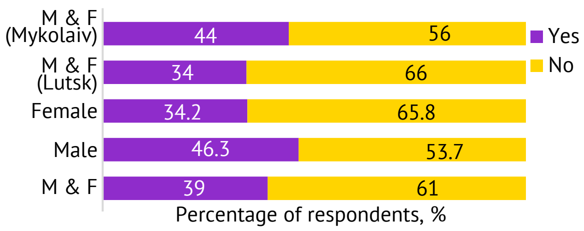

Figure 6. *The results of answering the question Q13 (Do you have enough information about craft food and producers in Ukraine?)*
Source: *developed by the authors*

Consumers with higher education would like to receive information about craft foods from online resources for craft producers (58.7%), popular online resources (57.7%), and web chats or life chats (35.0%) (Fig. 7). Consumers with professional education prefer to receive information from the same sources as consumers with higher education. However, they believe that popular online sources are the most appropriate (75.0%). Consumers with a secondary education would also like to get information about craft foods from producers to come from online resources for craft producers (67.1%), popular online resources (67.1%), and web chat or live chat (53.9%). Consumers with different levels of education would least like to receive information about craft products from print media (9.0%).

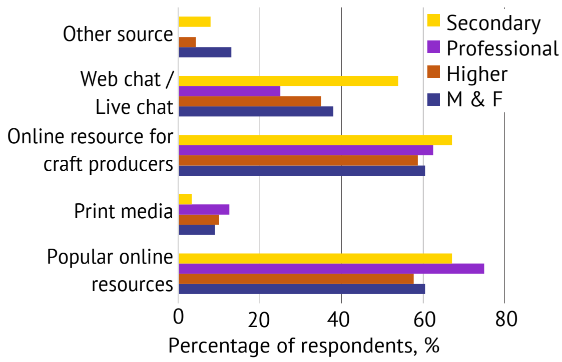

Figure 7. *Preferred sources of information about craft foods for consumers with different levels of education (the results of answering the question Q14)*
Source: *developed by the authors*

Figure 8 shows the preferred sources of information about craft foods for consumers of different ages. Respondents of all ages prefer to get food information from online resources. Consumers aged 18-35 are the biggest supporters of such information resources. In addition, approximately 85.0% of respondents aged 18-25 selected popular online resources as the best source of information about craft foods, and approximately 87.5% of respondents aged 26-35 considered an online resource for craft producers to be such a source. A significant proportion (20.0%) of consumers aged over the age of 60 would like to receive information from print media. At the same time, consumers in this age group are more likely to get information from popular online resources (43.8%) and online resources for craft producers (42.5%). In the 36-45 age group, the most common ways to get information are through a craft online resource (62.5%) and popular online resources (58.8%). In the 46-55 age group, preferences were almost evenly split between an online resource for craft food producers (56.3%), popular online resources (50.0%), and online chats (50.0%).

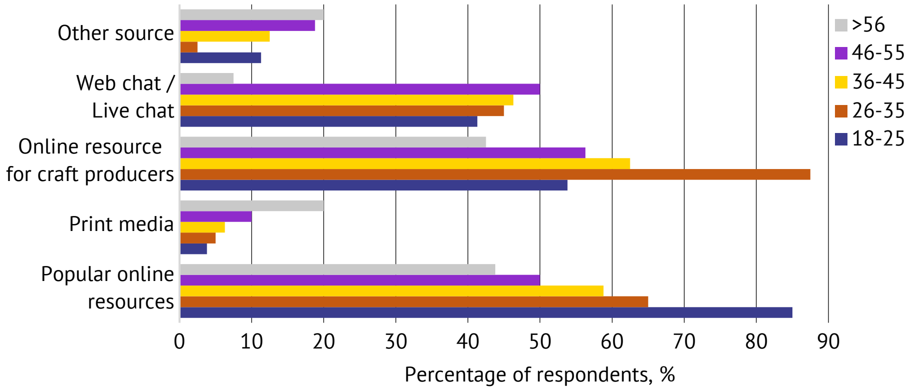

Figure 8. *Preferred sources of information about craft foods for consumers of different ages (the results of answering the question Q14)*

Source: *developed by the authors*

Over 84.3% of survey respondents declared that they are purchasers of craft foods, including about 41.0% who do so periodically. These results are very similar to previous research by D. Thilmany *et al.* (2010) in other countries, which found that the vast majority of respondents (85.0%) buy locally grown fresh produce. Another study by M. Dunne *et al.* (2017) showed that 64.4% of respondents purchase craft foods, including 33.9% who do so weekly and 48.2% who do so intermittently throughout the year.

The research showed that respondents with lower levels of education are more likely to consume craft foods than those with professional or higher education. Consumers with higher income levels are less likely to purchase craft foods. This correlates with previous research by A. Annunziata *et al.* (2019), which stated that high levels of education and high level of income have a negative impact on local food consumption.

Understanding food choice motives is necessary to improve consumers' dietary health and well-being. Food choice is a complex function of food sensory characteristics combined with the influence of non-sensory factors, including price, consumers' expectations, likes and dislikes, and habits. R. Brečić *et al.* (2017) emphasised that consumers are generally very concerned about intrinsic food characteristics, as taste and natural content, they are also rather sensitive to the price of the food as the most important extrinsic attribute. According to the survey results, consumers of both mass-produced and craft foods are primarily concerned with sensory attributes (taste, appearance), ingredients, and price when choosing foods. They also associate craft foods with products that contain natural ingredients, and are tasty, fresh, and domestic. According to respondents, quality is one of the most important attributes of craft food. K. Grunert (2005) found that when asking consumers what they regard as food products of good quality, the answers always include characteristics such as: taste (and other sensory characteristics), health, process characteristics such as organic production, natural production, GMO-free, fat content, packaging. Findings of this study are similar to previous research that provides strong evidence that consumers associate local food with attributes such as: freshness, high quality, nutritional value, safety, evocation of domestic flavours, naturalness (Kovács *et al.*, 2022). Most of these local food attributes are universal product attributes (Dhargalkar *et al.*, 2016). E. Carrillo *et al.* (2011) also suggested that sensory properties and naturalness of ingredients are the factors that motivate consumers to purchase foods. As indicated by C. Gómez-Corona *et al.* (2016), the main motivation for consuming craft foods or beverages may also be the search for authenticity, the desire for new taste experiences. Hence, craft food can be seen as an alternative to mass-produced food because of the trust in its high quality.

Respondents believe that craft food are more expensive than mass-produced foods. However, consumers can find craft foods in the marketplace that are sold at very different market prices. The studies summarised by S. Rivaroli *et al.* (2021) suggested that the price attribute is consistently associated with the perceptions of food quality and that consumers judge the quality of craft food by price, associating higher price with higher food quality. Hence, there has been consumer interest in local craft food, but food price remains an issue for now, especially for low-income consumers. In some cases, consumers are willing to pay a premium for local food over non-local food, and even higher than for organic food (Enthoven & Van den Broeck, 2021). A survey of respondents indicated that approximately 29% of consumers are willing to pay 10% more for craft foods.

According to the results of the survey, the following craft products are most in demand among consumers: baked goods, confectionery, meat products and dairy products. Results of alternative studies by D. Znotina & M. Igavens (2017) indicated that the most popular craft food products among buyers are poultry meat products, teas, natural juices, biscuits, yogurt, cheese, lard.

The conventional model of food supply to consumers includes chains of the national and international supermarkets and hypermarkets. An alternative model includes mostly local and small distribution channels such as farmers' markets and regular or occasional local fairs, open air-markets, cooperatives, specialised stores, buying directly from producers (Kawecka & Gębarowski, 2015). Other places where craft foods are sold include roadside sales, harvest festivals, and restaurants that specialise in local products (Pokorná *et al., 2015*). The survey results show that consumers buy craft food both through both traditional and local distribution channels. Over 30% of consumers prefer to buy food products directly from small, local producers. Rational, symbolic and cultural motivations that motivate consumers to purchase local food products in local retail channels versus supermarkets can be divided into main categories: health (healthy food without hormones, herbicides, and pesticides), environmental motivation (organic food), and economic motivation (supporting the local economy), emotional and spiritual role of food products in consumers' lives (supporting unique local traditions and values, embodying one's heritage) (Spielmann & Bernelin, 2015). As a result, local food production and distribution brings producers and consumers closer together. As noted by A. Tregear (2005), this contributed to the development of sustainable local food supply chains.

Modern consumers can also find needed food products from all over the world. Alternative food distribution channels using modern forms of communication are Internet shops, online sales portals, which help more direct and easier to deliver food to the final consumer than traditional channels (Kawecka & Gębarowski, 2015). Online shopping creates the ability to buy local food without leaving home and avoiding the crowds, which is a huge benefit for many consumers (Gumirakiza & VanZee, 2017). The results of the conducted research indicate that consumers of craft products in Ukraine also use modern forms of buying food via the Internet, especially in the age group of 26-45, more than 30% of such consumers.

A lack of reliable information or incomplete disclosure about the attributes of a food product has the potential to destroy trust between consumers and producers, whereas providing trustworthy information about food can greatly increase consumer confidence (Lam *et al.*, 2020). As noted by E. Lioutas (2014), consumers seek food information by using one or more of the available out-of-store (published material, media, experts, institutional bodies, and social milieu and media) or in-store (store personnel, food labels) information sources. Surveyed craft food consumers prefer such sources of information about the food products such as online resources for craft producers, popular online resources, and web chats or life chats.

The results of the study allow craft food producers to better understand the preferences of consumers of different ages, genders, education levels, and incomes, as well as to understand their motivations for choosing craft food products. Based on the research results, producers can create a profile of the craft food consumer. Information on the regularity of consumer purchases of craft foods and where they are purchased will also be useful to producers. An effective advertising campaign is important to increase the number of buyers. The results of the study allow producers to decide where to place information about their products so that their advertising is accessible to consumers and effective.

Conclusions

In Ukraine, there is an increase in interest in craft food. This is due to a global trend toward the consumption of local and traditional foods from small, local producers. Consumers perceive craft foods as higher quality and tastier than mass-produced foods. However, there is very little study devoted to the Ukrainian craft food market.

The survey conducted among consumers of two regional centers of Ukraine, Lutsk and Mykolaiv, confirms that Ukraine is not isolated from global trends in the field of food consumption. Consumers (more than 97.0%) are well aware of what local craft food is. 84.3% of respondents in both cities buy craft food, with females buying it more often than males. Perhaps this is due to the fact that in Ukraine, females traditionally buy food for the family. It should be noted that consumers with a higher level of education and a higher level of income are less likely to purchase craft foods compared to consumers with lower levels of education and income. Most consumers buy craft foods periodically (41.0%) and occasionally (44.0%).

Consumers characterise craft foods as tasty, fresh, small-batch, natural, domestic, handcrafted, natural, traditional, high-quality and local. They believe that craft foods have better taste and quality than mass-produced foods, but at a higher price. These beliefs create a mostly positive consumer attitude toward craft foods and motivate consumers to buy them. The higher price is a deterrent to the purchase of craft foods by low-income consumers. However, about 29.0% of consumers are willing to pay 10% more for craft foods than for mass-produced foods.

The most popular food products in the craft food segment are baked goods, confectionery, meat products and dairy products. When choosing a food product, consumers mainly take into account its taste, appearance and content of ingredients. 56.2% of respondents do not consider the range of craft foods in their city to be sufficient.

Consumers buy craft food products, mostly from producers or in chain stores. In addition, a significant proportion of consumers, especially those over the age of 56, buy craft food products at markets and fairs, as well as in specialised stores. These are the formed habits of Ukrainian consumers regarding the places of purchase of food products. It is also becoming more common to purchase craft food products through online resources. Consumers actively recommend craft foods to others based on their experience of consuming them. This is a positive factor for the development of the craft food market, as information about this food segment spreads among consumers. On the other hand, consumers indicated that they do not have enough information about craft foods and their producers. Sources of such information, according to consumers, can include popular online resources, producers' online resources and web chats.

The survey made it possible to find out the attitude of the residents of two cities of Ukraine to craft food and to determine the motives that guide them in choosing such food. The main one is the confidence that local craft food is of higher quality, tastier and more natural. Further research should be aimed at identifying the main problems faced by producers of craft foods in Ukraine during their production and sale to consumers.

Acknowledgements

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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Дослідження звичок, ставлення та мотивацій, що лежать в основі вибору крафтової їжі споживачами в Україні

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Анотація. У світі наявний зростаючий попит на місцеву крафтову їжу. Виробництво крафтових продуктів харчування активно підтримується в багатьох країнах, оскільки це сприяє вирішенню низки соціально-економічних та екологічних проблем. Кількість виробників крафтових продуктів в Україні також зростає, але ринок крафтової їжі залишається недостатньо дослідженим. Тому метою дослідження було вивчення через опитування звичок, ставлення та мотивацій, які визначають вибір крафтових продуктів споживачами в Україні. Опитування проводилося в двох обласних центрах України – Луцьку та Миколаєві – серед споживачів різного віку, статі, рівня доходів та освіти. Близько 84,3 % опитаних є споживачами крафтової їжі. Респонденти зазначили, що купують крафтову їжу періодично і час від часу. Більшість споживачів вважають, що крафтова їжа смачніша та кращої якості, ніж масово вироблена їжа. Респонденти відзначили, що крафтові продукти дорожчі за масові, але 29 % респондентів готові платити за них на 10 % більше. Були визначені найпопулярніші крафтові продукти серед українських споживачів, серед яких випічка, кондитерські вироби, м'ясні та молочні продукти. Українці купують крафтову їжу переважно безпосередньо у виробників, у мережевих та спеціалізованих магазинах. Респонденти зазначили, що їм не вистачає інформації про виробників крафтової їжі та їхні продукти. Вони хотіли б бачити більше реклами крафтової їжі на інтернет-ресурсах. Таким чином, результати опитування дозволили визначити звички та ставлення українських споживачів до крафтової їжі, а також дослідити мотиви, що спонукають до її придбання. Отримані результати будуть корисними для виробників крафтових продуктів, оскільки вони дозволять створити профіль споживача їхніх продуктів і зробити інформацію про свої продукти більш ефективною

Ключові слова: місцеві продукти харчування; крафтові виробники; споживчі переваги; ринок крафтової їжі; опитування споживачів