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Food company competitiveness determination using marketing monitoring

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► **Abstract.** The study aimed to assess the market position of food enterprises and identify the key factors influencing consumer satisfaction with products. The study included a survey of 200 consumers and 50 business representatives, stratification analysis, Student's t-test and Fisher's test. The main results showed that product quality was the most important factor with a weight of 40%, while price had a weight of 25%, availability 20% and packaging 15%. Younger consumers (18-35 years old) prefer innovative and aesthetic products, while older groups value functionality and safety more. Consumers with higher education prefer environmentally friendly products, while consumers with secondary education are more likely to trust trusted brands. The analysis of professional differences demonstrated that business professionals focus on brand and price, healthcare professionals on health and safety, and educators on the value and educational impact of the product. In addition, the study found that women were significantly more likely to state that aesthetic and functional aspects of packaging were important compared to men, with average satisfaction levels of 4.5 and 3.8 respectively ($p < 0.05$). The study also determined that consumers with higher incomes are more likely to choose products with premium packaging and additional benefits. The conclusions highlight the need to adapt marketing strategies to meet the specific needs of different demographic groups, which will help to increase the

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competitiveness of food companies in the market. This research provides valuable information for food producers, improving consumer awareness and tailoring products to meet the needs

► **Keywords:** demographic characteristics; product quality; customer satisfaction; product evaluation; market strategy; selection factors

► Introduction

Competitiveness is a key factor in the success of businesses in the modern market, especially in the food industry, where consumer demands are constantly changing. Food businesses face challenges in meeting the diverse preferences of consumers, including product quality, price, availability and packaging. These factors play a critical role in shaping brand perception and customer satisfaction. However, the question of which factors have the greatest impact on customer satisfaction and preferences remains under-researched, especially in the context of different demographic and professional groups.

In Ukraine, research on the competitiveness of food companies and consumer preferences is also relevant, as the market is constantly evolving and changing (Remizova *et al.*, 2024). A.D. Berher (2023) addressed the impact of product quality on customer satisfaction and found that high-quality standards contribute to increased customer loyalty. As emphasised, the importance of quality control at all stages of production, confirms the need to implement quality management systems in enterprises. However, the study did not address the impact of packaging and other external factors on customer satisfaction.

V. Moskalenko & I. Ryabchenko (2021) addressed the influence of price on the choice of products by Ukrainian consumers. Their research has demonstrated that while price is an important factor, consumers are willing to pay more for products that meet expectations of quality and safety. This demonstrates the need to position products with high-added value in the market. The study conclusions are limited, as the influence of demographic factors such as age and education on consumer choice were not addressed.

Various studies also highlight the importance of considering demographic factors in marketing strategies. I. Kovshova & V. Hlushchenko (2021) addressed the influence of age groups on consumer preferences and determined that younger consumers prefer innovative and aesthetic products, while older consumers value functionality and safety more. They also found that older consumers are more likely to choose products with traditional recipes and natural ingredients. However, the study did not address the impact of income on consumer preferences.

Education also has a significant impact on consumer preferences. A study by I. Panova & D. Zernenkova (2023) showed that educated consumers consider the environmental and social aspects of products. They are more likely to choose products that have quality certificates and meet sustainability standards. These consumers are willing to pay more for products that align with their values. However, the study did not analyse how the impact of educational attainment varies among different professional groups.

The professional characteristics of consumers also influence their preferences. A study by Y. Yegupov & I. Yegupova (2021) determined that healthcare professionals value products that support a healthy lifestyle and contain natural ingredients more. They stressed that these

consumers often choose organic and low-preservative products. However, the study did not address the influence of other professional groups on consumer preferences, which leaves room for further research in this area.

The literature analysis shows that many studies focus on specific aspects of customer satisfaction, such as quality, price or environmental friendliness of products. T. Balanovska *et al.* (2021) studied the importance of packaging for consumers and determined that modern design and sustainable materials have a positive impact on product choice, especially among young people. This confirms the need for innovation in packaging design to attract a younger audience.

Another study conducted by O. Kovalenko & L. Yashchenko (2021) addressed the impact of marketing communications on consumer preferences. They determined that effective advertising campaigns that emphasise the uniqueness and quality of products significantly increase consumer interest and trust. They also noted that the use of social media is particularly effective for younger audiences, who are active users of these platforms.

A study by A. Tanasichuk *et al.* (2021) focused on regional differences in consumer preferences. The author determined that consumers in the western regions of Ukraine are more focused on the environmental aspects of products, while those in the eastern regions value availability and price more. This highlights the importance of adapting marketing strategies to specific regional needs.

Lastly, V. Onegina *et al.* (2022) demonstrated that high-income consumers are more likely to choose premium products that emphasise status and exclusivity. The author also determined that these consumers pay more attention to details such as the origin of ingredients and ethical aspects of production.

The literature analysis shows that many studies focus on specific aspects of customer satisfaction, such as quality, price or environmental friendliness of products. However, a comprehensive approach that addresses the influence of various demographic and professional characteristics on consumer preferences remains insufficiently researched. The study aimed to identify the key factors that influence consumer satisfaction with food products, with a focus on different demographic and professional groups.

► Materials and methods

A comprehensive methodological approach was developed to assess the company's market position in comparison with key competitors. The competitiveness assessment was based on data obtained through consumer surveys, market research and financial analysis of market participants. The survey of consumers and representatives of the food industry was conducted between January and March 2024 using the SurveyMonkey online survey platform. The survey contained 30 detailed questions aimed at identifying consumer preferences and product satisfaction.

The sample included 200 consumers, and 50 representatives of businesses selected by random sampling from people aged 18 to 65 from different regions of Ukraine.

The demographic questions included in the questionnaire included age, gender, education, occupation, income and region of residence. This data was used for stratification analysis to determine how demographic factors influence consumer preferences and product satisfaction. Thus, the study determined which aspects of the product were most important to different consumer groups, which can be used in formulating marketing strategies. All study participants were informed about the objectives and procedures of the study, as well as the confidentiality of the data provided. The survey was anonymous, and all participants were aware of how their anonymity was ensured, the purpose of the survey, how the data they provided would be used, and the possible risks involved.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software was used to analyse the collected data. Several statistical methods were used, including the Student's t-test, which was used to assess the statistical significance of differences between groups by comparing the mean values of two independent samples. For instance, this criterion was used to compare product satisfaction between men and women. In addition, Fisher's test was used to determine the significance of differences in frequency distributions. This method was used to analyse the percentage of respondents who believed that product packaging was important. All analyses were performed with a statistical significance level of $p < 0.05$. Both methods contributed to a deeper understanding of the data collected and allowed for a reasonable assessment of statistical differences and trends identified during the study.

To assess the impact of various aspects of the product on overall brand perception and customer satisfaction, a component importance analysis based on regression analysis was used. This approach was used to accurately

calculate the weight of each aspect of the product, including quality, price, availability and packaging. This was used to identify the key factors that most influenced consumers' decisions. The regression analysis determined how individual product components contributed to the overall level of customer satisfaction and which ones should be improved or changed to increase brand loyalty and market perception.

As part of the marketing analysis, SWOT analysis and Porter's five forces analysis was used. The SWOT analysis was used to identify the organisation's strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats that affected competitiveness. The analysis of Porter's five forces was used to assess the overall structure of the industry, including the threat of new competitors, the degree of rivalry between existing enterprises, the threat of product substitution, and the bargaining power of suppliers and consumers. These analyses provided information on which industry forces had the greatest impact on competitiveness.

All study participants were informed about the objectives and procedures of the study, as well as the confidentiality of the data provided. Participation in the study was voluntary, and all data was used exclusively in aggregate form for scientific analysis. The study was conducted following the rules of The Declaration of Helsinki (1975).

► Results

The primary task for companies should be to analyse the age preferences of consumers. Accounting for these differences is critical for the determination of the needs of customers, which can be used to develop products that not only meet their expectations but also reflect their specific needs. Adapting the product line to different age segments helps to attract and retain customers more effectively, ensuring longer and more effective relationships between consumers and brands (Table 1).

Table 1. Consumer preferences depending on their age

Age groups	Advantages in products	The main characteristics that influence the choice	Media activity	Environmental friendliness and social responsibility	Number of respondents (%)
18-35 years	Modern trends in style and technology	The importance of aesthetics and innovation	High, especially in social media	Choosing products that support sustainable development	100 (50%)
36-50 years	Functionality, improved health characteristics	Demanding quality and durability	Moderate	Preference for products that offer added value	60 (30%)
50+ years	Health, safety, convenience	Prefer products that promote health and well-being	Low	Preference for natural ingredients, minimal additives	40 (20%)

Source: compiled by the authors

The analysis of data among consumers aged 18 to 35, which covers 50% of the target audience, revealed that modern trends in style and technology play a key role in this demographic. This indicates a deep interest of young people in the latest innovations that influence their purchasing decisions. The study determined that 30% of consumers aged 36 to 50 prefer products that offer improved functional and health benefits, while 20% of

consumers over 50 focus on products that promote health and safety. This data highlights the importance of adapting products and marketing strategies to the age-specific characteristics of consumers.

A detailed study of age preferences shows significant differences in consumer behaviour between younger and older age groups. Younger consumers (18 to 35 years old) highly value the aesthetic appearance and innovation of

products that are in line with modern stylistic trends and technological innovations. They actively use social media as their primary channel for product information and are often responsive to marketing that uses these platforms. The study also determined that young consumers are more likely to choose products that reflect their social and environmental outlook, such as products that promote sustainable development.

The middle age segment, aged 36-50, is more demanding of product quality and durability. These consumers are looking for brands that demonstrate a commitment to high quality and reliability, choosing products that offer added value through enhanced functionality or improved health-promoting features. People over 50 address the healthiness, safety and convenience of products. They prefer products that support their health and well-being, including products with low levels of preservatives and artificial additives. This group

also prefers products that are easy to use and consume, especially if it contributes to their ability to lead an active lifestyle. These findings point to the critical need for companies to focus on creating products that meet the age-specific needs of consumers, as well as the importance of adapting marketing strategies to specific age requirements and preferences to effectively engage different market segments.

The educational level of consumers has a decisive influence on the formation of their preferences and product selection criteria. Knowing these educational parameters allows companies to gain a deeper understanding of their target audience and effectively tailor their products and marketing strategies to meet the educational and cultural requirements of their customers. This approach contributes to the creation of more balanced and customer-oriented products, ensuring a high level of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Table 2).

Table 2. Consumer preferences depending on their level of education

Level of education	Advantages of products	Key characteristics of the choice	Brand orientation	Environmental and social requirements	Number of respondents (%)
Higher education	Sustainable development products	High awareness of environmental and social aspects	Low	High, prioritising certification and innovations to reduce environmental impact	80 (40%)
Secondary specialised	Time-tested products	Better value for money	High	Low, less inclined to innovate	70 (35%)
The main general	Simple and affordable products	Simplicity and ease of use	Average	Very low, driven by availability and price	50 (25%)

Source: compiled by the authors

The analysis of consumer preferences revealed that 40% of consumers with higher education prefer products that support sustainable development and are highly aware of environmental and social aspects. This highlights the trend among educated consumers towards making informed choices focused on environmental responsibility and social justice. On the other hand, 35% of consumers with secondary specialised education prefer time-tested products, where reliability and a favourable price-quality ratio are important. This category of consumers tends to make conservative choices, avoiding the risks associated with new market offers. Meanwhile, 25% of consumers with a basic general education focus on the simplicity and convenience of products, choosing those options that are easy to use and consume.

A detailed examination of consumers' educational levels revealed distinct differences in product choice, reflecting the different values and awareness they attach to a product. Consumers with higher education often seek additional information about the source of ingredients, labour conditions, and corporate responsibility of brands. They highly value innovations that minimise environmental impact, such as reducing the use of plastic in packaging.

Consumers with secondary specialised education, in turn, are more conservative in their choices, preferring time-tested brands and products that have already proven themselves in the market. They are less inclined to experiment with new products and are looking for the best value for money. People with basic general education are guided by simplicity and convenience in choosing products, where availability, low price and ease of use are important.

These findings demonstrate the need for businesses to focus on creating products that meet the educational and cultural characteristics of consumers, as well as the importance of adapting marketing strategies to specific age, educational and cultural requirements and preferences to effectively engage different market segments. Knowledge of consumers' professional activities is essential for the determination of their product selection criteria and preferences. An analysis of the professional characteristics of clients illustrates how specific professional obligations and working conditions affect consumer requirements. Different professional groups have their specific needs and priorities, which creates a need for companies to adapt their products and marketing strategies to more targeted attract and retain clients from different professional fields (Table 3).

Table 3. Consumer preferences depend on their professional activity

Professional group	The main criteria for product selection	Key characteristics of the preferences	Additional factors of influence	Number of respondents (%)
Business professionals	Brand, price	Quality, reliability, professional image	Famous brands, products of the highest price category	90 (45%)

Table 3, Continued

Professional group	The main criteria for product selection	Key characteristics of the preferences	Additional factors of influence	Number of respondents (%)
Healthcare professionals	Health and Safety	Natural ingredients, no harmful additives	Professional knowledge of the impact of nutrition on health	60 (30%)
Teachers and educational staff	Cost, educational impact	Products as educational resources, stimulating creativity	Discounts for educators, special educational packages	50 (25%)

Source: compiled by the authors

The analysis of professional differences among respondents revealed significant variations in preferences and product selection criteria, which are closely related to the professional activities and everyday needs of people of different professions. Each professional group has unique priorities that influence their choice of products. 45% of business professionals give preference to brand and price when determining quality, reliability and professional image. Among business professionals, high attention to brand and price are critical factors. This group often associates a brand with quality and reliability, choosing well-known and trusted brands that provide stability and confidence in their purchases. Their choice is also motivated by the need to maintain their status, which makes them prefer products of a higher price category, which are considered to be symbols of success.

30% of healthcare professionals are focused on health and safety, identifying natural ingredients and the absence of harmful additives. They prefer products that support a healthy lifestyle, contain natural ingredients and are free of harmful additives. Their choice is often driven by professional knowledge of the impact of nutrition on health, which makes them more likely to choose organic and environmentally friendly products.

Moreover, 25% of teachers and educators are focused on the value and educational impact of the product. They are looking for products that can be used as educational resources or stimulate creativity and learning. This group also often prefers products that offer discounts for educators or special educational packages that can be used in the classroom.

These professional differences provide important information for companies seeking to attract diverse market segments by providing products and services that meet the specific needs and preferences of different professional groups. Tailoring products and marketing strategies to the professional characteristics of consumers can significantly increase customer engagement and loyalty.

The Student's t-test was used to assess the levels of satisfaction with product packaging between men and women. This statistical method is indispensable in research, as it can be used to reasonably assess whether there is a statistically significant difference between the mean values of two independent groups. The application of the t-test in the context of the study identified the extent to which gender differences affect packaging perceptions, providing valuable guidance for developing more effective marketing strategies that take these differences into account (Table 4).

Table 4. The difference in satisfaction with product packaging between men and women

Group of respondents	Average level of satisfaction with packaging (on a 5-point scale)	Standard deviation	P-value (Student's t-test)
Females	4.5	0.7	<0.05
Males	3.8	0.9	<0.05

Source: compiled by the authors

The use of the Student t-test to analyse the levels of satisfaction with product packaging between men and women revealed significant differences between these groups. The analysis showed that women showed a significantly higher level of satisfaction with product packaging compared to men, with a significance level of $p < 0.05$. This shows that women prioritise to packaging details such as aesthetics, usability and environmental friendliness.

Men, on the other hand, are less critical of these aspects of packaging, focusing more on other product characteristics such as functionality and price. This indicates that to increase men's satisfaction, it may be worth prioritising other aspects of the product, not just its packaging. A detailed analysis of the results showed that the average level of satisfaction among women was 4.5 out of 5, while among men it was 3.8 out of 5. The standard deviation also indicates that women's scores are more consolidated around

the mean, suggesting a more consistent and homogeneous attitude towards packaging among women compared to men. This may indicate that female consumers have clearer and more stable requirements for product packaging, while men show more variability in their assessments.

Given this data, it is possible to recommend improving packaging design for the female audience by introducing more attractive colours, and textures and using environmentally friendly materials. It is also advisable to develop marketing campaigns that emphasise these aesthetic and environmental aspects, as they are important to the female audience. For men, who show greater variability in satisfaction and a preference for functional features, product quality and functionality improvement should be prioritised. It is also necessary to include favourable price offers in marketing strategies, which can help increase satisfaction and loyalty among male customers.

The Fisher's test is an important statistical tool for analysing categorical data, and it is particularly effective in contexts where it is necessary to compare frequency distributions between different groups. In the study, Fisher's criterion was used to analyse data reflecting respondents' preferences and assessments

of product packaging among different demographic groups. This made it possible to identify statistically significant differences, providing a deeper understanding of the specifics of consumer behaviour and marketing approaches that take these differences into account (Table 5).

Table 5. The impact of demographic factors on the perceived importance of product packaging

Demographic group	Number of respondents who consider packaging important	Total respondent number	Share (%)	P-value (Fisher's criterion)
Higher education	120	150	80%	<0.05
Secondary specialised	60	100	60%	<0.05
The main general	30	100	30%	<0.05
18-35 years	85	120	71%	<0.05
36-50 years	50	80	62.5%	<0.05
50+ years	35	70	50%	<0.05
Males	70	110	63.6%	<0.05
Females	115	140	82.1%	<0.05
High income	90	100	90%	<0.05
Average income	60	100	60%	<0.05

Source: compiled by the authors

The application of Fisher's criterion in the analysis of the impact of education level on product packaging preferences showed that a significantly higher percentage of respondents with higher education attach great importance to packaging aspects compared to those with secondary specialised or basic general education. This shows that education is substantial in shaping consumer preferences and requirements for product quality and aesthetics.

Fisher's criterion was also used to analyse the impact of age on packaging perception. The results show that younger consumers (aged 18 to 35) are more likely to prioritise packaging design and innovation, while older age groups (50 and over) are more focused on functionality and usability, indicating different priorities depending on age.

Gender differences in packaging perception were also analysed. Women are much more likely than men to note the importance of aesthetic and functional aspects of packaging, such as ease of opening and eco-friendly materials. Men, in turn, are more focused on other product characteristics, such as overall functionality and price.

Respondent income also has an impact on their packaging preferences. Consumers with higher incomes are

more likely to seek premium packaging and the additional benefits it can offer, including innovative materials and environmental certifications. Those with lower incomes are more focused on affordability and ease of use of packaging.

The results of Fisher's analysis highlight the importance of considering the diverse demographic characteristics of consumers when designing packaging. For younger consumers, companies should focus on innovation and packaging design, while for older consumers, they should focus on functionality and convenience. For educated consumers, environmental benefits and certification should be emphasised, and for high-income consumers, premium packaging with additional benefits should be offered. This will allow companies to attract different market segments more effectively and increase overall customer satisfaction.

The regression analysis used in this study identified the most relevant factors that influence overall brand perception and customer satisfaction. Determination of the key factors allows companies to focus on those aspects of their operations that maximise their competitiveness in the market (Table 6).

Table 6. The contribution of different product components to the overall brand perception

Component	Relevance (%)
Quality	40%
Price	25%
Availability	20%
Package	15%

Source: compiled by the authors

The regression analysis conducted as part of the study highlighted the importance of product quality as a key factor influencing overall brand perception and customer satisfaction. According to the results, product quality plays a key role in shaping a positive brand image and customer satisfaction, accounting for 40% of the overall perception. This highlights how much customer

loyalty, and repeat purchases depend on the quality of the goods. The analysis also showed that the price of the product is important, with a weight of 25%. This points to the need to ensure competitive prices as customers actively compare prices and look for the best deals. Balancing price and quality can be a key factor in ensuring customer loyalty.

The availability of products with a weight of 20% in the perception structure is also important. Consumers highly appreciate the product's easy access, availability in stores, fast delivery and availability in convenient outlets. Efficient logistics and wide distribution are essential to meet this need.

Product packaging, although less important (15%), is still important, as the aesthetics, convenience and environmental friendliness of packaging can play an important role in customer perception. High-quality packaging can significantly increase the attractiveness of a product on the shelf and encourage purchases.

The correlation between consumer preferences and sales has shown that packaging that appeals more to certain demographics is associated with higher sales for certain products. For example, packaging that meets modern trends in style and technology leads to increased sales among consumers aged 18-35. Such observations help companies adapt their products and marketing strategies to maximise sales.

The application of SWOT analysis and Porter's Five Forces methodology assessed in detail the strategic position of food companies in the current market. The analysis identified key strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats affecting their competitiveness. Strengths include high product quality, which contributes to customer loyalty; a wide range of products, which meet the diverse needs of customers; and the use of innovation and modern technology to improve efficiency and product quality. Weaknesses include high production costs, which limits competitiveness in the market; limited flexibility in changing the product mix, which makes it difficult to adapt to market conditions; and high dependence on suppliers, which creates risks to the stability of supply. Opportunities include expanding into new markets to increase sales and competitiveness; introducing new technologies to reduce costs and improve quality; and developing partnerships to ensure supply security. Threats include increasing competition that may reduce market share; changes in legislation that may increase costs; and economic and political fluctuations that may affect market stability.

Competition in the food market remains intense due to a wide range of products and insignificant differentiation between available selection. The threat of new entrants and substitutes remains moderate due to high barriers to entry and innovation. Suppliers and consumers have moderate to high power, which requires companies to work actively to attract and retain customers and ensure the stability of supply.

► Discussion

The results of the study, based on interviews with consumers and food businesses, provide a deeper understanding of the preferences and product selection criteria of different demographic groups. This research is significant because it provides valuable insights for food producers, helping them to tailor their products and marketing strategies to meet the needs of different consumer segments. It also helps to identify the key factors that influence customer satisfaction, which is critical for increasing the competitiveness of enterprises.

The research results showed that product quality is the most important factor that affects overall brand perception and customer satisfaction. This is consistent with the research of other scholars, S. Said *et al.* (2021) and F. Babayev & T. Balajayeva (2023), who also emphasise the importance of quality as a key element in building customer loyalty. High-quality products not only help to meet current consumer needs but also create a positive brand image, which in turn leads to increased repeat purchases.

The results of the study confirm the conclusions drawn in other studies regarding the impact of demographic characteristics on consumer preferences. For instance, a study conducted by K. Brunso *et al.* (2021), and S. Moghildea (2023), showed that younger consumers place a high value on aesthetics and product innovation, while older consumers place a higher value on functionality and convenience. This indicates the need to develop differentiated marketing strategies for different age groups, which is consistent with the findings.

In addition, the analysis of the impact of education on consumer preferences in this paper is consistent with the findings of X. Luo *et al.* (2022) and L. Tavares *et al.* (2021), who found that educated consumers pay more attention to environmental and social aspects of products. They note that educated consumers are more aware of sustainability and tend to support brands that demonstrate environmental responsibility. P. Abey Siriwardana *et al.* (2023) and K. Hennyeyová *et al.* (2021) also confirm that the level of education influences consumer preferences, especially in terms of choosing products with environmentally friendly and natural ingredients.

Research conducted by P. Ghisellini *et al.* (2023) and D. Hadi *et al.* (2023) also emphasised the importance of understanding the impact of occupation on consumer preferences. They determined that healthcare professionals attach great importance to products that support a healthy lifestyle and contain natural ingredients. The results confirm these findings and highlight the need to tailor marketing strategies to the specific needs of different professional groups.

Despite the high degree of consistency with the results of other studies, certain discrepancies were found. In particular, the study determined that women are much more likely than men to note the importance of aesthetic and functional aspects of packaging. At the same time, the results of a study conducted by A. Buallay (2021) and V. Basile *et al.* (2023) did not confirm significant gender differences in this context. They noted that men and women equally value the quality of packaging. However, according to the data, women demonstrate a more demanding attitude towards aesthetic and environmental aspects. These differences may be due to cultural or regional factors, which underlines the need to take these differences into account in future research to better analyse the impact of socio-cultural conditions on consumer preferences.

A study conducted in Japan by S. Yang *et al.* (2021) and I. Tsuchimoto & Y. Kajikawa (2022) showed that consumers of all age groups prioritise product quality and price, while the results suggest that younger consumers are more focused on product innovation and aesthetics. This can be explained by differences in cultural values and consumer behaviour between different countries (Maharramova &

Maharramov, 2023). The researchers noted that Japanese consumers are more focused on traditional values and stability, while the survey respondents, mostly from Western countries, have more modern and dynamic preferences.

In addition, a study conducted in Germany by J. Winterstein & A. Habisch (2021) and M. Lehberger *et al.* (2021) found that product price is the most significant factor for all age groups. At the same time, other analyses show that product quality is a higher priority for consumers. Such differences may be due to differences in economic conditions and income levels between countries. The authors also emphasised the importance of product availability, but in other results, this factor was given less weight than quality and price. This highlights the importance of the global context and local characteristics of economies in shaping consumer priorities, which is key to developing effective marketing strategies (Markovych, 2023).

The results revealed certain differences in consumer preferences depending on the region of residence of the respondents. This is in line with data obtained in different countries. For instance, a study by M. Dereva & M. Rajcaniova (2021) and J. Crick & D. Crick (2021) in the United States found that consumers in different states set different priorities for product packaging, which may be due to cultural and economic differences between regions. In particular, the researchers noted that consumers in the southwest of the US place a higher value on packaging convenience, while in the northeast of the country, more attention is paid to environmental aspects of packaging. This underscores the need to address regional specifics when formulating marketing strategies and developing products.

Similar results were obtained in studies conducted in European countries by I. Dam *et al.* (2021), where consumers also showed different preferences depending on cultural and socioeconomic factors. In France, for example, consumers prefer products with premium packaging that emphasises high status, while in Germany, they value the functionality and environmental friendliness of packaging more (Mukhametov *et al.*, 2023).

A study conducted by X. Chen *et al.* (2021) in China determined that young consumers prefer products with innovative and eco-friendly packaging, which is in line with trends found among younger consumers in other studies. At the same time, older Chinese consumers also prioritised the environmental aspects of packaging, in contrast to older respondents in other studies who focused more on the functionality and convenience of packaging. This discrepancy may be due to the higher level of environmental awareness among all age groups in China. Such differences highlight the need for companies to consider cultural and regional specificities in their global marketing strategy and product policies (Musayeva *et al.*, 2024).

A study conducted by B. Kelly *et al.* (2021) in Australia also highlighted the importance of adapting products to regional preferences. The study determined that Australian consumers place a high value on natural and organic ingredients, which is consistent with the findings on the impact of education on consumer preferences in Ukraine. This indicates a global trend of increasing environmental awareness among educated consumers. B. Kelly *et al.* (2021) also noted that high-income consumers are

more likely to choose premium products, emphasising the importance of socioeconomic factors in shaping preferences. This is consistent with the findings that high-income consumers in Ukraine also prefer premium products and pay more attention to details such as packaging quality and sustainability.

A study conducted by L. Carmona & G. Gomes (2021) in Brazil determined that consumers place a high value on local products, which are associated with supporting local producers and the economy. This contrasts with the findings in Ukraine, where consumers are more focused on global brands and product quality. Ukrainian consumers prefer well-known international brands, which may be due to trust in their quality and reliability (Palamarchuk & Korkach, 2023). L. Carmona & G. Gomes (2021) also noted that Brazilian consumers are more price-oriented, which may be due to the country's economic conditions. Similarly, the results of the study in Ukraine showed that price is an important factor for consumers, but they are willing to pay more for products that meet their high quality and environmental requirements.

Thus, the study is consistent with many previous works but also reveals some discrepancies, which emphasises the importance of addressing cultural and regional differences in consumer behaviour. Further research in this area could help to identify additional factors that influence consumer preferences and develop more effective strategies to increase the competitiveness of enterprises in the global market.

Overall, the findings of the study provide valuable insights for food businesses, helping them to better understand their customers' needs and tailor their products and marketing strategies to meet those needs. This helps to increase customer satisfaction, build brand loyalty and ensure long-term market success.

► Conclusions

An analysis of consumer age preferences showed that younger consumers (aged 18 to 35) prefer innovative and aesthetic products, while older consumers (aged 50 and over) value functionality and safety more. The influence of educational level on consumer preferences is manifested in the fact that consumers with higher education (40%) pay more attention to the environmental friendliness of products, while consumers with secondary specialised education (35%) trust trusted brands more. Occupation also has a significant impact on consumer preferences. Business professionals (45%) focus on brand and price, healthcare professionals (30%) on health and safety, and educators (25%) on the value and educational impact of the product. Gender differences in satisfaction with packaging revealed that women are significantly more likely to say that the aesthetic and functional aspects of packaging are important. The average level of satisfaction with packaging among women was 4.5 out of 5, while among men it was 3.8 out of 5. The impact of demographic factors on packaging perceptions showed that consumers with higher incomes (90%) are more likely to pay attention to premium packaging and the additional benefits it can offer, including innovative materials and environmental certifications. Those with lower incomes (60%) are more focused on affordability and ease of use.

The research findings highlight the importance of considering the demographic and professional characteristics of consumers when developing products and marketing strategies. This will help increase customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty and ensure long-term market success. The study has several limitations. The sample of respondents may not fully reflect the diversity of consumers in Ukraine. The study did not address the impact of seasonal factors and cultural characteristics on consumer preferences. The main areas for further research include analysing the impact of cultural characteristics and new technologies on consumer behaviour. The main areas for further

research include a more detailed analysis of the impact of cultural characteristics on consumer preferences, as well as research on the impact of new technologies on consumer behaviour. It is also important to address global trends, such as sustainable development and environmental awareness, and their impact on consumer behaviour in different regions of the world.

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►Conflict of interest

The authors of this study declare no conflict of interest.

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Маркетинговий моніторинг для визначення конкурентоспроможності харчового підприємства

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► **Анотація.** Метою статті було оцінити ринкову позицію харчових підприємств та виявити ключові чинники, що впливають на задоволеність споживачів продукцією. Дослідження включало опитування 200 споживачів та 50 представників підприємств, стратифікаційний аналіз, t-критерій Стьюдента та критерій Фішера. Основні результати показали, що якість продукції є найважливішим чинником із вагою 40 %, тоді як ціна мала вагу 25 %, доступність 20 % і упаковка 15 %. Молодші споживачі (18-35 років) надають перевагу інноваційним і естетичним продуктам, тоді як старші групи більше цінують функціональність і безпеку. Споживачі з вищою освітою віддають перевагу екологічним продуктам, тоді як споживачі з середньою спеціальною освітою більше довіряють перевіреним брендам. Аналіз професійних відмінностей показав, що бізнес-професіонали зосереджуються на бренді та ціні, медичні працівники – на здоров'ї та безпеці, а освітяни – на вартості та освітньому впливі продукту. Крім того, дослідження виявило, що жінки значно частіше відзначають важливість естетичних та функціональних аспектів упаковки порівняно з чоловіками, із середніми рівнями задоволеності упаковкою 4,5 та 3,8 відповідно ($p < 0,05$). Також було виявлено, що споживачі з вищим рівнем доходу частіше обирають продукти з преміум-упаковкою та додатковими перевагами. Висновки підкреслюють необхідність адаптації маркетингових стратегій для задоволення специфічних потреб різних демографічних груп, що сприятиме підвищенню конкурентоспроможності харчових підприємств на ринку. Це дослідження надає цінну інформацію для виробників харчової продукції, допомагаючи їм краще розуміти споживачів та адаптувати свої продукти відповідно до їх потреб

► **Ключові слова:** демографічні характеристики; якість продукції; задоволеність споживачів; оцінка продуктів; ринкова стратегія; фактори вибору