
CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING WHEN PURCHASING FOOD PRODUCTS FROM UKRAINIAN MANUFACTURERS

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INTRODUCTION

In modern economic science, the study of consumer behavior serves as the foundation for developing effective marketing strategies. The process of making a purchasing decision is not a quick one, but rather a complex sequence of stages in which the consumer is influenced by a combination of specific internal and external factors.

Classical economic theory (A. Smith, D. Ricardo, J. Stuart Mill, T. Malthus) was based on the utility maximization postulate: the consumer possesses complete information about the market and chooses the good that yields the greatest benefit at the lowest cost. However, in practice, this theory proved to be flawed.

Modern theory (based on the research of L.V. Balabanova and S.V. Garkavenko) views consumer behavior as a system of an individual's adaptation to environmental conditions^{1, 2}. Consumers satisfy their needs by making the choices that seem acceptable to them at a given time.

According to the classical approach, the decision-making process consists of five main stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of options, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior.

The first stage is recognizing a need. It arises when a consumer perceives a gap between their desired and actual state, where the impulse can be triggered by both internal stimuli (hunger, thirst) and external ones (advertising, a store window)³.

During the information-seeking stage, consumers gather data by drawing on their own cognitive experience (internal sources of information) and their

¹ Балабанова Л. В. Маркетинговий менеджмент : навч. посібник. Київ : Знання, 2014. 354 с.

² Гаркавенко С. С. Маркетинг : підручник. Київ : Лібра, 2010. 720 с.

³ Шафалюк О. К. Споживачі на ринку : монографія. Київ : КНЕУ, 2015. 212 с.

active external environment. In this era of widespread digitalization, the significance of external communication factors has increased substantially. Modern Ukrainian consumers are characterized by a high level of trust in informal information – in particular, user-generated content on social media and the expert opinions of influencers. На стадії пошуку інформації споживач збирає дані, звертаючись до власного когнітивного досвіду (внутрішні джерела інформації) та активного зовнішнього середовища⁴.

The process of evaluating alternatives is based on a system of individual criteria that reflect a person's key priorities, and it is at this stage that the “awareness set” and “choice set” are structured, within which the individual analyzes brands based on their ability to best meet current needs⁵.

During the purchase stage, two factors can influence a consumer's decision: the opinions of those around them (so-called social pressure) and unforeseen circumstances (such as the unavailability of the desired product or the sudden emergence of priorities that require additional financial expenditure).

The final stage is the experience following the purchase. It is this experience that will determine whether a person returns to this brand again. If the actual product turns out to be worse than expected, “cognitive dissonance” arises – a state of disappointment that negates all of the company's previous advertising efforts⁶.

Therefore, the very process of choosing is always an attempt to solve a problem without having all the facts. Since consumers never have complete information (so-called “information asymmetry”), they subconsciously use heuristics – simple rules that make their choice easier, namely: the recognition strategy (I buy what I've seen on TV, in advertising brochures, on billboards, on social media, etc.); the price-quality strategy (if a product is expensive, it subconsciously implies high quality; or if it's the Nasha Ryaba brand, their products are safe and fresh thanks to the company's “from grain to plate” control policy); the social proof strategy (I buy what others have or choose – the bandwagon effect). Thus, the theoretical essence of this phenomenon lies in reducing cognitive load. The consumer strives to make a decision as quickly as possible and with minimal effort. The economics of choice is, above all, a struggle to become the easiest and most desirable choice for the buyer, one that leaves no doubt about the choice made.

⁴ Шафалюк О. К. Споживачі на ринку : монографія. Київ : КНЕУ, 2015. 212 с.

⁵ Решетнікова І. В. Маркетингова стратегія підприємства : навч. посібник. Київ : Знання, 2010. 252 с.

⁶ Куденко Н. В. Стратегічний маркетинг : навч. посібник. Київ : КНЕУ, 2012. 523 с.

1. Key factors influencing Ukrainian consumers' decisions

Making a purchasing decision in Ukraine today is not just about choosing a specific product, but also about the consumer's attempt to adapt to extremely challenging conditions. While price used to be the decisive factor, the psychological model of choice has now become much more complex. Let's examine the main groups of factors that guide modern Ukrainians.

1. The factor of security and trust. In conditions of constant instability (power outages, air raid alerts, constant enemy attacks on infrastructure, uncertainty about the future, limited financial resources, and financial instability), product quality has taken center stage. Consumers fear buying spoiled or low-quality goods. Therefore, they subconsciously choose large, recognizable brands (such as “Nasha Ryaba”).

For Ukrainians, a large, stable company is a guarantee that production standards are met and that products are of high quality, fresh, and safe. This is a reassuring factor for which the buyer is willing to pay more. Ключові фактори впливу на рішення українських споживачів

It is also important to note that Ukrainian legislation regarding compliance with product quality requirements and liability for violations is gradually improving, but not sufficiently. Control over manufacturers is largely formal in nature. The mechanism for returning goods and compensating for damages based on the provisions of the Law of Ukraine “On the Protection of Consumer Rights” is often very complex and time-consuming in practice⁷.

European quality standards (EN) are stricter than Ukrainian ones (DSTU), as they prioritize safety, quality, and environmental friendliness. Ukraine is in the process of aligning its legislation with EU requirements in accordance with the Association Agreement⁸.

Quality control for Ukrainian products is far from perfect; very often, the ingredients listed on the label do not match the actual contents, not to mention underground workshops and production facilities. Therefore, domestic consumers place greater trust in craft producers and small family businesses that care about their image and reputation, as well as in industrial giants that export their goods, whose products undergo multi-stage inspections in order to enter and remain competitive in foreign markets.

⁷ Про захист прав споживачів : Закон України. *Відомості Верховної Ради (ВВР)*. 2023. № 78, ст. 276. URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3153-20#Text>.

⁸ Угода про асоціацію між Україною, з однієї сторони, та Європейським Союзом, Європейським співтовариством з атомної енергії і їхніми державами-членами, з іншої сторони. Офіційний сайт Верховної Ради України. URL: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/984_011#Text.

2. The social factor. Ukrainians have become extremely sensitive to the values of the brand they choose. The so-called ethical choice has become a priority. Before making a purchase, consumers (often unconsciously) check whether the brand supports the military, has withdrawn from the market of the aggressor country, or allocates funds to volunteer programs. A company's social stance has become a powerful factor in loyalty. If a chosen brand demonstrates patriotism, the consumer feels involved in a good cause simply by purchasing its products.

3. The factor of saving personal time and energy (convenience). Due to high levels of constant stress and fatigue, consumers have come to value their time and energy more. This is a factor of functional convenience. Instead of buying a whole chicken and spending time cutting it up, Ukrainians opt for ready-made solutions: fillets, marinated meat, or semi-prepared foods ("ready-to-cook"), such as nuggets. Preference is given to a more expensive product whose preparation will save precious time that can be devoted to oneself and one's family. In conditions of energy scarcity, this is a decisive argument.

4. The information factor. Traditional TV commercials and billboards have begun to lose their influence on consumers. Social proof is becoming the dominant factor. Consumers now trust reviews in online forums or posts by bloggers and celebrities more than official slogans. Ukrainians have started actively using mobile apps and retail chains' websites to search for discounts and promotional items. Such actions subconsciously give a sense of control over one's own financial resources, which is extremely important in the current realities faced by consumers in Ukraine.

2. Factors influencing purchasing decisions and directions for the transformation of marketing strategies among Ukrainian companies in the industry

An analysis of Ukraine's consumer market for the period 2021–2024 reveals a profound shift in priorities driven by macroeconomic shocks. The food inflation index has become a key factor driving Ukrainians' choices. While inflation was moderate in 2021 (10%), it surged to 26.6% (overall) and over 34.4% for food products in 2022. Take the rise in chicken prices, for example. Based on average monthly prices from the Ministry of Finance portal, the average price of chicken breast rose from 108.44 UAH/kg in 2021 to 163.14 UAH/kg in 2024 (Table 1). This has forced consumers to switch from buying premium cuts to more budget-friendly options (drumsticks, wings) or to look for promotional offers from large retail chains.

Table 1

Comparison of average prices for meat products (UAH/kg)

Products	2021	2022	2023	2024
Chicken breast, UAH/kg	108,44	131,68	139,05	163,14
Pork (UAH/kg)	120,55	146,06	188,45	180,69
Beef (UAH/kg)	164,86	205,61	221,42	270,56

Source: created by the author based on⁹.

Economic factors have triggered a “substitution effect” that is clearly evident in industry statistics. Due to rising prices for beef and pork (which, according to the Ministry of Finance portal, outpaced the rate of increase in poultry prices), the share of chicken in total meat consumption in Ukraine has risen to over 55%. Chicken has officially become the primary source of animal protein for most households, making the pricing policies of market leaders (particularly MHP) strategically important for the entire industry.

During the 2022–2024 period, purchasing decisions were influenced by the stability of supply. According to retail statistics, during power outages, consumers preferred vacuum-packed products and semi-prepared foods that do not require lengthy preparation. This confirms the shift from a “raw material” choice to a “functional” choice, where ease of use and speed of heat treatment are key factors.

An analysis of real household income indicates a decline in its currency equivalent. This has given rise to the “rational shopping” phenomenon: consumers have begun to shop more frequently but in smaller quantities, which has led, for example, to food giants such as MHP expanding their product range to include portion-sized packaging. According to the data presented in Table 1, certain trends can be observed. In recent years, there has been a steady upward trend in the cost of all types of meat products, driven by a combination of macroeconomic factors.

Prices for pork and beef are rising faster than those for chicken, making poultry products more economically attractive for consumers’ budgets. Chicken breast has shown the most stable yet continuous growth – from 108.44 UAH in 2021 to 163.14 UAH in 2024. Thus, the total absolute increase amounted to 54.70 UAH, which represents a 50.44% increase. This confirms chicken’s status as a staple protein source, with a price that is less volatile compared to other types of meat. Pork and beef saw a sharper price surge in 2022–2023. In particular, the price of pork rose by a record 29.02% in 2022 alone, which is

⁹ Середні ціни на товари та послуги. Мінфін: фінансовий портал. URL: <https://index.minfin.com.ua/ua/markets/product-prices> (дата звернення: 20.03.2026).

attributed to logistical challenges and a reduction in livestock numbers due to hostilities.

The combination of military risks, energy shortages, rising feed costs, and logistical challenges is creating the conditions for further price increases in meat products. The need to maintain complex technological processes and cold-chain logistics amid an energy crisis – exacerbated by the instability of global fuel prices due to geopolitical tensions in the Middle East – inevitably leads to higher costs for end consumers. Rising prices for diesel fuel and gasoline directly impact producers' logistics costs. For example, for companies with their own distribution networks (their own trucks), every hryvnia increase in fuel prices adds 2–3% to the cost per kilogram of meat on the shelf.

Poultry farms require stable heating (gas/electricity) and ventilation. Amid power shortages and the shift to generators, the cost of energy increases by 3–5 times. This creates a “price shock” that is gradually passed on to the consumer. Grain elevators and feed mills also depend on energy costs (for grain drying), which increases the cost of raising poultry. The outlook for the future is not very optimistic at this time. In the medium term, retail prices are expected to rise by 10–12%. The main peak will occur during periods of increased electricity rates for industry.

To save money, consumers will increasingly opt for packaged goods and ready-to-cook meals in order to better control their spending and time. To retain the loyalty of budget-conscious consumers, companies are forced to strike a balance between raising prices and optimizing their own energy and logistics costs.

The transformation in consumer behavior caused by the macroeconomic shocks of 2021–2024 has forced Ukraine's food industry to radically rethink its marketing models. Whereas competition used to revolve primarily around price, the industry has now shifted its focus to competing for consumers' time and trust.

– *The shift toward the “Food-as-a-Service” model.* The meat processing industry is seeing a clear move away from selling unprocessed raw materials. The development of high-value-added products has become a priority, specifically Ready-to-Cook (semi-prepared foods) – this is a response to consumer demand for simplified meal preparation. Manufacturers are investing in marinating technologies, portion-cutting, and baking-ready packaging. Companies in the industry are moving away from positioning themselves as farms and are instead becoming kitchen assistants, offering ready-made recipe solutions.

– *Restructuring of distribution channels.* Industry analysis indicates a shift in the role of retail. Instead of general-purpose hypermarkets, industry leaders are developing their own or partner single-brand chains. This allows them to control the “cold chain” (especially important during blackouts) and collect

consumer data directly at the point of sale. Integrating online orders with physical pickup locations has become a mandatory standard for maintaining market share.

– *Adapting pricing to the new realities.* Based on inflation data from the Ministry of Finance’s monitoring portal, companies in the industry have implemented a flexible pricing strategy. The use of fixed-weight packaging (for example, 350–500 g instead of 1 kg) allows for maintaining a psychologically comfortable price per unit of product. Marketing budgets are being reallocated from direct advertising to trade marketing (discounts, bonuses), as 75% of purchasing decisions in the industry are now made directly at the shelf based on the so-called “yellow price tag.”

– *Social and value-based differentiation.* During the 2022–2024 period, a mandatory element of reputational sustainability was incorporated into the industry’s marketing strategies. Factors such as support for the military, energy independence in production, and tax transparency have become part of marketing communications. Consumers tend to choose brands that demonstrate social responsibility, which fosters long-term loyalty that is resilient to price fluctuations.

According to the data presented in Table 2, there has been a trend in recent years toward a shift from selling bulk goods (whole carcasses, meat by weight) to high-value-added products (semi-prepared and ready-to-eat meals). Companies now sell not just raw materials, but “time” and “convenience,” which align with the modern pace of consumers’ lives. Instead of exhausting price wars and dumping (the battle for the lowest price on the market), businesses have shifted to more sophisticated strategies. Customer retention through bonuses and personalization (loyalty cards).

Table 2

**Evolution of marketing tools in the food industry
(based on original research)**

The 4P Element	Traditional approach (until 2021)	Modern approach (from 2024)
Product	Bulk goods, raw materials	Semi-finished products, ready-to-eat meals
Price	Price wars, dumping	Loyalty programs, “price per serving,” promotional campaigns
Place	Mass market, markets	Branded retail chains, neighborhood stores
Promotion	Іміджева реклама (ТБ)	Social projects, digital engagement, collaboration with bloggers and influencers

Source: Compiled by the author based on personal observations.

To mitigate the price shock for consumers, manufacturers are shifting to a model of reducing the nominal weight per unit. This approach allows them to maintain a psychologically acceptable price per package, despite rising raw material costs.

Large-scale mass-market retailers and markets are beginning to compete with specialized formats (such as “M’yasomarket”). This allows companies to directly control the customer experience and service. The focus is shifting toward walk-in accessibility, which is a key factor for daily purchases of fresh produce. Traditional image advertising on television reaches everyone, but it is not always effective. Collaborating with bloggers and influencers builds a higher level of trust.

3. The company’s marketing mix and measures for its improvement (using PJSC “MHP” as an example)

MHP (Myronivsky Hliboproduct) is a leading international player in the food and agrotechnology sector, as well as the largest poultry producer in Ukraine. It is important to view the company not merely as a producer, but as a complex system that directly influences consumer choice.

– *Scale and structure of operations.* The company is based on a vertical integration model, which, in conditions of instability, is its main competitive advantage. MHP is a full-cycle company. It independently grows grain for compound feed, produces poultry meat, and handles its own logistics and retail operations. The company’s portfolio includes such well-known brands as “Nasha Ryaba” (market leader), “Legko!”, “Bashchynskyi,” “Skott Smeat,” “Super Filéo,” “Vegas,” “Sekreti Shefa,” and the “Myasomarket” neighborhood store chain.

– *Business model transformation (2021–2024).* It was during this period that MHP embarked on a large-scale transformation from an agricultural holding into a culinary company. This move was a direct response to the factors of “time constraints” and “demand for convenience.” The goal of the transformation is to create high-value-added products (semi-finished goods, ready-to-eat meals) and develop its own retail network for direct contact with consumers.

– *Economic role in the market.* According to financial reports and industry monitoring (including the Ministry of Finance portal), MHP holds over 50% of the industrial chicken production market share in Ukraine. The company is one of the country’s largest taxpayers and foreign exchange earners, which strengthens “social trust” and patriotic loyalty among Ukrainian consumers.

MHP’s product portfolio strategy is a key tool for influencing consumer decisions. Between 2021 and 2024, the company transitioned from a “raw materials producer” model to a “culinary company” model, which enabled

it to differentiate its products based on various factors. According to the company's annual reports (MHP Annual Reports), the key objective is to transition from a model of raw material supplier to a producer of ready-to-eat food solutions, in line with the global trend toward convenience. The company's products are clearly divided into categories, each of which is designed to meet specific psychological and economic needs of the consumer.

Table 3

Product portfolio segments by target market

Main Segments	TM	Brand Product portfolio	Product factors	Segment priorities
Core segment	TM “Nasha Ryaba”	chilled poultry (whole birds, cuts)	core factors of safety and trust	most in demand due to affordability compared to pork and beef
Value-added segment	TM “Apetitna,” “Legko!”	marinated meat, ready-to-bake dishes, nuggets	the main influencing factor is convenience	a premium for speed of preparation, which is critical in high-stress situations.
Premium and niche segment	TM “Skott Smeat,” “Bashchynskyi”	dry-aged beef and sausage products	Gastronomic pleasure	focus on obtaining the desired emotional reward.

Source: this resource was created by the author based on¹⁰.

Innovations in packaging and technology are aimed at preserving quality and safety. Taking into account industry challenges (blackouts, logistical disruptions), MHP's product analytics identifies the following technological factors. Vacuum packaging and modified gas atmospheres allow for extending the shelf life of chilled meat without freezing. For the consumer, this ensures freshness and reliability. The shift from bulk goods to portion-sized packages of 400–600 g. This addresses the “rational check” concept – the consumer sees a fixed price per package, which makes budget planning easier in an inflationary environment.

MHP's products are highly competitive thanks to vertical integration (control from grain to shelf). This creates a guarantee of quality for the buyer, which is difficult for small local producers to replicate.

According to market analyses (Forbes Ukraine¹¹, Dragon Capital¹²), MHP's products maintain their market leadership thanks to vertical integration.

¹⁰ Офіційний сайт МХП. URL: <https://mhp.com.ua> (дата звернення 18.03.2026).

¹¹ Українська версія авторитетного міжнародного бізнес-видання Forbes. URL: <http://www.forbes.ua> (дата звернення 05.03.2026).

¹² Сайт однієї з найвпливовіших українських груп компаній у сфері інвестицій та фінансових послуг. URL: <http://www.dragon-capital.com> (дата звернення 05.03.2026).

Quality control begins with feed production and extends through the company’s own logistics, which minimizes the impact of external logistics risks on product freshness.

Table 4 presents an analytical assessment of MHP’s product lines. The analysis is based on key influencing factors, sources of competitive advantages, and demand trends. MHP focuses not merely on meat sales but on high-value-added products (semi-finished goods).

Table 4

**Analytical assessment of PJSC “MHP” product lines through
the lens of influencing factors**

Product category	Key influencing factor	Source of competitive advantage	Share of demand (trend)
Chilled Chicken	Brand Trust and Price	Brand Awareness > 90%	Stable
Ready-to-Cook Products	Convenience and Speed	Wide product range	Wide product range
Prepared meals (M'yasomarket)	Service and ready-made solutions	Own chain of “M'yasomarket” stores	Rapid growth
Sausage products	Taste and value	Wide “Bashchynsky” product range	Moderate growth

Source: Created by the author based on personal observations.

The company’s own “Myasomarket” store chain is identified as a key advantage for its culinary products, minimizing dependence on third-party retailers. High brand recognition – over 90% in the core segment – allows the company to experiment with new product lines, building on the trust it has earned from consumers.

Between 2021 and 2024, the Ukrainian food market was affected by extreme factors: the COVID-19 pandemic, a full-scale invasion, inflation, logistical challenges, and mass population migration.

According to the annual reports of PJSC “MHP,” the company has demonstrated adaptability to changes in consumer demand. In 2021, the strategy focused on transforming from a raw materials company into a culinary one, which aligned with consumer demand for ready-to-eat and quick-prep meals. However, starting in 2022, product availability and safety have also become important. An analysis of financial reports shows that despite logistical challenges, the company’s revenue in 2023 increased by 14% compared to 2022, which is attributed to both inflationary pressures and stable demand for poultry meat as the most affordable source of protein for Ukrainians. This confirms that, in a context of declining incomes, affordability becomes the dominant factor.

Based on an analysis of PJSC “MHP”’s non-financial reports and sustainability reports, three main groups of factors can be identified that influenced Ukrainians’ purchasing decisions during this period.

- Economic factor (price elasticity and the “price-quality” strategy).

In its 2022 report, the company notes that consumer price inflation forced shoppers to reevaluate their shopping baskets. There was a shift from expensive beef and pork to chicken. The growth in the share of chicken meat sales in the retail segment against the backdrop of a general decline in purchasing power. Consumers choose products that meet their basic needs at the lowest possible cost.

- Socio-psychological factors (brand trust, corporate social responsibility).

During the war, product safety and trust in the manufacturer have become critical factors. In its 2023 report, MHP notes increased loyalty to the “Nasha Ryba” brand, as consumers, in times of uncertainty, tend to choose familiar brands that guarantee quality. To avoid risk, the buyer is willing to pay more for the brand to be confident in the product’s freshness.

An analysis of the 2023 sustainability (ESG) report shows that Ukrainian consumers have begun to pay attention to how the company supports the Armed Forces of Ukraine and local communities. MHP’s humanitarian projects, such as “MHP-Community,” have had a positive impact on the brand’s image.

- Situational factors (convenience and changes in distribution channels, environmental friendliness).

Reports from 2021–2023 document a sharp increase in demand for individually packaged products and semi-finished goods. This is primarily due to time savings and quick meal preparation amid power outages and water supply issues. The number of retail outlets in the “Myasomarket” chain grew to over 240 in 2023, indicating demand for the “neighborhood store” format».

4. A study of factors influencing consumers of PJSC “MHP” and ways to improve the company’s marketing activities

a total of 135 respondents participated in the pilot study: 51.4% were men and 48.6% were women. In the food sector (especially meat), women traditionally tend to act as the primary decision-makers for family purchases. Women focus more on safety and environmental friendliness. They are more likely to read the ingredients list on the packaging and look for labels such as “antibiotic-free,” “GMO-free,” and so on. It is women who are the main critics of industrial chicken in favor of free-range chicken. Men tend to prioritize functionality and quantity. For them, it is more important that the product is filling, or that it is a ready-made solution (such as marinated kebabs) that does not require a long preparation time.

It was important for the study to take into account the purchasing attitudes of both men and women.

The respondents' ages ranged from 26–40 (62.9%), 41–60 (20%), and over 60 (17.1%). Each generation has its own purchasing preferences. Young people (18–25 years old) typically prioritize speed. They are more likely to buy ready-to-eat meals. Middle-aged consumers (26–40 years old), the so-called “family” demographic, prefer both semi-prepared products and whole or portioned chicken. For them, meat quality and convenient packaging are important. The older generation (41+) is more conservative. They are accustomed to buying whole chickens or meat by weight and cooking “from scratch.” It is this group that most often chooses “free-range” chicken at markets out of habit or a whole chicken at the supermarket.

Classifying customers by marital status is one of the key elements of demographic segmentation in marketing research. Marital status directly influences how much and how often a person purchases a product. Single people prefer portion-sized items, small packages (e.g., 200 g of chicken breast), and quick-to-prepare foods; price also plays an important role for them. Large families focus on bulk purchases and staple foods in significant quantities.

The vast majority of respondents (65.7%) belong to families consisting of 3–4 people, 17.1% to families of 2, 11.4% are single, and 5.8% are families consisting of 5 or more people.

According to the analysis of this study, the dominant factors influencing the choice of meat products in stores are freshness, production date, product appearance, price, and promotional offers (Fig. 1).

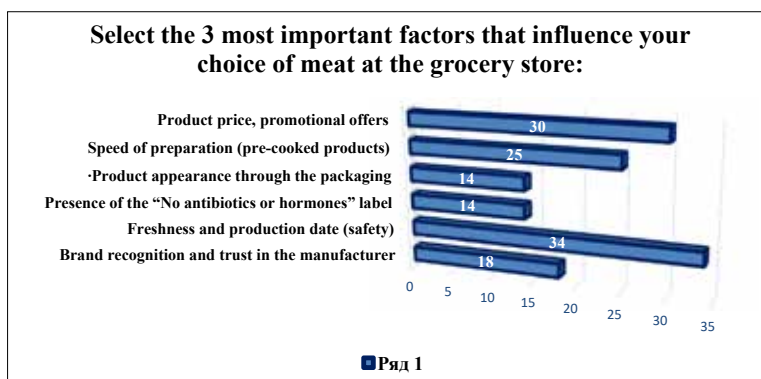


Fig. 1. Factors influencing the choice of meat products

Source: Created by the author based on original research.

The vast majority of respondents who participated in the study (85.7%) belong to the category of people with a middle-income level, which is sufficient for food and clothing, but requires saving up for major purchases (Fig. 2).

Middle-income consumers are rational. They don't buy the cheapest items because they care about quality, but they also don't mindlessly buy expensive items because they need to save money. These shoppers look for a balance between price and quality. If such a shopper sees expensive decor or a "sommelier" at "Meat Market," they might subconsciously think it's "too expensive." It's important to understand whether the modern design might scare off this group of people, who are used to saving money. People with average incomes often work long hours to maintain their standard of living. For them, time is money. They are willing to pay a little more for marinated meat or a ready-made meal if it allows them to relax after work. This is the ideal target audience for MHP's "culinary company" concept. For this group, it is critically important to have a clear loyalty program and regular promotional offers, allowing them to effectively manage their daily budget while still being able to save up for major purchases.

According to the data obtained (Fig. 3), 42.9% of respondents buy chicken 2–3 times a week, 25.7% buy it once a week, 22.9% buy it less frequently, and 8.6% do not buy poultry at all.

These figures demonstrate the market's high capacity and a well-established culture of poultry consumption in Ukraine. The fact that the majority of respondents (68.6%) buy chicken at least once a week indicates low price elasticity of demand for this product.

This creates favorable conditions for implementing loyalty programs aimed at retaining regular customers.

According to the survey results (Fig. 4), 25.7% of respondents prefer the "Nasha Ryaba" brand (which indicates that MHP products are in high

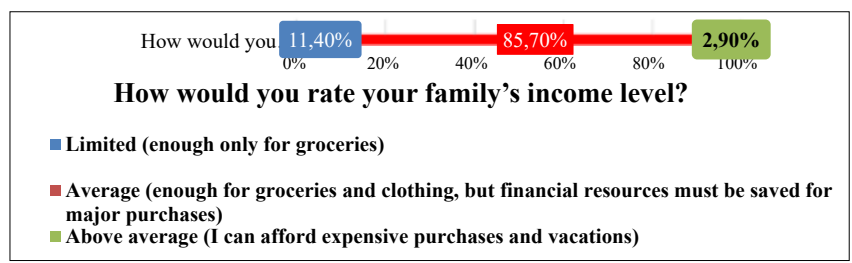


Fig. 2. Household income level

Source: Created by the author based on original research.

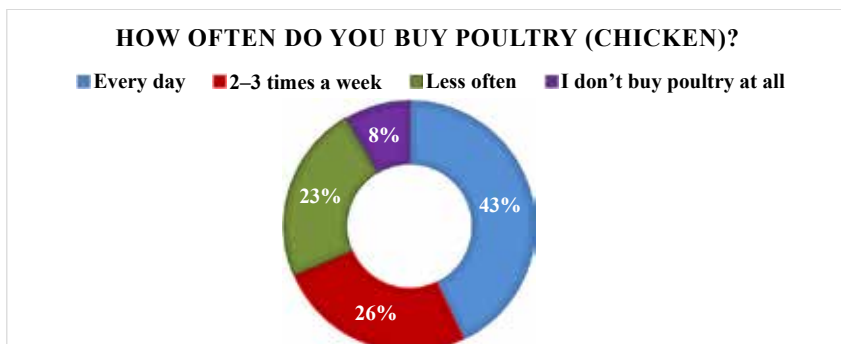


Fig. 3. Frequency of poultry meat purchases

Source: Created by the author based on original research

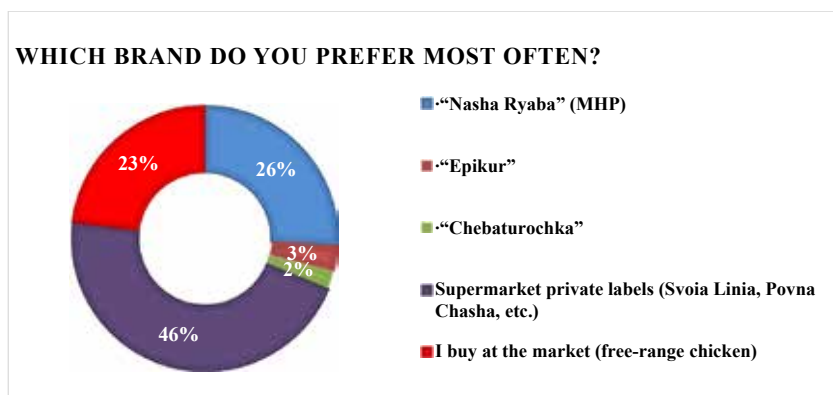


Fig. 4. Brand popularity ranking among surveyed consumers

Source: Created by the author based on original research.

demand), 45.7% prefer supermarket private labels (Povna Chasha, Svoia Linia, etc., as this offers convenience and saves time by allowing them to purchase other items along with chicken), and 22.9% buy poultry (which indicates that quality, environmental friendliness, and taste are important to shoppers).

According to the survey data, price remains the dominant factor in purchasing decisions for the majority of respondents (Fig. 5).

This indicates a high price sensitivity among the target audience, driven by consumers' desire to optimize their daily expenses. At the same time, the results

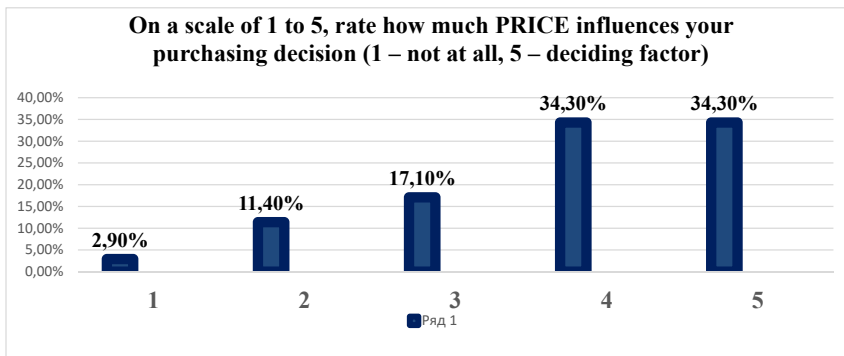


Fig. 5. The impact of price on purchase decisions

Source: Created by the author based on original research.

show that price is not perceived in isolation, but in close connection with the product's quality characteristics.

“Respondents are willing to pay a moderate premium only if freshness and safety are guaranteed, which confirms a rational model of their behavior.” The data obtained indicate that consumers are extremely price-sensitive. A total of 94.3% of respondents are guided, to one degree or another, by promotional offers. This confirms the thesis that in the modern meat products market, price is the primary tool for stimulating sales. Only a small proportion of respondents (5.7%) demonstrate complete price inelasticity, which is characteristic of the premium segment of high-income consumers.



Fig. 6. The effect of promotional pricing on purchasing decisions

Source: Created by the author based on original research.

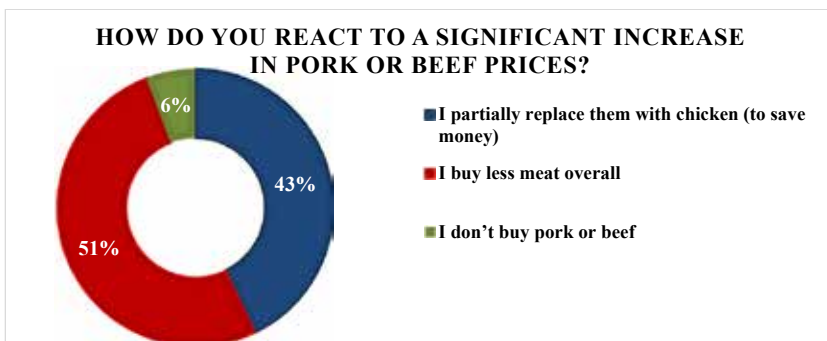


Fig. 7. Response to rising pork and beef prices

Source: Created by the author based on original research.

When pork and beef prices rise, 51.4% of respondents begin to buy less meat overall, while 42.9% partially substitute them with chicken (Fig. 7). These results confirm consumers' high sensitivity to price fluctuations in the meat market. The fact that 42.9% of respondents are willing to substitute expensive pork and beef with chicken indicates poultry's status as the primary substitute product. For MHP, this means that any significant increase in prices for other types of meat automatically expands its customer base, as chicken remains the most affordable source of animal protein for Ukrainians. This allows the company to maintain sales volumes even amid declining consumer purchasing power, provided that chicken is properly positioned as an affordable and healthy alternative to more expensive red meat.

Only 14.3% believe that the chosen manufacturer must support the Armed Forces of Ukraine, engage in volunteer activities, etc.; for 62.9%, this would be desirable but is not the main factor when choosing a brand; and for 22.9% of survey participants, it is not important at all (Fig. 8).

These results indicate that a brand's social engagement (supporting the Armed Forces, volunteering) is an important but not a decisive factor for the majority of consumers (62.9%). This suggests that corporate social responsibility is perceived as an added benefit rather than the primary reason for purchase. For MHP, this means that despite the importance of charitable projects, product quality and affordable prices must remain the foundation of the marketing strategy, as these are critical for 85.8% of respondents (the sum of those for whom this is unimportant or important only as an added benefit). 88.6% choose raw meat (carcass, fillet) for home cooking, 8.6% prefer semi-prepared products, and only 2.9% opt for ready-to-eat meals (Fig. 9).

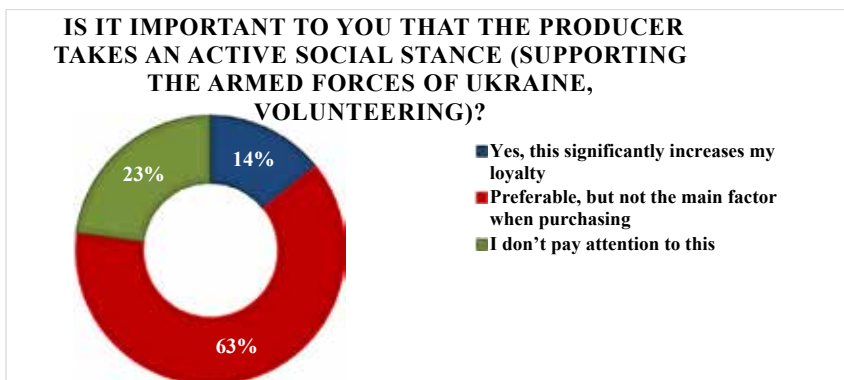


Fig. 8. The influence of a manufacturer's social position on consumers

Source: Created by the author based on original research.

The results confirm that the market remains traditional. 88.6% of consumers still focus on purchasing raw ingredients (whole cuts, fillets) for home cooking. This indicates a strong conservatism among Ukrainian households.

For MHP's strategy to transform into a "culinary company," this indicates the existence of enormous untapped potential; however, it also points to the need for a long-term effort to educate consumers about the benefits of ready-to-eat meals (2.9%) and semi-prepared foods (8.6%).

34.3% of respondents confirm that shopping at specialty meat stores like "M'yasomarket" is very convenient and comfortable, but they usually shop at

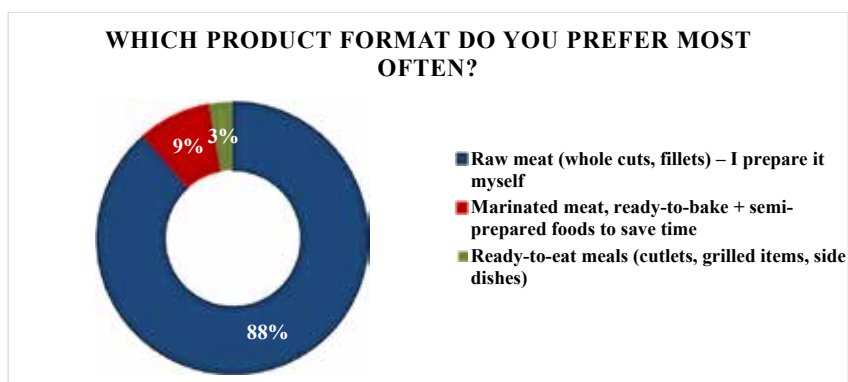


Fig. 9. The impact of a manufacturer's social stance on consumers

Source: Created by the author based on original research.

large supermarkets, where a wide variety of necessary products is available in one place, which significantly saves time on shopping (Fig. 10).

The survey results revealed serious competition between specialized meat retailers and multi-format supermarkets. The main challenge for MHP remains transforming “Myasomarket” from a destination for meat purchases into a full-fledged store with an expanded range of complementary products. The most critical finding of the study is that the majority of respondents had never even heard of the “Myasomarket” chain. This indicates insufficient marketing communications during the project’s scaling phase. MHP needs to strengthen local marketing and advertising to convert potential interest into actual visits to its stores.

An analysis of the use of digital loyalty tools (Fig. 11) revealed a significant gap between the company’s technological offerings and actual customer behavior. The vast majority of respondents (82.9%) prefer traditional shopping without using mobile apps. This indicates that for the majority of the audience, digital barriers (the need to download software, registration) currently outweigh the potential benefits of MHP’s “YIMO” loyalty program.

To summarize the above, the following conclusions can be drawn. During this extremely difficult time for the Ukrainian population, saving money is a priority for most consumers, so price remains the decisive factor when choosing products. Shoppers prefer products that have stood the test of time and well-known brands, spending time searching for discounts and promotional offers.

Although neighborhood stores like “M’yasomarket” are very convenient, many people have never even heard of them. Unlike the “Nasha Ryaba” brand,

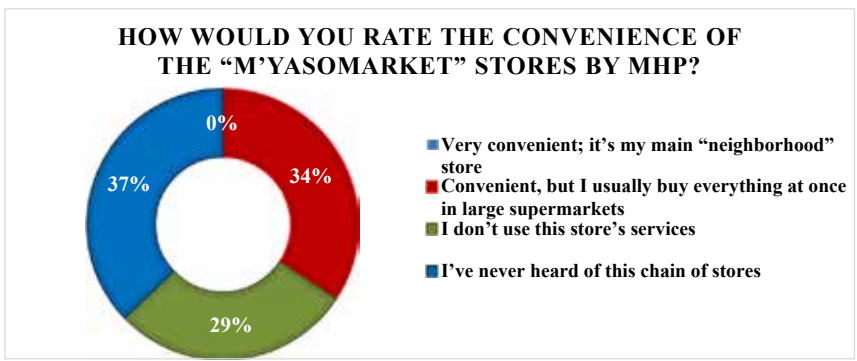


Fig. 10. The convenience of “Myasomarket” stores from the consumer's perspective

Source: Created by the author based on original research.

DO YOU USE THE MHP “YIMO” MOBILE APP FOR THE “MYASOMARKET” CHAIN OR OTHER DIGITAL LOYALTY PROGRAMS FROM OTHER RETAIL CHAINS?

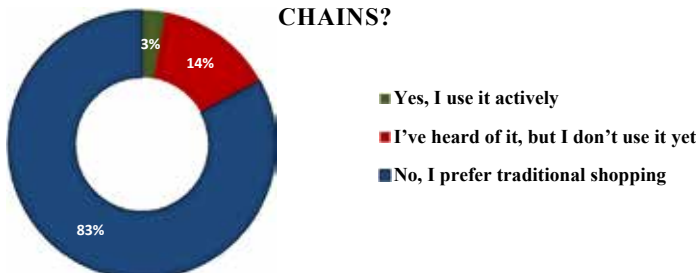


Fig. 11. Shoppers' use of MHP mobile apps and other digital loyalty programs from other retail chains

Source: Created by the author based on original research.

which has been advertised on national TV and radio for years, the promotion of the “Myasomarket” chain, which began in 2020, is more focused on digital (social media) and BTL (local promotions). The older generation (which is an active buyer of meat) is often left out of this communication.

To improve the marketing activities of PJSC MHP and increase the effectiveness of the “Myasomarket” chain, the following measures are proposed.

Strengthen local marketing (BTL promotions, geotargeted advertising) to raise brand awareness, as most potential customers are currently unfamiliar with this store format.

Rebranding or simplifying the interface of the “YIMO” app, including the introduction of an “instant benefit” mechanism (e.g., a 10–15% discount on the first purchase when the app is downloaded directly at the checkout, or “refer a friend and receive bonus points toward future purchases,” etc.).

Expanding the line of ready-to-eat culinary solutions and conducting regular tastings at points of sale to overcome the psychological barrier regarding the quality and taste characteristics of ready-made products.

The main way to improve marketing could be transforming “M’yasomarket” into a full-fledged mini-market. Given that 34.3% of consumers choose large retail chains solely because they can buy everything in one place, it is necessary to expand the complementary product range (bread, dairy products, basic fruits and vegetables, and possibly add baked goods to the product lineup). This will allow for the implementation of the concept of “quick and high-quality shopping close to home,” thereby neutralizing the advantage large retailers have in one-stop shopping.

Improvements to marketing activities should be based on increasing transparency. Since a significant portion of respondents still prefer poultry (22.9%), it would be advisable to implement QR codes on packaging, allowing consumers to instantly view the slaughter date, laboratory test results, and the conditions under which the poultry was raised. Such a step, combined with active communication of the company's volunteer projects (which 77.2% of respondents cited as a desired factor), will foster strong emotional brand loyalty."

CONCLUSIONS

The process of purchasing a product is a complex journey consisting of many stages. At each stage, the buyer may have doubts, revisit their choice, or change their mind several times.

Modern international and domestic approaches demonstrate a shift in focus from purely rational choice to emotional and behavioral models, where psychological triggers and social context play a decisive role.

Today's buyer has become more demanding regarding product safety and environmental friendliness. While price used to be the key factor, today trust in the manufacturer has become a key factor, which in Ukraine is often based on the manufacturer's long-standing presence in the market.

An analysis of the current market situation for the 2021–2024 period showed that Ukrainian consumers are influenced by extreme external factors. An examination of the annual reports of PJSC "MHP" revealed a trend toward "pragmatic loyalty." Consumers choose familiar brands for safety reasons but have become extremely sensitive to price fluctuations due to a decline in real incomes. These conclusions are also confirmed by the results of our own research into factors influencing consumers.

A practical study of the marketing mix, based on a survey of 135 respondents, revealed a high level of trust in the products of the "Nasha Ryaba" brand (25.7%). There is also a clear trend showing the influence of price, the availability of discounts, and loyalty programs on product selection, driven by the limited financial resources of the average Ukrainian. A correlation was found between a person's age, family composition, and purchasing power. Single people and the elderly have lower incomes and, as a result, can afford only a minimum of products, leading them to choose discounted items.

The shift from traditional retail outlets to culinary centers and neighborhood stores ("M'yasomarket") requires a rethinking of classic marketing models. Most respondents (37.1%) have never heard of stores of this type, which indicates that MHP's marketing and advertising policies are inadequate. 34.3% of respondents prioritize convenience and time savings when shopping,

choosing large supermarkets where they can buy everything at once in one place. This once again confirms that for the vast majority of consumers, time is a priceless and non-renewable resource.

It is important to note that middle-income shoppers are the “most loyal” segment for MHP, as they will not switch to the cheapest products at the first sign of a crisis, nor will they go to expensive gourmet markets.

In the Ukrainian context of 2022–2026, consumer behavior is driven not only by preferences but also by logistical constraints, shifts in income, and the need for long-shelf-life or quick-prep foods.

Thus, an analysis of PJSC “MHP”’s strategies reveals how past theoretical approaches are being adapted to today’s crisis conditions, transforming challenges into new opportunities for business development.

SUMMARY

Research into consumer decision-making mechanisms when making purchases now extends beyond purely marketing interests, becoming a matter of business adaptability and resilience. Amid high market volatility, inflationary pressures, and a decline in real household incomes in Ukraine, the structure of consumer priorities has undergone fundamental changes. The chosen topic is driven by the following factors:

1. Transformation of the consumption model. There is a shift from emotional shopping to a strategy of smart saving. Consumers are becoming more rational and discerning, comparing price offers and seeking added value in every purchase.

2. The effect of deferred demand and spending priorities. During times of crisis, consumers tend to postpone purchases of durable goods, focusing instead on basic needs. Understanding the touchpoints that can trigger a purchase under such conditions is key for retailers.

3. The patriotic dimension of consumption. Economic nationalism has become a unique influencing factor for the Ukrainian market. Supporting local producers often becomes a more compelling argument than the recognition of a global brand or even a price advantage.

Thus, a scientific analysis of choice factors allows businesses not only to survive but also to build loyal communities around their brand, based on a deep understanding of customers’ current pain points and needs.

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