

## ARTISANAL VS. INDUSTRIALIZED FOODS: CONSUMER CHOICES AND MARKET TREND

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Market research enables the acquisition of important information and data for management and development in the industry. This study aimed to profile consumers based on their preferences for artisanal and industrialized products.

This is justified because, with the constant changes in consumers' eating habits, understanding their behavior concerning their knowledge and consumption of these products can be useful in outlining strategies for the sector's development and understanding potential shifts in food consumption. Therefore, this article aims to explore consumers' preferences concerning two types of products (artisanal and processed). For this research, a market survey was conducted using an online questionnaire via the Google Forms platform, which received 100 responses. Data analysis and tabulation were

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performed using the statistical software R. The participating audience was mostly composed of single women, consumers of both artisanal and processed products, who reported that their emotions directly influenced their food choices. Furthermore, artisanal products are often consumed along with other food types categories of food and have weak ties to other categories classes. Thus, the consumption of artisanal products must offer advantages that meet consumers' demands, in addition to overcoming barriers imposed by non-sensory characteristics such as income, which can be considered one of the main limiting factors.

**Keywords:** Preference. Market study. Consumer decision. Questionnaire.



## **INTRODUCTION**

The industrialization process, the globalization of the food industry, and changes in consumer tastes and preferences, shaped by several factors, have driven the increase in the production and consumption of processed foods (Atzeni, et al., 2022). These products, standardized and produced on a large scale, aim to gain competitiveness through more affordable prices and the convenience of wholesale sales. In contrast, artisanal foods stand out for telling stories that often refer to cultural and family traditions, valuing authenticity and proximity to the producer.

In this context, understanding the choices and consumption habits among these different food categories can be obtained through easy-to-apply methodologies. The results of these analyses are essential to understanding the demands of the modern consumer, who has become increasingly concerned about the quality of products, as well as their impacts on health and the environment (Carvalho et al., 2018; Mesías et al., 2021).

Market research is a versatile and effective tool for capturing these trends. It enables us to understand the relationship between the consumption of certain food products and the innovations promoted by the industry, in addition to providing practical insights into consumer behavior, needs and desires. Through this research, it is possible to obtain valuable information Market research is a versatile and effective tool for capturing these trends. It enables us to understand the relationship between the consumption of certain food products and the innovations promoted by the industry, in addition to providing practical insights into consumer behavior, needs and desires. Through this research, it is possible to obtain valuable information about consumer profiles, their expectations, satisfaction, habits and attitudes towards products, in addition to identifying the factors that influence their purchasing decisions.

This knowledge helps in the development and innovation of new products within the food industry (Gonçalves et al., 2018). According to Velema et al. (2019), qualitative research is a flexible and adaptable approach, capable of generating deep insights and communicating its implications to the target audience.

Food, in addition to being a biological necessity, also carries cultural, social and political dimensions. As pointed out by Jomori et al. (2006), eating habits are influenced by environmental, psychological and biological factors, and are a complex practice. Wansink and Sobal (2006) highlight that, although nutritional knowledge is relevant, it is not sufficient to determine food choices, highlighting the importance of non-sensory factors in these decisions.



In this scenario, this study aims to explore consumer preferences regarding two distinct types of food products: artisanal and industrialized. To this end, market research was carried out in order to understand how the characteristics of each category affect purchasing decisions and consumer perception.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The project was submitted and approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (CEPH), under number CAAE: 52762021.9.0000.5588 and substantiated opinion No. 1 5,169,981 which constitutes qualitative research to understand the behaviors and perceptions of the individuals evaluated here through a semi-open questionnaire applied online, available between 12/15/2021 and 01/05/2022.

## SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION

In exploratory research, it is common to use the convenience sampling technique, with sample elements being individuals over 18 years of age and available to answer the questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared via Google Forms and the access link was shared using social networks, emails and WhatsApp. Along with the link, participants received the Free and Informed Consent Form (FICF), in which they confirmed their agreement to the research and authorized the use of their data. Participants stated that participation was voluntary. After expressing consent, the FICF and a copy of the responses were sent by email to each participant.

The assessment of consumer behavior regarding the choice between artisanal and industrialized food products was carried out through a market research with a questionnaire structured in two main sections. The first section addressed issues related to the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants and the second section focused on the factors that influence the choice between artisanal and industrialized foods. Participants answered open-ended and specific questions about the reasons behind their preferences and purchasing decisions as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1.Summary of questions presented to survey participants.

#### Questionnaire

Demographic data (gender identity, age group, income, family group, marital status, area of expertise).

Do you know what an artisanal food is?
What is an artisanal food?
Do you know what an industrialized food product is?
What is an industrialized food?
Why are you coming?
When choosing a food, what is most important?



What type of food do you usually consume more?
How much does your feeling interfere with your food consumption?
Justify the previous answer. You may want to give examples of the reasons for the feelings, report them and talk about how they interfere with your system (consuming more or less)

Do you think the environment interferes with the choice of food product?

Source: the authors (2024)

Furthermore, consumers' concepts regarding the definition of artisanal and industrialized products were investigated.

## **EVALUATION OF RESULTS**

An exploratory descriptive analysis of the data was carried out, presenting the results regarding the sociodemographic and cultural characteristics of the participants through graphs, figures and tables. To evaluate the relationship between the choice of artisanal or industrialized products with the determining factors of the choice, as well as with the sociodemographic and cultural variables, the logistic regression model was used.binary (RLB).Data were tabulated in Excel and statistical analyses were performed using R software as described below (R Core Team, 2019), with the response variable (Y) being considered "What type of food do you consume the most?" The value 1 was assigned to individuals who responded "artisanal" and 0 to individuals who responded "others" (industrial, minimally processed and ultra-processed). From the total sample obtained, 42 individuals who did not answer the question: "What type of food do you consume the most?" were excluded.

- Twelve explanatory or independent response variables (X's) were considered as described below:
  - o Do you know what artisanal food is?
  - o Do you know what an industrialized food is?
  - o How much do your feelings interfere with your food consumption?
  - Do you think the environment influences the choice of food product? Please justify,
     if you wish;
  - Gender identity; Age; Marital status;
  - o Who do you live with?
  - o Do you have children? If so, how many?
  - Currently you; Monthly income: Salary, read minimum wage;
  - What is your occupation in your family group?



## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The market research explored the behavior and perceptions regarding processed and artisanal foods, evaluating the content of the responses provided by 100 people. This group of consumers was characterized in relation to sociodemographic aspects and the results obtained are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

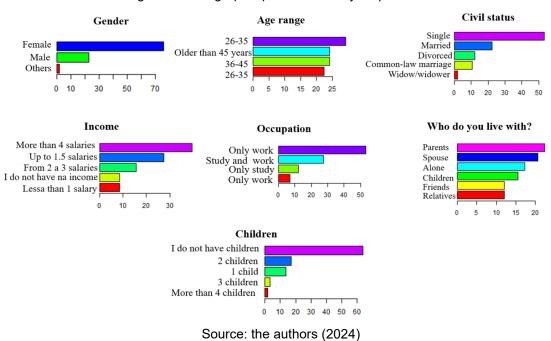


Figure 1.Demographic profile of survey respondents

The demographic profile of the research participants was mostly represented by single people (49%), followed by married people and those in stable unions (40%), without children (55%), who identify as female (76%), and aged between 18 and 25 years (30.3%). Furthermore, the majority live with up to 3 people (30%), living with a spouse (30%), and having only a job (49%), with up to one1.5 minimum wage (34%), responsible only for their own livelihood and still helping their family (29%). Income is a non-sensory factor that limits the consumer's purchasing power, and consequently access to products with higher added value, such as artisanal products. In this context, they choose to make choices that offer better value for money, with the acquisition of more units of products at more affordable prices that can be associated with the context of industrialized products.

Thus, when answering the question about their knowledge of artisanal and industrialized products, respondents had the option of choosing "yes" or "no" as an answer, and then the option of describing/characterizing the type of food in question, if they wished (Figure 2). For artisanal products, 88% of respondents stated that they knew and understood what they were, giving as an answer the description that it is a food produced



without industrial techniques, with a minimum of preservatives, in homemade conditions, with natural foods.

Figura 2. Knowledge about industrialized products.

Artisanal

Yes

No

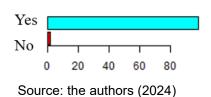
20 40 60 80

Source: the authors (2024)

The concept found in the legislation by Decree-Law No. 11,099/2022 considers food products produced in an artisanal way to be those "made from raw materials of animal origin from their own production or from a specific origin, resulting from predominantly manual techniques adopted by individuals who have full control over the production process, whose final product is individualized and genuine and maintains the uniqueness and the product's own cultural, regional or traditional characteristics". Thus, we can infer that the participants have a more general assertive perception about this product category.

When asked about their knowledge of what an industrial product is, a total of 98% of respondents stated that they knew what an industrial food was (Figure 3). Among the phrases used to describe this concept, in the answers given to the open questions, descriptors such as "product with preservatives", "food produced by machines", "food with a long expiration date", "food produced on a large scale", "products produced with a higher percentage of chemicals" and "artificial food" were presented.

**Figura 3.** Knowledge about what an industrialized product is. **Industrial** 



Processed foods are defined by the Brazilian population's food guide as: "relatively simple and old products manufactured essentially with the addition of salt or sugar (or another culinary substance such as oil or vinegar) to a natural or minimally processed food. The processing techniques for these products resemble culinary techniques and may include cooking, drying, fermentation, packaging the food in cans or glass jars, and the use



of preservation methods such as salting, brining, curing, and smoking. Processed foods are generally easily recognized as modified versions of the original food" (BRASIL, 2014).

Among the guidelines of the Guide are the presentation of information to promote better health habits through diet, encouraging the consumption of fresh and minimally processed foods and recommending a reduction in the consumption of so-called ultra-processed foods, which generally contain large amounts of sodium, sugar and saturated fats, which, when not controlled and associated with other unhealthy habits, such as lack of physical activity, can cause long-term health problems.

Based on the results obtained regarding which types of food the participants consumed most in their daily food routine, industrialized/ultra-processed foods, with higher percentages among the other categories (Figure 4).

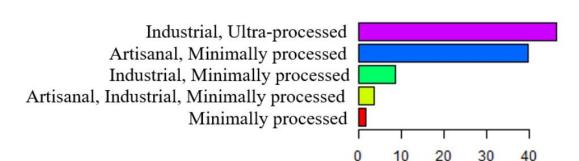


Figure 4. Food categories indicated as most consumed.

Source: the authors (2024)

The results presented show that industrialized products are very popular and are sometimes considered more practical and convenient to be consumed quickly, being generally cheaper when compared to artisanal products as described in the literature (Rivaroli, Baldi, Spadoni, 2020).

According to Belik (2020), some dietary changes are noticeable, citing a drop in natural products (7%) and an increase in ultra-processed foods (46%), justifying this by the population's lack of time, advertising and attractive prices. The author also highlights his main perceptions and concerns regarding these products, considering that, often, they are not produced with the intention of providing nutrition, being replaced by foods with greater nutritional value and consumed without the monitoring of professionals in the area of nutrition and food. The author also highlights his main perceptions and concerns regarding these types of products, since these foods are not necessarily produced with the intention of providing nutrition, they are replaced by foods with the desired nutritional value and are consumed without monitoring by professionals in the area of nutrition and food. However,



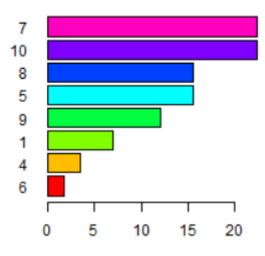
the industry is already showing signs of adapting to consumer demands for healthier and more nutritious products. One of the strategies adopted is to provide more detailed information to consumers, indicating quantities higher than those established by current legislation such as sugar, sodium and saturated fat, allowing consumers the right to make more informed choices.

The presence of the artisanal option in 55% of the responses, in addition to the minimally processed, industrialized and ultra-processed options, may signal a variable consumer attitude where consumers permeate different consumption categories, indicating a positive consumer attitude towards the inclusion of artisanal products in their diet, even if occasionally with the combination of different categories. On the other hand, only 7% indicated that they consume mainly food based on artisanal products. This result shows that this market has great growth potential, which may be a reflection of the cost and access to these products, which is a strong and growing demand in the food industry. Epinoza-Brisset et al. (2023) demonstrate that for the group of consumers in the study, the processing conditions (homemade, artisanal, industrial) artisanal products are the ones consumed most frequently, since when receiving information about the quality of production and processing of these foods, consumers consider this category as a healthier and more advantageous option in their dietary routine.

Human nutrition can be seen as a factor that can be verified in terms of needs, where understanding eating habits is complex, encompassing biological factors, cultural, social and emotional desires. Figure 5 shows the interviewees' responses to the question about how much feelings interfere with food consumption. Participants could respond by marking the number that best represented their feelings at the time of choice, with options anchored at 1 (one) for "does not interfere" or "interferes very little" and 10 for "interferes a lot".



Figure 5. Level of sentimental interference for food consumption



Source: the authors (2024)

The results show that of the 100 respondents, 55% had their answers anchored in the intervals eight, nine and ten; 21% between six and seven and 12% in five, which can be considered the latter as the positive limit associated with the scale used, indicating the positive relationship of the feeling influencing food consumption, an association described in the literature as those capable of evoking pleasurable feelings associated with the consumption and acceptance of food, the so-called comfort foods. According to Pinto et. al. 2023 and Batista et al. 2023, the definition of comfort foods can be understood as products capable of promoting some emotional well-being or feeling of reward, as is the case with ice cream. Souza et al. 2023, demonstrated that ice cream is one of the main products capable of providing emotional comfort, with the sweet flavor as the main attribute to justify such choice. Furthermore, 12% of participants defined their answers between one and four, with 58% of these saying that feelings do not interfere or interfere very little.

ToUyeda and Biacchi (2016)neuroscience states that the human brain is capable of processing about 11 million bits of sensory information per second, however, only about 40 bits are processed consciously. This brain processing is what leads to decision-making and at this moment any internal or external aspect interferes in the positive or negative judgment about the food in question. According toJomori et al. (2008), andThere are 9 factors for a single food choice, among which we can describe as non-sensory characteristics (related to the food and the consumer) health, convenience of purchase, food preparation, price, natural content, emotional factor, eating habits, ethical concern in addition to sensory aspects.



## DATA ANALYSIS BASED ON REGRESSION - CATEGORICAL VARIABLES

To verify the relationship between the type of food consumed and the categorical variables that make up the demographic and/or family basis of the questionnaire, a model was adjusted regression model. According to the model, none of the explanatory variables showed a significant relationship (5%) with the type of food consumed, since the final model was adjusted only according to the model's intercept. Table 2 presents the coefficient of the adjusted logistic regression model.

**Tabela 2.** Coefficient of the logistic regression model adjusted for categorical variables.

Coefficient	Estimated value	Standard error	Standard error	Standard error
Intercept	-0.3185	0.2683	-1.187	0.235

Dispersion parameter for the binomial family taken to be 1; null deviance: 77.59 on 56 degrees of freedom; residual deviance: 77.59 on 56 degrees of freedom; number of Fisher scoring interactions: 4.

Source: the authors (2024)

From the adjusted model, none of the explanatory variables were relevant to elucidate the respondents' choice for artisanal/minimally processed or non-artisanal (industrial/ultra-processed) food and such choices may be affected by factors that may not have been fully covered by the questions used here.

To obtain an explanatory model, the backward method was used at a significance level of 5%. In this process, the independent variables related to food consumption were progressively eliminated from the model, according to the 95% confidence level (p > 0.05), until the final model was formed. This model indicated the variables with a significant association with the most consumed type of food, considering p < 0.05.

However, even after this process, it was observed that the chance of consuming artisanal foods is reduced. This can be justified by the fact that most respondents are consumers of industrialized products, which are generally associated with practicality and convenience. Other aggravating factors can be mentioned to explain the high consumption of these products, such as marketing and sales strategies produced by big industries, the launch of commemorative editions with diverse and attractive flavors, portioned and ready-to-eat foods, and significant discounts on purchases of more units. In addition, industrialized products have a longer shelf life compared to artisanal products.

Even though respondents associate artisanal foods with healthier products with more favorable sensory characteristics when compared to processed foods, this estimate is probably linked to the factors mentioned above.



#### CONCLUSION

The questionnaire used as a data collection tool allowed us to understand the sociodemographic profile, which is mostly composed of women, who are the main caregivers or share this responsibility with others in their family group. Among the consumption profile, 21% of respondents are consumers of artisanal and/or minimally processed (MMP) products, indicating that there is a group of consumers who consume this category of food in whole or in part. Although the consumption of artisanal products is generally occasional, they are frequently included in the context of consumption due to their specific characteristics. These products are recognized for having benefits associated with human health and differentiated techniques, which means that some are constantly recognized as important representatives of this segment.

On the other hand, it is clear that the consumption of industrially produced products is more present and consumed by family groups, as it presents more competitive advantages in relation to price and practicality, being a category also greatly influenced by emotional factors, being a complex evaluation that needs to take into account both sensory and non-sensory characteristics.

Furthermore, the results show that simple and objective tools such as market research can be useful for obtaining qualitative and exploratory information, reflecting the importance of non-sensory characteristics that are important in consumers' decisions regarding the main food categories, as well as their relationship with emotional factors in which food is viewed with objectives that go beyond nutrition.

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