

MODERNIZATION OF THE DEMAND AND SUPPLY SIDES FOR GASTRONOMIC CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Gastronomic cultural heritage is part of cultural heritage. Under globalisation, individuals become increasingly interested not only in cultural heritage as a whole but also in its components, e.g. gastronomic heritage. Nowadays individuals are interested in such things as traditional foods, the techniques of preparing the foods and the traditions of consuming them. Individuals wish to see gastronomic traditions not only on a national scale but also a regional and even a local scale. Previous research studies conducted in Latvia focused on the progress of cultural heritage products as value and the introduction of such products by businesses in the rural areas of Latvia. Scientific cooperation opened up opportunities to study the phenomenon of a wider geographical space covering four countries – Poland, Lithuania, Romania and Latvia. The aim of this research stage: to identify an impact of information on the demand-supply balance of gastronomic heritage as a product in the market. The method of the research: a sociological survey (n = 1000 from Poland, Lithuania, Romania and Latvia; 285 men and 715 women) that was carried out during 2016. Despite the fact that the sample groups were not representative (did not reflect the views of the entire population), the obtained data and results of this analysis provided insight into the cultural issues under today's circumstances through the population's views. The results of the study strengthen the need for the modernization of the information system in order to promote rural viability.

Key words: gastronomic heritage, modernization of demand-supply in the market, rural development.

JEL Codes: M11, O31, R11.

1. Introduction

Many research studies indicate that the modern world is characterised by two pronounced trends: the expansion of globalisation in the economy, politics and culture and at the same time the preservation of national identity; the preservation of national cultural heritage and the use of it in real life are emphasised as significant indicators of national and territorial identity (Morley, 2002; Pieterse, 2015). The influence of cultural heritage expands towards both tangible culture, which paves the way for the development of small and medium businesses, and intangible culture, which takes the form of various cultural events (Tomaszewski, 2003; Bouchenaki, 2003; Ahmad, 2006).

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Under globalisation, individuals become increasingly interested not only in cultural heritage as a whole but also in its components, e.g. gastronomic heritage as one of the components of tangible cultural heritage. Nowadays individuals are interested in such things as traditional foods, the techniques of preparing the foods and the traditions of consuming them. This is confirmed by a number of research studies (Albala, 2000; Katz, 2003; Bendiner, 2004; Poulain, 2005; Watson, 2005; Matta, 2016). In view of the high interest in gastronomic cultural heritage, the authors focused on the understanding of the nature and role of this kind of tangible cultural heritage as a theoretical background (Mennell, 2005; Nestle, 2000).

Gastronomic heritage broadly functions in the society as a market good, the role of which is expressed by the demand-supply balance and content progression of it. An increase in the demand for and supply of gastronomic cultural heritage makes a positive effect on rural space development through the production of both goods and services, as it allows expanding food production and processing as well as the provision of rural tourism services. The mentioned kinds of economic activity give opportunities for small and medium businesses that are attached increasing importance in rural development in European Union Member States (Small and..., 2018). This has been stressed by a number of findings made in research studies done in some countries (Steiner, 2015).

Previous research studies conducted in Latvia focused on the progress of cultural heritage products as value and the introduction of such products by businesses in the rural areas of Latvia (Jeroscenkova, 2013; Kruzmetra, 2013; Jeroscenkova, 2016). Scientific cooperation opened up opportunities to study the phenomenon of a wider geographical space covering four countries – Poland, Lithuania, Romania and Latvia.

The aim of this research stage: to identify an impact of information on the demand-supply balance of gastronomic heritage as a product in the market. To achieve this aim were set the following goals: to identify both similarities and territorial differences in the information space and to determine the influence of digitization of rural space on the gastronomic heritage circulation. The methods of the research: a sociological survey (n = 1000 from Poland, Lithuania, Romania and Latvia; 285 men and 715 women) that was carried out during 2016. Despite the fact that the sample groups were not representative (did not reflect the views of the entire population), the obtained data and results of this analysis provided insight into the cultural issues under today's circumstances through the population's views. The research also analysed the digitalisation variations of the information space for the demand for and supply of gastronomic cultural heritage that reflect the modernization of gastronomic heritage marketing.

2. Research and discussions

2.1. Demand for and supply of gastronomic cultural heritage and the information space

The survey of residents conducted by the authors revealed both a sufficiently high current demand for gastronomic heritage (2016) and a growing trend in the demand. The phenomenon could be observed in all the four countries analysed, yet the indicator values differed (Fig.).

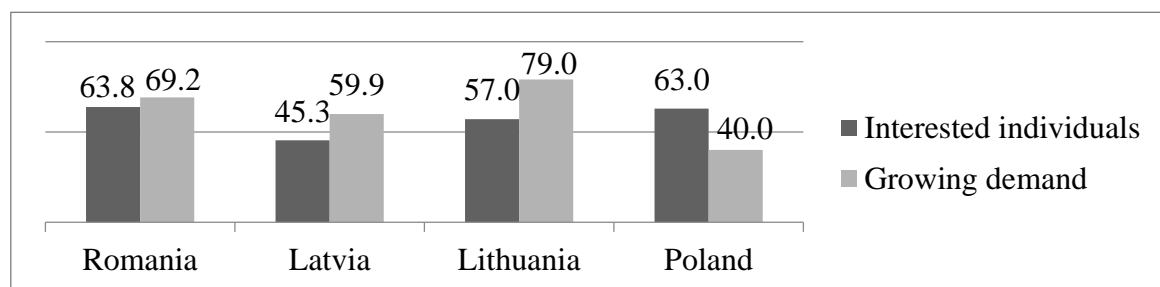


Fig. Current and potential demand for gastronomic heritage, %

The survey revealed that the current demand for gastronomic heritage was strongly expressed in Romania and Poland, whereas in Latvia and Lithuania it was less pronounced. However, in terms of growing demand, Lithuania was a particularly obvious leader. A similar situation was observed with regard to the kinds of shopping sites for gastronomic cultural heritage and the extent of use of them (Table 1).

Table 1. Kinds of shopping sites for gastronomic cultural heritage and the extent of use of them, % (several answers possible)

Shopping sites	Romania	Latvia	Lithuania	Poland
Specialty shops	50.9	22.3	27.0	16.0
Special department in a supermarket	13.7	9.2	16.0	18.0
Marketplace	18.8	38.8	35.0	40.0
Green market	8.3	40.1	39.0	4.5
Directly from the farmer	22.3	30.6	17.0	21.0

As regards the supply of gastronomic cultural heritage, specialty shops dominate in Romania, marketplaces – in Poland, while in Latvia and Lithuania they are both marketplaces and the so-called green markets where the product makes the shortest way from the production site to the consumer because in most cases the producers themselves sell their products.

However, the research focused on one kind of shopping sites – “directly from the farmer”. Despite the large number of supermarkets, marketplaces and green markets, a quite stable position in the demand-supply system is held by this particular kind, in which one can see several trends: tourism chains that emerge on the basis of gastro-

conomic heritage, the arrival of consumer at a farm to collect the product (e.g. strawberry picking) and pay a lower price than at general shopping sites or to use the digitalised sales option, which is currently one of the variants of marketing modernization.

The demand-supply balance is considerably affected by the information flow between market participants. The buyer wants to know where to get the desired good/service, what the available assortment of goods/services is and what the specifics of the good/service are. The supplier, however, needs information channels for popularising the good/service and increasing the sales volume. The survey results showed that the individuals used both modern information channels (the Internet, television) and traditional ones (newspapers, billboards). However, the extent of use of the information channels or their significance in the countries analysed differed (Table 2).

Table 2. Information channels for bringing demand and supply together, % (several answers possible)

Information channels	Romania	Latvia	Lithuania	Poland
Internet portals	74.0	60.2	43.0	88.0
Public television channels	36.5	73.7	62.0	62.5
Websites of institutions and enterprises	21.7	15.6	23.0	36.0
The Press	9.4	31.5	13.0	13.5
Billboards	12.1	41.0	18.0	20.0
Lectures and presentations	20.1	24.8	53.0	30.5
Other	0.8	0.3	0.0	3.0

Among the mentioned information channels, Internet portals dominate in Romania and Poland, while in Latvia and Lithuania – the information available on television. Traditional information channels are preferred in Latvia and Lithuania. Lectures and presentations, in which the focus is placed on the demand for and supply of gastronomic heritage and detailed information about goods/products is revealed, are particularly popular in Lithuania.

Even though a lot of information on gastronomic heritage was available in all the countries analysed, their residents wished to expand the information space on this phenomenon: in Poland 29.5% of the surveyed individuals wished a broader information space, in Romania and Lithuania – 32.0%, while in Latvia – even 41.9%. This means that one of the strategic objectives regarding increasing the demand for and supply of gastronomic heritage is to enhance the information space in the countries in terms of technology and content.

2.2. Digitalisation of the demand and supply sides for gastronomic cultural heritage

One of the priorities in enhancing the information space is the digitalisation of the demand and supply sides for gastronomic heritage that contributes to the integration of small farms and semi-subsistence farms into economic activity, which, in its turn, promotes the vitality and viability of the rural space.

For a detailed analysis of this process, the authors selected two countries in which the number of respondents questioned on gastronomic heritage was relatively larger: Latvia (n=327) and Romania (n=373). The research identified variations in the digitalisation of the information space for demand and supply in both countries.

One of the simplest ways is to establish a special institution being responsible for bringing demand and supply together. Individual producers inform the institution about their goods/products, how to reach them (their addresses) and the direct communication option (via phone). The institution creates a website, aggregates the information and places the orders. PlatFerma in Romania could be mentioned as an example. PlatFerma is an online platform through which people can find out who and where the Romanian farmers are, what natural products they offer, how they take care of their own households, what inspires and motivates them. Within this platform, every farm has a correspondent “Farmer Portrait”, which contains information about healthy food and its source. The platform includes “The Farms’ Map” – a map that directs buyers to farms close to large cities, what and where they can buy. The map pinpoints places in the country, where farms are divided by county and product category. There are nine categories which include elements of a diversified, delicious and local diet (PlatFerma..., 2018). A similar platform in Latvia is “1188 Augļi, dārzeni”, which provides information about more than a thousand enterprises that produce fruits and vegetables, pinpoints the locations of these farms on an enclosed map and shows the ways to reach the goods/products (1188, Augļi..., 2018)

An important option to bring demand and supply together is the self-organisation of business associations or cooperatives and the establishment of their own outlets/shops. In Latvia, the idea about uniting the strength of local food producers emerged in the autumn of 2011 when a training cycle “How to start up, develop and sell home-produced products in small quantities?” was implemented at the Jelgava Consultancy Office. Future food producers concluded that in order to effectively enter the market, it is necessary to cooperate. An interest group emerged from individuals having the same ideas; the group decided to establish the association Food Craftsmen. The name of the association symbolises cooperation among small and medium food producers, as mainly families that produce locally grown food and sell it in the market are involved in this activity. Such products have a special value because of manual work, which is not possible in industrial production. The motto of the association is “Local products to local residents!” Association members’ cooperation is based on such basic values as family, which is the key value of any society; work as a virtue that creates a balanced culture and avoids social injustice; responsible attitude to the use of natural resources; mutual respect, trust and support. Based on the mentioned values, food craftsmen set the following goals: to promote cooperation among food craftsmen and sales; to contribute to the popularisation of local products, environment-friendly and sustainable agriculture and rural development. Demand and supply are brought together at the Craftsmen House – the association’s shop that has a website with broad information about the available goods/products.

The key goal of the Craftsmen House is to give an opportunity for the association's members and cooperation partners to permanently market their goods and products. At present, more than 50 small producers from five municipalities supply their products and craft goods. In Romania too cooperative shops, established by the farmers being the members of the cooperatives, are opened. This process began only in 2017 when the first shop of this kind, called Romanian Goodies, was opened in the city of Alba Iulia. The purpose of the cooperative was to help small farmers sell their products at fair prices. At the shop, customers can find vegetables, dairy, meat, fish, fresh bread and wine at producer price, and everything about the goods/services could be found on the website (Great Initiative..., 2017).

Finally, direct marketing expands as well. A producer of goods/products creates a personal website in the digital network and offers the goods/products, the kinds of packaging, the price and the possible time of delivery, as the producer him/herself delivers the goods/products to certain sites. A farm – MKD projekts Ltd – in Gulbene municipality that started operating in 2012 could be mentioned as an example in Latvia; it effectively used EU co-funding for young farmers, bought agricultural machinery and began developing the business by raising cattle and producing organic meat products. Since the business was successful, in 2016 it created a trademark “Tirzas bullis” for selling fresh beef through direct marketing. The bulls raised on the farm are slaughtered at a certified slaughterhouse, the meat is cut and packaged at a certified meat-processing enterprise. The farm uses a refrigerator-freezer to offer the products to customers through direct marketing. The farm's owners has a website where to inform buyers and place orders, i.e. bring demand and supply together (Tirzas bullis..., 2018).

In Romania there are some small farms that are producing organic products that they are selling using their personal websites, such as: Hărman Farm – rabbit meat, duck meat, chicken meat, quail meat, dairy products made from goat milk, chicken eggs, duck eggs and quail eggs (Harman Farm..., 2018); Taticu's Farm - chicken meat (Taticu's Farm..., 2018); Microferma Prepelite Brasov- quail meat and eggs (Microferma Prepelite..., 2018); Catean Farm - sheep milk cheese (Catean Farm..., 2018). Catean Farm has also been involved in the transnational project "Transhumance 2013" – The Transhumance of Carpathian Sheeps – The Echo of the Common Carpathian History, implemented by the Foundation Pasterstwo Transhumancyjne from Poland and the Transhumance Association (Asociația Transhumanta) from Romania, both of them taking care of the preservation of the traditional pastoralism and cultural heritage in the Carpathians. (Transhumance..., 2013). The project has proposed the traditional movement of the professional shepherds with 300 sheep through the Carpathians, which was organized to celebrate historical transhumance of the Vallachian shepherds, a movement which in the past has led to the settlement of the mountain area and the creation of a common pastoral culture in the Carpathians. The established route follows the mountain areas of the Carpathian countries, crossing through five countries – Romania, Ukraine, Poland, Czech Republik and Slovakia, about 1400 kilometers. The basis of Carpathian culture is the pastoral traditions, that influence the music, dances, colorful outfits of people in

mountain areas, habits and everyday life. These pastoral traditions are based on love for nature and for the human being (Ferma Catean..., 2013).

As regards direct marketing, often buyers rather than suppliers cooperate. The so-called direct marketing groups emerge. Direct marketing groups are attributed to an opportunity created by buyers – enthusiasts – to regularly, every week, purchase fresh local organic food directly from organic farmers by investing their own time.

Such a practice has been effectively functioning for more than a decade in many countries as an alternative to the industrial food system, which contributes to increasingly intensive, chemical-, pesticide-, fertiliser-, antibiotic- and GMO-based farming and in which customers have lost a link with the real food producer – the farmer. For this reason, buyers take their choice of food in their own hands and directly cooperate with organic farmers. It has become widespread in Italy, France, Germany, the USA, Japan and other countries. There are various kinds of direct marketing. Buyers agree with farmers on the particular kind of direct marketing, which is the most beneficial to both parties.

In Latvia, direct marketing groups have emerged during recent three years, and the movement comprises already more than 15 groups in Riga and other cities and towns. Totally, currently more than 500 families and more than 70 organic farmers and home producers are involved in this movement. Volunteers of a group do food ordering- and distribution-related activities according to the principle of rotation – those responsible for it are assigned every week; in the result, all the members of the group contribute to making orders and everyone has an opportunity to get organic food at acceptable producer prices. The system functions based on the initiative of the group members and does not require financial investments, only time.

Direct marketing contrasts with usual shopping at the marketplace or a supermarket. Buyers have to plan their needs for products for the next week. Besides, sometimes they have to be creative in order to cook meals from what is available at that period or season (Tieša pirkšana..., 2018).

"Adopt a peasant" is a component of the Romania Bio project. The campaign, started at the initiative of the Developing Romania Together Association (Asociația Creștem România Împreună) from Brașov, joined by the Civic Intervention Group (Asociația Grupul de Intervenție Civică) of the same city and Agora for Life of Belgium, mediates the communication between the buyers and the peasant households in Romania. Local producers are identified and their stories are made public on the social network of the campaign, along with a short film showing the products that the producers have for sale, and the posts include its contact details. Urban residents are urged to choose one of the local producers of the region and to buy home-made products from them weekly or monthly, depending on the offer. The initiative is not only aimed at helping those living from subsistence agriculture but, also in promoting Romanian values and traditions (Adopta un taran..., 2016).

The variants of digitalisation of the demand and supply sides for gastronomic heritage suggested by the authors indicate that small farms and semi-subsistence

farms get modernized. Nevertheless, a lot of problems are faced in this process. The first one – the availability of the e-environment. The real situation in the e-environment in the countries analysed by the research is shown by the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) developed and applied in the EU. It characterizes the e-environment in all the EU Member States at the beginning of 2018. According to the index values, the situations in the countries analysed were quite different. Among the 28 Member States, Lithuania was ranked the highest (13th place), followed by Latvia (10th); Poland was ranked lower (24th), while Romania was ranked the lowest (28th). It is worth mentioning that the DESI rates e-infrastructure and e-infrastructure use. The index component – Integration of Digital Technology – variant 4.b1, gives information that in Lithuania, 21.9% of small and medium enterprises, among them the producers of gastronomic heritage products, sell their products online, in Latvia – 10.6%, in Poland – 9.5% and only 7.7% in Romania. It has to be taken into account that of the total SMES, 30.0% in Ireland, 28.5% in Sweden and even 28.2% in Norway are involved in online commerce (The Digital..., 2018). The role of digital technologies in reaping the benefits in food production and agriculture has been stressed at the Global Forum of Agriculture (OECD..., 2018). Therefore, an important priority is to promote the expansion of e-environment infrastructure and an even more important priority is to build up IT skills to use the possibilities provided by the e-environment infrastructure in consumers and suppliers to meet their economic needs.

3. Conclusions

1. The survey of residents of four European Union Member States revealed the understanding of the value of gastronomic heritage as a component of cultural heritage, the way it is used and the growing demand for it in future. Individuals wish more precise and broader information about both the product itself and where to buy it. Along with the modern traditional shopping sites – supermarkets and marketplaces –, the so-called green markets and buyer-consumer contacts through direct marketing either by visiting the producer/farm or by establishing a contact line in digital form owing to the development of the e-environment in the rural space play an increasing role.

2. An analysis of the digitalised demand and supply sides in Romania and Latvia confirms the existence of such a contact line and allows distinguishing the variations of it. The first one pertains to the establishment of a special institution that maintains a special website, gives information on it about the goods/services offered and the suppliers themselves. The second one relates to the emergence of cooperation groups on the part of suppliers and on the part of buyers. Finally, of course, there are direct contacts between the buyer and the supplier, but the contacts are made using the opportunities provided by the e-environment. This means that the digitalisation of the demand and supply sides offers new opportunities for the expansion of small businesses in rural areas, yet the digitalisation is one of the modern features of economic growth or the forms of modernization and fostering rural viability.

3. The demand for gastronomic heritage products could increase only if buyers develop their skills to use the digital environment and suppliers perform well and build up their skills needed for the digitalisation of the supply side. This is confirmed by the DESI index and particularly its component – Integration of Digital Technology –, variant 4.b1 indicators. At present, the e-environment infrastructure is insufficient; however, the readiness of rural residents to engage in an innovative activity and their skill to do it accurately are likely to be even more insufficient.

4. The above-mentioned conclusions set new priorities for next steps in the research: to identify the factors hindering the faster expansion of the e-environment infrastructure in the rural space and the engagement of small enterprises in e-commerce, as the small businesses represent most of the businessperson community in the rural space, as well as what hampers the acquisition of new knowledge and skills – an insufficient wish or limited opportunities? Undoubtedly, one of the research priorities in future is also the examination of successful e-commerce in a number of countries, which is revealed by the DESI index, including in Lithuania, which was the best performer among the countries analysed in the research.

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GASTRONOMINĖS KULTŪROS PAVELDO PAKLAUSOS IR PASIŪLOS MODERNIZAVIMAS

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Santrauka

Dėl globalizacijos poveikio žmonės vis daugiau susidomi ne tik bendruoju kultūros paveldu, bet ir atskirais jo komponentais, tarp kurių ir gastronominiu paveldu: nacionalinis tradicinis maistas, maisto paruošimo būdai, jo vartojimo tradicijos ir pan. Žmonės siekia susipažinti su gastronomicinėmis tradicijomis ne tik nacionaliniu, bet ir regioniniu ir net vietiniu lygmeniu. Ankstesni tyrimai, atlikti Latvijoje, buvo skirti kultūros paveldo produktų vertės progresui ir įtraukimui tokių produktų į verslus kaimiškose Latvijos vietovėse. Mokslinis bendradarbiavimas atvėrė galimybes tirti šį fenomeną platesnėje geografinėje erdvėje, apimančioje keturias valstybes: Lenkiją, Lietuvą, Rumuniją ir Latviją. Šios tyrimo fazės tikslas – identifikuoti informacijos įtaką gastronomicinio paveldo, kaip rinkos produkto, paklausos ir pasiūlos balansui. Tyrimo metodas – sociologinė apžvalga, apimanti 1000 respondentų (285 vyrų ir 715 moterų) iš Lenkijos, Lietuvos, Rumunijos ir Latvijos. Nors ši tiriamųjų grupė nėra reprezentatyvi (neatspindi visų gyventojų požiūrių), tačiau tyrimo duomenys ir jų analizė leidžia pateikti išvagas apie gyventojų požiūrio kultūrinius aspektus, atsižvelgiant į šių dienų aplinkybes.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: gastronomicinis paveldas, paklausos ir pasiūlos modernizavimas rinkoje, kaimo plėtra.

JEL kodai: M11, O31, R11.