



ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS OF TRADITIONAL ROMANIAN CUISINE

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Abstract: Romanian cuisine is characterized by its diversity and the blending of historical and cultural influences from various geographical regions. Over time, Romanian cuisine has incorporated Balkan, Turkish, Austro-Hungarian, and Slavic elements, adapting them to local resources and the specific traditions of each region. Traditional dishes are generally hearty, based on natural ingredients and culinary techniques passed down from generation to generation. This paper analyzes consumer perceptions of traditional cuisine in Romania, highlighting its role in defining cultural identity and preserving culinary traditions. Traditional cuisine is perceived as an essential element of cultural heritage, being associated with authenticity, the quality of ingredients, and a connection to local customs and values.

• Introduction

Over time, traditional Romanian cuisine has distinguished itself through its distinctive flavors and unique culinary customs. It is rich and varied, including numerous gastronomic traditions and signature dishes that reflect the fusion of Romanian culinary culture with influences from other ethnic traditions with which the Romanian people have come into contact throughout history.

Hungarian, Serbian, Balkan, German, Italian, and Turkish cuisines have significantly influenced modern Romanian gastronomy. Over time, Romanian culinary culture has adopted numerous gastronomic elements and customs, such as the traditional Roman pie, Turkish-inspired meatball soup, Greek-style moussaka, vegetable-based dishes such as zacusca, influenced by Bulgarian cuisine, as well as schnitzel, adopted from Austrian cuisine.

• Material and method

This paper presents a study on Romanian consumers' perceptions of traditional dishes, with the aim of identifying the importance of traditional cuisine as part of the country's unique cultural identity. To this end, a questionnaire was developed and administered as a survey tool among consumers from diverse backgrounds in terms of age, socioeconomic background, education level, and occupation. The study sample consisted of 328 consumers.

• Results and discussions

Of the 328 respondents, 213 (64.94%) are female and 115 (35.06%) are male, with 188 (57.32%) living in urban areas and 140 (42.68%) in rural areas. Most respondents are in the 18–25 age group (45.12%), and the fewest are in the over-60 age group (2.43%). 129 (39.33%) are from Banat, 98 (29.87%) from Oltenia, 48 (14.63%) from Transylvania, 34 (10.36%) from Moldova, 17 (5.18%) from Muntenia, and 2 (0.61%) from Dobrogea (Figure 1).

Regarding frequency of consumption, 149 (45.42%) of the respondents consume it several times a week, 117 (35.67%) daily, with roughly equal numbers of respondents who consume it occasionally or once a week, and one person consumes it very rarely (Figure 2).

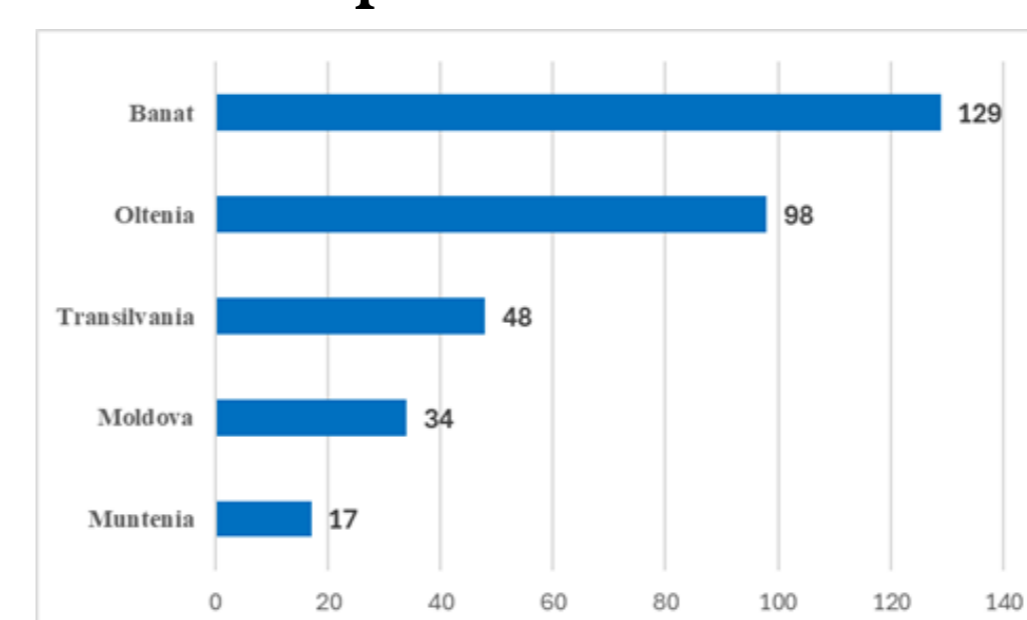


Figure 1

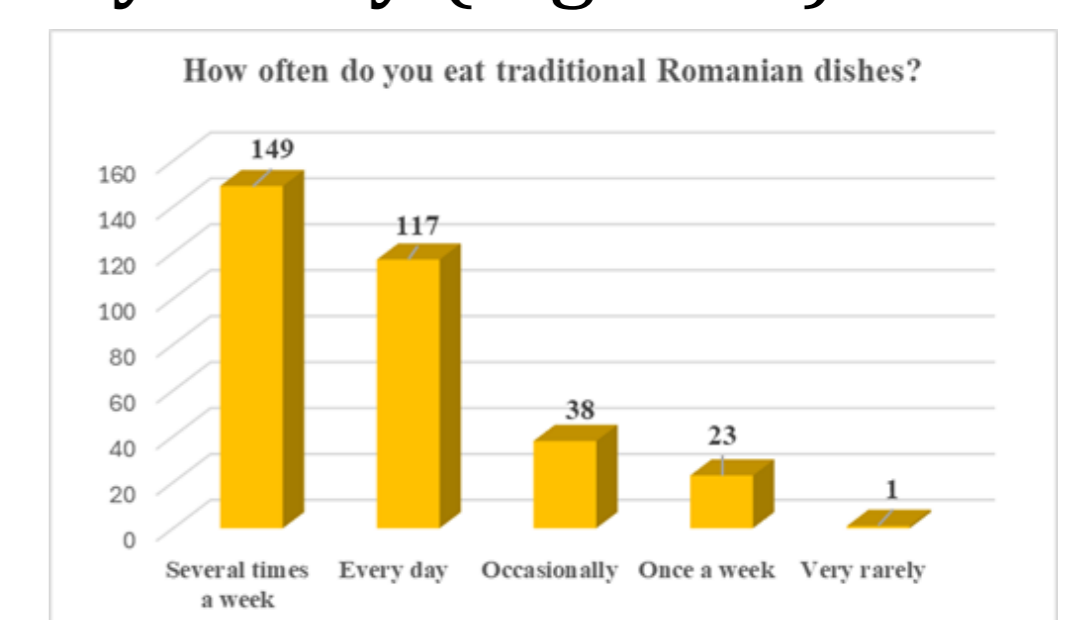


Figure 2

The level of promotion of traditional Romanian cuisine in restaurants is considered moderate by 149 (45.42%) of the respondents, while 37 (11.28%) consider it to be promoted very little (Figure 3). Furthermore, 188 (57.31%) of respondents consider young people's interest in traditional cuisine to be moderate, while only 23 (7%) consider it very high (Figure 4).

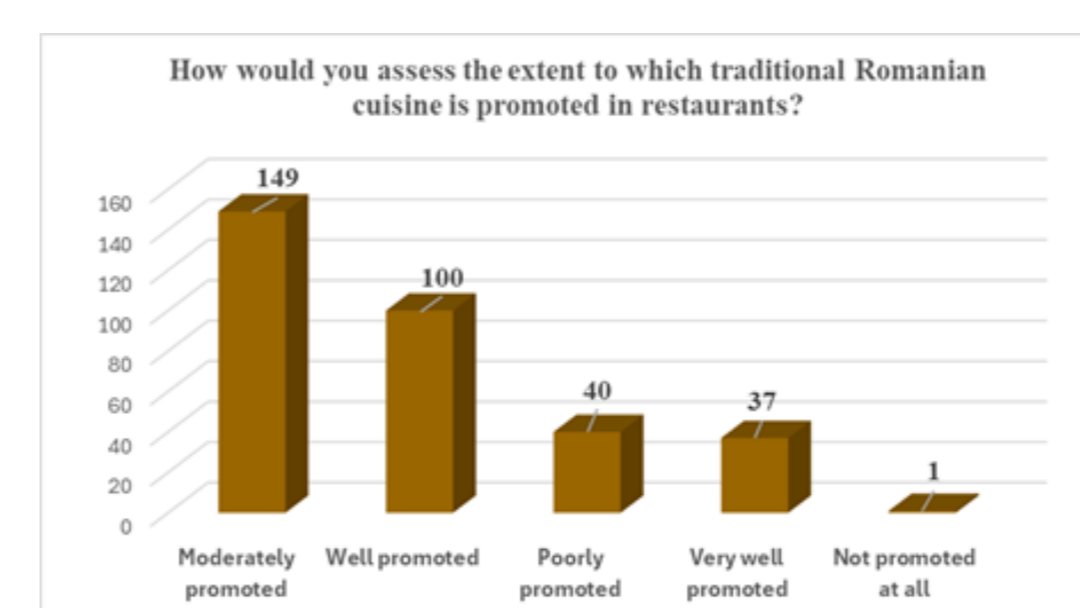


Figure 3

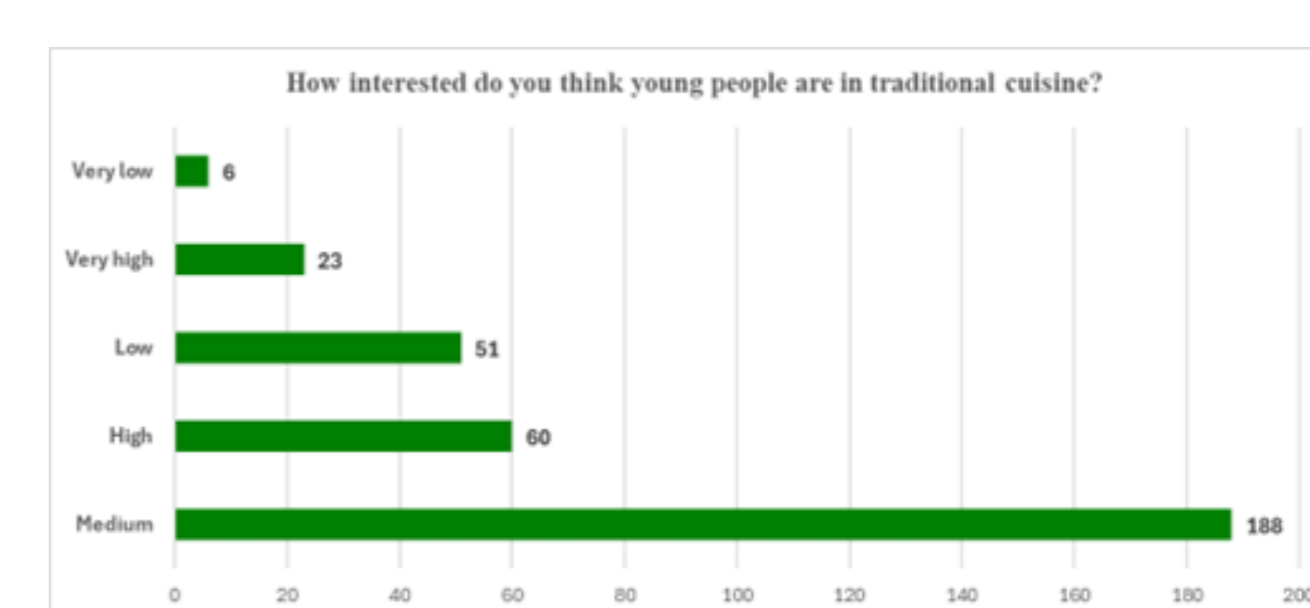


Figure 4

• Conclusions

The study highlights the fact that traditional Romanian cuisine is frequently incorporated into daily diets, being consumed primarily at home and passed down mainly within the family. Its promotion in public spaces and restaurants is perceived as moderate, and young people's interest remains mostly average, indicating the need for additional efforts to highlight and promote the traditional culinary heritage.