

## **Abstract**

The spread of COVID-19 influenced consumers' behavior and changed individuals' usual habits. The retail industry has been affected by the novel coronavirus due to the unexpected changes in consumers' preferences and food purchasing behavior. The importance of the research is amplified by the food retail market that significantly depends on consumers' choices and buying behavior where predicting future changes can be crucial for retailers to efficiently forecast and develop new strategies. The objective of the thesis is to determine consumers' perspectives on the changes in food purchasing behavior in the future within the county of Satu Mare, Romania. The paper aims at analyzing the factors contributing to the changes observed during the COVID-19 pandemic more specifically, how will the changes develop in the future. While current literature focuses more on the short-term changes within the retail industry, the thesis desires to close the gap in the literature by emphasizing on the individuals' attitude on the future changes in food related choices, with a central focus on Romania. The research questions developed for the thesis focus on to what extent did the COVID-19 pandemic impact the food purchasing behavior of consumers and how will normality post COVID-19 influence consumers' food preferences and purchasing behavior. The research design implemented for attaining the objective of the thesis is related to a qualitative research approach, consisting of 14 interviews with the scope of answering the research questions. The interviews will provide detailed information regarding individuals' perspective on the future changes related to food preferences within the area of Satu Mare, Romania that will contribute to closing the current research gap. The data analysis part will assist in summarizing and concluding the thesis by evaluating the findings of the research based on the research questions developed. The findings of the research will contribute to providing a direction of the possible future changes regarding food purchasing behavior.