

# **The future outlook regarding the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on consumers' food purchasing behavior: A case study of Satu Mare, Romania**

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International Management

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## **Affidavit**

I hereby affirm that this Bachelor's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

The thesis was not submitted in the same or in a substantially similar version, not even partially, to another examination board and was not published elsewhere.

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## **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.

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## List of Abbreviations

**COVID-19-** Corona Virus Disease 2019

**EU-** European Union

**SARS-COV-2-**Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2

**SOR-**Stimuli Organism Response



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Problem statement

The rapid expansion of the COVID-19 virus affected several industries along with consumers' behavior and preference (Eger et al., 2021). Among the impacted sectors of the economy, the food industry observed several changes in relation to consumers' food related purchasing habits (Eger et al., 2021). The current pandemic was determined by a new coronavirus, first observed during the last month of the year 2019, that is associated with the COVID-19 infection caused by the SARS-COV-2 virus (Shereen et al., 2020). Within a short period of time, the new virus started spreading at a rapid pace to different countries and most of the continents therefore, affecting an increasing number of people, as well as forcing governments to implement solutions to prevent the COVID-19 infection from escalating and affecting the population (Loske, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic brought several challenges where humanity was faced with a new, uncommon situation surrounded by uncertainty. After a period of constant spread, during the beginning of 2020, the virus expanded to Europe and two months later, in March 2020, most countries were affected by the new virus that led to different measures being implemented with the objective of lowering the negative impact of the pandemic (Burgos & Ivanov, 2021). As such, countries worldwide have implemented several measures to stop the spread of the COVID-19 infection, such as a national lockdown where most economic operators needed to discontinue their operations, only the necessary sectors remaining open, as well as limiting the interaction between individuals or any gatherings at restaurants or events (Loske, 2020).

Considering the rapid spread of the virus, governments were pressured to quickly adapt to the uncertainty caused by the new situation and prevent the virus from expanding by implementing different restrictions. The measures implemented caused several obstacles for retailers and other economic actors,

especially for supply chains that experienced uncommon challenges during the first wave of the pandemic (Burgos & Ivanov, 2021). The pandemic generated an economic crisis around the world that was the result of an increase in unemployment levels due to limited economic activity, as well as the uncertainty of the situation that provoked sudden changes within the economy (Altig et al, 2020). Moreover, supply chains were affected since the infected employees were not able to work, along with the changes in demand that accentuated the unfamiliar pandemic situation (Barman et al., 2021).

In response to the accentuating pandemic and the number of daily infections at the end of October 2021, the government of Romania decided to implement new regulations to prevent the spread of the virus such as the possibility to attend physical meetings and events, enter shopping centers or restaurants only with the European green pass (Ilie et al., 2021). Therefore, it is essential to evaluate the impact of such regulations on consumers' purchasing behavior. Besides the safety regulations and measures implemented towards minimizing the contamination, the fear and the insecurity associated with the initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic influenced individuals towards an impulse shopping related behavior and certain unusual purchasing decisions with regards to food products (Eger et al., 2021). Therefore, individuals made unusual purchasing choices for certain products that resulted in different challenges for food retailers due to the uncertainty created (Russo et al., 2021).

## **1.2 Purpose of the thesis**

The purpose of the study is to examine the future outlook towards the changes in food related preferences and buying behavior of consumers brought by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Current studies indicate different factors that contributed to certain changes observed with regards to consumers' food related habits during the initial wave of the pandemic, such as the impossibility of shopping for preferred brands or grocery stores therefore, consumers changed to different food brands or products (Russo et al., 2021). Therefore, it

is essential to assess how such changes might evolve in the future since they can significantly impact the operations within the food retail industry. As such, this thesis will contribute to filling the current gap in the literature.

The existing literature indicates the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumers' food consumption preferences with a focus on the short-term, such as the current effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to food related choices or preferences (Russo et al., 2021). Current studies emphasize the changes in consumers' preferences during the pandemic, neglecting the effects in the long term. Additionally, the research gap is emphasized by the available research accentuating the effects of the pandemic on food choices at the earlier stages of the COVID-19 pandemic (Laato et al., 2020).

This research will fill the gap in the literature by focusing on consumers' perspective on the future changes related to food purchasing behavior with an emphasis on the area of Satu Mare, Romania. The research will emphasize on the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumers' food buying behavior by assessing how might the current changes be affected in the future. Since consumers changed their habits and behavior during the pandemic, it is essential to assess the different factors that impacted consumers' consumption behavior, along with evaluating the current impact and the changes in the long-run.

The annual household food and non-alcoholic drinks spending reached 13% of the accumulated costs allocated towards consumption in the European Union in 2019 (Eurostat, 2020a). The food and drinks expenditure during 2019 in Romania represented approximately 26% of the accumulated consumption expenditure placing the country in the top position with regards to food expenditure within the European Union, emphasizing the importance of assessing the short term and long-term impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on consumers' food purchasing behavior in Satu Mare, Romania (Eurostat, 2020a). Therefore, the current research will identify the factors and

the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the habits of consumers with an emphasis on the purchasing and consumption behavior of consumers in relation to food products. Additionally, the findings of the research will contribute to the current literature by providing a better understanding of the causes and the possible long-lasting effects of the current pandemic within the food sector that would benefit producers and retailers in adjusting their strategies according to the possible preferences and spending behavior of individuals.

The importance of understanding the impact of the pandemic in the future is indicated by the economic effects that such changes might have on consumers, as well as retailers and therefore, assist producers and retailers to better understand the reasons behind the shifts observed within the market for developing efficient forecasting strategies for the near future in terms of demand and inventory management. On the other side, if the research question is not answered, the readers will not understand the long-term implications with regards to food choices and the changes in consumers' preferences influenced by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The importance of providing an answer to the research questions is indicated by the impact of COVID-19 on the retail industry, where a decline of 5.7% in retail sales worldwide was observed in 2020 in comparison to 2019 (Statista Research Department, 2021).

### **1.3 Objective of the research**

The objective of the research is to provide reliable findings regarding the possible long lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumers' food preferences based on individuals' perspective within the county of Satu Mare, Romania to help retailers when planning and forecasting new strategies. Moreover, the goal of the study is to evaluate the factors contributing to the shifts in consumers' food choices during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic based on available literature and assess the degree to which the preferences of consumers were influenced by the restrictions and the overall

pandemic situation. Furthermore, the main objective is to assess the influence of the current changes in consumers' food purchasing behavior in the post COVID-19 future.

From a practical perspective, the findings of the study will provide comprehensive information regarding the long-term changes in consumers' food related habits to retailers, as well as producers within the food industry to be able to successfully prepare for the ongoing changes in demand for specific food products. As such, retailers can better understand the reasons behind drastic changes in demand for specific products and assess the possible impact of the pandemic situation in the future.

#### **1.4 Research questions**

The goal of this thesis is to assess the influence of normality subsequent to the pandemic on consumers' food purchasing behavior. For achieving the proposed objective of identifying in what manner will the effects associated with the initial development of the pandemic change or last in the long term, the research follows a qualitative research design and data collection process. The data collection process consists of structuring and conducting 14 interviews with the targeted sample. Subsequently, the data gathered will be transcribed and structured for a better interpretation and presentation of the findings. Therefore, the main research question developed for the research is as follows:

RQ: To what extent did the COVID-19 pandemic impact the food purchasing behavior of the consumers?

The supplementary research question is as follows:

RQ: How will normality post COVID-19 influence consumers' food preferences and purchasing behavior?

The research questions represent the base for providing a reliable explanation to the research problem of the thesis. The findings of the research will provide an answer to the research questions based on respondents' opinions during the interviews and therefore, will assist in developing a reliable conclusion to the research topic.

## **1.5 Structure**

The paper is structured in different sections, each section containing several subsections. Therefore, the following section, the literature review, evaluates the existing literature by defining the key terms and identifying the main factors that triggered the shift in consumers' usual habits and buying behavior related to food products during the initial wave of the pandemic, as well as prior to COVID-19. The literature review part is structured into four subsections.

The first subsection focuses on the importance of the food industry, with an emphasis on Romania. The following subsection emphasizes on the impact of COVID-19 on the food industry and the effects of the pandemic on the food market in Romania, along with assessing the change in preference for shopping in brick-and-mortar supermarkets or using online delivery services. It analyses the factors affecting the food industry, as well as the factors influencing the choice between shopping online or in a physical supermarket.

The third subsection analyses the impact of COVID-19 on consumers' purchasing behavior and compares the difference in the food purchasing behavior prior to COVID-19 and during the pandemic, along with identifying the causes of the shift in consumers' food purchasing behavior. The subsection identifies two theories related to food purchasing behavior that apply for the changes observed during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and after the beginning of COVID-19. The fourth subsection evaluates the dietary changes caused by COVID-19 and the changes in consumption preferences, along with identifying the factors influencing consumers' food related habits.

Moreover, it evaluates consumers' unusual purchasing behavior during the beginning of the pandemic.

The third section, the methodology section, will describe the qualitative research design implemented for attaining the objective of the thesis. Moreover, it will explain the reason behind the use of a qualitative approach and the research method used. The methodology part will present the structure of the data collection process guiding the research by examining and explaining the questions developed for the interviews. Additionally, the section will emphasize the data processing part, along with the technique used for collecting data and explaining how data is being converted and structured for a better interpretation of the findings.

The fourth section of the thesis, the data analysis and interpretation section, emphasizes on analyzing the data gathered from the data collection process. Based on the interviews conducted, data is structured and interpreted to provide an answer to the research questions. In comparison to a quantitative approach, consisting of hypothesis testing based on numerical data, the qualitative approach guiding this research will consist of examining the information gathered from the interviews and selecting the appropriate statements for providing a reliable conclusion. The findings are presented in a separate part and evaluated according to the research questions of the thesis. The conclusion section will summarize the findings of the research based on the objective, as well as the research questions of the study and will be followed by the limitations of the research along with the author's suggestions for later research.

## **2 Literature review**

### **2.1 The importance of the food industry**

The food industry represents an essential sector for the economic system and development of a country or region (Bigliardi & Galati, 2013). Additionally, it became a highly competitive industry, consisting of several firms with the common goal of constantly improving and becoming more efficient (Cushen et al., 2012). Therefore, the food industry and the economic actors within the industry strived to develop and expand. Furthermore, the food industry consists of the production or farming aspect, the processing part, as well as the supply of food and the retail, that all contribute to the economic importance of the industry in any country (Sadiku et al., 2019).

Therefore, the food industry is a complex sector with different dependent segments that take an active part in the overall processes associated with the industry. In addition, the food industry and the different sections of the industry have an impact on the security and availability of food worldwide, as well as on the level of health of the population since it can negatively or positively affect the health and immune structure of individuals (Sadiku et al., 2019).

Food is indispensable for individuals since it contributes to the level of health and sustains life by providing the needed nutrients where proper food consumption can reduce the risk of certain diseases (Shepherd et al., 2005). Additionally, Maslow's hierarchy of needs model further explains that a top priority for any individual relies on the availability of food that can sustain life (Jerome, 2013). Therefore, food takes a crucial role in individuals' lives and in the overall well-being. Additionally, the supply of food to all the countries around the world is crucial for maintaining good health (Telukdarie et al., 2020).



The food industry is related to food products specifically, to the processes consisting of fruits and meat, as well as bakery, processes where agriculture, distribution and retailing are involved and dependent on every activity within the industry (Sadiku et al., 2019). Considering the industry's economic impact, the food industry is constantly striving for improvement with regards to the technologies used for overcoming the challenges faced related to sustainability or to the impact on individuals' health (Sadiku et al., 2019).

The demand and the supply of food have significantly changed in the past years within the food industry, becoming an international industry where products are supplied from different continents since the demand for variety has increased and consumers expect a larger availability of products in stores (Trienekes & Zuurbier, 2008). As such, the trading related to the food industry has seen several changes and shifted towards a more internationalized trading among countries and food retailers (Traill & Pitts, 1998).

The rapid change observed recently with regards to diversifying the demand and supply of food resulted in the food industry possessing a significant role worldwide where companies emphasized on improving the processes within the industry and developing innovations that would aid in the development of the sector in order to provide more benefits to the end consumers (Trienekes & Zuurbier, 2008). Therefore, such changes within the food and beverage industry emphasize the importance of food and the related industry at a global level.

To emphasize the changes and the importance of the food industry, different statistics related to the industry in countries within the European Union are reviewed. For example, employment in the food industry within the European Union has significantly increased in 2020 when compared to 2015 (FoodDrink-Europe, 2020). Moreover, the food industry represents the largest and most important manufacturing sector within the European Union when related to employment levels (Lodorfos et al., 2018). The industry became a significant

and positive component to the economy of the European Union that led to revenue of approximately 1.2 trillion Euro in 2017 therefore, the food industry possesses an important role for the countries within the European Union (FoodDrink-Europe, 2020).

Individuals in countries that are part of the European Union allocate a significant amount from their budget towards the food industry, approximately 20.7% representing the expenditure on food and beverage from the total budget of consumers during 2018 (FoodDrink-Europe, 2020). The food market has changed and improved since consumers' choices have changed towards healthier products, the quality of food and the importance of lowering the negative additives in products taking an increasing importance in the purchasing decision (Huang et al., 2017).

Both the production of food and the consumption have changed in the past couple of years along with the diets followed by consumers therefore, individuals' expectations regarding the quality of the purchased food items becoming higher (Santeramo et al., 2018). Consumers' preferences have shifted towards ready to consume products and fresh foods that boosted the innovations within the entire food industry and the food value chain (Santeramo et al., 2018). As such, the changes within the industry emphasize the importance of food and beverage for individuals and producers.

Within European countries, a significant proportion of the increase in household expenditure is allocated towards the food market more specifically, towards high quality food and beverage products, emphasizing the importance of the food industry for consumers (Traill & Pitts, 1998). The increase in the economic level of countries led to improvements in the food habits of consumers that in turn, increased the inclinations related to food products and influenced the growth or changes of the food industry and the related process, such as agriculture and the production of new food products based on the increasing demand (Rask & Rask, 2011). Thus, the different activities related to

the food industry changed and transformed the industry according to the demand of consumers, making the food industry a significant component of the economy of a country.

### **2.1.1 The importance of the food industry in Romania**

Food and beverage represent a significant part of individuals' lives where the associated food industry is essential for providing the availability of food to the population of a country. Therefore, as described in the previous section, the food industry is essential for a country's economic system and development, as well as for its population. As in most of the countries within the European Union, the food and beverage industry represents an important economic sector for Romania. The following statistics emphasize the individuals' perceived importance of the food industry in Romania, as well as the contribution to the economic system and development of Romania.

The importance of the food industry is illustrated by the expenditure allocated by consumers towards food products and drinks in comparison to the total expenditure. Food and beverage products, along with alcohol and tobacco are important for consumers in Romania since consumers allocated approximately half of the total household consumption expenditure on such products, a significantly higher number compared to the rest of the countries within the European Union (Chițu & Tecău, 2014). Within the food industry and the different processes involved in producing and delivering food to consumers, several companies are actively participating. In addition, the revenues within the food industry in 2019 show an upward trend when compared to the revenues observed 10 years before thus, emphasizing the importance of food and also beverages for Romanian consumers, as well as for the economy of Romania (Sava, 2021a).

An important part of the food industry, the agriculture sector, occupies a leading position in Romania since the country is known for taking the first position within the EU with regards to the number of agriculture focused farms

in the country (Feher et al., 2021). Furthermore, in 2012, the food, drinks and tobacco sector in Romania was the most important sector with regard to the value added in comparison to other economic sectors within the country (Herman, 2016). Therefore, consumers within Romania place an important value on food products, as well as beverages. The food industry employs between approximately 4% to 5% of the accumulated employment within Romania, indicating the industry's contribution and significance to the economy of the country (Mocan et al., 2015).

Furthermore, imports and exports represent an important economic factor influencing the overall development of a country, as well as its economic stability. The exports related to the food industry and food products managed to exceed the imports in Romania during 2013, after several years of a negative trade balance (Mocan et al., 2015). In addition, specific food products have positively influenced the trade balance of Romania related to the food industry, especially cereals and oil-seeds that contributed to the increase in food exports (Arghiroiu et al., 2015). Therefore, food is perceived as an essential segment for the economy of Romania, as well as for the everyday life of consumers and for individuals' diets.

The turnover related to food and beverage has increased in Romania since the early 2000s (Kopeva et al., 2011). Moreover, individuals have increased household spending on food, especially on meat, fish and fruits starting from 2001 (Cupák et al., 2014). Besides the increase in spending on specific food products, in the past years, people allocated more towards outdoor dining and therefore, restaurants managed to develop and economically grow as a result of an increase related to consumers' spending possibilities (Veith, 2018).

The statistics mentioned that emphasize the importance of the food industry in Romania indicate the attractiveness of the industry for food retailers and the numerous opportunities that developed in the past decade related to the

potential of the food industry. Therefore, the food industry expanded and became an important economic sector for Romania.

## **2.2 The impact of COVID-19 on the food industry**

In the past decade, the food industry became increasingly dependent on the main parts and actors within the industry in order to achieve the objective of the supply chain and to properly function where a challenge to a single part of the industry can severely affect the entire supply chain (Knorr & Khoo, 2020). Since the food industry contains different components that are significantly important for consumers, as well as for the economy, the disruption within the food industry can negatively affect the function of its parts. The COVID-19 pandemic brought several disruptions for the food industry and impacted the different companies within the food supply chain. The COVID-19 pandemic affected every part of the food industry, ranging from distributors and producers to retailers or consumers (Boyacı-Gündüz et al., 2021).

Therefore, international trade of food was challenged, especially during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic (Laborde et al., 2020). Additionally, a principal part of the food sector, agriculture, was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and by the restrictions implemented to reduce the spread of the virus (Knorr & Khoo, 2020). The restriction of international transportation impacted the agriculture sector that was faced with insufficiency of fertilizers and pesticides, essential items for the cultivating and growing processes and with an insufficiency of labor force due to health limitations and contamination with the new virus (Khan et al., 2021). As such, the agri-food sector within the European Union has seen a decrease in output regarding agriculture of approximately 1.4% during 2020 when compared to the previous year (Montanari et al., 2021).

Another sector that was severely challenged by the infection of workers and the inability to effectively operate was meat processing (OECD, 2020). Food processing was challenged since the measures to reduce the spread of the virus

affected the efficiency of the operations and the ability to continue the operations within the food industry.

The risk of infection became an important issue to be considered by consumers when shopping for food products (Rizou et al., 2020). As such, the coronavirus pandemic made safety become an important aspect in the consumption of food. The governmental measures implemented towards limiting the spread of the virus have negatively impacted the processes within the food industry, affecting the production process and agriculture that in turn, affected the final consumer (Khan et al., 2021). As a result of the restrictions, producers faced different challenges since the demand decreased for specific products therefore, the inventory increased with unnecessary products (Purwanto et al., 2020). For example, the decreasing demand for milk resulted in a supply of milk exceeding the needs of consumers that negatively impacted the ability of producers to distribute the amount of milk left in the inventories (Purwanto et al., 2020).

Additionally, the supply of food was affected since the imports and exports of products have suffered several changes in a short period of time where international trade was limited by transportation disruption (Khan et al., 2021). The changes in supply chains have not only affected the transportation of food, but also retailers and consumers. In addition, the countries and industries that were heavily relying on the imports of goods were severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic since distribution and imports were limited due to the restrictions implemented (Khan et al., 2021).

The transportation sector was impacted by the lockdown measures that limited the possibility of efficiently transferring the food products to retailers (Chitrakar et al., 2021). The challenges within the transportation systems resulted in a shortage of essential input goods for retailers, as well as for farming and agriculture processes such as chemicals or seeds (Chitrakar et al., 2021). Moreover, the change in consumers' shopping preferences since the

beginning of the pandemic provided additional constraints for the global food supply chains (Nakat & Bou-Mitri, 2021). As a result of an uncommon situation, global supply chains and logistics were faced with several disruptions.

The change in the supply and demand for food products affected retailers and producers that were forced to adapt to the uncertainty of the situation. As such, food security became a major problem for consumers and for different nations (Khan et al., 2021). Therefore, the poorest countries were mostly affected by the changes within the food industry and food security. The processes that required more labor force, especially observed in poorer areas, have seen a significant impact of the pandemic since the measures, such as social distancing and the risk of contamination were more difficult to avoid thus, the production and the food value chain being negatively affected (Laborde et al., 2020).

The lack of technology related automation in some areas and the labor-intensive processes where interaction between workers was needed were severely affected by the measures implemented during the pandemic (Chitrakar et al., 2021). The production of food and drink products in the EU decreased by approximately 9% during the second quarter of 2020 when compared to the same period of the previous year, while the beef and veal sector experienced a decrease of 6% regarding production in 2020 within the EU (Montanari et al., 2021).

The food industry has additionally suffered from the closure of different activities due to the novel virus and led to more expired food items for retailers and producers (Chowdhury et al., 2020). The closure of factories and production plants represents another effect of the COVID-19 virus that impacted the entire food supply chain (Burgos & Ivanov, 2021). In addition, an important part of the food industry is represented by restaurants, cafes, and bars. The restrictions implemented have completely limited the operation of restaurants or any outdoor dining events that severely affected the food

industry and several producers that relied on the demand generated by this sector (Purwanto et al., 2020).

Therefore, this part of the food industry was drastically challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, the number of outdoor diners experienced a sharp decline starting from March 2020 when the restrictions were implemented (Lock, 2021). Moreover, the change in consumers' behavior towards buying more food from grocery stores instead of dining at restaurants and fast foods accentuated the challenges faced by the food transportation systems (OECD, 2020).

Besides transportation and distribution related disruptions, food demand has drastically changed during the initial phase of the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic influenced the income level of individuals that was reflected in the food industry, and it resulted in several challenges for the access to food and led to increased food prices (Laborde et al., 2020). The uncertainty created influenced consumers towards stocking unnecessary food products at the beginning of the pandemic, leading to an increase in prices of food due to higher demand that exceeded the supply (Çelik et al., 2020). The news and confusion regarding the restrictions implemented and the pandemic situation influenced consumers to change their usual shopping choices for food therefore, impacting consumers' food related demand (Khan et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the shifts in demand resulted in shortages for specific food products in food retail stores that made it almost impossible for customers in some countries to buy the needed products where the main reason relies on the behavior of individuals that purchased large quantities of food, triggered by the measure implemented during the first wave of the pandemic (Çelik et al., 2020). Moreover, food safety became an issue since the prices quickly changed and the availability of food was affected during the beginning of the pandemic (Khan et al., 2021).



One group of products affected by the shortages within the food industry and the challenges faced by the activities within the industry refers to dairy products (Khan et al., 2021). In addition, the shrimp producers in Iran have experienced several difficulties and challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic since the demand for shrimp suddenly decreased because of the decline in restaurant gatherings and tourism activities thus, further affecting the price of shrimps (Pazir et al., 2021). Similarly, the change in demand, the quarantine implemented and the challenges in logistics led to an increase in the price of staple foods (Boyacı-Gündüz et al., 2021). Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the food industry and the global food supply chains, along with consumers' behavior and demand with regard to food.

### **2.2.1 The impact of COVID-19 on the food industry in Romania**

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only provided several challenges to the global food industry, but it further affected the food industry in Romania. The challenges to the food sector and the economy of Romania started during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. As described in the previous subsection, the impact of the pandemic in Romania followed a similar pattern to the shifts related to the food processes observed in other countries across the European Union.

The restrictions implemented towards limiting the spread of the new coronavirus in Romania, along with the fear of infection led to the development of distinct changes in consumers' behavior regarding food and drink purchases that determined the shifts within the food industry in Romania (Dumitras et al., 2021). The pandemic impacted food producers, as well as retailers within the food industry because of the influence related to the shifts observed in consumers' food purchasing behavior (Dumitras et al., 2021). Therefore, the different participants within the food industry became affected by the uncertainty related to the new coronavirus.

Consumers focused more on cooking at home during the COVID-19 pandemic since restaurants and cafes in Romania were closed due to the restrictions implemented (Procopie et al., 2021). As such, the pandemic offered the possibility of preparing meals at home therefore, individuals started analyzing the quality of the products consumed that led to a change towards acquiring food from local food producers (Dumitras et al., 2021). Moreover, the demand for fresh food and necessary food products increased since the beginning of the pandemic, along with the shift towards shopping at local retailers and purchasing locally produced foods (Procopie et al., 2021).

Besides the effects related to the changes in consumers' food habits observed by retailers, the other parts of the food industry have also experienced different challenges. An important part for the availability of food for the end consumer, agriculture, suffered different changes during the COVID-19 pandemic with regards to labor availability and the fluctuating cost of agri-food products that not only affected the agriculture sector, but also the farmers in the rural areas within Romania (Popescu & Popescu, 2021).

The disruption within the food value chains influenced the fluctuations in prices of certain products, such as the increase in the price of vegetables while decreasing the price for eggs in the same period (Ignat & Constantin, 2020). Besides the food supply chains and distribution, the marketing and processing parts of the food industry were impacted by the novel coronavirus that resulted in different disruptions in the entire value chain (Procopie et al., 2021). The restrictions caused major delays that in turn, led to an increase in the highly demanded food products such as rice where the imports from other countries were limited (Munteanu, 2020). Therefore, the limitation of international trade and the decreased efficiency of transportation systems caused delays and distinct constraints for the food supply chain.

The major obstacle faced by the food industry is related to the sudden changes in consumers' purchasing and consumption behavior developed since the

initial COVID-19 infection cases in Romania (Procopie et al., 2021). The cause of the shifts with regards to food demand that impacted retailers and producers is related to consumers' change in preferences, along with the measures to prevent the infection that challenged the efficiency of food distribution systems in an industry characterized by fluctuating demand (Munteanu, 2020).

The Romanian food industry has seen a switch in terms of the choice for preferred shopping places where, during the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers placed more importance on shopping at local convenience stores or local producers of meat compared to the behavior of shopping at hypermarkets, a habit observed prior to the pandemic (Butu et al., 2020). Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the food industry in Romania where individuals' changes in food choices and the delays in transportation were the main reasons for the challenges faced by the different parts within the Romanian food industry.

### **2.2.2 Brick and mortar supermarkets vs online delivery services**

The food industry is associated to different processes where the end consumer has the possibility of choosing how to proceed with the actual purchase of goods, ranging from brick-and-mortar supermarkets to the use of online delivery services. The technological advancements provided several opportunities for different industries, including the food service industry. The brick-and-mortar supermarkets refer to companies within the food industry operating as traditional offline retailers of food and non-food products (Chen et al., 2021).

The food industry improved and developed by implementing new methods of purchasing and delivering food to the end consumer. One new development within the food sector is represented by the online delivery services for food that consist of ordering food with the use of online platforms or applications with the purpose of a physical delivery system to the clients (Li et al., 2020). As such, food delivery services are represented by mobile apps where customers

order food or groceries online, while the delivery aspect is made offline and prepared for clients (Muangmee et al., 2021). Therefore, consumers are offered the possibility of placing orders directly to several restaurants or with the use of third-party online ordering services (Li et al., 2020).

The online delivery platforms became increasingly popular among the younger generation in several countries where online platforms for food deliveries are available (Li et al., 2020). The food delivery apps represent an example of an online food ordering platform, mainly targeting consumers using apps on smartphones, that managed to become popular in the past years where various newly developed companies have been successful, such as Foodpanda or Uber Eats (Ray et al., 2019).

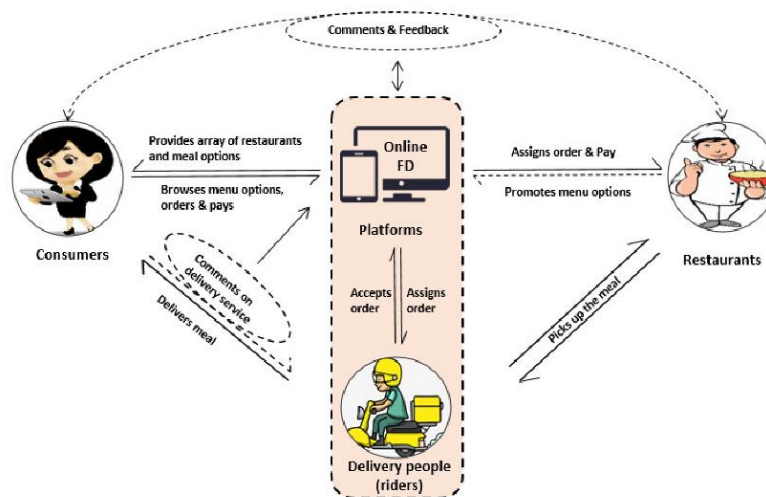


Figure 1. Online food delivery platforms and the main characteristics

Source: (Li et al., 2020).

The new niche within the industry provided various opportunities for new developers that took advantage of the shifts with regard to consumers' purchasing behavior. The development of such services provided different benefits for consumers, ranging from economic benefits, such as more employment possibilities, to more convenience, as well as safer methods of

purchasing food during the difficult times related to the COVID-19 pandemic (Li et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the food industry in Romania has developed, offering new possibilities to consumers. Therefore, the pandemic influenced consumers in Romania to increase the online purchases for products usually acquired in physical stores therefore, during the pandemic, e-commerce in Romania has seen an upward trend with regards to different industries, including the grocery sector (Lone et al., 2021). Considering the restrictions related to outdoor dining and restaurant gatherings, online food platforms and grocery ordering became a considerable opportunity for consumers in Romania (Dumitras et al., 2021).

Considering the increasing popularity of such food delivery platforms, it is essential to determine the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumers' preference for shopping at brick-and-mortar supermarkets or using online delivery services. The e-commerce and online services offered the possibility of limiting interaction during the period of COVID-19 when the fear of infection represented an important factor for consumers when shopping (Salem & Nor, 2020). Additionally, the importance of online delivery services is emphasized by the increase in online grocery spending that improved from 3% of the total grocery spending before COVID-19 to about 10 – 15% during the pandemic (Repko, 2020).

The uncommon situation generated by the coronavirus led to different changes with regards to the behavior of consumers towards online or offline shopping where the online grocery shopping services offered consumers a more convenient option for purchasing food during the COVID-19 pandemic (Wang et al., 2020). As a result of the increasing demand for such innovations during a pandemic period, the online grocery market was able to grow since the beginning of the pandemic and attracted more customers to order groceries online (Dannenberg et al., 2020).

Considering the governmental measures in most of the countries that limited the interaction between individuals and the activities related to food services, along with the changes in consumers' food related behavior, it led to an increase related to the possibilities of online food delivery services (Muangmee et al., 2021). Muangmee et al. (2021) argue that consumers tend to switch to online food delivery services because of the perceived advantages of the platform, such as trust or safety and the social influence during the coronavirus pandemic.

Furthermore, the adaptation to online grocery shopping was influenced by different advantages, such as a larger variety of products or the easy to use interface, along with the influence of other individuals (Habib & Hamadneh, 2021). Moreover, physical supermarkets started implementing and testing e-commerce opportunities in terms of delivering and ordering food online from existing grocery stores (Dannenberg et al., 2020). Therefore, consumers changed their usual shopping behavior when the new COVID-19 pandemic started expanding therefore, some switched from shopping in physical stores to e-commerce (Habib & Hamadneh, 2021).

The insecurity and safety reasons prompted consumers to adapt to online food services during the pandemic (Dannenberg et al., 2020). As such, during the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the food ordering apps were considered a great opportunity for restaurants and other food services for diminishing the negative impact generated by the restrictions for limiting the spread of the virus (Türkeş et al., 2021). Faced with the uncertainty associated to the COVID-19 pandemic, restaurants began implementing and using online food delivery services (Gavilan et al., 2021). According to Gavilan et al (2021), the fear related to the infection with the novel coronavirus has driven consumers to adapt to an alternative method to restaurant gatherings in the form of online food delivery at home during the pandemic. In addition, the measures implemented to reduce the physical contact among individuals,

along with the desire of consumers to avoid congested places drove individuals' intention towards online grocery shopping (Habib & Hamadneh, 2021). However, only a compact part of the population considered online grocery shopping an alternative to physical supermarkets (Dumitras et al., 2021). In Romania, only approximately 23% of the population made purchases online during 2019 (Eurostat, 2020b).

Therefore, as previously mentioned, brick-and-mortar supermarkets represent a key place for shopping, but the advantage of shopping for groceries online and ordering food from restaurants online via the different platforms and apps attracted new customers to the online possibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **2.3 The impact of COVID-19 on consumers' purchasing behavior**

The COVID-19 pandemic challenged the different operations within the food industry, as well as the end consumer. The difficulties and challenges resulted from the uncertainty related to the spread of the COVID-19 brought several changes with regards to consumers' purchasing behavior (Akter et al., 2021). The changes in consumers' behavior were influenced by the restrictions implemented, health risk perception and economy related constraints that developed since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic (Akter et al., 2021). As a result, the food industry has experienced several changes in consumers' purchasing behavior and usual habits (Procopie et al., 2021).

Consumer behavior is related to different factors influencing the patterns in the purchasing behavior of consumers (Qazzafi, 2020). Moreover, food purchasing behavior is related to consumers' behavior with the focus on food products where factors such as price or flavor, along with the usual habits that are triggered by everyday needs are determining factors for developing different habits (Sanlier & Karakus, 2010). According to Qazzafi (2020), consumers' purchasing behavior is influenced by certain factors, ranging from personal or psychological factors to social and economic related

characteristics. Consumers' food purchasing behavior is represented by the individuals' action towards acquiring food or drink products and selecting the place of shopping, ranging from supermarkets to restaurants or other food catering services (French et al., 2008).

Furthermore, consumers' food purchasing behavior can be influenced by different factors, from previous experiences and demographic related characteristics to marketing and pricing strategies used by certain retailers (Sanlier & Karakus, 2010). Purchasing behavior can be impacted and shifted by different internal or external factors, such as different events (Akter et al., 2021). Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic that affected consumers' lifestyles is related to an external factor influencing individuals. As such, the COVID-19 pandemic along with the uncertainty created by such an uncommon situation led to several changes within a short period of time with regards to the usual habits and purchasing behavior of consumers (Valaskova et al., 2021).

Additionally, consumers' purchasing behavior in terms of food has changed in Romania during the COVID-19 pandemic and affected the food industry in the country since the beginning of the pandemic (Constantin et al., 2021). The fear and governmental measure towards limiting the infection with the novel coronavirus, along with the financial situation of individuals represent the main reasons for the sudden shifts in consumers' purchasing and consumption behavior developed during the pandemic (Valaskova et al., 2021).

Therefore, several factors influenced the changes observed with regards to consumers' usual behavior during the difficult period generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The following sub-sections will explore the main changes related to food purchasing behavior prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic at a global level but will also focus more on the changes observed in Romania.



### **2.3.1 Food purchasing behavior prior to COVID-19**

The behavior of consumers with regards to purchases of food is an important influencing factor for the efficiency of the food industry. The decisions regarding consumer behavior provide certain satisfaction or perceived value developed with the buying or purchasing process, along with the actual consumption that can satisfy a need (Mehta et al., 2020). Thus, individuals engage in different behaviors related to goods that are mainly triggered by different types of needs that can affect and develop positive emotions. However, individuals tend to change the behavior or habits related to certain products in case of different or unusual events that can negatively affect consumers (Mehta et al., 2020).

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, brand loyalty represented an important influencing factor for consumers' purchasing decisions with regards to certain items (Pattweekongka et al., 2019). Additionally, the advertising efforts towards creating brand awareness were significant factors for influencing customers' intention to buy organic food products (Pattweekongka et al., 2019). Furthermore, consumers dedicated more time towards outdoor dining prior to COVID-19 and focused less on cooking food at home (Bender et al., 2021). Grocery shopping was made more in physical supermarkets and not via online ordering platforms before the start of the coronavirus pandemic (AlTarrah et al., 2021).

Moreover, price represented a significant factor in the decision making related to the purchase of food, especially for organic food (Katt & Meixner, 2020). The frequency of shopping for groceries at stores was higher prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the focus towards purchasing packaged foods (Ben Hassen et al., 2021). For outdoor dining and eating, individuals within the European Union allocated approximately 7% of the overall expenditure, with only 1.9% for Romania in 2018 (Eurostat, 2020c). Therefore, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, restaurants and brick and mortar supermarkets were

popular for consumers, along with the tendency to value loyalty to certain brands.

### **2.3.2 Food purchasing behavior during COVID-19**

Individuals experience certain effects when negative or positive economic related events occur, such as an economic crisis or global events, where the impact of the situation depends on individuals' perspective or the evaluation of possible risks of such situations (Mehta et al., 2020). For example, pandemics affect individuals because of the risk regarding health that could lead to changes in consumer habits (Laato et al., 2020). As a result, people can act in different ways when faced with an uncertain event that personally affects the usual behavior and preferences of consumers.

The pandemic of COVID-19 affected consumers' habits and food related behavior. Therefore, consumers shifted their personal perception of the usual essential products by emphasizing on consuming only the necessary goods and products (Mehta et al., 2020). Moreover, studies indicate that self-isolation behavior, as a result of the new measures implemented for reducing the spread of COVID-19, can influence or boost engagement in atypical and unusual consumer behavior (Laato et al., 2020). Therefore, the tendency of individuals to shift to unfamiliar behavior could be explained by the uncertainty developed by the situation therefore, the observed tendency to store unnecessary and large amounts of different indispensable products for home isolation (Laato et al., 2020). Similar to consumer preferences, food related purchasing preferences were affected and shifted by the pandemic (Russo et al., 2021).

As such, apart from the social related limitations, the pandemic changed the preferences of consumers towards different purchasing behaviors in relation to food products during the initial wave of the pandemic where the influence related to the risk and fear of contamination changed individuals' purchasing habits (Eger et al., 2021). During the earliest wave of the pandemic, individuals

developed certain chaotic purchasing preferences of food that resulted in the inability of grocery stores to restock the shelves considering the increasing food demand (Mehta et al., 2020). Besides the negative effects, a positive aspect from such shifts in consumers' consumption or purchasing behavior is related to the development of healthier habits and lifestyle related to food products in some geographic regions (Hassen et al., 2020). Moreover, online shopping for food was considered as a new alternative to shopping in brick and mortar grocery stores where the risks related to infection with the new virus was important for consumers (Alaimo et al., 2020).

Aside from uncertainty, the accessibility of the goods or products further impacted individuals' behavior to changing the usual behavior and shifted towards testing different brands of food products. (Eger et al., 2021). The maintenance or shift of already developed changes related to consumers' food shopping behavior in the future can be impacted by the pressure related to psychological attributes, as well as impulse behavior (Russo et al., 2021).

The coronavirus pandemic in Romania changed the purchasing behavior of consumers with regards to groceries and indicated a trend towards purchasing local products instead of imported food along with buying fresh vegetables and fruits or food products that are healthier (Sava, 2020). In addition, meat, fruits and oil, along with rice were the most common grocery purchases during the pandemic in Romania (Sava, 2021b). The main fear of consumers in relation to food purchasing refers to the limited supply of desired food products in-store and the risk of infection (Shamim et al., 2020).

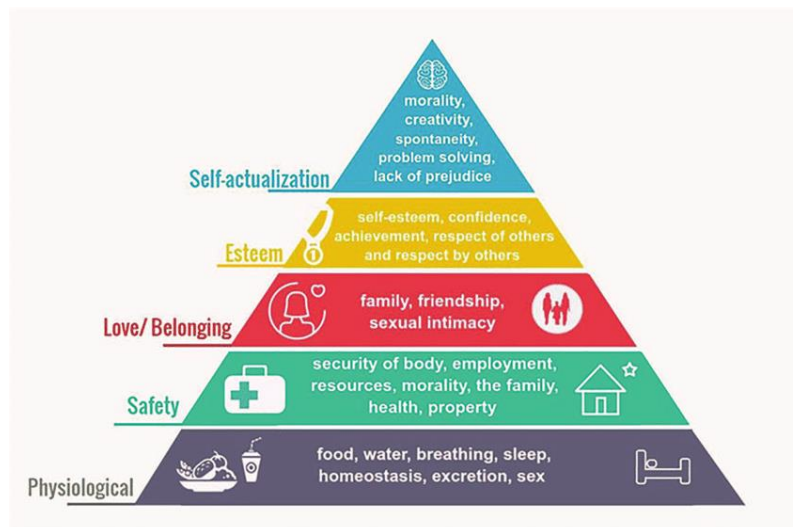
The findings of Shamim et al (2020) present a trend towards purchasing packaged food products since the beginning of the pandemic. Consumers have shifted towards packaged foods where the main reason was the risk of infection, Romania experiencing the highest increase in the demand for packaged food (EitFood, 2020). Besides visiting grocery stores with the intention to purchase food less often, consumers shifted the budget towards

essential food products (Valaskova et al., 2021). During the early stages of the pandemic, individuals shifted from hypermarkets to smaller grocery stores (Scacchi et al., 2021). Moreover, the category of fresh fish purchases has seen a decline in consumption and demand and the closure of the restaurants and other food services, along with the measures implemented influenced the impulse buying behavior of consumers (Scacchi et al., 2021).

The uncommon situation generated by the coronavirus crisis led to a shift with regards to consumers' behavior that resulted in "lack of control and anxiety and ultimately triggering impulse buying" (Wang et al., 2021, p. 14). Furthermore, impulse buying behavior and stockpiling were common in Romania with regards to basic grocery products (Roşu et al., 2021). Moreover, food hoarding was mainly influenced by the perception of fear and risk of the pandemic (Khoi & Long, 2020). According to the findings of Wang et al (2020), the higher price for fresh food products when supply was limited in the context of a pandemic was not a limiting factor in the purchasing decisions.

Within the European Union, consumers changed their behavior and started buying more inexpensive groceries along with trying new brands of products as compared to the usual brands (EitFood, 2020). However, an interesting fact is represented by Romania which was not associated with an important increase in the purchases of unknown food brands (EitFood, 2020). Therefore, consumers changed the usual purchasing behavior in several ways as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The theoretical foundation for emphasizing the influence towards the changes in consumers' behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic follows Maslow's hierarchy of needs model developed by Abraham Maslow in 1943. The theory emphasizes on ranking the needs of individuals based on the desire to satisfy such needs that became common among individuals (Gawel, 1996).



*Figure 2. Maslow's hierarchy of needs*

Source: (Ramakrishnan et al., 2017)

The main finding of the Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory is represented by the individuals' behavior of prioritizing the satisfaction of a need where "one does not feel the second need until the demands of the first have been satisfied" (Jerome, 2013, p. 41). The hierarchy proposed by Abraham Maslow starts with the bottom line where physiological needs are crucial, such as the indispensable food and air or oxygen, followed by the safety needs (Jerome, 2013). The third line in the hierarchy, the need for love and belongings is followed by the need for esteem and is finalized by the need for self-actualization (Jerome, 2013).

From Maslow's hierarchy of needs model, it can be observed that the one essential need is represented by the physiological needs, consisting of the need for food therefore, the theory is linked to the behavior observed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the needs of individuals, impulse buying with regards to food was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in the early stage of the pandemic (Wang et al., 2021). Therefore, the drastic changes in consumers' food purchasing behavior are linked to the findings analyzed by Maslow's

hierarchy of needs where food represents a physiological need that is crucial for individuals' life and well-being.

The base for analyzing the buying behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic is represented by the Stimuli-Organism-Response model (SOR) as a result of the model described by Mehrabian and Russell. The SOR model describes a possible reason for a certain behavior where “environment is a stimulus (S), which consists of a set of signs that cause an internal evaluation of someone (O) and then produces a response”(Mehrabian & Russell, 1974, as cited in Hetharie et al., 2019). The SOR model in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic focuses on the link between the COVID-19 stimulus, along with the emotion of individuals influenced by the pandemic and the response of behavioral changes. The SOR model can analyze the reaction of consumers towards buying behavior after the changes observed during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **2.4 Dietary changes caused by COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the choices and preferences of consumers with regard to purchasing products. Therefore, consumers changed their usual patterns according to economic situations and to the uncertainty of an economic event, such as the coronavirus pandemic that impacted consumers' perception of patterns in everyday dietary or consumption habits (Hasan et al., 2021).

Several factors could lead to a change in the usual preferences or habits of individuals, ranging from social related characteristics or different technological advancements to worldwide negative situations or events (Sheth, 2020). Moreover, the perception regarding the risks of the situations can significantly affect the degree of change with regards to the usual consumers' diets or consumption (Hasan et al., 2021). Therefore, the main impacts of the pandemic on consumers' preferences or habits are represented by developing stocks of different food or grocery products, the focus on only

essential products or food and development of new habits according to the availability of certain products (Sheth, 2020).

Since operations within restaurants have been restricted during the pandemic, consumers changed the usual food preferences (Laguna et al., 2020). Therefore, in most of the countries within the European Union, there was an increase in cooking meals at home (EitFood, 2020). Considering the limitations regarding the regularity of shopping for groceries, consumers shifted to fresh food products and spent more time cooking that further affected the food related consumption patterns of consumers with regards to perishable products (Laguna et al., 2020).

Furthermore, consumers within Romania focused more on consuming vegetables and meat or dairy products but decreased the consumption of alcoholic beverages (EitFood, 2020). The main change in terms of dietary habits during the COVID-19 crisis is represented by a shift towards a healthier diet (Rodríguez-Pérez et al., 2020). For example, consumers in Spain shifted away from the consumption of meat-based food products, along with the habit of avoiding pastries (Rodríguez-Pérez et al., 2020). In addition, consumers in Germany and Denmark focused more on non-perishable grocery products since the first wave of the pandemic (Janssen et al., 2021).

The first wave of the pandemic influenced individuals towards consuming more lean meat or coffee, but at the same time, consuming less fish-based food (Cicero et al., 2021). Moreover, consumers in Italy developed new consumption habits such as placing more importance on eating frozen foods, along with an increase in the eating habit of sweet grocery products (Izzo et al., 2021). During the first wave, a sudden increase in the demand for organic and frequently consumed food products was observed in different regions (Boyacı-Gündüz et al., 2021). With regards to fast food preferences, individuals have changed the fast-food consumption habits towards healthier diets therefore, lowering the intake of fast-food meals (Chenarides et al., 2020).

Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the dietary habits of consumers towards essential food products.

#### **2.4.1 Dietary changes caused by COVID-19 due to monetary impact**

The changes with regards to consumers' preferred diets are influenced by several factors. Among the influencing factors, the economic related factors can influence the usual habits and behavior of consumers (Qazzafi, 2020). Among the different factors that influenced the consumption behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic, monetary loss or financial limitation represented a significant reason for consumers' consumption habits in certain countries (Janssen et al., 2021).

Therefore, during difficult time periods or events that impact the economic performance of individuals, the behavior and preferences can be affected. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted consumers within Romania due to the monetary limitation associated with the new global phenomenon (EitFood, 2020). For example, the findings of Janssen et al (2021) suggest that consumers within the lower income countries within Europe have not experienced similar changes with regards to consumption behavior such as consumers in Germany regarding more expensive foods, such as snacks.

Moreover, the budget constraints within countries facing difficulties in terms of the economic performance during the coronavirus pandemic, such as Slovenia, led to a behavior where consumers have not allocated a significant proportion of the budget towards non-necessary grocery products or foods (Janssen et al., 2021). Slovenia, one of the countries impacted more in terms of financial constraints, observed consumers changing the usual consumption habits towards reducing the consumption of fruits, as well as ready to eat food or alcoholic beverages and increasing the use of cheaper grocery products (Janssen et al., 2021). Therefore, the trend towards inexpensive food products was observed for consumers in countries impacted by the novel coronavirus



where individuals shifted to new dietary habits as a result of monetary constraints.

### **3 Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research design**

The research design represents an important aspect in a research study with the purpose of guiding the process based on the research problem. Besides the analysis of secondary data, the collection of primary data is crucial for the goals of this research. The researcher has different options with regards to the implementation of a research approach, ranging from qualitative or quantitative to a mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2014). While quantitative research focuses on the collection of numerical data, qualitative research emphasizes on gathering more detailed information, expressed in words and is based on open-ended questions (Williams, 2007). The third research approach, the mixed methods, is represented by a combination of both a quantitative approach and a qualitative approach with regards to the collection of primary data (Williams, 2007).

The implementation of a specific research approach varies according to the objective of the study where the researcher takes an active part in selecting the appropriate research approach and research design. The research problem represents a reliable consideration for the selection of a research approach. Therefore, the appropriate research approach for the objectives of this study relies on the qualitative research method.

Qualitative research is represented by an emphasis on participants' views based on the problem developed in the research where understanding and elaborating the opinion expressed by individuals is essential for achieving the objectives of the study (Creswell, 2014). The data collection part of qualitative research focuses on the implementation of open-ended questions that offer

the possibility of analyzing the meaning behind the detailed responses of participants (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, the qualitative research is based on text-related information gathered from participants where openness and the perspective of individuals are the main characteristics (Flick et al., 2004).

The qualitative approach is appropriate for this research and for the objective of assessing consumer's perspectives on the long-term changes with regards to food purchasing behavior in a detailed manner. Furthermore, it allows for a better understanding and interpretation of participants' view of the research problem, along with evaluating the perceptions regarding the behavior observed during the COVID-19 pandemic and a future perspective of consumers.

The researcher needs to decide on an appropriate worldview that would suit the purpose and the objective of the research. Therefore, the current research is based upon a constructivist worldview that allows for a better interpretation and collection of the views and opinions of participants following the open-ended questions developed for the interviews (Creswell, 2014). The constructivist worldview is focused on a subjective approach, where participants build the findings, and is therefore appropriate for qualitative research with interviews as a research method (Petersen & Gencel, 2013).

Furthermore, the researcher needs to focus on the ethical considerations appropriate for the implemented research design with regards to the collection of data, interpretation and use of collected information. The goals of the ethical considerations within research are to protect the individuals participating in the study in every step within the research process (Coughlan et al., 2009). The importance of ethics in research is emphasized by the impact on the relation between interviewer and interviewee and how the interview process will develop. Therefore, considerations regarding confidentiality and the data collection process are the essential ethical aspects to be considered in research (Coughlan et al., 2009).

The research method includes the methods used, ranging from qualitative, quantitative to mixed methods, for gathering, evaluating and interpreting data (Creswell, 2014). Based on the objectives of the research, the research method can gather data in a numerical format, common for the quantitative research, or data in the form of words or text based on a recording of data, common for qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, the qualitative research design follows the qualitative research method in the form of interviews with open-ended questions. The qualitative interviews are appropriate for the objective of the research since it asks participants questions regarding the observed phenomenon in a face-to-face setting with the purpose of gathering ideas and opinions regarding the research problem.

The specific type of qualitative interview implemented in the study is represented by semi-structured interviews where the interview is mostly based on a structured set of questions (Coughlan et al., 2009). Interviews represent an attractive method of collecting data since this method allows for the observation and identification of certain behavior, along with the perspective of participants regarding a specific event in a detailed format (Coughlan et al., 2009). Therefore, the interview will provide detailed information regarding the behavior related to food purchases observed by the interviewees during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The foundation of the methodology section is represented by the research questions that guide the entire research process and data collection. Therefore, the main research question aims to find to what extent did the COVID-19 pandemic impact the food purchasing behavior of consumers. In addition, the supplementary research question focuses more on consumers' future perspectives regarding the changes related to food and looks at how normality post COVID-19 will influence consumers' food preferences and purchasing behavior.

### **3.2 Data collection**

Data collection represents an important part of the research process. Based on the purpose of the research study, the researcher collects both primary and secondary data in order to achieve a reliable conclusion to the research problem. Therefore, the current study follows a mixture of the two types of data collection processes, including secondary data gathered from existing literature based on the topic of interest, as well as primary data collected based on the qualitative research method implemented in the study.

The secondary data described in this research was collected with the use of different online platforms such as Research Gate, Science Direct and Google Scholar, as well as other internet based sources gathered from online libraries. The purpose of secondary data refers to identifying related research studies that contribute to the understanding of the current research and evaluating the findings of previous studies about the current research topic (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, the secondary data was gathered in the form of numerical data, as well as in a form of text based on the findings of previous studies that are closely related to the current research topic. The secondary data provided significant information related to the research problem evaluated in this research.

Furthermore, the primary data was collected by the researcher with the use of a qualitative method that included 14 interviews with consumers. The interviews were conducted in a face-to-face setting with several consumers within the county of Satu Mare, in Romania consisting of 18 interview questions that provided details regarding their personal views on the changes in behavior observed during the COVID-19 pandemic in Romania. Considering the place where data was collected, the interviews were in Romanian or English language, based on the skills and willingness of interviewees. The interviews conducted in Romanian language are translated in the Appendices section.

### **3.3 Interview development**

The collection of primary data in the form of interviews with consumers is centered towards gathering detailed information regarding the future perspective of consumers on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals' food purchasing behavior within the county of Satu Mare, Romania. Therefore, for achieving this objective, the interview is formed of 18 different questions for providing the ideas and views of participants related to the topic of the research.

The interview begins with a question regarding the permission to record the interview session and to use the data gathered with the scope of providing an answer to the current research topic. The second question looks at the educational background of the interviewed individuals, followed by the third question that asks participants about their professional background. The interview continues with a different interview question that has the goal of introducing the topic and it wants to see how the participants feel about the pandemic and if they were personally affected by the virus or anyone they personally know. This question represents a great introduction of the participants to the following questions, focusing on a more detailed description of the changes observed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the fifth question introduces the food industry and asks about the importance of the food industry in Romania, based on consumers' perspectives.

The following question is as follows: "What were your food consumption preferences before COVID-19?" and intends to observe the preferences related to the consumption of food prior to the pandemic in order to compare the results with the changes seen during the pandemic. In order to evaluate if their consumption preferences have changed, the next question turns towards the present and attempts to look at the preferences in terms of food consumption in the current period, after two years since the start of the

COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it asks about the participants' food consumption preferences during the pandemic and now. On a similar topic, the following question further emphasizes the importance of consumer preferences, but it looks at the opinion of participants regarding how the preferences will change in the future more specifically, if consumers would continue with the preferences developed since the pandemic or if they would shift back to the previous behavior observed prior to the pandemic. Moreover, it is followed by question 9 that focuses on the changes in consumer preferences based on the affected social well-being during COVID-19.

Dietary habits represent an important behavior in the research that intends to assess the changes observed with regard to diets. Therefore, the next interview question emphasizes the dietary habits and asks if the pandemic changed consumers' dietary habits. It is continued with a follow-up question, where the goal is to gather more details regarding the dietary habits before the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the present moment. It is important to evaluate these changes from a future perspective where the following question, number eleven, focuses on individuals' opinions regarding how the changes in relation to dietary habits will develop in the long term. In addition, another question is further referring to dietary habits, but it looks at the results regarding the health of interviewees and if this further impacted the exercise and fitness routines. The interview continues by looking at the implementation of a healthy diet prior to COVID-19, as well as at the changes observed by consumers regarding groceries and food products purchases since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the choice between processed and organic food.

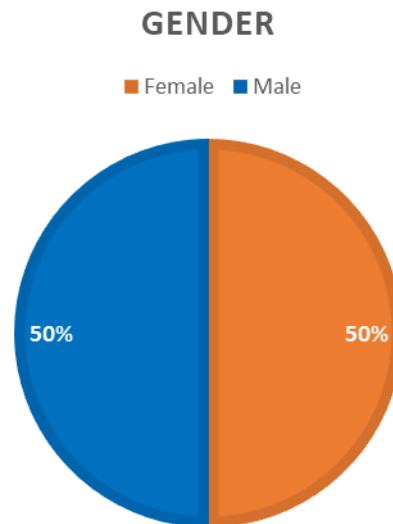
Additionally, it is succeeded by the impulse buying behavior observed during the pandemic, especially in the first wave, and is emphasizing how this behavior developed afterward. The fear of infection is another important factor that is assessed in this interview where the next question refers to "How

did the fear of infection decide where you do your food purchases? (i.e. did you buy your groceries online, did you go to a supermarket, or did you buy your food at a restaurant via online food delivery services?)”. This question desires to assess the fear related to the virus and the impact on the choice of shopping for food, ranging from online grocery shopping to supermarkets or restaurants with the use of online delivery services. Moreover, the following question asks about the expenditure on each of the types of food shopping choices. Furthermore, the interview process continues by emphasizing how the availability of food delivery services by grocery stores could impact consumers’ purchasing behavior during and post COVID-19. It is continued with a follow-up question regarding the frequency of using such a service, along with the individuals that would benefit the most from it. The last question focuses on how the safety reasons and the online grocery shopping possibilities would shift consumers’ behavior regarding the preparation of food at home during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **4 Data analysis and interpretation**

The data collected with the use of qualitative interviews are analyzed and interpreted to provide an answer to the research questions. Therefore, the data collection process consisted of 14 interviews with consumers within the county of Satu Mare, Romania. Additionally, the interview consisted of 18 questions with the central aim of gathering detailed opinions and perspectives according to the research topic and objective. The analysis of the gathered data can be structured in 4 different parts or themes, starting with an introductory question towards the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by the evaluation of changes in food consumption preferences, dietary habits and buying behavior. The objective of the author was to include a diverse sample of participants related to age groups, gender and educational background or working

experience. Figure 3 shows the percentage of the two identified genders among the interviewees, male and female, from the total number of participants.

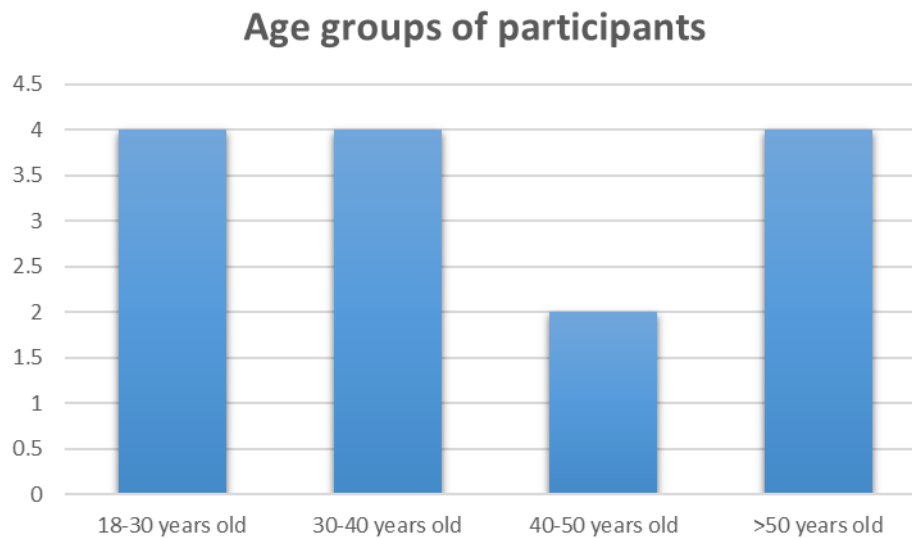


*Figure 3. Gender*

Source: Author's own (2022)

The interviews consisted of participants from different age groups in order to have a diverse sample where the researcher was able to assess how the opinions differed among the age groups. As such, 4 participants were part of the 18-30 age group and the other 4 were between the 30-40 age group. As presented in the histogram plotted in Figure 4, 2 participants were part of the 40-50 age group while the other 4 interviewees were above 50 years old.

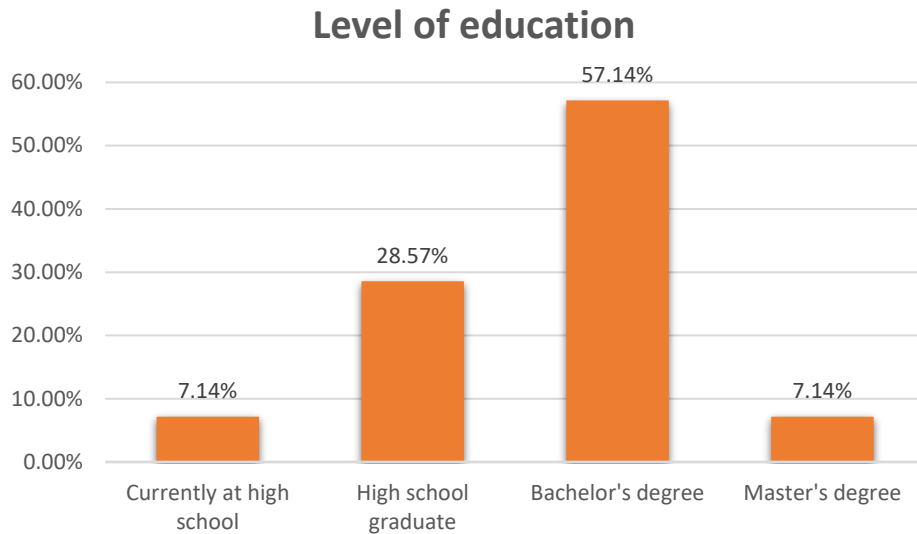




*Figure 4. Age groups of participants*

Source: Author's own (2022)

The researcher's objective for collecting data from a diverse sample is further emphasized by the difference with regards to participants' educational levels. The aim of having a diverse sample regarding the educational background is to analyze how consumers were impacted by the pandemic according to the different levels of education associated with each participant. Figure 5 illustrates how the sample differs in relation to the 4 different types of educational levels identified during the data collection part. Subsequently, approximately 7% of the sample have a Master's degree and another 7% are currently studying at a High School level, while about 28% of the total number of participants have graduated High School along with 57% that have a Bachelor's degree. The working experience of participants was diverse, and it varied from managers and economists within the food industry to students or engineers.



*Figure 5. Level of education*

Source: Author's own (2022)

Data analysis consists of evaluating the responses from the 14 interviews by structuring the questions into 4 different themes and interpreting the data. Therefore, the first theme is represented by an introduction where the questions have the aim of introducing the participant to the topic. The interview starts with two questions focusing on the educational background and the working experience of the participants. The interview is continued with an introductory question, focusing on the general opinion of the participants regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. The opinions were closely related, and most participants expressed the personal impact of the pandemic observed from a health related perspective or the general effects of the pandemic that created several uncertainties.

*“It is a very bad thing that happened to us and the whole world. I was not directly affected by the pandemic in the sense that I was not sick. But I do know individuals that were affected.”* (Female, Interview 10)

The following question emphasizes the importance of the food industry in Romania. Most participants valued the food industry in Romania as one of the most important industries since food is essential for sustaining life.

*“I consider it as one of the most important industries at national or even international level, I could say.”* (Female, Interview 8)

*“I consider it one of the most important and this was proved during the pandemic because people can live without clothes, furniture, toys or anything else, but not food. There was even a shopping spree at the beginning of the pandemic of flour, milk, yeast, oil due to the panic created.”* (Female, Interview 11)

The data analysis section continues with the second theme, looking at food consumption preferences therefore, being more specific towards the topic of the research. Interview questions starting from 6 to question 9 have the objective of identifying the changes observed in consumers' consumption preferences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus of the following interview question regarding the food consumption preference prior to COVID-19 led to a diverse set of answers, but most of them contained specific food product categories that were preferred by consumers before the pandemic. While several participants focused on a balanced and broad diet with vegetables, meat and fruits, some observed that *“it predominated the consumption of meat and sometimes fast food products.”* (Male, Interview 2). A low percentage of participants followed a strict meal plan that would be considered healthier and most of the individuals in the sample emphasized on meat consumption. A low percentage also mentioned the preference towards sweets and fish or pasta.

*“As a food preference, it was a balanced consumption of vegetables, fruits, meat and other dairy products, so it was a balanced consumption of all products on the market.”* (Female, Interview 4)

## Food preferences before COVID-19

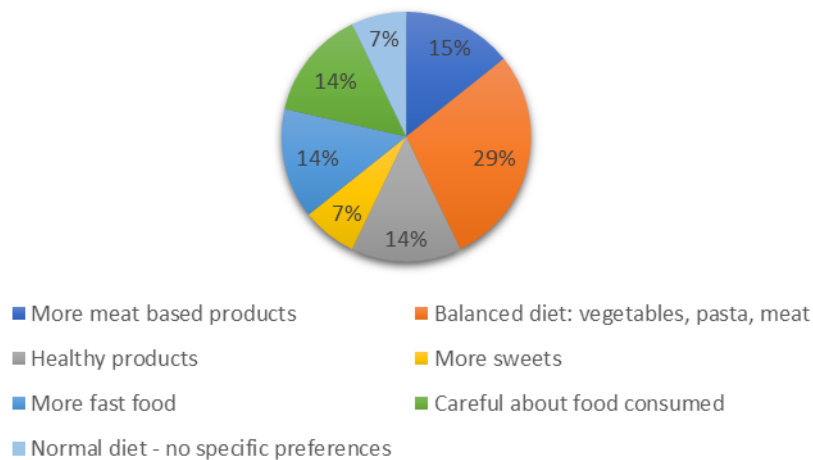


Figure 6. Food preferences before COVID-19

Source: Author's own (2022)

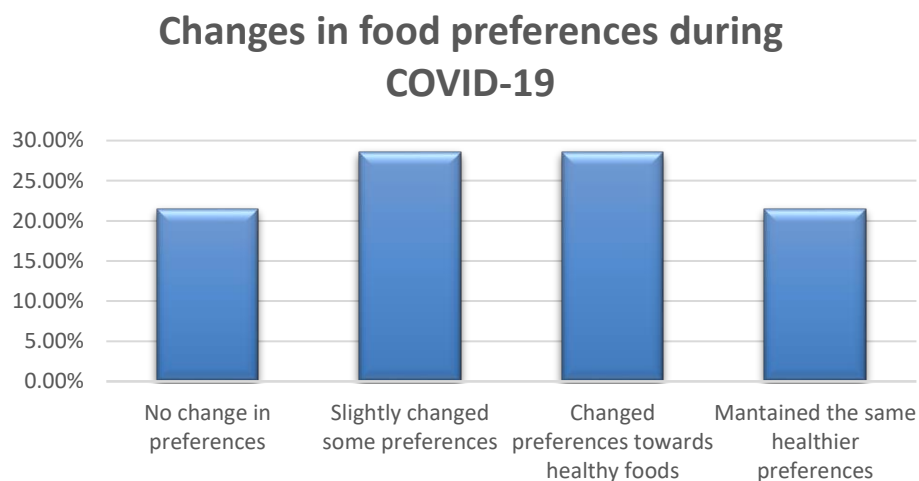
Question 7 in the interview looks at how the previously developed food preferences have changed since the beginning of the pandemic. The answers varied among interviewees where some have experienced significant changes towards healthier food consumption such as vegetables or fruits as expressed in the first interview: *“Well, in the beginning I consumed more meat products, flour based products, dairy products, sweets, but now I prefer vegetables and fruits.”* (Female, Interview 1). Some participants did not observe any significant changes in their consumption preferences, with only small shifts away from certain foods.

*“I have remained at about the same preferences, not being affected by a diet after COVID-19, I have remained at the same preferences, dairy products, vegetables, fruits, meat products. So, I use the same products now as before COVID-19.”* (Female, Interview 4)

For the participants that already had a strict and healthy meal plan before COVID-19, the food consumption preferences have not changed thus, remaining at similar habits as before the pandemic.

*“Nothing has changed, vegetables, fruits and meat have remained the same. It is still as healthy as possible.” (Male, Interview 9)*

The changes in food consumption preferences observed by participants since the beginning of the pandemic are illustrated in Figure 7 that emphasizes the tendency towards a change for healthy foods for some consumers.



*Figure 7. Changes in food preferences during COVID-19*

Source: Author’s own (2022)

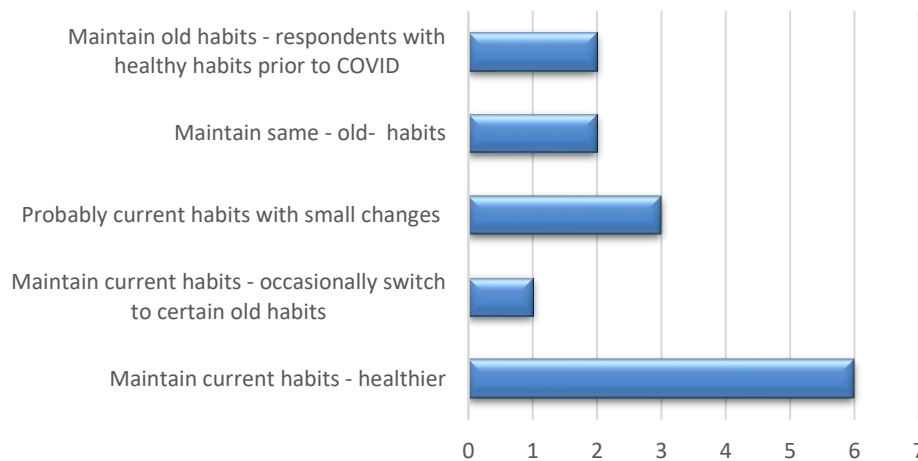
The following question emphasizes how participants would change their food consumption preferences post COVID-19 and it has the main objective of assessing if the habits developed during the pandemic will remain in the long term and to provide an answer to the additional research question developed for the paper. An interesting fact is that almost all interviewees plan to maintain the food preferences and habits developed during the pandemic, as emphasized by participant 14, *“I think I would stay the same now, because they are healthier since I eat less sweets or fast-food. It is a healthier consumption level in general now.”* (Male, Interview 14). Only a few participants mentioned that, besides keeping the healthier habits established during the pandemic, *“I prefer to stick to the vegetarian diet thus, maintaining the improvements made during the pandemic, but I will probably occasionally use the old habits as well.”*

(Male, Interview 2) therefore, some would probably occasionally return to some of the old preferences.

*“I would stick to the current ones because I think it's healthier for me.”* (Female, Interview 12)

The responses for the preferences post COVID-19 are illustrated in Figure 8 clearly shows a tendency of most respondents towards maintaining the healthier habits developed during the pandemic.

### Preferences post-COVID-19



*Figure 8. Preferences post COVID-19*

Source: Author's own (2022)

The impact of COVID-19 on social well-being and the associated effect on consumers' preferences is emphasized within question 9 of the interview. The respondents mentioned that family gatherings and dining at restaurants with friends were some of the impacts of the pandemic on social well-being. In addition, some mentioned a financial impact due to the crisis generated and the effect on the usual interactions with friends and family. An interesting opinion is represented by participant 9 that observed a shift

towards more qualitative food consumed at home as a substitute to the expenditure at restaurants.

*“Yes, I reduced the restaurant outgoings, but I think the money spent at restaurants I now concentrate the amount towards the quality of food I buy and consume.”* (Male, Interview 9)

The third theme analyzed within the interview refers to dietary habits. The researcher continues by asking candidates if the pandemic changed their dietary habits. The interviewees had different perspectives, but a significant proportion of the sample observed a shift to a healthier diet where the quality of the food purchased became more important during the pandemic along with the regularity of the meals within a day. One respondent mentioned that the increased free time was concentrated on eating regularly and having a diversified diet.

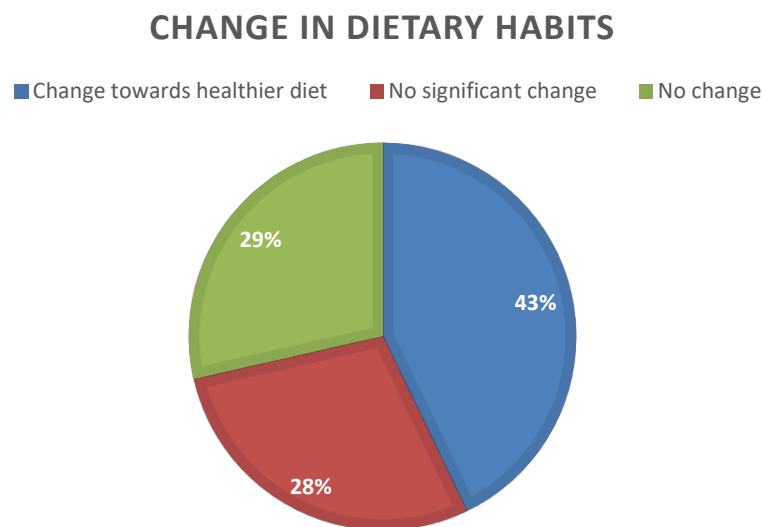
*“Yes, I used to eat only in the evening before and at the beginning and now I had time to eat more regularly, to think more about the quality of the food and from now on I started to diversify the products.”* (Female, Interview 1)

However, there were contradicting opinions, meaning that some candidates have not seen any changes in their diet or significant change. Out of the respondents that did not indicate a significant change in their diets, some experience a minor change in the quantities of food consumed. One respondent indicated that besides a shift to a healthier diet, the preference for sweets was not changed and it remained.

*“Here I would say a definite no, we ate about the same. Maybe we order food more often, but having a wife who cooks, I don't order very often compared to others. I haven't changed my tastes, I haven't changed the types of food, I don't eat more or less of specific products than before. So, my consumption and food preferences have not been changed by the pandemic.”* (Male, Interview 5)

An interesting aspect regarding the observation towards more emphasis put on the quality of food, one respondent mentioned that for some individuals, the fear and the economic impact influenced their behavior towards the quantity of products and not the quality. While most participants were more interested in the quality of the food consumed, others mentioned that the financial constraints limited their possibility of buying products of higher quality. As mentioned by participants 11, *“People tried to save on food, in the sense of buying cheaper food, more quantitatively on the grounds that they were afraid to go out in society, but it is not always that cheap is qualitative.”* (Female, Interview 11).

The pie chart in Figure 9 shows that 43% of the respondents changed their dietary habits towards healthier diets while 28% have not seen any major changes and 29% did not change their diets.



*Figure 9. Change in dietary habits*

Source: Author’s own (2022)

For providing an understanding to the alternative research question, participants were asked about their opinion regarding the future changes in dietary habits. From the total of 14 participants, 8 indicated a trend towards



healthier eating habits in the future. The healthier shift would consist of more attention towards the food consumed, the quality of the products purchased along with a shift towards online food shopping and fewer sweets or processed food. The highest percentage of participants from each age group that mentioned a trend towards healthier diets is represented by the 18-30 age group.

*“Well, as I said, we will probably all think a little more about how important it is to eat regularly, to choose quality food and to pay more attention to what we eat.”* (Female, Interview 1)

Other participants argued that there will not be any significant changes, maybe a shift towards more fast food or restaurants and online services. Other answers suggested a trend towards more affordable food products. However, two answers varied considerably from the rest and indicated a change towards preparing more food at home that would have the advantage of consuming better and healthier meals at home along with a shift away from restaurants considering the desire of consumers to avoid crowded spaces, as indicated by participant 9, *“Honestly, if people get used to not going to restaurants at all or less, I think people can possibly come to the conclusion that I have reached, meaning that I can cook at home healthier and better food.”* (Male, Interview 9).

When interviewed about the effect of the changes in diets on health and physical exercise routines, only 3 participants experienced a possible effect on their health during the COVID-19 pandemic. While some participants that were exercising frequently before the pandemic have not changed this habit and continued the routine, 5 observed a positive effect of the pandemic in their sports routines, indicating an increase in the frequency of their exercising routines since the beginning of the pandemic. On the contrary, some exercised less during the pandemic. The answers of the majority of respondents are clearly described by participant 14 where he *“did not feel a*

*change in my health, but I started exercising more often with the pandemic, I think because of the impossibility of going out in the city and then I found another activity.” (Male, Interview 14).*

The last theme, focusing on food buying behavior, aims at answering the main research question in this thesis. Subsequently, the researcher tried to identify if consumers had a healthier eating plan before the pandemic and if it changed the types of food individuals purchased. When asked if they ate healthier before COVID-19, 9 participants agreed that they did not have a healthier eating plan before the pandemic while the rest did not indicate a specific change regarding eating behavior. Most participants indicated that their purchasing behavior changed towards healthier food products, whereas only 3 participants mentioned that no significant change was observed with regards to their food purchasing behavior. Therefore, 7 participants have changed their purchasing habits towards organic food during the pandemic. It is interesting that the only age group where all participants have decided to purchase healthier products since the pandemic is represented by the participants above the age of 50.

*“No, it was similar. Since the eating habit has not changed, I have eaten the same before and after and I think the same in the future.” (Female, Interview 10); “Maybe, because of the pandemic we buy more organic food than processed food if possible.” (Female, Interview 10)*

One participant had a different answer regarding the change in food purchasing behavior and observed a tendency for processed food because the prices of organic food were higher compared to processed food products.

*“Yes, the pandemic made me change what I buy precisely because of the price differences between organic and processed foods, the processed ones being much more easily accessible, cheaper and so I chose the processed ones.” (Male, Interview 14)*

Interviewees were asked about the impulse buying behavior they experienced at the beginning of the pandemic and if this behavior is still true now. Stockpiling food in the first wave of the pandemic was a common behavior among participants where 8 of them indicated such habit.

*“I was scared when I saw the shelves empty, and then I started buying products, such as flour like everyone else. With each wave, it didn't remain, and people didn't react the same way.”* (Female, Interview 13)

Despite a significant proportion of the sample indicating that this trend is not valid anymore, 3 responses were totally different and still observed a similar behavior of stockpiling food. One such perspective is represented by interviewee 4, *“Yes, there are elderly people, there are people who still have that much greater fear of this virus and they limit the interaction and then, they make their supplies and go shopping much less often in order not to have contact with other people.”* (Female, Interview 4).

For assessing the preferred option for food purchases, participants are asked where they chose to purchase food, ranging from supermarkets to buying groceries online or ordering food from restaurants. All participants mentioned supermarkets and grocery stores as the main method of shopping for groceries. Additionally, 7 of them also ordered meals from restaurants and only 4 participants used online services for ordering food while none used to shop for groceries online. Participants that ordered food from restaurants are part of the younger generation, from 18-30 age group and 30-40 that greatly exceeded the other age groups where a limited number of participants ordered food. When only looking at the usage of online food delivery services, only younger consumers took advantage of such services. An interesting fact is emphasized by 5 participants that purchased groceries from supermarkets less frequently to reduce the risk of contamination associated with crowded places. While no influence of age on the decision to reduce the frequency of shopping for groceries at supermarkets was

observed, it was observed that more females chose to reduce the frequency of going to supermarkets.

*"I bought my food from grocery stores, but I tried to restrict my shopping, buying a much larger quantity and doing the shopping once a week, once every 10 days and not daily or almost daily as before."* (Female, Interview 11);

*"I used online services strictly for cooked food but not for groceries."* (Female, Interview 11)

*"For the most part, I bought food from the supermarket, but I reduced a bit the frequency of shopping just to avoid interacting with people and to protect myself. I did not buy food online, only from the supermarket."* (Female, Interview 8)

Another outstanding opinion was referring to a shift towards local producers when shopping for groceries or food.

*"Online, not really. I prefer the supermarket. I prefer to buy locally, so from local producers. I haven't ordered much from restaurants, but it seems to me that the food delivered by restaurants is of poorer quality than the one actually consumed in restaurants."* (Male, Interview 9)

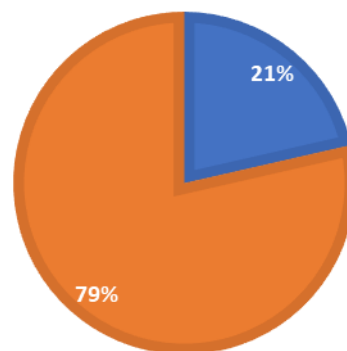
Following the choice and preference for food shopping, participants are asked about their expenditure on each method of shopping for food. For almost all participants, the budget allocated towards shopping at supermarkets significantly exceeded the expenditure towards ordered meals. A trend observed here is that the younger generation spent considerably less on food and groceries.

To identify the possible behavior of consumers that would assist in answering the alternative research questions, the researcher continues by asking how the possible development of online grocery shopping services would influence consumers' behavior and if participants would consider using such a service. It

is followed by a follow-up question that desires to assess the frequency of use of the service and the opinion regarding who would benefit the most from it. As presented in Figure 10, 79% of the respondents would consider using an online grocery shopping service. Most respondents mentioned that it would be used once or twice a week. Regarding individuals that would benefit from it, the majority agreed that the younger individuals would benefit and use it more often, while others indicated that the elderly and the busy people would benefit the most.

### USE OF ONLINE GROCERY ORDERING SERVICES

■ Would not use ■ Would use in the future



*Figure 10. The use of online grocery shopping services*

Source: Author's own (2022)

The researcher further asked participants regarding the impact of the availability of an online grocery service on the frequency of preparing food at home and 6 respondents indicated that they would prepare more food at home if such an online service would be available because it would be more convenient, and they could save time for other activities. However, the rest of the sample would not prepare more food at home considering the possibility of using this specific service. Some of the reasons why most respondents would not prepare more food at home relied on the fact that it is more convenient to

order food or for those that already created the habit of preparing food at home, it would not further influence them to cook more food at home despite the availability of the service. It was not observed that age could influence the choice towards preparing more food at home in the future, considering that such a service would be used.

*“I don't think I would prepare food at home, I think I would still order from restaurants. So the simple answer would be no because it's easier to order, to get ready-made meals and to be able to eat without cooking and to clean up afterward.” (Male, Interview 14)*

*“Yes, probably I would prepare more food at home since it is healthier to eat at home the meals you prepared compared to eating fast food since this way you know what you are eating.” (Male, Interview 3)*

Figure 11 presents the “Word Cloud” that lists the most important and frequently used words during the data collection process and is based on the interview transcripts. The shape of an apple is used since it suits the topic of the research where the focus is on food. The word cloud is an illustrative way of summarizing the main ideas identified through the interviews. The most frequent words observed within the interviews are emphasized in bold text format with increased font size. Therefore, Figure 11 is related to the topic of the research since the words frequently used in the interviews are COVID-19, food or change and habits.



Figure 11. Frequently used words during the interviews

Source: Author's own (2022)

## 5 Discussion of findings

This section evaluates the findings presented in the data analysis section and provides an answer to the research questions guiding this research study. The COVID-19 pandemic influenced the food consumption preferences of a significant number of participants. An important proportion has observed the change towards a healthier consumption with regards to food products. Consumers that have previously developed healthy food preferences prior to the pandemic, maintained the same consumption preferences during COVID-19.

Almost all participants agreed that their eating was not healthier before the pandemic, indicating that the COVID-19 pandemic did not negatively impact

the eating plans of participants. When looking at how the pandemic impacted the purchasing behavior for food, the research identified a positive effect since almost all candidates experienced a shift towards healthier food during COVID-19. Among consumers that changed to purchasing healthier products in general after the beginning of the pandemic, a significant proportion purchased more organic food products. Despite different perspectives where some did not prefer organic products, an important number of consumers considered and purchased organic products.

At the beginning of the pandemic, there was a clear pattern towards stockpiling certain food products from the majority of respondents. However, data collected from participants show that the impulse buying behavior observed during the first wave of the pandemic is currently not valid as it was slowly reduced after the first wave of COVID-19.

Another topic discussed in the thesis is the preference for different methods of purchasing food during the pandemic. As such, the researcher focused on three different options for purchasing food, at supermarkets, by ordering groceries online or ordering food from restaurants. Based on the data analyzed, it can be observed that the preferred method of acquiring food is represented by supermarkets and grocery stores since all candidates preferred this option. Ordering food from restaurants was a secondary option, but it was more common among younger consumers. Regarding online food delivery service, it was not considered as a preference by participants since only a non-significant number of candidates used online delivery services for ordering food.

As such, as an answer to the main research question focusing on “To what extent did the COVID-19 pandemic impact the food purchasing behavior of the consumers?”, it could be summarized that a change to healthier consumption, as well as a shift to purchasing healthier food products were observed as an influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumers within the county of Satu



Mare, Romania. In addition, the impulse buying behavior was not valid after the beginning of the pandemic and it was observed that consumers preferred to buy groceries at supermarkets while there can be concluded that online delivery services were not an option to consider for most consumers in this area during the pandemic.

The future outlook towards consumer preferences post COVID-19 is another topic developed in this research. This research suggests that, based on participants' perspectives, most consumers will maintain the healthier food preferences developed during the pandemic in the long run. In a similar context, the research identified that consumers would shift or maintain healthier eating habits in the future, after the COVID-19 pandemic.

An additional topic that is emphasized in this study is represented by how the implementation of a grocery online delivery service would impact consumers' buying behavior in the post COVID-19 future. The results from the data collected show a clear pattern where most consumers would use an online delivery service for groceries if it would be available in this area. Regarding the frequency of use, data show that most participants would use it once or twice each week. However, considering the availability of this service, the study shows that most consumers are not willing to prepare more food at home in the future.

The additional research question aims at identifying "How will normality post COVID-19 influence consumers' food preferences and purchasing behavior?". The findings of this research conclude that consumers within the county of Satu Mare, Romania would maintain healthier consumption preferences and shift to healthier diets in the post COVID-19 future along with the shift towards purchasing groceries from online services. However, the research shows that, in the future, the implementation of grocery delivery services will not impact the frequency of meals prepared at home by consumers.

## 6 Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic influenced and affected certain habits of consumers within the food industry. The uncertainty and the social distancing measures to prevent the spread of the virus further impacted consumers' behavior and preferences with regards to food. The objective of this thesis is to analyze and evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on consumers' food purchasing behavior, along with the changes in dietary habits within the county of Satu Mare, Romania. The thesis aims at identifying how these changes will further develop in the future according to consumers' perspectives.

The objectives of this research are fulfilled by a detailed analysis of the available literature on the topic, as well as an empirical approach towards reaching a reliable conclusion. The research is based upon a qualitative method for collecting and analyzing data.

The review of the available literature accentuated the importance of the food industry with an emphasis on Romania and the significance of the industry to the overall economy of the country. In addition, it emphasized the impact of COVID-19 on the food industry in Romania and the effects observed since the beginning of the pandemic. The secondary research provided a better understanding of the factors that influenced the changes in consumers' behavior in relation to food. Among the different factors, the restrictions implemented to limit the spread of the virus and the fear associated with the new coronavirus have significantly influenced consumers' buying behavior, as well as consumption behavior since the beginning of the pandemic. Consumers in Romania were observed to shift to shopping at local producers more frequently during the pandemic. The changes in food consumption behavior can be explained by Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory that emphasizes the importance of food for humans and for maintaining life or health levels, ranking it as a top priority for individuals.

The methodology for attaining the objectives of this thesis focus on a qualitative approach with the use of interviews with several participants for collecting data. The research focused on 14 interviews with different consumers in order to gain the opinion and perspective regarding the impact of COVID-19. The interview consisted of 18 questions with a central aim of identifying the possible future outlook towards the changes in food related behavior developed during the pandemic. The data analysis was guided by the main research question, looking at the impact of COVID-19 on consumers' food purchasing behavior, along with the additional research question, focusing on the influence of normality after COVID-19 on consumers' food related preferences and buying behavior.

The findings of the research indicate the consumers' choice towards maintaining or even changing the consumption and purchasing behavior to healthier grocery products during the COVID-19 pandemic in Satu Mare, Romania. The findings of this study are supported by the results of Hassen et al. (2020) that found a similar trend in consumers' behavior towards a healthier diet and lifestyle.

While the research shows a clear trend towards the choice of supermarkets when compared to online ordering platforms, the impulse buying behavior observed at the beginning of the pandemic has eventually diminished after the first wave associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the research indicates that the pandemic did not negatively affect consumers' eating habits in terms of healthy food consumption. The eating habits observed by consumers in the county of Satu Mare, Romania were not healthier prior to the pandemic when compared to the habits developed during COVID-19. These findings contribute to the main research question of the thesis, indicating the changes in consumers' food purchasing behavior since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in Satu Mare, Romania.

The alternative research question is answered by the findings of this thesis that indicate the future outlook of consumers towards maintaining the healthier habits, as well as consumption preferences developed with the beginning of the pandemic. The research found that, besides consumers' preferences towards online grocery delivery services in the future, it does not affect nor influence the frequency of preparing food at home, considering the availability of an online grocery ordering service.

The main findings of this research identified a positive influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumers' food purchasing behavior towards healthier products within Satu Mare, Romania, considering that consumers did not have a healthier eating plan before COVID-19, as found in this research, and eliminated the impulse behavior in relation to food as the pandemic developed. The research indicates a positive influence in the future of the current changes in consumers' food preferences and habits thus, maintaining or slightly improving the dietary plans and eating habits. Consumers within Satu Mare, Romania would consider switching to a more frequent use of online grocery ordering services in the long-run if such an online ordering service would be implemented by brick and mortar supermarkets in the future.

The findings of the research emphasize the changes in consumers' food related behavior and dietary habits observed during the pandemic and the changes related to food in the future therefore, providing an answer to the two research questions that contribute to a better understanding of the research problem of this thesis.

## **7 Limitations, Recommendations and Implications**

### **7.1 Limitations of the research**

The findings of this research have certain limitations that need to be evaluated. As in any research, the current study has specific limitations that are described in this section where the limitations are related to the qualitative research approach implemented by the researcher for providing an answer to the research questions of this study. The qualitative approach consisted of interviews with several consumers within the county of Satu Mare, Romania and the interview was based on questions regarding the impact of COVID-19 on consumers' food related behavior.

The sample size consisted of 14 participants that were interviewed based on a list of 18 interview questions. The objective of the research was to have a diverse sample with regards to age, educational background and working experience. The first limitation of this research could be related to the collection of data specifically, to the sample size. The sample size of this research is rather small and limits the ability of the findings to be generalized to a larger population. Participants within the interview part provided a better understanding of the topic of identifying the outlook on the impact of the pandemic on consumers' purchasing and consumption behavior related to food in Satu Mare, Romania.

The researcher focused on providing an answer to the research questions developed by analyzing and evaluating both primary and secondary data. The analysis of secondary data could be considered as another limitation to this research. Considering the topic of this research where the central objective was surrounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher observed limitations regarding the availability of research on this slightly recent topic. The focus on Romania of this research further limited the ability to collect considerable information from the available literature. The limitations in terms

of available studies were further accentuated by the focus of this thesis on a specific region, mainly the county of Satu Mare in Romania. Therefore, the researcher observed certain limitations in the availability of statistics and research studies on the topic of COVID-19 that were focusing on Romania.

A different limitation to this research is indicated by the language used towards gathering data during the interviews. Almost all interviews were conducted in Romanian language, with two exceptions where the interviewees agreed to have the interview in English. The reason relies on the preference of participants that did not prefer having the interview in English since most of them had certain difficulties in freely expressing themselves in a foreign language or did not speak English. These difficulties impacted the interview transcription process where the translation from Romanian to English that was based on the knowledge of the researcher, considering the Romanian language as a mother tongue. The process of transcribing and translating the data gathered in the form of interviews could lead to certain information being lost during the process.

Therefore, the main limitations of the research are the lack of previous studies with an emphasis on this topic or specifically on Romania, as well as the difficulties observed during the data collection process and the impediments experienced during the transcription of data gathered from interviews in a different language.

## **7.2 Recommendations for future research**

This research focuses on the impact of COVID-19 on consumers' purchasing and consumption behavior related to food within Satu Mare, Romania therefore, examining a new topic related to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Therefore, the researcher provides several recommendations for future research on the topic. The secondary research part of the research observed certain limitations and difficulties in the availability of studies on the effects of COVID-19 on individuals' behavior, especially with regards to Satu

Mare, Romania. Future studies should focus on how the habits observed at the beginning of COVID-19 have changed in the long-run and on the effects of COVID-19 on the use of online grocery shopping services in Romania among different generations of consumers and different age groups.

Considering the findings of the research where a clear preference towards shopping for groceries online in the future was observed, companies within the food industry in Romania, as well as brick and mortar grocery stores should focus on implementing such services for their customers in the future. For providing a better understanding of the tendency towards online grocery shopping, studies could further expand on the factors that would impact consumers' willingness to adapt to a change towards online grocery delivery services. In addition, further research should focus on how the shifts in consumers' food purchasing behavior observed during the pandemic in Romania affected the preference for local or foreign producers, as well as on consumers' preference for certain food related brands as a result of the changes in dietary habits during COVID-19. Research could focus on the changes in dietary habits and the impact on the health of consumers within Romania after the pandemic and assess to what extent the habits developed during the pandemic actually changed after COVID-19.

Future research could expand on the topic analyzed within this thesis and emphasize the effects of COVID-19 on the food industry and on new preferences related to food products or the use of different online services for ordering groceries and food in Satu Mare, Romania.

### **7.3 Implications for the food industry in Satu Mare, Romania**

The central theme of the current research emphasizes the changes resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic within the county of Satu Mare, Romania. Considering the focus on food purchasing behavior and dietary habits of this research, different actors within the food industry could evaluate the findings of the research. The findings focus on the future perspective of how the habits related to food developed by consumers during COVID-19 will change in the long run. Supermarkets and grocery stores in Satu Mare, Romania could evaluate the findings of the research and benefit by identifying new trends in consumers' food related habits according to the results of the study.

The thesis could be published in local research websites within Romania, such as food or health related publication sites or the Romanian Journal of Economics website, where companies within the food industry could access the results and assess if it would benefit their strategies and operations. The findings related to the use of online grocery delivering services in the future might be beneficial to food retailers and supermarkets in Satu Mare, Romania in order to evaluate the possibility of implementing such a service in the near future according to the results of this study. The results regarding the possible future changes with regards to dietary habits and food consumption preferences might benefit food retailers in forecasting demand for certain food products, especially towards the availability of healthier food products.



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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### Interviews

A= Author

P= Participant

#### Interview 1 – Female

A: What's your educational background?

*P1: I graduated with a bachelor's degree in economics.*

A: What's your professional experience?

*P1: 15 years as a medical assistant and 20 years as an economist.*

A: How do you feel about the COVID-19 pandemic?

*P1: It is the worst thing that happened to me.*

A: Were you affected by it or do you know anyone who was affected by it?  
Please explain.

*P1: I was not personally affected by the virus, but my husband was infected with the virus and then my child was also infected.*

A: How important do you think is the food industry in Romania?

*P1: I think it is very important since Romanian consumers are known as being heavy food consumers.*

A: What were your food consumption preferences before COVID-19?

*P1: I bought several export brands except for the meat products that I bought from local producers.*

A: What is your food consumption preference during beginning of COVID-19 and now, two years in?

*P1: Well, in the beginning I consumed more meat products, flour based products, dairy products, sweets, but now I prefer vegetables and fruits.*

A: What do you think your consumer preferences would be once COVID 19 is over? Would you still stick to your preferences now or go back to pre-COVID-19?

*P1: I prefer to stick to the current ones because I consider them healthier and I feel better.*

A: As a result of COVID-19, how did this consumer preference change if true affected your social well-being?

*P1: It affected me because I used to eat at restaurants where socialization was a priority for me.*

A: Did COVID-19 change your dietary habits which resulted in a change in consumption preferences?

*P1: Yes, I used to eat only in the evening before and at the beginning and now I had time to eat more regularly, to think more about the quality of the food and from now on I started to diversify the products used.*

A: What were your dietary habits before COVID-19, the beginning of COVID-19 and now?

*P1: I think we will all pay more attention to the regularity of the meals and to the quality of the food.*

A: How do you think the dietary habits you developed during the pandemic will change in the future?

*P1: Well, as I said, we will probably all think a little more about how important it is to eat regularly, to choose quality food and to pay more attention to what we eat.*

A: As a result of the change in dietary habits, did this, in your opinion, affect your health? Do you exercise more now or less?

*P1: Yes, it affected my health, staying at home longer, I gained weight even though I improved my diet, I gained weight and now I do less exercise.*

A: Before COVID-19, would you say you were a healthy eater? Explain.

*P1: No. During the pandemic I had time to focus on food quality.*

A: Has COVID-19 pandemic made you change what you buy i.e organic foods vs processed foods

*P1: Yes, now I buy more organic products from local producers, but also from specialty supermarkets.*

A: What type of impulse buying behavior did you partake in during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and is it true still now?

*P1: At first I did the same as everyone else, I stockpiled food, especially I remember buying flour, canned food, pasta, products with a long shelf life, but now this is no longer the case.*

A: How did the fear of infection decide where you do your food purchases? (i.e did you buy your groceries online, did you go to a supermarket or did you buy your food at a restaurant via online food delivery services?)

*P1: I went to the supermarket respecting the rules of protection and distance, but sometimes I also order food from the restaurant.*

A: If you can give an estimate of how much money you spent on each per month?

*P1: Well, about 1000 RON at the supermarket and about 300 at restaurants.*

A: Would the use of grocery online delivery services by brick and mortar grocery stores change your buying behaviour during COVID-19 and post COVID-19 if you have access to such service?

*P1: Yes*

A: How often would you use it?

*P1: About 2-3 times a week.*

A: Who do you think might benefit from this service?

*P1: I'm thinking of retirees, people caring for the sick, the elderly and parents with young children, this could be a category that would benefit from this.*

A: If the above was made available would you prepare more food at home now and post COVID-19 pandemic for health and safety reasons?

*P1: Yes, because I would save time, time I could spend with my family, so it would be more convenient for me.*

## **Interview 2 – Male**

A: What's your educational background?

*P2: I have a law degree.*

A: What's your professional experience?

*P2: I'm the manager of a group of companies.*

A: How do you feel about the COVID-19 pandemic?

*P2: It is a situation we have never encountered before in this century, it is a novelty for all the governments of the world.*

A: Were you affected by it or do you know anyone who was affected by it? Please explain.

*P2: Yes, I was personally affected by being hospitalized.*

A: How important do you think is the food industry in Romania?

*P2: Being an agricultural country, a significant proportion of the population works in the food industry.*

A: What were your food consumption preferences before COVID-19?

*P2: It predominated the consumption of meat and sometimes fast food products.*

A: What is your food consumption preference during the beginning of COVID-19 and now, two years in?

*P2: At first I ate the same as before, then I switched to vegetables and fruits and replaced fast food with home-cooked food.*

A: What do you think your consumer preferences would be once COVID 19 is over? Would you still stick to your preferences now or go back to pre-COVID-19?

*P2: I prefer to stick to the vegetarian diet thus, maintaining the improvements made during the pandemic, but I will probably occasionally use the old habits as well.*



A: As a result of COVID-19, how did this consumer preference change if true affected your social well-being?

*P2: Yes, interesting, before I was socializing with friends and collaborators when serving meals together at a restaurant, but the pandemic changed this habit and further significantly changed my food consumption habits.*

A: Did COVID-19 change your dietary habits which resulted in a change in consumption preferences?

*P2: Yes*

A: What were your dietary habits before COVID-19, the beginning of COVID-19 and now?

*P2: Before I was a foodie and I wasn't paying attention to what I was eating, then, with the beginning of the pandemic, I did my shopping at the stores near my house, I tried to eat healthy foods that do not affect the environment. I will try not to waste food, knowing from statistics that people throw away large quantities of food that affects the environment, so I put more importance on the quantity purchased.*

A: How do you think the dietary habits you developed during the pandemic will change in the future?

*P2: Hard to predict. Personally, I think the trend is in the online area but at the same time the store chains are expanding their store opening and significantly influencing consumer behavior knowing that they are very aggressive in the marketing and advertising market. About me, given the trends towards a healthy diet during the pandemic, I will keep this trend.*

A: As a result of the change in dietary habits, did this, in your opinion, affect your health? Do you exercise more now or less?

*P2: Yes, it affected my health. No, I don't exercise more.*

A: Before COVID-19, would you say you were a healthy eater? Explain.

*P2: Before COVID no, on the contrary actually I consumed a lot of fat.*

A: Has the COVID-19 pandemic made you change what you buy i.e organic foods vs processed foods

*P2: Yes, now I buy food that I think is healthy.*

A: What type of impulse buying behavior did you partake in during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and is it true still now?

*P2: I made stocks of goods, being scared by this unprecedented situation and for sure the trend remained.*

A: How did the fear of infection decide where you do your food purchases? (i.e did you buy your groceries online, did you go to a supermarket or did you buy your food at a restaurant via online food delivery services?)

*P2: Well, now I'm shopping at convenience stores and supermarkets.*

A: If you can give an estimate of how much money you spent on each per month?

*P2: For me, my wife does the grocery shopping, but an estimate of around 800 RON at supermarkets per month.*

A: Would the use of grocery online delivery services by brick and mortar grocery stores change your buying behavior during COVID-19 and post COVID-19 if you have access to such service?

*P2: No*

A: If the above was made available would you prepare more food at home now and post COVID-19 pandemic for health and safety reasons?

*P2: Given my activity that requires me in several places, I do not think that such a service would benefit me.*

### **Interview 3 – Male**

A: What's your educational background?

*P3: I finished high school, I'm currently a student.*

A: What's your professional experience?

*P3: I'm a student, I don't have any training in a field.*

A: How do you feel about the COVID-19 pandemic? Were you affected by it or do you know anyone who was affected by it? Please explain.

*P3: Personally, I have not been affected by the disease or the pandemic, apart from the fact that I studied online for a while, but I know people who have been affected professionally and by the disease that needed medical care.*

A: How important do you think is the food industry in Romania?

*P3: Since we can't survive without food, it's very important.*

A: What were your food consumption preferences before COVID-19?

*P3: Before the pandemic, the daily meal plan would contain vegetables, fruits, fish, bakery products, meat, any kind of meat: pork, chicken, beef and sometimes, fish.*

A: What is your food consumption preference during the beginning of COVID-19 and now, two years in?

*P3: I can say that they are very similar, they probably differ to a very small extent, I probably eat more fruits and vegetables than before, that's about it. They were about the same after.*

A: What do you think your consumer preferences would be once COVID 19 is over? Would you still stick to your preferences now or go back to pre-COVID-19?

*P3: Maybe I'll stick to the ones I have now, maybe a little more meat.*

A: As a result of COVID-19, how did this consumer preference change if true affected your social well-being?

*P3: Well, it affected me quite a bit because the meetings with the family were fewer and more restricted and the outgoings with friends and colleagues were almost non-existent.*

A: Did COVID-19 change your dietary habits which resulted in a change in consumption preferences?

*P3: In general, not really, possibly small differences, but nothing major, about the same.*

A: Did you notice anything significant?

*P3: No*

A: How do you think the dietary habits you developed during the pandemic will change in the future?

*P3: I believe that due to the pandemic, people will generally be more careful with their health and will eat healthier foods or try to eat as many healthy foods as possible.*

A: As a result of the change in dietary habits, did this, in your opinion, affect your health? Do you exercise more now or less?

*P3: Yes, due to the pandemic I take more care of my health and I try to exercise more, even if I already have been exercising before. And related to diet, it is a slightly better diet now.*

A: Before COVID-19, would you say you were a healthy eater? Explain. Has the COVID-19 pandemic made you change what you buy i.e organic foods vs processed foods?

*P3: I think I ate quite well before the pandemic and now I probably eat more organic food than before.*

A: What type of impulse buying behavior did you partake in during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and is it true still now?

*P3: Probably, during the first week or the first two weeks when the news started regarding the pandemic, I bought more bakery products or everyday use products since I did not know what will happen or if grocery stores will have any shortages.*

A: How did the fear of infection decide where you do your food purchases? (i.e did you buy your groceries online, did you go to a supermarket or did you buy your food at a restaurant via online food delivery services?)

*P3: I can't say that the fear, but I buy food from the supermarket and order from restaurants through services more than before.*

A: If you can give an estimate of how much money you spent on each per month?

*P3: At the supermarket probably around 400-500 RON per month and at restaurants about 200-300 RON per month.*

A: Would the use of grocery online delivery services by brick and mortar grocery stores change your buying behavior during COVID-19 and post COVID-19 if you have access to such service?

*P3: Yes, it would be a pretty good option because it is more convenient than going to the convenience stores to simply order what you want.*

A: How often would you use it? Who do you think might benefit from this service?

*P3: I would probably use the services every week. The beneficiaries would be the young people because the elderly people do not use the internet that much.*

A: If the above was made available would you prepare more food at home now and post COVID-19 pandemic for health and safety reasons?

*P3: Yes, probably I would prepare more food at home since it is healthier to eat at home the meals you prepared compared to eating fast food since this way you know what you are eating.*

#### **Interview 4 – Female**

A: What's your educational background?

*P4: Bachelor's degree in economics.*

A: What's your professional experience?

*P4: 21 years of business and commerce.*

A: How do you feel about the COVID-19 pandemic? Were you affected by it or do you know anyone who was affected by it? Please explain.

*P4: Personally, I was not affected by the disease itself, but I know individuals that were more or less affected.*

A: How important do you think is the food industry in Romania?

*P4: From my point of view, the food industry is the most important in Romania, both the production and consumption.*

A: What were your food consumption preferences before COVID-19?

*P4: As a food preference, it was a balanced consumption of vegetables, fruits, meat and other dairy products, so it was a balanced consumption of all products on the market.*

A: What is your food consumption preference during the beginning of COVID-19 and now, two years in?

*P4: I have remained at about the same preferences, not being affected by a diet after COVID-19, I have remained at the same preferences, dairy products, vegetables, fruits, meat products. So, I use the same products now as before COVID-19.*

A: So, nothing has changed?

*P4: No*

A: What do you think your consumer preferences would be once COVID 19 is over? Would you still stick to your preferences now or go back to pre-COVID-19?

*P4: In principle, I would stay the same, there being no changes in my consumption, it would remain about the same in terms of preferences.*

A: As a result of COVID-19, how did this consumer preference change if true affected your social well-being?

*P4: As a social well-being, as far as I consider, 50-60% of the population was affected, even in our family not necessarily from my point of view, but of another family member, social well-being was affected. Unfortunately, many services, they became dependent on this virus and their activities were reduced and then implicitly social well-being was affected.*

A: Did COVID-19 change your dietary habits which resulted in a change in consumption preferences?

*P4: No, I have the same habits, the same daily caloric intake, sometimes more normal sometimes more chaotic, depending on the time we have.*

A: How do you think the dietary habits you developed during the pandemic will change in the future?

*P4: I don't know if there will be big changes, I don't see such changes. There will probably be a lot of outgoings and probably then other types of food, fast-food or others will be more popular than now, but in principle I don't see big changes.*

A: As a result of the change in dietary habits, did this, in your opinion, affect your health? Do you exercise more now or less?

*P4: It has not affected my health and I do not exercise more or less because, in principle I do not exercise, I do not have much time to exercise.*

A: Before COVID-19, would you say you were a healthy eater? Explain. Has the COVID-19 pandemic made you change what you buy i.e organic foods vs processed foods?

*P4: No, I haven't changed the food I buy. I'm quite conservative with the products we use and I don't change the food I use too easily.*



A: So, they stayed about the same?

*P4: They remained about the same, not necessarily only processed, not necessarily organic, but both.*

A: What type of impulse buying behavior did you partake in during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and is it true still now?

*P4: I did not take part, but I witnessed the purchases driven by this COVID, since working in trade I saw a lot of people, scared, impatient, trying to stock up and starting to buy chaotically some things that probably, I say, were not necessary as they didn't use them. But the stock made by some people was too big and then, in time, it became clear that this behavior was not necessary, but I personally was not the kind of person to be very impulsive due to COVID. I knew that the grocery stores would operate anyway, they would be open since it took a much bigger crisis not to be able to buy bread or basic food and I thought that was not the case. Instead, some people were very agitated and scared probably also because they had an example of this disease in their family or for other strictly personal reasons.*

A: And you think that what you have noticed at some consumers is still valid?

*P4: Yes, there are elderly people, there are people who still have that much greater fear of this virus and they limit the interaction and then, they make their supplies and go shopping much less often in order not to have contact with other people.*

A: How did the fear of infection decide where you do your food purchases? (i.e. did you buy your groceries online, did you go to a supermarket or did you buy your food at a restaurant via online food delivery services?)

*P4: I work in a grocery store and do the necessary shopping at work, and another aspect is that I have a garden at home, where we have vegetables and fruits for ourselves. So, the supermarket was the main source for the processed and those products from food production.*

A: If you can give an estimate of how much money you spent on each per month?

*P4: Yes, if I would make an estimate, and if you refer to the consumption per person, about 1000-1200 RON.*

A: Would the use of grocery online delivery services by brick and mortar grocery stores change your buying behavior during COVID-19 and post COVID-19 if you have access to such a service?

*P4: No, I don't think it would change it for me. I really prefer to buy equipment and other household items online, but I personally prefer to choose the food part visually and palpably this is how I will do the shopping as much as possible.*

A: If the above was made available would you prepare more food at home now and post COVID-19 pandemic for health and safety reasons?

*P4: No, we would prepare about the same because 90-95% of the food in our family is prepared at home and then we could not prepare much more.*

### **Interview 5 – Male**

A: What's your educational background?

*P5: Graduated high school.*

A: What's your professional experience?

*P5: Experience in sales, commerce for about 35 years, in the food industry.*

A: How do you feel about the COVID-19 pandemic? Were you affected by it or do you know anyone who was affected by it? Please explain

*P5: The COVID pandemic, directly or indirectly, I think has affected everyone's life. Fortunately, neither I nor those close to me were infected, but I had colleagues who were affected, some in more easy ways and others more difficult ways. Fortunately, I do not have very close friends who have died, but it has affected our lives. Economically it influenced us, in trade we had ups and downs, many unforeseen things. We are already far away and we would probably be better prepared for another blow like this, but then even the most developed countries proved that they were not prepared for such a thing.*

A: How important do you think is the food industry in Romania?

*P5: In Romania, it is a good question, it is a paradox, a country with the geographical situation of Romania and the natural possibilities is unlikely to be dependent on imports in the food industry. Much more emphasis should be placed on the food industry, it has become an international market that has killed a large part of our food industry.*

A: What were your food consumption preferences before COVID-19?

*P5: Honestly, as a person, I couldn't say that COVID changed my food preferences at my age. There are already things that are implemented into my daily routine, I didn't have to make big changes because with the whole family we were careful about our diet and COVID-19 did not produce changes in our diet. Maybe at the frequency of shopping, maybe at the way of buying, but it didn't affect our consumption preferences.*

A: What is your food consumption preference during the beginning of COVID-19 and now, two years in?

*P5: Not with what we consume, but maybe in the frequencies of purchases. By not shifting to online, I rather used to shop physically and now, instead of once every two weeks, I go once every three weeks or every month to buy packaged food. I buy fresh foods much more often. What we noticed at the beginning, even the fear of contamination when protective measures were taken, taught us to go shopping less often.*

A: What do you think your consumer preferences would be once COVID 19 is over? Would you still stick to your preferences now or go back to pre-COVID-19?

*P5: Of course, I would stick to these, maybe it showed us that before we should have started sooner to protect ourselves, to have a disinfectant when we leave the store. And another change, we chose more to use a card than the cash because money is a vector of spread of any type of virus, so this pandemic ordered our life.*

A: As a result of COVID-19, how did this consumer preference change if true affected your social well-being?

*P5: Yes, I think it's the most obvious change, considering that due to the field in which I work, our work was not so affected and we continued our work, but social life was the most influenced by the pandemic and I notice that it will leave its mark in the post pandemic behavior. It's as if people have become more distant from each other. I don't know if it's good or bad. It is certain that social life has influenced us the most.*

A: Did COVID-19 change your dietary habits which resulted in a change in consumption preferences?

*P5: Here I would say a definite no, we ate about the same. Maybe we order food more often, but having a wife who cooks, I don't order very often compared to others. I haven't changed my tastes, I haven't changed the types of food I eat, I don't eat more or less of specific products than before. So, my consumption and food preferences have not been changed by the pandemic.*

A: How do you think the dietary habits you developed during the pandemic will change in the future?

*P5: I think the most important change in eating habits will be to stay away from restaurants or crowded places, to avoid them because new virus variants are developing that are much more contagious. We must continue to beware and therefore, there will be individuals that will avoid crowded places including restaurants.*

A: As a result of the change in dietary habits, did this, in your opinion, affect your health? Do you exercise more now or less?

*P5: I do not exercise more or less and the health, directly to both me and my loved ones, has not been affected.*

A: Before COVID-19, would you say you were a healthy eater? Explain.

*P5: No, certainly not, but on the contrary and because of more information, the tendency to eat healthier has intensified. People realized that processed foods are unhealthy. We are moving in the direction of eating healthier. I personally have a garden at home and I see that neither the appearance nor the taste can compare to those in the supermarket.*

A: Has the COVID-19 pandemic made you change what you buy i.e organic foods vs processed foods.

*P5: Small differences, but I consider that it is not the pandemic, but the awareness that this is the right direction. But, I see people who were awakened by the pandemic to be even more economical, not just to eat healthy.*

A: What type of impulse buying behavior did you partake in during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and is it true still now?

*P5: From the point of view of my profession, from which I had an overview, I was not so terrified that we would run out of food, but I still took a few things with a reserve for a longer period. In the short term, we stockpiled a bit.*

A: How did the fear of infection decide where you do your food purchases? (i.e. did you buy your groceries online, did you go to a supermarket or did you buy your food at a restaurant via online food delivery services?)

*P5: We didn't use online much. The pandemic pushed us to avoid crowds, we avoided crowded hours, basically that physical distance started to be more important and we tried to respect it. If until then it was natural to go shopping on the way home, now I left it for later when there were not so many people in the same store.*

A: If you can give an estimate of how much money you spent on each per month?

*P5: Well, in a small family of two people, 1000 RON per month for shopping.*

A: Would the use of grocery online delivery services by brick and mortar grocery stores change your buying behavior during COVID-19 and post COVID-19 if you have access to such a service?

*P5: During COVID, we didn't use it much, it didn't change our behavior, but it is becoming more and more natural. And as in the case of non-food products where we already use it, I think we will get used to ordering those known food products, with a long shelf life. I would not rule out that we will shift to online,*

*maybe considering the convenience or to save time. I would see that in the future.*

A: How often would you use it? Who do you think might benefit from this service?

*P5: Well, the frequency of using the supermarkets, once every 3 weeks, once a month, while you are active probably you would use it daily.*

A: If the above was made available would you prepare more food at home now and post COVID-19 pandemic for health and safety reasons?

*P5: Until our lifestyle changes, considering that I am an active and busy person, I think it is less likely that my consumption habits will change.*

#### **Interview 6 – Male**

A: What's your educational background?

*P6: I am currently on my way to finishing high school at a local schooling institution here in my hometown.*

A: What's your professional experience?

*P6: I have not had a proper job yet as I am first striving to get my school diploma first. I have only worked as a part-time employee for smaller local businesses.*

A: How do you feel about the COVID-19 pandemic? Were you affected by it or do you know anyone who was affected by it? Please explain.

*P6: I feel like for me, as a young member of society, it came as a surprise as I have only briefly heard about previous epidemics that took place in the world. They all sounded like stories to me, until early 2020 when I found myself at home most of the time, but frankly, I enjoyed my time at home as I really had time to take a break from the chaos of today's rapid changes.*

A: How important do you think is the food industry in Romania?

*P6: I think its potential is progressively valued as years go by and the clear interest people nowadays show in their health shifts their buying options. Local farms and producers do benefit from these changes in attitude and are therefore incentivized to keep it as real and green as possible.*

A: What were your food consumption preferences before COVID-19?

*P6: I would say they were similar to what everyone around me considered appropriate for a balanced diet. I rely mostly on my parents as they are the ones doing all the shopping, thus there can't be a week without consuming vegetables, fruits, fish, pasta, bakery products and unfortunately, milk and red meat.*

A: What is your food consumption preferences during the beginning of COVID-19 and now, two years in?

*P6: Well, they haven't changed that much, I have maybe only reduced the red meat I was previously mentioned as COVID gave me some free time to explore documentaries on the subject and really made me understand the great harm it causes to our immune system and not only.*

A: What do you think your consumer preferences would be once COVID 19 is over? Would you still stick to your preferences now or go back to pre-COVID-19?



*P6: I don't see any reason why they would change. Apart from putting a stop to acquiring large quantities of the same products at once, now that the short supplies will be over, I will keep my consumer options as consistent as they have been so far.*

A: As a result of COVID-19, how did this consumer preference change if true affected your social well-being?

*P6: As I have mentioned, I transitioned to a significantly better lifestyle, therefore COVID got me in a better mental place, which translates to improved social interaction and overall changed the perspective I had about all surroundings. As we all know, diet heavily influences the perception.*

A: Did COVID-19 change your dietary habits which resulted in a change in consumption preferences? What were your dietary habits before COVID-19, the beginning of COVID-19 and now?

*P6: Being literally confined at home for an extended period of time really shone light on the effects of bad eating habits and lack of exercise, therefore, quarantine gave me the push I needed to hit the gym and be attentive with the food I choose to eat. We, as a family, definitely try to avoid the meat section of the supermarket as much as possible and get creative with the greens, as opposed to what we used to do at the beginning of 2020 when the rapid pace of our lives dictated that we ate quickly and basically whatever was easily cooked.*

A: How do you think the dietary habits you developed during the pandemic will change in the future?

*P6: I believe once I got on this track there's nothing taking me off it. I know how ambitious and serious I get about aspects relevant to my health so there's no doubt in my mind I will continue following the best information I have accumulated about treating my health properly.*

A: As a result of the change in dietary habits, did this, in your opinion, affect your health? Do you exercise more now or less?

*P6: Way more, quarantine made the gym come alive for me. I had only briefly worked out before COVID hit, but so much free time put a stop while in the mirror and the rest is history. I am positive that's the way it will be from here, as it has since become an addictive activity for me.*

A: Before COVID-19, would you say you were a healthy eater? Explain. Has the COVID-19 pandemic made you change what you buy i.e organic foods vs processed foods

*P6: All the information we needed was on the internet and, as I said, COVID was the necessary time I, personally, used to my benefit to try to understand all the adverse effects of having an imbalanced and overall unhealthy diet have on both your mental and physical health. Definitely would say COVID turned me to more organic foods and made me invest more time and money into products of quality.*

A: What type of impulse buying behavior did you partake in during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and is it true still now?

*P6: I am assuming this is about the acquiring of massive quantities of goods in the fear of short supplies. We didn't stack up on toilet paper, food or any of those products, as there were no alarming signs of insufficient quantities in our city.*

A: How did the fear of infection decide where you do your food purchases? (i.e did you buy your groceries online, did you go to a supermarket or did you buy your food at a restaurant via online food delivery services?)

*P6: Delivery of food clearly became more of a thing in Romania once the pandemic hit, but I would say my family only rarely places orders for food. We still went to the supermarket and did the regular shopping duties even with the virus at large but used sanitizers and masks non-stop.*

A: If you can give an estimate of how much money you spent on each per month?

*P6: I don't know the exact figures as that's for my parents to judge but in percentages it would come out as about 90% supermarket shopping and 10% online. Us Romanians like to keep it conventional and I believe that's going to stick for a while.*

A: Would the use of grocery online delivery services by brick and mortar grocery stores change your buying behavior during COVID-19 and post COVID-19 if you have access to such a service?

*P6: I think it could greatly improve time usage and save unnecessary trips to the supermarket, therefore contribute to saving the planet too so I would be thrilled to try it. Everyone should take part in such a visionary change as it epitomizes what digitalization stands for.*

A: If the above was made available would you prepare more food at home now and post COVID-19 pandemic for health and safety reasons?

*P6: I'm not sure as I'm not much of a cook myself but probably in a couple of years I would love to start learning to prepare it all myself and be one click and a couple of cuts and slices away from a delicious, home-made, organic dish.*

## **Interview 7 – Male**

A: What's your educational background?

*P7: I finished High School in 1993 and proceeded to get a Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education.*

A: What's your professional experience?

*P7: I have been a professor and coach at a high school level for the first years of my active period as a contributor to the workforce, but then I switched my career path to commerce, a field where I think I was meant to become involved in as it suits all my personality traits.*

A: How do you feel about the COVID-19 pandemic? Were you affected by it or do you know anyone who was affected by it? Please explain

*P7: I believe it made us all reflect on our well-being, brought us closer to each other in regards of caring for one another, but at the same time prove people that living in solidarity is not in our nature. I think people became aware of the seriousness of what a global disaster means to us as a species and the technological advancements we need to get through everything.*

A: How important do you think is the food industry in Romania?

*P7: I see it as a future contender to the current exports that dictate our consumption nowadays. More and more individuals are turning to support their local business as a result of this pandemic and this is only pushing the development of great sources of food here in Romania forward.*

A: What were your food consumption preferences before COVID-19?

*P7: I personally stuck to the regular guidelines that most of us responsible people followed, meaning a low-fat, high-protein, high in fibers and overall balanced diet. I basically tried to experience what the market had to offer but at the same time was interested in the effects it all had on my health.*

A: What are your food consumption preferences during beginning of COVID-19 and now, two years in?

*P7: Not much has changed, honestly, as the shelves that the supermarket had me reaching to have the same products to offer and they have so far made me feel pretty good in my own skin. Vegetables, fruits, bread, fish, meat, spices, you name them.*

A: What do you think your consumer preferences would be once COVID 19 is over? Would you still stick to your preferences now or go back to pre-COVID-19?

*P7: My view on what my life requires in order to stay solid hasn't changed, therefore my shopping basket will contain the same goods, regardless of the different purpose they are serving.*

A: As a result of COVID-19, how did this consumer preference change if true affected your social well-being?

*P7: As I have stated, not much has changed, but a few new products that have hit the market as a response to the demand of better quality food could be named as reasons my well-being has slightly improved, although I would consider myself to be in a great social space right now, nonetheless.*

A: Did COVID-19 change your dietary habits which resulted in a change in consumption preferences?

*P7: I have slowly shifted over to some products I have seen my children and wife have picked. This whole pandemic has seriously changed their approach to eating habits and I'm glad I get to be a part of it as well as there is a vivid change for the better in our mood. More vegetables and less processed food get to our doorstep.*

A: How do you think the dietary habits you developed during the pandemic will change in the future?

*P7: I don't see any reason why I would turn down valuable information any time soon, as a result, I see all of our diets slowly improving, just as society is right now. Every piece of information a human need to determine whether something is harmful or not is out there on the internet, and this pandemic proved us just that.*

A: As a result of the change in dietary habits, did this, in your opinion, affect your health? Do you exercise more now or less?

*P7: It visibly affected my mental health, because, as I have mentioned, feeding the body proper food means the mind benefits as well. In terms of exercise, I do try to work on that part too, especially since my oldest son has recently shown a serious passion for working out.*

A: Before COVID-19, would you say you were a healthy eater? Explain. Has COVID-19 pandemic made you change what you buy i.e organic foods vs processed foods?

*P7: I would say I was pretty balanced in my eating habits, cheat days were exactly that, but I have easily enjoyed home-made, vegetable based meals to even it all out.*

A: What type of impulse buying behavior did you partake in during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and is it true still now?

*P7: I did buy more food than usual just as a matter of precaution because everything seemed so uncertain at the beginning, but it transitioned into normal quantities as time went on and the pandemic became something normal.*

A: How did the fear of infection decide where you do your food purchases? (i.e. did you buy your groceries online, did you go to a supermarket or did you buy your food at a restaurant via online food delivery services?)

*P7: I have stepped food into supermarkets just as regular as I have before, to provide the necessary products for my family, both food and other goods, but I have made sure to wear a mask and gloves at all times. We rarely ordered anything online.*

A: If you can give an estimate of how much money you spent on each per month?

*P7: Roughly about 400 to 500 euros went into groceries every month and about 20 to 30 euros were for the occasional take away deliveries we placed during the weekends.*

A: Would the use of grocery online delivery services by brick and mortar grocery stores change your buying behavior during COVID-19 and post COVID-19 if you have access to such service?

*P7: Why not? I am an advocate for change and this seems like a proper one to make considering the pace at which society turns digital nowadays. I see no reason why speeding up the process of bringing the necessary products to your home wouldn't soon be a reality considering all the technological advancements we have at our disposal.*

A: If the above was made available would you prepare more food at home now and post COVID-19 pandemic for health and safety reasons?

*P7: Definitely. It really does sound more appropriate for health reasons to prepare the food yourself and COVID truly showed us that we are supposed to find the best ways to cope with everything life throws at us. Food dictates our overall physical and mental state so I could see that time going to the supermarket being turned into getting more aware of the quality of the food I am consuming.*

### **Interview 8 – Female**

A: What's your educational background?

*P8: I recently graduated from a faculty of Economics with a bachelor's degree in accounting.*

A: What's your professional experience?

*P8: I have been active in this field for about 3 years.*

A: How do you feel about the COVID-19 pandemic? Were you affected by it or do you know anyone who was affected by it? Please explain.

*P8: Personally, I was not affected by the virus, but I had a more unfortunate case in my family, which resulted in a death.*

A: How important do you think is the food industry in Romania?

*P8: I consider it as one of the most important industries at national or even international level, I could say.*

A: What were your food consumption preferences before COVID-19?

*P8: My preferences were the same both before the pandemic and now, I focused more on healthy products based on nutrients, proteins. The preferences did not change with the development of COVID-19.*



A: What is your food consumption preference during the beginning of COVID-19 and now, two years in?

*P8: Now, after two years, I can say that I am more balanced, I eat a lot more products based on fruits, vegetables than on carbohydrates as I used to consume before the pandemic.*

A: What do you think your consumer preferences would be once COVID 19 is over? Would you still stick to your preferences now or go back to pre-COVID-19?

*P8: I think I would stick to these, I don't think any of my preferences would change, maybe I would eliminate more carbohydrates from my diet.*

A: As a result of COVID-19, how did this consumer preference change if true affected your social well-being?

*P8: Personally, I believe that social well-being did not change, but human interactions have changed, people have become more distant, the relationship between people has been negatively affected.*

A: Did COVID-19 change your dietary habits which resulted in a change in consumption preferences?

*P8: I can say no, my eating habits haven't changed at all.*

A: Not even with regards to how many meals you had per day or how regularly you ate?

*P8: Maybe the meals are no longer 3 but 2 per day, but I think that even before the pandemic I had about 2 meals a day.*

A: How do you think the dietary habits you developed during the pandemic will change in the future?

*P8: I think people will focus more on healthier products, and they won't consume so many processed products, but personally, I repeat, I don't think my eating habits will change.*

A: Do you think that people will go on a vegetarian diet?

*P8: Yes, I think yes and I think it is healthier.*

A: As a result of the change in dietary habits, did this, in your opinion, affect your health? Do you exercise more now or less?

*P8: Yes, I could say that physical exercises are more frequent now with the development of the pandemic because in the beginning, I was not too active and now I think I exercise more often.*

A: Before COVID-19, would you say you were a healthy eater? Explain.

*P8: Not necessarily, I think on the contrary. I think that with the advent of COVID-19, I started to eat a little healthier because we know that in the beginning, everyone bought a lot of things, and you ate not exactly the healthiest foods.*

A: Has the COVID-19 pandemic made you change what you buy i.e organic foods vs processed foods

*P8: Yes, I buy a lot more organic food right now and less processed food.*

A: What type of impulse buying behavior did you partake in during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and is it true still now?

*P8: I think it's valid now too, as it was in the beginning when people shopped in excess, I think this will last a long time, that is, people will buy a lot of food.*

A: How did the fear of infection decide where you do your food purchases? (i.e did you buy your groceries online, did you go to a supermarket or did you buy your food at a restaurant via online food delivery services?)

*P8: For the most part, I bought food from the supermarket, but I slightly reduced the frequency of shopping just to avoid interacting with people and to protect myself. I did not buy food online, only from the supermarket.*

A: If you can give an estimate of how much money you spent on each per month?

*P8: About 200-300 RON per month, and at the restaurant about 100 RON per month.*

A: Would the use of grocery online delivery services by brick and mortar grocery stores change your buying behavior during COVID-19 and post COVID-19 if you have access to such a service?

*P8: Yes, I would really prefer the online purchase of both food and other services, and I think the online purchase of food would change a lot in the world we live in and is much more useful for both consumers and supermarkets, I think it would be a good solution.*

A: How often would you use it?

*P8: I think, somewhere around 2-3 times a week, it would be much easier for anyone.*

A: Who do you think might benefit from this service?

*P8: I think that consumers would benefit the most, it would be easier to cook a meal at home, they would not go to stores, but for stores it would be easier too with online delivery.*

A: If the above was made available would you prepare more food at home now and post COVID-19 pandemic for health and safety reasons?

*P8: Yes, I think I would cook more at home, I would prepare more if I could order online and simply because it is more convenient to order online and cook at home.*

### **Interview 9 – Male**

A: What's your educational background?

*P9: University, a bachelor's degree.*

A: What's your professional experience?

*P9: I am a topographer engineer.*

A: How do you feel about the COVID-19 pandemic? Were you affected by it or do you know anyone who was affected by it? Please explain.

*P9: Personally, I think I was affected even in the first two months when there was chaos, people did not know what awaited us and there were too many uncertainties.*

A: How important do you think is the food industry in Romania?

*P9: Very important, as everywhere in the world.*

A: What were your food consumption preferences before COVID-19?

*P9: Before covid, mostly vegetables, fruits and dairy products, poultry and fish, less pork or beef.*

A: Did you eat fast-food?

*P9: Not really, I'm not a fan of fast-food.*

A: What is your food consumption preference during the beginning of COVID-19 and now, two years in?

*P9: Nothing has changed, vegetables, fruits and meat have remained the same, still as healthy as possible.*

A: What do you think your consumer preferences would be once COVID 19 is over? Would you still stick to your preferences now or go back to pre-COVID-19?

*P9: I think they will stay the same, just as healthy.*

A: As a result of COVID-19, how did this consumer preference change if true affected your social well-being?

*P9: Yes, I reduced the restaurant outgoings, but I think the money spent at restaurants I now concentrate the amount towards the quality of food I buy and consume.*

A: Did COVID-19 change your dietary habits which resulted in a change in consumption preferences?

*P9: Regarding meals, I have several meals a day, but they were the same before and after the pandemic.*

A: Did you pay more attention to quality?

*P9: Personally, I did pay more attention after the pandemic started while I didn't have access to restaurants, there were meals that I ate at restaurants and because they were closed, I had to prepare them myself. And I came to the conclusion that for the same amount of money, I can prepare the same meal, but improve it, in terms of quality, to an even higher level.*

A: How do you think the dietary habits you developed during the pandemic will change in the future?

*P9: Honestly, if people get used to not going to restaurants at all or less, I think people can possibly come to the conclusion that I have reached, meaning that I can cook at home healthier and better food.*

A: As a result of the change in dietary habits, did this, in your opinion, affect your health? Do you exercise more now or less?

*P9: I have been exercising frequently for many years, so nothing has changed here since the pandemic.*

A: Before COVID-19, would you say you were a healthy eater? Explain.

*P9: I think that now I eat even healthier, it has changed for the better or at least the quality of the food I eat is better now.*

A: Has the COVID-19 pandemic made you change what you buy i.e organic foods vs processed foods

*P9: Now, as I cook more, yes, I look at what I buy and quality matters, so more organic products. I try to pay attention to the details.*

A: What type of impulse buying behavior did you partake in during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and is it true still now?

*P9: I didn't stock up. Maybe at the beginning I stocked up on canned food, but even if I start buying long-term now, I only buy something that doesn't expire and can be stored for a long time.*

A: How did the fear of infection decide where you do your food purchases? (i.e did you buy your groceries online, did you go to a supermarket or did you buy your food at a restaurant via online food delivery services?)

*P9: Online, not really. I prefer the supermarket. I prefer to buy locally, so from local producers. I haven't ordered much from restaurants, but it seems to me*

*that the food delivered by restaurants is of poorer quality than the one actually consumed in restaurants.*

A: If you can give an estimate of how much money you spent on each per month?

*P9: Somewhere around 1500 RON at the supermarket.*

A: Would the use of grocery online delivery services by brick and mortar grocery stores change your buying behavior during COVID-19 and post COVID-19 if you have access to such a service?

*P9: I don't think so, I honestly prefer to see what I buy.*

A: If the above was made available would you prepare more food at home now and post COVID-19 pandemic for health and safety reasons?

*P9: I'm cooking at home anyway, so I'd go on like this.*

### **Interview 10 – Female**

A: What's your educational background?

*P10: I graduated from a faculty of Accounting and Informatics Management.*

A: What's your professional experience?

*P10: I have been an accountant for 26 years.*

A: How do you feel about the COVID-19 pandemic? Were you affected by it or do you know anyone who was affected by it? Please explain.

*P10: It is a very bad thing that happened to us and to the whole world. I was not directly affected by the pandemic in the sense that I was not sick. But I do know individuals that were affected.*

A: How important do you think is the food industry in Romania?

*P10: It is one of the most important industries in Romania.*

A: What were your food consumption preferences before COVID-19?

*P10: Prior to COVID-19, my food preferences were primarily vegetables, fruits, low-fat foods, fish, chicken, and home-cooked foods.*

A: What is your food consumption preference during the beginning of COVID-19 and now, two years in?

*P10: I had the same food preferences both before and now. As I said, healthier vegetables, fruits and healthier foods. So, they haven't changed.*

A: What do you think your consumer preferences would be once COVID 19 is over? Would you still stick to your preferences now or go back to pre-COVID-19?

*P10: Yes, I would stick to my current preferences. Nothing would change.*

A: As a result of COVID-19, how did this consumer preference change if true affected your social well-being?

*P10: For me personally, my social well-being was not affected because I interacted with friends and family in the same way. Eventually, going out in the city was really limited because we used to go out with our friends for an ice cream or for a juice. That way I did not go out if it wasn't possible.*

A: Did COVID-19 change your dietary habits which resulted in a change in consumption preferences?

*P10: It hasn't changed the eating habits. I try to eat as many healthy foods as possible and from now on it will be the same way.*



A: How do you think the dietary habits you developed during the pandemic will change in the future?

*P10: Personally, my eating habits will not change. I think that those who have developed such a habit will change if they consider it for their own good. If they have developed a bad eating habit that they consider not good, they will probably change their habit.*

A: As a result of the change in dietary habits, did this, in your opinion, affect your health? Do you exercise more now or less?

*P10: Speaking of me, it hasn't changed my eating habits. I don't exercise even though I know it would be good. Other people who have changed their eating habits, it has affected their health. People don't feel as good if they eat but don't exercise. The gyms were closed so it was not possible workout the same way.*

A: Before COVID-19, would you say you were a healthy eater? Explain.

*P10: No, it was similar. Since the eating habits have not changed, I have eaten the same before and after and I think it will be the same in the future.*

A: Has COVID-19 pandemic made you change what you buy i.e organic foods vs processed foods

*P10: Maybe, because of the pandemic we buy more organic food than processed food if possible.*

A: What type of impulse buying behavior did you partake in during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and is it true still now?

*P10: No, it is not valid anymore. But, I took part in the beginning of the pandemic, I bought basic food, basic medicine because I didn't know what was going to happen. I took part, just like a lot of people, but it is no longer valid and it only lasted a very short time.*

A: How did the fear of infection decide where you do your food purchases? (i.e did you buy your groceries online, did you go to a supermarket or did you buy your food at a restaurant via online food delivery services?)

*P10: I shopped at the supermarket, but went with a longer shopping list and less often to the supermarket. And bought more from local producers.*

A: If you can give an estimate of how much money you spent on each per month?

*P10: At the supermarket between 1000-1800 RON per month.*

A: Would the use of grocery online delivery services by brick and mortar grocery stores change your buying behavior during COVID-19 and post COVID-19 if you have access to such service?

*P10: Yes, if I had access to such a service, it would change my behavior because I would use these services more often.*

A: How often would you use it? Who do you think might benefit from this service?

*P10: It would benefit all those who do not have time for shopping, it would benefit the elderly who cannot go shopping. Eventually I would use it twice a week, depending on my needs.*

A: If the above was made available would you prepare more food at home now and post COVID-19 pandemic for health and safety reasons?

*P10: Yes, I would prepare more at home because I would have more time. I think stores would have higher quality food products so I would prepare more at home.*

## **Interview 11 – Female**

A: What's your educational background?

*P11: Postgraduate studies, Master's degree in political science.*

A: What's your professional experience?

*P11: I have been working as an assistant manager for 8 years.*

A: How do you feel about the COVID-19 pandemic? Were you affected by it or do you know anyone who was affected by it? Please explain.

*P11: Right at the beginning of the pandemic, I was pregnant and I panicked like everyone else, I didn't want to come to work because of fear. I tried to go out as little as possible. Part of my family was infected and my cousin was significantly affected.*

A: How important do you think is the food industry in Romania?

*P11: I consider it one of the most important and this was proved during the pandemic because people can live without clothes, furniture, toys or anything else, but not food. There was even a shopping spree at the beginning of the pandemic of flour, milk, yeast, oil due to the panic created.*

A: What were your food consumption preferences before COVID-19?

*P11: I consumed a lot from online orders, less home cooking and more fast-food, I was a fan of fast food.*

A: What is your food consumption preference during the beginning of COVID-19 and now, two years in?

*P11: At the beginning of the pandemic, I tried to eat as healthy as possible, eat more fruits and I started cooking. I was afraid of the food being cooked in the restaurant.*

A: What do you think your consumer preferences would be once COVID 19 is over? Would you still stick to your preferences now or go back to pre-COVID-19?

*P11: I try to eat healthy at the moment, although I am not a fan of fruits, vegetables, but the pandemic taught us to try to eat healthier, to cook more, to spend more time with family and not to order.*

A: As a result of COVID-19, how did this consumer preference change if true affected your social well-being?

*P11: Yes, it limited our interaction with friends and family, especially with the elderly. We tried to avoid frequent interactions with the elderly so as not to infect them.*

A: Did COVID-19 change your dietary habits which resulted in a change in consumption preferences?

*P11: I started cooking and I resumed online orders. I tried not to be the same as before regarding fear. For the child I still cook, but for me I also order online.*

A: Regarding how many meals a day you had, did anything change?

P11: Not necessarily, about 2 meals a day plus snacks.

A: Did you notice any changes regarding the quality of the food?

*P11: People tried to save on food, in the sense of buying cheaper food, more quantitatively on the grounds that they were afraid to go out in society, but it is not always that cheap is qualitative.*

A: And regarding the consumption of sweets?

*P11: I am a big consumer of sweets, this habit has remained the same.*

A: How do you think the dietary habits you developed during the pandemic will change in the future?

*P11: It depends on each person, it depends on the fear that the pandemic creates in people. People prefer in-store shopping. Especially in the beginning when there were restrictions, the only socialization was going to the store.*

A: As a result of the change in dietary habits, did this, in your opinion, affect your health? Do you exercise more now or less?

*P11: I do not really exercise, but the health was affected considering the lack of exercise due to restrictions, we could not do more activities.*

A: Before COVID-19, would you say you were a healthy eater? Explain.

*P11: No, I can say that I ate even healthier before, but I tried to eat healthier during the pandemic and to take more vitamins.*

A: Has COVID-19 pandemic made you change what you buy i.e organic foods vs processed foods

*P11: For the child, I tried from the beginning to buy organic products, fruits, vegetables, to cook them and I gave up the processed ones, even though I was a fan before.*

A: What type of impulse buying behavior did you partake in during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and is it true still now?

*P11: Even during the first wave, people were crazy about flour, oil, yeast in large quantities, although it was known that grocery stores would not close and the food industry would not stop. But, people were very panicked and bought a lot of pasta also.*

A: How did the fear of infection decide where you do your food purchases? (i.e did you buy your groceries online, did you go to a supermarket or did you buy your food at a restaurant via online food delivery services?)

*P11: I bought my food from grocery stores, but I tried to restrict my shopping frequency, buying a much larger quantity and doing the shopping once a week, once every 10 days and not daily or almost daily as before.*

A: And did you also use online services?

*P11: I used online services strictly for cooked food but not for groceries.*

A: If you can give an estimate of how much money you spent on each per month?

*P11: For the purchases in the store, I can say at least 1000 RON, maybe even more, even 500 RON per week, so about 2000 RON per month, and for the online ones about 500-600 RON.*

A: Would the use of grocery online delivery services by brick and mortar grocery stores change your buying behavior during COVID-19 and post COVID-19 if you have access to such service?

*P11: I think I would always prefer to shop in the store, and especially the elders, I don't think they will order online, they prefer to see the product itself and so do I. For convenience, or for lack of time, I could use online orders.*

A: If the above was made available would you prepare more food at home now and post COVID-19 pandemic for health and safety reasons?

*P11: Possibly, yes.*

## **Interview 12 – Female**

A: What's your educational background?

*P12: I graduated a bachelor's degree in management and marketing.*

A: What's your professional experience?

*P12: I worked for 9 years in the food industry and 9 years in commerce.*

A: How do you feel about the COVID-19 pandemic? Were you affected by it or do you know anyone who was affected by it? Please explain

*P12: COVID-19 pandemic, my brother became infected and a cousin, he arrived at the hospital too late and unfortunately died.*

A: How important do you think is the food industry in Romania?

*P12: Well, the food industry is one of the most important and not only in Romania but everywhere because food is for us, humans the main source of energy, health after air and water. It is very important, possibly the most important.*

A: What were your food consumption preferences before COVID-19?

*P12: I didn't have many preference before and it hasn't changed much in terms of diets or specific food. Instead, in the first wave, I tried to eat healthier, I made fruit and vegetable juices and that's what I prepared for the whole family, containing carrot, apple, kiwi, orange, everything we thought was healthier to strengthen our immunity to deal with the pandemic. As for food, I can't say I've changed anything in my diet.*

A: What is your food consumption preference during the beginning of COVID-19 and now, two years in?

*P12: I don't eat fast food much, I avoid it as much as possible and I don't even fry and I don't cook the meat fried but boiled. And regarding the consumption of sugar and sweets, it has not changed.*

A: What do you think your consumer preferences would be once COVID 19 is over? Would you still stick to your preferences now or go back to pre-COVID-19?

*P12: I would stick to the current ones because I think it's healthier for me.*

A: As a result of COVID-19, how did this consumer preference change if true affected your social well-being?

*P12: Yes, it changed the interactions with family since in the beginning, I was not able to visit my dad that often. Also with friends, the relation has suffered because of the pandemic. Even during holidays, we did not maintain the old habits.*

A: Has anything changed regarding going to restaurants?

*P12: Yes, it changed us because we had a certain reluctance to go to the restaurant. I've been out only a few times.*

A: Did COVID-19 change your dietary habits which resulted in a change in consumption preferences?

*P12: As for the quality of the food, yes towards healthier eating, but otherwise it has not changed in terms of how many times a day I eat, only by being more careful about what I eat.*

A: Did anything change regarding where you go shopping? Local producers?

*P12: No, they stayed the same.*

A: How do you think the dietary habits you developed during the pandemic will change in the future?



*P12: Certainly, people will order more online, especially those who are familiar with the internet because our parents or grandparents are not familiar with the internet, but the younger ones will choose to order food. I would prefer to go shopping, because it's different when you go and see a product and at the same time I would be more physically active. As long as I order, I am not active and my health would be affected. But surely others would prefer to order.*

A: As a result of the change in dietary habits, did this, in your opinion, affect your health? Do you exercise more now or less?

*P12: I exercise more now, I am practicing a sport twice a week because I was going home from work and I had nothing else to do. I felt bad for my health and I have been more active since the pandemic broke out.*

A: Before COVID-19, would you say you were a healthy eater? Explain.

*P12: Not necessarily.*

A: Has COVID-19 pandemic made you change what you buy i.e organic foods vs processed foods

*P12: To some extent yes. I didn't buy processed food before.*

A: What type of impulse buying behavior did you partake in during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and is it true still now?

*P12: In the first wave, there was madness with sugar, oil and flour. During that time, I bought some also, not exaggerated, but at the second and third wave I didn't buy the same. People didn't know how to manage the pandemic in the beginning and then I did the same.*

A: How did the fear of infection decide where you do your food purchases? (i.e did you buy your groceries online, did you go to a supermarket or did you buy your food at a restaurant via online food delivery services?)

*P12: I ordered very little online, only if I had guests and I didn't have time to cook, then I ordered online through Glovo for food, pizza or fast-food. Otherwise, I preferred to go shopping but less often, once a week and then we bought more so as not to go shopping often and to protect ourselves.*

A: If you can give an estimate of how much money you spent on each per month?

*P12: Ordering online, somewhere up to 100 RON an order and about 4 times, and for shopping at stores about 250 RON per week, depending on the period.*

A: Would the use of grocery online delivery services by brick and mortar grocery stores change your buying behavior during COVID-19 and post COVID-19 if you have access to such service?

*P12: It would help us, I don't think it would change us, just in situations where you don't have time and you prefer to order, but if I have time, I prefer to go shopping. Yes, it is a possibility, I would use it.*

A: How often would you use it?

*P12: I would probably use it once a week.*

A: Would they be more popular with younger or older people?

*P12: Of course, more for younger people.*

A: If the above was made available would you prepare more food at home now and post COVID-19 pandemic for health and safety reasons?

*P12: I don't know if I would prepare more at home. I noticed that when cooking at home, the food is eaten once or twice and then thrown away. That's why we go and buy a meal and then I eat more diversified. I don't cook much at home. We buy food from places where healthy food is prepared.*

### **Interview 13 – Female**

A: What's your educational background?

*P13: I finished high school.*

A: What's your professional experience?

*P13: For 11 years I worked in food commerce with a break in the field of construction.*

A: How do you feel about the COVID-19 pandemic? Were you affected by it or do you know anyone who was affected by it? Please explain.

*P13: I didn't get sick, but I have friends who were sick. It affected me because I lost my job.*

A: How important do you think is the food industry in Romania?

*P13: The food industry seems to me to be vital because after air and water, we need food.*

A: What were your food consumption preferences before COVID-19?

*P13: I preferred sweets in general, but I still prefer them even after COVID. I don't think I changed my food consumption.*

A: What is your food consumption preferences during beginning of COVID-19 and now, two years in?

*P13: No, I didn't notice any changes. During the period when I lost my job, I can say that I cooked more at home. But now I order and cook as I used to do before.*

A: What do you think your consumer preferences would be once COVID 19 is over? Would you still stick to your preferences now or go back to pre-COVID-19?

*P13: Maybe, but I'd rather go out more to restaurants.*

A: As a result of COVID-19, how did this consumer preference change if true affected your social well-being?

*P13: Yes, I went to restaurants less frequently, actually almost not at all.*

A: Did COVID-19 change your dietary habits which resulted in a change in consumption preferences?

*P13: Something has changed, I ate healthier and I ate the food I have grown in my garden at home.*

A: How do you think the dietary habits you developed during the pandemic will change in the future?

*P13: I hope to be able to stay the same, to be able to eat from the products I grow. But I don't know if I could afford to eat only organic products because it's much more expensive. As for sweets, it has remained the same. In the future, I hope to reduce them because it will help my health.*

A: As a result of the change in dietary habits, did this, in your opinion, affect your health? Do you exercise more now or less?

*P13: In terms of exercise, I was affected because the gyms were closed and I couldn't go to gyms and after I didn't start again even though the gyms were open. At the health level, no, it didn't affect me.*

A: Before COVID-19, would you say you were a healthy eater? Explain.

*P13: No, I didn't eat healthier.*

A: Has COVID-19 pandemic made you change what you buy i.e organic foods vs processed foods

*P13: No, I wouldn't say that, I just tried not to buy what we can make at home.*

A: What about the decision between local producers or supermarkets, did it change?

*P13: No, maybe because of the budget.*

A: What type of impulse buying behavior did you partake in during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and is it true still now?

*P13: I was scared when I saw the shelves empty, and then I started buying products, such as flour like everyone else. With each wave, it didn't remain, and people didn't react the same way.*

A: How did the fear of infection decide where you do your food purchases? (i.e. did you buy your groceries online, did you go to a supermarket or did you buy your food at a restaurant via online food delivery services?)

*P13: Even though it was safer to order at home, I chose to go to the supermarket, so I chose to go out rather than staying home.*

A: If you can give an estimate of how much money you spent on each per month?

*P13: Around 1000 RON per month go for food.*

A: Would the use of grocery online delivery services by brick and mortar grocery stores change your buying behavior during COVID-19 and post COVID-19 if you have access to such service?

*P13: No, it wouldn't change for me during COVID. In the future, maybe if I were busy, I would also consider the online option. I would, however, consider this possibility.*

A: How often would you use it? Who do you think would benefit most from it?

*P13: I would use it once a week. I think that people with disabilities and very busy people, a mother with a small child who doesn't have a lot of free time, would use them the most. Not the elderly because they do not have access to online even if they could benefit the most.*

A: If the above was made available would you prepare more food at home now and post COVID-19 pandemic for health and safety reasons?

*P13: No, I only prepared more at home when I lost my job, but I don't think it would change.*

#### **Interview 14 – Male**

A: What's your educational background?

*P14: I only finished high school.*

A: What's your professional experience?

*P14: I have been working in the food industry for 7-8 years as a waiter, delivery man.*

A: How do you feel about the COVID-19 pandemic? Were you affected by it or do you know anyone who was affected by it? Please explain.

*P14: Almost everyone has been affected by this pandemic. Personally, I was only affected at the workplace where sales fell, so the level of work fell.*

A: How important do you think is the food industry in Romania?

*P14: Well, it is a very important part of the industry in general and there are a lot of people working in this industry and most of them have been affected by this pandemic and it has a big impact on us in general.*

A: What were your food consumption preferences before COVID-19?

*P14: I can't say that I had any special preferences, but cooked food is one of my preferences and a little fast-food. And sweets are an important part of my diet.*

A: What is your food consumption preference during the beginning of COVID-19 and now, two years in?

*P14: I can't say that something has changed, possibly the amount we consume, especially for sweets, has decreased, otherwise not much has changed.*

A: Regarding fast food?

*P14: Fast food consumption decreased slightly, being more expensive to buy it remained slightly lower.*

A: What do you think your consumer preferences would be once COVID 19 is over? Would you still stick to your preferences now or go back to pre-COVID-19?

*P14: I think I would stay the same now, because they are healthier since I eat less sweets or fast-food, it is a healthier level in general now.*

A: As a result of COVID-19, how did this consumer preference change if true affected your social well-being?

*P14: It has affected in the idea of financial well-being, but socially maybe going out with friends or going out to restaurants has been affected by the pandemic, but otherwise not much.*

A: Did COVID-19 change your dietary habits which resulted in a change in consumption preferences?

*P14: I can't say that it changed my eating habits. I stayed with the same eating habits, it didn't change much, maybe just the quantities.*

A: How many meals did you have a day, did it change?

*P14: It has not changed, the meals per day have remained the same.*

A: What about the importance of food quality?

*P14: We have seen a change because with the pandemic, prices have risen, so most consumers have turned to food that was a little cheaper, which means food that is a not so good.*

A: Local or foreign producers?

*P14: Most consumers are not paying attention to the producers although it would be good for the local producers, but the vast majority are paying attention to the prices, so we all looked at the price of the product more than who produced it. The price was much higher during the pandemic because revenues fell and a reduction to some category was needed.*

A: How do you think the dietary habits you developed during the pandemic will change in the future?

*P14: I don't think the food habits developed during the pandemic will change because I don't think the economy will recover very soon, so most of them will stay with the same products precisely because they are more accessible.*

A: As a result of the change in dietary habits, did this, in your opinion, affect your health? Do you exercise more now or less?

*P14: I did not feel a change in my health, but I started exercising more often with the pandemic, I think because of the impossibility of going out in the city and then I found another activity.*

A: Before COVID-19, would you say you were a healthy eater? Explain.

*P14: No. I think I am focusing more on healthier products. I ate unhealthier because I ate more fast-food.*



A: Has COVID-19 pandemic made you change what you buy i.e organic foods vs processed foods

*P14: Yes, the pandemic made me change what I buy precisely because of the price differences between organic and processed foods, the processed ones being much more easily accessible, cheaper and so I chose the processed ones.*

A: What type of impulse buying behavior did you partake in during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and is it true still now?

*P14: I did not take part in this impulse buying behavior because I waited to see what the world was doing and tried to think logically regarding what was happening.*

A: How did the fear of infection decide where you do your food purchases? (i.e did you buy your groceries online, did you go to a supermarket or did you buy your food at a restaurant via online food delivery services?)

*P14: Yes, I tried to avoid the crowded supermarkets and I ordered a lot online because the online delivery services, during the pandemic, have developed a lot and then it was easier to order from home than to go shopping.*

A: If you can give an estimate of how much money you spent on each per month?

*P14: An approximate estimate, online would be about 400-500 RON per month, and buying from supermarkets 200-300 RON.*

A: Would the use of grocery online delivery services by brick and mortar grocery stores change your buying behavior during COVID-19 and post COVID-19 if you have access to such service?

*P14: Of course, whenever the pandemic ends, I would stay with the online services because I got used to the convenience of ordering from home. So, I would stick to online delivery services.*

A: How often would you use it? Who do you think would benefit most from it?

*P14: Twice a week. I consider that the age range of the people who would order would be between 15-35 years old because we are more used to technology and these online delivery methods. The older ones prefer to go, analyze and buy their products. We are a little more comfortable and I find it much easier to order at home.*

A: If the above was made available would you prepare more food at home now and post COVID-19 pandemic for health and safety reasons?

*P14: I don't think I would prepare food at home, I think I would still order from restaurants. So, the simple answer would be no because it's easier to order, to get ready-made meals and to be able to eat without cooking and cleaning afterwards.*

## **Appendix 2**

### **Interviews in Romanian**

#### **Interview 1 - Female**

A: Care este pregătirea dumneavoastră educațională?

*P1: Am absolvit facultatea de științe economice.*

A: Care este experiența dumneavoastră profesională?

*P1: 15 ani am profesat ca asistent medical la un spital și 20 de ani ca economist.*

A: Ce părere aveți despre pandemia de COVID-19?

*P1: Este cel mai îngrozitor lucru pe care l-am trăit de când m-am născut.*

A: Ați fost afectat de ea sau cunoașteți pe cineva care a fost afectat de ea? Va rog, explicați.

*P1: Eu nu m-am îmbolnăvit, dar am fost afectată din cauza infectării soțului meu, apoi și băiatul meu s-a infectat.*

A: Cât de importantă credeți că este industria alimentară în România?

*P1: Cred ca este foarte importanta mai ales ca romanii sunt cunoscuți ca mari consumatori de alimente.*

A: Care au fost preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar înainte de COVID-19?

*P1: Am cumpărat mai multe branduri din export cu excepția produselor din carne pe care le achiziționam de la producători locali.*

A: Care sunt preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar la începutul COVID-19 și acum, după doi ani?

*P1: Pai la început am consumat mai mult produse din carne, făinoase, lactate, dulciuri, dar acum prefer legumele și fructele.*

A: Care credeți că ar fi preferințele dumneavoastră de consumator odată ce COVID 19 se va termina? Ați rămâne în continuare la preferințele dumneavoastră de acum sau ați reveni la cele din pre-COVID-19?

*P1: Prefer sa rămân la cele de acum pentru ca le consider mai sănătoase și mă simt mai bine.*

A: Ca urmare a COVID-19, cum s-a schimbat această preferință a consumatorului dacă v-a afectat bunăstarea socială?

*P1: M-a afectat pentru ca înainte obișnuiam sa consum mâncare și la restaurante unde socializarea era o prioritate pentru mine.*

A: V-a schimbat COVID-19 obiceiurile alimentare, ceea ce a dus la o schimbare a preferințelor de consum?

*P1: Da, obișnuiam să măncăm doar seara înainte și la început, iar acum am avut timp să măncăm mai regulat, să mă gândesc mai mult la calitate alimentelor și de acum am început să diversific produsele.*

A: Care au fost obiceiurile dvs alimentare înainte de COVID-19, la începutul COVID-19 și în prezent?

*P1: Cred că cu toții vom fi mai atenți la regularitatea servirii meselor, la calitatea alimentelor.*

A: Cum credeți că obiceiurile alimentare dezvoltate în timpul pandemiei se vor schimba în viitor?

*P1: Pai așa cum am spus probabil toți ne vom gândi puțin mai mult la cât de important este să mâncăm cu regularitate, să ne alegem alimente de calitate și să fim mai atenți la ceea ce mâncăm.*

A: Ca urmare a schimbării obiceiurilor alimentare, în opinia dumneavoastră, v-a afectat sănătatea acest lucru? Faci exerciții acum mai mult sau mai puțin?

*P1: Da, mi-a afectat sănătatea. Stand mai mult timp acasă, am luat în greutate chiar dacă mi-am îmbunătățit dieta, m-am îngrășat și fac acum mai puține exerciții fizice.*

A: Înainte de COVID-19, considerați că ați mâncat mai sănătos? Explicați

*P1: Nu, în timpul pandemiei am avut timp să mă concentrez asupra calității alimentelor.*

A: V-a făcut pandemia de COVID-19 să schimbați ceea ce cumpărați, spre exemplu alimente organice în schimbul alimentelor procesate?

*P1: Da, acum cumpăr mai multe produse bio de la producătorii locali, dar și de la supermarketurile de specialitate.*

A: La ce tip de comportament de cumpărare impulsivă ați luat parte la începutul pandemiei de COVID-19 și este valabil încă?

*P1: La început am procedat la fel ca toți oamenii, am făcut stocuri de alimente, în special îmi amintesc cum cumpăram făina, conserve, paste, produse cu termen mare de valabilitate, dar acum nu mai e valabil acest lucru.*

A: Cum a decis teama de infectare unde vă faceți cumpărăturile alimentare? (spre exemplu: v-ați cumpărat alimente online, ați mers la un supermarket sau v-ați cumpărat mâncarea de la un restaurant prin utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de alimente?)

*P1: Am mers la supermarket respectând normele de protecție și distanțare, dar uneori comandam mâncare și de la restaurant.*

A: Dacă ați putea preciza o estimare referitoare la câți bani ați cheltuit pentru fiecare lunar?

*P1: Pai aproximativ 1000 Ron la supermarket și cam 300 la restaurante.*

A: V-ar schimba utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de produse alimentare de către magazinele alimentare comportamentul de cumpărare în timpul COVID-19 și după COVID-19 dacă ați avea acces la un astfel de serviciu?

*P1: Da.*

A: Cat de des ați utiliza serviciile?

*P1: De 2-3 ori pe săptămâna.*

A: Cine credeți că ar beneficia datorită acestor servicii?

*P1: Mă gândesc la pensionari, la persoane care îngrijesc bolnavi, bătrâni, părinți cu copii mici, aceasta ar putea fi o categorie care să beneficieze de acest lucru.*

A: Dacă cele menționate mai sus ar fi disponibile, ați pregăti mai multe alimente acasă acum și după pandemia de COVID-19 datorită motivelor de sănătate și siguranță?

*P1: Da, pentru că eu câștig timp, timp pe care l-aș putea petrece cu familia, deci mi-ar fi mai convenabil.*

## **Interview 2 – Male**

A: Care este pregătirea dumneavoastră educațională?

*P2: Sunt licențiat în științe juridice.*

A: Care este experiența dumneavoastră profesională?

*P2: Sunt managerul unui grup de companii.*

A: Ce părere aveți despre pandemia de COVID-19?

*P2: E o situație ne mai întâlnită în acest secol, e o noutate pentru toate guvernele lumii.*

A: Ați fost afectat de ea sau cunoașteți pe cineva care a fost afectat de ea? Va rog, explicați.

*P2: Da, am fost personal afectat fiind spitalizat.*

A: Cât de importantă credeți că este industria alimentară în România?

*P2: Fiind o țară agrară, o proporție mare din populație lucrează în industria alimentară.*

A: Care au fost preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar înainte de COVID-19?

*P2: Predominat consumul de carne si uneori produse de fast-food.*

A: Care sunt preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar la începutul COVID-19 și acum, după doi ani?

*P2: La început am consumat tot la fel ca înainte, apoi am trecut la legume si fructe si am înlocuit fast-food cu mâncarea gătită acasă.*

A: Care credeți că ar fi preferințele dumneavoastră de consumator odată ce COVID 19 se va termina? Ați rămâne în continuare la preferințele dumneavoastră de acum sau ați reveni la cele din pre-COVID-19?

*P2: Prefer sa rămân la dieta vegetariana, astfel menținând îmbunătățirile făcute in timpul pandemiei, dar probabil ocazional voi mai utiliza si din vechile obiceiuri.*

A: Ca urmare a COVID-19, cum s-a schimbat această preferință a consumatorului dacă v-a afectat bunăstarea socială?

*P2: Da, interesant, înainte socializam cu prietenii si colaboratori servind masa împreuna la restaurant, dar o data cu pandemia, acest obicei s-a schimbat si mi-a schimbat obiceiurile alimentare chiar destul de mult.*

A: V-a schimbat COVID-19 obiceiurile alimentare, ceea ce a dus la o schimbare a preferințelor de consum?

*P2: Da*

A: Care au fost obiceiurile dvs alimentare înainte de COVID-19, la începutul COVID-19 și în prezent?

*P2: Înainte eram gurmand si nu eram atent al ceea ce consum, apoi o data cu începutul pandemiei cumpăraturile le-am făcut de la magazinele apropiate de locuința si încerc sa consum alimente sănătoase care nu afectează mediul înconjurător. O sa încerc sa nu fac risipa de alimente știind din statistici ca se arunca cantități importante de alimente care afectează mediu înconjurător, astfel pun mai multa importanta cantității cumpărate.*

A: Cum credeți ca obiceiurile alimentare dezvoltate in timpul pandemiei se vor schimba în viitor?

*P2: Greu de preconizat. Personal, cred ca trendul este in zona online, dar in același timp lanțurile de magazine își dezvolta expansiunea deschiderilor de magazine si influențează semnificativ comportamentul consumatorului știind ca sunt foarte agresivi in piața de marketing si publicitate. Despre mine, având in vedere tendințele spre o alimentație sănătoasă in timpul pandemiei, acest trend îl voi păstra in continuare.*

A: Ca urmare a schimbării obiceiurilor alimentare, în opinia dumneavoastră, v-a afectat sănătatea acest lucru? Faci exerciții acum mai mult sau mai puțin?

*P2: Da mi-a afectat sănătatea. Nu, nu fac mai mult.*

A: Înainte de COVID-19, considerați că ați mâncat mai sănătos?

*P2: Înainte de COVID nu chiar, din contra consumam multe grăsimi.*

A: V-a făcut pandemia de COVID-19 să schimbați ceea ce cumpărați, spre exemplu alimente organice in schimbul alimentelor procesate?

*P2: Da, acum cumpăr alimente care consider ca sunt sănătoase.*

A: La ce tip de comportament de cumpărare impulsivă ați luat parte la începutul pandemiei de COVID-19 și este valabil încă?



*P2: Am făcut stocuri de marfa fiind speriat de aceasta situație nemaiîntâlnita, sigur ca tendința a rămas.*

A: Cum a decis teama de infectare unde vă faceți cumpărăturile alimentare? (spre exemplu: v-ați cumpărat alimente online, ați mers la un supermarket sau v-ați cumpărat mâncarea de la un restaurant prin utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de alimente?)

*P2: Pai acum fac cumpărături in magazine de proximitate si supermarketuri.*

A: Dacă ați putea preciza o estimare referitoare la câți bani ați cheltuit pentru fiecare lunar?

*P2: La mine soția face cumpărături dar o estimare in jur de 800 RON la supermarketuri pe luna.*

A: V-ar schimba utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de produse alimentare de către magazinele alimentare comportamentul de cumpărare în timpul COVID-19 și după COVID-19 dacă ați avea acces la un astfel de serviciu?

*P2: Nu*

A: Dacă cele menționate mai sus ar fi disponibile, ați pregăti mai multe alimente acasă acum și după pandemia de COVID-19 datorita motivelor de sănătate și siguranță?

*P2: Nu, având in vedere activitate mea care mă solicita in mai multe locuri, nu cred ca un astfel de serviciu m-ar avantaja.*

### **Interview 3 – Male**

A: Care este pregătirea dumneavoastră educațională?

*P3: Am terminat liceul, momentan sunt student.*

A: Care este experiența dumneavoastră profesională?

*P3: Student, nu am nicio pregătire in domeniu.*

A: Ce părere aveți despre pandemia de COVID-19? Ați fost afectat de ea sau cunoașteți pe cineva care a fost afectat de ea? Va rog, explicați.

*P3: Personal n-am fost afectat nici de boala ,nici de pandemie in afara de faptul ca am făcut facultatea online o perioada, dar cunosc persoane care au fost afectate si din punct de vedere profesional si din cauza bolii si au avut nevoie de îngrijiri medicale.*

A: Cât de importantă credeți că este industria alimentară în România?

*P3: Având in vedere ca nu putem sa supraviețuim fără alimente, este foarte importanta.*

A: Care au fost preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar înainte de COVID-19?

*P3: Înainte de pandemie, meniul zilei ar conține legume, fructe, produse de panificație, carne de orice fel: porc, pui, vita si câteodată, peste.*

A: Care sunt preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar la începutul COVID-19 și acum, după doi ani?

*P3: Pot sa spun ca sunt foarte asemănătoare, probabil ca diferă într-o măsura foarte mica, probabil consum mai multe fructe si legume ca înainte, cam atât. Au fost cam la fel si după.*

A: Care credeți că ar fi preferințele dumneavoastră de consumator odată ce COVID 19 se va termina? Ați rămâne în continuare la preferințele dumneavoastră de acum sau ați reveni la cele din pre-COVID-19?

*P3: Posibil ca as rămâne la acestea de acum, poate un pic mai multa carne.*

A: Ca urmare a COVID-19, cum s-a schimbat această preferință a consumatorului dacă v-a afectat bunăstarea socială?

*P3: Pai, m-a afectat destul de mult deoarece întâlnirile cu familia au fost mai puține si mai restrânse, ieșirile cu prieteni si colegi au fost aproape inexistente.*

A: V-a schimbat COVID-19 obiceiurile alimentare, ceea ce a dus la o schimbare a preferințelor de consum?

*P3: In general, nu prea, posibil mici diferențe, dar nimic major, aceleași diferențe.*

A: Nu ați observat nimic semnificativ?

*P3: Nu*

A: Cum credeți ca obiceiurile alimentare dezvoltate in timpul pandemiei se vor schimba în viitor?

*P3: Consider ca datorată pandemiei, in general, oamenii vor fi mai atenți cu sănătatea lor si vor consuma alimente cat de cat sănătoase sau ar încerca cat mai mult sa consume alimente sănătoase.*

A: Ca urmare a schimbării obiceiurilor alimentare, în opinia dumneavoastră, v-a afectat sănătatea acest lucru? Faci exerciții acum mai mult sau mai puțin?

*P3: Da, datorată pandemiei, am mai multa grija de sănătatea mea si încerc sa fac exerciții mai multe chiar daca făceam si înainte si cu alimentația e un pic mai bine.*

A: Înainte de COVID-19, considerați că ați mâncat mai sănătos? Explicați. V-a făcut pandemia de COVID-19 să schimbați ceea ce cumpărați, spre exemplu alimente organice în schimbul alimentelor procesate?

*P3: Consider ca am mâncat destul de sănătos și înainte de pandemie și acum probabil ca acum mănânc mai multe alimente organice decât înainte.*

A: La ce tip de comportament de cumpărare impulsivă ați luat parte la începutul pandemiei de COVID-19 și este valabil încă?

*P3: Probabil ca în prima săptămână sau primele două săptămâni când au apărut știrile despre pandemie, am cumpărat mai multe produse de panificație sau produse de uz deoarece n-am știut ce o să se întâmple sau dacă o să fie lipsuri în magazine.*

A: Cum a decis teama de infectare unde vă faceți cumpărăturile alimentare? (spre exemplu: v-ați cumpărat alimente online, ați mers la un supermarket sau v-ați cumpărat mâncarea de la un restaurant prin utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de alimente?)

*P3: Nu pot să spun că teama de infectare, dar tot așa cumpăr alimente de la supermarket, poate comand și de la restaurante prin servicii mai mult decât înainte.*

A: Dacă ați putea preciza o estimare referitoare la câți bani ați cheltuit pentru fiecare lunar?

*P3: La supermarket probabil în jur de 400-500 de Lei lunar, iar la restaurante cam 200-300 Lei lunar.*

A: V-ar schimba utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de produse alimentare de către magazinele alimentare comportamentul de cumpărare în timpul COVID-19 și după COVID-19 dacă ați avea acces la un astfel de serviciu?

*P3: Da, ar fi o varianta destul de buna deoarece e mai comod decât sa mergi pana la magazin, așa din confortul casei poți sa comanzi ce dorești. Probabil săptămânal as utiliza serviciile, iar beneficiarii ar fi mai mult tinerii deoarece cei in vârsta nu prea utilizează internetul.*

A: Dacă cele menționate mai sus ar fi disponibile, ați pregăti mai multe alimente acasă acum și după pandemia de COVID-19 datorita motivelor de sănătate și siguranță?

*P3: Da, probabil ca da, as pregăti mai multe alimente deoarece e mai sănătos sa mănânci acasă ce ai făcut tu decât la un fast-food deoarece știi ce mănânci.*

#### **Interview 4 – Female**

A: Care este pregătirea dumneavoastră educațională?

*P4: Studii superioare economice.*

A: Care este experiența dumneavoastră profesională?

*P4: 21 de ani de activitate in comerț.*

A: Ce părere aveți despre pandemia de COVID-19? Ați fost afectat de ea sau cunoașteți pe cineva care a fost afectat de ea?

*P4: Personal nu am fost afectata in ceea ce privește boala propriu-zisa, dar cunoștințe am care au fost afectate mai grav sau mai puțin grav.*

A: Cât de importantă credeți că este industria alimentară în România?

*P4: Din punctul meu de vedere, industria alimentara este cea mai importanta in Romania, atât producția cat si consumul.*

A: Care au fost preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar înainte de COVID-19?

*P4: Ca si preferențe alimentare, a fost un consum echilibrat atât legume, fructe, atât produse din carne si alte produse lactate, deci a fost un consum echilibrat din toate produsele de pe piața.*

A: Care sunt preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar la începutul COVID-19 și acum, după doi ani?

*P4: Am rămas cam la aceleași preferințe, nefiind afectați de un regim alimentar in urma COVID, ne-au rămas aceleași preferințe, produse lactate, legume, fructe, produse din carne, deci cam aceleași produse le folosim si acum si înainte de COVID.*

A:Deci nu s-a schimbat nimic?

*P4: Nu*

A: Care credeți că ar fi preferințele dumneavoastră de consumator odată ce COVID 19 se va termina? Ați rămâne în continuare la preferințele dumneavoastră de acum sau ați reveni la cele din pre-COVID-19?

*P4: In principiu, as rămâne la aceleași, nefiind schimbări in consumul meu, ar rămâne cam aceleași preferințe.*

A: Ca urmare a COVID-19, cum s-a schimbat această preferință a consumatorului dacă v-a afectat bunăstarea socială?

*P4: Ca si bunăstare sociala, din cate consider eu, 50-60% din populație a fost afectat, chiar si la noi in familie nu neapărat din punctul meu de vedere, ci al altui membru de familie a fost afectata bunăstarea sociala, din păcate multe servicii au depins de acest virus si s-au redus activitățile si atunci implicit bunăstarea sociala a fost afectata.*

A: V-a schimbat COVID-19 obiceiurile alimentare, ceea ce a dus la o schimbare a preferințelor de consum?

*P4: Nu, avem aceleași obiceiuri, același consum caloric zilnic, uneori mai normal alteori mai haotic depinde de timpul pe care îl avem.*

A: Cum credeți ca obiceiurile alimentare dezvoltate în timpul pandemiei se vor schimba în viitor?

*P4: Nu știu dacă vor interveni mari schimbări, nu vad, probabil ca ieșirile vor fi mai multe și probabil atunci alt gen de mâncare, tip fast-food sau altele vor fi mai multe decât acum, dar în principiu nu vad mari schimbări.*

A: Ca urmare a schimbării obiceiurilor alimentare, în opinia dumneavoastră, v-a afectat sănătatea acest lucru? Faci exerciții acum mai mult sau mai puțin?

*P4: Nu mi-a afectat sănătatea și nu fac exerciții nici mai mult nici mai puțin pentru că în principiu nu fac exerciții, nu prea dispun de timp pentru a face exerciții fizice.*

A: Înainte de COVID-19, considerați că ați mâncat mai sănătos? V-a făcut pandemia de COVID-19 să schimbați ceea ce cumpărați, spre exemplu alimente organice în schimbul alimentelor procesate?

*P4: Nu, nu am schimbat alimentele pe care le cumpăram, sunt destul de conservatoare în produsele pe care le folosim și nu schimb prea ușor nici chiar partea de produse alimentare care le folosesc.*

A: Deci au rămas cam la fel?

*P4: Au rămas cam la fel, nu neapărat numai procesate, nu neapărat organice ci din ambele.*

A: La ce tip de comportament de cumpărare impulsivă ați luat parte la începutul pandemiei de COVID-19 și este valabil încă?

*P4: Eu nu am luat parte ci am asistat la cumpărare impulsivă de acest COVID, lucrând în comerț am văzut foarte multă lume, speriată, impacientată, încercând să își facă provizii și începând să cumpere haotic unele lucruri pe care probabil, spun eu, nu neapărat ca nu le-au folosit, dar a fost prea mare stocul făcut de unele persoane și atunci în timp s-a concretizat ca nu trebuia chiar așa să fie acest comportament. Dar, eu personal nu am fost genul de persoană care să fiu foarte impulsivă de COVID. Am știut că magazinele alimentare oricum vor funcționa, vor fi deschise, era nevoie de o criză mult mai mare ca să nu îți poți cumpăra o pâine sau produsele alimentare de bază și am considerat că nu e cazul. În schimb au fost persoane care au fost foarte agitate și speriate probabil și din cauza că au avut boala în familie sau din alte motive strict personale ale lor.*

A: Si credeți că mai este valabil încă ceea ce ați observat la unii consumatori?

*P4: Da, sunt persoane vârstnice, sunt persoane care și acum au acea teamă mult mai mare de acest virus și se feresc mult mai mult și atunci își fac provizii și ies mult mai rar la cumpărături pentru a nu avea contact cu alți oameni.*

A: Cum a decis teama de infectare unde vă faceți cumpărăturile alimentare? (spre exemplu: v-ați cumpărat alimente online, ați mers la un supermarket sau v-ați cumpărat mâncarea de la un restaurant prin utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de alimente?)

*P4: Eu, lucrez într-un magazin alimentar și cumpărăturile necesare mi le fac la locul de muncă, iar cealaltă parte de care eu sunt norocoasă este că dispun acasă de o grădină de unde, în ceea ce privește legumele și fructele, le procurăm singuri și e ok așa. Deci supermarketul a fost principala sursă pentru cele procesate și cele produse în producția alimentară.*

A: Dacă ați putea preciza o estimare referitoare la câți bani ați cheltuit pentru fiecare lunar?



*P4: Da, daca as face o estimare si daca va referiți la consumul pe o persoana, 1000-1200 lei.*

A: V-ar schimba utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de produse alimentare de către magazinele alimentare comportamentul de cumpărare în timpul COVID-19 și după COVID-19 dacă ați avea acces la un astfel de serviciu?

*P4: Nu, nu cred ca mi l-ar schimba. Intr-adevăr prefer sa cumpăr online echipament si alte aparate casnice, dar partea de produse alimentare prefer vizual si palpabil sa le aleg personal si așa sa fac cumpărăturile pe cat este posibil.*

A: Dacă cele menționate mai sus ar fi disponibile, ați pregăti mai multe alimente acasă acum și după pandemia de COVID-19 datorita motivelor de sănătate și siguranță?

*P4: Nu. Am pregăti cam tot așa pentru ca 90-95% din preparatele alimentare la noi in familia sunt pregătite in casa si atunci nu am putea pregăti mai mult.*

#### **Interview 5 – Male**

A: Care este pregătirea dumneavoastră educațională?

*P5: Învățământul mediu, liceu.*

A: Care este experiența dumneavoastră profesională?

*P5: Experienței in vânzări, comerț de vreo 35 de ani, in industria alimentara.*

A: Ce părere aveți despre pandemia de COVID-19? Ați fost afectat de ea sau cunoașteți pe cineva care a fost afectat de ea?

*P5: Pandemia de COVID, direct sau indirect, cred ca a afectat viață tuturor. Din fericire nu am fost infectat nici eu nici apropiați de ai mie, dar am avut colegi trecând mai ușor, iar alții mai greu. Din fericire, nu am cunoștințe foarte apropiate care sa fi decedat, dar ne-a afectat viață tuturor. Economic ne-a influențat, in comerț am avut urcușuri si coborâșuri, multe lucruri neprevăzute. Acum deja suntem departe si probabil am fi mai pregătiți pentru încă o lovitura de genul acesta, dar atunci si tarile cele mai dezvoltate s-au dovedit ca nu au fost pregătite pentru așa ceva.*

A: Cât de importantă credeți că este industria alimentară în România?

*P5: In Romania, buna întrebare, e un paradox, o tara cu situația geografică a României si cu posibilitățile naturale e neverosimil dependentă de importuri in industria alimentară. Ar trebui sa se pună mult mai mult accent pe industria alimentară, a devenit o piața internațională care ne-a omorât o mare parte din industria alimentară.*

A: Care au fost preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar înainte de COVID-19?

*P5: Aici sincer, ca persoana nu as putea zice ca mi-a schimbat COVID preferințele de consum alimentar având vârsta pe care o am. Deja sunt lucruri care poate intra in rutina zilnică, nu a trebuit sa fac mari schimbări pentru ca, cu toata familia am fost atenți la alimentație si nu ne-a produs COVID schimbări in alimentație. Poate la frecvența cumpărăturilor, poate la modul de cumpărare, dar nu ne-a afectat preferințele de consum.*

A: Care sunt preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar la începutul COVID-19 și acum, după doi ani?

*P5: Nu in ce consumam, ci poate in frecventa de cumpărare, netrecând in online ci făcând fizic, iar acum in loc de o data la doua săptămâni merg o data la trei săptămâni sau la o luna la achiziții de alimente ambalate. Proaspetele le cumpăr mult mai frecvent. Ce am observat la început, chiar de frica contaminării când s-au luat masuri de protecție, ne-a învățat sa mergem mai rar la cumpărături.*

A: Care credeți că ar fi preferințele dumneavoastră de consumator odată ce COVID 19 se va termina? Ați rămâne în continuare la preferințele dumneavoastră de acum sau ați reveni la cele din pre-COVID-19?

*P5: Clar, rămânem la acestea, poate ne-a arata ca si înainte era mai feresc sa ne protejam, sa avem dezinfectat când ieșim din magazin. Si o alta schimbare, am mers mai mult spre card decât numerar pentru ca banii sunt vectori de împrăștiere al oricăror tip de virus, așa ca ne-a ordonat puțin viață aceasta pandemie.*

A: Ca urmare a COVID-19, cum s-a schimbat această preferință a consumatorului dacă v-a afectat bunăstarea socială?

*P5: Da, cred ca e cea mai evidenta schimbare, datorita domeniului in care lucrez, munca nu ne-a fost atât de afectata si ne-am continuat munca, viata sociala a fost cea mai influențata de pandemie si observ ca si aici comportamentul post pandemic își va lasă urme. Parca s-au mai distanțat oamenii unii fata de alții, nu știu daca e bine sau rău. Cert e ca viata sociala ne-a influențat-o cel mai mult.*

A: V-a schimbat COVID-19 obiceiurile alimentare, ceea ce a dus la o schimbare a preferințelor de consum?

*P5: Aici as spune un hotărât nu, mâncam cam la fel. Poate ca ne comandam ceva mai des mâncare, dar având o soție care gătește, nu comand chiar cel mai des in comparație cu alții. Nu am schimbat gusturile, nu am schimbat felurile*

*de mâncare, nu mănânc mai mult sau mai puține mezeluri ca înainte. Deci preferanțele de consum, de alimentație nu mi-au fost schimbate de pandemie.*

A: Cum credeți ca obiceiurile alimentare dezvoltate în timpul pandemiei se vor schimba în viitor?

*P5: Cred ca cea mai importanta schimbare ca obicei alimentar va fi reținerea fata de restaurante sau de locurile aglomerate, a le evita pentru ca, se dezvolta tulpini noi care sunt mult mai contagioase. In continuare trebuie sa ne ferim si de aceea, nu vor fi putini cei care vor evita locurile aglomerate inclusiv restaurante.*

A: Ca urmare a schimbării obiceiurilor alimentare, în opinia dumneavoastră, v-a afectat sănătatea acest lucru? Faci exerciții acum mai mult sau mai puțin?

*P5: Nu fac exerciții nici mai mult nici mai puțin. Sănătatea, în mod direct atât mie cât și apropiaților mei, nu a fost afectată. Am fost oamenii mai precauți. Cu sănătatea stăm încă ok.*

A: Înainte de COVID-19, considerați că ați mâncat mai sănătos? Explicați.

*P5: Nu, cu siguranța nu, ci din contra și din cauza mai multor informații, tendința spre a mânca mai sănătos s-a accentuat. Lumea realizează ca alimentele procesate sunt mult mai nesănătoase. Pe an ce trece, mergem în direcția spre a mânca mai sănătos. Noi personal avem grădina acasă și vedem ca nici aspectul și nici gustul nu se compară cu cele din supermarket.*

A: V-a făcut pandemia de COVID-19 să schimbați ceea ce cumpărați, spre exemplu alimente organice în schimbul alimentelor procesate?

*P5: Mici diferențe, dar consider ca nu pandemia ci conștiința ca aceasta e direcția buna. Dar vad oameni pe care pandemia i-a trezit sa fie si mai economi, nu numai sa mănânce sănătos.*

A: La ce tip de comportament de cumpărare impulsivă ați luat parte la începutul pandemiei de COVID-19 și este valabil încă?

*P5: Din prisma profesiei, din care am avut o privire de ansamblu, nu am fost atât de îngrozit ca vom rămâne fără mâncare, dar câteva chestii totuși chiar la început le-am luat cu o rezerva pentru un timp mai mult. Pe termen scurt ne-am făcut unele rezerve.*

A: Cum a decisa teama de infectare unde vă faceți cumpărăturile alimentare? (spre exemplu: v-ați cumpărat alimente online, ați mers la un supermarket sau v-ați cumpărat mâncarea de la un restaurant prin utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de alimente?)

*P5: Nu prea am mers spre online, pandemia ne-a împins să evităm aglomerările, am evitat orele aglomerate, practic aceea distanțare fizică a început să fie mai importantă și să căutam să o respectăm. Dacă până atunci în drum spre casa era firesc să intri să cumperi, acum am lăsat pe mai târziu când în același magazin nu mai erau atât de mulți oameni.*

A: Dacă ați putea preciza o estimare referitoare la câți bani ați cheltuit pentru fiecare lunar?

*P5: Pai, într-o familie restrânsă de două persoane, 1000 de lei pe luna pentru cumpărături.*

A: V-ar schimba utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de produse alimentare de către magazinele alimentare comportamentul de cumpărare în timpul COVID-19 și după COVID-19 dacă ați avea acces la un astfel de serviciu?

*P5: În timpul COVID, nu prea am utilizat, nu ne-a schimbat comportamentul, dar devine din ce în ce mai firesc. Și așa cum și în cazul produselor ne-alimentare deja folosim, cred că ne vom obișnui să comandăm acele produse alimentare cunoscute, cu termen lung de valabilitate. Nu as exclude că vom merge spre online, poate comoditatea, să economisești timp. As vedea asta pe viitor.*

A: Cat de des ați utiliza serviciile? Cine credeți ca ar beneficia datorita acestor servicii?

*P5: Pai frecventa de utilizare a supermarketurilor, o data la 3 săptămâni, o data pe luna pentru alimentele cu termen mai lung, cat ești activ probabil comanzi zilnic mâncarea.*

A: Dacă cele menționate mai sus ar fi disponibile, ați pregăti mai multe alimente acasă acum și după pandemia de COVID-19 datorita motivelor de sănătate și siguranță?

*P5: Pana nu ni se schimba modul de viață, fiind activi, cred eu ca prea puțin probabil sa ni se schimbe obiceiurile de consum. Poate unii vor avea ambiția de a găti mai des acasă, dar strict la familia mea nu vad o schimbare datorita programului zilnic pe care îl avem.*

## **Interview 6 – Male**

A: Care este pregătirea dumneavoastră educațională?

*P6: În prezent sunt pe cale să termin liceul la o instituție școlară locală.*

A: Care este experiența dumneavoastră profesională?

*P6: Nu am avut încă un loc de muncă adecvat, deoarece mă străduiesc mai întâi să-mi iau diploma de școală. Am lucrat doar ca angajat cu jumătate de normă pentru afaceri locale mai mici.*

A: Ce părere aveți despre pandemia de COVID-19? Ați fost afectat de ea sau cunoașteți pe cineva care a fost afectat de ea?

*P6: Simt că pentru mine, ca tânăr membru al societății, a fost o surpriză, deoarece am auzit doar pe scurt despre epidemiile anterioare care au avut loc în lume. Toate mi-au părut povești, până la începutul anului 2020, când m-am trezit acasă tot timpul, dar sincer, mi-a plăcut timpul petrecut acasă, deoarece am avut timp să iau o pauză din haosul schimbărilor rapide de acum.*

A: Cât de importantă credeți că este industria alimentară în România?

*P6: Cred că potențialul său este evaluat progresiv pe măsură ce trec anii și interesul clar manifestat de oamenii din ziua de azi pentru sănătatea lor le schimbă opțiunile de cumpărare. Fermele și producătorii locali beneficiază de aceste schimbări de atitudine și, prin urmare, sunt încurajați să-l mențină cât mai real și natural posibil.*

A: Care au fost preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar înainte de COVID-19?

*P6: Aș spune că erau asemănătoare cu ceea ce toată lumea din jurul meu considera potrivit pentru o dietă echilibrată. Mă bazez mai ales pe părinții mei, deoarece ei sunt cei care fac toate cumpărăturile, așa că nu poate fi o săptămână fără să consumăm legume, fructe, pește, paste, produse de panificație și lapte și carne.*

A: Care sunt preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar la începutul COVID-19 și acum, după doi ani?

*P6: Ei bine, nu s-au schimbat atât de mult, poate că am redus doar carnea despre care am menționat anterior, deoarece COVID mi-a dat puțin timp liber să explorez documentare pe acest subiect și m-a făcut să înțeleg cu adevărat răul mare pe care îl provoacă sistemului nostru imunitar și nu numai.*

A: Care credeți că ar fi preferințele dumneavoastră de consumator odată ce COVID 19 se va termina? Ați rămâne în continuare la preferințele dumneavoastră de acum sau ați reveni la cele din pre-COVID-19?

*P6: Nu văd niciun motiv pentru care s-ar schimba. Pe lângă faptul că opresc achiziționarea de cantități mari din aceleași produse deodată, acum că rezervele scurte se vor termina, îmi voi păstra opțiunile de consum la fel de consistente cum au fost până acum.*

A: Ca urmare a COVID-19, cum s-a schimbat această preferință a consumatorului dacă v-a afectat bunăstarea socială?

*P6: După cum am menționat, am trecut la un stil de viață semnificativ mai bun, prin urmare COVID m-a adus într-un loc mental mai bun, ceea ce se traduce printr-o interacțiune socială îmbunătățită și, în general, a schimbat perspectiva pe care o aveam. După cum știm cu toții, dieta influențează puternic percepția.*

A: V-a schimbat COVID-19 obiceiurile alimentare, ceea ce a dus la o schimbare a preferințelor de consum?

*P6: Fiind literalmente acasă pentru o perioadă lungă de timp, a scos într-adevăr în evidență efectelor obiceiurilor alimentare proaste și a lipsei de exercițiu, prin urmare, carantina mi-a dat impulsul de care aveam nevoie să merg la sală și să fiu atent la alimentele pe care aleg să le consum. Noi, ca familie, cu siguranță, încercăm să evităm pe cât posibil secțiunea de carne a supermarketului și să fim creativi cu verdețurile, spre deosebire de ceea ce făceam la începutul lui 2020 când ritmul rapid al vieții ne dicta că am mâncat repede și practic orice a fost ușor de gătit.*

A: Cum credeți ca obiceiurile alimentare dezvoltate în timpul pandemiei se vor schimba în viitor?

*P6: Cred că, odată ce am ajuns pe această pistă, nimic nu mă scoate din ea. Știu cât de ambițios și serios înțeleg aspecte relevante pentru sănătatea mea, așa că nu am nicio îndoială că voi continua să urmez cele mai bune informații pe care le-am acumulat despre obiceiurile și sănătatea mea.*



A: Ca urmare a schimbării obiceiurilor alimentare, în opinia dumneavoastră, v-a afectat sănătatea acest lucru? Faci exerciții acum mai mult sau mai puțin?

*P6: Mai mult, carantina a făcut ca sala să prindă viață pentru mine. M-am antrenat doar pentru scurt timp înaintea COVID-19. Sunt pozitiv ca așa va fi de acum, pentru că de atunci a devenit o activitate care provoacă dependență pentru mine.*

A: Înainte de COVID-19, considerați că ați mâncat mai sănătos? Explicați.

*P6: Toate informațiile de care aveam nevoie erau pe internet și, așa cum am spus, COVID a fost timpul necesar pentru mine, personal, folosit în folosul meu pentru a încerca să înțeleg toate efectele adverse pe care le are o dieta generală nesănătoasă atât asupra sănătății mentale, cât și sănătății fizice. Cu siguranță aș spune ca COVID m-a îndreptat către mai multe alimente organice și m-a făcut să investesc mai mult timp și bani în produse de calitate.*

A: La ce tip de comportament de cumpărare impulsivă ați luat parte la începutul pandemiei de COVID-19 și este valabil încă?

*P6: Presupun că este vorba despre achiziționarea de cantități masive de mărfuri din teama. Nu ne-am axat pe hârtie igienică, mâncare sau oricare dintre acele produse, deoarece nu existau semne alarmante de cantități insuficiente în orașul nostru.*

A: Cum a decis teama de infectare unde vă faceți cumpărăturile alimentare? (spre exemplu: v-ați cumpărat alimente online, ați mers la un supermarket sau v-ați cumpărat mâncarea de la un restaurant prin utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de alimente?)

*P6: Livrarea alimentelor a devenit în mod evident un lucru mai des întâlnit în România odată ce pandemia a lovit, dar aș spune că familia mea face doar rar comenzi de mâncare. Am mers tot la supermarket și am făcut obișnuit cumpărături, dar am folosit dezinfectante și măști non-stop.*

A: Dacă ați putea preciza o estimare referitoare la cați bani ați cheltuit pentru fiecare lunar?

*P6: Nu știu cifrele exacte, deoarece acestea trebuie făcute de părinții mei, dar ar veni în procente aproximativ 90% cumpărături din supermarket și 10% online. Nouă românilor ne place să ne păstrăm convențional și cred că asta va rămâne o vreme.*

A: V-ar schimba utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de produse alimentare de către magazinele alimentare comportamentul de cumpărare în timpul COVID-19 și după COVID-19 dacă ați avea acces la un astfel de serviciu?

*P6: Cred că ar putea îmbunătăți considerabil utilizarea timpului și ar putea reduce călătoriile inutile la supermarket, prin urmare, am contribui și la salvarea planetei, așa că aș fi încântat să încerc. Toată lumea ar trebui să ia parte la o astfel de schimbare vizionară, deoarece reprezintă ceea ce reprezintă digitalizarea.*

A: Dacă cele menționate mai sus ar fi disponibile, ați pregăti mai multe alimente acasă acum și după pandemia de COVID-19 datorita motivelor de sănătate și siguranță?

*P6: Nu sunt sigur, deoarece eu nu sunt un bun bucătar, dar probabil că peste câțiva ani mi-ar plăcea să încep să învăț să le pregătesc singur și să fiu la un clic și la câteva tăieturi și felii distanță de un preparat delicios, de casă, organic.*

## **Interview 7 – Male**

A: Care este pregătirea dumneavoastră educațională?

*P7: Am terminat liceul în 1993 și am obținut o diplomă de licență în educație fizică.*

A: Care este experiența dumneavoastră profesională?

*P7: Am fost profesor și antrenor la nivel de liceu în primii ani ai perioadei mele active, dar apoi mi-am schimbat cariera către comerț, un domeniu în care cred că trebuia să mă implic, deoarece se potrivește tuturor trăsăturilor mele de personalitate.*

A: Ce părere aveți despre pandemia de COVID-19? Ați fost afectat de ea sau cunoașteți pe cineva care a fost afectat de ea?

*P7: Cred că ne-a făcut pe toți să reflectăm asupra bunăstării noastre, ne-a apropiat unul de celălalt în ceea ce privește să avem grijă unul de altul, dar în același timp să le demonstrăm oamenilor că a trăi în solidaritate nu este în natura noastră. Cred că oamenii au devenit conștienți de gravitatea a ceea ce înseamnă un dezastru global pentru noi ca specie și progresele tehnologice de care avem nevoie pentru a trece prin toate.*

A: Cât de importantă credeți că este industria alimentară în România?

*P7: O văd ca pe un viitor concurent la exporturile actuale care ne dictează consumul în zilele noastre. Din ce în ce mai multe persoane se întorc pentru a-și susține afacerile locale ca urmare a acestei pandemii, iar asta nu face decât să împingă mai departe dezvoltarea marilor surse de hrană aici în România.*

A: Care au fost preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar înainte de COVID-19?

*P7: Personal, am respectat obiceiurile pe care majoritatea dintre noi, oamenii responsabili, le-am urmat, adică o dieta săraca în grăsimi, bogată în proteine, bogată în fibre și o dieta echilibrată în general. Practic am încercat să experimentez ce oferea piața, dar în același timp eram interesat de efectele pe care le aveau asupra sănătății mele.*

A: Care sunt preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar la începutul COVID-19 și acum, după doi ani?

*P7: Nu s-au schimbat multe, sincer, cumpăram de la supermarket aceleași produse și până acum m-au făcut să mă simt destul de bine: Legume, fructe, pâine, pește, carne, condimente.*

A: Care credeți că ar fi preferințele dumneavoastră de consumator odată ce COVID 19 se va termina? Ați rămâne în continuare la preferințele dumneavoastră de acum sau ați reveni la cele din pre-COVID-19?

*P7: Viziunea mea asupra a ceea ce necesită viața mea pentru a rămâne sănătos nu s-a schimbat, deci cumpărăturile mele și coșul de cumpărături va conține aceleași bunuri, indiferent de scopul diferit pe care îl servesc.*

A: Ca urmare a COVID-19, cum s-a schimbat această preferință a consumatorului dacă v-a afectat bunăstarea socială?

*P7: După cum am spus, nu s-au schimbat multe, dar câteva produse noi care au ajuns pe piață ca răspuns la cererea de alimente de mai bună calitate ar putea fi unele dintre motivele pentru care starea mea de bine a fost îmbunătățită.*

A: V-a schimbat COVID-19 obiceiurile alimentare, ceea ce a dus la o schimbare a preferințelor de consum?

*P7: Am trecut încet la unele produse pe care le-au ales copiii și soția mea. Întreaga pandemie le-a schimbat serios abordarea asupra obiceiurilor alimentare și mă bucur că am ajuns să fac parte din ea, iar acum există o schimbare vie în bine în starea noastră de spirit. Mai multe legume și mai puțină mâncare procesată ajung acum la ușa noastră.*

A: Cum credeți ca obiceiurile alimentare dezvoltate în timpul pandemiei se vor schimba în viitor?

*P7: Nu văd niciun motiv pentru care aş refuza informațiile valoroase în curând, ca urmare, as vedea că toate dietele noastre se îmbunătățesc încet, așa cum este societatea în acest moment. Fiecare informație care determina dacă ceva este dăunător sau nu există pe internet și pandemia ne-a dovedit tocmai asta.*

A: . Ca urmare a schimbării obiceiurilor alimentare, în opinia dumneavoastră, v-a afectat sănătatea acest lucru? Faci exerciții acum mai mult sau mai puțin?

*P7: Mi-a influențat vizibil sănătatea mintală, deoarece, după cum am menționat, dacă hrănesc organismul cu hrana adecvată înseamnă că și mintea beneficiază. În ceea ce privește exercițiile, încerc să lucrez și la acea parte, mai ales deoarece fiul meu cel mare a arătat recent o pasiune serioasă pentru antrenamente sportive.*

A: Înainte de COVID-19, considerați că ați mâncat mai sănătos? Explicați.

*P7: Aș spune că eram destul de echilibrat în obiceiurile mele alimentare, aveam și zile de mâncat nesănătos, dar am preparat mâncăruri de casă, pe bază de legume, ușor de savurat, pentru a uniformiza totul.*

A: La ce tip de comportament de cumpărare impulsivă ați luat parte la începutul pandemiei de COVID-19 și este valabil încă?

*P7: Am cumpărat mai multă mâncare decât de obicei, doar cu măsuri de precauție, pentru că totul părea așa incert la început, dar a trecut înapoi la cantități normale odată cu trecerea timpului și pandemia a devenit ceva normal.*

A: Cum a decis teama de infectare unde vă faceți cumpărăturile alimentare? (spre exemplu: v-ați cumpărat alimente online, ați mers la un supermarket sau v-ați cumpărat mâncarea de la un restaurant prin utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de alimente?)

*P7: Am cumpărat alimente din supermarketuri la fel ca înainte, pentru a oferi produsele necesare pentru familia mea, atât alimente, cât și alte bunuri, dar am avut grijă să port mască și mănuși tot timpul. Rareori am comandat ceva online.*

A: Dacă ați putea preciza o estimare referitoare la câți bani ați cheltuit pentru fiecare lunar?

*P7: Aproximativ 400 până la 500 de euro pentru alimente în fiecare lună și aproximativ 20 până la 30 de euro au fost pentru livrările ocazionale la pachet pe care le făceam in weekend.*

A: V-ar schimba utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de produse alimentare de către magazinele alimentare comportamentul de cumpărare în timpul COVID-19 și după COVID-19 dacă ați avea acces la un astfel de serviciu?

*P7: De ce nu? Sunt un susținător al schimbării și aceasta pare a fi una potrivită ținând cont de ritmul în care societatea devine digitală în zilele noastre. Nu văd niciun motiv pentru care procesul de aducere a produselor necesare la tine acasă nu ar fi curând o realitate având în vedere toate progresele tehnologice pe care le avem la dispoziție.*

A: Dacă cele menționate mai sus ar fi disponibile, ați pregăti mai multe alimente acasă acum și după pandemia de COVID-19 datorita motivelor de sănătate și siguranță?

*P7: Categorical. Chiar sună mai potrivit, considerând sănătatea, să prepari singur mâncarea, iar COVID ne-a arătat cu adevărat că ar trebui să găsim cele mai bune modalități de a face față tuturor lucrurilor din viață. Mâncarea ne dictează starea generală fizică și mentală, așa că as vedea că timpul petrecut la supermarketuri sa fie transformat în a conștientiza mai mult despre calitatea alimentelor pe care le consum.*

## **Interview 8 – Female**

A: Care este pregătirea dumneavoastră educațională?

*P8: Recent am absolvit facultatea de științe economice nivel licența în contabilitate.*

A: Care este experiența dumneavoastră profesională?

*P8: Activez în acest domeniu de aproximativ 3 ani.*

A: Ce părere aveți despre pandemia de COVID-19? Ați fost afectat de ea sau cunoașteți pe cineva care a fost afectat de ea?

*P8: Eu personal nu am fost afectat de virus, dar am avut în familie un caz mai nefericit care s-a concretizat cu un deces.*

A: Cât de importantă credeți că este industria alimentară în România?

*P8: Consider ca este una dintre cele mai importante industrii la nivel național sau chiar internațional așa putea să zică.*

A: Care au fost preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar înainte de COVID-19?

*P8: Preferințele mele au fost aceleași atât înainte de pandemie cât și acum după pandemie, m-am axat mai mult pe produsele sănătoase bazate în nutrienți, proteine, nu s-au schimbat o dată cu apariția COVID-19.*

A: Care sunt preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar la începutul COVID-19 și acum, după doi ani?

*P8: Acum după doi ani, așa putea să zică ca sunt mai echilibrată, mănânc mult mai multe produse bazate pe fructe, legume decât pe carbohidrați cum poate consumam înainte de pandemie.*

A: Care credeți că ar fi preferințele dumneavoastră de consumator odată ce COVID 19 se va termina? Ați rămâne în continuare la preferințele dumneavoastră de acum sau ați reveni la cele din pre-COVID-19?

*P8: Eu consider ca as rămâne tot la acestea, nu cred ca mi s-ar schimba nici o preferința, poate as elimina din viață mea carbohidrații mai mult.*

A: Ca urmare a COVID-19, cum s-a schimbat această preferință a consumatorului dacă v-a afectat bunăstarea socială?

*P8: Personal, consider ca bunăstarea sociala nu s-a schimbat, dar interacțiunile umane s-au schimbat, oamenii au devenit mai reci, s-a răcit relația între oameni.*

A: V-a schimbat COVID-19 obiceiurile alimentare, ceea ce a dus la o schimbare a preferințelor de consum?

*P8: Pot sa zic ca nu, nu s-au schimbat obiceiurile mele alimentare chiar deloc.*

A: Nici cate mese ați avut pe zi sau cat de regulat ați consumat?

*P8: Poate mesele, nu mai sunt poate 3 ci 2, dar cred ca si înainte de pandemie cam tot 2 mese pe zi aveam.*

A: Cum credeți ca obiceiurile alimentare dezvoltate in timpul pandemiei se vor schimba în viitor?

*P8: Cred ca oamenii se vor axa mai mult pe produse mai sănătoase si nu vor consuma atât de multe produse procesate, dar personal, repet, nu cred ca mi se vor schimba obiceiurile alimentare.*

A: Considerați ca lumea va merge spre o dieta vegetariana?

*P8: Da, așa consider si cred ca este mult mai sănătos.*



A: Ca urmare a schimbării obiceiurilor alimentare, în opinia dumneavoastră, v-a afectat sănătatea acest lucru? Faci exerciții acum mai mult sau mai puțin?

*P8: Da, as putea spune ca exercițiile fizice sunt mult mai dese o data cu apariția pandemiei deoarece, la început, nu prea faceam alta mișcare si acum cred ca fac mai multe exerciții fizice.*

A: Înainte de COVID-19, considerați că ați mâncat mai sănătos?

*P8: Nu neapărat, cred ca chiar din contra, cred ca o data cu apariția COVID am început sa mănânc puțin mai sănătos pentru ca știm ca la început, toata lumea cumpăra multe lucruri si mâncai nu tocmai cele mai sănătoase alimente.*

A: V-a făcut pandemia de COVID-19 să schimbați ceea ce cumpărați, spre exemplu alimente organice in schimbul alimentelor procesate?

*P8: Da, cumpăr mult mai multe alimente organice in acest moment si mai puțin cele procesate.*

A: La ce tip de comportament de cumpărare impulsivă ați luat parte la începutul pandemiei de COVID-19 și este valabil încă?

*P8: Consider ca este valabil si acum, așa cum a fost si la început când lumea a achiziționat, au făcut cumpărături in exces, cred ca va mai tine mult acest lucru, adică oamenii vor cumpăra multe alimente.*

A: Cum a decis teama de infectare unde vă faceți cumpărăturile alimentare? (spre exemplu: v-ați cumpărat alimente online, ați mers la un supermarket sau v-ați cumpărat mâncarea de la un restaurant prin utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de alimente?)

*P8: In cea mai mare parte, am cumpărat alimente de la supermarket, însă am redus puțin mersul la cumpărături tocmai pentru a evita interacțiunea cu oamenii si pentru a mă proteja mai mult. Online nu am cumpărat alimente, decât de la supermarket.*

A: Dacă ați putea preciza o estimare referitoare la cați bani ați cheltuit pentru fiecare lunar?

*P8: Aproximativ cam 200-300 lei lunar, si la restaurant cam 100 lei lunar.*

A: V-ar schimba utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de produse alimentare de către magazinele alimentare comportamentul de cumpărare în timpul COVID-19 și după COVID-19 dacă ați avea acces la un astfel de serviciu?

*P8: Da, prefer foarte mult achiziționarea online atât a serviciilor alimentare cat si a celorlalte, si consider ca ar schimba destul de mult lumea in care trăim achiziționarea online a produselor alimentare si este mult mai util atât pentru consumatori cat si pentru supermarketuri, cred ca ar fi chiar o soluție buna.*

A: Cat de des ați utiliza serviciile? Cine credeți ca ar beneficia datorita acestor servicii?

*P8: Mă gândesc, undeva cam la 2-3 ori pe săptămâna, ar fi mult mai ușor pentru oricine. Mă gândesc ca consumatorii ar beneficia cel mai mult, ar fi mai simplu sa gătească acasă o masa, nu s-ar mai deplasa pana la magazine, dar si pentru magazine ar fi mai simplu cu livrarea online.*

A: Dacă cele menționate mai sus ar fi disponibile, ați pregăti mai multe alimente acasă acum și după pandemia de COVID-19 datorita motivelor de sănătate și siguranță?

*P8: Da, consider ca as găti mai mult acasă, as pregăti mai mult daca as avea posibilitatea sa comand online si din simplu fapt ca e mai comod sa comand online si sa gătesc acasă.*

**Interview 9 – Male**

A: Care este pregătirea dumneavoastră educațională?

*P9: Facultate, nivel de licența.*

A: Care este experiența dumneavoastră profesională?

*P9: Sunt inginer topograf.*

A: Ce părere aveți despre pandemia de COVID-19? Ați fost afectat de ea sau cunoașteți pe cineva care a fost afectat de ea?

*P9: Personal, cred ca am fost afectat chiar in primele doua luni când era haos, lumea nu știa ce ne așteaptă, prea multe incertitudini.*

A: Cât de importantă credeți că este industria alimentară în România?

*P9: Foarte importanta, ca si peste tot in lume.*

A: Care au fost preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar înainte de COVID-19?

*P9: Înainte de COVID, in mare parte, legume si fructe si produsele lactate, carne de pasare si peste, mai puțin carne de porc sau vita.*

A: Fast-food obișnuiți să consumați?

*P9: Nu prea, nu sunt adeptul fast-food.*

A: Care sunt preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar la începutul COVID-19 și acum, după doi ani?

*P9: Nu s-a schimbat nimic, au rămas la fel, cat mai sănătos, legume, fructe si carne.*

A: Care credeți că ar fi preferințele dumneavoastră de consumator odată ce COVID 19 se va termina? Ați rămâne în continuare la preferințele dumneavoastră de acum sau ați reveni la cele din pre-COVID-19?

*P9: Cred ca vor rămâne la fel, tot așa mai sănătos.*

A: Ca urmare a COVID-19, cum s-a schimbat această preferință a consumatorului dacă v-a afectat bunăstarea socială?

*P9: Da, într-adevăr, mai puțin mers la restaurant, dar cred ca banii cheltuiți la restaurante acum ii concentrez pe calitatea alimentelor pe care le cumpăr si le consum acasă.*

A: V-a schimbat COVID-19 obiceiurile alimentare, ceea ce a dus la o schimbare a preferințelor de consum?

*P9: Am mai multe mese pe zi, dar au fost la fel si înainte si după pandemie.*

A: Ați acordat mai multa atenție calității?

*P9: Eu personal, da mai mult după ce a început pandemia si nu am avut acces la restaurante, erau mese pe care le consumam la restaurante si din cauza ca erau închise am fost nevoit sa le prepar eu. Si am ajuns la concluzia ca la aceeași suma de bani pot sa prepar aceeași masa, dar sa ridic din punct de vedere calitativ la un nivel si mai înalt.*

A: Cum credeți ca obiceiurile alimentare dezvoltate in timpul pandemiei se vor schimba în viitor?

*P9: Sincer, daca lumea se va obișnui fără restaurante sau mai puțin cu mersul la restaurant, cred ca e posibil sa ajungă la concluzia la care am ajuns si eu ca pot găti acasă mai sănătos si mai calitativ.*

A: Ca urmare a schimbării obiceiurilor alimentare, în opinia dumneavoastră, v-a afectat sănătatea acest lucru? Faci exerciții acum mai mult sau mai puțin?

*P9: Eu, de mai mulți ani fac exerciții fizice frecvent, deci aici nu s-a schimbat nimic după pandemie.*

A: Înainte de COVID-19, considerați că ați mâncat mai sănătos?

*P9: Eu cred ca acum mănânc chiar mai sănătos, s-a schimbat in bine sau cel puțin calitatea mâncărilor pe care le consum este mai buna acum.*

A: V-a făcut pandemia de COVID-19 să schimbați ceea ce cumpărați, spre exemplu alimente organice in schimbul alimentelor procesate?

*P9: Acum, cum gătesc mai mult, da, mă uit la ce cumpăr si contează calitatea, produsele bio. Încerc sa fiu atent la detalii.*

A: La ce tip de comportament de cumpărare impulsivă ați luat parte la începutul pandemiei de COVID-19 și este valabil încă?

*P9: Nu am făcut stocuri. Poate la început m-am aprovizionat cu conserve, dar si daca încep sa cumpăr pe termen lung, cumpăr doar ceva ce nu expira si se poate păstra pe termen lung.*

A: Cum a decis teama de infectare unde vă faceți cumpărăturile alimentare? (spre exemplu: v-ați cumpărat alimente online, ați mers la un supermarket sau v-ați cumpărat mâncarea de la un restaurant prin utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de alimente?)

*P9: Online, nu prea. Prefer supermarketul. Prefer sa cumpăr local, deci de la producătorii locali. De la restaurante nu prea am comandat, dar mi se pare ca mâncarea livrata de restaurante e de calitate mai proasta decât cea consumata efectiv in restaurante.*

A: Dacă ați putea preciza o estimare referitoare la cați bani ați cheltuit pentru fiecare lunar?

*P9: Undeva in jur de 1500 lei la supermarket.*

A: V-ar schimba utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de produse alimentare de către magazinele alimentare comportamentul de cumpărare în timpul COVID-19 și după COVID-19 dacă ați avea acces la un astfel de serviciu?

*P9: Nu cred. Sincer, prefer sa vad ceea ce cumpăr.*

A: Dacă cele menționate mai sus ar fi disponibile, ați pregăti mai multe alimente acasă acum și după pandemia de COVID-19 datorita motivelor de sănătate și siguranță?

*P9: Eu oricum prepar acasă, deci as continua tot așa.*

#### **Interview 10 – Female**

A: Care este pregătirea dumneavoastră educațională?

*P10: Am terminat facultatea de contabilitate si informatica de gestiune.*

A: Care este experiența dumneavoastră profesională?

*P10: Sunt contabila de 26 de ani.*

A: Ce părere aveți despre pandemia de COVID-19? Ați fost afectat de ea sau cunoașteți pe cineva care a fost afectat de ea? Va rog, explicați.

*P10: Este un lucru foarte rău care ni s-a întâmplat noua si întregii lumi. Nu am fost afectata direct de pandemie in sensul in care nu am fost bolnavi, dar da am cunoștințe care au fost afectate.*

A: Cât de importantă credeți că este industria alimentară în România?

*P10: Este una dintre cele mai importante industrii in Romania.*

A: Care au fost preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar înainte de COVID-19?

*P10: Înainte de COVID-19, preferințele alimentare au fost în primul rând legume, fructe, mâncăruri mai slabe în grăsimi, pește, pui și alimente gătite acasă.*

A: Care sunt preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar la începutul COVID-19 și acum, după doi ani?

*P10: Aceleași preferințe de consum alimentar le-am avut atât înainte cât și acum. Cum am spus, legume, fructe și mâncăruri mai sănătoase. Deci, nu s-au schimbat.*

A: Care credeți că ar fi preferințele dumneavoastră de consumator odată ce COVID 19 se va termina? Ați rămâne în continuare la preferințele dumneavoastră de acum sau ați reveni la cele din pre-COVID-19?

*P10: Da, as rămâne la preferințele de acum. Nu s-ar schimba nimic.*

A: Ca urmare a COVID-19, cum s-a schimbat această preferință a consumatorului dacă v-a afectat bunăstarea socială?

*P10: Pentru mine personal, nu mi-a fost afectată bunăstarea socială deoarece în același mod am interacționat cu prietenii și familia. Eventual ieșirea în oraș într-adevăr, ne-a fost limitată pentru că înainte mai ieșeam cu prietenii la o înghețată, la un suc. Așa, nu am mai ieșit dacă nu a fost posibil.*

A: V-a schimbat COVID-19 obiceiurile alimentare, ceea ce a dus la o schimbare a preferințelor de consum?

*P10: Nu ne-a schimbat obiceiurile alimentare. Încercăm să consumăm cât mai multe alimente sănătoase și de acum înainte tot așa.*

A: Cum credeți că obiceiurile alimentare dezvoltate în timpul pandemiei se vor schimba în viitor?

*P10: Mie personal nu o sa mi se schimbe obiceiurile alimentare. Mă gândesc ca cei care si-au dezvoltat un astfel de obicei își vor schimba daca vor considera ca este spre binele lor. Daca si-au dezvoltat un obicei alimentar care vor considera ca nu este bun, probabil își vor schimba obiceiul.*

A: Ca urmare a schimbării obiceiurilor alimentare, în opinia dumneavoastră, v-a afectat sănătatea acest lucru? Faci exerciții acum mai mult sau mai puțin?

*P10: Daca vorbesc de mine, nu mi-a schimbat obiceiul alimentar. Nu fac exerciții fizice deși știu ca ar fi bine. Alte persoane care si-au schimbat obiceiurile alimentare, i-a afectat sănătatea acest lucru. Persoanele nu se mai simt la fel de bine daca mănâncă, dar nu fac sport. Sălile de fitness au fost închise, deci nu s-au putut face exerciții la fel.*

A: Înainte de COVID-19, considerați că ați mâncat mai sănătos?

*P10: Nu, tot așa. Din moment ce nu s-a schimbat obiceiul alimentar, tot așa am mâncat si înainte si după si cred ca si in viitor tot așa.*

A: La ce tip de comportament de cumpărare impulsivă ați luat parte la începutul pandemiei de COVID-19 și este valabil încă?

*P10: Poate ca din cauza pandemiei mai mult cumpăram alimente organice decât procesate daca este posibil.*

A: Cum a decis teama de infectare unde vă faceți cumpărăturile alimentare? (spre exemplu: v-ați cumpărat alimente online, ați mers la un supermarket sau v-ați cumpărat mâncarea de la un restaurant prin utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de alimente?)

*P10: Nu, nu este valabil. Dar, am luat parte la începutul pandemiei, am cumpărat alimente de baza, medicamente de baza pentru ca nu știam ce se va întâmpla. Si eu am luat parte ca si multa lume, dar nu mai este valabil si a durat doar foarte puțin timp.*



A: Iar referitor la decizia intre supermarket si producători locali?

*P10: Am cumpărat la supermarket dar am mers cu lista mai lunga si mai rar la supermarket. Si mai mult de la producători locali.*

A: Dacă ați putea preciza o estimare referitoare la cați bani ați cheltuit pentru fiecare lunar?

*P10: La supermarket intre 1000-1800 lei pe luna.*

A: V-ar schimba utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de produse alimentare de către magazinele alimentare comportamentul de cumpărare în timpul COVID-19 și după COVID-19 dacă ați avea acces la un astfel de serviciu?

*P10: Da, daca am avea acces la un asemenea serviciu, ne-ar schimba comportamentul pentru ca am utiliza aceste servicii mai des.*

A: Cat de des ați utiliza serviciile? Cine credeți ca ar beneficia datorita acestor servicii?

*P10: Ar beneficia toți cei care nu au timp pentru cumpărături, ar beneficia oamenii in vârsta care nu pot sa meargă la cumpărături. Eventual as utiliza de 2 ori pe săptămâna, depinde de necesități.*

A: Dacă cele menționate mai sus ar fi disponibile, ați pregăti mai multe alimente acasă acum și după pandemia de COVID-19 datorita motivelor de sănătate și siguranță?

*P10: Da, as pregăti mai multe acasă pentru ca as avea mai mult timp. Mă gândesc ca magazinele acestea ar avea produse de calitate si as putea sa pregătesc mai mult alimente acasă.*

## **Interview 11 – Female**

A: Care este pregătirea dumneavoastră educațională?

*P11: Studii post-universitare, masterat de științe politice.*

A: Care este experiența dumneavoastră profesională?

*P11: Lucrez de 8 ani pe postul de asistent manager.*

A: Ce părere aveți despre pandemia de COVID-19? Ați fost afectat de ea sau cunoașteți pe cineva care a fost afectat de ea? Va rog, explicați.

*P11: Chiar la începutul pandemiei, eram însărcinată și m-am panicat că și toată lumea, nu am mai vrut să vin la lucru din cauza fricii. Am încercat să ies cât mai puțin. O parte a familiei mele a fost infectată și verișorul meu a fost afectat mai sever.*

A: Cât de importantă credeți că este industria alimentară în România?

*P11: Eu consider că este una dintre cele mai importante și acest fapt s-a dovedit în timpul pandemiei deoarece omul se poate lipsi de haine, mobila, jucării sau orice altceva, dar de alimente nu. Chiar a fost o explozie de cumpărături la începutul pandemiei de făina, lapte, drojdie, ulei din cauza panicii create.*

A: Care au fost preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar înainte de COVID-19?

*P11: Consumam mult din comenzi online, mai puțin gătit acasă și mâncare de tip fast-food, eram fan al mâncării de fast-food.*

A: Care sunt preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar la începutul COVID-19 și acum, după doi ani?

*P11: La începutul pandemiei am încercat sa consum cat de cat mai sănătos, sa mănânc mai multe fructe si am început sa gătesc. Mi-a fost frica de mâncarea gătită in restaurant.*

A: Care credeți că ar fi preferințele dumneavoastră de consumator odată ce COVID 19 se va termina? Ați rămâne în continuare la preferințele dumneavoastră de acum sau ați reveni la cele din pre-COVID-19?

*P11: Încerc sa mănânc si momentan sănătos, deși nu sunt adepta fructelor, a legumelor, dar pandemia ne-a învățat sa încercam sa mâncam mai sănătos, sa gătim mai mult, sa petrecem mai mult timp cu familia si sa nu ne comandam mâncare.*

A: Ca urmare a COVID-19, cum s-a schimbat această preferință a consumatorului dacă v-a afectat bunăstarea socială?

*P11: Da, ne-a limitat interacțiunea cu prietenii si familia, mai ales cu persoanele in vârstă. Am încercat sa evitam interacțiunile dese cu persoanele in vârstă ca nu cumva sa ii infectam.*

A: V-a schimbat COVID-19 obiceiurile alimentare, ceea ce a dus la o schimbare a preferințelor de consum?

*P11: Am început sa gătesc, iar cu comenzile online am reluat comenzile online. Am încercat sa nu mai fiu chiar așa ca înainte. Pentru copil mai gătesc, dar pentru mine mai si comand online.*

A: Iar referitor la frecvența a câte mese pe zi ați avut, s-a schimbat acest obicei?

*P11: Nu neapărat, cam 2 mese pe zi plus snack-uri.*

A: Referitor la calitatea alimentelor, ați sesizat vreo schimbare?

*P11: Oamenii au încercat sa facă economie la mâncare, in sensul in care sa cumpere mâncare mai ieftina, mai multa cantitativ pe motivul ca se temeau sa iasă in societate, dar nu tot timpul ieftin e si calitativ.*

A: Iar referitor la consumul de dulciuri?

*P11: Sunt o mare consumatoare de dulciuri, a rămas tot așa acest obicei.*

A: Cum credeți ca obiceiurile alimentare dezvoltate in timpul pandemiei se vor schimba în viitor?

*P11: Depinde de fiecare om in parte, depinde de frica pe care o naște pandemia in oameni. Oamenii prefera cumpărăturile din magazin. Mai ales la început când erau restricții, singura socializare a fost mersul la magazin.*

A: Ca urmare a schimbării obiceiurilor alimentare, în opinia dumneavoastră, v-a afectat sănătatea acest lucru? Faci exerciții acum mai mult sau mai puțin?

*P11: Nu prea practic exerciții, dar sănătatea ne-a afectat-o si lipsa de mișcare fiind restricționați in casa mai mult, nu am putu sa mai fac unele activități.*

A: Înainte de COVID-19, considerați că ați mâncat mai sănătos? Explicați

*P11: Nu, pot sa zic ca chiar mai nesănătos am mâncat înainte, dar după am încercat sa mănânc mai sănătos, sa iau mai multe vitamine.*

A: V-a făcut pandemia de COVID-19 să schimbați ceea ce cumpărați, spre exemplu alimente organice in schimbul alimentelor procesate?

*P11: Pentru copil, am încercat de la început sa ii cumpăr produse bio, fructe, legume, sa ii gătesc si am renunțat la cele procesate, deși am fost fan înainte.*

A: La ce tip de comportament de cumpărare impulsivă ați luat parte la începutul pandemiei de COVID-19 și este valabil încă?

*P11: Chiar la primul val, oamenii erau înnebuniți după făina, ulei, drojdie în cantități de bax deși se știa ca magazine nu se vor închide și industria alimentară nu se va opri. Dar oamenii erau foarte panicați și au cumpărat și paste foarte multe, la nivel de bax.*

A: Cum a decis teama de infectare unde vă faceți cumpărăturile alimentare? (spre exemplu: v-ați cumpărat alimente online, ați mers la un supermarket sau v-ați cumpărat mâncarea de la un restaurant prin utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de alimente?)

*P11: Mi-am cumpărat mâncarea de la magazine, dar am încercat să îmi restricționez mersul la magazin, cumpărând o cantitate mult mai mare și făcând cumpărăturile o dată pe săptămână, o dată la 10 zile și nu zilnic sau aproape zilnic ca înainte.*

A: Și foloseați și serviciile online?

*P11: Am folosit serviciile online strict pentru mâncarea gătită, dar pentru alimente nu.*

A: Dacă ați putea preciza o estimare referitoare la câți bani ați cheltuit pentru fiecare lunar?

*P11: Pentru cumpărăturile din magazin pot să zic minim 1000 lei poate chiar mai mult, chiar 500 lei pe săptămână deci cam 2000 de lei, iar pentru cele online cam 500-600 de lei.*

A: V-ar schimba utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de produse alimentare de către magazinele alimentare comportamentul de cumpărare în timpul COVID-19 și după COVID-19 dacă ați avea acces la un astfel de serviciu?

*P11: Eu cred că aș prefera întotdeauna cumpărăturile din magazin, și mai ales vârstnicii ei nu cred că își vor face comenzi online, ei prefera să vadă produsul*

*in sine si la fel si eu. Din comoditate eventual, sau din lipsa de timp as putea apela si la comenzile online.*

A: Dacă cele menționate mai sus ar fi disponibile, ați pregăti mai multe alimente acasă acum și după pandemia de COVID-19 datorita motivelor de sănătate și siguranță?

*P11: Posibil ca da.*

### **Interview 12 – Female**

A: Care este pregătirea dumneavoastră educațională?

*P12: Am terminat facultatea de management si marketing.*

A: Care este experiența dumneavoastră profesională?

*P12: Am lucrat 9 ani in industria alimentara si 9 ani in comerț.*

A: Ce părere aveți despre pandemia de COVID-19? Ați fost afectat de ea sau cunoașteți pe cineva care a fost afectat de ea? Va rog, explicați.

*P12: In pandemia COVID-19, fratele meu s-a infectat si un verișor, el a ajuns prea târziu la spital si din păcate a decedat.*

A: Cât de importantă credeți că este industria alimentară în România?

*P12: Pai, industria alimentara este una dintre cele mai importante si nu numai in Romania ci peste tot pentru ca alimentele sunt, pentru noi oamenii, principala sursa de energie, sănătatea după aer si apa. Este foarte importanta, chiar cea mai importanta.*

A: Care au fost preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar înainte de COVID-19?

*P12: Nu prea am avut preferințe nici înainte și nu s-a schimbat prea mult în alimentație sau ca produse alimentare, în schimb în primul val, am încercat să consum mai sănătos, îmi făceam sucuri de fructe și legume și asta am făcut pentru întreaga familie din sfecla roșie, morcov, mar, kiwi, portocale tot ce credeam că e mai sănătos pentru a ne întări imunitatea pentru a face față pandemiei. Ca alimente, nu pot să spun că am schimbat ceva în alimentație.*

A: Care sunt preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar la începutul COVID-19 și acum, după doi ani?

*P12: Fast-food nu prea mănânc, evit pe cât se poate și nici prăjeli și carnea nu o gătesc prăjită ci fiartă. Iar referitor la consum de zahăr și dulciuri, nu s-a schimbat.*

A: Care credeți că ar fi preferințele dumneavoastră de consumator odată ce COVID 19 se va termina? Ați rămâne în continuare la preferințele dumneavoastră de acum sau ați reveni la cele din pre-COVID-19?

*P12: As rămâne la cele de acum pentru că eu consider că e mai sănătos pentru mine.*

A: Ca urmare a COVID-19, cum s-a schimbat această preferință a consumatorului dacă v-a afectat bunăstarea socială?

*P12: Da, a schimbat destul de mult interacțiunea cu familia pentru că la început foarte rar mergeam la tatăl meu. Și cu prietenii, s-a răcit relație din cauza pandemia. Inclusiv de sărbători, nu am mai ținut obiceiurile.*

A: V-a schimbat și referitor la mersul la restaurant?

*P12: Da, ne-a schimbat deoarece am avut o anumită rețineră să mergem la restaurant. Am mai ieșit de câteva ori. Nu am mai ieșit ca înainte.*

A: V-a schimbat COVID-19 obiceiurile alimentare, ceea ce a dus la o schimbare a preferințelor de consum?

*P12: La calitatea alimentelor, da, pentru ca mâncatul este așa mai sănătos, dar in rest nu mi-a schimbat referitor la de cate ori pe zi mănânc, doar referitor la faptul de a fi mai atenți la ce mâncam.*

A: Referitor la de unde v-ați făcut cumpărăturile? Producători locali poate?

*P12: Nu, au rămas la fel.*

A: Cum credeți ca obiceiurile alimentare dezvoltate in timpul pandemiei se vor schimba în viitor?

*P12: Cu siguranța, lumea va comanda mai mult online, in special cei care sunt familiarizați cu internetul pentru ca părinții sau bunicii nu sunt familiarizați cu internetul, dar cei mai tineri vor opta sa comande mâncare. Eu as prefera sa merg sa cumpăr, pentru ca e diferit atunci când mergi si vezi un produs si in același timp as face si mișcare. Cat timp comand, nu fac mișcare si ar fi afectata sănătatea. Dar cu siguranța alții ar prefera sa comande.*

A: Ca urmare a schimbării obiceiurilor alimentare, în opinia dumneavoastră, v-a afectat sănătatea acest lucru? Faci exerciții acum mai mult sau mai puțin?

*P12: Fac exerciții mai mult acum, practic un sport de 2 ori pe săptămâna pentru ca mergeam acasă de la serviciu si nu aveam altceva de făcut. Am simțit ca nu e bine pentru sănătatea mea si am început sa fac mișcare de când a apărut pandemia.*

A: Înainte de COVID-19, considerați că ați mâncat mai sănătos? Explicați.

*P12: Nu neapărat.*

A: V-a făcut pandemia de COVID-19 să schimbați ceea ce cumpărați, spre exemplu alimente organice in schimbul alimentelor procesate?

*P12: Intr-o oarecare măsura da. Eu oricum nici înainte nu prea cumpăram alimente procesate.*



A: La ce tip de comportament de cumpărare impulsivă ați luat parte la începutul pandemiei de COVID-19 și este valabil încă?

*P12: In primul val, a fost nebunie cu zahar, ulei si faina. Atunci mi-am luat, nu exagerat, dar la valul doi si trei nu am mai cumpărat la fel. Lumea nu a știut cum sa gestioneze acest lucru si atunci am făcut si eu la fel.*

A: Cum a decis teama de infectare unde vă faceți cumpărăturile alimentare? (spre exemplu: v-ați cumpărat alimente online, ați mers la un supermarket sau v-ați cumpărat mâncarea de la un restaurant prin utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de alimente?)

*P12: Online foarte puțin am comandat, doar daca aveam musafiri si nu aveam timp sa gătesc atunci am comandat online prin Glovo pentru produse alimentare, pizza sau fast-food. In rest, am preferat sa merg sa fac cumpărături, dar mai rar, o data pe săptămâna si atunci cumpăram mai mult pentru a nu merge des la cumpărături si sa ne protejam.*

A: Dacă ați putea preciza o estimare referitoare la câți bani ați cheltuit pentru fiecare lunar?

*P12: Comanda online undeva pana in 100 lei o comanda cam de 4 ori, iar la cumpărături cam 250 lei pe săptămâna, depinde de perioada.*

A: . V-ar schimba utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de produse alimentare de către magazinele alimentare comportamentul de cumpărare în timpul COVID-19 și după COVID-19 dacă ați avea acces la un astfel de serviciu?

*P12: Ne-ar ajuta, nu cred ca ne-ar schimba, tocmai in situații in care nu ai timp si preferi sa comanzi, dar daca este timp eu prefer sa merg la cumpărături. Da, este o posibilitate, as utiliza.*

A: Cat de des ați utiliza serviciile? Cine credeți ca ar beneficia datorita acestor servicii?

*P12: O data pe săptămâna probabil ca as utiliza.*

A: Ar fi mai populare în rândul persoanelor mai tinere sau mai în vârstă?

*P12: Sigur, pentru persoanele mai tinere.*

A: Dacă cele menționate mai sus ar fi disponibile, ați pregăti mai multe alimente acasă acum și după pandemia de COVID-19 datorită motivelor de sănătate și siguranță?

*P12: Nu știu dacă as pregăti mai mult acasă. Am observat că gătind acasă, mâncarea se mănâncă o dată sau de două ori iar apoi se arunca. De aceea mergem și cumpărăm un meniu și atunci mănânc mai diversificat. Eu nu prea gătesc acasă. Luam din locuri unde se pregătește mâncare sănătoasă.*

### **Interview 13 – Female**

A: Care este pregătirea dumneavoastră educațională?

*P13: Am terminat un liceu.*

A: Care este experiența dumneavoastră profesională?

*P13: De 11 ani am lucrat în comerț cu o întrerupere în domeniul construcțiilor.*

A: Ce părere aveți despre pandemia de COVID-19? Ați fost afectat de ea sau cunoașteți pe cineva care a fost afectat de ea?

*P13: Nu m-am îmbolnăvit, dar am cunoștințe care au fost bolnave, în schimb m-a afectat pentru că mi-am pierdut locul de muncă.*

A: Cât de importantă credeți că este industria alimentară în România?

*P13: Industria alimentară mi se pare că e vitală pentru că, după aer și apă avem nevoie de alimente.*

A: Care au fost preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar înainte de COVID-19?

*P13: Eu prefer dulciurile, dar le prefer si acum după COVID. Nu mi se pare ca am observat o schimbare in consumul de alimente.*

A: Care sunt preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar la începutul COVID-19 și acum, după doi ani?

*P13: Nu, nu am observat schimbări. In perioada in care mi-am pierdut locul de munca pot sa zic ca am gătit mai mult acasă. Dar acum, comand si gătesc la fel ca înainte.*

A: Care credeți că ar fi preferințele dumneavoastră de consumator odată ce COVID 19 se va termina? Ați rămâne în continuare la preferințele dumneavoastră de acum sau ați reveni la cele din pre-COVID-19?

*P13: Poate as prefera sa ies mai mult in oraș la restaurante.*

A: Ca urmare a COVID-19, cum s-a schimbat această preferință a consumatorului dacă v-a afectat bunăstarea socială?

*P13: Da, am mers mai puțin la restaurante, chiar spre deloc.*

A: V-a schimbat COVID-19 obiceiurile alimentare, ceea ce a dus la o schimbare a preferințelor de consum?

*P13: S-a schimbat ceva, am mâncat mai sănătos, am mâncat produsele cultivate de noi.*

A: Cum credeți ca obiceiurile alimentare dezvoltate in timpul pandemiei se vor schimba în viitor?

*P13: Sper sa pot rămâne la fel, sa pot sa mănânc din produsele cultivate de noi. Nu știu însă daca mi-as permite financiar sa mănânc doar produse organice*

*pentru ca este mult mai scump. Referitor la dulciuri, a rămas la fel. Pe viitor, sper sa renunț la ele pentru ca m-ar ajuta la sănătate.*

A: Ca urmare a schimbării obiceiurilor alimentare, în opinia dumneavoastră, v-a afectat sănătatea acest lucru? Faci exerciții acum mai mult sau mai puțin?

*P13: In legătura cu exercițiile fizice, am fost afectata deoarece sălile de fitness au fost închise si nu am putut merge, iar apoi nu am reînceput chiar daca sălile au fost deschise. La nivel de sănătate, nu.*

A: Înainte de COVID-19, considerați că ați mâncat mai sănătos? Explicați.

*P13: Nu, nu am mâncat mai sănătos.*

A: V-a făcut pandemia de COVID-19 să schimbați ceea ce cumpărați, spre exemplu alimente organice in schimbul alimentelor procesate?

*P13: Nu, nu as spune, doar am încercat sa nu cumpăr ceea ce putem face noi acasă.*

A: Iar referitor la decizia între producători locali sau supermarketuri, au fost schimbări?

*P13: Nu, poate din cauza bugetului.*

A: La ce tip de comportament de cumpărare impulsivă ați luat parte la începutul pandemiei de COVID-19 și este valabil încă?

*P13: Am fost speriată când am văzut rafturile goale si atunci mi-am luat si eu faina ca toata lumea. Cu fiecare val, nu a mai rămas, nici oamenii nu au mai reacționat la fel.*

A: Cum a decis teama de infectare unde vă faceți cumpărăturile alimentare? (spre exemplu: v-ați cumpărat alimente online, ați mers la un supermarket sau v-ați cumpărat mâncarea de la un restaurant prin utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de alimente?)

*P13: Chiar daca era mai sigur sa comand acasă, am ales sa merg la supermarket, dar am ales sa ies decât sa stau acasă sa îmi vina mâncarea acasă.*

A: Dacă ați putea preciza o estimare referitoare la cați bani ați cheltuit pentru fiecare lunar?

*P13: In jur de 1000 lei pe luna merg la alimente.*

A: V-ar schimba utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de produse alimentare de către magazinele alimentare comportamentul de cumpărare în timpul COVID-19 și după COVID-19 dacă ați avea acces la un astfel de serviciu?

*P13: Nu știu, nu mi l-a schimbat nici in timpul COVID. Pe viitor, poate daca as fi ocupata, as considera si varianta online. As considera totuși aceasta posibilitate.*

A: Cat de des ați utiliza serviciile? Cine credeți ca ar beneficia datorita acestor servicii?

*P13: O data pe săptămâna as utiliza. Cred ca le-ar utiliza cel mai mult persoanele cu dizabilități si oamenii foarte ocupați, o mama cu copil mic care nu are timp. Nicidecum vârstnicii pentru ca nu au acces la online chiar daca probabil ei ar fi cei mai avantajați.*

A: Dacă cele menționate mai sus ar fi disponibile, ați pregăti mai multe alimente acasă acum și după pandemia de COVID-19 datorita motivelor de sănătate și siguranță?

*P13: Nu, am pregătit mai mult acasă doar când am rămas fără loc de munca, dar in rest nu cred.*

## **Interview 14 – Male**

A: Care este pregătirea dumneavoastră educațională?

*P14: Doar liceul.*

A: Care este experiența dumneavoastră profesională?

*P14: De 7-8 ani lucrez in industria alimentara ca si chelner, livrator.*

A: Ce părere aveți despre pandemia de COVID-19? Ați fost afectat de ea sau cunoașteți pe cineva care a fost afectat de ea? Va rog, explicați.

*P14: Cam in general toata lumea a fost afectat de aceasta pandemie. Eu personal nu am fost afectat decât la locul de munca unde au scăzut vânzările astfel ca si nivelul de munca a scăzut.*

A: Cât de importantă credeți că este industria alimentară în România?

*P14: Pai, este o parte foarte importanta a industriei in general si sunt foarte mulți oameni care lucrează in aceasta industrie si majoritatea au fost afectați de aceasta pandemie si are un impact mare asupra noastră in general.*

A: Care au fost preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar înainte de COVID-19?

*P14: Nu pot sa spun ca am avut unele preferințe mai speciale, dar mâncarea gătită este una dintre preferințele mele si puțin fast-food. Si dulciurile sunt o parte importanta a dietei mele.*

A: Care sunt preferințele dumneavoastră de consum alimentar la începutul COVID-19 și acum, după doi ani?

*P14: Nu pot sa spun ca s-a schimbat ceva, eventual a scăzut cantitatea pe care o consumam in special la dulciuri, in rest nu s-a schimbat mare lucru.*

A: Referitor la fast-food?

*P14: La fast-food a scăzut puțin consumul fiind mai scump puțin de achiziționat și a rămas puțin mai jos.*

A: Care credeți că ar fi preferințele dumneavoastră de consumator odată ce COVID 19 se va termina? Ați rămâne în continuare la preferințele dumneavoastră de acum sau ați reveni la cele din pre-COVID-19?

*P14: Cred ca as rămâne la cele de acum, pentru ca sunt mai sănătoase din moment ce mănânc mai puține dulciuri sau fast-food, este un nivel întreg mai sănătos.*

A: Ca urmare a COVID-19, cum s-a schimbat această preferință a consumatorului dacă v-a afectat bunăstarea socială?

*P14: A afectat in ideea de bunăstare financiara, dar social poate ieșirile cu prietenii sau ieșirile la restaurante au fost afectate de pandemie, dar in rest nu mare lucru.*

A: V-a schimbat COVID-19 obiceiurile alimentare, ceea ce a dus la o schimbare a preferințelor de consum?

*P14: Nu pot sa spun ca mi-a schimbat obiceiurile alimentare. Am rămas la aceleași obiceiuri alimentare, nu mi-a schimbat foarte mult poate doar cantitățile.*

A: Referitor la cate mese aveați pe zi?

*P14: Nu s-a schimbat, mesele pe zi au rămas la fel.*

A: Iar referitor la importanta calității alimentelor?

*P14: Am văzut o schimbare pentru ca o data cu pandemia au crescut preturile, deci majoritatea consumatorilor ne-am îndreptat spre alimentele care erau puțin mai ieftine ceea ce înseamnă o mâncare puțin mai rea.*

A: Producători locali sau străini?

*P14: Majoritate nu sunt atenți la producători deși ar fi bine la producătorii locali, dar marea majoritate sunt atenți la preturi deci toți ne-am uitat la prețul produsului mai mult decât la cine l-a produs. Prețul a contat mult mai mult în timpul pandemiei deoarece au scăzut veniturile și a fost nevoie de o reducere.*

A: Cum credeți că obiceiurile alimentare dezvoltate în timpul pandemiei se vor schimba în viitor?

*P14: Obiceiurile alimentare dezvoltate în timpul pandemiei nu cred că se vor schimba pentru că nu cred că economic își va reveni foarte curând, deci majoritatea vor rămâne la aceleași produse tocmai pentru că sunt mai accesibile.*

A: Ca urmare a schimbării obiceiurilor alimentare, în opinia dumneavoastră, v-a afectat sănătatea acest lucru? Faci exerciții acum mai mult sau mai puțin?

*P14: Nu am simțit o schimbare în sănătatea mea, dar exerciții am început să fac mai mult o dată cu pandemia cred că din cauza privării de ieșiri în oraș și atunci am găsit altă activitate.*

A: Înainte de COVID-19, considerați că ați mâncat mai sănătos?

*P14: Nu. Cred că mă orientez mai mult spre produse puțin mai sănătoase. Mâncam mai nesănătos pentru că mâncam mai mult fast-food.*

A: V-a făcut pandemia de COVID-19 să schimbați ceea ce cumpărați, spre exemplu alimente organice în schimbul alimentelor procesate?

*P14: Da, pandemia m-a făcut să schimb ceea ce cumpăr tocmai din cauza diferențelor de preț dintre alimentele organice și cele procesate, cele procesate fiind mult mai ușor accesibile, mai ieftine și deci ne-am îndreptat spre cele procesate.*



A: La ce tip de comportament de cumpărare impulsivă ați luat parte la începutul pandemiei de COVID-19 și este valabil încă?

*P14: Nu am luat parte la acest comportament de cumpărare impulsivă pentru că am stat să văd ce face lumea și să evit asta și să gândesc logic ce se întâmplă.*

A: Cum a decis teama de infectare unde vă faceți cumpărăturile alimentare? (spre exemplu: v-ați cumpărat alimente online, ați mers la un supermarket sau v-ați cumpărat mâncarea de la un restaurant prin utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de alimente?)

*P14: Da, am încercat să evit aglomerațiile din supermarketuri și am comandat foarte mult online pentru că serviciile de livrare online, o dată cu pandemia, s-au dezvoltat foarte mult și atunci e mai simplu să comanzi de acasă decât să mergi la cumpărături.*

A: Dacă ați putea preciza o estimare referitoare la câți bani ați cheltuit pentru fiecare lunar?

*P14: O estimare aproximativă, pe online ar fi cam 400-500 lei pe lună, iar cumpărare din supermarketuri 200-300 lei.*

A: V-ar schimba utilizarea serviciilor online de livrare de produse alimentare de către magazinele alimentare comportamentul de cumpărare în timpul COVID-19 și după COVID-19 dacă ați avea acces la un astfel de serviciu?

*P14: Desigur, oricând s-ar termina pandemia, ar rămâne la serviciile online pentru că m-am obișnuit cu comoditatea de a comanda de acasă. Deci, ar rămâne la serviciile de livrare online.*

A: Cat de des ați utiliza serviciile? Cine credeți că ar beneficia datorită acestor servicii?

*P14: De 2 ori pe săptămâna. Consider ca marja de vârstă a persoanelor care ar comanda ar fi între 15-35 ani pentru ca suntem mai obișnuiți cu tehnologia și aceste metode de livrare online, cei mai în vârstă preferă să meargă, să analizeze și să cumpere ei produsele. Noi suntem puțin mai comози și mi se pare mult mai simplu să comand acasă.*

A: Dacă cele menționate mai sus ar fi disponibile, ați pregăti mai multe alimente acasă acum și după pandemia de COVID-19 datorită motivelor de sănătate și siguranță?

*P14: Nu cred că aș pregăti mâncare acasă, cred că în continuare mi-aș comanda de la restaurante. Deci răspunsul simplu ar fi că nu pentru că e mai simplu să comanzi, să îți vină acasă gata preparat și să poți manca fără să mai gătești și să mai faci curățenie după.*