



**One Health**  
Student Conference  
USAMV București



**PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL DETERMINANTS OF FOOD PURCHASE  
DECISIONS:  
INSIGHTS INTO SHELF SELECTION BEHAVIOR**

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# Introduction



The study is justified by the need to understand how perceptual and experiential factors shape consumers' shelf-selection behavior, particularly in modern retail environments where purchasing decisions are made rapidly, under information overload, and are strongly guided by visual cues, prior experiences, and immediate sensory impressions.



# The purpose of the study and the objectives



The objectives of the study focused on understanding how marketing factors influence food purchasing behavior and analyzing consumers' buying habits within the context of food marketing strategies.



# The purpose of the study and the objectives

**Best**  
**SALE**



**O1:** Investigation of consumers' purchasing habits and behaviors within the context of food marketing, focusing on how marketing strategies shape their choices.

This objective aims to identify patterns and motivations behind consumers' decisions at the point of sale, providing insights into the interplay between marketing tactics and buying behavior.



# The purpose of the study and the objectives

**O2:** Examination of how various marketing factors shape and influence consumers' decisions to purchase food products.

O2 aims to analyze how various marketing factors—such as packaging, shelf placement, price, and visual communication—influence consumers' decisions to purchase food products





## Materials and methods

For the realization of this cross-sectional study, an online questionnaire was administered.

A total of 291 respondents participated in the study. The participants' responses were downloaded into an Excel file and processed using descriptive statistics through graphical representations.

Characteristics	Share in the Sample	N	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	190	65.3
	Male	100	34.4
	I prefer not to mention	1	0.3
Age (years)	18–29	173	59.5
	30–39	46	15.8
	40–49	39	13.4
	50–60	21	7.2
	Over 60	12	4.1
Marital status	Single	103	35.4
	In a relationship	83	28.5
	Unmarried	13	4.5
	Married	84	28.9
	Divorced	8	2.7
Education level	High school education	33	11.4
	Post-secondary education	1	0.3
	University education	217	74.6
	Postgraduate education	40	13.7
Household monthly net income (RON)	Under 1500	55	18.9
	1501–3000	77	26.5
	3001–5000	81	27.8
	5001–5500	47	16.2
	5001–8000	14	4.8
	Over 8000	17	5.8
Residence	Urban	195	67.0
	Rural	96	33.0



# Materials and methods

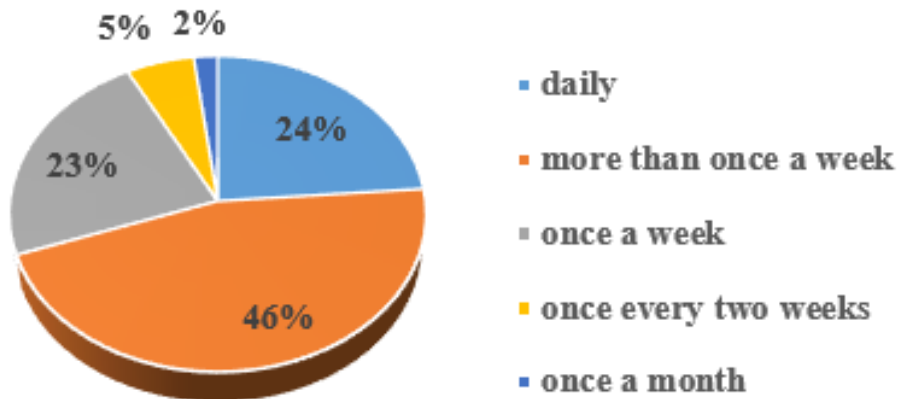
291 respondents



# Results and discussions

**01:** Examination of how various marketing factors shape and influence consumers' decisions to purchase food products.

Analyzed item: **How often do you purchase food products:**



The majority of respondents make frequent purchases, suggesting that marketing strategies and product placement should continuously attract attention rather than targeting occasional shoppers.

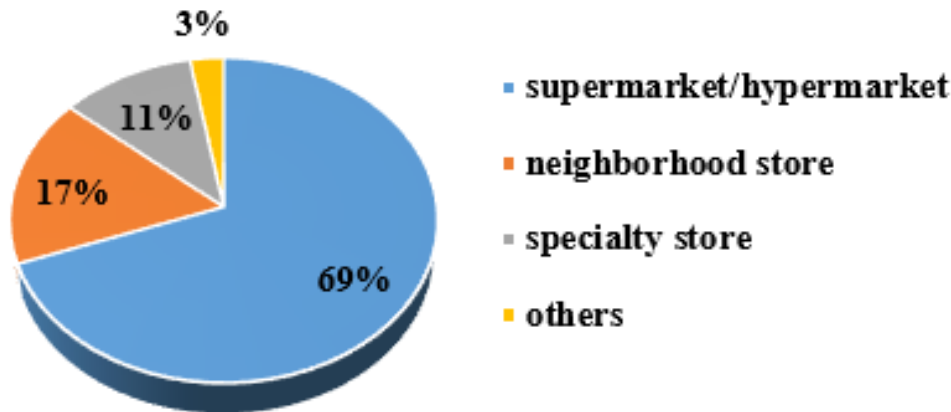
The “once every two weeks” and “once a month” segments are minor, indicating a less active consumers in daily food shopping.



# Results and discussions

01

Analyzed item: **Where do you usually purchase food products:**



The data shows a strong preference for supermarkets and hypermarkets, highlighting their dominant role in food retail.

Neighborhood and specialty stores serve niche or convenience-oriented segments, while other sources are rarely used.

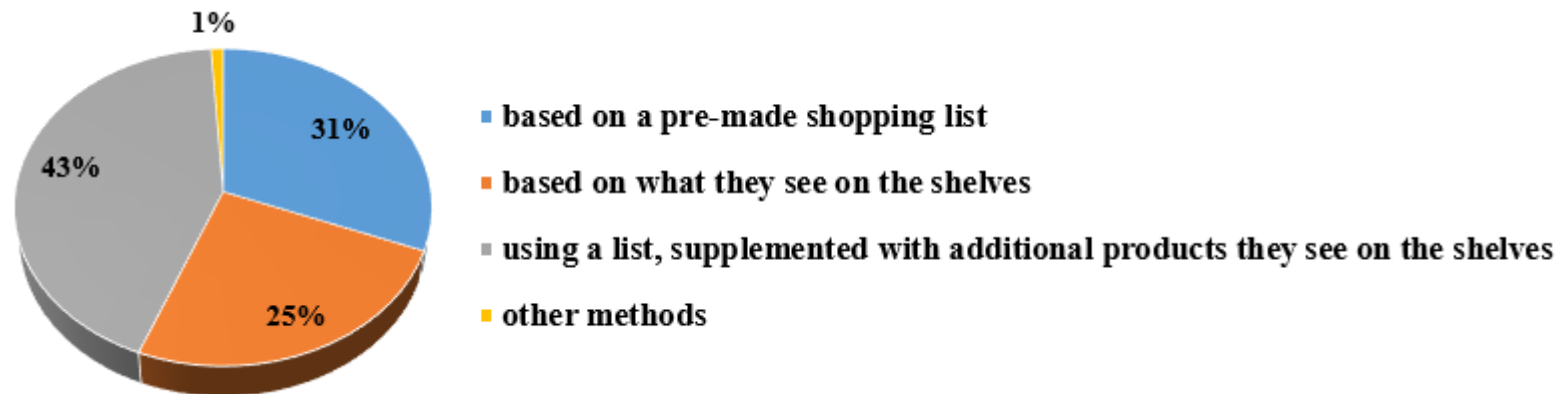
Marketing and product placement strategies should prioritize these high-traffic supermarket/ hypermarket channels to reach the majority of consumers



# Results and discussions

01

Analyzed item: **How do you usually make your purchases**



The results highlight that while structured shopping lists are common, **most consumers (43%) adopt a mixed approach**, blending planned purchases with spontaneous decisions influenced by shelf displays. This underscores the importance of **in-store marketing, product placement, and visual merchandising**, as a large proportion of buying decisions are made at the point of sale.



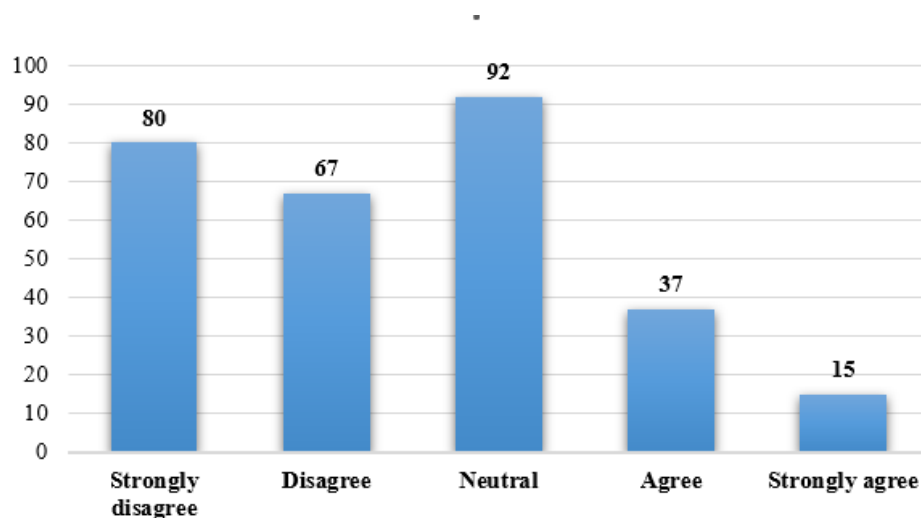
# Results and discussions

**02:** Examination of how various marketing factors shape and influence consumers' decisions to purchase food products.

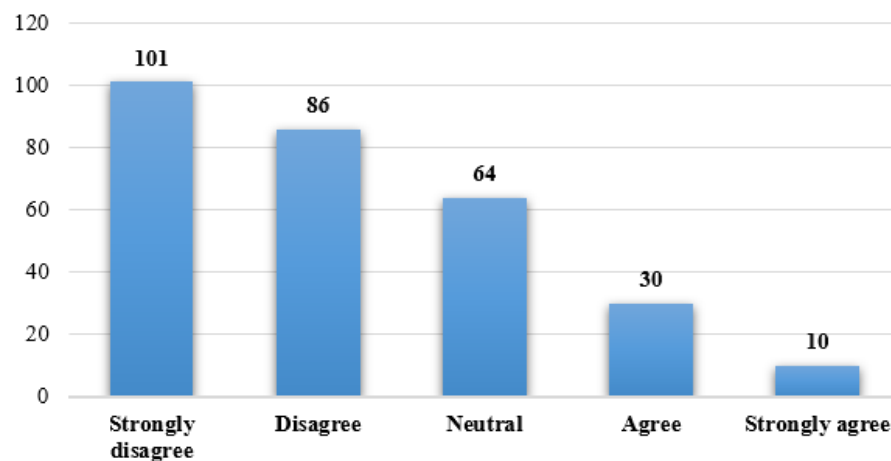
**Analyzed item:** To what extent do the following influence your choice of food products and alcoholic/non-alcoholic beverages?

(Likert scale: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly agree):

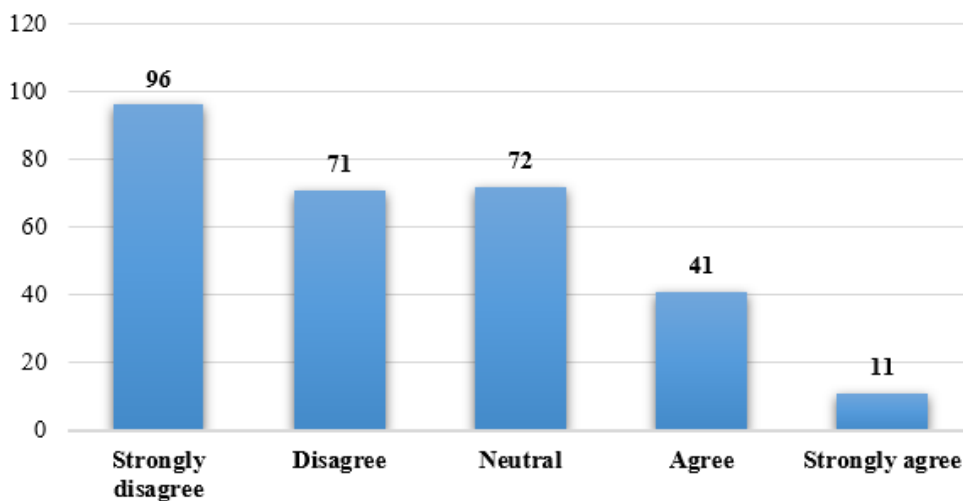
- a. TV
- b. Radio
- c. Newspapers/Magazines
- d. Internet
- e. Friends
- f. Relatives;
- g. Promotions



TV



Radio



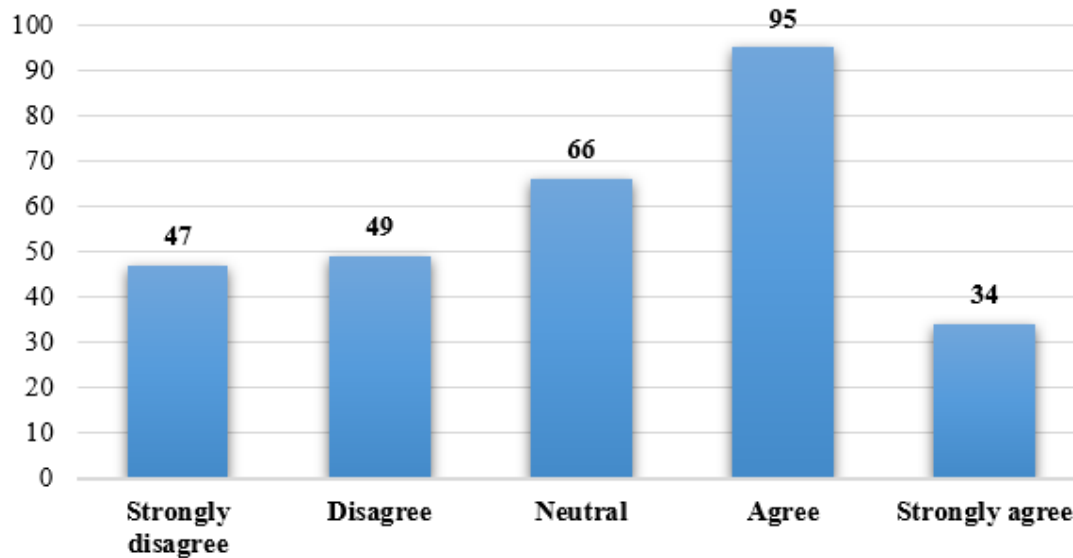
Print media

TV, radio, and print media appear to have relatively low influence. A majority of respondents either *strongly disagree* or *disagree* that these sources impact their choices, suggesting that traditional media is less persuasive in shaping purchasing decisions in this sample.



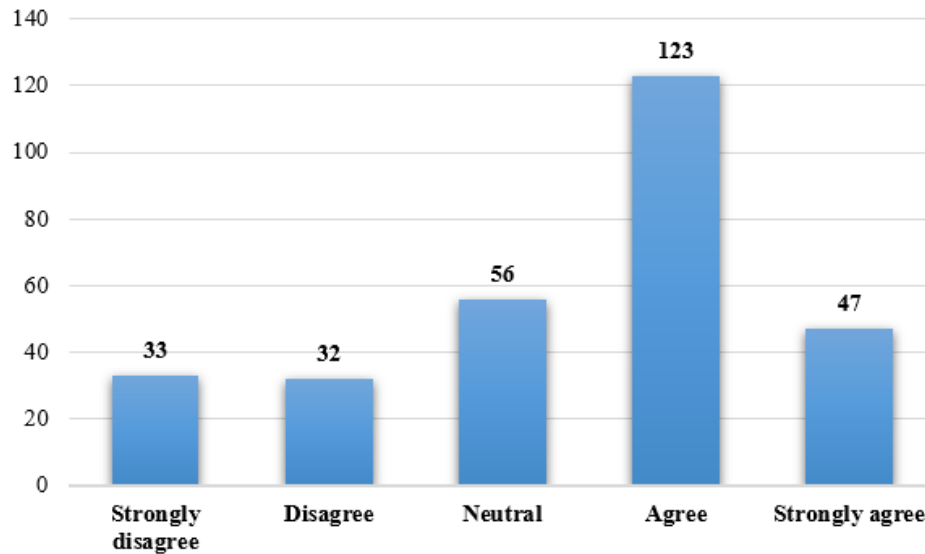
## Results and discussions

02

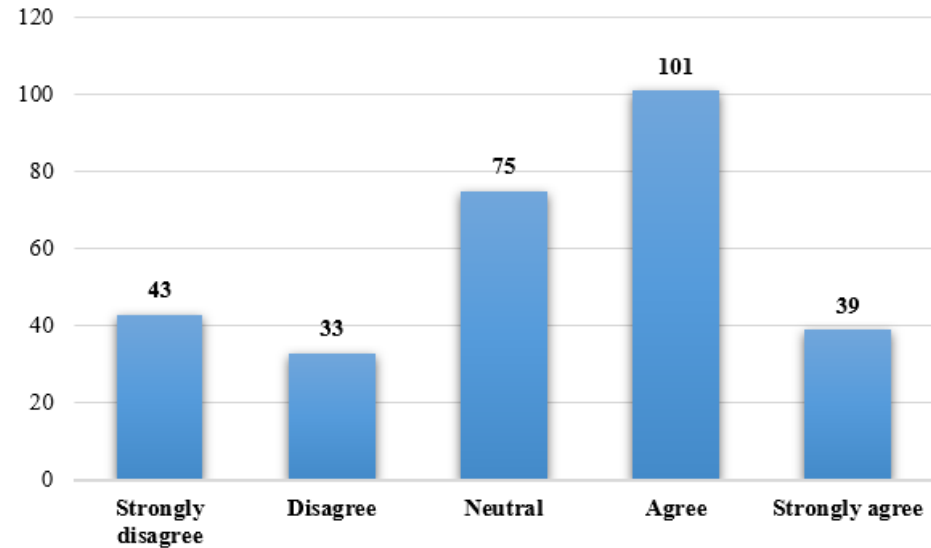


**Internet**

**Internet** shows a stronger influence, with a combined total of 129 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that it affects their choices. This indicates that online content, advertisements, or social media may play a significant role in consumer behavior.



**Friends**



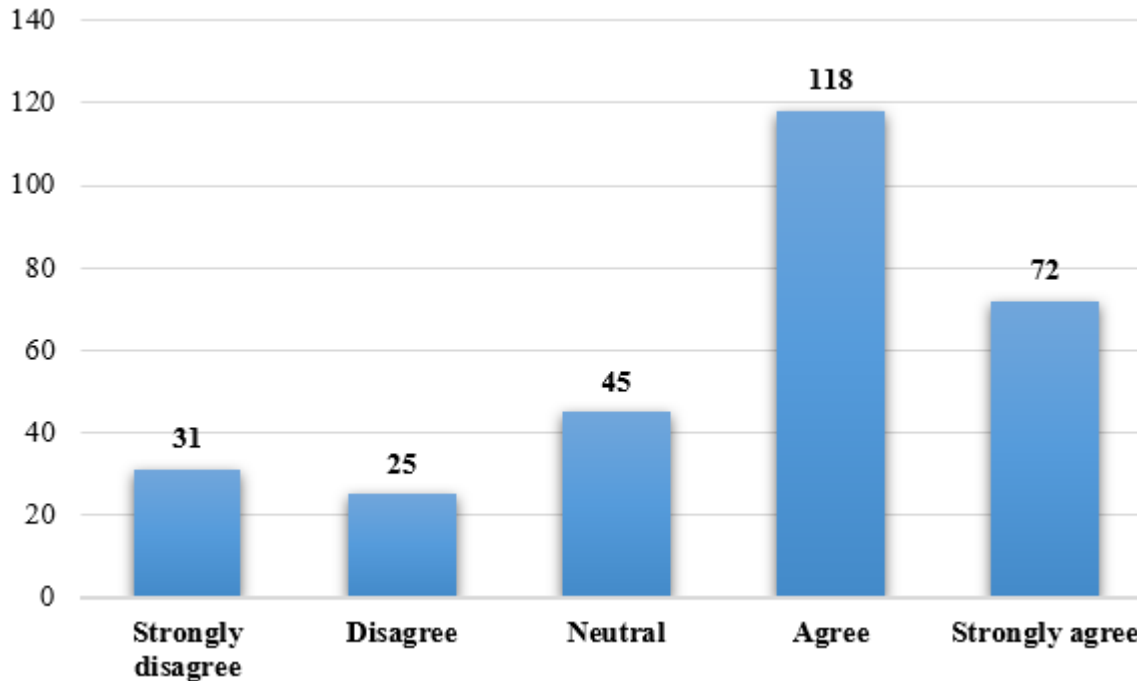
**Relatives**

**Friends and relatives** are highly influential. Friends had the highest agreement scores (170 combined for agree/strongly agree), and relatives were similarly influential (140 combined). This emphasizes the importance of word-of-mouth and social influence in purchasing decisions.



## Results and discussions

01



**Promotions**

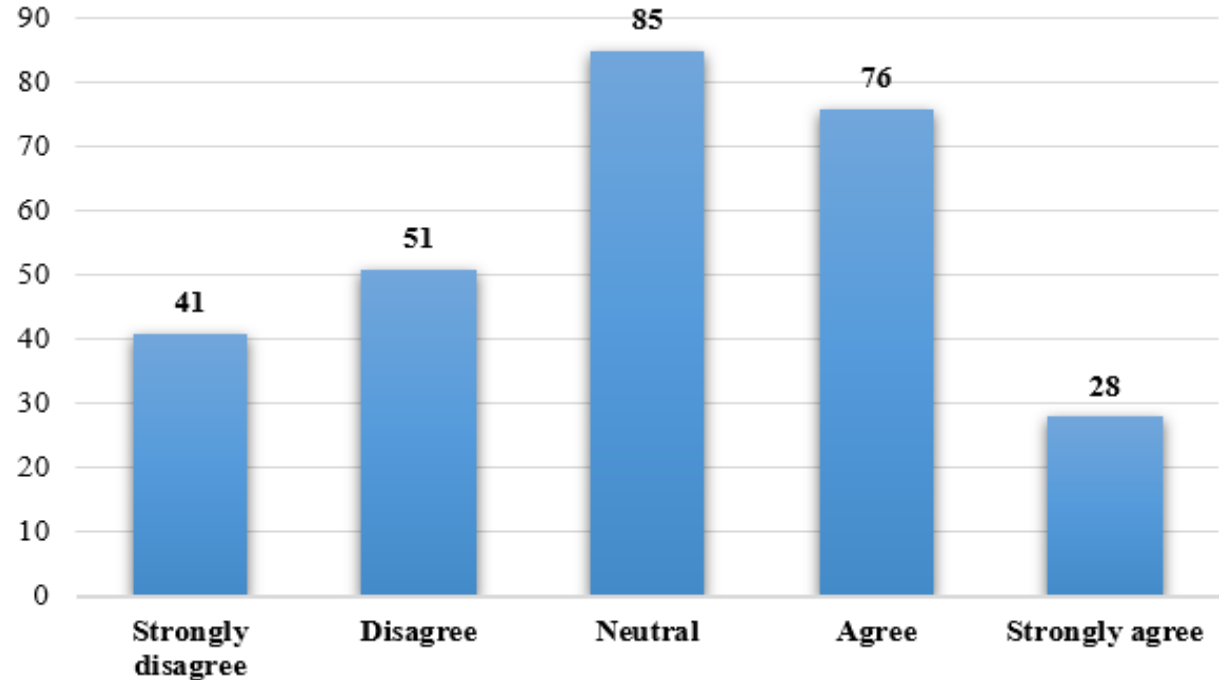
**Promotions** are also a major driver, with 190 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that promotions affect their choices, making it one of the strongest motivators.



## Results and discussions

02

### Colleagues



**Colleagues** have a moderate influence, with fewer respondents agreeing compared to friends or promotions, but still more influential than traditional media.



## Results and discussions

02

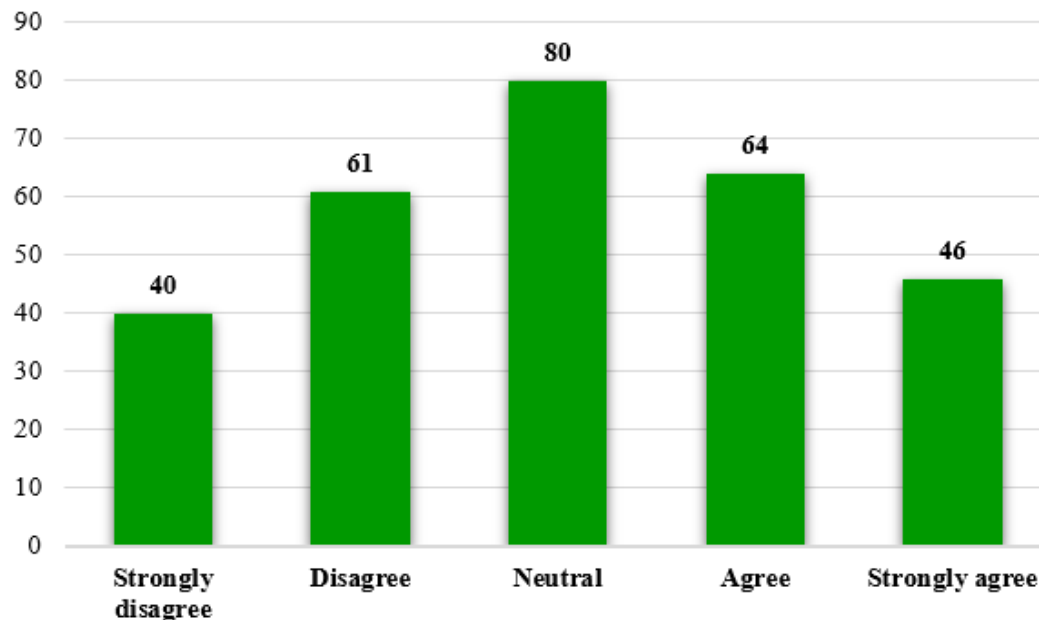
**Analyzed item:** To what extent, when you go shopping, do you choose a specific food product from a wide range of available products?

- a. The product is at your eye level;
- b. Packing appearance;
- c. You check the entire range of products before choosing;
- d. Familiarity with the product.



## Results and discussions

### a. The product is at your eye level



Eye-level placement has a moderate influence. While a notable number of people are neutral (80), there is still a significant portion who agree or strongly agree (110 combined) that eye-level positioning affects their choice.

This suggests that product visibility and accessibility matter, although many consumers also believe they are not strongly influenced by this factor (101 disagree/strongly disagree).

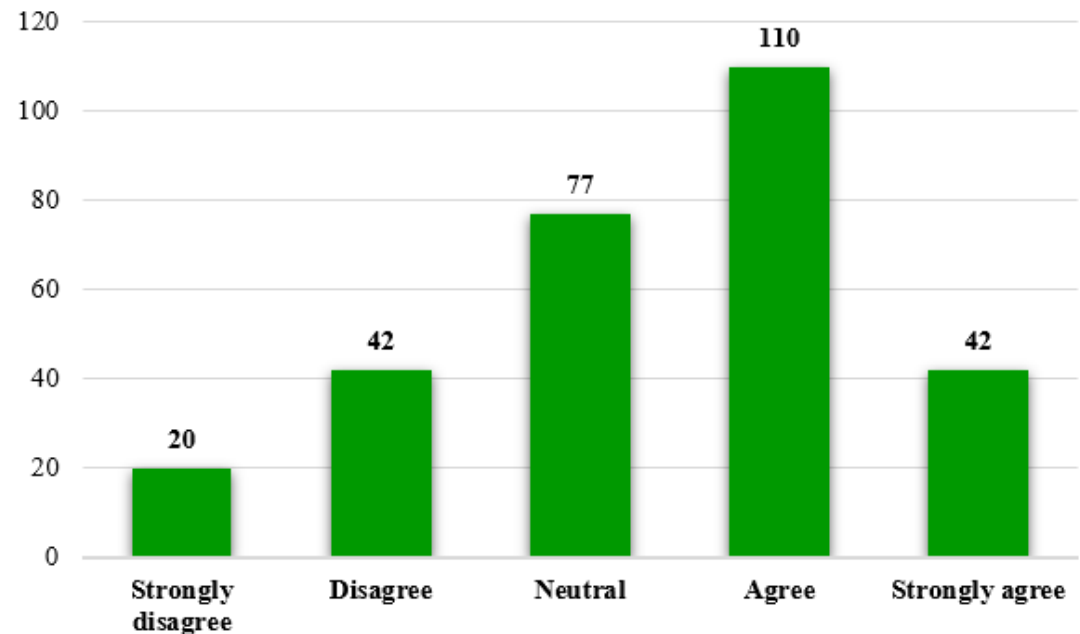
Overall, it is an influence—but not a dominant one.



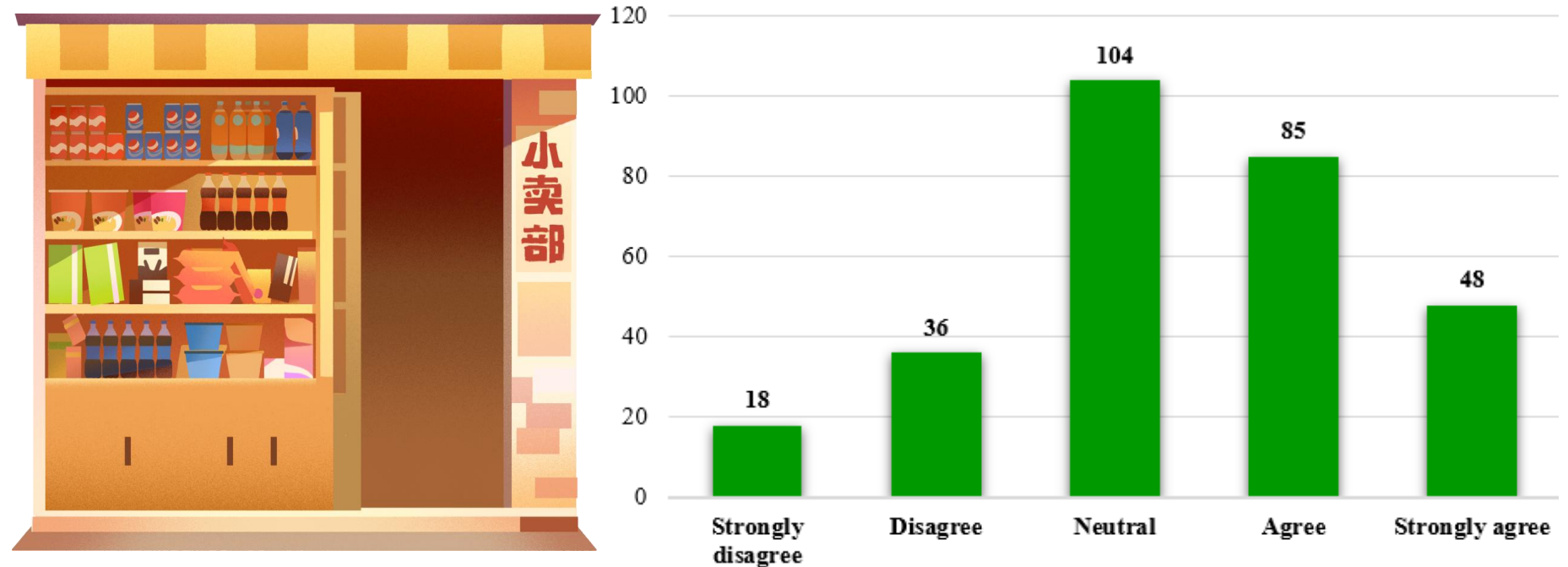
## Results and discussions

### b. Packing appearance

Packaging appearance is a strong influence. With 152 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing, this factor clearly impacts decisions more than eye-level placement. Only a small minority disagree (62 total). This indicates that design, colors, and the aesthetic appeal of the packaging play an important role in attracting buyers and guiding choices among similar products.

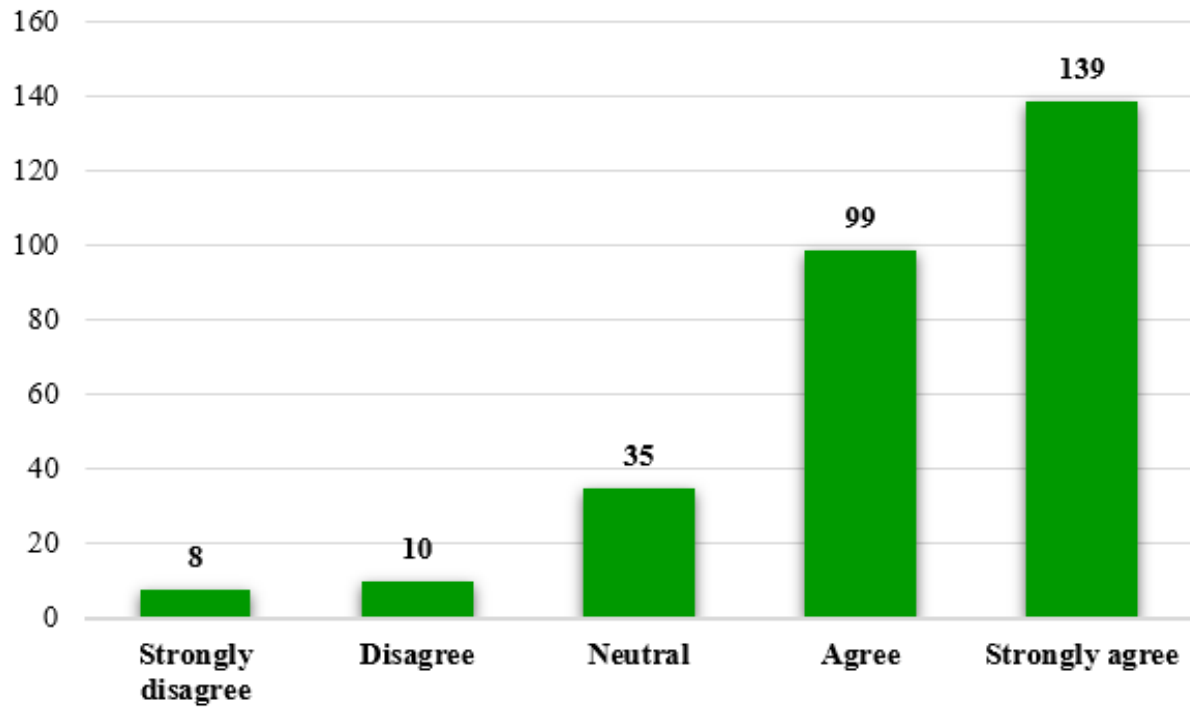


## c. You check the entire range of products before choosing



Most respondents either feel neutral (104) or agree/strongly agree (133) that they examine all available options. This shows that many consumers adopt a comparative, deliberate shopping behavior, reviewing multiple brands or varieties before deciding. The low disagreement total (54) suggests that relatively few people choose products impulsively or without considering alternatives.

## d. Familiarity with the product.



Familiarity is by far the strongest influence. With 238 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing, this factor clearly dominates. Consumers tend to prefer brands or products they already know and trust. The extremely low disagreement (18) shows that familiarity significantly reduces uncertainty and increases the likelihood of choosing a specific item from a wide range.

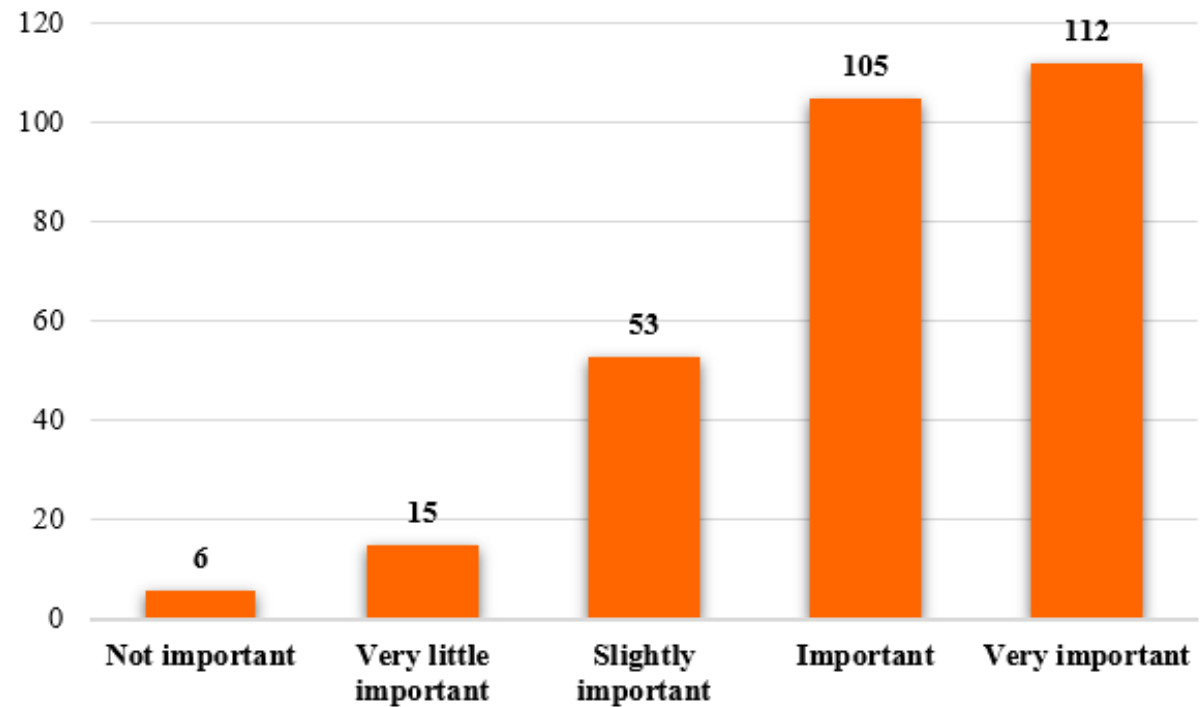


# Results and discussions

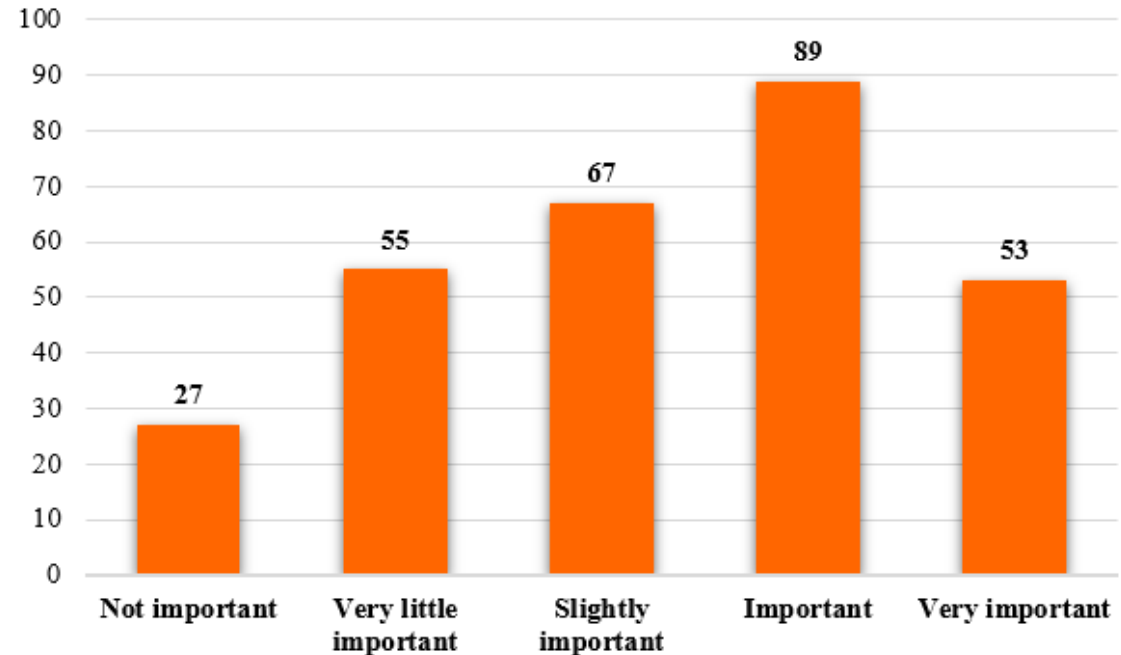
02

**Analyzed item:** When you choose a food product, how important is it for you?

- a. Price;
- b. Brand;
- c. Quality.



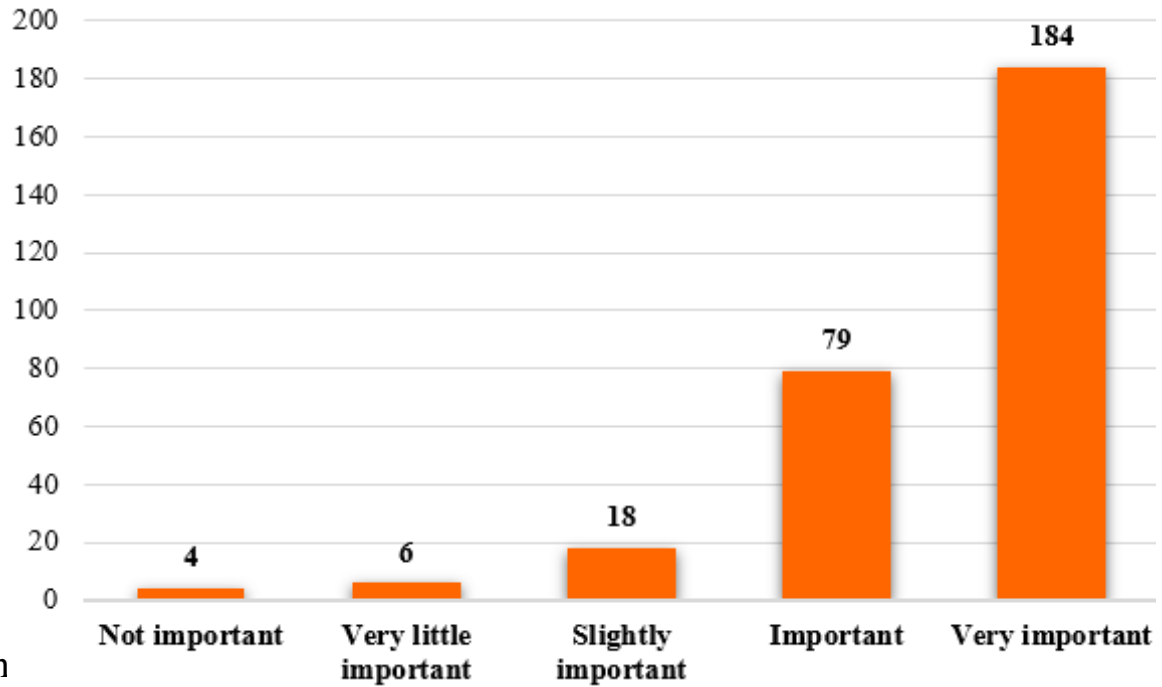
Price is a **highly important factor** for most consumers. With 217 respondents marking *important* or *very important*, it is clear that cost plays a decisive role in food product selection. Only a small minority consider price unimportant. This suggests that shoppers are price-sensitive and tend to make choices that align with their budget.



Brand importance is **moderate**, with mixed opinions. Although a considerable number of respondents (142) say it is important or very important, a similar portion (149) view brand as less important or only slightly relevant. This indicates that while brand reputation matters to some consumers, many rely on other criteria—such as price or quality—rather than brand name alone



Quality is by far the most important factor in choosing a food product. With 263 respondents selecting *important* or *very important*, quality clearly outweighs price, brand, and all other considerations. Only 10 people consider it unimportant. This shows that consumers prioritize safety, freshness, and overall product standards above all else when making food purchases.





## Conclusions and recommendations

The findings of the study reveal clear patterns in consumer behavior that emphasize the dominant role of modern retail environments in shaping purchasing decisions. Respondents shop frequently, primarily in supermarkets and hypermarkets, and although some plan their purchases in advance, a significant portion of their decisions is made inside the store. Visual factors—such as packaging design and product placement—contribute to these decisions, yet they hold only a secondary role compared to other determinants.



## Conclusions and recommendations

The most influential factors in choosing food products are **quality, price, and product familiarity**. Quality stands out as the primary driver, reflecting consumers' strong focus on food safety, nutritional value, and overall trust in the product. Price follows closely, indicating a pronounced sensitivity to budget constraints and highlighting the importance of pricing strategies and promotional activities. Familiarity with products further reinforces consumer choices, as previously tested or well-known items are perceived as safer and more predictable, thereby fostering brand trust and loyalty.



## Conclusions and recommendations

In comparison, **brand importance is moderate**, suggesting that while brand reputation matters to some consumers, it does not universally guide purchasing behavior. Moreover, traditional media exert limited influence over food choices, whereas the internet, personal recommendations, and promotional offers play a far more substantial role in shaping preferences. Many respondents also report evaluating the full available assortment before selecting a product, demonstrating a deliberate and comparative purchasing style aimed at identifying the best value for money.



# Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, the results indicate that consumer decision-making is shaped by a combination of **intrinsic product attributes (quality, familiarity, price), social and digital influences, and in-store stimuli**, with modern retail formats acting as the primary context in which these factors interact.



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# Thank you for your attention!



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