

Original Article

Consumer Behaviour of Local Meat and Meat Products

CHICIUDEAN Daniel, Felix ARION, Iulia MUREȘAN, Gabriela CHICIUDEAN*

Faculty of Horticulture, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca, 3-5 Calea Manastur, 400372,

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Abstract

Local food markets became more important both for consumers and for the policy makers. So, analysing the consumers' behaviour related to local food is extremely important in order to build sustainable strategies and identify modalities to act on the market. A research was conducted in Cluj-Napoca and results indicate that "locally produced" means that the product should be produced in Cluj County or Transylvania. Local food products are purchased for their freshness, familiarity and for belonging to a certain place. The specialized stores are the most appreciated by consumers when purchasing local meat and meat products. All the results could be used for building market strategies both by policy makers and by local food producers.

Keywords: *specialized stores, motivations, locally produced.*

1. Introduction

The last two decades are characterized by an increment of local product markets worldwide and simultaneously by a substantial interest among policy makers [5] for consumer behaviour of local food, in order to develop proper strategies for promoting this category of products. More, local consumption generated a local-food movement, a viable alternative to traditional food systems [1] opposing "localness" to "globules" for a sustainable development [3] the fact that local food contribute to a sustainable development was observed by other scholars too [4, 6, 12, 14] while others focused on the consumers' motivations to purchase local food [10, 13]. It is considered that efficient local food systems need a broader vision of the food economy by taking into consideration both urban and rural needs and concerns.

While others believe that the economic impact of local food systems are not yet efficiently analysed [11]. Local food products in Romania enjoy a wide variety, with particularities depending on the country's region. As a price level for local products, it can be said that it is much higher compared to other similar products manufactured at the industrial level. The explanation consists in the fact that they are homemade products in small quantities with natural ingredients with superior taste and superior quality [8]. Of course, the high price is in close correlation with the manufacturing mode of production, costs being higher than for industrial products where economies of scale are made. In the food sector there has been a radical change in consumers' optics so that the agro-food industry has identified a major urgency to adopt viable communication policies on the origin of food and its traceability in the supply chain.

This necessity has arisen as a result of an increase in consumer interest in reconnection with consumed food and its origin. Retail chains have been heavily influenced by this phenomenon and increased anxiety about the food system [7].

* Corresponding author.
Tel: +40-264-596384
Fax: +40-264-593792
e-mail: gabriela.chiciudean@usamvcluj.ro

2. Material and Method

The main objective of the research was to assess the main motivations for purchasing local products and to identify the consumer behaviour of local meat and meat products in order to obtain a consumer profile.

The meat sector of Cluj County is well developed, among the agro-food producers; meat processors represent 9% [15]. More, it is important to identify consumer behaviour for local meat and meat products in order to help processors and retailers to build successful marketing strategies for local products [2]. Therefore, a research was conducted among the population of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, using as an instrument the questionnaire. Sampling was determined with Taro-Yamane formula:

$$N = N/(1+N e^2) \quad (1)$$

Where “n” represents the sample size, “N” represents the total population and “e” is the maximum admitted error. After performing the calculations it was obtained a sample of 277 respondents. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics.

3. Results and Discussions

Sample size consisted in 277 respondents, among which 53.79 % were women and 46, 21% were men. Given the official statistics for Cluj-Napoca in 2016 there were 170,265 women and 151,422 men [16] so, it can be concluded that the sample is similar to the original population. The sample was an educated one, 49.46% graduated high school, while an important percent of 38.99 % graduated faculty or master and a small percent of 7.94% finished elementary school. Half of the sample is represented by employees, while 25% are students. A quarter of the sample is represented by retirees, unemployed or freelancers.

Their income is a decent one, 41.52% of the respondents had an income between 1001-2000 lei, while 31.42% had higher than 2001 lei. Only a small percent of 12.27% gain below 1000 lei. The most frequently household size was of three or four members (31.05%), families with two members represented 20.22% and household with one member and the ones with six members had equal percents (7.58%). The highest percent of respondents had no children under eighteen within their household (71.12%) and only 28.88% had at least one.

Before analyzing the consumer behaviour of local meat and meat products, respondents were asked about what they understand by “local food product” and almost 38% considered it’s a product

made in Transylvania, while for 26% is made in Cluj County.

Regarding the most frequent motivations for purchasing local products are the ones which reflect the products’ characteristics, so freshness is a major motivation for 37.18% followed by the familiarity which those products inspire (32.13%).

An important percent of 29.96% appreciated local meat products for being specific to a certain area, natural and tasty. So, it can be observed that the major motivations for purchasing local products rely in personal motivations, which bring benefits to consumers (Fig. 1).

Results are similar to other findings [2]. Interaction with the producers represented an important motivation for 21.30% of the respondents so social reasons were involved. A study from Missouri U.S.A. [2] concluded that people raised in a farm had preferences for local food. Tradition is another social motivation for 18.41%, meaning that some of the respondents are used to purchase the same products for a long time. Environmental motivations are the weakest, only 4.33% of the respondents associate local products to pollution reduction.

Local meat and meat products are purchased weekly by 50.54% of respondents, while 9.39% of them purchase them daily. A significant percent of 23.10% acquires this category of local products monthly, and 11.19% does not purchase local meat products. Meat and meat products are not on the bottom of the food pyramid, so they are not consumed daily by a large number of people. Consumption can also be influenced by religious posts on Wednesdays and Fridays, but also by different diets or consumption trends.

The fact that this category is most frequently purchased weekly can also mean a more massive supply to households for a whole week, so as not to carry out this often, which often consumes a lot of time (Fig. 2).

The analysis of purchasing frequency by respondents’ income revealed that this socio-demographical variable influences the purchase of meat and local meat products, so that a revenue increase denotes a high percentage of consumers purchasing this category of products locally, so the percentage 9.38% of the consumers who buy meat and local meat products daily, 46.15% have revenues between 1001-2000 lei and 19.23% have revenues between 2001-4000 lei.

The same situation can be observed for respondents who purchase this product category weekly: of the 50.54% of respondents 37.14% have revenues between 1001-2000 lei and 36.43% have revenues between 2001-4000 lei (Table 1).

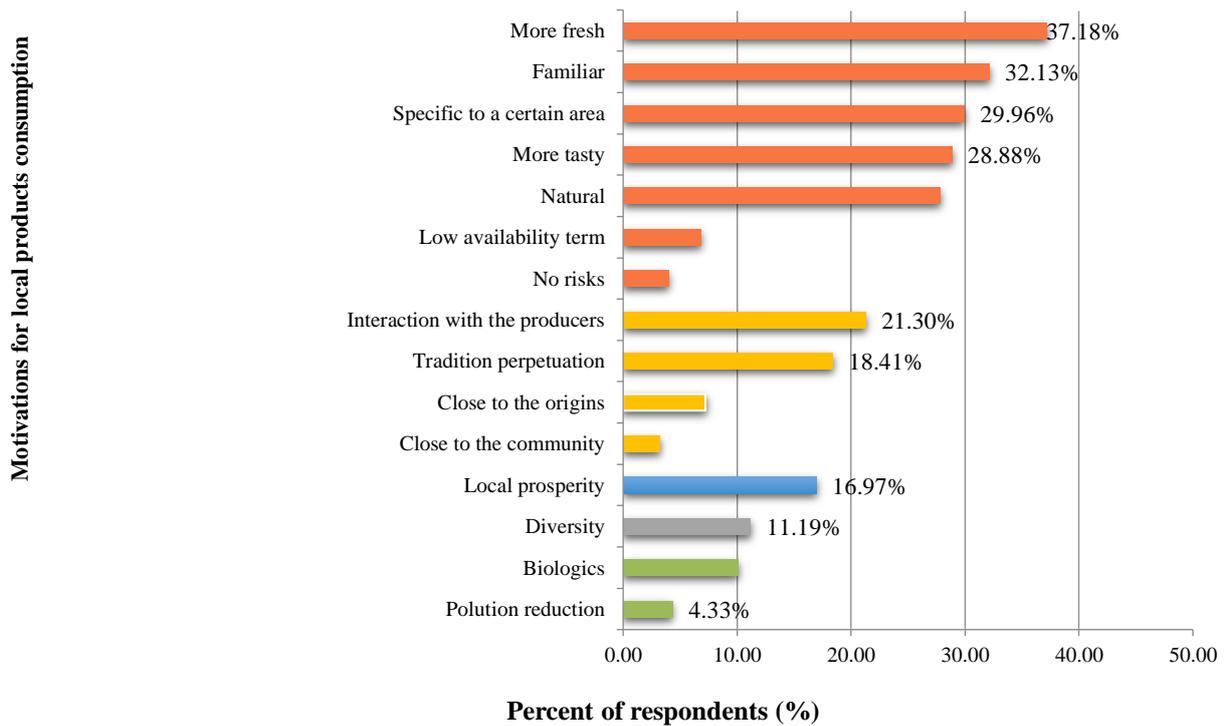


Figure 1. Main motivation for purchasing local products

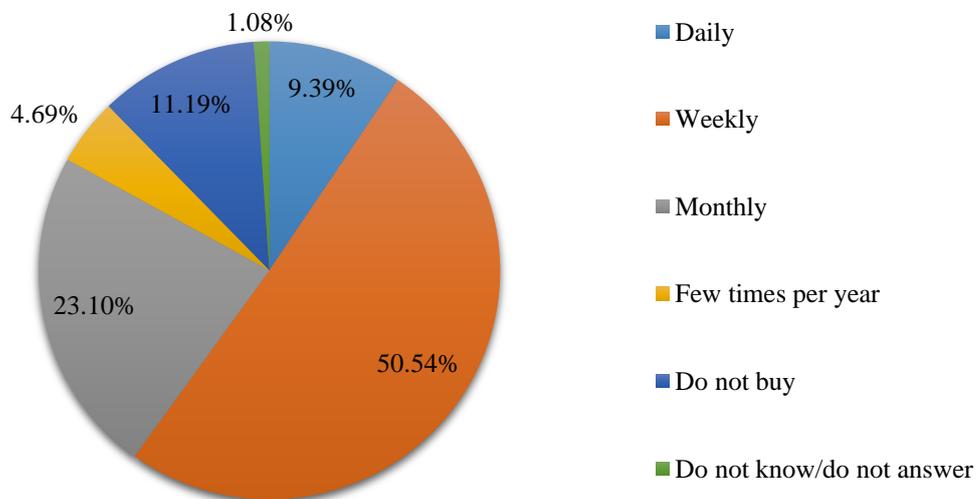


Figure 2. Frequency of local meat and meat products purchasing

Meat and meat products are produced at a higher price than carbohydrates, so the net household income affects the budget allocated to these products. For low-income households, the daily grocery basket is based mostly on cheap products with high calorie intake, such as bread, potatoes, etc. The increase in household income will, however, lead to the adoption of quality meals and the meat will be purchased more

frequently. Individuals who claim to purchase meat and meat products of local origin several times a year are either not purchasing this category at all, being vegetarian or buying these products of non-local source.

The existence of children within a family influences the frequency of the procurement of local meat and meat products.

Table 1. Local meat and meat products purchasing by income

Buying frequency (%)	Family net income (lei)					Total absolute frequencies	Total Relative frequencies (%)
	<650	650-1000	1001-2000	2001-4000	>5000		
Daily	19.23	7.69	46.15	19.23	7.69	26	9.38
Weekly	5.71	10.71	37.14	36.43	10.00	140	50.54
Monthly	6.25	17.19	43.75	28.13	4.69	64	23.10
Few times per year	7.69	7.69	46.15	30.77	7.69	13	4.69
Do not buy	6.45	16.13	45.16	29.03	3.23	31	11.19
/Do not know/do not answer	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	3	1.08
Total	20	34	115	87	21	277	100
Total	7.22	12.27	41.52	31.41	7.58	100	

Thus, from the category of people who purchase these products daily, 33.33% have children under eighteen years old and 69.23% have no children in the family. In the category of people who buy meat and local meat products weekly, 70.71% do not have children within the family, so the situation is similar in this case (Fig. 3).

Analysis of the influence of the age on the frequency of local meat and meat products acquisition reveals that 9.39% of respondents who buy local meat and meat products daily, young people aged 19-30 have half the share.

The share of people who purchase these

products daily decreases as the age increases, so people aged 31-40 represent 30.77% of the total, and people aged over 60 represent 7.69% of the total.

These results indicate that the purchase of local meat and meat products is more common among young people who want to consume this type of fresh produce.

It is worth mentioning the high percentage of 45.16% of the 18- to 30-year-olds who do not locally purchase this category of food, which are certainly customers of supermarkets and hypermarkets, and less of the producer shops, slaughterhouses or agri-food markets (Fig. 4).

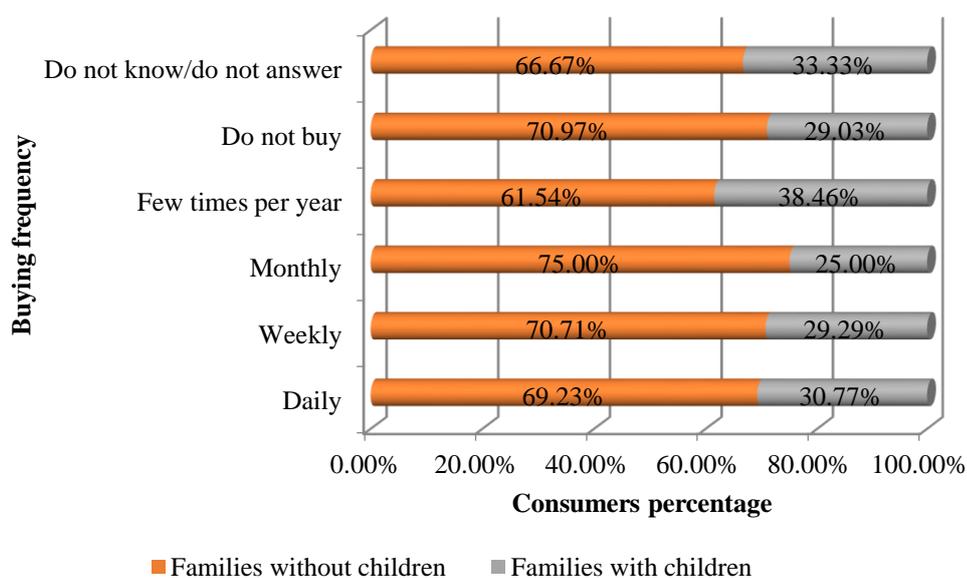


Figure 3. Frequency of local meat and meat products purchasing related to the existence of children within families

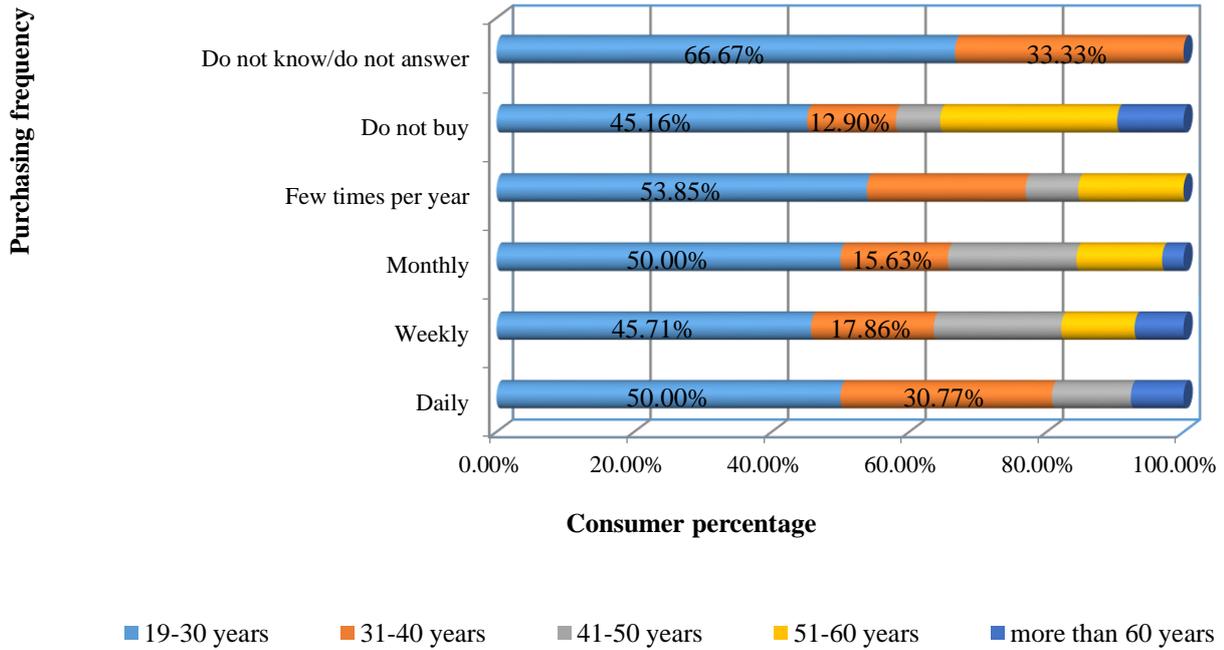


Figure 4. Frequency of local meat and meat products purchasing by age

Local meat and local meat products are bought by 45.85% of respondents from specialized stores, being more popular than small neighbourhood stores.

These results are different by other studies where farmers markets are preferred for local food purchase [9]. From the supermarket/hypermarket they prefer to buy 24.19% of the respondents, while in the agri-food markets they purchase such products only 10.47%.

Directly from the producer, it acquires 7.58% of the respondents, the lowest percentage within this category, which is explained by the fact that it is

impossible to procure meat constantly, and producers have a rather casual turnover. Noteworthy is that for this category of products, there is an important percentage of 10.11% of respondents buying meat and local meat products from online stores (Fig. 5). Gender is a variable that influences the place of purchase of local meat and meat products.

Among women there is a stronger preference for specialized stores (48.32%) but also for producers' shop (9.4%), while men mostly prefer supermarkets and hypermarkets (25.78%) but also the online shops (14.06%) (Fig. 6).

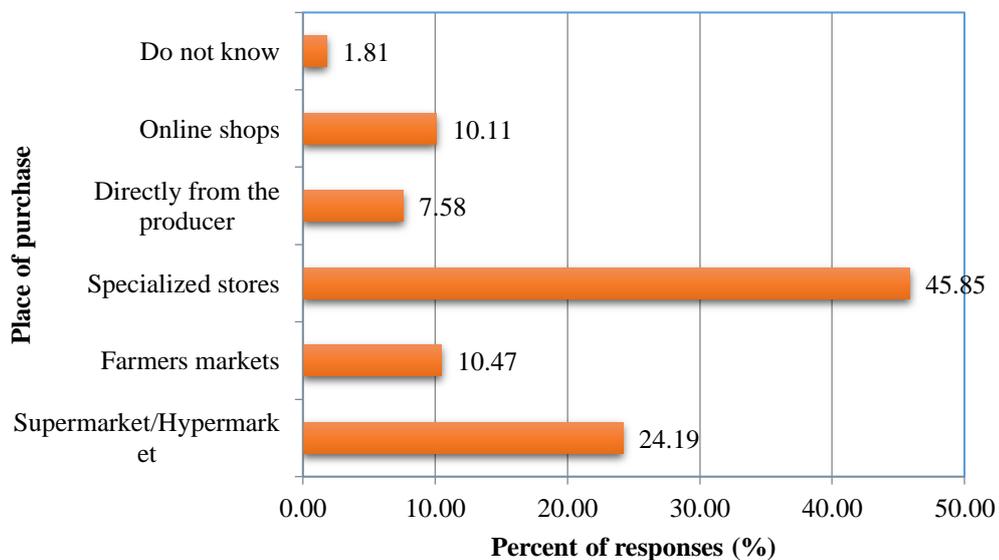


Figure 5. Place of purchasing preferred by the consumers in the case of local meat and meat products

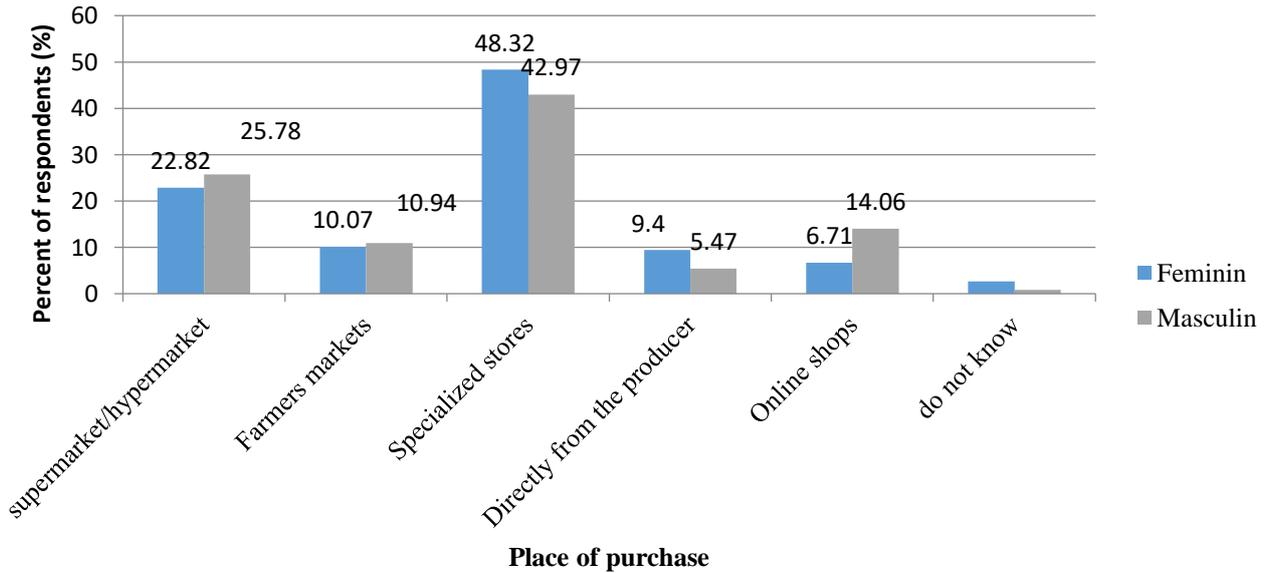


Figure 6. Place of purchase of local meat and meat products by gender

The analysis of the influence of the age on the place of purchase of local meat and meat products reveals that from the category of persons aged 18-30 years, 46.21% prefer the specialized stores, followed by supermarkets/hypermarkets (31.82%). Agri-food markets and producers are an option only for a very low percentage of 6.06% and 4.55% respectively. An

important segment, considering the fact that online stores are still at the beginning in the agri-food sector, is 9.85% of young people who buy meat and meat products from the Internet.

Stores specializing in the sale of local meat and meat products are preferred by all segments of age (Fig. 7).

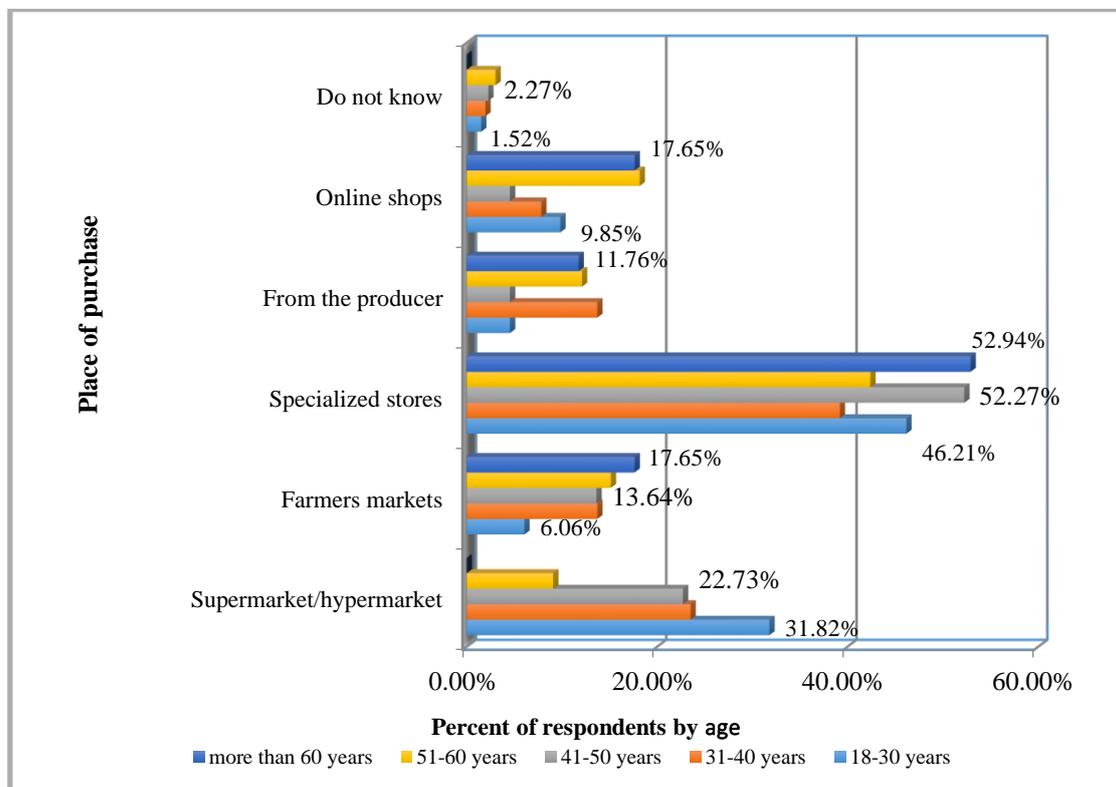


Figure 7. Place of purchase of local meat and

4. Conclusions

Consumers from Cluj-Napoca associate a locally produced food product with one made in Transylvania or in Cluj County, so the distance between consumer and producer is a relatively short one. Local meat and meat products are being purchased weekly by most of the respondents and the motivations are based on consumers' personal benefits like freshness, familiar and related to a certain place. Local meat purchasing is more common among young people who want to consume this type of products daily. As referring to the most commonly places of purchase, it was observed that specialized stores are more important than farmers markets. Results of the study are very important especially for local producers which are able to build market strategies in order to satisfy consumers' needs and preferences. It is recommended that producers should take into consideration the importance of the place of purchase and consider being present on the market through their specialized stores, being more important in the case of local meat and meat products than the supermarkets and hypermarkets.

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