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SEGMENTATION OF NICHE MARKETS OF MEAT AND MEAT PRODUCTS (BY THE EXAMPLE OF LOCAL MARKET)

It is investigated features of the demand for meat and meat products of Kharkiv residents. It is carried out market segmentation and it is highlighted priority target audiences of meat and meat products buyers on the ground of the developed methodical approach. It is determined specific characteristics of selected market segments regarding their needs and characteristics of consumer behaviour.

Keywords: market segmentation, market of meat and meat products, marketing policy, market niche, marketing. DOI: 10.21272/mmi.2017.1-04

Problem statement. The competition and dynamic operating conditions of enterprises in the food market, particularly meat and meat products, requires construction of a clear system of strategic and tactical marketing, where segmentation is the initial process. For emergent markets the process of segmentation is necessary to determine the center of demand location, orientation of production program; product assortment of shops and the complex of mix-marketing. The determination of segmented features allows to ground further marketing actions regarding the positioning and development of the enterprise.

Analysis of recent researches and publications. The analysis of recent researches shows that most works, in particular R. Lohosha [4], I. Dragan [6], I. Romanenko [7], V. Topiha [9], are focused on various aspects of the meat and meat products market functioning. A great contribution to determination of tendencies of regional development concerning goods production of basic kinds of meat products was made by N. Gurzhiy [1], A. Kovalchuk [2], L. Lomovskyh [3], M. Misyuk [5], concerning the peculiarities of marketing activities of companies in the market of meat – by O. Rudych [8], and the assessment of the population demand impact on the formation of meat consumption level in the region and its forecasting of its parameters – by S. Yatsiv [10].

Unsolved questions which are the part of the general problem. The analysis of recent researches shows that methodological and applied aspects of formation of marketing strategy and enterprise policy in the market of meat and meat products require further development of ways to determine adequate use of marketing tools when entering niche segments. Just marketing approach will allow to identify and better meet the needs of actual and potential customers through the market segmentation, to ensure the development of livestock and processing enterprises. The relevance of the above mentioned aspects and their insufficient theoretical foundation and practical application in the activities of meat processing enterprises determined scientific and practical interest of the authors.

The object of the article is to ground the scientific and methodological approach to segmentation of niche market of meat and meat products (by the example of Kharkiv local market) and to determine specific characteristics of consumer behavior of the selected segments.

Basic material. With the aim of identifying of peculiarities of market demand for meat and meat products, it was conducted marketing research by means of written survey by questionnaire among the residents of Kharkiv, 857 persons were respondents. Among received questionnaires it was selected

682 ones according to criteria of residence place and presence of all the answers of the questionnairy and correctness of filling the form. The sample is representative, because according to statistics [11], for a city which has the population of one million inhabitants it is enough to interview 400 respondents, and according to the statistics 1 453 541 people lived in Kharkiv at the moment of questioning [12]. Sampling error is 5%, which suggests about the sufficient level of reliability of received results of field marketing research.

According to the results of the study it was made several important conclusions for manufacturers and sellers of meat and meat products that should be taken into consideration when forming the marketing strategy and policies of companies in the market of meat and meat products in Kharkiv region:

- meat and meat products is a traditional food of Kharkiv residents, which is consumed quite often,
 2-3 times a week, and in some cases even daily, that shows a substantial capacity of the local market of meat and meat products;
- the frequency and amount of consumption of meat and meat products are greatly caused by the demographic and social factors, including gender, age, family composition and income level, that stipulates the need for market segmentation according to these parameters;
- it is determined the presence of the unmet demand of certain sections of the population, that is largely caused by the limited solvency level of consumers and high prices, non-conformity of production quality expectations and desires of consumers. Under these conditions, producers of meat and meat products have to apply the policy of price differentiation and to expand the range of products, including demand and needs of target market segments;
- Kharkiv residents mostly prefer meat and meat products of domestic production, so the product promotion programs should be focused on national traditions of production and consumption of meat and meat products;
- important factors in the selection of meat and meat products are non-price factors: outer look, the smell of production, quality assurance, terms of purchase;
- results of consumer evaluation of retail facility, where meat and meat products are realized, according to the above-mentioned factors, found that the best level of sales organization is observed in supermarkets and brand shops and their weighted assessments exceed assessments of grocery stores, markets and stalls.

During the investigation the price consumers are ready to buy meat and meat products of domestic production with a guaranteed high quality, respondents were offered to identify how many percent they are willing to pay more. The results revealed that more than half of consumers are willing to buy fresh meat (beef, veal and pork) with a guaranteed high quality with the margin of 26-50%. About 20% of respondents are ready to buy fresh qualitative meat with the margin over 50%, in particular, 17-18% of respondents are ready to overpay 51-75% of the average price and about 2-3% of respondents are ready to double the price. At the same time only 20-25% of respondents will not buy fresh qualitative meat with the margin more than 25%. And 21.8% of respondents are ready to buy fresh chicken of improved quality with the margin of 26-50%.

After the obtained results we can conclude that the development of the high-quality segment of fresh meat (beef, veal and pork) and chicken is quite promising, as nearly 20% of consumers understand that high-quality, safe and environmentally safe products are more cost-intensive for manufacturers and hence more expensive and under the conditions of confidence in high quality of fresh meat are ready to pay higher prices, even higher than 50%.

The basic feature of market segmentation is the income level of consumers, because it differentiates the level of possible costs for the purchase of any product. It is confirmed the operation of the substitution effect, when the increase of income causes the displacement of low-quality goods by higher quality benefits. There is a direct correlation of choice of meat and meat products according to the price parameters depending on the income level of consumers. According to information of the survey by

questionnaire it is revealed differences in the choice of meat and meat products of consumers by sociodemographic and behavioral characteristics. Table 1 shows the matrix of segmentation of meat and meat products according to the income level of consumers.

Table 1 – The matrix of market segmentation according to the income level (authors' development)

Requirements to	The level of income, UAH per month for a person in the household					
purchasing	≤ 3000	3001-4500	4501-6000	6001-7500	≥ 7501	
Low	Economical					
Average		Meat lovers				
High				Demanding meat eaters		

The results of questionnaire processing allowed to describe the next consumer profiles of segments of meat and meat products market, they allow the enterprises to direct their marketing activity (Fig. 1). The segment "Economical" includes consumers with low and below the average income to 3000 UAH per month per one person in the household because of limited opportunities to buy expensive food and usually present low demands on products, focusing on low price, these can be pensioners, students and large families. "Meat lovers" are consumers with average income 3001-6000 UAH per month per one person in the household, so they spend more money on food, have the opportunity for a variety nourishment and present demands on food of mid-level, orient on average prices, in addition to that don't buy cheap products, considering them as non-qualitative ones, but also they have not enough money or make no sense to spend money for expensive types of meat and meat products, these can be public sector workers, employees and workers. The segment "Demanding meat eaters" are consumers who have income level above average – 6001-7500 UAH and high – more than 7501 UAH per month per one person in the household.

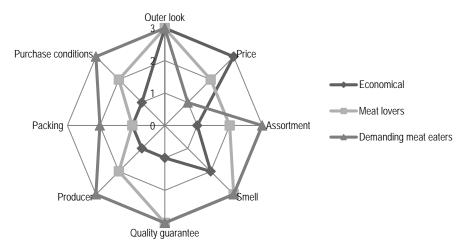


Figure 1 – The consumer profile of market segments according to the importance of parameters of fresh meat buying

They have the opportunity to choose expensive products, which are better, secure and prestigious, and present certain demands on the products and purchase conditions; these can be entrepreneurs, heads of organizations and institutions, managers of higher level. Results of consumer choice in the selected segments allow to set the most important options for buying fresh meat for the segment (Fig. 1):

"Economical" – reasonable price and outer look; "Meat lovers" – outer look, smell and quality guarantee; "Demanding meat eaters" – outer look, smell and purchase conditions, manufacturer, assortment and quality guarantee.

The choice of delicacy and exclusive meat products isn't available for the segment "Economical", that's why it is present only in two segments of consumers – "Meat lovers" and "Demanding meat eaters". Fig. 2 shows that for the segment of "Meat lovers" the price will be more important than for "Demanding meat eaters", which is determined by their lower income. In addition, "Meat lovers" buy delicacy and exclusive products in smaller quantities and less frequently, usually on holidays. According to the fact that for segments of consumers "Meat lovers" and "Demanding meat eaters" apart from the price, all other parameter are in equivalent position (Fig. 2), enterprises should look for ways to get a competitive advantage in the deeper segmentation, including differences in psychographic tfeatures of segments and to focus on socially responsible business and forming of the concentrated marketing policy.

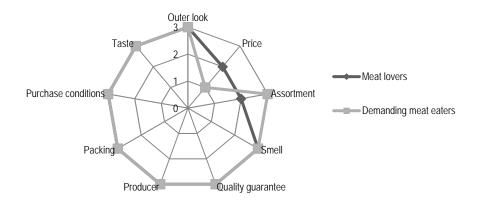


Figure 2 – The consumer profile of market segments according to the importance of parameters of delicacy and exclusive meat products buying

The process of formation of the concentrated marketing policy provides for the selection of niche market segments among the defined segments, the most attractive segment for meat processing enterprises are "Demanding meateaters". According to data of the Central Statistical Office of Kharkiv region the target segment "Demanding meat eaters", that are consumers with a high income level, is spacious enough because it include 22% of households in Kharkiv region with an equivalent average total income per month per one person more than 7500 UAH [12]. Accordingly, to penetrate it out with niche products, that are organic meat, delicacy and exclusive meat products, the demand on which is unstable, it is necessary to make a deeper segmentation. Taking into consideration the specificity of this kind of product, consumer segmentation features of organic meat products, in addition to socioeconomic characteristics, should include psychographic features that characterize the features of needs and lifestyle.

For market segmentation it was chosen a famous AID method (automatic interaction detection) [13], according to which any strategic criterion is chosen. Then the sample is divided into several subgroups within which there is a high value of the strategic criterion (Fig. 3). Consumers segment "Demanding meat eaters" not only fully meet the demand for meat and meat products, but can afford more expensive, more qualitive, delicious and exclusive products, the offer of which is not sufficient on the market, that's why niche products, that are designed to meet a special demand, should be oriented on it.

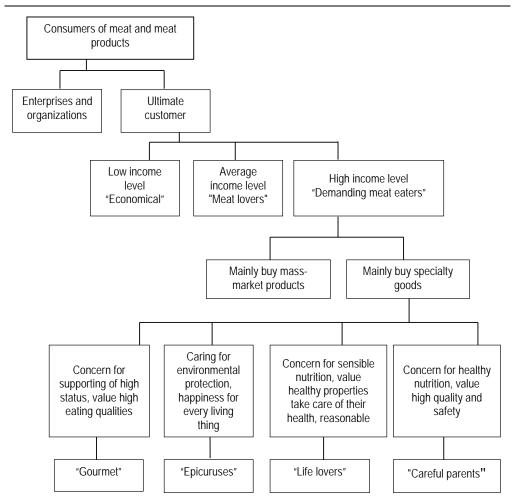


Figure 3 – Segmentation of market of meat and meat products according to AID method (authors' development)

When entering new market segments enterprises should identify their potential capacity with the aim of planning the volume of production and the formation of the entire marketing complex for each segment. According to assessments of the National Scientific Center "Institute of Agrarian Economy" potential market capacity of organic products in Ukraine is estimated at 40 milliards UAH, while organic meat in the structure of organic market is 33% [14] that is more than 13 billion USD.

In our view, market capacity of organic meat will increase, as domestic consumers with income above average are primarily concerned with quality of meat products they buy, because market development of organic meat will give the opportunity of an alternative choice to ensure a valuable nutrition.

To form marketing policy it is necessary to find out characteristics of segments, which will allow to choose optimal marketing tools to influence consumer behavior, forming a consumption culture of exclusive and organic meat products, ensuring continuous demand on it. Target market segments of

exclusive organic meat products are consumers with high income level, target market segment of organic meat are families with children, whose income is above average. To identify target segments of consumers with high income level it is necessary to hold deeper segmentation, that's why it is developed a methodical approach of identifying and selecting segments of the market, which takes into account psychographic features of consumers and their buying preferences (Fig. 4).

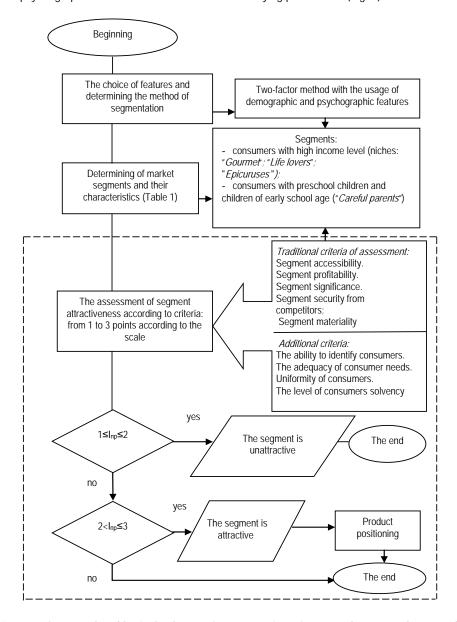


Figure 4 – Structural and logical scheme of segmentation of meat and meat products market (authors' development)

The algorithm shown on the Fig. 4 is based on the traditional approach to segmentation, which involves the following steps [13]: forming the criteria for segmentation, the choice of method and implementation of market segmentation, the interpretation of the segments, the choice of goods positioning on each segment, the development of marketing plans for each market segment.

The proposed scientific and methodical approach to the choice of consumer market segments is based on individual standardized jury of opinion, the selection of expets was carried out according to the following characteristics: equal average competence according to professional and qualimetric characteristics (education, experience, knoowledge of market research methodology); efficiency (discipline, impartiality, non-conformism, promptness, validity and motivation of assessments) and objectivity of opinions. Along with traditional assessment criteria of the segment attractiveness, including profitability, value, protection from competitors, materiality, availability, we have identified the following additional ones: ability to identify consumer needs, the adequacy of needs and demands of consumers regarding the proposed product, uniformity of purchasing behavior of consumer segment, the level of consumers paying capacity. Proposed additional criteria are extracted in italics on Fig. 4 into a separate block.

The assessment stage of segments attractiveness according to the selected criteria involves determining the number of points for each criterion on a three-level scale (low level = 1 point; average level = 2 points; high level = 3 points) and their averaging:

$$I_{\Pi P} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} \mathcal{F}}{\mathcal{N}},\tag{1}$$

where $I_{\Pi P}$ – the index of segment's attractiveness, B – scoring assessment of the criterion; N – quantity of criteria used during the evaluation.

According to the proposed evaluation system, the maximum assessment can be 3 points, so the segment is considered to be attractive if $2 < I_{PP} \le 3$ and unattractive if $1 \le I_{PP} \le 2$. After results of evaluation it is selected attractive segment, according to which marketing policy is developed and marketing tools to influence consumers are selected. The usageof the proposed assessment system allowed to obtain a quantitative description of segment attractiveness and on this basis to make an informed decision concerning the product positioning.

Table 2 shows the testing of the above-mentioned methodological approach at Kharkiv enterprises of meat industry, which are regional industry leaders, including Ltd. "Saltovsky meat-processing plant".

To determine the attractiveness of selected segments it was involved nine experts who have sufficient consistency of thought, that is attested by concordance coefficient (listed in the Table 2) and assessment of its significance by Pearson criterion, which in each case at a given significance level 0,05 is higher than the table value (>15,50731 [15]). According to Table 2 the maximum quantity of points have profitability criteria, as high quality products with increased customer value will be offered to selected segments; for segments of "Gourmet" and "Epicuruses" price will be set with taking into account the prestige of products, it will be used the strategy of premium pricing, that meets the objective of profits maximizing.

On the basis of two-factor method of segmentation with the usage of demographic and psychographic features we have distinguished the following segments: consumers of organic meat and consumers of exclusive meat products. The mentioned segments are characterized according to commodity advantages concerning the choice of meat and meat products, psychographic characteristics, reason of purchasing, customer status, desired benefits, intensity of consumption, willingness to purchase, attitude to the product, ultimate expectations, and the level of purchasing power.

Table 2 – Evaluation of attractiveness of selected consumer segments for the Ltd. "Saltovsky meat-processing plant" (Kharkiv)

The criterion of segment	Consumer segments					
assessment	"Gourmet"	"Epicuruses"	"Life lovers"	"Careful parents"		
Profitability	3	3	3	3		
Significance	2	2	3	3		
Security from competitors	3	3	3	3		
Materiality	3	2	3	3		
Availability of distribution channels	1	1	2	2		
The ability to identify consumer needs	2	1	2	3		
The adequacy of consumer needs, the compliance with production specifics	2	2	2	2		
Uniformity of consumer segment	3	3	2	2		
The level of consumers solvency	3	3	3	2		
Total	22	20	23	23		
Average score	2,44	2,22	2,56	2,56		
The concordance coefficient	0,61	0,63	0,67	0,6		
The level of segment attractiveness	Quite attractive segments					

Consumers of organic meat are people with high and above average income level, people who care about healthy lifestyle, prefer high-quality and safe products, and also families with children of preschool and early school age. Consumers of organic meat are offered to call "life lovers", these are people who follow healthy nourishment, and "careful parents", these are people who buy organic meat for childhood nutrition. Consumers of exclusive meat products: people with high income level, these are wealthy consumers who are oriented on their status, prefer sophistication, the highest quality, safety and product prestige, and people with certain religious traditions in case of consumption of kosher products. Selected segments are evaluated according to the developed scale and the results of the assessment indicate their quite high attractiveness.

Conclusions and directions of future researches. For the development of promising niches of meat and meat products market it was made multi-criterial segmentation. The basic feature of market segmentation is income level of consumers. The priority target audience of buyers of organic meat and meat products was formed by consumers with high income level and families with children (above average income level). It was proposed the methodical approach to market segmentation based on assessment of their attractiveness with the usage of a three-level score scale according to defined system of criteria (profitability, significance, protection from competitors, materiality, accessibility, opportunity identification, adequacy, uniformity, the level of solvency). Consumers of the selected segment "Demanding meat eaters" are oriented to meet special demand in more qualitative and exclusive products. On the basis of this criterion it is grounded the expediency of development by meat processing plants subsegments of niche market of organic meat, delicacy and exclusive meat, such as "Gourmet", "Epicuruses", "Life lovers", "Careful parents". According to the results of expert attractiveness evaluation of the selected market subsegments (on the example of Kharkiv meat processing company Ltd. "Saltovsky meat processing plant") it was found that they are quite attractive for the enterprise, especially "Careful parents" and "Life lovers". The results of the research can be used in further scientific and practical investigations in the direction of a marketing strategy making to promote organic, delicacy and exclusive meat products.

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Сегментація нішевих ринків м'яса та м'ясопродуктів (на прикладі локального ринку)

Досліджено особливості попиту на м'ясо та м'ясопродукти мешканців м. Харкова. Здійснено сегментацію ринку та виділено пріоритетні цільові аудиторії покупців м'яса та м'ясопродуктів на основі розробленого методичного підходу. Визначено специфічні характеристики виділених сегментів ринку відносно їх потреб та особливостей купівельної поведінки.

Ключові слова: сегментація ринку, ринок м'яса та м'ясопродуктів, маркетингова політика, ніша ринку, маркетинг.

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Сегментация нишевых рынков мяса и мясопродуктов (на примере локального рынка)

Исследованы особенности спроса на мясо и мясопродукты жителей г. Харькова. Проведена сегментация рынка и выделены приоритетные целевые аудитории покупателей мяса и мясопродуктов на основе разработанного методического подхода. Определены специфические характеристики выделенных сегментов рынка относительно их потребностей и особенностей покупательского поведения.

Ключевые слова: сегментация рынка, рынок мяса и мясопродуктов, маркетинговая политика, ниша рынка, маркетинг.

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