

6th Interdisciplinary International Conference

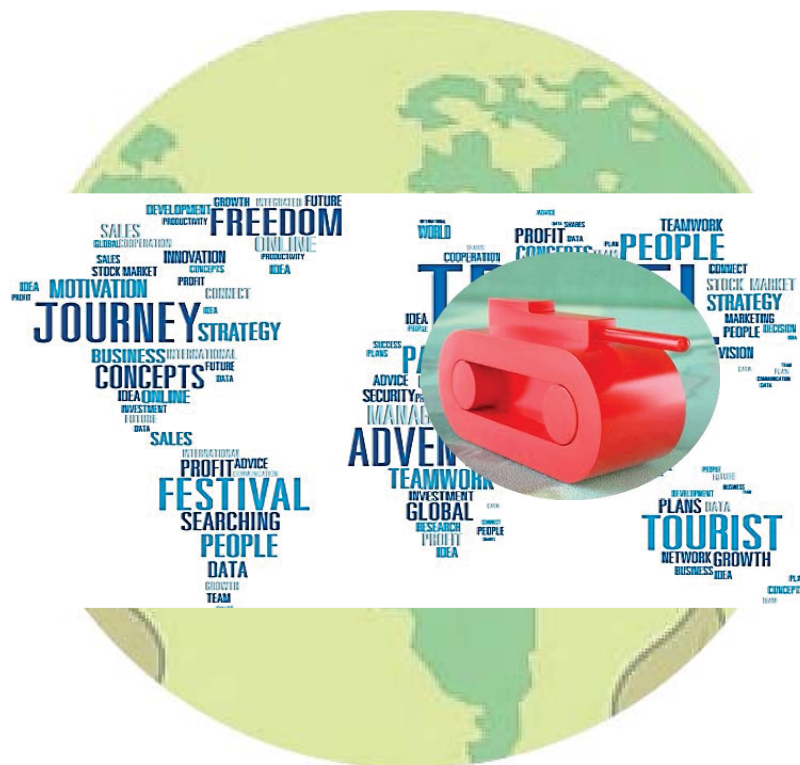
UNICART

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ACADEMIC RESEARCH & TOURISM

I. Cekani, F. D. d'Ovidio, F. Favia,
P. Iaquina, T. Romita

Food, Tourism and Environment

Proceedings Book, Volume I



2-4 June 2022,

Caldora Hall of Calabria University (Italy) *Opening of the Web Conference*
Headquarter of IARC (Albania) *Live and Web Conference*



International Academic
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UNICART

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
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Food, Tourism and Environment

2 - 4 June 2022

Calabria University, Caldora Hall (Italy)
(Opening of the Conference and Live Sessions)

IARC Headquarter, Tirana (Albania)
(Web Conference Remote Sessions)

Proceedings Book,
Volume I

published by: **International Academic Research Center Str.**

Cekani I., d'Ovidio F. D., Favia F, Iaquinta P., Romita T., eds. (2022). *6th UNICART International Conference "Food, Tourism and Environment" - Proceedings Book, volume I*. Calabria University (Italy)/ IARC Tirana (Albania), 2 – 4 June. IARC-ETQA Publishers, Tirana-Bruxelles.

ISBN 978-2-931089-25-5

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Final editing: Francesco D. d'Ovidio & Stefano d'Ovidio

**Il mondo è il libro, dove il senno eterno
scrisse i proprii concetti, e vivo tempio
dove, pingendo i gesti e 'l proprio esempio,
di statue vive ornò l'imo e 'l superno.**

In: *Scelta di poesie filosofiche* (1622)

Tommaso Campanella

Stilo (RC), 5 settembre 1568 – Parigi, 21 maggio 1639



Introduction and remarks

The UNICART Scientific Conferences project started more than three years ago as a cycle of itinerant meetings, so far limited to a number of southern European countries (Italy, Malta, Albania, Croatia, etc.). The project aimed to provide great opportunities for specialists, academics, students, and professionals, as well as for institutions that deal directly or indirectly with management, tourism and land development issues. All participants were invited to present their experiences, to share best practices, to provide detailed examples and recommendations on the proposed topics. Authors were encouraged to contribute to the conference by submitting their abstracts and research papers. High-level work was also welcomed to describe constructive, empirical, experimental, or theoretical concepts.

The 1st UNICART *Interdisciplinary International Conference* took place at the University of Bari Aldo Moro (Italy) in 16 – 19 December 2019, with large participation of researchers from many countries of Europe and Africa, as well from the nearest countries of West Asia.

The 2nd Conference was planned for 6-7 April 2020 with the colleagues of the University of Dubrovnik (Croatia), but the COVID-19 pandemic changed many situations, and many Scientific Conferences were cancelled. However, the 2nd UNICART Conference continued her activities as a Web Remote Conferences, and a good number of researchers participated actively with their work and their discussions.

The 3rd UNICART *Interdisciplinary International Conference* was planned in 17-19 September 2020 at the University Ismail Qemali, Vlorë (Albania), both in live and remote modalities of participation, with a special panel on “Tourism of the Roots” proposed and organized by Letizia Carrera, Antonella Perri and Tullio Romita. But two days before the inaugural session, the pandemic ruined among the personnel of Ismail Qemali University: thus, the whole conference activities were transferred in the IARC Headquarters in Tirana. Live presentations were still allowed, but even Albanian scholars preferred to participate remotely. In spite of everything, the conference was a success, almost a happening against the pandemic.

The 4th UNICART *Interdisciplinary International Conference* was planned in 15-17 June 2021 at the Universitas Sancti Cyrilli in Malta, both in live and remote modalities of participation. However, due the restrictive anti-COVID policies still active by the Malta Government, the Conference goes on, once again, in remote mode only. In this Conference the potential aspects of issues related to Digital Transition and Green Sustainable Economy were studied by many scientific contributions, with particular attention to the innovations due to the pandemic crisis and its impact on the development of tourism, territories and cultures.

The 5th UNICART *Interdisciplinary International Conference* took place from 23 to 25 November 2021, remotely in the Main Hall of the *Embassy of the Republic of Liberia* in Rome, and in the Main Hall of the *Lab Instruments Institute Training Center*, Castellana Grotte (Italy), planning both live and remote participation. However, following the choices of almost all the participants, all sessions were carried out remotely.

This choice was due to numerous restrictive safety measures related to the pandemic, which did not allow many speakers (apart from those residing in Italy) to participate in person.

The 5th edition of UNICART included some collateral activities, such as the 2nd edition of the “Journey of the Roots” Award, and an editorial session for the presentation of UNICART publications in collaboration with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI).

Now our medal table also includes the 6th UNICART International Interdisciplinary Conference.

It took place from 2 to 4 June 2022, in the IARC Headquarter in Tirana (Albania) *in remote way*, and in the Caldora and Sorrentino Halls of Calabria University (Italy) with both *live* and *remote* participation, also for the Official Opening of the Conference (organised the 3 June due to the National Holiday of 2 June, Italian Republic Day).

In this conference we analysed collectively the potential aspects of issues related to Food, Tourism and Environment, with particular attention to the innovations resulting from the pandemic crisis and its impact on the development of tourism, territories, and cultures. The “UNICART 2021 Best Papers Award” ceremony was also included in the 6th Conference, and the finalist papers now are on the way to be published in a dedicated Book.

Nearly one hundred abstracts were proposed by Authors of various countries of South-Eastern Europe but also from USA, and the procedure of checking the consistency of the proposed topics with those of the Conference (and beyond) resulted in the number of 80 abstracts accepted and published in the Abstracts book, as well as three proposals for our Workshop opened only to students and PhD candidates.

The COVID 19 Pandemics appears less present in the presented communications, but unfortunately dramas and tragedies have not stopped: the war does not stop, the Climate Change is burning the world, and to talk about food, environment and tourism is taking on difficult connotations. It is necessary to overcome these difficult moments, in order to return to a normal situation.

The problem of food, that could turn into famine due to climate change, is increasingly topical. The environment in which man lives and acts (often with great recklessness) is increasingly put in crisis by human choices. For these reasons, tourism is once again changing its guidelines and development is opening up to new environment-friendly sustainability scenarios. On all these topics, conference participants presented interesting points of view, explored in depth in numerous panels.

As always, we wish to thank all the participants who shared their research and analyses, contributing with their work to the success of this sixth edition of the UNICART Conference.

After the Conference, about 60 scientific papers were submitted by their Authors for the publication in the Proceedings Book following the Editorial Rules quite well. However, a relevant number of them was large up to 10 pages (and sometimes much more!), and the Editorial Team did not want to cut them, also using typographical gimmicks such as reducing the font size when needed. Therefore, the UNICART 6 Proceedings Book had to be divided into two volumes.

In this book, we present the main part of full papers we received, ordered following the Conference Macro-areas, but the numerous papers presented by young Authors in the wide Macro-area named “Glocalization” (that is “Global localization”) are published in Volume II. The same volume also contains three works submitted to participate in the Workshop “Young People for Research”.

30/06/2022

Francesco D. d'Ovidio, Francesco Favia, Tullio Romita

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- University of Calabria (Italy)
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Mountain product: the younger consumers' point of view

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Abstract: Agriculture and its related food products are often considered a way for supporting local communities and economic operators due to their ability to produce socio-economic benefits for mountain people. On the one hand, many studies focus the attention on the consumer's perception on local food, on the other hand, a few studies are oriented to analyse the mountain areas and related food production. In this case, the study aspires to contribute to the literature dedicated to mountain products. Starting from these considerations, this paper aims at contributing to analyze more in-depth the younger consumers' perception on mountain products. An empirical approach was carried out to investigate the perception of the younger generations. To this end, a structured questionnaire was made and a focus group and pre-test activity were implemented to define the final version. Furthermore, several university students from the North West of Italy were involved in a survey to evaluate their perception of the mountain product. Some evidences emerge and some differences in demographic variables are pointed out.

Keywords: mountain product; young consumers; food products; empirical survey.

1. Introduction

The European Union enhances the concept of origin and emphasises the importance of the relationship between food and territory with the application of the EU Regulation no. 1151/2012 ("Quality Package"). Indeed, over the definition of the different Geographical Indications (i.e. Protected Denomination of Origin, Protected Geographical Indication), it introduced the "optional quality terms (OQT)" inspired by the local territory.

The main objective of these tools is oriented to facilitate the communication of specific information from the producer to the consumer with regard to inherent characteristics of the food in order to generate new income in less-favoured areas like as mountains and islands. In this sense, the Regulation defines two optional quality terms: "mountain product" and "product of island farming".

Related to "mountain product" optional quality term, the EU Legislator identified two specific conditions i.e. "raw materials and animal feed come from mountain areas" and "the food production processes should take place in such areas as well".

The EU Delegated Regulation no. 665/2014 followed and identified the compulsory requirements for the use of the term "mountain product" for each category of food e.g. in the case of the bovine breeding, it defines that "*these products are supplied from animals reared for at least the last two thirds of their life in those mountain areas, if the products are processed in such areas*" or "*products made from transhumant animals that have been reared for at least one quarter of their life in transhumance pastures in mountain areas*". Moreover, the feedstuffs

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used in the breeding phase can be considered to come essentially from mountain areas if “*the proportion of the annual animal diet that cannot be produced in mountain areas, expressed as a percentage of dry matter, (...) does not exceed 40%*”.

During this time, some researchers provided some studies dedicated to the Mountain Product and related OQT. Related to the consumers’ perception, several scholars evidenced that some consumers had a positive perception of the inherent characteristics of the mountain products (Oliveira et al., 2021; Spence, 2017; Santini et al., 2013; Abdullah, 2012; LeBel et al., 2006), some consumers evidenced the rediscovering of the local cultures, the family roots and the lost “ancient flavours” (Krüger and Strüver 2018; Spence 2018; Spence, 2017; Abdullah, 2012; Schjoll, 2010; LeBel et al., 2006). Furthermore, some scholar evidenced the necessity to provide more information about mountain product to the consumers (Borec et al., 2009; Majkovic and Borec, 2010; Schermer et al., 2010), also in the light of the lack of information about it in recent years (Finco et al., 2017).

Moreover, some concerns have been evidenced about the OQT mountain product like e.g. poor interest in the implementation of a quality labelling scheme (Bonadonna et al., 2015; Bonadonna, 2016) and the real need for this term by potential stakeholders (Bonadonna and Rosati, 2015).

At the same time, a few studies dealt with younger generations’ attitudes towards food and beverage. Especially, young generations are influenced by hygienic and environmental risks and hedonic benefits Yoon and Chung (2018), or by innovation technologies in food products, that, on the one hand, can be perceived as a safety risk (Cavaliere and Ventura, 2018), on the other can be realized as a less risk if compared to the consideration of the other generations (Öz et al., 2018). Moreover, young generations are not influenced by Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Harun et al., 2018), they did not well-known the climate labels (Bollani et al., 2017 and 2019) and realized that wine increases enjoyment of food and conviviality (Thompson and Barrett, 2016).

Currently the literature dedicated to Mountain products and Millennial consumers is lacking and, therefore, starting from the abovementioned indication, this paper aims at contributing to analyze more in-depth the younger consumers’ perception on mountain products. In particular, the study wants to investigate the main characteristics of the mountain product perceived by younger generations related to the supply chain stages, the inherent characteristics and the sensitive aspects recalled.

2. Methodology

Definitions of the main aspects dedicated to the mountain products on the basis of the international literature and EU legislation, were considered in the survey.

The questionnaire was designed in three steps.

- First step (qualitative): a first version of qualitative questionnaire (open questions) was carried out with a focus group activity (6 young male and female consumers).
- Second step (quantitative): the second version of the questionnaire was structured into several closed questions by a second focus group activity (4 university researchers and 2 food professionals).
- Third step (pre-test): the third version of the questionnaire was tested by 20 young consumers and the final version was defined.

The sample was identified on the basis of literature: Millennials/GenZ who are very sensitive to sustainable issues and the environment were chosen; in particular, higher cultural levels were taken into consideration because they allow sustainability issues to be taken in account more.

The questionnaire was administered online via the MOODLE platform to younger consumers with a higher cultural level, identified in university students. More than 4000 valid questionnaires were collected in the Turin area, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – *Sample characteristics*

Gender	Freq	Freq%
Female	2,884	70,70
Male	1,195	29.30
Age	Freq	Freq%
18-21y	2,061	50.33
>21y	2,018	49.47
All students surveyed	4,079	100

In terms of gender, 70% of the sample is female, generally more interested in environmental and sustainability issues. By age group, the two groups approaching the next two degree levels in Italy ('triennale' and 'magistrale') are equally balanced.

A pre-processing step was carried out, summarising several batteries of questions – posed on a Likert scale – into the following latent concepts:

- Purchase influences
- Definition of high quality food product
- Mountain product categories
- Mountain product definition
- Mountain product perception
- Place of purchase

At this stage, a principal correspondence analysis was performed, followed by a hierarchical cluster analysis to collapse each battery of questions in one concept. Each latent concept took the form of a qualitative variable, with categories depending on the number and description of clusters obtained in each analysis.

3. Findings

This section contains the main results of the analysis, showing the frequency distribution of the latent concepts mentioned above and their connections with gender and age. These connections all appear statistically significant, but generally weak. Cramer's V coefficients are shown in Table 2 and the significance in terms of p-value of the chi-square test is indicated in brackets.

Table 2 – *Cramer's V*

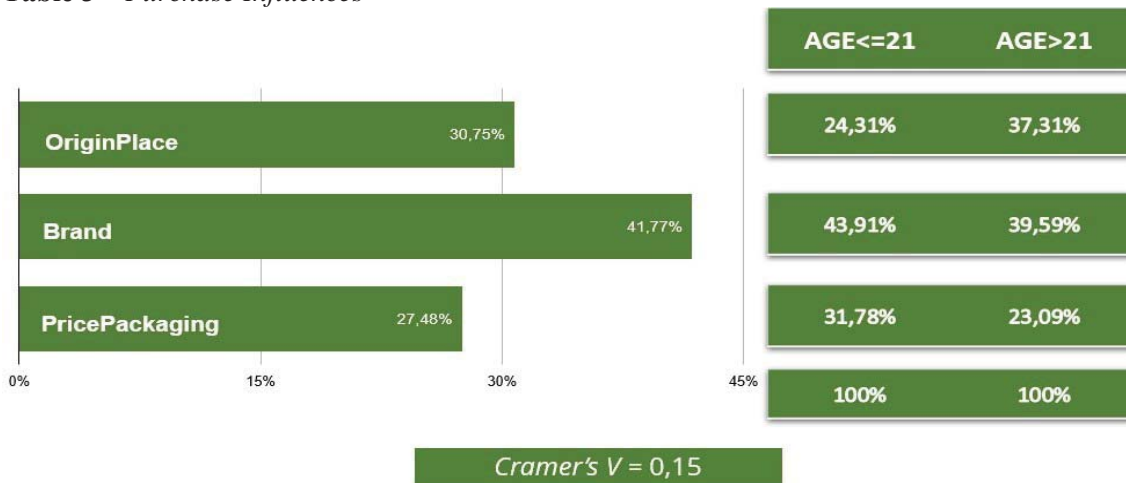
	GENDER	AGE
PURCHASE INFLUENCES	0,04 (8,97E-03)	0,15 (4,70E-21)
DEFINITION OF HIGH QUALITY FOOD PRODUCT	0,06 (3,66E-05)	0,04 (2,21E-02)
MOUNTAIN PRODUCT CATEGORIES	0,07 (9,91E-06)	0,06 (1,65E-04)
MOUNTAIN PRODUCT DEFINITION	0,02 (2,89E-01)	0,01 (4,48E-01)
MOUNTAIN PRODUCT PERCEPTION	0,08 (1,40E-07)	0,06 (1,06E-04)
PLACE OF PURCHASE	0,05 (4,56E-04)	0,09 (6,24E-09)

Note: p-values of the chi square test are in brackets.

With reference to the concept of 'Purchase Influences', the results are shown in Table 3.

As can be seen from the table, the 'brand' factor seems to be the most influential on purchase intentions with a percentage of 41.77%. This is followed, with more similar percentages, by respondents influenced by origin and place of production (OriginPlace) and those influenced by price and packaging (PricePackaging).

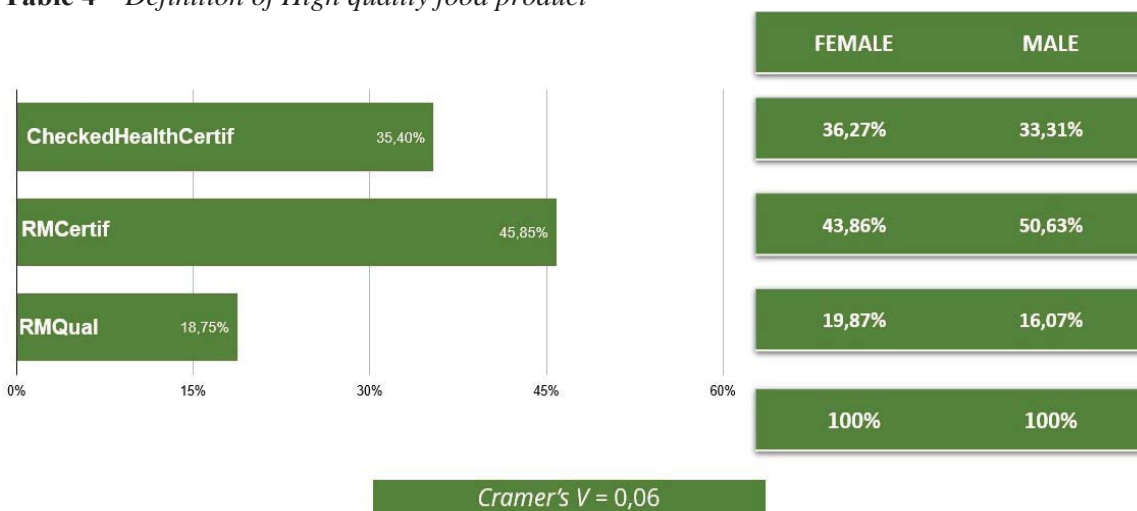
Table 3 – Purchase Influences



Legenda:

OriginPlace	Respondents influenced by origin and production place in purchase phase
Brand	Respondents influenced by brand in purchase phase
PricePackaging	Respondents influenced by price and packaging in purchase phase

Table 4 – Definition of High quality food product



Legenda:

CheckedHealthCertif	Respondents oriented to consider high quality food product as a produce with verified quality i.e. certified and checked, for health purpose
RMCertif	Respondents oriented to consider high quality food product as a produce with production process and/or raw materials guaranteed.
RawMaterials	Respondents oriented to consider high quality food product as a produce characterized by high quality production process and/or raw materials

Table 4 shows the 'Definition of high quality food product' recognised by the intertwined people. Respondents are mostly oriented towards considering a high quality food product as a certified product, both with regard to the production process and/or raw materials (RMCertif)

and with regard to health (CheckedHealthCertif). Only a smaller part (18.75%) is represented by those who are oriented towards considering a high quality food product as a product characterised by a high quality production process and/or raw materials (RawMaterials), as is the case, for example, in some high quality craft products.

For the concept of “Mountain product categories”, the results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 – Mountain product categories

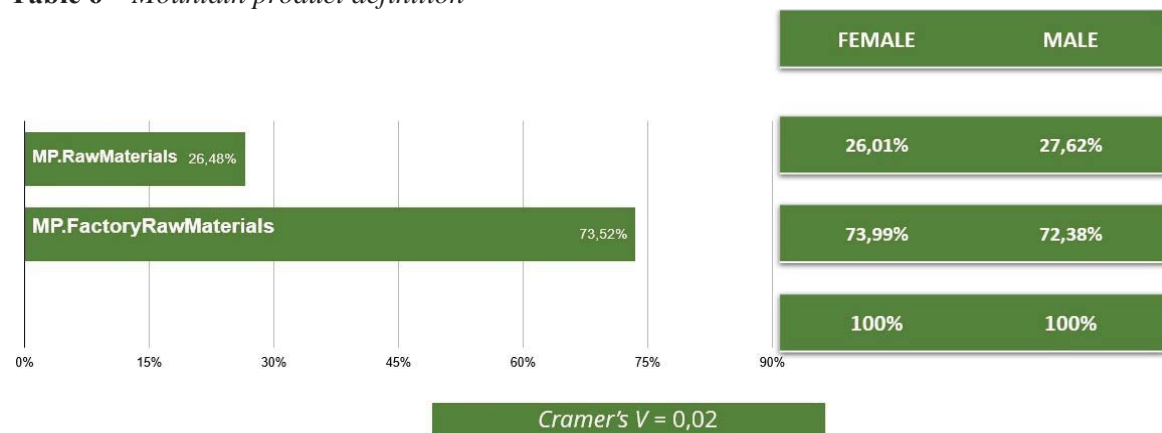


Legenda:

What.MP.Allfoods	Respondents oriented to consider all categories of food i.e. oil, wine, spirits, jam, mushroom, cheese, meat and honey, as mountain product
What.MP.RawVegCheeseMeat	Respondents oriented to consider cheese, meat and fresh vegetable products as mountain product
What.MP.ProcProdAnimalOrigin	Respondents oriented to consider animal origin food (i.e. cheese, meat and honey) and processed products as mountain product

As can be seen from the table, those respondents (about 40%) who consider all possible food categories as potentially mountainous prevail, in line with the literature. However, the two groups of those who are more likely to consider vegetarian (32%) or animal-dominated foods (28%) as potentially mountainous are also consistent.

Table 6 – Mountain product definition



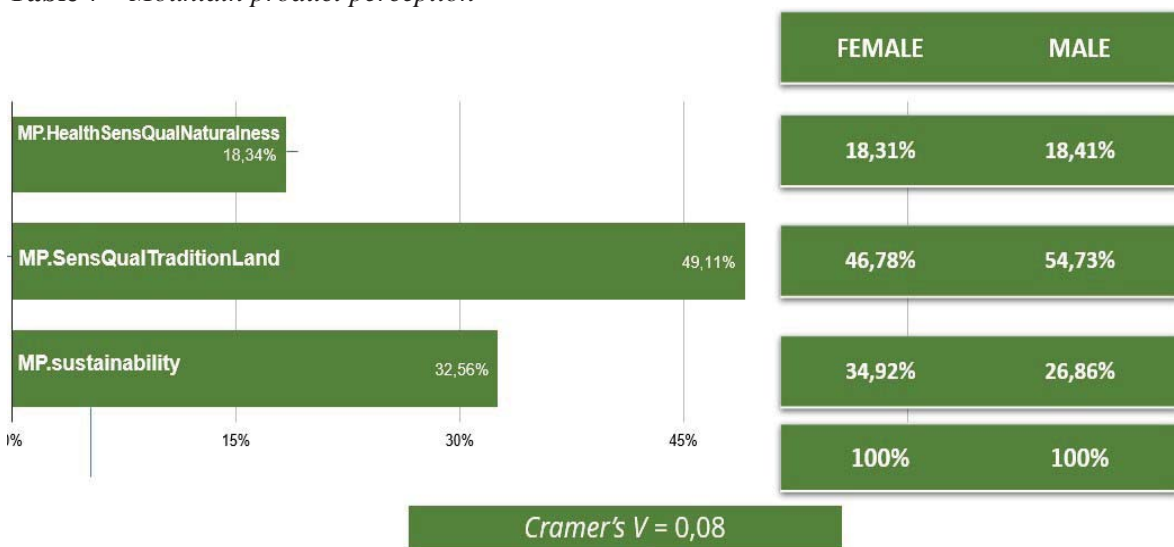
Legenda:

MP.RawMaterials	Respondents oriented to consider mountain product as product made with raw material with mountain origin
MP.FactoryRawMaterials	Respondents oriented to consider mountain product as product made with raw material with mountain origin processed in mountain area

With reference to the concept of “Mountain product definition”, the results are shown in Table 6.

It appears that respondents are mostly oriented towards considering the mountain product as a product obtained from raw materials of mountain origin processed in mountain areas (MP.FactoryRawMaterials) with a percentage of 73.52%. This is followed by the respondents considering the mountain product as a product obtained from raw materials of mountain origin (MP.RawMaterials) with a percentage of 26.48%.

Table 7 – Mountain product perception



Legenda:

MP.sustainability	Respondents oriented to consider mountain product a useful tool reaching the triple bottom line (TBL) i.e. environmental, social and economic sustainability
MP.SensQualTraditionLand	Respondents oriented to consider mountain product a useful tool rediscovering old flavours, tradition and land contact
MP.HealthSensQualNaturalness	Respondents oriented to consider mountain product a useful tool eating health, tasty and natural food

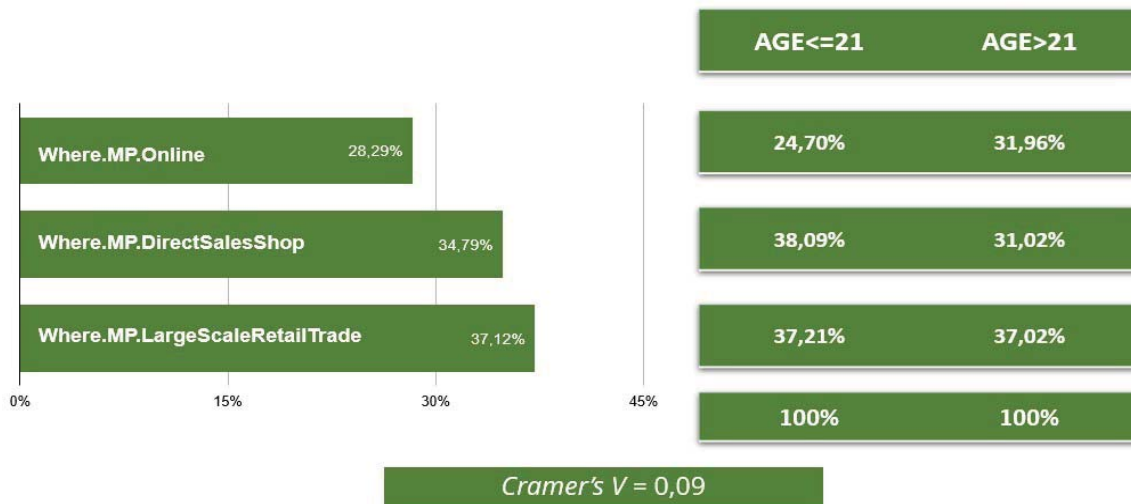
For the concept of “Mountain product perception”, the results are shown in Table 7.

As can be seen in the table, respondents are mostly oriented towards considering the mountain product a useful tool to rediscover ancient flavours, tradition and contact with the territory (MP.SensualQualTraditionLand) with a percentage of 49.11%. This was followed by the respondents oriented to consider the mountain product a useful tool to achieve the triple bottom line (TBL), i.e. environmental, social and economic sustainability (MP.sustainability) with a percentage of 32.56%. The lowest rate, at 18.34%, is represented by respondents oriented towards considering the mountain product a useful tool for eating healthy, tasty and natural food (MP.HealthSensQualNaturalness).

As far as the concept of “Place of purchase” is concerned, the results are presented in Table 8.

For this last variable, the sample is divided into three groups. The group slightly larger than the other two believes that mountain product can be purchased in large-scale distribution (Where.MP.LargeScaleRetailTrade) with a percentage of 37.12%. This is followed by the respondents who believe that mountain product can be purchased through direct sales, via the food market or the farm, and specialised shops (Where.MP.DirectSalesShop) with a rate of 34.79%. The lowest rate of 28.29% is represented by respondents who believe that mountain product can be purchased via e-service (Where.MP.Online).

Tab. 8 – Place of purchase



Legenda:

Where.MP.DirectSalesShop	Mountain product can be purchased with direct sales, through food market or farm, and specialized shops
Where.MP.Online	Mountain product can be purchased by e-service
Where.MP.LargeScaleRetailTrade	Mountain product can be purchased in large scale retail traders

5. Discussion and conclusion

This research aimed at increasing knowledge about the young consumers' perception on mountain products. The mountain agri-food economy is a fundamental pillar for the maintenance of rural areas and in this line the mountain product is a very important asset for our respondents. They identify it as a product that involves all the categories of food e.g. cheese, meat, honey, fruits and vegetables. They consider that mountain products should be produced entirely in mountain area (i.e. all the phases of the supply chain) even if they realize that the most important phase is the production of raw materials. Moreover, the respondents are oriented to consider mountain product as a useful tool to rediscover old flavors, tradition and land contact in line with other studies (Krüger and Strüver, 2018; Spence, 2018; Spence, 2017; Abdullah, 2012; LeBel et al., 2006). At the same time, they believe that mountain product is a tool oriented to reach the goal of the triple bottom line (TBL) i.e. environmental, social and economic sustainability, as well as reported in other study (Oliveira et al., 2021).

Findings are in line with the indication of the scholars that study these issues and contribute to improve the knowledge in the field underlining that the respondents are sensitive to mountain product themes. However, the research is limited to a sample belonging to the younger consumers with high level of education. In this sense, future researches should be oriented to extend the study to other generations and other categories of the generation of the respondents.

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