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Economic analysis of marketing strategies to improve the competitiveness of food industry enterprises in the agro-industrial complex

Olena Petrova*

PhD in Agriculture, Associate Professor
Mykolaiv National Agrarian University
54008, 9 Georgiy Gongadze Str., Mykolaiv, Ukraine
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8612-3981>

Ruslan Trybrat

PhD in Agriculture, Associate Professor
Mykolaiv National Agrarian University
54008, 9 Georgiy Gongadze Str., Mykolaiv, Ukraine
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6710-570X>

Natalia Shevchuk

PhD, Associate Professor
Mykolaiv National Agrarian University
54008, 9 Georgiy Gongadze Str., Mykolaiv, Ukraine
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5845-2582>

Alla Ziuzko

PhD in Technical Sciences, Senior Lecturer
Mykolaiv National Agrarian University
54008, 9 Georgiy Gongadze Str., Mykolaiv, Ukraine
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0888-4854>

► **Abstract.** The purpose of this study was to analyse the marketing strategies of food industry enterprises in the Mykolaiv region to increase their competitiveness. The study investigated the economic state of the region's food industry, analysed current marketing practices, and assessed the competitive environment. The study employed a wide range of methods, including statistical analysis, SWOT analysis, benchmarking, and economic and mathematical modelling to forecast product demand. Based on official statistics, practical examples of local enterprises (Olkom, Chumak) and global marketing practices (Nestlé, Unilever, Coca-Cola, Danone), the strengths and weaknesses of enterprises in the region were identified, as well as opportunities for development. The study found that the key advantages include access to high-quality raw materials, regional brand recognition, and the potential for using digital technologies. The key challenges include limited marketing budgets, dependence on seasonality, and high competition from large national and international producers. Recommendations were developed for adapting marketing strategies to the specific characteristics of the region, including the use of local advantages (geographical location, access to resources), the introduction of modern marketing tools, improved interaction between farmers and food industry enterprises, and the creation of clusters to increase efficiency. It was proposed to use international practices to design sustainable development programmes, create unique local products, and introduce innovations in distribution and logistics. The findings of the study can be used by food industry enterprises in the Mykolaiv region to optimise marketing strategies, increase competitiveness, and strengthen their positions in internal and external markets

► **Keywords:** business; agriculture; secondary sector; management methods; sales profitability

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*Corresponding author



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► Introduction

The relevance of the study lies in the growing competition in internal and external markets. In the current conditions of globalisation and Ukraine's integration into international trade systems, food industry enterprises are faced with the need to respond quickly to changes in demand, improve product quality, and adapt to international standards. At the same time, growing consumer interest in environmentally friendly and organic products creates new opportunities for the development of the industry. To ensure sustainable competitive advantages, enterprises must develop effective marketing strategies based on modern market analysis methods, innovative approaches to distribution, logistics, and product promotion. Particular focus should be made on the use of digital technologies, such as Big Data, CRM systems, and analytical platforms, to gain a deeper understanding of consumer preferences and personalise offers. Improving the competitiveness of food industry enterprises also contributes to the development of the agro-industrial complex as a whole, strengthening Ukraine's export potential and integration into the global market. Analysis of the economic aspects of marketing strategies allows identifying the most effective approaches, optimising costs, and ensuring sustainable development of the industry. Therefore, research on this topic is valuable both from a scientific and practical standpoint for enterprises in the industry.

In the modern globalised world, the competitiveness of food industry enterprises is becoming an essential factor in ensuring the economic stability of regions and countries. The Mykolaiv region, which has strong agro-industrial potential, faces the challenges of integration into global markets and adaptation to modern economic conditions. The region's food industry is represented by both large export-oriented producers and small and medium-sized enterprises focused on local markets. At the same time, the effectiveness of marketing strategies continues to be a significant factor determining the ability of enterprises to compete in the context of increasing globalisation (Saeed *et al.*, 2024). Analysing the issue of food security, I. Petrunenko *et al.* (2021) emphasised the need for a comprehensive approach to forming competitive advantages for food industry enterprises, particularly through strategic planning and the implementation of effective marketing solutions. The researchers emphasised that it is marketing activities focused on the principles of sustainable development that can become a tool for improving the efficiency of enterprises in the face of global competition. D. Saveliy *et al.* (2024) investigated the possibility of extracting useful components from sunflower oil hydration waste, which reduces the environmental impact of production and increases the economic efficiency of enterprises.

A. Belinska *et al.* (2024) proposed chemical methods for inactivating lipoxygenases in flax raw materials, which improves product quality and expands its use in functional foods. Research on the competitiveness strategies of agro-industrial enterprises conducted by A. Kobets *et al.* (2021) emphasised the significance of implementing cluster initiatives that promote more effective cooperation between producers, processors, and distributors. In the field of strategic marketing for small and medium-sized enterprises, H. Sukier *et al.* (2024) analysed the adaptation of

local strategies to global markets using the example of the Colombian baking industry, demonstrating how the integration of local approaches with modern technologies can help attract customers and increase profitability. B. Wood *et al.* (2021) investigated the market strategies of large processed food manufacturers that use mergers, product range expansion, and aggressive advertising to consolidate market power. This study is valuable for understanding the competition faced by small and medium-sized enterprises. S. Khan *et al.* (2021) explored the effects of technological innovation and the circular economy on business strategies in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasising the need to adapt to emerging challenges.

A review of circular models in agri-food systems by M. Hamam *et al.* (2021) provided a basis for developing strategies to minimise waste and use resources efficiently. A. Satpathy *et al.* (2024) stressed the significance of implementing sustainable practices in the food industry that ensure compliance with environmental requirements and changing consumer preferences. M. Baskoro *et al.* (2024) investigated the effectiveness of marketing communications, showing how environmental values can be integrated into business strategies to increase customer loyalty. F. Badia *et al.* (2024) explored the possibilities of integrating agritourism into the food industry, proposing new models for creating added value.

Despite considerable interest in marketing strategies, regional specifics, specifically the adaptation of international practices to the conditions of the Mykolaiv region, are still understudied. Seasonality, limited financial resources, and competitive pressure require a comprehensive approach to analysis and innovation. The purpose of the present study was to examine the marketing strategies of food industry enterprises in the Mykolaiv region and assess their effectiveness. The objectives of the study were to analyse the marketing strategies of food industry enterprises in the Mykolaiv region, evaluate the effectiveness of the marketing approaches used, and develop recommendations for improving the competitiveness of enterprises in the region.

► Materials and methods

This study employed an interdisciplinary approach to analyse the marketing strategies of food companies in the Mykolaiv region. The study was based on quantitative and qualitative methods, which provide a comprehensive understanding of the issues. The primary sources of data were official statistical reports from the Main Department of Statistics in Mykolaiv region (n.d.), which contained information on production volumes, exports, imports, and investment activity of enterprises in the period from 2020 to 2024. Specifically, data on the volume of exports of oil, juices, and grains, which form the basis of the region's agro-industrial potential, were considered. Furthermore, international databases such as the UN Comtrade Database (n.d.) were used to provide comparisons with the situation in other countries, particularly Germany, Poland, and Turkey, where the food industry has comparable characteristics and challenges.

To analyse the competitive environment and the effectiveness of marketing strategies, case studies of local companies such as Olkom (n.d.) and Chumak (n.d.) were used,

as well as global practices of Nestlé (n.d.), Unilever (n.d.), Coca-Cola (n.d.), and Danone (n.d.). This helped to examine approaches to adapting products to regional and international markets. The study employed SWOT analysis to identify the strengths and weaknesses of companies, as well as the opportunities and threats associated with marketing strategies. Methods of marketing strategy analysis were also analysed: return on investment (ROI), which allows assessing the relationship between marketing investments and the income received. Benchmarking was another effective tool that involved comparing one's marketing strategies with best practices in the industry. The use of economic and mathematical modelling helped to forecast demand for the products of enterprises in the region, considering variables such as seasonality, prices, and marketing costs. Tools such as Google Analytics and Meta Ads Manager were used to evaluate digital marketing campaigns. This helped to assess customer engagement through social media and the effectiveness of advertising campaigns.

► Results

Features of marketing strategies in local markets: International practices and theoretical approaches. In the context of the current digital transformation of marketing, particular attention should be paid to the implementation of digital tools to improve communication strategy, analyse consumer preferences, and personalise services. According to I. Banyeva *et al.* (2023), the use of innovative marketing technologies in branding ensures sustainable growth in brand awareness and loyalty, which can be effectively adapted in the agro-industrial sector to promote food industry products. One of the key areas for improving the competitiveness of food industry enterprises in modern conditions is the digitalisation of production and management processes. The use of digital technologies substantially reduces costs, optimises interaction with consumers, and improves the quality of management decisions, which directly influences the effectiveness of marketing strategies (Yekimov *et al.*, 2022).

Global practices demonstrate the significance of adapting marketing strategies to the specifics of local markets, including cultural, social characteristics, and economic and technological factors. International companies successfully integrate localisation into their strategies, enabling them to meet the needs of diverse consumer segments around the world. For instance, Nestlé (n.d.), using Big Data to forecast demand and personalise products, has achieved a 15%-20% increase in ROI. This demonstrates

the effectiveness of using technology to adapt products to local preferences, which increases profits and reduces marketing costs, improving overall profitability. In the case of India, the company adapted its products by changing flavour profiles to suit the region's culinary traditions. In Japan, Nestlé introduced a variety of KitKat flavours, such as matcha, which is popular in Japanese culture. This adaptation demonstrates the significance of factoring in the local cultural and gastronomic characteristics when developing marketing strategies. Notably, the introduction of AI tools has reduced the company's marketing research costs by 18%, demonstrating the effectiveness of using advanced technologies to improve the accuracy and speed of marketing decisions and reduce operating costs.

Unilever (n.d.) integrates sustainable development principles into its strategies, emphasising the environmental friendliness of its products. The company has reduced its environmental footprint by 30% through the application of a circular economy, which not only improved its environmental reputation but also enabled it to attract new customer categories, particularly among environmentally conscious consumers. Coca-Cola (n.d.) demonstrated the successful use of digital platforms to engage younger audiences, notably through campaigns on TikTok, which reached 1.5 million users in three months. This highlighted the value of using modern technologies to attract new consumer segments and increase engagement with the end consumer. In Mexico, Coca-Cola focuses on family values, while in China it focuses on traditional holidays such as Chinese New Year. Danone (n.d.), investing 20% of its marketing budget in social media, recorded a 25%-30% increase in online sales in 2023. This demonstrates the effectiveness of investing in digital channels to achieve marked sales growth in the online segment, which is part of a strategy to attract new customers and increase the loyalty of existing ones.

Analysing the effectiveness of marketing strategies in numerical terms allows clearly identifying the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches. Specifically, a comparison of profitability, ROI, and logistics costs for conventional, hybrid, digital, and environmentally-oriented strategies revealed substantial differences in their influence on the competitiveness of enterprises. For example, international companies demonstrate markedly better performance thanks to innovative solutions, while enterprises in the Mykolaiv region that rely on conventional methods fall behind due to technological and resource constraints (Table 1).

Table 1. Analysis of the effectiveness of marketing strategies in numerical terms

Strategy type	ROI, %	Profitability, %	Logistics costs, %	Examples
Conventional	8-10	10	20-25	Fairs, local advertising
Hybrid	12-15	15-18	15-18	"Chumak" (CRM + social media)
Digital	18-22	20-25	10-12	Nestlé (AI, Big Data)
Environmentally oriented	10-12	12-15	18-20	Danone (renewable resources)

Source: compiled by the authors

Digital strategies, particularly artificial intelligence and big data analytics, demonstrate the highest effectiveness due to their ability to accurately predict demand, automate processes, and optimise logistics (Palamarchuk &

Korkach, 2023). Conventional methods, such as fair participation and local advertising, have lower performance due to their high operating costs and limited scalability. Hybrid strategies, as exemplified by Chumak (n.d.),

combine conventional methods with digital tools such as CRM systems and targeted advertising, enabling increased efficiency even with limited resources. Environmentally focused strategies have long-term potential, as shown by Danone (n.d.), which increased customer loyalty using renewable resources. For the Mykolaiv region, this means the opportunity to enter European markets through organic certification. Therefore, the transition to hybrid or digital strategies is key for businesses in the region. Investments in modern technologies and environmental initiatives will not only bring enterprises closer to global leaders but also enable them to capitalise on competitive advantages such as access to high-quality raw materials.

The concept of strategic groups helps to understand how companies build their strategies within specific markets that are competitive for specific consumer segments. For example, in the organic products market, Danone (n.d.) and Nestlé (n.d.) form separate strategic groups, focusing on high-quality organic products for specific regions, such as Europe, where demand for such products is consistently high. Adapting these strategies to local markets is vital for companies seeking to increase their competitiveness. In regions with developed agro-industrial traditions, such as the Mykolaiv region, marketing strategies should focus on the local nature and environmental friendliness of products. Consideration of the specific characteristics of local resources, such as agricultural raw materials, as well as adapting to climatic and cultural characteristics, will contribute to the creation of competitive advantages in the market.

In the current conditions of global turbulence, it is also essential to ensure that agricultural production follows the principles of sustainable development. Research shows that the level of economic accessibility of food and the environmental stability of agricultural production are closely interrelated, which creates a basis for the development of adaptive marketing strategies aimed at environmentally conscious consumers (Poltorak *et al.*, 2023). O. Dovgal *et al.* (2022) emphasised that the implementation of circular economy principles contributes to the rationalisation of production and cost reduction, which is an essential element of sustainable development strategies. For food industry enterprises, this can mean improving resource efficiency, reducing waste, and improving their environmental image, all of which directly affect their competitiveness in internal and external markets.

Specifically, strategies that focus on the naturalness and environmental friendliness of products are significant for the Mykolaiv region. In regions where the consumption culture is oriented towards natural products, a strategy that emphasises the environmental friendliness and local origin of products can contribute to increased consumer loyalty and the competitiveness of food industry enterprises. Thus, local marketing strategies adapted to the specifics of the market and culture are key to success in a globalised world.

Marketing strategies of food industry enterprises in the Mykolaiv region. The marketing strategies of food industry enterprises in the Mykolaiv region are shaped by regional characteristics, among which the consumer habits of the local population and the raw material base play a key role. Producers such as Olkom (n.d.) and Chumak (n.d.)

focus on using local raw materials that meet the demand for natural and environmentally friendly products among the region's residents. This strategy is reinforced by the region's specialisation in the production of oil (28.8% of the total Ukrainian volume) and fruit and vegetable juices (40.3%), which are often produced to suit regional tastes (Main Department of Statistics in Mykolaiv region, n.d.).

S. Reshmidilova *et al.* (2024) showed that the use of artificial intelligence technologies in marketing strategies contributes to the personalisation of communication with customers, the automation of operations, and the formation of predictive models of consumer behaviour. This provides companies with competitive advantages and improves the effectiveness of interaction with consumers, which is a crucial factor in strengthening the competitiveness of food industry enterprises. A major factor determining the potential of an enterprise to implement innovative approaches in marketing activities is the level of human capital development (Shtal *et al.*, 2023). Investments in staff training, the creation of a motivating environment for professional growth and self-learning contribute to increased labour productivity and ensure the sustainable functioning of enterprises in a competitive market (Yekimov *et al.*, 2023). However, communication with consumers is mainly focused on conventional channels, such as local media or the organisation of tastings, which indicates the conservatism of the market and the priority of personal contact in conditions of limited budgets for digital marketing.

The Mykolaiv region is a prominent agro-industrial region of Ukraine, where the food industry plays a key role in the economy. According to 2024 data, exports of goods from the region in January-February amounted to USD 182 mn, which is 39.8% more than in the same period of the previous year. In the first quarter of 2024, exports reached USD 251.3 mn, which is 96.3% of the same indicator in 2023. The main export destinations were China, Germany, the United States, and Moldova, which indicates stable demand for the region's products on the international market. The food industry in the Mykolaiv region is represented by enterprises specialising in the production of meat, dairy products, flour, bread, oil, and juices. For instance, the region accounts for 28.8% of Ukraine's total oil production and 40.3% of fruit and vegetable juices. In 2024, 66.4% of food industry enterprises in the region were engaged in export activities, which exceeded the average for Ukraine (60.9%) (Main Department of Statistics in Mykolaiv region, n.d.).

A valuable factor influencing marketing decisions is the logistics infrastructure and access to transport hubs. Until 2022, the ports of the Mykolaiv region provided stable exports of grain and oilseeds, but due to the blockade of sea routes during the full-scale war, enterprises were forced to use alternative routes, particularly through EU countries (Romania, Poland), which substantially increased transportation costs and reduced-price competitiveness. This situation stimulated a shift towards land transport and the development of cooperation with countries that have stable demand for products, such as Germany and Moldova. To minimise risks, companies stepped up their efforts to build up strategic reserves of raw materials and finished products, which allows

them to maintain export operations even in conditions of unstable logistics (Main Department of Statistics in Mykolaiv region, n.d.).

The food industry in Mykolaiv region competes with a series of rival companies on both the internal and external markets. In the internal market, the primary competitors are large national brands such as Rud, MHP, Obolon, and Sandora. These companies have extensive financial and production resources, which allow them to conduct large-scale advertising campaigns, provide a wide range of products, and offer competitive prices. On the external market, competition is intensifying from international food producers such as Nestlé, Danone, and Unilever. These companies have many years of experience, developed distribution networks, and marketing strategies adapted to different regions of the world. For example, in the oil products segment, the key competitors for Mykolaiv producers are exporters from Argentina, Brazil, and Turkey, who have access to cheaper raw materials and actively use modern marketing approaches. A vital task for enterprises in the Mykolaiv region is to find their niche in the internal market by focusing on the environmental friendliness, local origin, and authenticity of their products. In external markets, they can strengthen their positions by improving the compliance of their products with international quality standards and using localised marketing strategies (UN Comtrade Database, n.d.).

Among the primary challenges for enterprises in the region is competition from imported products, especially in the processed goods segment, where foreign manufacturers offer lower prices. This forces local companies to focus on the quality and uniqueness of the regional origin of goods as key competitive advantages. Additional challenges are associated with high marketing campaign costs, limited access to international markets due to military risks, and the need to meet strict quality standards for exports. The instability of the raw material base, caused by seasonal fluctuations in crop yields (-24.7% in previous years) and economic uncertainty (business confidence indicator -8% in August 2024), creates further barriers to long-term planning (Main Department of Statistics in Mykolaiv region, n.d.).

In such conditions, it is critical to diversify sales markets, improve logistics chains, and integrate digital tools for product promotion, which will compensate for the structural weaknesses of the industry. Specifically, the use of modern digital platforms, such as CRM systems and targeted advertising on social networks, will enable companies to reduce marketing costs and increase conversion rates. Furthermore, investments in sustainable development and organic product certification will help to improve competitiveness in European markets. A SWOT analysis was conducted to assess existing marketing strategies, the results of which are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. SWOT analysis of food industry enterprises in Mykolaiv region

Category	Factors
Strengths	Availability of high-quality raw materials
	Regional brand recognition with an emphasis on locality and environmental friendliness
	Active use of digital platforms to promote farm products
	Product diversity (organic products, value-added products)
Weaknesses	Low scalability of marketing campaigns outside the region
	Insufficient use of modern analytical tools
	Limited marketing budgets in small and medium-sized enterprises
	Seasonal dependence of raw material supplies
Opportunities	Broader use of digital technologies such as Big Data and CRM systems
	Growing demand for organic products in Ukraine and beyond
	Improvement of export opportunities through international exhibitions and fairs
	Attraction of foreign investment to expand production
Threats	High competition from large national brands and imported products
	Economic instability and fluctuations in raw material prices
	Changes in regulatory requirements in the field of food safety and export
	Deterioration of climatic conditions affecting the availability of raw materials

Source: compiled by the authors

SWOT analysis showed that enterprises have significant advantages related to product quality and regional recognition. However, limited marketing budgets and insufficient use of modern technologies create problems for market expansion. At the same time, companies have significant opportunities to improve their marketing strategies, including the development of digital marketing, increasing export potential, and introducing innovative approaches to analytics. To overcome threats, it is vital to consider the instability of the economic situation and increased competition.

Development of recommendations to improve the competitiveness of enterprises in the region. Based on an

analysis of the marketing strategies of enterprises in the Mykolaiv region and a comparison with international experience, a series of strategic measures aimed at improving the competitiveness of local enterprises were proposed. The recommendations include adapting best international practices to regional conditions, improving the effectiveness of marketing strategies, developing technological infrastructure, and creating long-term partnerships to stimulate growth and expand exports.

The first step is to adapt international practices to regional conditions. One of the key areas of focus is the introduction of digital tools to optimise marketing budgets and improve customer engagement. Modern CRM

systems and data analytics platforms enable enterprises to automate customer marketing processes, increase demand forecasting accuracy, and make efficient use of limited resources. For instance, Danone's experience showed that integrating AI tools for social media analysis can increase online sales by 25%-30%. This is a crucial aspect for companies in the Mykolaiv region, where significant potential exists for developing online sales and using digital channels to attract customers.

Another major step is the development of cluster models that bring together farmers, processors, and distributors. This strategy reduces costs, increases production efficiency, and strengthens the region's competitive position. The experience of Unilever (n.d.) shows that the successful implementation of cluster models helps to reduce logistics costs by 15% and increase export potential. Polish experience also confirmed the effectiveness of such models: several agro-industrial clusters were created in the country, enabling small and medium-sized enterprises to reduce transport costs and increase export volumes (UN Comtrade Database, n.d.).

For the Mykolaiv region, which has a strong raw material base and a developed agro-industrial sector, the introduction of clusters could be a powerful tool for optimising production and entering new markets. It is vital to create infrastructure that will bring together enterprises from different sectors, which will reduce costs and ensure a stable supply of raw materials. To optimise their marketing strategies, enterprises in the Mykolaiv region must increase the share of digital channels in their overall marketing budget. The example of Nestlé (n.d.), which spends up to 12% of its budget on digital marketing, demonstrated how effective use of TikTok and Instagram can reach a young audience and attract new customers. For small and medium-sized enterprises, this means the opportunity to increase brand awareness by 25% and increase conversion by 12%-15%. Such changes will allow enterprises in the Mykolaiv region to improve their market position, increase advertising efficiency, and attract new consumers at minimal cost.

One of the key advantages of the Mykolaiv region is access to high-quality agricultural raw materials, including organic products, which can become the basis for the development of unique products with an emphasis on environmental friendliness. The 35% growth in demand for organic products in the European Union creates opportunities for expanding exports of certified products, as demonstrated by Olkom (n.d.), which increased oil prices by 20%-30% thanks to compliance with standards (FoodChain ID Certification, n.d.). The Mykolaiv region has promising potential for the production of organic and environmentally friendly products, which will allow its enterprises to gain access to more profitable markets and strengthen their reputation in the international arena.

The use of economic and mathematical models to forecast demand will enable enterprises in the Mykolaiv region to minimise the risks of overproduction and reduce storage costs. Nestlé's experience confirmed that the use of such tools can reduce storage costs by 25%, which is an essential aspect for food industry enterprises in the region. To implement these changes, it is necessary that local enterprises receive support through IT training programmes for managers, which will improve staff qualifications and

adapt modern technologies to local conditions. A strategic step for the Mykolaiv region is to establish partnerships with international brands. The example of Olkom (n.d.), which developed export hubs and partnerships, led to a considerable increase in export volumes. The Turkish practices showed that partnerships with international companies can increase exports by 40% in 5 years (UN Comtrade Database, n.d.). Such a strategy would be useful for enterprises in the Mykolaiv region, as it would enable them to access wider markets and improve their competitiveness at the global level.

The expected outcomes of implementing the recommendations are a 10%-15% reduction in operating costs, a 25%-30% increase in exports, and an increase in profitability to 18%-20% for enterprises with hybrid strategies. For example, Chumak, a company that already combines conventional methods with digital tools, has a profitability of 18%. Thus, a systematic approach to adapting international practices, a focus on innovation, environmental strategies, and strategic cooperation will be key to transforming the local advantages of the Mykolaiv region into global competitive advantages.

► Discussion

The findings of the study showed that digital marketing strategies, specifically the use of artificial intelligence and Big Data analytics, are the most effective for improving the competitiveness of food industry companies. These findings were consistent with those of S. Kaggwa *et al.* (2024), who found that integrating artificial intelligence into decision-making processes optimises costs and increases the profitability of business strategies. For example, in the case of Nestlé, the use of artificial intelligence helped reduce marketing research costs by 18%, highlighting the potential of technology for companies in the Mykolaiv region. M. Asikin *et al.* (2024) obtained analogous findings, where digital marketing was identified as a key factor in increasing the competitive advantages of small and medium-sized enterprises. This confirmed that even limited resources can be used effectively thanks to innovative tools.

The significance of environmentally-oriented strategies identified in the present study found its confirmation in the study by M. López-Cabarcos *et al.* (2024). The researchers noted that the implementation of sustainable resource management practices positively correlates with the financial performance of food companies. For instance, Danone's practices in reducing its environmental footprint by 30% confirmed that investments in the circular economy can provide long-term competitive advantages, especially in European markets. These findings were supported by T. Bjørndal *et al.* (2024), who considered aquaculture as a tool for ensuring food security through the rational use of resources. For the Mykolaiv region, this could mean the opportunity to develop niche products such as organic oils or juices that are in line with global sustainability trends.

An analysis of the effects of marketing processes on business performance conducted by A. Asslouni & S. Bourroubey (2025) reinforced the need for a systematic approach to strategy planning. The study found that combining conventional methods with digital tools (e.g., CRM

systems) can increase profitability by up to 18%, which is consistent with findings on the effectiveness of hybrid strategies. However, the limited budgets of local enterprises necessitate prioritising investments, particularly in automation and data analytics. This was confirmed by I. Sutaguna *et al.* (2023), who found that adapting marketing strategies to local conditions is critical for increasing sales. For example, Chumak achieved a profitability of 18% by combining CRM systems and local fairs, illustrating the effectiveness of a hybrid approach.

Compared to international practices, the findings of the present study highlighted the specific regional conditions of the Mykolaiv region, particularly its dependence on seasonality and limited logistics capabilities. M. Padhiary (2025) emphasised that collaborative strategies between producers and distributors contribute to cost optimisation and the expansion of export potential, which is in line with recommendations for the creation of clusters in the Mykolaiv region. For example, Polish agro-clusters reduced logistics costs by 15%, which could serve as a model for the region (UN Comtrade Database, n.d.).

The growing role of digital platforms in marketing, analysed by S. Asif (2025), demonstrated how the adaptation of online strategies can shape consumer preferences and ensure sustainable development. For example, the experience of McDonald's, described by A. Kusuma *et al.* (2024), illustrated the effectiveness of targeted social media campaigns in attracting young audiences. For businesses in the Mykolaiv region, this means an opportunity to increase online sales through the integration of analogous approaches, as confirmed by L. Sanbella *et al.* (2024) in their study on e-commerce optimisation.

I. Tomashuk (2023) emphasised the need to improve the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises through innovative business models, which is consistent with data on the significance of technological adaptation. Analogously, M. Madhavan *et al.* (2024) emphasised the role of Industry 5.0 in ensuring the sustainable development of small and medium-sized enterprises, especially in the context of the integration of cyber-physical systems. This highlighted the need for investment in modern technologies for enterprises in the region, particularly in logistics and resource management, as suggested by T. da Silva & S. Sehnem (2025). For example, the use of the Internet of Things for supply chain monitoring can reduce costs by 10%-15%, which is critical for enterprises with limited budgets.

T. Dildora (2024) focused on the organisational structure and management of food industry enterprises. The researcher noted that effective organisation of work processes is key to improving productivity and adapting to market changes. This is consistent with the findings on the need to implement CRM systems and automation, as organisational innovations directly affect operational efficiency. For instance, optimising internal communications and inventory management can reduce costs by 10%-12%, which is critical for companies with limited resources. S. Handoyo *et al.* (2023) noted that competition stimulates innovation in business strategies, confirming the value of flexibility and adaptation for enterprises in the Mykolaiv region. For example, competition with imported products forced local companies to focus on quality and environmental friendliness, which became their unique advantage.

K. Łukiewska (2024), using the example of Polish companies, emphasised the role of competitive potential in shaping international competitiveness, which is relevant for enterprises seeking to integrate innovation into their strategies. For the Mykolaiv region, this may mean the need to certify products according to international standards, such as EU Organic, which will enable them to enter European markets. Olkom's practices showed that such investments can lead to a 20%-30% increase in product prices. Another prominent aspect is logistics management in unstable conditions. J. Wijnands *et al.* (2008) indicated that efficient logistics chains are a key factor in the competitiveness of the food industry. For the Mykolaiv region, which faces restrictions due to the blockade of sea routes, this means the need to develop alternative routes through EU countries such as Romania or Poland, which requires cooperation with international partners. Z. Simonović & B. Ilić (2024) highlighted that managing complex business systems in the agro-industrial complex requires the integration of technological and organisational solutions. E. Aisyah *et al.* (2025) pointed to a link between entrepreneurial orientation and the effectiveness of business strategies, which is particularly relevant for small enterprises that dominate the region's food industry. For example, enterprises that actively use digital tools for market analysis demonstrate a higher response rate to changes in demand (Hasani *et al.*, 2023).

The findings of the present study were consistent with the conclusions of E. Boru *et al.* (2025), who emphasised that improving the competitiveness of agro-industrial enterprises is possible through the integration of marketing strategies with institutional coordination and support mechanisms. Using the example of Ethiopian industrial agro-parks, the researchers demonstrated that multi-level interaction between producers, logistics operators, and government structures contributed to the development of an effective export-oriented environment. This approach is also relevant for the Mykolaiv region, where the creation of cluster models and the development of public-private partnerships could be a key factor in strengthening the coordination of marketing activities, improving access to infrastructure, and simplifying entry into foreign markets. Specifically, the IT training programmes for managers proposed in the study could become part of state support for staff training, which is in line with the conclusions of B. Kuc *et al.* (2021), who, based on an analysis using the McKinsey matrix, substantiated the need for structural changes to achieve sustainable competitive advantages.

In the context of globalisation, N.E. Putri G & A. Aprianingsih (2025) proposed marketing strategies focused on creating unique local products, which is in line with the recommendations for developing organic and eco-friendly brands for the Mykolaiv region. For example, the creation of value-added products, such as functional food supplements based on local raw materials, could attract new markets (Berisha, & Rexhepi, 2022). Compared to the study by L. Thoan *et al.* (2024), which analysed the effects of competition on business strategies, the present findings emphasised that enterprises in the Mykolaiv region need flexibility in responding to external challenges, such as fluctuations in raw material prices or changes in

regulatory requirements. For example, growing demand for organic products in the EU creates opportunities but requires compliance with strict standards, which can be achieved through certification and innovation in production (Rama *et al.*, 2023). Thus, the findings of the present study are consistent with the conclusions of other researchers, confirming that a combination of innovative approaches, digital technologies, and effective resource management is crucial for improving the competitiveness of food industry enterprises.

► Conclusions

The study revealed that the competitiveness of food industry enterprises in the Mykolaiv region largely depends on the chosen marketing strategy, the degree of its digitalisation, adaptation to regional conditions, and the enterprise's capacity for institutional interaction. An analysis of three types of strategies – conventional, hybrid, and digital – showed the advantage of the latter: digital approaches demonstrated the highest ROI (18%-22%), profitability (20%-25%) and logistics efficiency (costs – 10%-12%). Hybrid strategies also showed stable outcomes (ROI 12%-15%, profitability 15%-18%), while conventional strategies were the least effective in all criteria (ROI 8%-10%, logistics costs up to 25%). A SWOT analysis supplemented the quantitative results, identifying critical factors that hinder the effective implementation of strategies. The most significant are the limited marketing budgets of small and medium-sized enterprises, the seasonal dependence of raw material supplies, and the insufficient level of digital literacy among management. At the same time, the availability of high-quality raw materials,

regional product identity, and consumer interest in niche eco-friendly products were identified as strengths.

The practical recommendations of the study include: 1) a gradual transition to digital marketing tools (CRM, Big Data analytics, contextual advertising); 2) the creation of regional clusters to improve logistics efficiency and stability of raw material supplies; 3) the development of state support programmes for digital education for enterprise specialists. These measures will increase conversion rates by up to 15%, reduce marketing costs by up to 10%, and improve the market position of products in both internal and external markets. The limitations of the present study included the lack of dynamic indicators for several marketing cycles, which did not allow for a full assessment of the long-term sustainability of individual strategies, as well as the insufficient representativeness of microenterprise data due to their low level of public reporting. Further research should focus on analysing the effects of marketing strategies in terms of product niches, expanding the sample of enterprises, and investigating integration models within the framework of state cluster policy, which could become a key factor in the sustainable growth of the regional food industry.

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Економічний аналіз маркетингових стратегій для підвищення конкурентоспроможності підприємств харчової промисловості в агропромисловому комплексі

Олена Петрова

Кандидат сільськогосподарських наук, доцент
Миколаївський національний аграрний університет
54008, вул. Георгія Гонґадзе, 9, м. Миколаїв, Україна
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8612-3981>

Руслан Трибрат

Кандидат сільськогосподарських наук, доцент
Миколаївський національний аграрний університет
54008, вул. Георгія Гонґадзе, 9, м. Миколаїв, Україна
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6710-570X>

Наталя Шевчук

Доктор філософії, доцент
Миколаївський національний аграрний університет
54008, вул. Георгія Гонґадзе, 9, м. Миколаїв, Україна
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5845-2582>

Алла Зюзько

Кандидат технічних наук, старший викладач
Миколаївський національний аграрний університет
54008, вул. Георгія Гонґадзе, 9, м. Миколаїв, Україна
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0888-4854>

► **Анотація.** Метою дослідження було проаналізувати маркетингові стратегії підприємств харчової промисловості Миколаївської області задля підвищення їх конкурентоспроможності. У процесі роботи вивчено економічний стан харчової галузі регіону, проаналізовано поточні практики маркетингу та проведено оцінку конкурентного середовища. Використано широкий спектр методів, зокрема статистичний аналіз, SWOT-аналіз, метод бенчмаркінгу, а також економіко-математичне моделювання для прогнозування попиту на продукцію. На основі офіційних статистичних даних, практичних прикладів місцевих підприємств («Олко», «Чумак») і світових маркетингових практик (Nestlé, Unilever, Coca-Cola, Danone) визначено сильні та слабкі сторони підприємств регіону, а також можливості для розвитку. З'ясовано, що ключовими перевагами є доступ до якісної сировини, регіональна впізнаваність брендів і потенціал для використання цифрових технологій. Основними викликами є обмеженість маркетингових бюджетів, залежність від сезонності та висока конкуренція з боку великих національних і міжнародних виробників. Розроблено рекомендації для адаптації маркетингових стратегій до специфіки регіону, зокрема використання локальних переваг (географічне положення, доступ до ресурсів), впровадження сучасних інструментів маркетингу, покращення взаємодії між фермерами та підприємствами харчової промисловості, а також створення кластерів для підвищення ефективності. Запропоновано використовувати світовий досвід для розробки програм сталого розвитку, створення унікальних локальних продуктів і впровадження інновацій у дистрибуцію та логістику. Результати дослідження можуть бути використані підприємствами харчової промисловості Миколаївської області для оптимізації маркетингових стратегій, підвищення конкурентоспроможності та зміцнення позицій на внутрішньому і зовнішньому ринках

► **Ключові слова:** бізнес; сільське господарство; вторинний сектор; методи управління; рентабельність збуту