A QUESTIONNAIRE TO UNDERSTAND CONSUMERS' ENGAGEMENT WITH FOOD AND COOKING:

EXPLORING CONSUMERS' CULINARY CONNECTIONS DURING THE DELICIOUS PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION AND AIM

Understanding **consumer behavior in gastronomy** is essential for **appreciating food culture** and its **societal impact.**

The aim of the study is to **develop a questionnaire to measure consumer engagement with food-related activities, including cooking**.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

n = 554

Participants recruited from the Basque Culinary Center and AIJU database.

Initial 63-item questionnaire was refined through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) (Table 1).

Table 1.
Procedure followed to obtain the final tool.

	Step	Resulting items
1	Items selection (literature, and Focus Groups)	63 items
2	Correlation analysis to identify similar items	55 items
3	KMO and Bartlett test (sampling adequacy and sphericity)	51 items
4	EFA (n = 227) – 1st to 5th rounds	21 items in a four-factor solution
5	CFA (n = 327)	Confirmed 18 items and the four-factor solution

Factor loadings and model fit indices (Chi-square, χ2/df ratio, GFI, CFI, TLI, RMSEA, SRMR) were calculated to optimize the questionnaire.

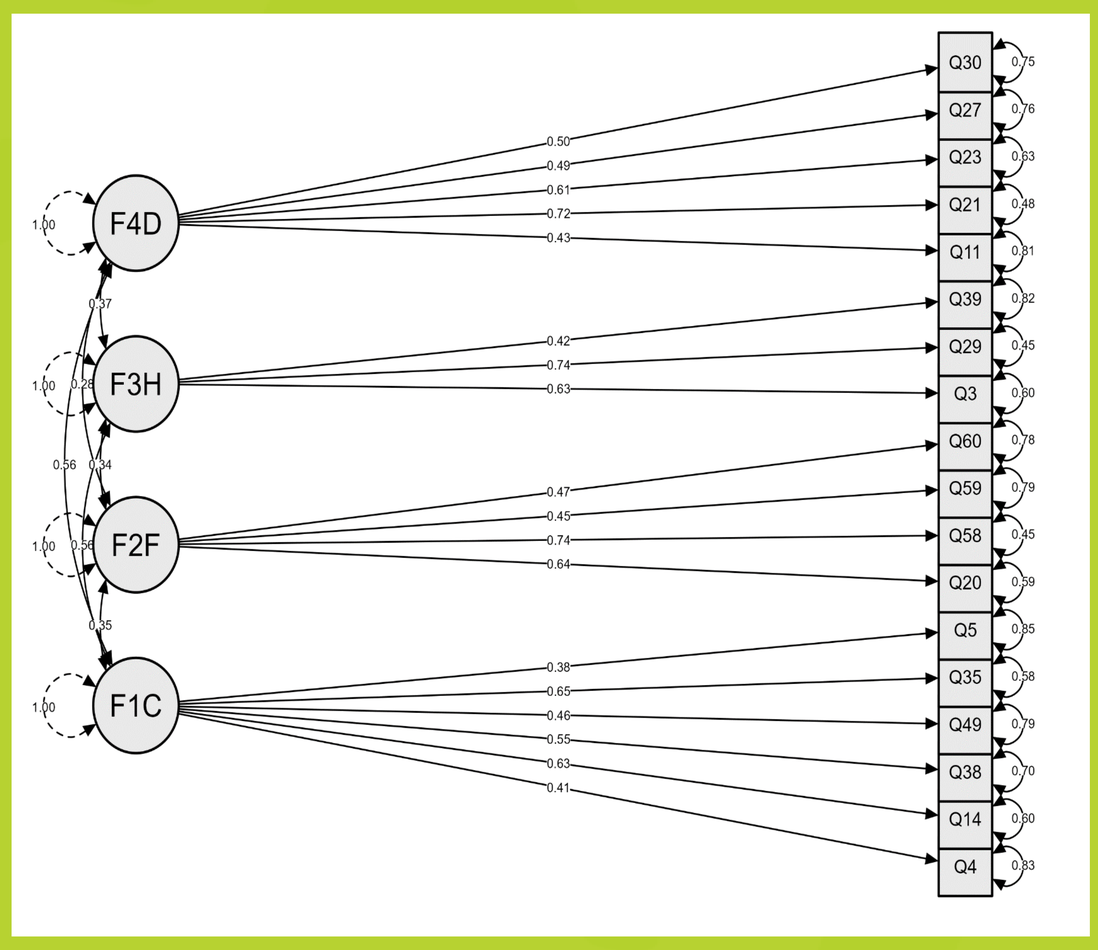
Table 2.
Final list of items after EFA and CFA

No.	Item
3	I organize the week considering the nutritional distribution of my meals.
4	In general, I buy groceries myself.
5	I buy in different food stores because I like specific products that they have in each one of them.
11	I often buy food already prepared ("heat and go") (R).
14	I worry about buying seasonal foods.
20	Once my basic needs are covered, I allocate a good part of the money I have left to gastronomy/food/food.
21	In general, I do not think too much about the food that I am going to prepare or eat throughout the day. (R)
23	Compared to other daily decisions, choosing what to eat is not important. (R)
27	I do not like to cut or mix food. (R)
29	Every day I organize the day considering what I am going to eat.
30	Mealtime is more of an obligation than a pleasure for me.
35	I take care to always apply the appropriate cooking time to each food to obtain the best results. (R)
38	When I see that there is food about to expire or spoil, I improvise any meal to use it.
39	I organize the meals for the week in advance, making large productions and freezing for later days.
49	I have notions about hygiene and food preservation.
58	I go to restaurants to learn and cook better.
59	I follow food experts through the networks to find out which foods are healthier.
60	I share what I cook/eat on my social networks.

RESULTS

After different process of refining of the EFA and CFA, the final version of the tool included 21 items (Table 2).

Items were categorized into four factors—**Culinary Skills** (F1C), **Foodies Interests** (F2F), **Healthy Habits** (F3H), and **Food & Cook Disregard** (F4D), with 6, 4, 3 and 5 items respectively.



A weighted formula was developed to calculate the consumers' overall food and cooking engagement. F1C - Culinary Skills carried the highest weight (3), followed by F2F - Foodies Interests (2) and F3H - Healthy Practices (1). F4D - Food & Cook Disregard has a negative weight (-1) to indicate disengagement.

$$Engagement\ Level\ Puctuation\ (ELP) = \frac{\sum(W_i(\overline{x}_i k_i))}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} W_i}$$

The equation calculates a score from 0 to 100, characterizing consumer engagement with food and cooking.

CONCLUSION

A **validated** and **reliable questionnaire** for measuring consumer engagement in food and cooking activities **was developed**.

This **Food & Cooking questionnaire** offers valuable insights into consumer behavior, making it an essential tool for **developing targeted culinary programs** and **enhancing food culture across various populations.**

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