Independent College

Applied Project
Submission Form

LEARNER NUMBER	51809753
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COURSE	Applied Project 2
REPORT TITLE	Overcoming the Gap: Addressing the Market Potential and Proposing Supply Chain Strategies for Accessible and Affordable Mexican Products in Dublin, Ireland.
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WORD COUNT	7117
DUE DATE	14th December 2025
DATE SUBMITTED	13th December 2025

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Overcoming the Gap: Addressing the Market Potential and Proposing Supply Chain Strategies for Accessible and Affordable Mexican Products in Dublin, Ireland.

By: Frida Martinez Garcia

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to those whose support and guidance made this project possible.
First, this is for my parents in Mexico, Rosario and Gustavo. Though separated by distance, their constant love, and belief in me have made me stronger and made this step of my academic and personal journey possible here in Ireland.
My appreciation goes to my supervisor Klaus Walter for his insightful guidance and constructive ideas, also for his clear direction.
Also, I would like to thank Dr. Daniel O'Sullivan, my course professor, for proving the knowledge and academic framework necessary to complete this project.
And finally, to my friends and people I now call my family, here in Ireland.

Abstract

This study will show the market potential and distribution challenges for Mexican food products in the city of Dublin in Ireland. Despite having a high demand, the analysis reveals a disconnection between the EU-Mexico Trade Agreement, where it's practically it is almost not as productive as it was intended to be.

Findings show that there is a low visibility and there are supply gaps that lead to high product substitution and there is a high reliance on unofficial (grey) markets. To solve this project, it is proposing to create a centralized import project to reduce costs and have better compliance with EU custom laws. Also, there is strategy of creating a certified online marketplace, to enhance the accessibility to Mexican products through reliable and trustable brands approved by customs in EU.

The conclusion is showing that is necessary to apply a strategic chain optimization to unlock Dublin's market for Mexican products, to ensure accessibility and affordability not just for the Mexican community in Ireland, but for the general Irish public.

Acronyms

ENS: Entry Summary Declaration
EU: European Union
FSAI: Food Safety Authority of Ireland
FTA: Free Trade Agreement
HS: Harmonized Code
ICS: the Import Control System
IOM: International Organization of Migration
SAD: Single Administrative Document
TARIC: Integrated Tariff of the European Union

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Immigration is defined as the act of moving into another country different to one's nationality or where someone usually lives, so the new country (of arrival) becomes the new country of residence of the person moving or immigrant. (IOM,2019). Immigration is a phenomenon present in every country in the world and therefore present in Ireland. In recent years, the Mexican Community has been growing with a register of 2,654 Mexicans living in Ireland in 2020, according to the Mexican Government. Since this data is from five years ago, this means that the Mexican population in Ireland has grown significantly, however there are no updated official figures about this information. This represents a great opportunity for Mexican products to be exposed and sold in Irish territory.

The first Mexican restaurant in Ireland opened in 1999 (Newcityresto, 2024) since then, Mexican food has represented an opportunity to grow. However, it faces multiple challenges, like supply-chain issues, transport costs, tariffs and import costs, among others. This project will try to explain the challenges and opportunities for Mexican products to be imported and sold into Ireland. This project will analyze root causes of people acquiring Mexican products in the grey market and it will address issues like pushing consumers into unofficial sources, pricing issues and product substitution.

The main objective of this project is to unlock visions to make Mexican products available for all population in the Dublin area, and the most important part to unlock the market potential that can be reached by international trade agreements like the one explored in this paper, the Mexico-European Union one.

Objective of this study

The objective of this study is to determine the demand for Mexican products in Ireland, specifically in Dublin. In addition to identifying opportunities for Mexican products in this market. By identifying market deficiencies, the lack of Mexican products in the Irish market can be addressed. This study pretends to understand the consumption habits of the Mexican Community in Ireland, for Mexican products, but also to understand locals' habits and trends. The objective also is to collect data on the consumption of Mexican products, to identify which products are the most sold, the most purchased and what products are the most looked for in the stores. These trends will also help analyze the distribution channels and how product availability affects distribution and types of channels that provide Mexican products in Ireland.

Aims

The aims of the project will be analyzed by theme, as follows:

The first theme on Import process analysis is to understand the export process between Mexico and the European Union, their characteristics and how it helps to import goods into the EU. For the second

topic of “Markets”, the objective is to understand the different distribution channels and how these are related to the distribution and the trade of Mexican products in Ireland, with focus in the city of Dublin. For the third theme of “Supply gaps and repercussions” the aim is to understand how the lack of proper (meaning, official channels to acquire Mexican products in Dublin affects sellers and consumers. For the fourth topic on “Current market analysis”, the aim is to understand the market in recent years in Dublin, for Mexican Products. And for the last and fifth theme the objective is to understand the main challenges Mexican imports face in the EU, specifically in Ireland and how to find possible solutions to the lack or to the slow growth of Mexican products in Dublin.

Expected Outcomes

This research is expected to confirm that while a modernized EU-Mexico trade agreement exists, there is still. Non-tariff barriers, like the Safety regulations and these affect the supply chain for Mexican products in Ireland. However it sometimes removes all the tariff barriers, this helps with the distribution. Some of the issues this could make exports decrease the value of export increases as well as the cost of export (Copenhagen Economics A/S, 2024). This project aims to understand the role of official and unofficial (grey market) distribution channels and how the lack of enough options for the Mexican public is partially covered by the grey market. The main outcome will be giving recommendations for suppliers and also to recognize the capacity of official markets to fulfill the demand for Mexican products.

CHAPTER II

Literature review.

Introduction

This report investigates the market potential for Mexican food products in Dublin, focusing on how supply chain strategies can be improved to meet the growing demand of the European population, while improving the access for the Mexican community in Ireland.

Theme 1: Import process analysis.

EU-Mexico Trade agreement

The main focus of this theme will be Mexico's bond with the EU, this historical agreement largely covers several types of goods including industrial, and it is the most comprehensive and advanced trade deal the EU had ever reached. (DETE, 2025). In January 2025, announced the conclusion of the modernization of the deal (European Parliament, 2025)

In 2023 the European Union represented the third-largest trading partner for Mexico. This signifies a surplus for the European Community. And talking about direct investment in Mexico, the EU is the second largest investor. (European Parliament, 2025) Mexico can benefit from the reallocation of

European investment, since Mexico is a great production/export hub for the western hemisphere. (Busse, M. & Koopmann, 2002 p. 45)

Process for importing goods from Mexico.

The process for importation could vary from country to country, but focusing on Ireland's process it should follow the subsequent steps as stated by Revenue: Goods imported into the EU must be declared to Revenue electronically through Revenue's Automated Import System (AIS). (Revenue, 2024 p.10) This will help importers or representatives to import by obtaining an electronic customs declaration.

In order to import goods into the EU, goods should be classified under the TARIC, the integrated Tariff of the European Union, this classification helps knowing customs tariffs, commercial and agricultural regulations and other non-tariff barriers (BANCOMEXT, 2000)

Carriers bringing goods into the EU must submit an Entry Summary Declaration (ENS) before arrival at the first customs office. This requirement, part of the Import Control System (ICS), applies regardless of whether goods are being imported. The ENS includes advance cargo details and can be submitted by the carrier, consignee, or their representative. Deadlines vary by transport mode, with maritime cargo requiring up to 24 hours' notice. (European Commission, 2024)
Once goods enter the EU, they are placed in temporary storage and must be submitted a customs procedure such as release for free circulation or a special procedure. Special procedures include transit, storage, specific use like temporary admission and processing. (European Commission, 2024). Goods must be declared using Single Administrative Document (SAD).

The EU Single Market guarantees free movement of goods, supported by no discrimination, mutual recognition, and legislative harmonization. Products are classified using the Harmonized System (HS), Combined Nomenclature (CN), and TARIC, before mentioned.

Business opportunity by sector

Mexico represents a business opportunity with their main products offered to Europe are transport vehicles, mainly automobiles, machinery, household appliances, mineral products and optical and photographic instruments, in regard to agricultural products: avocados, coffee, fruit juices, frozen fish, canned fruit, berries, citrus fruits and bananas. Another important market is beer and tequila. (SRE, 2021)

Theme 2: Markets (distribution channels)

Official markets

As explained by Szopa P., Pękała W. in 2012, distribution channels are also referred to as marketing or market channels, are networks of interdependent organizational units involved in the process of moving products or services from producers to final consumers. From a functional perspective, a distribution channel serves as a structured system that connects various intermediaries with people with products like goods, services, information, and finances. For this investigation it is considered an official market, any.

Grey markets

Grey market is an unauthorized market functioning parallel to the authorized distribution channel, on its authentic brands and products are distributed by an unauthorized intermediary. (Srivastava, A et al, 2024). Grey market sellers purchase products in regions where prices are lower and then resell them in higher-priced markets, creating competition for the manufacturers' official or authorized distributors. (Hu, Q. and Mizuno, T., 2024 p, 1)

Black markets

Black markets emerge when goods or services are traded outside legal frameworks. This can involve inherently illegal items, like illicit drugs, or legal products exchanged through unlawful means, such as avoiding taxes or bypassing regulations, therefore making the transaction itself illegal (Waller, 2015). The smuggling of goods to evade taxes or avoid import and export regulations is a symbol of black-market activity. Black markets tend to grow in places with strict rules or limited supply. They harm the legal economy, reduce tax income, and often support criminal groups, creating serious risks for both economic stability and public safety.

Fisman and Wei (2009) argue that discrepancies in trade data often result from intentional underreporting of exports, especially in countries with high levels of corruption, whereas imports tend to be accurately reported due to facing fewer regulatory obstacles. This misleading information occurs as businesses attempt to evade trade restrictions or taxes. In contrast, imports are usually reported more accurately, as they face fewer regulatory hurdles and less incentive for misreporting.

Countries and products most susceptible to smuggling revealing a strong link between trade discrepancies, corruption in exporting countries, and protectionist measures in importing countries. This suggests that smuggling plays a significant role in the differences observed in global trade data (Costa & De Grauwe, 2012, p. 49).

Theme 3: Supply gaps and repercussions

Causes of supply gaps

As people increasingly seek better-tasting, more flavorful, and authentic food, their consumption of Chinese, Mexican, and Indian cuisines, both pre-packaged and homemade, are increasing. However, Europe continues to stay behind the United States in this trend. (Marketwatch, 2005 p. 70).

Europe's refusal to accept Mexican food products can be attributed to several factors, including cultural preferences, regulatory challenges, and concerns about quality and authenticity. One key reason is the preference for traditional European diets, which often prioritize local and familiar foods. Many European consumers are slow to adopt foreign cuisines, especially those with distinct flavors, ingredients, or preparation methods (Okun, 2013). This cultural resistance limits the market acceptance of Mexican food products in some countries.

European Union regulations on food safety and labeling are stricter than those in many parts of the world. For example, the EU's strict regulations on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and food additives often present a barrier to the importation of certain Mexican food products (European Commission, 2020). These regulations guarantee that products have the EU's high safety standards but can make it difficult for foreign producers to comply with all the necessary requirements.

There is a concern about maintaining authenticity. European consumers may be skeptical of Mexican food products that are perceived as being too "westernized" or not truly representative of the cuisine (Sloan, 2014).

The European food and grocery retail market is highly competitive, offering a wide variety of retailers, including supermarkets, specialty stores, discount chains, and online platforms. This diversity gives consumers considerable power, allowing them to easily switch between retailers for better prices, quality, or service. The ability for consumers to switch retailers or brands freely strengthens their influence, forcing retailers to continuously adjust to market demands and stay competitive. (MarketLine, 2024)

Repercussions for official distribution channels

Grey marketers take advantage of the after-purchase services offered by authorized distributors, creating unfair competition. To tackle this, brand managers and authorized distributors may consider raising service fees for grey-market goods, in order to eliminate the grey marketers' benefit from these services and reduce their competitive advantage (Huang, 2008).

This phenomenon discourages investment in service quality and customer support, as distributors are forced to compete with lower-priced, unofficial products. Also, the diversion of goods through grey

markets can lead to the decline of brand value and customer loyalty, as consumers may perceive these products as being of the same quality as those bought through official channels (Kugler & Gable, 2001).

Repercussion for consumers

Consumers can save money by purchasing a product on the grey market, but they must bear the risk of receiving poor service and no warranty (Alberts, 1992). People might buy products from the grey market to save money, especially when the official prices are too high or the product is hard to find. But those savings can come with some serious disadvantages. Grey market items usually don't come with a warranty or customer support so if something goes wrong, you're mostly on your own. The product might not meet local safety or quality standards. While the lower price might seem like a good deal it is important to think about the risks, especially if you're buying something imported or hard to fix or return without official help.

Theme 4: Current market analysis:

Most sold products

In 2020, Mexico's main export product to the European Union was avocado, with a value of €158.3 million. The second-largest export was green coffee, totaling €100 million. The third most important product was beer in containers smaller than 10 liters, with a value of €99.5 million. (SE, 2020) In addition to goods, services trade between Mexico, and the EU has grown including sectors like travel, transport, business services, and telecommunications.

In Ireland, Mexican products are available through various specialized retailers and mainstream supermarkets. In Dublin, Picado Mexican offers a wide range of authentic Mexican ingredients. In Galway, Mexican Things operates as an online store, offering Mexican groceries and crafts, with products made in Mexico or using Mexican ingredients. Cork Viva Mexico provides Mexican products.

Purchasing habits, preferences

Health and wellness trends continue to significantly influence consumer behavior in the Irish grocery retail market. Functional foods, plant-based alternatives, and clear label ingredients are becoming popular. The retailers who align their product varieties with these evolving consumer priorities are better positioned for long-term growth. The increasing focus on health and wellness is reshaping industry, and those that stay agile and adapt to these changes are most likely to thrive in a competitive market. (Irish Food Board, 2025).
Irish retailers are adapting to price-sensitive shoppers by offering value promotions and private labels (MarketLine, 2024) while still focusing on quality, convenience, and transparency to retain loyalty and address evolving expectations.

Regulated products

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) enforces comprehensive legislation to regulate the importation of food products into Ireland, ensuring they meet stringent safety standards. Some of the most important laws establish general principles and requirements of food law, ensuring that all food imported into the EU is safe for consumption. There is also a law on hygiene requirements for food businesses, including those involved in the importation of food products. They regulate and control certain food products of non-animal origin from specific third countries due to contamination risks and the most important the regulation "EU 2019/2122" which regulates the importation of food of animal origin for personal use, specifying conditions under which such imports are permitted, mostly controlling the access of meat, poultry, fish, eggs, milk, dairy products, and honey. (Food Safety Authority of Ireland, 2025)

Theme 5: Distribution

Challenges and Opportunities (how does it work)

Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein (without Switzerland), as European Free Trade Association members, have been part of the EU single market through the European Economic Area (EEA) since 1994 and are involved in consultations on single market matters. (European Parliament, 2018). Since the elimination of EU tariffs inside the EU in 1968, EU policy has primarily focused on reducing non-tariff barriers, such as differing product standards, safety and health regulations, tax systems, and currency practices. Some areas, like the automotive and chemical industries, are subject to more detailed EU rules. For non-harmonized products, individual member states may introduce their own regulations, but the EU ensures these do not create unnecessary trade barriers. In such cases, mutual recognition of national standards is key, meaning products officially sold in one EU country should be accepted across the European Union to support a unified market while protecting consumers. (Mateo, 1996).

Mexican exports to the European Union face a competitive disadvantage due to trade discrimination. This arises because the EU offers preferential trade agreements to nearly 100 countries, allowing their products easier access and more satisfactory terms. As a result, Mexican goods struggle to compete on equal footing within the European market.

Legal barriers (customs barriers)

Every week, millions of cargo containers cross international borders to deliver goods to the next production stage and ultimately to consumers. Customs authorities traditionally play a key role in safeguarding national interests by collecting duties, taxes, and preventing illicit trade such as drug trafficking, weapons smuggling, and counterfeit products. Following the terrorist attacks in the U.S. in 2001, customs controls have become even stricter due to the increased risk of terrorism.

Supply chains could be targeted for smuggling hazardous materials, nuclear weapons, or even terrorists, with potentially devastating consequences for society. In response, governments have intensified border security measures, including advance shipment data and mandatory declarations. However, these actions can disrupt supply chains, impose administrative burdens, and cause significant economic repercussions. Customs compliance and clearance costs in the EU are estimated between €12.5 billion and €23 billion, or 15% of goods' value (Urciuoli, L., Hintsa, J. & Ahokas, J., 2013).

Supplier limitations

Mexico has a regulation for both imports and exports. Exports can be regulated by some laws for some specific goods, ensuring national security, public health, and environmental protection.

The National Defense Agreement regulates goods under the authority of the Ministry of National Defense, particularly those related to arms and military materials. The Pesticides, Fertilizers, and Toxic Substances Agreement rules products regulated by agencies within the Inter-Secretarial Commission, focusing on substances that may pose environmental or health risks. (SE, 2024)

The Ministry of Energy Agreement requires prior authorization for the import and export of energy-related materials. Finally, the Ministry of Health Agreement controls goods subject to sanitary regulation. All of these agreements are published in the Federal Official Gazette and are essential mechanisms of Mexico's export control administration helping respect regulatory supervision and compliance. (Ramirez, 2024)

Conclusion

The integration of Mexican products into the European Union market presents several challenges as I have identified in recent literature. A major issue is the import process, which involves numerous regulations, customs procedures, and classification systems such as the HS code. These difficulties create barriers to compliance and efficiency. Another key challenge is distinguishing between official, grey, and black markets, which complicates distribution strategies and affects both consumer trust and retailer practices.

Cultural resistance in European markets also plays a significant role, particularly in the supply and acceptance of Mexican food products. Strict EU regulations on food safety affect imports as well. These issues result in delays and increased costs for Mexican exporters and less options for consumers, either Mexican looking for home-related products and Europeans looking to explore new cultures through food.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The methodology of this project had to be changed due to different issues regarding the availability of the interviewers with whom I wanted to speak about specific issues, specifically products, the demand of products and the functioning of ethnic (Mexican) stores in Ireland. For the final methodology I will use a quantitative research method, and the approach is positivism.

Research method

The research method is quantitative, and it is the most suitable for this study since it will let me understand through numeric data, which makes it measurable. This is expressed in numbers, can be applied through surveys with predefined options, and closed questions, through digital data collection. (Simister, N. and James, D., 2024). The sample could be large and random, but also it helps with the numeric collection This kind of methodology helps identifying what are the most popular products, by having concise data provided by the consumers, it will help analyze as well, the trends of shopping of Mexicans in Ireland. This is used to validate market opportunities by providing numeric data that will help with the decisions.

Research approach

The research approach I have chosen is the ontological approach of positivism. This approach is correct, mainly because the idea of reality is objective, measurable and can be analyzed through empirical data. The positivist approach is characterized by the following elements: It is secure to give validity to science. It admits natural and constant laws. It is uniform with real structures. And it tends to use mathematics and mechanics to explain phenomena (Ibarra-Serrano,1992). In the context of this research is based on consumer behavior and preferences, this is an observable phenomenon, it is quantifiable and observable, this means, that the data is objective and it is just going to be studied and analyzed (by numbers). This study assumes that consumers' attitudes and decisions are patterns that can be measured, compared and analyzed. It will help to identify general trends in how Dublin residents (Mexican, Irish and locals in general) interact with Mexican food products.

Positivist ontology is suitable because it helps understand consumer behavior as a number, as a measurable aspect of a social reality. The interpretation will be empirical, not subjective and this data will be useful for store managers and the general public interested in these metrics.

Data collection method

The approach first planned for this research was aimed to employ mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative), by combining the surveys and the interviews to Mexican and Ethnic stores that sell Latino products. This mix-method was meant to be used with 50 surveys and two interviews that were planned to be a 20-minute interview with a questionnaire. For the interview one owner of a Mexican shop with two branches in Dublin, only could answer my interview through an email response.

This same person, the owner of the shop, said that due to issues with their schedule, (September and October are very busy months for these shops, mainly linked to national parties such as Mexican Independence Day and preparations for The Day of the Death). I decided not to use the interview since I could not rely on the information given, without being faced to face, it lowers the control and reliability of the study.

This is when it was decided to focus on a quantitative approach. A structured questionnaire was redacted and published using Google forms, between September 2025 and October 2025. The survey was a combination of close-ended questions and scale questions, and semi open questions where more than one option was allowed to be chosen. To ensure a robust and trustworthy data set the original size was changed from 50 to 100 respondents.

Through sharing the survey in social media platforms, community groups like Facebook groups Mexicanos en Dublin (Mexicans in Dublin) (Annex 2). And local groups via WhatsApp, the survey generated 109 responses (110 responses in total with 109 answers and 1 refusal of participation). The sample size provided enough basis for identifying trends and potential consumers' habits and interests.

Design method

For this project it was required to explore the answers given and connect them with the literature review. Triangulation seemed the most important part of the project, since it involves examining changes or lessons learned from different points of view and the correlation between data sources (INTRAC, 2017). In this case the data sources are the first information gathered before primary research, the literature review and finally the primary research (obtained by the primary research). The literature review offered the theory, industry trends and previous information on consumer behavior and markets. For its part, survey finding provided direct insights into consumers, but with the difference of having real, factual information about products and the markets where people access to this.

Sample

The sample calculator tool gave the sample size of 384, this setting a confidence level of 95%, for a population size, in this case for this project it is considered Dublin population, which is 592,713 inhabitants. However, as established by the outlines of the project, a 100-person sample would be enough to show confidence in this project.

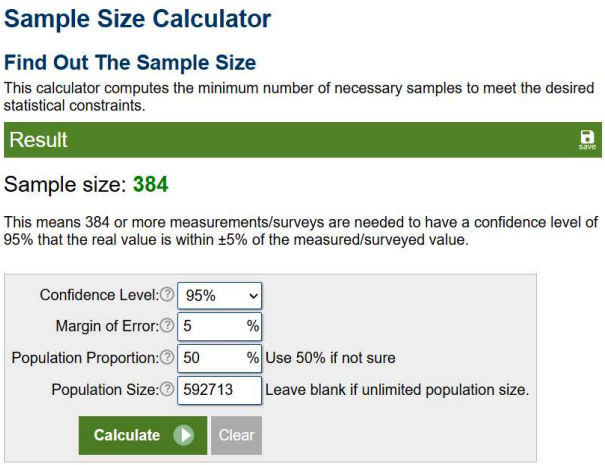


Figure 3.1: Sample size calculator, tool from Calculator.net. Consulted on the 1st of December 2025.

The sample was first explored in the first section of the questionnaire. With the following answers:
For gender the sample was composed of 56% Female subjects (61 respondents), and 44% Male subjects (48 respondents). The age range 25-34 with 48.6% (53 answers), followed by the range of 35 to 44 years with 20.2% (22 answers). The next one was the range of 18 to 24 years, with a 18.3% (20 answers), followed by 55 to 64 years with 9 answers and being the 8.3% of the sample, next followed by 45-54 years with 4 answers and 3.7% and one answer of 65+ years. This can be explained through the method of expansion of the survey, in which most of the range of people in them are adults between 25 years and 34 years of age.

For the ethnic background of the population this survey was primarily answered by Mexicans, with 48 answers, followed by Irish nationals with 34 answers. 17 of the responses came from Latin American countries different from Mexico (this could include Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, to name the most popular nationalities from Latin America in Dublin). Followed by 4 answers from people from Asia. Followed by 3 answers where people stated they did not identify with any of the options given. The survey was also answered by 2 European people (from different countries rather than from Ireland). And one answer from a person from Africa. The answers show that Mexicans and Irish are more interested in these topics, and have more awareness than other cultures, therefore are more willing to participate.

For the level of education, 70 of the answers were submitted by bachelor's degree holders. 17 were by master's degree holders. 14 people were declared to have a high school diploma. 5 answers were submitted by people with vocational skills. 2 of the answers were given by people with no formal education. And one answer was given by a person with a Doctorate degree.

Ethical Considerations.

For this project, it was stipulated it should follow ethical standards, and so it did under appropriate academic supervision. For the primary data collection all participants (from the survey) were presented with the first section where it indicates basic information about consent where participants voluntarily agree to participate, they are at least 18 years of age, and they have read the consent form written

above (Annex 1). The questionnaire had two options, agreeing to it and automatically beginning the questionnaire, or clicking the disagreeing button and automatically closing the questionnaire.

CHAPTER IV

Findings and discussion (triangulation).

Introduction

The objective of the survey was to investigate the market potential for Mexican products in Dublin. It can help them understand the consumer behavior and logistical challenges associated with the supply for Mexican food products in the city. The findings were based on 109 answers, (110 in total but one did not agree to continue with the survey) this primarily of Mexican and Irish nationals aged 25-34 as discussed in the previous chapter. The analysis will be divided into five, (without considering key themes, covering consumer insights, market (distribution) channels, supply gaps and their consequences for consumers, product visibility and distribution or supply challenges.

Consumer Insights on Mexican Imports.

This demonstrated that consumers have a strong preference for authenticity. The products labeled as Mexican are much more popular than the ones that are perceived as not Mexican. This was the most insightful of the sections, since it helped understand the real perception of locals in Dublin to Mexican products.
First question: When you buy a product from Mexico in an Irish shop (e.g. avocados, tequila, or sauces), do you ever notice a special label, seal, or marking that indicates it was imported from Mexico?
Options: Always, Sometimes, never.
Prominent answers: Sometimes (44.0%) and Always (33.0%)

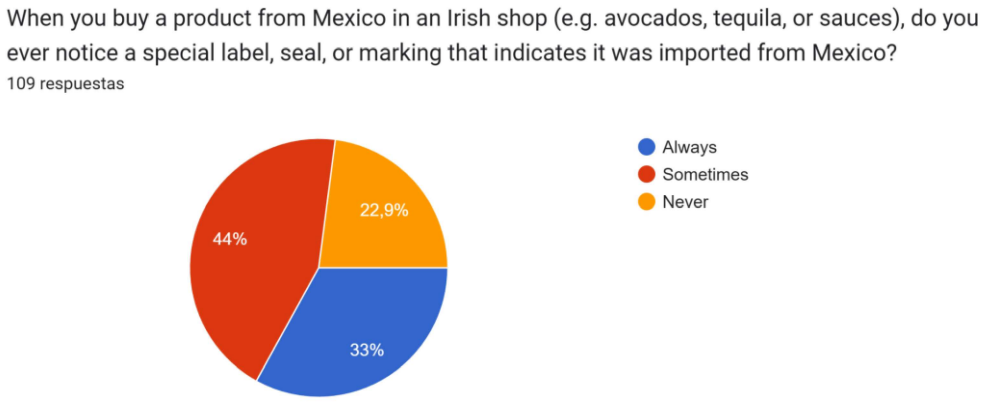


Figure 4.1 Question 1 Observation of labels by the consumers- section 1. Google Forms Survey (Martinez, 2025)

Second question: Have you observed any changes in the variety, price, or availability of Mexican products in Irish stores over the past few years?
Options: Yes, no, I am not sure.
Prominent answers: “Yes”. A majority, 66.1%, reported observing changes, this suggests people are aware of availability of Mexican products in stores.

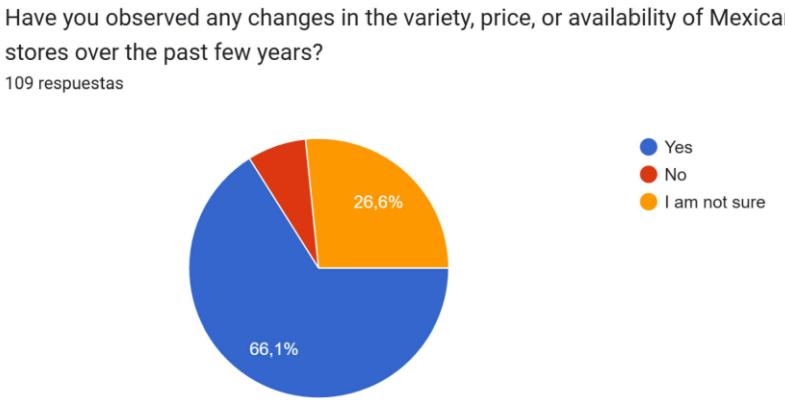


Figure 4.2: Question 2- section 1. Google Forms Survey (Martinez, 2025)

Third question: From your perspective as a consumer, what does "easier to import" mean to you?
Options: Lower prices, Wider selection of products, better product quality or freshness, more consistent availability, more authentic or specialized products, All of them above, Other. (with no option of open answer)
Prominent answer: "All of them above" (50.5%) was the top response, this can be interpreted as a desire to have more access to these products with better (lower) prices. Consumers require wider selection and fresher products.

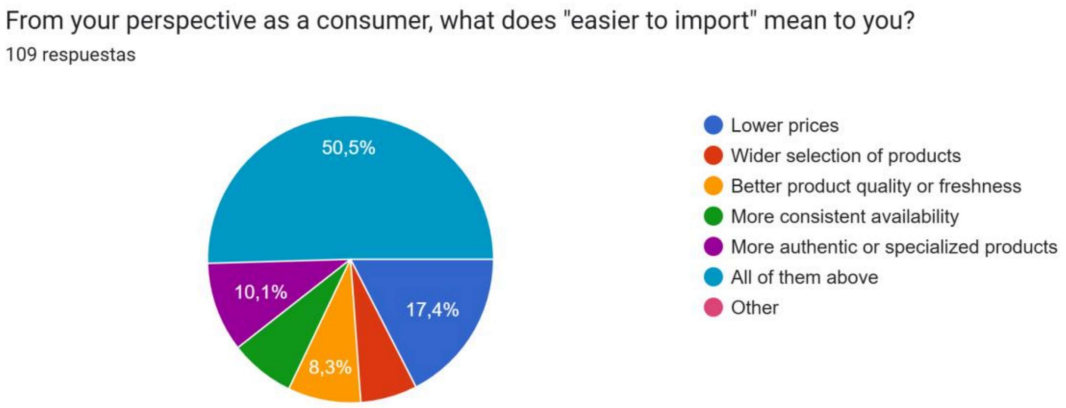


Figure 4.3: Question 3- section 1. Google Forms Survey (Martinez, 2025)

Fourth question: When you buy a Mexican product, how important is it to you that it is a truly authentic product of Mexico, with a clear origin and production story?
Options: Very Important, Somehow Important, Neutral, not very important, not important at all.
Prominent answer: Very Important (47.7%) and Somehow Important (35.8%). *This represents people's interest in products coming from Mexico.*

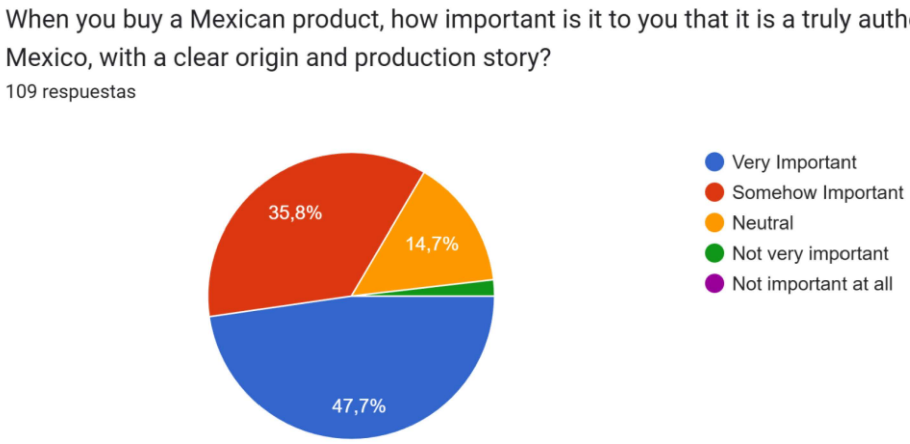


Figure 4.4: Question 4- section 1. Google Forms Survey (Martinez, 2025)

Results of the product perception:

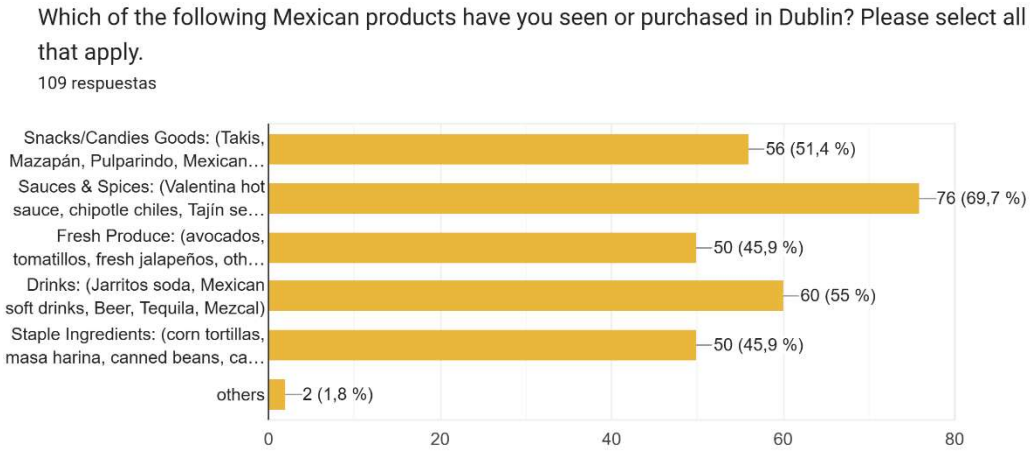


Figure 4.5 **Question 1- section 4. Google Forms Survey (Martinez, 2025)**

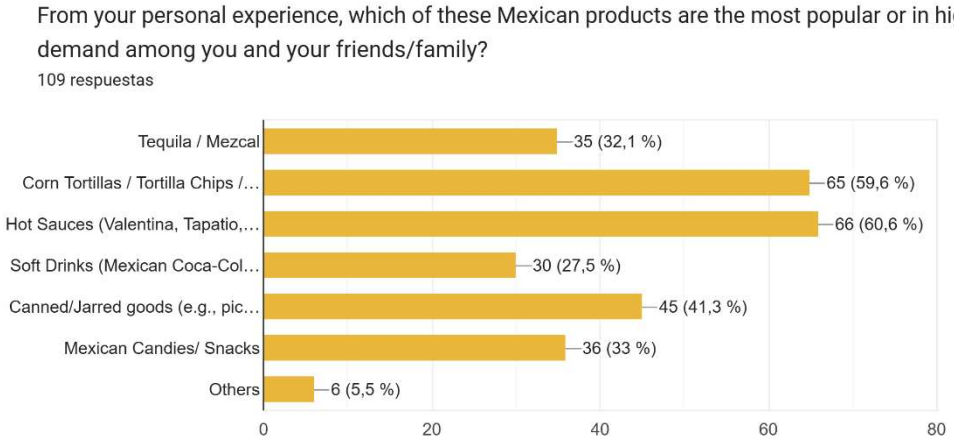


Figure 4.6 **Question 3- section 4. Google Forms Survey (Martinez, 2025)**

These two graphs indicate the findings about the demand and consumption. The first question the most demanded products like hot sauces with 23.3% are the most consumed product. Corn tortillas and tortilla chips have second place with 23% of the answers. This can be explained since tortillas are the staple food product for Mexicans. Importers and retailers must logically restock based on these items, to focus a strategy to meet the demand for these products. The least popular of the options after the option “others” is fresh produce like avocado, lime, tomatillos (green tomato), fresh jalapeños, among others. This can be explained with the difficulty to find fresh produce that is not originally from the EU, and that one that is not coming from the EU is submitted to numerous regulations.

Triangulation

Triangulation for theme 1: Import process analysis and Theme 1 of survey: Consumer Insights on Mexican Imports.

The high desire for authentic products by the consumers validates the need for EU customs procedures, which means that they should still control the entrance of goods into the continent but having support for Mexican products. Also, Mexican products still need to comply with the legal requirements of Europe. Exporter should comply with EU standards to keep distributing their products in Europe, since the Irish market still wants access to real and authentic (that often come from Mexico only), products.

Despite having the existence of a developed and updated trade agreement aimed at facilitating the import-export process between Europe and Mexico (European Parliament, 2025), consumers want to see the benefits of the Free Trade Agreement in a tangible way, this means more accessible prices, and constant supply of them . However, these are not fully realized on the Dublin market, due to logistical challenges, like non-tariff barriers related to TARIC classifications (SRE, 2021) (European Parliament, 2025).

The market change reflects the active but still very inconsistent nature of the local market. There are still business challenges observed by the consumers. They understand the efforts to export truly Mexican products and even fresh produce; however, it is logistically still difficult to do so.

Second topic: Markets (distribution channels) and theme 2 of survey: Market Channels for Mexican Products.

Consumers rely on specialty stores, over large supermarkets or even smaller or unofficial channels like social media, this decreases the risk associated with buying a product from an unofficial market. These procedures of safety can be explored in the TARIC, previously explained in the literature review with information of the European Parliament. Consumers place higher importance on official distributors with 84.4% of the answers marked as somehow very important (annex 2) to get products from official distributors, especially for beverages and food. This validates the necessity for a formal import structure that protects the consumer from harmful products that are not verified by legal authorities like FSAI, and Revenue, through customs.

Third topic: Supply gaps and repercussions and theme 3 of survey: Supply Gaps and Their Impact on Mexican Product Markets

Consumer perception identifies logistics as the main problem, with nearly 40% of the answers indicating that shipping and import logistics problems are the reason to make Mexican products hard to find. As explored by the literature review, error in the ENS produces most of the lateness. (European Commission, 2019). Therefore, consumers consider that looking at other options to obtain the Mexican products they really desire is an option when legal or official markets do not provide them, since 71.6% of the surveys said this. The EU-Mexico agreement aims to expand the market, the official market, however that complexity is faced due to the lack of expertise on compliance framework by Mexican exporters and Irish (local) distributors. The literature highlights the opportunity for new products like

fresh produce and tequila. However, this is a lost opportunity since 53.2% of the surveys stipulated that they could find a substitute for this (at least for fresh produce) from other countries. Since the EU-Mexico facilitates the entry of products it is still difficult to let vegetables and fruits due to the protectionism to agriculture in Europe (Revenue Commissioners, 2022)

Fourth topic: Current market analysis and theme 4 of survey: The Dublin Market for Mexican Goods: Availability and Visibility

For this topic, literature supports that a single market guarantees free movement between EU-Mexico, however there is still low visibility in Dublin stores, and this suggests that the benefit of this agreement is not fully developed yet. Import procedures and logistical costs are high, leaving too low visibility reported by 86.2% of the survey participants, saying that it is somewhat visible or not very visible, but not choosing the fully visible.

In the literature review it is stated that tequila, beer and fresh produce are the trade opportunities for Mexico in the EU. The top popular items are sauces and tortillas, which are staples for the Mexican community. But in the survey's tequila, mezcal and avocados showed somehow a grade of importance and interest among the survey participants. Showing that the stores should focus on bringing these products to Ireland.
There is also another important aspect of the high consumer concern for spirits, in this case tequila and mezcal, where it directly connects to the legal and quality mechanism established by the EU. The TARIC classification, as stated by the European Commission, which helps with the classification and corresponding tariffs, For the 61.5% of the respondents, Certification for Tequila and our mezcal is very important.

Fifth topic: Distribution and theme 5 of survey: Distribution Challenges for Mexican Products in Dublin

For the distribution theme, The EU import process analyzed on the literature review is complex and has mandatory requirements (previously mentioned). For the 33.9% identify logistical barriers and 30.3% identify legal barriers as the biggest challenges for distribution. They align with the literature, because the detailed multi-step nature of the import process is associated with shipping times and transport.

Also 38.5% of the surveys consider that the solution for the distribution interruptions is to create an official online marketplace with certified imports. This can be seen as a solution to issues with distribution, and an aid to already located distribution channels. This solution is recognizing the difficulty of the physical markets to cover the existing demand for Mexican products.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions.

The market of the city of Dublin for the Mexican products demonstrates how it is growing, and more and more products are being demanded not only by the Mexican community in Ireland, but by locals as well, however it is underestimated by official distribution channels like large supermarkets. The survey had a high participation, 109 surveys from which 44% were Mexican nationals living in Ireland, and more than half are professionals, (with a 64.2% of the participants having a bachelor's degree. Mexican goods are known by a wide range of demographic, with people of different geographical backgrounds.

The main finding can be resumed in the goals that the EU-Mexico Trade Agreement has produced in today's trade relationship b between these two territories and this can be translated into product availability. Consumers relate the expression "easier to import" to paying lower prices for Mexican products in Ireland, also to have better and more options, and the most important a consistent availability. However, it is hard to appreciate the impact of Mexican products since almost three quarters of the surveys said that they are somehow visible or not very visible products. The low visibility suggests that the FTA is not accomplishing a totally open market, and there is still a lot to do in market liberalization.

The triangulation proved one of the main points from the investigation. It links consumer perception to the regulatory status of the trade process. Consumers identified on the survey that the primary obstacles were the logistical challenges and the legal barriers. These perceptions have effects on the complex import process explained in the literature review. The difficulty to create two major consequences: the first is related to the market erosion, since consumers are pushed from official channels, like supermarkets, ethnic stores and established stores, to the grey market, with 71.6% of the people believing that they feel that official sources are exchangeable to unofficial markets when it comes to satisfy a demand for Mexican product. Therefore, customers are almost always willing to resort to the grey market. This confirms the failure of the official markets to meet the basic demand from Mexican products.

And the second big issue is the product substitution, where customers are forced to find replacements to original Mexican products in other kind of products from other countries. More than half of the population from the survey has found that they have to find an alternative from another country, which means a loss of market share to Mexican shops, this could be a business opportunity, for example for products like fresh produce like chilies and avocado, and with more niche products such as the mezcal.

Another interesting analysis is that the market for Mexican products is currently sustained by ethnic shops (Mexica, Latino, Spanish or Asian-selling products stores) or specialty food stores, which are better positioned to handle the complex import process from such far away countries. Also, the quality of products is very important for consumers, since almost 40% of the people said that they need an official online marketplace for certified Mexican imports. Therefore this shows people are interested in having products that have been verified and approved by European authorities, but that still remain produced and Mexico, and that they are authentic enough to meet the demand for products, these

products are usually staples like corn tortillas, salsas (hot sauces) and some other pantry products such as corn flour.

The most important thing to address is trying to avoid the bottlenecks associated with the retail infrastructure, all this to make a real change in the availability of Mexican products not only in Dublin, but in Ireland as well. Mexico and the EU should see the benefits of the FTA and focus to solve the ground-level logistical and compliance issues.

Limitations

This study is quantitative however it faced several limitations, primarily linked to the late stage of it. The most important limitation happened when it was designed as a mixed-method investigation, however it had to be restricted to quantitative study only. The original plan was to include crucial qualitative interviews with key industry participants, in this case managers of Mexican stores in Dublin. This was mainly to know the perspective on the logistical and legal barriers and also to identify consumers demand or at least have an idea of the most popular products, However the pre-arranged interview was non bible because the respondent submitted their answers via email, contrary to the methodological requirement of a face to face interview. This changed the dynamic of the investigation. While the second respondent never had the opportunity to even look at my messages. This is understandable since my data collection was made during the months of September and October, being these two very important to Mexican culture and therefore charged with Mexican national parties and as a consequence there were many events where these shops and their managers were part of.
Additional issues could be found in the sampling bias, meaning the data may not be representative of the entire Dublin city or Irish market. The demographic bias could be considered as well, since almost half of the respondents were of Mexican nationality and with a high level of education.

Recommendations

Based on the triangulation, here are some recommendations to increase the accessibility and formal market penetration of Mexican products in Dublin.

First, Mexican stakeholders, this means interested parties, like trade organizations in Mexico, Ireland, exports, importers, Mexican shops, and Irish partners should collaborate to create a specialized Mexican market. This means having a specialized import program. This can be justified with the answers from the survey, where people identified the main issues for access to Mexican products as legal and logistical challenges. These are the biggest obstacles. By having this import program, this problem could be addressed. This can help with the supply of these products, since prices would be lower, because of lower shipping costs. It will help to have smoother compliance and import process. Experts will be experts to manage complex paperwork like ENS, SAD or simply by doing a more precise TARIC classification. This means a reduction of the legal barriers to meet EU standards.

The second recommendation is to create a certified online marketplace. This action consists in creating an official market, through digital media. This is justified in the answers where people participating in the survey said that they do rely on unofficial online channels when they want to access specific Mexican products that are brought in and sold by Mexican people online, in WhatsApp groups or

Facebook groups. This will improve the traceability and the trust for Mexican products, because this means that products were legally cleared by EU customs and they have their proper documentation, they provide customers with assurance that they seek, especially in alcohol products like the “tequila” and “mezcal”. An official online platform can serve the entire Irish market, not only in the Dublin area.

And the last recommendation is to use data to market and create a marketing strategy for Mexican products that already have a great awareness, like hot sauces and tortilla chips. This exposure would be focused on expanding these products to large supermarkets like Tesco, SuperValu, Dunnes and even Lidl. Importers should aim for mainstream retailers, since the survey showed that Mexican can be a good product to be introduced into Irish markets. This will create consistent and visible stockings, and this will help mitigate the substitution that produces switching from Mexican products to non-Mexican alternatives.

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