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**ORGANIC FOOD PROMOTION BY INVESTIGATING
ESTONIAN GREEN CONSUMER: CASE OF
BIOMARKET LTD.**

Master Thesis

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This Master Thesis has been compiled independently. All works by other authors used while compiling the thesis as well as principles and data from literary and other sources have been referred to.

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INTRODUCTION

The last decades have shown the excite interest among consumers towards their attitudes about modern agriculture practices that are increasingly challenged due to ascending environmental awareness and to healthy eating. Organic food is an alternative to conventional food and has become more appreciated by consumers due to its environmental friendly and healthy characteristics (Saba & Messina, 2002). Organic food differs from conventional food as it is produced in a way that avoids synthetic chemicals (pesticides and fertilizers) and is without genetically modified organisms (GMO). Regarding animals for meat production they are not treated with preventive medication to avoid possible diseases. Therefore, organic products do not contain synthetic residue (Dreezens et al., 2005). Organic food and products consumption is influenced by an overall holistic healthy lifestyle. The volition for health and wellness is a strong driver in the food market as it stands behind a healthy diet or development of healthy food. The benefits of organic food are generally stated that it is healthier, more nutritious, safer, animal friendlier, tastes better and allergy free. Wellness products and services have universal appeal because everyone, no matter how healthy or fit, wants to be even healthier and fitter (Pilzer, 2007). The same applies for organic food and products as when customers find something that works for them, they typically become enthusiastic consumers of that product and their passion also influences others around.

There is lack of research done among Estonians related to their attitudes and behavioral characteristics towards organic food. Mostly the studies are done about organic farming and farmers in Estonia (Matt, Luik, Peetsmann, Roasto, 2001; Peetsmann, Luik, Kall, Vetemaa, Mikk, Peepson, 2009) and also about organic products labeling affect to consumers (Korpõljova, 2012). Therefore, this research contributes to the understanding of consumer behavior, especially in the organic food and products segment with the intention to help the members of wellness and organic business to maximize further profits by determine who purchases it and what are their motives to buy it. Research

highlights the importance of health through consuming organic products and also identifies differences in the understanding of wellness and environmental awareness. The results can be applied in practice by using the right commercials, strategies and marketing channels in order to attract and reach the target group. The objective of this thesis is to identify Estonian green consumer and its knowledge about organic products. Under the term “green consumer” is meant the consumer, who constantly buys organic food and products. Studies using demographic profiling have shown effective results in describing the typical organic consumer. Therefore, Estonian green consumer will be identified in this research by investigating its demographic characteristics. Depending on results, the consecutive action is to find possibilities how to promote organic food consumption. The research question of the study is: “Why green consumers purchase organic products and is future education needed in order to promote organic food consumption?” In brief, the ambition of this study is to enhance our understanding of the factors influencing the purchase of organic food. To achieve more detailed understanding, the author set study questions that should lead to the goal of revealing the objective of this study and answering the research question. The study questions are following:

- Who is Estonian green consumer?
- What motivates consumers to buy organic products?
- What Estonian green consumers know about organic food wellness benefits?
- Do Estonian green consumers associate organic products with sustainable environment?
- How to promote organic products among Estonians?

This kind of Estonian organic consumer investigation brings out people’s motivations and attitudes towards organic products and by identifying these, marketers can find ways, how consumers can be attracted to healthy and environmental friendly living pattern. It is essential to establish specific strategies for this segment of consumers, therefore is important to identify the factors of influence in the buying decision process. Augmenting the population accessibility to the organic products, the enterprises can be more sustainable as well. This study tries to find out if spas as wellness centers should provide organic food and therefore be more sustainable and provide high quality food with the good taste. Knowledge is power and consumers should be educated about

organic products as it leads to higher life quality and wellness. It is possible that nations which make an early change to develop a more sustainable food system as an intrinsic part of a sustainable society, could reap a substantial health dividend which includes reduced obesity and enhanced wellness (Hanlon & Carlisle, 2010). In the study the Slow Food movement is brought out because it is related to organic food concept. The Slow Food movement seeks to educate consumers about traditional and local foods, while also protecting food and agricultural heritage. In order to understand how committed and involved Estonian green consumers are with the sustainable and healthy living, they are asked to evaluate their knowledge about the Slow Food. If Estonian green consumers have limited knowledge about organic products, it can be inclined to think that the overall knowledge about organic subject field is rather low.

For this certain research the quantitative method will be used in order to investigate the consumers. Targeting Estonian green consumer segment, the research strategy will be questionnaire survey which is distributed to the Biomarket clients via Biomarket's Facebook page, using purposive sampling. Biomarket Ltd. is a leading organic products retail and wholesale dealer in Estonia since 2003.

The master thesis consists of introduction, main body with three chapters, conclusion, 92 references, 6 appendices and a summary (*resümee*). The first chapter gives an overview of organic food and its benefits, Estonian organic producers, green consumer's demographic characteristics and behavior and also discusses about organic products education and promotion. The second chapter describes the method, sampling, limitations and other procedures of the empirical study and also gives an overview of Biomarket Ltd. In the third chapter results of the questionnaire and analyzes of the study are displayed with variable tables and figures, also it summaries the results with the discussion and recommendations in order to promote organic products consumption.

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1. ORGANIC FOOD BENEFITS AND GREEN CONSUMERS INVESTIGATION

1.1 Linkage between organic food, wellness and sustainability

Wellness and health are terms that have a lot of different definitions but are very closely linked to each other. Generally, wellness is referred in a broader context than health, which usually means only physical health. The main concept of wellness is to reach the harmony between body, spirit and mind and has a lot of aspects underneath this meaning. Most definitions of wellness focus on its interrelated dimensions that often include emotional, mental, physical and spiritual health (Hey, Calderon & Carroll, 2006). Wellness has been promoted as an alternative method of preventive medicine and healthy lifestyle (Dürschmid, et al., 2008). Broadly, wellness stands for activities and behavior patterns that improve quality of life and increase personal potential (Anspaugh, Hamrick, & Rosate, 2009). Clearly, wellness is more of a process that stands for maintaining a good health – rather to be a goal. Nowadays, wellness is, at its core, a synonym for a positive understanding of health. It increasingly stands for healthy behavior in everyday life and leisure. Since 1948, the World Health Organization has defined health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Both, wellness and health are resources for everyday life, not the objective of living. They are positive concepts, emphasizing social and personal resources as well as physical capabilities (WHO, 1997).

The wellness industry is tackling one of the most profound issues of life, solving one of the few remaining mysteries of human existence- age and vitality- on which technology has yet to make its mark. Spas, fitness centers, healthy food, beauty and anti-aging institutions and products, organic shops, etc. belong to the wellness industry. The wellness business is proactive. People voluntarily become customers- to feel healthier, to reduce the effects of aging, and to avoid becoming sick. Everyone wants to be a customer of this early stage approach to health (Pilzer, 2007).

Most of the immediate demand for wellness, and most wellness products themselves, exist today because of two major problems with food. First one is people eat too much, and the second one is poor nutrition, that means people are not getting minimum amounts of building blocks and/or catalysts that human bodies need. Human being should every day get the right amount of water, carbohydrates, lipids, protein, vitamins and minerals. Without a daily supply of proteins, vitamins, and minerals, no matter how much energy we get in the form of calories, our bodies and minds deteriorate because we are not able to fully replace the dying cells in our internal and external organs (Pilzer, 2007).

Nutrition is a very important component in order to achieve higher wellness level. Already in 1826 Anthelme Brillat-Savarin was stating that the food one eats has a bearing on what one`s state of mind and health. The volition for health and wellness is a strong driver in the food market. Today, consumers pay more attention to the health benefits of food in order to achieve a healthy diet than in the past (Chrysochou, 2010; Pech-Lopatta, 2007). Scientific publications show that health is an important motive for organic food consumption. Food that is perceived as healthy is of increasing interest for consumers and accompanies a growth in the food industry worldwide (Goetzke & Spiller, 2014). In the other hand there is limited research (Bacon & Keim, 2002) and an apparent inconsistency with measurement of quality of life or wellness and wellbeing outcomes in the context of nutrition interventions (Boelsma & Brink, 2010). This means that there is scant evidence available to determine whether improvements in wellness and overall wellbeing are relevant or achievable as end-points to consider as evidence-based outcomes for dietary practice (McMahon, O`Shea, Tapsell, & Williams, 2014). Furthermore, the literature also suggests that consumers are moving into a new era of health management looking for self determination in managing their own health future (Mattila, et al., 2010). Mainstreaming of alternative therapies within health framework (Menk, Howeter, Bell, & Jackson, 2010) and the development and marketing of food products to manage specific health issues or support general wellbeing (McMahon, Williams, & Tapsell, 2010) provide suggestive evidence that there is social change around how individuals and society view food and health management.

Fortunately, during recent decades, consumers have started to look for safer and controlled foods, produced in more environmentally friendly, authentic and local systems. Food and its quality are essential for human wellbeing and health. Organically produced foods are widely believed to satisfy the above demands (Matt, Rembalkowska, Luik, Peetsmann, & Pehme, 2011).

The word "organic" refers to the way farmers grow and process agricultural products, such as fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy products and meat. Organic farming practices are designed to encourage soil and water conservation and reduce pollution. It means foods, that are guaranteed to have been produced and processed in a manner that avoids the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, hormones, GMO-s and irradiation, and which strives to enhance natural biological cycles and to meet minimum animal welfare standards (Burch, Lyons, & Monk, 2002). Organic foods stand behind for a healthy diet or development of healthy food, organic raw materials should be considered for that. The overall number of studies analyzing the quality and safety of organic vs. conventional foods is growing rapidly (Matt, et al., 2011). The main difference between these two is the synthetic pesticides usage in conventional foods. Even small amounts of chemical residues in food cause disturbances, malformances and diseases in humans and may be hazardous to human health. People use several hundreds of different synthetic additives processing conventional food and this can cause adverse health outcomes like obesity, allergies, headaches, cancers, etc. In organic food processing around 40 natural substances are allowed. Till now the studies have shown many positive impacts on health using organic crops such as immune status, fertility rates and overall health. Also there are certain advantages in nutritional quality in favor for organic food. For example organic plant products contain more phenolic compounds and vitamin C. The content of nitrates that may cause cancer is lower in organic crops than in conventional. Some organic cereals may conclude less protein, but the protein has higher quality than conventional grains. Also organic milk outperforms from its nutritional content the conventional milk, having more antioxidants, vitamins and omega acids. Organic meat is stated to have higher intramuscular fat content and better fats for human health. Organic eggs tend to have higher amount of carotenoids (Magkos, Arvaniti, & Zampelas, 2006).

There are several observational studies showing that people on an organic diet evaluate their health status better than others (Rembiałkowska, Kazimierczak, Średnicka, Biemko, & Bielska, 2008). A research that was done to analyze the physical and mental status of two groups of nuns indicated better wellness conditions to that group that had organic diet for one month, versus conventional diet. Nuns from the organic food group showed a lower blood pressure and performed better immune parameters than those on the conventional diet. Moreover, they assessed their overall wellbeing, physical fitness and mental activity as being significantly better during the experiment. Nuns eating organic food suffered from headaches less often than before and performed an increased ability to cope under stress (Fuchs, Huber, Henning, & Dlugosch, 2005). Also other various quantitative consumer studies have been affirmed that health is a crucial reason for buying organic food (Magnusson, Arvola, & Koivisto Hursti, 2003; Gracia & de Magistris, 2008). Organic and fresh foods are usually perceived as healthy and fulfill the most important criterion of being “better for me” (Pech-Lopatta, 2007).

These facts above should be well known by the consumers as it influences their choice of food they eat daily. Overall, not only health and wellness are the main reasons people should choose organic products, in addition the reasons like environmental concerns and lack of trust in the conventional food industry is brought out by various studies (Squires, Juric, & Cornwell, 2001). Numerous social commentators and researchers from several disciplines have observed that the overweening concern with economic growth found in already affluent societies is linked to the rise of materialism and consumerism, and the decline of individual and social levels of wellness (Oswald & Powdthavee, 2007; James, 2008). In our society, people, educated or not, do not positively weigh green products as important and are not inclined towards building a better ecological understanding. Humanity faces looming global changes as at least a partial result of this imbalance. Ever increasing population compression and lack of awareness among masses is giving rise to deterioration of the environment and depletion of resources (Hamid, 2014). Sustainable development stands for development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987). The challenge of creating a healthy and more environmentally sustainable diet in the context of affluent society has been acknowledged (Riley & Buttriss, 2011). Nevertheless, commentators argue that the

broader case for reshaping the food system in ways that are genuinely sustainable at the planetary level has barely begun (Rayner & Lang, 2011). One of the problems here is that food choice is viewed as just one element of a linear and technical system, whereas consumption in any form is far more complex and far less tractable than, say, processing or waste management. It is possible that nations which make an early change to developing a more sustainable food system as an intrinsic part of a sustainable society could reap a substantial health dividend which includes reduced obesity and enhanced wellness. A more sustainable society and food system could ameliorate and possibly remove some of the key drivers of the obesogenic environment. The public health nutrition community should therefore see the sustainability agenda as a potential lever for health improvement, and a focus on wellness as a neglected but potentially powerful tool (Hanlon & Carlisle, 2010).

To keep developing towards more sustainable world, consumers should be informed that organic agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved (OWF, n.d.).

Another sustainable movement that is achieving popularity every year is Slow Food movement. The Slow Food international association was established in 1989 by initiative of Carlos Petrini to hit back at the fast food industry (Miele & Murdoch, 2002). Today, Slow Food is a nonprofit, member-supported organization, which has millions of members and is spread throughout over 150 countries. In this holistic and systemic perspective, the quality of food is deeply rooted in the quality of the surrounding ecosystem; the material and nonmaterial identity of the local community involved in the cultivation, breeding and production processes; and the overall quality of life, of which a structural element is conviviality (Tencati & Zsolnai, 2010).

There are three principles to qualify the idea of Slow Food:

1. The food must be good. This means that the food every person eats should taste good and give pleasure according to authenticity and naturalness criteria applied

in a certain moment, in a certain place, and within a certain culture (Pollan, 2008).

2. The food must be clean. Food should be produced in a sustainable way that does not harm the environment, animal welfare or human health. With regard to this point, the traditional patterns of production aim at not only avoiding negative ecological and social impacts, but also helping to restore and protect ecosystems and ecosystems services (Tencati & Zsolnai, 2010).
3. The food must be fair. Food producers should receive a fair compensation for the work they do, under humane conditions, while having their dignity, knowledge and capabilities valued and respected (Tencati & Zsolnai, 2010).

The Slow Food movement is getting more popularity among Estonians as people start to grow again their own food or buy products from the local markets. Preparing food for your family and enjoying it together is also a message from Slow Food movement that many Estonians still practice. This way people help to sustain the environment for the future generations and create their own wellness by enjoying good quality food that enrich the body with necessary nutrients, vitamins and minerals.

During last decade the term foodscape is widely used in order to promote healthy living and public health nutrition and describe food environments for assessing the potential impact of food choice and behavior in our society (Mikkelsen, 2011). Foodscapes is well suited to capture the different change agendas related to healthier and more sustainable production and consumption and that is why it can be associated with organic food concept. Kings (2009) assumes that food production should take place in a way that promotes human and ecological health and food consumption should encourage community dietary health. This would add new, qualitative dimension to food production beyond the quantitative measures of food that applied in the past, leading everyone from governments to consumers to evaluate foods for their long-term sustainability. Still nowadays we mostly live in the obesogenic environment, where surroundings, opportunities and conditions of life influence the promotion of obesity in individuals or populations. The idea that food environment could be designed in order to favor specific food choices and behaviors is tempting to food retailers and food service providers and that is why it is necessary to promote healthy eating and create

healthy and sustainable environment. Foodscapes appear both physically and pictorially in marketing and consumers are capable of creating imageries and mental foodscapes in which they imagine different encounters with foods, meals and snacks. According to foodscape philosophy, nowadays providing food should be done responsibly by assuring clients their better health and lifestyle (Mikkelsen, 2011). Nutritionists have a considerable role to play in enhancing health and wellness through the food we eat, and an active responsibility to engage with the creation of a more sustainable food system and the discipline will need a better understanding of the relationship between modern society, food choice and environmental sustainability (Deumling, Wackernagel, & Monfreda, 2003). That means food environment influences daily choices and purchase behavior that should be designed at first place for supporting healthier eating.

1.2. Overview of Estonian organic food producers

The climate in Estonia is very advantageous allowing to produce closer to nature than in several other places. The share of organic agricultural land is placing Estonia third in the EU and fifth place in Europe. People's growing knowledge of food and their interest in its origin continually increases organic production (Vetemaa & Mikk, 2014). Developing the organic food sector in Estonia is very important because it has a great potential to offer high quality and innovative products to the consumers and it holds a big role in the organic agriculture development and creating the future sustainable development practices (Sarapuu, 2013). Within a year, more than 400 new domestic organic products appeared on food counters in Estonia in 2013. This shows that producers have enough exciting ideas and consumers wish to eat food close to nature. In 2013 there were 84 registered organic processors in Estonia. Many of them produced organic as well as conventional products. Most of the processors are small-scale enterprises. 34 organic farmers are also processing their own products (Vetemaa & Mikk, 2014). Organic catering is still in the initial stage in Estonia. In 2013 several restaurants that used organic food were facing the complications with rules and regulations in order to reference organic food. In total more than 40 organic and health-shops can be found in Estonia and half of them are located in Tallinn. Such stores have opened in most county towns and other smaller towns. Approximately 10 web shops are available. Organic food is also available on the shelves of conventional food stores. For

example, selections can be found at Tallinn & Tartu Kaubamaja, Solaris, Stockmann and also at Selver, Rimi, Prisma, ETK and Maxima chain-stores (Vetemaa & Mikk, 2014).

There are also few Spas involved with organic food providing. For example Pühajärve Spa & Puhkekeskus is doing an excellent work with offering an organic menu in the café and making cooperation with local organic farms. It also won “The Green Key” award in 2009, being the best green accommodation business. Their work slogan was: “Choose organic food- good for nature, good for you!” Their aim is to promote organic food among clients, employees, tourist and locals. Also they would like to prove that it is possible even for the big accommodations to provide organic food and products (Pühajärve Spa & Puhkekeskus, 2009). Another Spa that is reaching towards organic food promotion is Vihula Manor Spa. They promote themselves as eco spa and offer fresh herbs and vegetables from their garden and local areas (Vihula Manor & Spa, n.d.). Georg Ots Spa is offering some local items from their menu, but do not advertise so much themselves as organic food providers (Georg Ots Spa Hotel, n.d.).

As the studies have shown, organic product labeling and certification logos play an important role in stimulating consumer appeal for organic products (Bauer, Heinrich, and Schafer, 2012). Therefore, Estonian organic and ecological products have its own Estonian organic labels and European Union (EU) labels. Broadly, organic label and ecological label difference is that organic labels go for the products that origin from agriculture farming and it is eatable, but ecological labels go for the industrial products and their raw material can be from different origins, included from the agricultural farming. Most commonly used Estonian organic label is “Öko” and it has been in use from 2005, before it was named “Mahemärk”. It stands for agricultural farming production and processing, without using the artificial fertilizers and pesticides and the permit to use logo will be given to the companies, who are certified according to the Estonian organic agricultural law (Öko-ja mahemärgised, 2015). Another most common label is the European Union organic logo “Euro-leaf”. The logo indicates that product can be legally qualified organic of its full conformity with the conditions and regulations for the organic farming sector established by the European Union. For

processed products it means that at least 95% of the agricultural ingredients are organic (Euroleaf, 2010).

The positive side is that nature protecting attitude and demand for organic products are winning supporters all over the world. The challenges that organic industry in Estonia has to face are the high prices for consumers purchasing organic foods as the survey in 2013 indicated (TNS Emor, 2013). Main reasons for the higher price, besides the difference in the production system, are the small production amounts and high costs of logistics. As mentioned before Estonia has all the preconditions for the environmentally friendly production of healthy food. Estonian Ministry of Agriculture hopes that with the help of Estonian producers it is possible that organic food we aim to reach organic food as a natural and not an elite part of the food table both in real life and statistics (Vetemaa & Mikk, 2014). The accessibility has increased every year to organic products in Estonia and the trend still continues to grow.

1.3 Green consumer characteristics

Green consumer is defined differently in scientific works. One of the many definitions can be that green consumer is a consumer who buys eco-friendly products not because it is becoming fashionable, but because he cares about environmental issues. In other words, these are the consumers who search for evidence in the labels that the product is eco-friendly or environmentally friendly. Moreover, they are motivated to buy green products even if they are of lower quality and higher price in comparison to alternative products (Ščypa, 2006). The author is investigating Estonian green consumers in order to target consumers who buy organic food and products.

In order to provide green products, it is necessary to understand the essence of green consumer and investigate their various characteristics. The most common identification methods of describing the green consumers are analyzing the demographic and behavioral characteristics. To choose effective solutions for green marketing it is important to know green consumer attributes, their personality and lifestyle, the motives to buy ecological product, usefulness and attitude. Recent years many authors have tried to investigate green consumer but with many different results (D'Souza, Taghian, & Lamb, 2006). One of the mostly widely held beliefs is that green consumers are

primarily wealthy consumers who concern more about their own health than the environmental impacts of conventional agriculture (Lockie, Lyons, Lawrence, & Grice, 2004).

Analyzing the demographic characteristics of a green consumer reflects such attributes as age, gender, number of children in the family, purchasing power, education etc. These characteristics have been analyzed in the scientific literature by various authors (Ottman & Reilly, 1998; Getzner & Grabner-Kräuter, 2004; do Paço, Raposo, & Filho, 2009; Magnusson et al., 2003; D'Souza et al., 2006).

Age is one of the demographic characteristics and the general belief is that the average age of a green consumer is lower than a typical consumer because younger people are more likely to be sensitive to environmental issues (D'Souza et al., 2006). Younger consumers tend to have a more positive attitude towards buying organic foods, and they are willing to pay a premium price, but their purchase frequency is low (Magnusson et al., 2003). However, some studies reveal opposite results either (do Paço et al., 2009). Younger consumers have more positive relationship related to the organic food but the actual buyer is more mature consumer and that might be caused by the fact that organic product are too expensive for the younger consumers (Magnusson M. , Arvola, Hursti, Aberg, & Sjoden, 2001). The study performed by Ottman & Reilly (1998) confirms that green consumers usually belong to the age group of 30 to 44.

Gender, as another demographical characteristic, is researched to find the correlation between environmental awareness and gender. The studies prove that men possess deeper knowledge on environmental issues, whereas women care about the quality of environment more (D'Souza et al., 2006). Although, empirical studies show that women are more sensitive and worry about environmental issues and perceive them better than men do; and therefore, they more often become green consumers (Ottman & Reilly, 1998; do Paço et al., 2009).

The number of children in the family can be also a demographic characteristic that has been indicated in many researches and show positive correlation. Families that have many children have greater knowledge about environmental issues and more positive attitude towards environment. Parents also are willing to put their children to the

schools where environmental issues are being discussed and that turns in the subject by the children at home as well and therefore parents feel the pressure to act environmentally sustainable (Grunert, 1993). Based on the review of several studies many other researches also affirm that having young children influences the mature female organic product purchases (Yiridoe, Bonti-Ankomah, & Martin, 2005; Hughner, McDonagh, Prothero, Schultz, & Stanton, 2007).

Purchasing power is generally positively related to environment awareness. It has been explained as consumers who have higher than average purchasing power can pay less attention to differences between eco-friendly and conventional product prices and are more sensitive to environmental issues in comparison to those who receive average or low income (do Paço et al., 2009). However there have been studies that indicate the opposite result and negative correlation between environmental awareness and purchasing power (Samdahl & Robertson, 1989).

Educational level can also be named one of the demographic characteristics and empirical studies prove that better educated consumers perceive environmental issues better and are more sensitive to them (Ottman & Reilly, 1998; D'Souza et al., 2006; do Paço et al., 2009). Although, there have been studies that show also negative correlation between education level and environmental awareness (Samdahl & Robertson, 1989).

Based on the researchers, it can be stated that general demographic profile who will possibly be involved into organic product purchase behavior are well-educated women, who belong to age group of 30 to 44, and whose annual household income is higher than average.

In Estonia there has limited amount of research done by finding out the green consumers demographic characteristics. Although Korpõljova (2012) indicates that Estonian average green consumers are women in their mid-thirties, with higher education, and whose annual household income is higher than average. This characteristic corresponds to the findings of various authors (Ottman & Reilly, 1998; Getzner & Grabner-Kräuter, 2004) who have investigated the same subject, only Korpõljova identifies that the Estonian green consumer is a bit younger. The result

might be induced because choosing the convenience sampling and therefore mostly younger people replied to the questionnaire using the internet (Korpõljova, 2012).

Behavioral profile of a green consumer reveals behavior characteristics of a green consumer like attitude, knowledge, motives, benefit, response for buying organic product, etc. (do Paço et al., 2009). The analysis of the consumer behavior is, on one hand, important for the marketing strategies of companies and, on the other hand, this analysis of consumer behavior reflects the way in which consumers can fulfill some of their needs, showing in this way their living standards and the quality of their life (Pop & Pelau, 2012). Green consumers are not completely homogeneous and therefore some authors have been divided them into three groups according to the motives such as consumers concerned with planet environment protection, health fanatics and animal lovers (Ottman & Reilly, 1998). These groups and motives are explained in Appendix 1.

When discussing the tendencies of green consumer behavior according to their motives, there has not been any significant research done about Estonian green consumer. Although the author assumes that Estonians concern about environment is perceived rather narrow and they rather just buy organic and eco-friendly products in the store; whereas in the world, the interests of such consumers are much wider and include climate changes, ocean pollution, the end of nuclear era, renewable energy resources, forest protection, fight for disarmament and toxic chemicals and other issues.

Many authors have classified consumers into types according to their environmental awareness level (Ščypa, 2006; Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004). Ginsberg and Bloom have divided green consumers into 5 categories (true blue greens, green black greens, sprouts, grouzers, basic browns) based on environmentally friendly behavior (see Appendix 2). The distribution shows five types of consumers, but there are many other variations of different division according to the behavioral criteria. Green consumers might vary from very high to very low environmental values. Again, there has been lack of information about Estonian green consumer environmental awareness level.

Based on TNS Emor study in 2013 8% of consumers purchased organic food once a week or often, 15% bought it 1–3 times a month and 26% less than once a month. 43% did not buy organic food (TNS Emor, 2013). It can be assumed based on that study that

8% of Estonians have rather very high or high environmental values and belong to true blue green group or green black greens group; 15% of consumers belong to green black greens group; 26% of consumers have medium ecological values and can be classified to sprouts group; and 43% of consumers have low ecological awareness and can be segmented to grouzers group. Conducting these correlations it seems that overall Estonians ecological awareness is rather low and creating higher environmental awareness is necessary.

This research tries to examine why green consumers buy organic products and based on earlier studies, there are several reasons for organic food consumption like concerns about health and nutrition, their superior taste, care for the environment, food safety, lack of trust in conventional food, care for animal welfare, support the local economy, freshness, nostalgia, curiosity or because they are considered trendy (Hughner et al., 2007). It is an interesting fact that some studies have shown that social approval plays a role in consumers' purchase of organic products (Grunert & Juhl, 1995). Bonti-Ankomah & Yiridoe (2006) claim that self-reported obstacles inhibiting organic product purchase are their low availability and distribution, their price premium, and consumer lack of knowledge.

1.4 Organic food education and promotion

When stressing the significance of consumer's education and society's ecological culture development, it can be emphasize that an environmentally sophisticated consumer is becoming a competent and demanding buyer, which induces business representatives and state institutions to act purposefully in the field (Ruževičius, 2009). There is lack of research done to investigate Estonians knowledge about organic products benefits. The fact that food production and consumption has significant implications on our health as well as on the environment is far from new, although research done by TNS Emor states that only 29% of consumers from 514 bought organic food because it is produced in environmental friendly way. The researches done in previous years have shown even lower percentages (in 2011 only 16%) (TNS Emor, 2013). Generally the health is the main concern why Estonians buy organic products but there has to be done more research about what kind of health concerns and what is the Estonians knowledge level of overall concept of organic food benefits.

A major assumption of wellness education is that nearly everyone has a basic desire to be healthy and well, but that many people acquire habits of thought and behavior that may make them less well rather than more. One goal of wellness education, therefore, is to encourage people to give up less-healthy attitudes and behaviors and adopt ones that lead to greater health, wellness, and satisfaction of life (Edlin, Golanty , & McCormack Brown , 2000). When wellness consumers find something that works on them, they typically become enthusiastic consumers of that product or service and try other wellness items. People immediately notice when someone has a wellness experience and are anxious to duplicate the results (Pilzer, 2007).

That goes also for green consumers, who care what they eat and continually try to get more information about healthy and holistic living. Some authors have ground the need for information on green consumer's necessity to know. Knowing is a criterion that has an impact on green consumer behavior in all the stages of decision making process on buying an organic product. There is an assumption that the better green consumers will be informed and the more they will know about the qualities of an organic product, the more they will be motivated to buy the product. Green consumer's need for information is closely related to knowing how and where to find eco-friendly products (Getzner & Grabner-Kräuter, 2004). In brief, the ideal organic consumer is proactive, informed, eco- educated, liberal, and have a green consciousness and is actively seeking out the product.

Knowledge on environmental issues tends to create awareness in brands and possible positive attitudes towards green brands, while environmental labels may assist in identifying green product attributes (D'Souza et al., 2006). Chan believes also that the ecological knowledge of certain individuals will positively affect their affective responses, which will lead to conative responses, the socially responsible behavior (Chan, 2001). In the other hand there has been found a positive relationship between knowledge and behavior in the behavioral literature, but empirical evidence on green product purchasing behavior indicates that the relationship between ecological knowledge and behavior is still inconclusive (Laroche, Bergeron, & Barbaro-Forleo, 2001). However the knowledge of ecological issues is the predictor of socially responsible consumer behavior (Chan, 1999). Ecological knowledge can be defined as

how much someone knows about the ecological issue, whilst consumer's affect towards the environment is the individual's emotional level towards ecological issues (Chan, 1999). Knowledge in consumer research is one of the characteristics influencing the whole decision-making process. Specifically, knowledge is the relevant and significant construct that can influence how consumers collect and organize acquired information, how information is used in decision-making, and how consumers evaluate products and services to be consumed (Shellyana Junaedi, 2007).

The influence of ecological knowledge on consumer behavior in relation to environmental care has been investigated by previous empirical studies, but show contradictive results. Previous studies consistently prove that a positive relationship prevails between ecological affect and behavior. This indicates that a person lacking in ecological knowledge mostly show high emotion. People are mostly emotional towards their environment, rather than using their knowledge to perceive the environment (Junaedi, 2007).

In the green marketing literature there are following three green communication strategies: educate consumer, empowered consumer and convince consumer (Ottman, 2011). The educate consumer strategy means educative efforts on environmental and life problems a green solve as a response to the pressures of the consumers or as a result of the business initiative by providing the needed information. The particular goal of educative messages is the increasing of buying intent (Ottman, 2011).

The strategy of empowering consumer with green solutions consists in demonstrating to the consumers how environmentally healthy products and services can help them protect life and preserve the environment for the future generations. Thus, this communication strategy supports the sustainable character of the green marketing (Ottman, 2011).

The strategy for convincing consumer has at least two directions. The first part of the communication strategy has providing the performance reassurance of the green products as a goal, in order to persuade the consumers that these products are good or even better than the conventional ones. The second strategic direction appeals to the consumer self- interest by bringing out the benefits of the green products to both actual

and potential consumers. The consumers quickly like better many green products when they are linking the green solutions to their personal wellbeing (Ottman, 2011).

Even the Slow Food agenda aims to educate consumers. Educating is critical if the target is to change the way food is produced and consumed and, all in all, the way people live. Eating is a political act that requires making informed choices. Therefore, passive consumers must become active and aware co-producers, who appreciate and select real quality food and support more sustainable agricultural patterns (Slow Food Educa, 2011).

Research that was done by TNS Emor indicated that more than 57% of Estonian consumers think that organic food is not promoted enough (TNS Emor, Eesti elanike toidukaupade ostueelistused ja hoiakud, 2013). The result shows that there is a need of future promotion of organic food. Also in Estonia there is lack of educational institutions that can teach people how to improve their life quality starting with the food that they eat daily. Spas as wellness centers should have that power to guide people towards healthier way of living. Currently Estonian spas concentrate mostly on the physical healing of the customers and there is lack of the holistic approach (Toomela, 2014). Nevertheless, not only spas could be more holistic. Nowadays it is becoming more and more popular to establish wellness centers and curing centers nearby organic farms and teach people how to live in more holistic way, and how to change their ways of living by eating more natural and sustainable food. Establishments with that kind of concept do not exist in Estonia yet and that could be one opportunity for improvement.

2. EMPIRICAL STUDY OF ESTONIAN GREEN CONSUMERS

2.1 Research purpose, method and strategy

When conducting a research it is necessary to define clearly its objectives or questions in order to determine the central purpose to keep the focus till the end (Thomas & Hodges, 2010). The objective of this thesis is to identify Estonian green consumer and its knowledge about organic products. Based on the research result the consecutive action is to find possibilities how to promote organic food consumption. This study tries to address the following question: “Why green consumers buy organic products and is future education needed in order to promote organic food consumption?” The ambition of this study is thus to enhance our understanding of the factors which influence the purchase of organic food. There are also study questions for this research:

- Who is Estonian green consumer?
- What motivates consumers to buy organic products?
- What Estonian green consumers know about organic food wellness benefits?
- Do Estonian green consumers associate organic products with sustainable environment?
- How to promote organic products among Estonians?

This paper makes use of an explorative approach and will focus specifically on Estonians. Green consumer, namely organic consumer investigation brings out people’s motivations and attitudes towards organic products and by identifying these, other consumers can be attracted to this healthy and environmental friendly living pattern. By increasing the population accessibility to the organic food, the enterprises can be more sustainable, and at the same time provide high quality food that tastes good. Knowledge is power and consumers should be educated about organic products as it leads to higher life quality and wellness. Estonian green consumers should have advanced knowledge about organic foods compared to conventional consumers. It can be assumed that if the

green consumer knowledge level is low about organic products, then the overall population knowledge about organic products is probably even lower.

Data is collected in form of primary and secondary data. Collecting data from multiple sources assists not only to collect more comprehensive relevant information but also to crosscheck consistency in order to enhance the robustness of findings. The research question and purpose played an important role for choosing the research strategy and method for this research. It is hard to choose the best method for the research and therefore mixed-methods approaches have become more popular over the past two decades. There are two key reasons for that: first to address research question that a single method is unable to do: quantitative verifies theory, or addresses the “how many” question while qualitative generates theory or addresses the “why” question. Secondly, the use of mixed-methods provides stronger inference and offset the disadvantages of a single method; and the results of each can validate each other (MacKenzie Bryers, van Teijlingen, Pitchforth, 2014). As this current research includes question “why consumers buy organic food” it was deliberated that maybe mixed methods would be the right solution. Although based on the Table 1, where it shows what kind of method would be suitable in certain situations, it can be stated that quantitative method would be most applicable for this research. Also there are no interviews following after the questionnaire that makes the research more qualitative format.

Table 1. Ways of combining methods

Sequence of Methods	Example
Qualitative before quantitative	Use focus groups (qualitative) to establish the questions and question order for large-survey questionnaire (quantitative).
Quantitative before qualitative	Study of records (quantitative) to find a correlation between two habits among certain respondents group and use interviews (qualitative) to find out why.
Quantitative & qualitative in parallel	Questionnaire study (quantitative) to establish how many respondents have some habit and interview (qualitative) a subsample of these respondents to find out what would help to stop the habit.

Source: (MacKenzie Bryers, van Teijlingen, Pitchforth, 2014)

The author of this thesis decided to use survey as a research strategy. A Survey is a system for collecting information from or about people to describe, compare, or explain their knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. Surveyors can collect information directly, by

asking people to answer questions, or indirectly, by reviewing written, oral, and visual records of people's thoughts and actions (Fink, 2002). Therefore for the primary data collection the author conducted questionnaire in order to target the green consumers. This quantitative research method provides a relatively quick and efficient way of obtaining large amounts of information from a large sample of people. Questionnaires can be an effective means of measuring the behavior, attitudes, preferences, opinions and intentions (Smith & Albaum, 2010). The conducted questionnaire contains 13 questions and they are mostly closed-ended questions, as it is not as time consuming for respondents and easier to analyze the data. The questionnaire also contains few open-ended questions that provide a rich source of qualitative information. Respondents are asked to express their feelings about organic products and assess their knowledge levels of organic products. A disadvantage of a questionnaire is that respondents may lie due to social desirability (Smith & Albaum, 2010). People want to present a positive image of themselves and so may lie or bend the truth to look good.

2.2 Sampling method, procedures and limitations

Quantitative Research establishes statistically significant conclusions about a population by studying a representative sample of the population (Creswell, 2003). For sampling the author chose purposive sampling in order to include people of interest and exclude those who do not suit the purpose (Tongco, 2007). Organic shop Biomarket Ltd. customers were chosen for this research in order to reach people who consume organic products. Therefore this research is concerned with that subset of the sample, who supposedly consumed at least some organic food or products and with how the various motivational, attitudinal and behavioral factors interacted to influence increasing levels of organic consumption. This can be named expert sampling as it involves the assembling of a sample of persons with known or demonstrable experience and expertise in organic products (Tongco, 2007). Since it is impractical to conduct a census because of constant turnover and resource constraints, a representative sample is chosen from the population. If chosen properly, the sample will be statistically identical to the population and conclusions for the sample can be inferred to the population (Zikmund, 2001).

Heretofore, the amount of organic products consumers has not been determined in Estonia. Because this research is done among Biomarket customers, the population size N includes people that are Biomarket customers. As it was not possible to reach the customers through the Biomarket customers' list the author got an agreement to publish the research questionnaire to Biomarket's Facebook page. The Biomarket Facebook page had 3271 fans that makes the population size N for the equation to calculate sample size. There are many different equations to calculate suitable sample size. The author is using the following equation for calculating the sample size (Trobia, 2008):

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq N}{E^2(N - 1) + z^2 pq}$$

where

n - sample size

z - confidence level (equals 1.96)

pq - variance (maximum 0.25)

N - whole population

E - sampling error (usually <0.04)

In case there are 3271 organic products consumers in Biomarket's Facebook page the sample size should be:

$$507 \approx \frac{1,96^2 \times 0,25 \times 3271}{0,04^2(3271 - 1) + 1,96^2 \times 0,25}$$

The equation shows that 507 consumers should be questioned. Lack of time and instruments might also decrease this number. The questionnaire was published on the Biomarket Facebook page and customers could fill it up online. The LimeSurvey software was used to conduct the questionnaire and it was in Estonian language. LimeSurvey software was used for many advantages. It offered to conduct an online survey that was easy to follow and had good guidelines for respondents. Also the author could make the questionnaire more illustrative and design more appealing layout for the respondents. Another advantage was that it provided basic statistical data of the results and separated fully answered questionnaires from the uncompleted ones. Overall most

of the questions were analyzed using the Microsoft Excel 11. All the figures and graphs in analyzes chapter are conducted by the author.

Before the questionnaire was published on the Biomarket's Facebook page, the pilot study was conducted in order to test the questionnaire and get assurance that it is understandable, short and logical for respondents. After the improvements and rephrasing some of the questions the questionnaire was sent to Biomarket's Facebook page on 9th of March and customers had time to answer it until 26th of March.

There were some limitations of this study. First of all, it was hard to calculate the sample size of green consumers as it is not determined in Estonia. Therefore the author tried to cooperate with Biomarket Ltd. as it is a largest organic products retailer and wholesaler in Estonia. Author had an agreement with Biomarket to publish the survey to their customer's list that consists around 10000 members. Unfortunately it was against privacy protection and therefore Biomarket published the questionnaire on their Facebook page. That kind of sample size might bias the results because mostly younger generation is involved with Facebook services and that might decrease the disparity of different age groups. Also the respondents' number could be bigger to get a better sample size. In the future studies the in depth interviews could be useful to get a rich qualitative data about the topic. Time consuming face-to-face questionnaires could be also a solution to get a better sample for the survey that includes older generations and males in the research.

2.3 Overview of Biomarket Ltd.

The author chose Biomarket Ltd., assuming the customers of this shop can be defined as organic products consumers and therefore they belong to Estonian green consumers category. Also Biomarket is doing a good job with educating their consumers about organic products. Biomarket is a leading organic products retail and wholesale dealer in Estonia. They opened in 2003 and today they concentrate on three main domains: Biomarket stores management and development; Dr. Hauschka natural cosmetic products representation in Baltic countries; organic products wholesale to other conventional and organic shops.

The author admires Biomarkets' mission as it comes from their heart and stands for volition to make organic products more accessible, for everyone and every day as it should become a natural part of peoples' life. They believe that organic products are healthier and environmental friendlier than conventional products and improving their availableness and consumption changes life in Estonia more healthier and happier.

In Estonia there are total of 6 Biomarket shops, 4 in Tallinn, 1 in Viimsi, and 1 in Tartu and Pärnu. Biomarket shops offer the widest and most exciting selection of organic, health and wellness products in Estonia. They are concentrated on daily basic necessities product groups such as food, health, cleaning and cosmetic products. They sell only certified organic and natural products as it refers to safe and high quality products for the customers. A good organic product should not be only made of naturally pure ingredients but also have a great taste. They cooperate with leading European and Estonian suppliers and pay a lot of attention to the reliability and quality of the products, not only the products composition and price is important, but also the supplier history and operational purposes pay role in the selection of their suppliers. Innovation and alternation are the words that describe their choice of products and daily operations (Biomarket, 2015).

In order to educate and attract their customer to purchase organic products Biomarket is releasing four times per year a customer magazine. The magazine includes guidance, news and introductions about products and producers. Their goal is to reveal the products background and give good recommendations how to use the organic products. The magazines are presented in the Biomarket shops. Also Biomarket is organizing different workshops to educate customers and reveal the organic cosmetics or food benefits (Biomarket, 2015). This kind of strategy is useful in order enchant more customers to consume organic products and helps to decrease the accessibility gap concerning organic products.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will give an overview about the research findings that were compiled from empirical quantitative research using the questionnaire survey. Purposive sampling method was used in order to target the experts of the field. Results are supported with the theoretical facts and the author will give recommendations up on the findings.

The general idea of this research was to get an overview of Estonian organic products consumers so called green consumers, and investigate their wellness and environmental sustainable knowledge about organic products. Also find ways how to promote healthy and sustainable lifestyle and determine if there is future education needed. As described before, the questionnaire that was distributed through the Biomarket's Facebook page, had 13 questions that mostly consisted of close-ended questions and 2 open-ended questions (see Appendix 5). The first part of the questionnaire was about the green consumers' behavioral aspects concerning organic products and food. The respondents had to name themselves the reasons why they prefer organic products and after that they had to rank the reasons why they purchase organic products from most important aspect to less important aspect. Also their knowledge and behavior related to the organic products was examined. The second half of the survey questionnaire consisted of demographic questions that enables identify Estonian green consumer. The author was interested in the demographic characteristics of a green consumer such as age, gender, number of children in the family, purchasing power and education.

3.1 Demographic characteristics of a green consumer

The total amount of respondents reached to 249 people. Although 75 of the questionnaires were not fully answered and they cannot be analyzed, as questions that had critical importance were not answered. Fully answered questionnaires reached to 164, and 141 of them were females and 23 males. The distribution of respondents according to their sex and age is presented in the Figure 1.

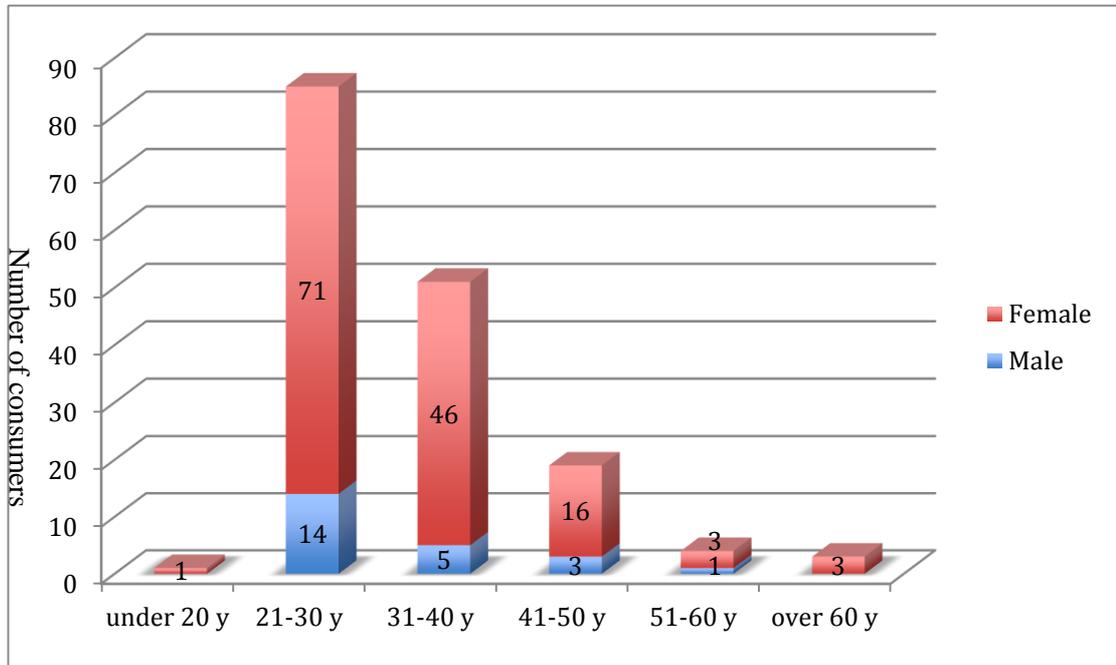


Figure 1. Green consumers distribution according to their age and gender

Totally 86% of the respondents were female and only 14% male. This result shows that women are more into organic products and food. Major part of the respondents belonged to the age group of 21-30 years. This result might be biased as the survey was on the Facebook page and mostly younger generation is more familiar with the computer and especially Facebook. Totally 52% respondents represented 21-30 year old age group. The second largest group was 31-40 year olds that formed 31% of total respondents. 41-50 years old formed 12% of the total respondents. As the figure shows, the rest of the age groups were poorly presented. According to the findings, organic products consumers are mostly women in the thirties. The theoretical background studies have been shown that women are more purchasing organic products and worry about environmental issues and perceive them better than men do; and therefore, they more often become green consumers (Ottman & Reilly, 1998; do Paço et al., 2009). Although, some previous studies have confirmed that green consumers usually belong to the age group of 30 to 44 (Ottman & Reilly, 1998) but in the other hand there have been studies that proven that younger people are more likely to be sensitive to environmental issues (D'Souza et al., 2006).

Another demographical measurement for identifying a green consumer in the study was number of children in the family. The distribution of having children in family or not by the respondents is presented in Figure 2.

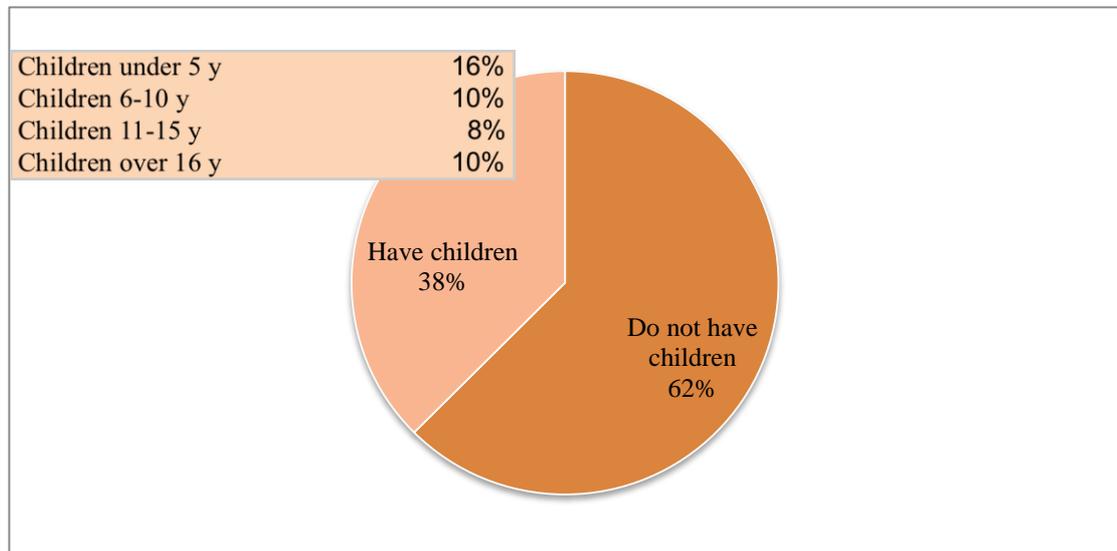


Figure 2. Having children in the family among respondents

Majority of respondents did not have children (62%). Nevertheless 16% of respondents had children under 5 years and 10% had children between age of 6-10 years, which might indicate families that have young children consider more to purchase organic products. Many other researches also affirm that having young children influences the mature female organic product purchases (Yiridoe et al., 2005; Hughner et al., 2007).

The author was also interested to investigate the income of organic products consumers. This question had option not to be answered and 5% of respondents used that opportunity, as it might be sensitive issue. The distribution of the monthly household net income per person is presented in the Table 2. Findings show that 33% of the respondents have over 1000 euros (€) monthly net income per person in a household, which is higher than Estonian average gross salary per month (in 2014 it was around 1001 € (Eesti statistika, 2015)). As it was asked to rank the net household income per person, respondents might misunderstand the question and put the gross salary or did not divide the income between the household members. Although, 62% of the respondents did not have children and in that case there is no need to divide the monthly

income between children. Probably the result indicates that people with higher incomes can afford more expensive organic products. Second largest group was 401-600 € net household income per person that formed 20% of the respondents, followed by 601-800 € income for 16% of respondents. Only 3 % of respondents had under 200 € income per person. In the previous studies the same findings have been explained as consumers who have higher than average purchasing power can pay less attention to differences between organic and conventional product prices and are more sensitive to environmental issues in comparison to those who receive average or low income (do Paço et al., 2009).

Table 2. Monthly household net income per person

Net income per person in household	Percentage from the total respondents
Under 200 €	3%
201-400 €	14%
401-600 €	20%
601-800 €	16%
801-1000 €	9%
over 1000€	33%
no answer	5%

Source: Author's calculations

Educational level was investigated as it is an important demographical characteristic. From the sample there was no respondents with elementary education. Most of the respondents had university or similar higher education degree that formed 66%. 20% had high school or vocational diploma and 14% of respondents were studying in the university. Table 3. presents the distribution of respondents by their education level.

Table 3. Education level

Education level	Percentage from the total respondents
High school/ vocational school diploma	20%
Currently studying in University	14%
University degree or similar higher education level	66%

Source: Author's calculations

The author included university students for classification separately as their income might not be as high as the full time workers and that might explain the general lower green consumers income. Although, minority of respondents were students and that does not influence this specific sample outcome so deeply. Other empirical studies have proven that highly educated consumers perceive environmental issues better and are more sensitive to them (Ottman & Reilly, 1998; D'Souza et al., 2006; do Paco et al., 2009).

In brief, the research showed that general demographic profile who will possibly be involved into organic products purchase behavior are usually women, around thirty, without children, highly educated, and whose monthly household income is higher than average.

3.2 Behavioral characteristics of a green consumer

Assuming that the respondents are organic products consumers, the purpose of the first part of the survey questionnaire was to reveal their behavior profile that includes customers' attitudes, knowledge, motives, benefits for buying organic products. The aim of this paragraph is to analyze Estonian green consumers purchase behavior; the density of purchasing organic products; motivations that lead to this purchase; benefits that the consumer gets from buying organic products; consumers information sources; and its overall knowledge about organic products wellness benefits and environmental sustainable advantages.

To attest that sample of this study consists of organic products consumers, respondents were asked about the density of purchasing organic products. The results are presented in the figure 3. Majority of respondents (43%) purchase organic products once a week. This is quite a high percentage compared to the survey made by TNS Emor in 2013 with a random sampling, were only 8% of consumers bought organic products once a week (TNS Emor, 2013). In the current survey overall 28% of respondents bought at least twice a month organic products and 24% at least once a month. In brief, totally 95% of the respondents purchased at least once a month organic products witch assures that the sample can be classified to green consumer category. Also all of the respondents had bought organic products at least sometime in their life. Comparing the

survey done by TNS Emor in 2013 about organic products, 15% of respondents bought it 1–3 times a month, 26% less than once a month and 43% didn't buy organic food at all (TNS Emor, 2013). Based on the results of this question, the chosen sample group should include the experts of organic products.

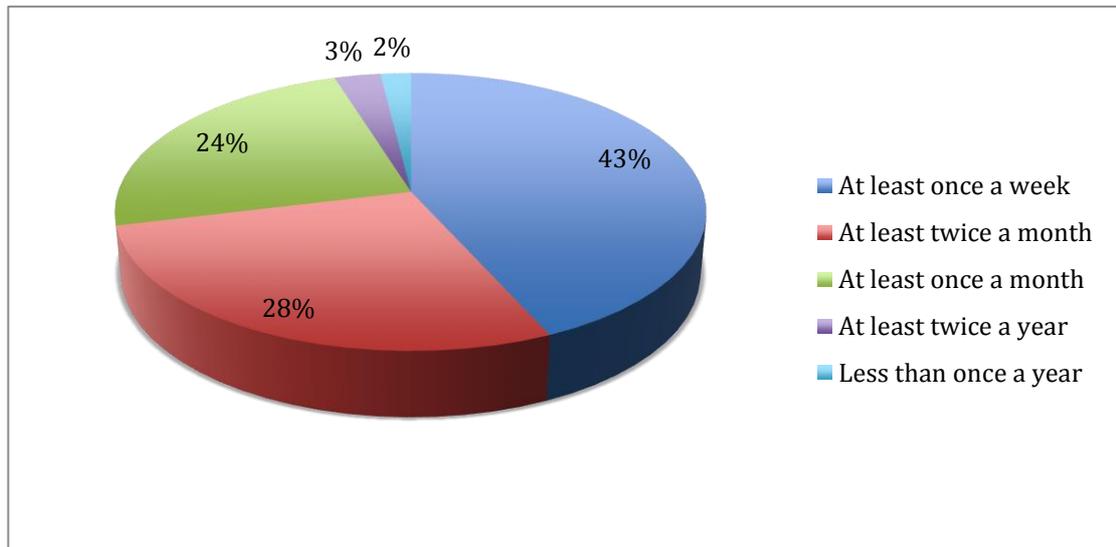


Figure 3. Green consumers organic products purchase density

For future marketing purposes and to understand better, what are the most popular sources of information, where green consumers get knowledge about organic products, they were asked to choose from the choice of answers to pick suitable answer for them. The choice of answers consisted of eight options and they are presented together with the results in the Appendix 3. Most of the respondents (86%) chose “internet”, where they get information about organic products. This finding is quite logical as people use daily internet for seeking information and also the questionnaire was made through the internet. Also the large amount of internet users might be related with the younger generation who dominated in the survey. 70% of respondents chose friends and family, as the word of mouth is quite strong when it comes to wellbeing and organic food, probably because they give them a greater confidence than the advertising. If someone is feeling or looking better, people want to know what is behind it and are influenced to try the same methods to look even better than they are already (Pilzer, 2007). Totally 68% of respondents pointed out magazines and books that give them good information about organic products. Nowadays there is a wide selection of health, nutrition, wellness

and fitness magazines and that gives the customers a good overview what are the trends around the world. Although, only 32% of the respondents named Biomarket customer's magazine as a source for getting information about organic products. While this research was carried out among Biomarket customers, it was expected that more consumers read the Biomarket's magazine. Probably consumers are getting all their information already in the Biomarket store, as 63% of the respondents chose this option. That demonstrates a good customer service in the Biomarket stores, as if consumers prefer more to get recommendations and information through "face to face" communication rather than reading it from the magazines. TV and radio is not so popular information sources which might indicate that organic products are poorly marketed through these channels. Also only 28% of the respondents have been some workshops about organic products. This might be a good idea how to involve more people to consume organic products by making educative workshops about the health benefits and environmental sustainability. The choice "other" was named by 5% of the respondents, who mostly pointed out other organic shops, different countries, and work related studies.

Another behavioral characteristic that was questioned from the respondents was willingness to pay more for organic products. In general 90% of the respondents are willing to pay more for organic products and 10% do not consider it at all. Nevertheless, the most popular answer (35%) was to pay 10% more for organic food. Very closely second largest group formed with 24% of respondents who are already willing to pay 20% more for organic products. The result might show that green consumers are familiar with the higher labor cost and shorter storage life of organic products, not to mention the quality what comes with it. One fifth of respondents agree to pay 5% more and 9% from the total respondents are willing to pay more than 30%, from which 2% agree to pay 40% more and even 3% of total respondents are willing to pay more than 50% for organic products. As 33% of the respondents have over 1000 euros income in the household per person, then it is not surprising that organic consumers can afford this luxury and are not so sensitive to the prices. There was also correlation found between willing to pay more for organic food and having higher income. The results are illustrated in Figure 4. which presents the percentage of consumers from the total respondents.

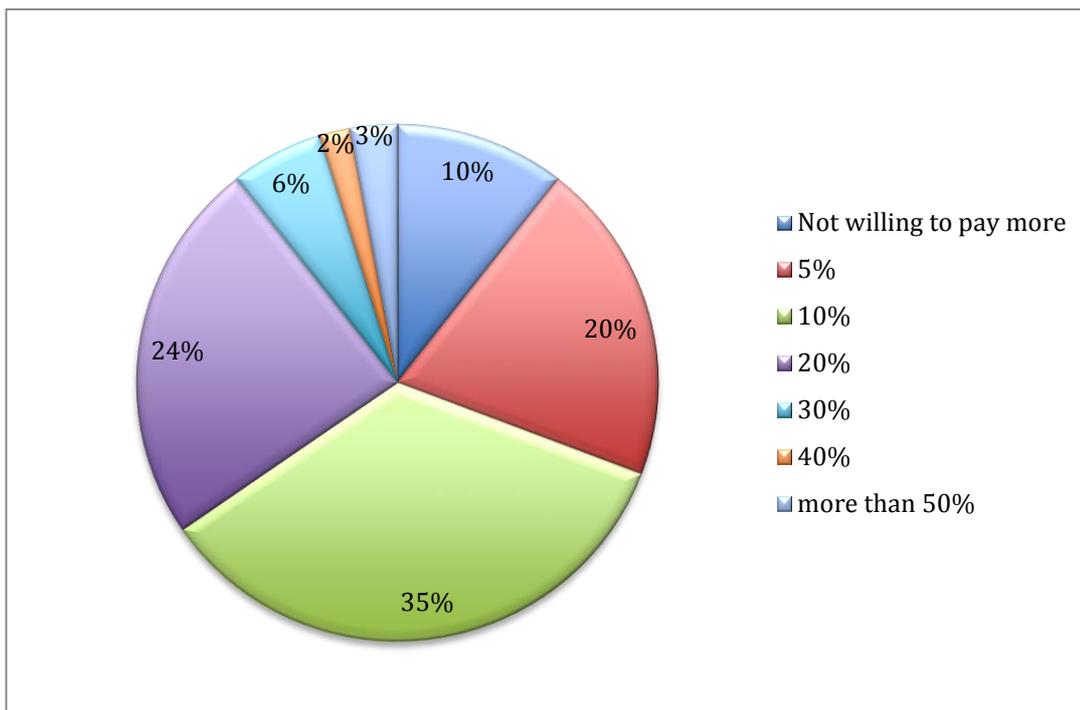


Figure 4. Organic products consumers' willingness to pay more.

Loosely it might assume that green consumers are willing to pay more for organic products and even beyond 50%. Globally, most consumers are willing to pay a premium of 10% to 20% for organic food and beverages products, yet price premiums on organic food products often range higher (Bonti-Ankomah & Yiridoe, 2006). Estonian green consumers resemble with the other green consumers as an average they are willing to pay 13% more for organic products.

Attitude plays essential role while identifying consumers' behavior. It is necessary to understand green consumers point of view in certain aspects and also find out what is their knowledge level when it comes to organic products. Therefore, to get the picture of their organic products conception, seven statements were named in the questionnaire, and the respondents had to assess them correspondingly their opinion. The 5-point Likert-type scale was used for this task and the respondents could classify the statements to strongly disagree, disagree, disagree nor agree and strongly agree (see Figure 5.). The results are presented in percentages and from the total respondents.

First statement "Organic food is trendy in Estonia" got mostly positive feedback with 57% of the respondents rather agreed with the sentence. Only 14% did not consider organic food trendy and 29% of the respondents did not have any opinion about that.

Overall green consumers rather think that organic food is trendy in Estonia but that is not the reason why they purchase it. Although, studies have show differently in the past and prove that people like to belong to the social group of being “organic” (Chiciudean, Funar, Arion, Chirla, 2012).

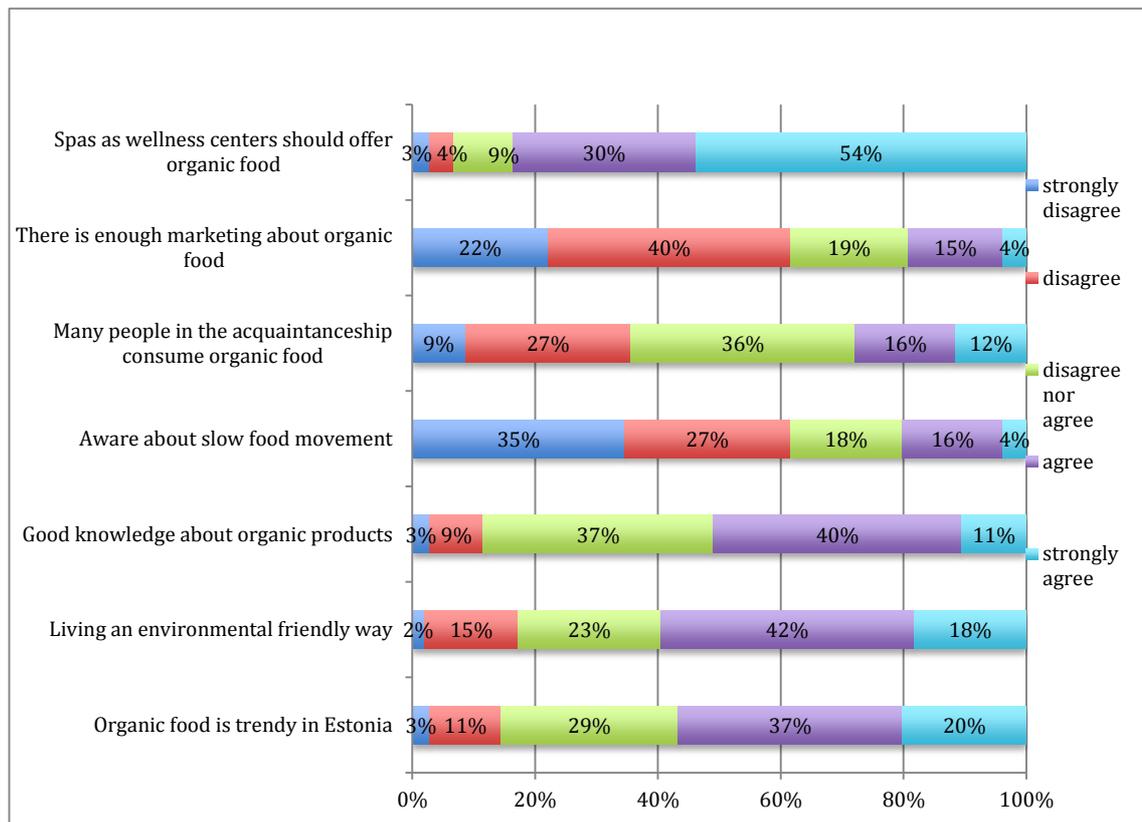


Figure 5. Respondents’ knowledge and attitude to the statements

Second statement “I am living an environmental friendly way” got also mostly positive feedback with 60% of total respondents claiming that they rather agree with the fact. From the consumers who seconded that statement, 42% admitted that they might consume organic products but they do not go in for completely environmental friendly lifestyle. 23% of respondents had no opinion about the statement. Only 18% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. It might expect a bit more from the green consumers to be extremely sensitive against environmental topics. Overall these subjective answers indicate that green consumers prefer to have environmental friendly lifestyle.

When the respondents were asked to rate their knowledge about organic products, most of them repute it very good or good (51%). It can be interpret that 37% of respondents

believe that their knowledge is average about organic products and only 12% think they do not know enough about organic products. The result indicates that there is still room for development and green consumers are willing to obtain more knowledge about organic products.

Although, the next statement shows the respondents' lack of knowledge because green consumers had to evaluate how aware are they about "Slow Food movement". Most of the respondents (63%) admitted that they do not know so much about it, from which 35% had not even heard about the movement. 18% of the respondents had no opinion and only 20% were aware about Slow Food movement. From that one fifth of the consumers as little as 4% of total respondents strongly agreed that they know about slow food movement. There was correlation found between higher education level and knowing about Slow Food movement. No other correlations were found. It comes out that Estonian green consumers have lack of knowledge about Slow Food movement. That shows overall unpopularity of Slow Food among Estonians and it might be a good idea to advertise it more.

The popularity of organic products should reflect the amount of people consuming it. The statement "many people in my acquaintanceship consume organic products" gathered mostly the answer "disagree nor agree" (36% of total respondents). Probably consumers have some friends in their acquaintanceship who prefer organic products but they could not answer that many of their friends prefer it. The same amount of respondents (36%) disagreed that many people in their acquaintanceship prefer organic products. Only 28% of the respondents rather agreed that they have many friends, who are into organic products. It might show that organic products consumption is still a rising trend in Estonia and more people are getting involved with that lifestyle. Organic and natural foods are first bought by a small group of devoted customers and then spread to the general shopper population (Bezawada & Pauwels, 2013).

Only 4% of the total respondents strongly agreed that there is enough marketing done about organic products. Overall, 19% of the respondents agreed with this argument and the same amount of respondents did not want to take any position related to this topic. Major part (62%) of the respondents claimed that there is not enough marketing done for organic products. This finding clearly shows the need for more marketing and

advertisement. Probably nowadays green consumers find ways and sources themselves how to reach to the organic products and what is good for them.

The final statement “spas as wellness centers should offer organic food” was adopted positively as 54% of total respondents strongly agreed with that, followed by 30% who just agreed with the statement. Only 7% totally did not see any need for spas to offer organic food and 9% did not have any opinion about that statement. As majority (84%) of the respondents agree spas should display organic menu in their complex, it would be feasible if spas see that as opportunity and therefore help to promote organic food among Estonians.

The questionnaire also included few open-ended questions. The first one enabled customers to express their feelings, thoughts and motives why they buy organic products. The amount of data was huge and the author coded it to make conclusions what motivates customers to buy organic products. Figure 6. shows what kind of words were mostly repeated in the text, and what was the percentage from the whole sample using that specific expression.

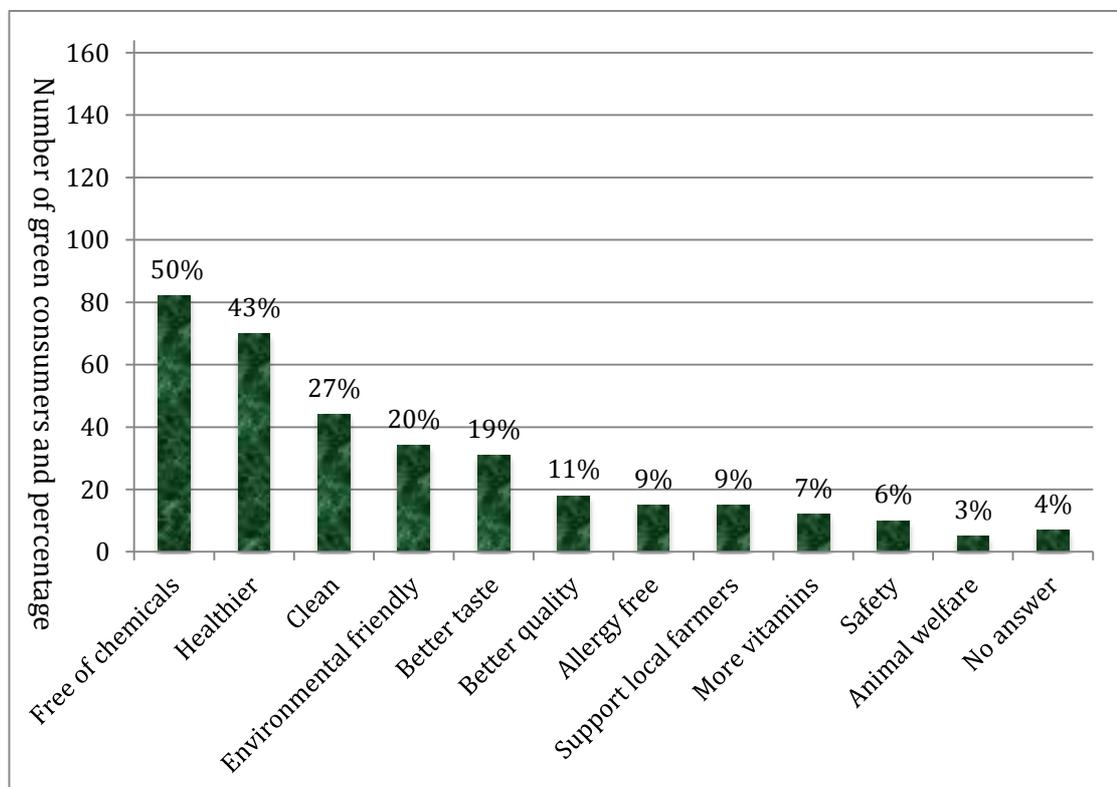


Figure 6. Reasons that respondents named why they prefer organic products

Half of the respondents biggest concern was the chemicals inside the conventional food. The author included all the expressions under “free of chemicals” who mentioned the phrases like organic products and foods are free of poisons, harmful subjects, artificial fertilizers, chemicals, preservatives and pesticide. The second most mentioned argument was that organic food is healthier than conventional alternatives forming 43% of the respondents who would like to live a healthier life and have healthier body. 27% of the respondents mentioned that organic products and foods are “cleaner” than conventional. Author assumes that by that the respondents mean the products are without harmful subjects and chemicals and good for the body. Only one fifth of the respondents were concerned about environmental sustainability, this topic is investigated also later in the study. Better taste was named almost as much as environment, forming 19% of the respondents. Better quality, allergy-free qualities, aim to support local farmers, more vitamins in the organic food, food safety and the animal welfare were not as significant factors why consumers buy organic food. There could be find few of the consumers’ purchase reasons that were well grounded and showed their good knowledge. Some core organic consumers expressed their reasons as following: “What you spread on your skin, it should be eatable”; “ Shower gels and deodorant sticks that I order from USA are so clean, that you can eat them”. In general by analyzing the green consumers preferences, why they choose organic products, their knowledge about health and wellness benefits were quite good. The results do not differ so much from the other surveys that are made about the same subject. Surprisingly green consumers concerns about environment were not so strong. Overall 4% of the respondents did not answer this question properly or did not know why they prefer organic products.

In order to examine the respondents’ believability the author conducted a task for the green consumers to range twelve reasons from the most important factor to less important factor why they prefer organic products. The respondents could choose from the following reasons why they prefer organic products: healthier than conventional food; better taste and smell than conventional food; GMO free; no artificial fertilizers residues; controlled products/ food safety; environmental friendly production/ consumption; interesting/ different products; trendy in Estonia; health issues (allergies, etc.) that do not allow use of conventional products; better quality than conventional products; would like to support organic products producers; animal welfare. The results

are presented in the Appendix 4. and show percentages of how many consumers rated previously mentioned reasons from first to twelfth position. To understand the table better, the author marked the most popular answers of each numbered position and took average of the ranked reasons, in order to collate the most important reason and diminishingly add the rest of the reasons. Based on these calculations the average most important factor stands behind number 1 and the less important reason stands behind number 12. The results were following:

1. Healthier than conventional food
2. No artificial fertilizers residues
3. Environmental friendly production/ consumption
4. Controlled products/ food safety
5. GMO free
6. Better quality than conventional products
7. Better taste and smell than conventional food
8. Would like to support organic products producers
9. Animal friendly production
10. Interesting/different products
11. Health issues (allergies, etc.) that do not allow use of conventional products
12. Trendy in Estonia

Some of the reasons that consumers named themselves why they prefer organic products coincide with the factors that they had to choose from the list and rank. The author formed a table that can be found in Appendix 4. which shows all the reasons that were included in the two tasks and marked the most important reason to number 1 and less important to number 12.

It can be stated by those two tasks that most important reasons of consuming organic products is healthiness and absence of harmful chemicals. Also the scientific publications show that health is an important motive for organic food consumption (Goetzke & Spiller, 2014). Environmental friendly production and consumption is also an important factor but not as much as the first two. Next important reasons are better quality, taste and smell of the organic products. Few consumers also pointed out that supporting the organic farmers is a reason to purchase organic products. Food safety

and the verified products did not play so big roll while consumers had to name themselves the reasons why they purchase organic products although, the second ranking task placed that reason in a quite high position. Probably it indicates that consumers still care about the food origin but maybe they do not believe completely in the safeness of organic products. Less important reasons are health issues like allergies, followed by the concerns of animal welfare and more vitamins in organic food. “Interesting/ different products” as a reason to purchase organic products did not play a significant roll and over half of the respondents ranked “trendy in Estonia” to the last place as a reason to buy organic food. People do not really want to admit that they buy products that are trendy. Although, studies have been shown that especially women buy organic products because of the trendy fact of being "organic" (Chiciudean, Funar, Arion, Chirla, 2012).

Based on this descriptive question to name the reasons why respondents purchase organic products, the general knowledge about organic products was quite good. Although, when it was asked if respondents want to have more knowledge about organic food wellness benefits and its environmental sustainable advantages, majority (74%) of total respondents replied positively to this question. 16% of the respondents did not want to get more information about these topics, 8% would like to know only more about organic products wellness benefits and 2% are interested to get more knowledge only about environmental sustainable advantages. It was brought out also in the theoretical framework that green consumers have necessity to know and it is a criterion that has an impact on green consumer behavior in all the stages of decision-making process on buying an organic product (Getzner & Grabner-Kräuter, 2004).

As one of the study questions was to find out do Estonian green consumers associate organic products with sustainable environment, additional analyses were done based on the data, in order to understand respondents commitment to sustainable lifestyle. Respondents' answers from the open- ended questions and close- ended questions that included important data about environmental topics or demographic characteristics were individually analyzed for making conclusions. When respondents had to mention the reasons why they prefer organic products (question 1, see Appendix 6.), 20% from all the respondents mentioned environmental issues and environmental friendly behavior.

5% of those green consumers respondents set environmental friendly production to a first place while ranking the most important aspect for them why they choose organic food (question 8, see Appendix 6.). Rest of the 15% of green consumers placed environmental friendly production in the first half of the reasons. To sum this up only 5% of the studied respondents are very strongly concerned about environmental sustainability (see Figure 7.). It is important to increase green consumers' knowledge about environmental issues as it tends to create awareness and possible positive attitudes towards green brands (D'Souza et al., 2006).

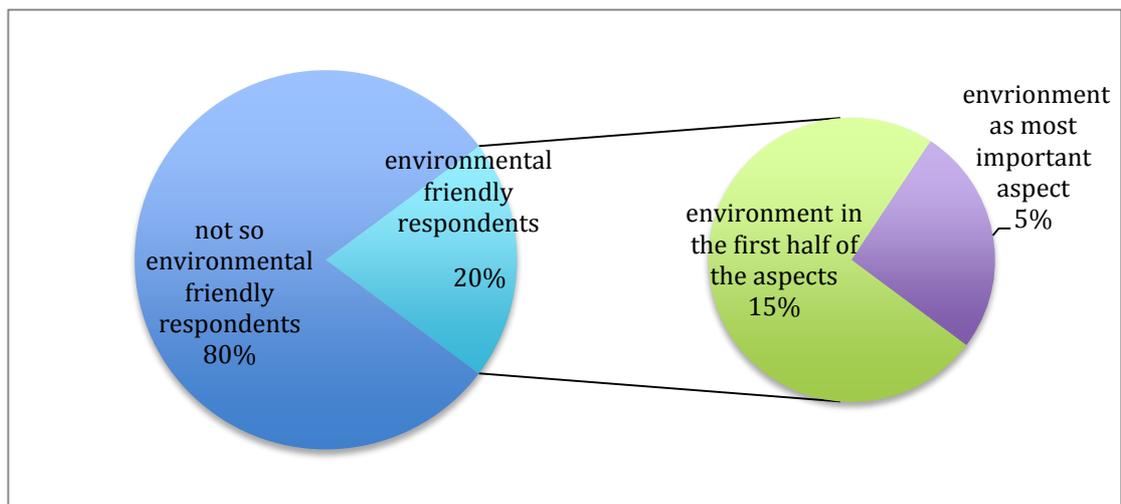


Figure 7. Respondents' awareness about environmental issues

Overall 9% of the total respondents ranked environmental sustainability to the first place when they could choose the reason, what is the most important aspect of consuming organic food. There was a positive correlation found between environmental sustainable behavior and higher education level. Also most of the environmental friendly respondents did not have children. No other significant correlation was found. Respondents who mentioned environmental issues why they prefer organic products agreed to pay 14,5 % average more for organic foods. Also they all believe that they live environmental friendly way.

This current research attempts ways to prove the fact that organic products and food improves personal wellness and quality of life. One of the research questions was also to find out what Estonian green consumers know about organic food wellness benefits. The respondents had to answer a question, if they feel that organic food consumption

improves their wellness and if yes, how do they feel it. 88% of the respondents agreed that organic food consumption increases their level of wellness. 12% of the total respondents admitted that they do not feel any difference. From this 12% of respondents 5% of them purchased organic food less than twice a year (see Figure 3.) and therefore might not see the results or feel any difference with this infrequent organic food consumption. Likewise, the negative answer to this question might also come because some respondents did not want to describe why they feel better when they eat organic food, as it was required to explain the answer for those who replied positively. The author made a chat (Figure 8.) how the organic food consumption influences the personal wellness improvement based on the respondents' descriptions to this question.

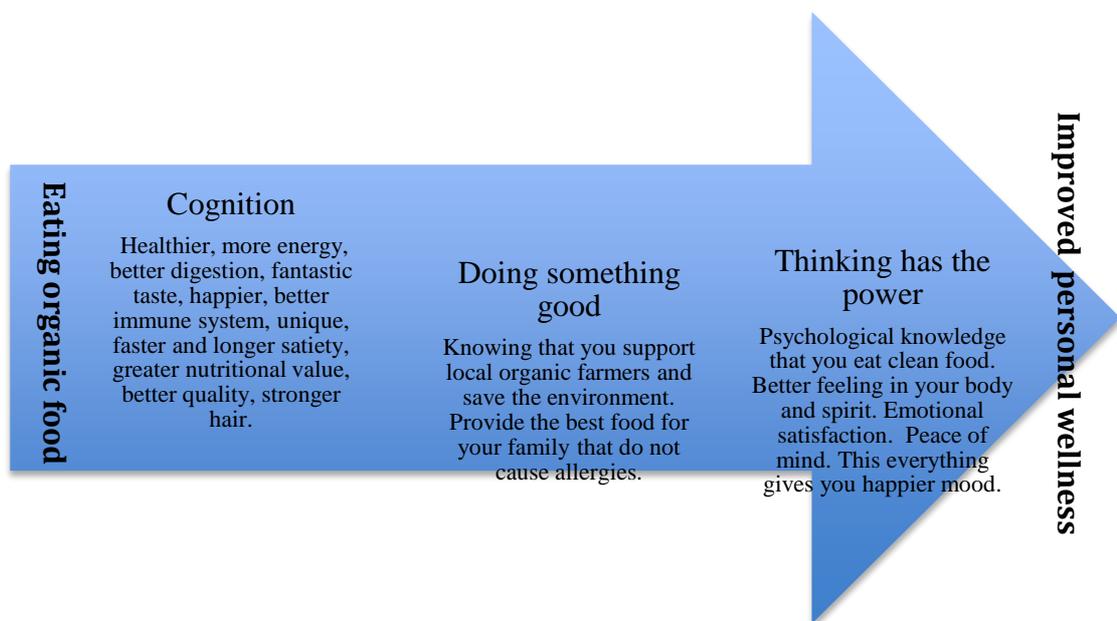


Figure 8. How organic food improves personal wellness

Most common answer was that health is better and eating organic food creates more psychological effect which gives peace of mind and assures that something good is done for your body that leads to the spiritual improvement. Thinking has a great power and it influences the chemical reactions of the body. Also better taste was brought out as respondents get emotional satisfaction from that and do not have to crave for more snacks.

3.3 Discussion

The objective of this thesis was to identify Estonian green consumer and its knowledge about organic products. Based on the research findings the consecutive procedure is to find possibilities how to promote organic food consumption. This study tries to address the following question: “Why green consumers buy organic products and is future education needed in order to promote organic food consumption?” The ambition of this study is thus to enhance our understanding of the factors which influence the purchase of organic food.

The study question and the objective of this study, identifying Estonian green consumer, got the following response: in average Estonian green consumers are women, around 30 years, without children, highly educated, and whose monthly household income is higher than average. As discussed earlier in the limitations, possible biased results might cause this outcome because Biomarket’s Facebook page was used for the questionnaire distribution and younger generation might be dominated in the research. When the results are compared to literature, the findings mostly support past works but contradict when determine the age group of green consumers (Ottman & Reilly, 1998).

The research findings explained a lot about consumers’ motivations why they purchase organic products. The most important aspects is the healthiness of organic foods and lack of synthetic and chemical substances. After those two aspects the green consumers point out the environmental sustainable issues. The finding was quite close to the general belief that green consumers are primarily wealthy consumers who concern more about their own health than the environmental impacts of conventional agriculture (Lockie et al., 2004). Also a better taste and quality are strong motivators of purchasing organic food. Taking care of a family and especially small children, drives mothers to purchase organic products with allergy free qualities and overall food safety. Supporting local organic farmers and animal welfare are motivations for few green consumers but mostly everyone is concerned about their own health to provide the best “fuel” for the body.

Green consumers explained the wellness benefits of the organic food as it is mostly emotionally beneficial and has a strong psychological influence. Majority of the green

consumers expressed the better feeling about using organic products and did not fall into details. Also the scientific studies have shown that organic delivers a feel-good factor, and rewards them for choosing the more natural option (Bord Bia, 2014). The thoughts of green consumers are well presented in the previous subchapter in Figure 8. Would be useful to have a future investigation about that subject, in order to get a deeper review and understanding, if organic food just psychological or really makes the difference in human bodies. In brief, the future education could be useful for explaining the wellness benefits to the green consumers and also introducing the same benefits to the non-experts. One goal of wellness education is to encourage people to give up less-healthy attitudes and behaviors and adopt ones that lead to greater health, wellness, and satisfaction of life (Edlin, Golanty , & McCormack Brown , 2000).

One of the study questions was to understand if green consumers associate organic products with sustainable environment. Although, it has been reported in multiple studies that environmental concerns are a major driver for organic consumption, consumer motivations and priorities vary and, for example, in Denmark the environment is the most important factor for buying organic foods (Hughner et al., 2007). Estonian consumers are still making first steps towards more sustainable living. As it was stated before in the theoretical part, more sustainable society and food system could ameliorate and possibly remove some of the key drivers of the obesogenic environment (Hanlon & Carlisle, 2010). Current study shows that only 5% of the respondents strongly associated organic products with more sustainable environment. The next group consisted of 15% of the consumers, who are also very environment-minded, but rank health concern a bit higher than environment why to purchase organic products. Around half of the green consumers know that consuming organic products has sustainable effects on environment and the rest of consumers do not pay much of an attention to the ecological footprint. There was correlation found between higher education level and environmental friendly behavior. Other significant correlations were not found between the demographic characteristics and behavioral characteristics. Based on the finding, it can be stated that future education regarding the environmental issues is essential in order to move towards sustainable development. There is an assumption that the better green consumers will be informed and the more they will know about the qualities of an organic product, the more they will be motivated to buy

the product (Getzner & Grabner-Kräuter, 2004). Not even all the organic products consumers are associating the environmental aspects with organic products, not to mention conventional consumers. Therefore, as it was pointed out in the theory, it might be useful to use the green communication strategies in order to promote organic products by educating, empowering, and convincing consumer (Ottman, 2011).

3.4 Recommendations

The author gives few recommendations that could be useful for the marketing managers, product and service developers, who engage in the wellness and organic products businesses. It is important to find good strategies in order to promote organic food. As it was mentioned before there is not much promotion needed among organic products consumers but mostly to involve more conventional consumers with this healthy life pattern. The overall green consumers opinion was that organic products are not advertised enough. Marketers must establish specific strategies for this segment of consumers, therefore is necessary to identify the factors of influence in the buying decision process. The advertisement should be done using the same factors that motivates green consumers to buy organic products. Kozup, Creyer, and Burton (2003) report that consumers' positive attitudes toward products are enhanced when favorable nutritional (e.g., fortified with vitamins) or health (e.g., heart-healthy) claims appear on the packaging. It would be an option to highlight the reasons named by green consumers, while advertising organic products, in order to involve more conventional consumers.

Biomarket Ltd. is doing a good job by training thoroughly the customer service representatives and releasing a customers' magazine four times a year. Also their homepage has a good overview about organic products benefits as the most preferable source for information is internet among green consumers. To increase consumers' knowledge they advertise different workshops on their web page. The workshops are about educating the consumer and therefore they get "hooked" with the organic products and lifestyles. As it was mentioned before the better the consumers are informed, the more likely they are willing to purchase the products (Getzner & Grabner-Kräuter, 2004). Also as it was brought out from the theory part, consumers quickly like

better many organic products when they are linking the green solutions to their personal wellbeing (Ottman, 2011). Biomarket is offering only labeled and certificated products in their assortment. Organic product labeling and certification logos have been shown to play an important role in stimulating consumer appeal for organics. Organic labeling results in a higher level of perceived healthfulness, hedonism, environmental friendliness, and food safety (Bauer, Heinrich, and Schafer, 2012). These methods are useful for marketing strategies and improving the consumers' awareness and are useful for other wellness establishments.

As the research revealed that green consumers are willing to pay more for organic products, there might be an opportunity to promote organic products by playing with the products price. Core green consumers frequently buy organic products, revealing a higher intrinsic value for organic over conventional products. Current research has shown that such consumers tend to exhibit a greater concern for their health and also be socially conscious (e.g., show greater environmental orientation). Consumers with such values are less sensitive to the enduring costs of limited assortment and the high price of organic versus conventional products in any specific category. In contrast, noncore green consumers have little experience with organics in general. Research that was done in order to find the right price range for conventional and at the same time organic consumer revealed, that increasing assortments and reducing the regular price for organics is especially effective for noncore green consumers, but also stimulates purchase by core green consumers (Bezawada & Pauwels, 2013). Such core green consumers should therefore not be taken for granted: Although they have much experience buying and consuming organics, the greater perceived benefits do not mean that they will buy organics at any cost. This kind of marketing strategy could be useful for already existing organic shops and other wellness providing establishments.

The question asked about spas providing organic food was replied mostly positively in current research. Nowadays spas should embody as wellness centers or even lifestyle universities, places of recreation and education that advocate a holistic approach to human complicated natures (Lazarus, 2000). One of the recommendations might be involving Estonian spas to promote organic food among their guests. Spas are wellness centers and their function can be educating guests towards better and healthier lifestyle.

In order to have longer lasting results and to take the knowledge home, so that people can practice daily new lifestyle patterns. Foodscape notion seems to be especially well suited for the spas by consuming sustainable and healthy organic food. Instead of food and meals simply being provided and eaten, they should becoming embedded, talked about and intermediated by the guests in a much more complex way. The spa industry is moving towards the new concept that involves concentration of the attention on the treatment to the preventive action and promotion of general healthy lifestyles that would ensure a long life and good health in an older age (Toomela, 2014). Consuming organic food should prevent illnesses and assure better health and therefore healthy people live longer. Green and organic spas around the globe are fulfilling an important mission: to promote wellness and keep customers healthy. Chefs work with the local farmers to source the freshest, healthiest food while at the same time spa directions incorporate botanicals and local ingredients, such as honey, into the treatments (Organic Spas Magazine, 2014). If Estonian spas want to move towards more holistic concept, they should see that as an opportunity and create their own foodscape. Mentioned by the green consumers, organic food tastes better, has better quality, more vitamins and do not include synthetic and chemical substances. Not just to provide organic and local food in the menu but also create better awareness among customers about organic food wellness benefits and environmental sustainability. Spas could cooperate with organic shops, including them to their complex. The educating part might include workshops, how to prepare a healthy environmental friendly meals and introductions to the Slow Food concepts. As little as booklets with educational sentences and pictures in the guestrooms might arouse attention and people start to get curious about organic products. Future research could be useful for that kind of foodscape service design element in the spas.

Another solution can be educational centers nearby the organic farms, where people can stay longer and change the way they eat and behave. Increase their environmental knowledge, introduce Slow Food philosophy and how to take care their body mind and spirit. The entropy of the planet's ecosystem has to remain constant what requires a new philosophy of living and new clever solutions, in order to preserve the environment and enhance the quality of life.

CONCLUSION

Nowadays moving towards to the holistic lifestyle and achieving higher level of wellness is getting more and more important in our society. This behavior has helped to increase organic food expenditure and leads the retail organic food market to an emerging trend. Organic products, which can simply be defined as products that have been produced with a minimum of synthetic inputs, mostly unprocessed, free of artificial additives and genetically modified organisms, are attractive to many consumers because of both their perceived and actual qualities. Tendency to lead healthy lifestyle is emerging and organic foods stand behind for a healthy diet or development of healthy food. In order to understand who buys organic food is more than just intellectual exercise, as retailers and members of wellness and organic business can future increase profits by understanding who buys their products and what influences them to purchase these products.

This study was conducted in order to achieve a better understanding of the main factors driving consumers to purchase organic products and therefore find ways how to promote organic food consumption. Based on that, the research question was formed as following: “Why green consumers buy organic products and is future education needed in order to promote organic food consumption?” The objective of the study was to identify Estonian green consumer and its knowledge about organic products. In order to target the research question and objective, there were five study questions formed:

- Who is Estonian green consumer?
- What motivates consumers to buy organic products?
- What Estonian green consumers know about organic food wellness benefits?
- Do Estonian green consumers associate organic products with sustainable environment?
- How to promote organic products among Estonians?

The research was carried out among 164 respondents, who were organic shop Biomarket Ltd. customers and filled out the online questionnaire survey through LimeSurvey software. The questionnaire was published on the Biomarket's Facebook page, although that could cause bias of the results. Mostly younger generation is involved with Facebook services and that might decrease the disparity of different age groups.

The outcome of the survey was that average Estonian green consumer is woman, around 30 years, without children, highly educated, and whom monthly household income is higher than average. Overall 86% of the respondents were female and only 14% male. On average, organic products are more expensive than conventional products, meaning that consumers who buy organics are willing to pay more for the perceived health and environmental benefits. The research showed that in average Estonian green consumers are willing to pay 13% more for organic products. The motives that drive them to purchase organic food are mostly health concerns and lack of synthetic and chemical substances. Little bit less important factor is environmental friendly behavior and the sustainability. Food quality and safety played an important roll why they purchased organic products. With respect to sensory properties, such as taste, smell, or feel, organic consumers agreed that organic fruits and vegetables tasted better than conventional produce. Animal welfare and supporting local farmers are not the main reasons why most consumers purchase organics but they are still influential components. Young children in the family drives concerned parents to seek products that they perceive as healthier and safer for their babies, by limiting their exposure to unnecessary chemicals, additives, and antibiotics.

Although Estonian green consumer's knowledge about wellness benefits was fair to middling, future education could be auspicious, as respondents assumed that consuming organics has psychological effect and courtesy to that they feel good. The same goes for the education necessity about environmental sustainable issues. Only 5% of the green consumers placed environmental issues very high why they consume organic products. Followed by 15% of consumers who have heightened awareness about sustainability, but still are mostly concerned about their own health. Rest of the consumers did not mark the environmental issues among the main reasons, why to purchase organic

products. Only one fifth of the green consumers were aware of the Slow Food movement that indicates limited knowledge about organic products. There was correlation found between higher education and environmental sustainable behavior and knowledge about Slow Food movement, which shows that increases in education led to higher likelihoods of purchasing organic products. Overall 74% of the respondents insisted to have more knowledge about organic food wellness benefits and its environmental sustainable advantages. Based on the literature and the study it comes out that better informed consumers are more likely to purchase organic products as they have knowledge about organic food ecologically friendly qualities and wellness related benefits. The key strategy for organic products providers and marketing managers would be to educate, empower and convince consumer.

Based on the research and literature, the author brought out some practical recommendations for marketing managers, products and service developers and others that are involved with wellness and organic products providing. There is not much promotion needed among organic products consumers but mostly to involve more conventional consumers with this healthy life pattern. Estonian green consumers brought out that organic products are not advertised enough. The author suggests to advertise organic products using the same factors that motivates green consumers to buy them (for example favorable nutritional, health or environmental claims on the packaging). Also Biomarket sets a good example how to increase the market sales by educating their customer service assistances, providing their own magazine about wellness and organic products, conducting workshops about organic products, wellness and health, and providing only certified products in their store. As the survey showed, most of the green consumers receive the information about organic products through internet, it should be considered as a primary source of advertising and web pages should be more fully constructed. Although the green consumers are willing to pay more for organic products, another idea for the marketers would be to increase assortments and reduce the regular price for organics, as it is especially effective for noncore green consumers, but also stimulates purchase by core green consumers.

As it was asked from the green consumers, if they presume spas as wellness centers providing organic food, most of them reacted positively. If Estonian spas want to move

towards more holistic concept they should see that as an opportunity and not only provide organic food but also create foodscape concept in the spas that ensures better awareness among customers about organic food wellness benefits and environmental sustainability. The educating part might include workshops, how to prepare a healthy environmental friendly meals, booklets with educational sentences and introductions to the Slow Food concepts. Nevertheless, other educational centers nearby the organic farms could be the solution, where people can stay longer and change the way they eat and behave. Therefore, wellness education encourages people to give up unhealthy attitudes and behaviors and adopt ones that lead to better health, wellness and life satisfaction.

It is purposeful to relate further theoretical and empirical case study research to the investigation of spas educative function related to the organic products and foodscape concepts, as it might develop to new service design in spas. Also the author suggests to get a deeper understanding about organic food physical and mental wellness benefits among Estonians as it might be a new tool how to attract more people to consume organic products.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Green consumers segmentation according to their motives

Consumers concerned with planet environment protection	Health fanatics	Animal lovers
Belong to organizations that deal with protection of important natural resources.	Belong to organizations that care about healthy nutrition and lifestyle of a human being.	Belong to organizations that fight for animal rights.
Consumer's behavior: – Economize water and electricity – Recycles waste – Buys recycled paper – Avoids excessive consumption – Reads magazines about planet environment protection	Consumer's behavior: – Buys organic food and scalded water – Uses sunscreen – Reads magazines about healthy nutrition and lifestyle	Consumer's behavior: – Boycotts meat and fish consumption – Does not approve wearing of natural fur coats – Reads magazines about animal rights an their protection

Source: (Ottman & Reilly, 1998).

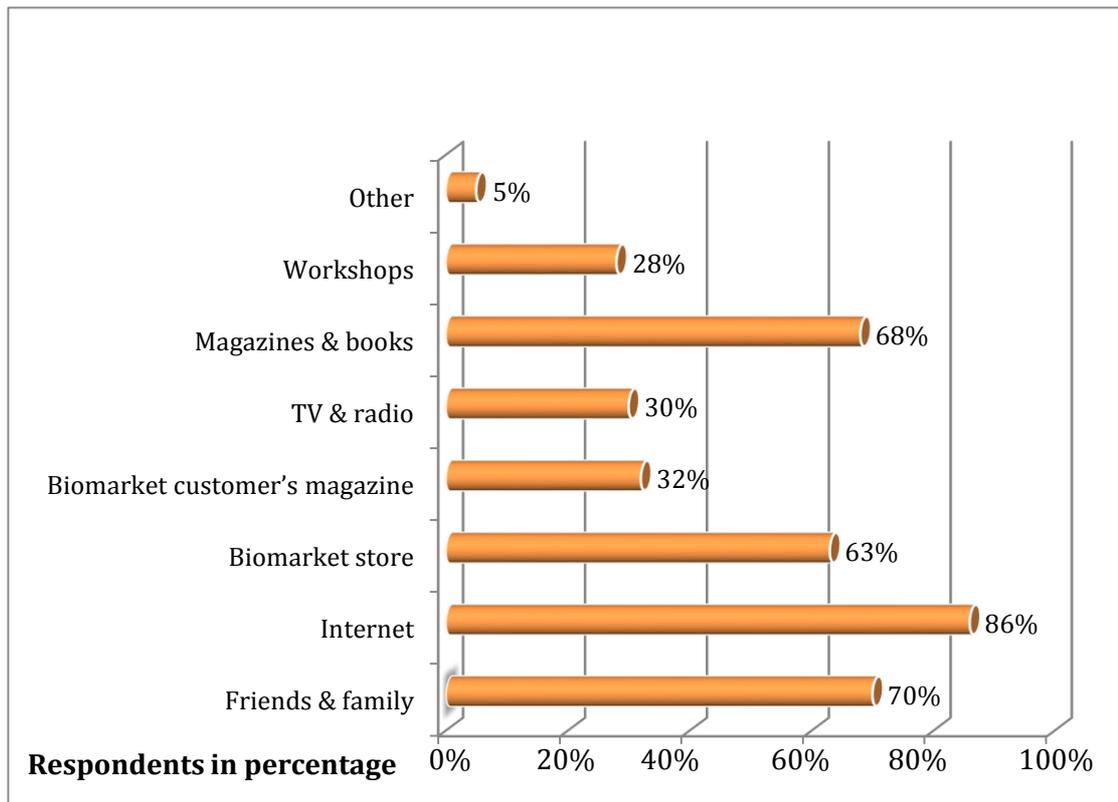
Appendix 2. Green consumers segmentation according to their environmental friendly behavior

Consumer group	Environmental behaviour
True Blue Greens	These green consumers have strong environmental values and intensive desire to participate in activities and organizations supporting the environment. This group, who forms about 9% of green consumers, intensively refuses to buy the products from manufacturers unresponsive to the environment. Overall, the most commonly stated motives for purchasing organic foods are concern for health and the environment with the former exceeding the latter in importance.

Green Black Greens	This sector of green consumers, who makes up about 6% of the total, are not interested as true blue green to join organizations supporting environment but they show their interest to buy green products.
Sprouts	Sprouts are only concerned about the environment, and in practice they are less willing to pay extra-price for green products. These types of green consumers, who make up 31% of the total, can be encouraged by appropriate green marketing strategies to buy green products.
Grouser	Environmental knowledge level in grouser consumers is very low, so this group, who constitutes 19% of total green consumers, believes that green products have low efficiency and quality and the manufacturers' claims about these products is only to increase sales.
Basic Browns	This group of consumers are more involved with their daily problems and ignores the environmental problems.

Source: (Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004).

Appendix 3. Information sources where consumers get knowledge about organic products



Source: Author's calculations

Appendix 4. Reasons why consumers prefer organic products in percentages

Reasons	Nr 1	Nr 2	Nr 3	Nr 4	Nr 5	Nr 6	Nr 7	Nr 8	Nr 9	Nr 10	Nr 11	Nr 12
Healthier	44.2%	15.4%	12.5%	7.7%	3.9%	7.7%	0%	2.9%	2.9%	1%	1%	1%
Better taste and smell	3.9%	8.7%	10.6%	13.5%	11.5%	7.7%	16.4%	11.5%	12.5%	2.9%	1%	0%
GMO free	7.7%	14.4%	13.5%	7.7%	12.5%	6.7%	7.7%	9.6%	10.6%	1.9%	6.7%	1%
No artificial fertilizers residues	12.5%	23.1%	13.5%	18.3%	7.7%	7.7%	2.9%	7.7%	1.9%	3.9%	1%	0%
Controlled products/ food safety	5.8%	6.7%	7.7%	14.4%	9.6%	12.5%	16.4%	10.6%	10.6%	3.9%	1%	1%
Environmental friendly	8.7%	6.7%	15.4%	14.4%	11.5%	11.5%	11.5%	11.5%	6.7%	1.9%	0%	0%
Interesting/ different products	1.9%	1.9%	3.9%	5.8%	3.9%	3.9%	9.6%	10.6%	12.5%	30.8%	15.4%	0%
Trendy	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1.9%	1%	1.9%	1.9%	8.7%	19.2%	64.4%
Health issues (allergies, etc)	2.9%	6.7%	4.8%	1%	5.8%	4.8%	1.9%	3.9%	6.7%	11.5%	26.9%	23.1%
Higher quality	5.8%	12.5%	6.7%	11.5%	13.5%	16.4%	11.5%	8.7%	6.7%	3.9%	1.9%	1%
Support organic farmers	2.9%	1.9%	3.9%	3.9%	9.6%	7.7%	13.5%	13.5%	13.5%	14.4%	12.5%	2.9%
Animal welfare	3.9%	1.9%	7.7%	1.9%	9.6%	11.5%	7.7%	7.7%	13.5%	15.4%	13.5%	5.8%

Source: Author's calculations based on the survey

Appendix 5. Positioning from 1-12 the reasons for preferring organic products

Reason to consume organic products	Task I ranking	Task II ranking
No chemicals, artificial fertilizers	1	2
Healthier than conventional products	2	1
Environmental friendly	4	3
Clean	3	-
Better quality	6	6
Better taste and smell	5	7
GMO free	-	5
Support organic farmers	8	8
Food safety	10	4
Health issues, allergies	7	11
Animal welfare	11	9
More vitamins	9	-
Interesting/ different products	-	10
Trendy in Estonia	-	12

Source: Author's calculations based on the survey

Appendix 6. Questionnaire

This is an anonymous questionnaire that is made for investigating the Estonian green consumer attitudes towards organic food. It will be much appreciated if you could help with the study by expressing your feelings about the questions. The questionnaire takes only 5-8 minutes.

1. Name the reasons why do you prefer organic products to conventional products?

.....
.....
.....

2. How often do you buy organic products?

- At least once a week
- At least twice a month
- At least once a month
- At least twice a year
- Less than once a year
- Never

3. Where have you got information about organic food and products?

- Friends/family
- Internet
- Biomarket store
- Biomarket customer magazine
- Magazines/books
- TV/radio
- Workshops
- Other.....

4. How much are you willing to pay more for organic food compared to conventional food?

- Not willing to pay more
- 5%
- 10%
- 20%
- 30%
- 40%
- 50% and more

5. Would you like to have more knowledge about organic food wellness benefits and its environmental sustainable advantages?

- Yes
- No
- Only about wellness benefits
- Only about environmental sustainability

6. Do you agree or disagree? Circle the suitable answer for you.

1- Strongly disagree / 2- Disagree / 3- disagree nor agree / 4-agree / 5-strongly agree

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| Organic food is a trend in Estonia nowadays. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I live an environmental friendly way. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I have good knowledge about organic products. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I'm aware about slow food movement. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Many people in my acquaintanceship consume organic food. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| There is enough marketing about organic food. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Spas as wellness centers should offer organic food. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

7. Is organic food consumption improving your wellness?

Yes No

If **yes**, please explain how you feel the improvement.

.....

8. Please number the factors in order of importance why you prefer organic products. 1 means it is most important and 12 less important for you.

- Healthy
- Better taste and smell than conventional food
- GMO free
- No artificial residues
- Controlled products, food safety
- Environmental friendly production/consumption
- Interesting, different products
- Trendy
- Health issues (allergies, etc) that do not allow use of conventional products
- Higher quality than conventional products
- Would like to support organic producers
- Animal friendly production

9. Gender: Female Male

10. Age group:

under 20 21-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 60 and older

11. Do you have children and how old? Yes No

0-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 16 years and older

12. Your educational level:

- Elementary school diploma
- High school/ vocational school diploma
- Currently studying in University
- University degree or similar higher education level

13. What is your monthly household net income per person (post taxes income)?

- lower than 200€
- 201-400 €
- 401-600 €
- 601-800 €
- 801-1000€
- more than 1001

RESÜMEE

EESTI ROHELISE TARBIIJA UURING EDENDAMAKS ÖKOTOIDU TARBIMIST BIOMARKET OÜ NÄITEL

Kaidi Suitslepp

Viimastel kümnenditel on järsult kasvanud tarbijate huvi ja seisukoht modernsete põllumajandusmeetodite rakendamise suhtes, seades viimastele väljakutse, mis vastaks kõrgeenenud keskkonna säästlikuse normidele ja tervisliku toidu kasvatamisele. Tarbijad on hakanud otsima võimalusi, et elada holistilisemat elustiili ja seeläbi suurendada üleüldist heaolu. Selline käitumine on kaasa toonud öko- ehk mahetoidu suurema tarbimise ja seadnud ökotoodete turu jätkuvalt tõusvaks trendiks. Ökotoit on alternatiiv tavatoidule, mis on tarbijate seas hinnatud just tänu oma keskkonnasõbraliku tootmise, parema maitse ja tervislike tegurite poolest. Maheettevõttes majandatakse keskkonnasõbralikult, pidades silmas tulevaste põlvete õigust puhtale elukeskkonnale. Ökotoit ei sisalda organismile kahjulikke sünteetiliste taimekaitsevahendite jääke, geneetiliselt muundatud organisme (GMO-sid) ega kunstlikke värv-, maitse- ja lõhnaaineid. Maheloomakasvatuses pööratakse suurt tähelepanu loomade heaolule ja kasvatamisel ei kasutata ennetavalt sünteetilisi veterinaarravimeid, antibiootikume ega kasvustimulaatoreid (Dreezens *et al.*, 2005). Teadusuuringud täheldavad, et ökotoit sisaldab suuremat toiteväärtust, rohkem vitamiine, mineraalaineid, asendamatuid aminohappeid ja antioksüdante kui tavatoit ning vähem nitraate ja nitriteid, mis võivad põhjustada erinevaid haigusi (Magkos, Arvaniti, & Zampelas, 2006). Ühelt poolt koostatigi järgnev uurimus selleks, et välja selgitada põhilised motiivid, mis ajendavad inimesi ökotooteid ostma ja selle põhjal leida võimalusi, mis aitaks kaasa tervislikule ja jätkusuutlikule mahetoidu edendamisele.

Eestis on roheline tarbija hoiakuid ja tema ostukäitumist veel vähe uuritud. Enamus uuringuid on tehtud just mahepõllunduse ja mahetalunike kohta (Matt, Luik,

Peetsmann, Roasto, 2001; Peetsmann, Luik, Kall, Vetemaa, Mikk, Peepson, 2009) ja uurides ökomärgiste mõju tarbijatele (Korpõljova, 2012). Selles uuringus käsitletakse roheline tarbija all inimest, kes tarbib järjepidevalt ökotooteid. Teadmine, kes on ökotoidu tarbija ja mis neid mõjutab mahetooteid ostma, on vajalik just heaolu ja mahetooteid pakkuvatele ettevõtetele, kelle eesmärgiks on igaaastane kasumi teenimine. Saadud tulemusi on võimalik rakendada praktikas töötades välja sihtgrupile suunatud reklaame, kasutades õiget strateegiat tarbija meelitamiseks ning turustuskanaleid sihtrühmani jõudmiseks. Uurimusküsimus on moodustatud vastavalt eelolevale probleemile ja kujunes välja järgmiselt: “ Miks rohelised tarbijad ostavad ökotooteid ja kas on vaja lisateadmisi, et edendada mahetoidu tarbimist?” Sellest tulenevalt, uurimuse eesmärgiks seati Eesti roheline tarbija ja tema teadmiste määratlemine mahetoodete vallas. Lähtuvalt töö eesmärgist ja vastamaks uurimisküsimusele, moodustati järgmised viis alaküsimust:

Kes on Eesti roheline tarbija?

Mis motiveerib tarbijaid ökotooteid ostma?

Mida teavad Eesti rohelised tarbijad ökotoidu kasulikkusest heaolule?

Kas Eesti roheline tarbija seostab ökotooteid keskkonnasäästlikkusega?

Kuidas edendada ökotoodete tarbimist eestlaste seas?

Suurendades rahvastiku ligipääsu mahetoodetele, peavad ka ettevõtjad ise jätkusuutlikumalt majandama. Samuti üritatakse järgnevas uuringus selgusele jõuda, kas spaad kui heaolu keskused peaksid pakkuma mahetoitu, mida peetakse kvaliteetsemaks, keskkonnasõbralikumaks ja parema maitsega. Teadmistes peitub jõud, mistõttu tarbijad võiksid olla kursis mahetoodete kasulikkusest, mida seostatakse suurenenud elukvaliteediga ja heaoluga. Riik võiks oluliselt rohkem kasu lõigata tervishoiu sektoris, vähenenud ülekaalulisuse ja paranenud heaolu näol, kui suudetaks varakult arendada oma toidusüsteemi jätkusuutlikumaks ning muutes see loomulikuks osaks jätkusuutlikus ühiskonnas (Hanlon & Carlisle, 2010). Uurimuses käsitletakse ka aeglase toidu (*Slow Food*) liikumist, mida saab seostada mahetoidu põhimõtetega, kuna on loodud selleks, et harida tarbijat kasutama rahvuslikku ja kohalikku toitu, samal ajal kaitstes loodust ja säilitades põllumajanduslikku pärandit. Eesti roheline tarbija teadmised sellest liikumisest võivad näidata kui pühendunud on nad jätkusuutlikele ja tervsilikele

eluviisidele. Kui juba roheline tarbija pole aeglase toidu liikumisest kuulnud, siis võib oletada, et üldine teadmine sellest on eestlaste seas madal.

Määratlemaks rohelist tarbijat ja tema ostukäitumist, kasutati uuringus kvantitatiivset meetodit ja strateegiaks uurimusküsimustikku, mis koostati Limesurvey internetikeskkonnas. Internetipõhine *online*-küsimustik avaldati Biomarketi poolt nende Facebook-i leheküljel, kasutades eesmärgipärast valimit. Biomarket OÜ on Eestis juhtivaim ökotoodete jae-ja hulgimüüja ning tegutseb alates aastast 2003.

Magistritöö koosneb sissejuhatusest, sisust, millel on kolm peatükki, kokkuvõttest, viidetest (mida on 92), kuuest lisast ja resümest. Esimene peatükk annab ülevaate mahetoidust ja selle kasulikkusest, samuti Eesti mahetootjatest, roheline tarbija demograafilistest iseloomujoontest ja käitumisest ning arutelu ökotoodete edendamisest ja tarbija harimise tähtsusest. Teine peatükk kirjeldab uurimismeetodit, valimit, piiranguid ja muid protseduure, mis olid uurimustööga seotud ning annab ka ülevaate Biomarket OÜ-st. Kolmas peatükk toob välja tulemused ning sisaldab analüütilist kokkuvõtet, mida illustreerivad tabelid ja joonised. Peatüki lõpus on arutelu ning soovitused, mis peaksid aitama edendada mahetoodete tarbimist.

Küsimustikule laekus 164 vastatud ankeeti, millest 86% moodustasid naised ja 14% mehed. Tulemused näitasid, et keskmine Eesti roheline tarbija on umbes 30-ne aastane kõrgelt haritud lasteta naine, kelle igakuine sissetulek leibkonna kohta on keskmiselt suurem. Tänu valimile võis ilmned tulemustes kallutatuse probleem, kuna enamasti noorem põlvkond kasutab interneti ja Facebook-i, mis võis vähendada erinevate vanusegruppide esinemist valimis. Üldiselt on mahetooted hinnalt kallimad kui tavatooted ja seetõttu tarbijad nõustuvad maksma suuremat hinda, et säästa keskkonda ja suurendada enda heaolu. Eesti rohelised tarbijad on keskmiselt valmis maksma 13% rohkem mahetoodete eest võrreldes tavatoodetega. Põhilisteks ökotoodete ostmise motivaatoriteks peetakse mahetoodete tervislike tegureid ja sünteetiliste ainete ning kemikaalide puudumist. Vähem tähtsam on rohelistele tarbijatele keskkonnasäästlikud motiivid. Ka mahetoidu kvaliteet ja turvalisus olid tähtsateks motivaatoriteks, kuid seevastu loomade heaolu ning kohaliku tootja toetamine ei omanud nii suurt rolli mahetoodete soetamisel. Puu-ja juurviljade parem maitse ja lõhn osutusid olulisteks teguriteks, miks tarbijad eelistavad mahetooteid tavatoodetele. Samuti

märkimisväärseks ajendiks saab lugeda ka väikelaste olemasolu peredes, kuna vanemad soovivad neile pakkuda kõige tervislikumat ja turvalisemat toitu, mis ei tekitaks allergiaid ega sisaldaks kemikaale, lisaaineid ning antibiootikume.

Uurimuses leiti, et Eesti rohelise tarbija teadmised mahetoodete tervislikust mõjust olid keskmised ning tarbijate harimine selles valdkonnas oleks vajalik. Vastajad väitsid, et ökotoodete tarbimisel on enamasti psühholoogiline mõju ning tänu sellele enesetunne paraneb. Keskkonna jätkusuutlikkuse teemadel oleks tarbijate harimine veelgi tähtsam, kuna vaid 5 % vastanutest pidas keskkonnasäästlikkust väga tähtsaks teguriks, miks tarbida mahetooteid. Sellele lisaks 15% vastanutest muretses samuti keskkonna pärast, kuid põhiliselt tarbisid mahetooteid nende tervislike tegurite poolest. Ülejäänud vastajatest ei märkinud keskkonnasõbralikkust põhimotiivide sisse, miks nad tarbivad mahetooteid. Ainult üks viiendik rohelistest tarbijatest teadis aeglase toidu liikumisest, millest võib järeldada, et eestlased vajaksid rohkem infomatsiooni selle kohta. Uuringust leiti seos kõrgema haridustaseme, keskkonnasõbraliku käitumise ning aeglase toidu teadlikkuse vahel, mis näitab, et haritumad inimesed ostavad suurema tõenäosusega mahetooteid. Üldiselt 74% vastanutest soovisid saada rohkem teadmisi mahetoodete tervislikkusest ja keskkonnasäästlikkusest. Kirjanduse ja uurimuse põhjal võib järeldada, et paremini informeeritud tarbija ostab tõenäolisemalt mahetooteid, kuna teab, et see on tervisele ja keskkonnale kasulik. Sellest tulenevalt võtmestrateegiateks mahetoodete pakkujatele ning turundusjuhtidele oleks harida, julgustada ning veenda tarbijat ökotoodete valdkonnas.

Võttes aluseks uuringut ning kirjandust, tõi autor välja mõned praktilised soovitusel turundusjuhtidele, toote- ja teenusearendajatele ning teistele, kes on seotud heaolu ja mahetoodete pakkumisega. Ökotoodete tarbijate seas pole oluliselt vaja tooteid propageerida, kuid eeldatavalt tuleks kaasata rohkem selle tervisliku eluviisiga tavatoodete tarbijaid.

Eesti roheline tarbija väitis, et mahetooteid ei reklaamita piisavalt. Autor soovib propageerida mahetooteid samade teguritega, mis motiveerib rohelisi tarbijaid neid ostma (näiteks heakskiidetud toitained, tervislikkuse ja keskkonnasõbralikkuse loosungid pakenditel). Samuti toetab Biomarket, et koolitades välja pädevad klienditeenindajad, andes välja oma kliendiajakiri ökotoodete ja heaolu kohta, viies läbi

koolitusi klientidele ökotoodete kasulikkusest ning pakkudes ainult ökomärgisega tooteid, aitab edendada mahetoodete tarbimist ja suurendada läbimüüki.

Uuringust selgus, et enamik rohelisi tarbijaid leidis mahetoodete kohta informatsiooni internetist, mistõttu tuleks vastav kanal võtta esmaseks ökotoodete reklaamimise allikaks. Erilist tähelepanu tuleks pöörata interneti lehekülgedele, mis sisaldab teavet mahetoodete kohta, et muuta need veelgi atraktiivsemaks potentsiaalsetele tarbijatele.

Kuigi rohelised tarbijad on nõus maksma rohkem mahetoodete eest, oleks üks idee turundusjuhtidele hoopis suurendada kaubavalikut ja vähendada mahetoodete tavahinda, mis paneks tavatarbija ökotooted ostma ning samas ajendaks ka rohelist tarbijat rohkem mahetooted soetama.

Enamus uuringus osalejatest nõustus väitega, et spaad kui heaolu keskused peaksid ökotoitu pakkuma. Eesti spaad võiksid näha selles võimalust liikuda holistilisema kontseptsiooni poole, mitte ainult pakkudes mahetooted, vaid luues rohkem teadlikkust klientide seas ökotoodete tervistavast mõjust ning keskkonnasõbralikkusest ja tekitades sellega toidumaastiku ideel põhineva keskkonna. Õpetusosa võiks koosneda väikestest õpikodadest, kuidas valmistada tervislikku ja keskkonda säästvat sööki, harivaid brošüüre ning anda ülevaadete aeglase toidu põhitõdedest. Samuti võiks lahenduseks olla iseseisvad keskused, mis asetseksid mahetalude lähedal ning õpetaksid inimesi tervislikult toituma ning muutma oma elustiili. Heaoluõpetus julgustab inimesi lahti ütlema ebatervislikest hoiakutest ning käitumisest ja aitab omaks võtta seda, mis tagab parema tervise, heaolu ning elu rahulolu.

Autor soovitaks järgneva empiirilise juhtumuuringu koostada spaade hariduslikust funtsioonist, seoses ökotoodete kasutusele võtmisega, mis võiks kujuneda uueks teenusedisaini elemendiks toidumaastiku näol. Samuti soovitaks sügavuti uurida mahetoidu tarbimisel kujunenud psühholoogilist ja füsioloogilist mõju eestlaste heaolule, kuna sellest võib areneda välja uus vahend, edendamaks ökotoodete tarbimist.

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