Influence of the Ecological Factors on Consumers’ Choice

The article provides the research results about the influence of ecological factors on the consumers’ choice. There is investigated the product’s organic origin and its influence on the buying decision making. The product (in this case – milk) is divided into six attributes and various attributes’ levels.

Keywords: ecology, organic, organic products, decision making, product’s attributes.

Introduction

Relevance of the research. Organization’s success in the market (its revenue and profits) often depends on the consumers’ preferences given to a brand or a product. Contemporary consumers are becoming stricter and more demanding to products they buy and organizations they are buying from. The latter is extremely important, while organic products and environmental aspects of manufacturing are being taken into consideration. It is extremely important for organizations to understand the peculiarities of consumers’ preferences and their behaviour concerning the ecological aspects of products.

The emerging worldwide interest in environment and its protection should be appropriately employed by business organizations. It could become a key success factor for many enterprises. Regarding the growing competition, the necessity to provide not only marketable agricultural and food products, but also to employ economically effective farming methods becomes vital for organizations. On the other hand, under the growth of consumer particularity and sophistication motivates the agricultural and food product manufacturers are practicing the manufacturing and farming methods, which are environment-guarding and socially acceptable.
Organic farming is different from the conventional one. When the organic farming is being applied, the synthetic pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers, growth-enhancing hormones or experiments with genes, are rejected (Maskoliūnaitė, 2004). The growing consumers’ sophistication and privity, the care about their health, are suggesting changes in manufacturing technology and the trends of organic farming (without the usage of health-injurious materials and methods, mentioned before). However, the producers of organic agricultural and food products often face greater expenditures related to the high standards obligatory for the ecology certifications. The final price (which pays the end consumer) increases.

Every product can be defined as a particular set of attributes or components. Some of these attributes are more important than the others. The product’s ecological factors (e.g. organic origin) can be considered as one of the mentioned attributes. However, there are no scientific evidences about the influence of ecologic factors on the customer’s decision to purchase a product; and what is the related importance of ecologic factors in comparison with other product’s attributes. The other important thing that organizations should know is how much a higher price consumers are willing to pay for organic products.

The object of the research of this article is the influence of ecological factors on the consumer’s choice.

The main purpose of the article is to determine the relative importance of ecology, while choosing a product.

The tasks set in the article are:

• to define the product’s attributes and attributes’ levels, which are supposed to affect the consumer’s choice;
• to estimate the relative importance of every attribute in the choosing process;
• to estimate the consumers’ valuation of various product attributes’ levels;
• to determine the importance and utility of ecology for consumers.

Endeavouring to determine the influence of ecological factors on the consumer’s choice, the product’s organic origin was chosen as a factor and milk was chosen as a product. The method of Conjoint analysis was chosen for the research. According to the principles of the Conjoint analysis, six attributes of milk as a product were named: ‘Country of origin,’ ‘Naturalness,’ ‘Package size,’ ‘Package type,’ ‘Richness’, and ‘Price’. Every of the attributes was divided into some levels.

The growing role of ecology

Contemporary consumers are becoming increasingly concerned about natural environment. Endeavouring to meet consumer needs and attitudes, business organizations are changing their attitudes and behaviour.

One way or another, slowly or faster, natural environment is becoming more and more prior, while affecting consumer behaviour. The pollution of the environment becomes one of principal areas of interest (Antonides, Raaij, 1998). After a slow start in seventies and eighties, about nineties the substantial growth of environmentally-concerned segment has begun (Schiffman, Kanuk, 1997). As one of the most reliable sources of arguments for the organization’s friendliness to the environment can serve certification. Various consumers favour certification, because it ensures lesser product’s harm to the environment in comparison to uncertified...
products (Schiffman, Kanuk, 1997). Marketers acknowledge environment protection as an important social factor, highly advocated by consumers. Accordingly, organizations plan and implement their products and promotions considering the environment (Schiffman, Kanuk, 1997). Various organizations worldwide are rearranging their activities to meet the state of global ecosystems, inculcating the systems of environmental protection management.

The lack of ecological purity can harm not only fauna and flora, but the human-kind itself. Lots of diseases (which were unknown a few centuries ago) are proved to be related to environmental pollution, induced by economic activity. Various principal aspects of the pollution are being named: atmosphere, water, soil, radiation, thermal and chemical waste, etc. Without management of these aspects there can be reached a critical margin; when it is overstepped, there will be no way back. Effectively handling existing resources, the competitiveness of business can be enhanced; however, the lack of ecological pureness can lead to the destruction of countries’ or even regions’ competing possibilities. Simply, subsequence will move from environmental to social dimension, and the economy will experience huge pressure of casework spending.

The main goal of ecologic pureness belongs to the area of strategic management, because it can be reached using economically-based environmental mechanisms, and management decisions, such as various types and levels of environmental management systems. Ecological criteria which affect consumers are related to products, their packages, and the impact of manufacturing processes on the environment.

In the future, CEOs will have to pay greater attention to environmental problems, related to the provision of raw materials, same as the prevention of nature spoliation. However, the majority of consumers have little understanding about the protection of the environment (Ottman, 1998). Moreover, consumers view the aims of environment protection sceptically, suspecting sellers of price enlargement. However, undoubtedly there exists a segment, where consumer purchase decisions are based on the organic factors. Though, commonly the organic nature of a product is related to a higher price. The latter fact diminishes environment-concerned segment to those, who agree to pay an extra price for quality.

The concern about the natural environment is growing among all types of consumers (individuals and organizations). The results of the research provided in 1992 in 16 countries revealed that more than 50 percent of all countries’ consumers were concerned about the environment (Ottman, 1993). The results of the research provided in Australia in 1994, revealed that 84.6 percent of respondents assume that all the members of the society were responsible for the environment protection. Moreover, 80 percent of respondents indicated that were changing their behaviour (including buying behaviour) due to environmental causes (EPA - NSW, 1994). Many organizations consider this to be a significant shift in the demand, which should be supported.

The figures prove that products which contain environment-friendly characteristics possess competitive advantage. There can be named plenty of such consumer satisfaction enhancing steps made by various organizations, e.g.:

- McDonald has changed its package from plastic to wax-paper, because of the consumers’ doubts about the effect of the
production of polystyrene on the ozone layer (Gifford, 1991; Hume, 1991);

- Producers of tuna changed the fishing technology, because of the harm for dolphins caused by fishery (Advertising Age, 1991);

- Xerox introduced the “high quality” recycled paper due to organizations’ need for environment-friendly products.

Sustainability is becoming the part of the organization’s image. The usage of environment-friendly conception and image can be very effective, while persuading customers to buy products, or declaring producer’s solidity, reliability, and acceptability. Ultimate market trends predict, that “green”, “organic” and “ecological” products are becoming more marketable. Green marketing can be defined as marketing activity, executed with purpose to satisfy the special needs of environment-concerned segment (naturally, considering the organization’s main purpose – maximisation of stakeholders’ profit). In other words, Green marketing is the activity endeavouring to establish competitive advantage – to convince consumers that some products are more environment-friendly than the others (Peattie, 1995). Moreover, Green marketing is organizations’ response to changing market requirements; growing amount of organizations are hurrying to acquire it and to become the point or system of relevance for others.

Many viewpoints concerning Green marketing are provided in scientific literature; the viewpoints differ according to the level of the organization’s environmental activities. W. Pride and O. Ferrel (1993) state, that Green marketing encompasses all the organization’s activities related to the design of environment-friendly product, its promotion, pricing, and distribution. Other scientists concern some particular aspects of manufacturing or communication; according to their opinion, organizations employ Green marketing when provide products, which preserve environmental resources in their manufacturing process (Porter, 1991), or implement communications representing environment-friendliness, or set prices which suggest consumers that higher charge helps in environment protection (Jay, 1990), or diminish pollution and reserve resources while transporting goods (Bohlen et al, 1993).

One of the principal forces stimulating the need for Green marketing is the desire to maintain and enhance the competitive position in the market. Commonly, organizations try to duplicate the environment-friendly behaviour of their competitors. Competitive advantages and problems are being continually observed and evaluated. Organizations cannot stay unconcerned, while observing positive consumer reaction to the programmes of Green marketing, provided by competitors.

Lithuania (while being an active member of European cultural-political-economic region) is facing similar problems as the rest European countries. Environmental subjects are under consideration, too. However, some important aspects, which make Lithuanian environment of Green marketing special (and require special action from market actors), exist:

1. The environment is becoming more important and impacts not only consumer, but also producer behaviour, encouraging more responsible and versatile judgment of every step made.

2. The consumer considerations about the environment are the challenge for producers, because the proper response to changing consumer needs can become
the reason of success; and of failure on the contrary.

3. Considerations about the environment in Lithuania are weaker than in most West European countries. As possible reasons for the lack of consumer concern about the environment can be: a) the consequences of economic recession; b) the low level of environmental sophistication; c) the lack of information and improper its provision; d) the significant part of foreign trade is provided with former USSR countries.

Considering the environment-friendly segment, it can be stated that in Lithuania it is relatively liberal. However, the segment is rather small, and according to the research (Liesionis, 2006), it can be characterised as very elastic to price. In Lithuania it would be difficult to force consumers to pay more for the environment-friendliness. However, the notion about the organization's harmfulness to the environment can lead to some dramatic consequences, even in Lithuania. The opinion exists, that the costs of producing environment-friendly and harmless products are higher. Accordingly, there can be assumed, that economy and environment protection are directly coherent, because the efficient manufacturing is more ecological (it reserves resources, energy, labour).

The growing role of organic agriculture

Organic agriculture has shown a rapid growth and dynamic developments in recent years (Willer, Yussefi, 2005). Due to this success, many different actors have now many hopes for the future of organic agriculture. They have different perspectives on organic agriculture with different understandings of what it is and what makes it move. Each perspective entails a certain understanding of organic agriculture featuring certain concepts and values and a particular logic or rationality (Alrøe, Noe, 2008).

According to H. F. Alrøe and E. Noe (2008), different perspectives on organic agriculture can be identified, where each perspective entails its own view of what kind of object the organic agriculture is; what its environment is; what its trajectory and dynamics are, and how it can be influenced. And each perspective entails a certain understanding of organic agriculture featuring certain concepts and values and a particular logic or rationality. There is no one right perspective that fully reveals organic agriculture; each perspective offers some insight on organic agriculture; it will always be possible to take on a new perspective. One may hold different perspectives in succession, and the different perspectives cannot, in general, be merged to one. But this does not mean that some perspective is more useful as any other for some purpose, or that a better, or fuller, or more balanced and subtle understanding cannot be approached. If we are to understand how different actors or actor-networks (consumers, producers, processors, retailers, NGOs, agro-food corporations, certification bodies, financing bodies, researchers, governments, politicians, etc.) act in relation to organic agriculture and try to influence its course, it is crucial to observe their perspectives and take them into account (Alrøe, Noe, 2008).

Concepts such as protest, alternative, market, brand, ideology and religion have been used to characterize organic agriculture. H. F. Alrøe and E. Noe (2008) outline three perspectives and their view of
the structure, dynamics and governance of organic agriculture. The three perspectives are: organic agriculture seen as an alternative in opposition to the mainstream, organic agriculture seen as a self-organizing system based on common organic values and organic agriculture seen as a market opportunity.

Organic agriculture is often characterized as a protest against modern industrialized and globalized agriculture similar to other protest movements against various aspects of modern society. In the protest perspective, organic agriculture is an alternative that is defined through its negation of conventional agriculture – which is therefore inseparable from the mainstream, formed as it is by its dissociation from it. Organic agriculture is often described as an ideology, or even a religion, and many within organic agriculture describe it as a movement with certain values, principles and goals. To characterize what kind of entity organic agriculture is in this perspective and what makes it move, H. F. Alrøe and E. Noe (2008) found it useful to regard it as a logo-poietic system or network.

Hence, this perspective shares a focus on standards as a key element in organic agriculture with the logo-poietic perspective, but for different reasons. From the market perspective the focus is on segmentation, on the niche as such, and not necessarily on the specific meaning or protest involved – all that is required is to tailor the products to the unique needs of the segment and to speak the language of the target group.

The environment of organic agriculture as a market niche is the global market. Standards, certification and branding are primarily intended to define the market niche, to enable growth and innovation, to avoid unfair competition and to aid consumer recognition and choice. The driving forces are the differentiation from other brands, consumer preferences and perceptions (Alrøe, Noe, 2008).

Our analysis is focused on the fluid milk market. Milk is often considered a gateway to organic food, and the ethos of organic milk – pure goodness, happy cows and small family farming – is heavily reinforced on its cartons via marketing claims. Fluid unflavoured milk can be viewed as a relatively standardized and ubiquitously processed commodity, which permits abstracting from brand and taste preferences (Kiesel, Villas-Boas, 2007).

The organic food sales have seen rapid growth in the United States, with an average of 20% annual increase in sales over the past ten years (Farrell, Mainville, 2007); organic dairy markets have experienced increases of approximately 20 percent per year (Born, 2005). Focusing on organic milk, L. W. Glaser and G. D. Thompson (2000) identified price premiums as high as 103% and high own-price elasticity for organic milk products. T. Dhar and D. J. Foltz (2005) used a quadratic, almost ideal demand system (AIDS) for differentiated milk types in combination with supermarket scanner data. They found significant consumer valuation of organic milk (Kiesel, Villas-Boas, 2007).

In the organic sector, milk quality is believed to be one of the motives for buying (Torjusen et al., 2004; Farrell, Mainville, 2007). F. W. Oudshoorn et al. (2008) have provided research with Dutch and Danish farmers, which results let them to determine the key characteristics of consumers’ wants, while buying organically produced food (see Table 1).

According to the results of scientific literature (Farrell, Mainville, 2007; Oud-
INFLUENCE OF THE ECOLOGICAL FACTORS ON CONSUMERS’ CHOICE

Table 1

Consumers’ wants for organically produced food

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Key issues for the consumers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal health</td>
<td>No chemicals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Better quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Healthier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Egocentric buying behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>No artificial fertilizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respect for nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal welfare</td>
<td>Grazing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Better animal welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cow outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons</td>
<td>Relatively cheap compared to what conventional food should cost without subsidies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It gives a good image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clear difference from conventional methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Because of scandals in conventional agriculture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: F. W. Oudshoorn et al. (2008).

shoorn et al., 2008), the worldwide growth of sales of organic milk can be detected. The question is: does Lithuanian milk market is experiencing the same trend? Are Lithuanian milk buyers affected by the product’s organic nature? An important question here is which other attributes of the milk are of most interest to consumers and are contributing to the increased sales.

Research organization

Seeking to answer the above raised questions, a method of the full profile “Conjoint” analysis was chosen.

Firstly, the two Focus group discussions were provided with purpose to determine the milk’s (as a product) attributes and attributes’ levels. Two groups of master students of VMU were discussing about the milk’s attributes and their levels. The results of both groups were almost the same. Five more attributes (besides the organic product’s origin) were determined. The chosen attributes were listed as follows:

- **Country of origin.** For Lithuanian milk buyers one of the most important characteristics was decided to be the country of origin of milk. In Lithuanian stores milk produced in Poland, Latvia, Germany, etc. can be found. The main assumption here was that Lithuanians are ethnocentric people, while taking food into account. Two attributes’ levels were named: ‘Lithuanian’ or ‘Imported’.

- **Package size.** Three levels of package size were determined (with regard to package sizes sold in most Lithuanian stores): ‘0.5 litre’, ‘1 litre’, or ‘2 litre’.

- **Package type.** Four possible attribute’s levels were named, while discussing about the milk’s packages: ‘Plastic bag’, ‘Tetra-pak’, ‘Plastic bottle’, or ‘Glass bottle’.

- **Richness.** With regard to the richness of milk sold in Lithuanian stores, three levels of richness were identified: ‘1 %’, ‘2.5 %’, or ‘3.5 %’.
• **Price.** The main assumption here was that people are willing to pay higher price for organic milk in comparison to conventional. After the random inspection of prices in several Lithuanian supermarkets, five possible levels of the milk’s rice were established: ‘1.89 Lt’, ‘2.39 Lt’, ‘2.99 Lt’, ‘3.99 Lt’, or ‘5.99 Lt’.

• **Naturalness.** While talking about milk’s naturalness, two attribute’s levels were identified: ‘Organic’ or ‘Conventional’.

The structure of the milk attributes and attributes’ levels is provided in Table 2 below. As can be seen in Table 2, all possible combinations of attributes’ levels (all possible product profiles) result in 720 combinations.

On purpose to simplify the ranking procedure (the ranking method was chosen instead of rating because of its simplicity), the SPSS Orthogonal Design function was used to reduce the number of concept cards. Applying the SPSS 13 for Windows software package, the number of milk’s profiles was reduced to 25 possible product’s choices to place on concept cards, which had to be ranked by respondents by purchasing preferences.

The research was provided in January, 2009, in Kaunas, Lithuania. Respondents chosen were 25-45 year age milk buyers: 18 women and 8 men. Product profiles (concept cards) were presented and explained for each respondent individually.

### Buyer preferences for milk’s attributes: research results

Conjoint analysis was further implemented by applying SPSS 13 for Windows software package. The relative importances of all of the chosen attributes’ and the utility scores of attributes’ levels were calculated.

The research results provided in Table 3 showed that almost 27% of average customer’s milk purchasing decisions depend on the country of product’s origin. The utility gap between selection of Lithuanian products and products provided be foreign producers resulted in 7.891 conditional utility points. The research results revealed, that Lithuanian origination was the main attribute, while making purchase decision for milk. The assumption about the Lithuanians’ ethnocentrism approved.

### Table 2

**Structure of milk’s attributes and attributes’ levels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Attribute’s level</th>
<th>Total amount of levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A3: Package size</td>
<td>L31: 0.5 litre</td>
<td>L32: 1 litre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5: Richness</td>
<td>L51: 1 %</td>
<td>L52: 2.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total: 6 attributes</strong></td>
<td><strong>720 combinations</strong></td>
<td><strong>19 levels</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second important attribute was the milk’s price – it determined more than 22 percent of respondents’ decisions. Milk’s richness could be considered as an important attribute, as well. Richness’s relative importance among all the attributes (given for the evaluation) appeared to be more than 16 percent. All three remaining milk’s attributes (Package’s size, Package’s type and Naturalness) were of almost equal importance for the respondents. Average relative importance of these attributes was 13.15 %, 11.14 % and 10.11 %, respectively.

According to the research results, milk’s naturalness was the least important attribute in the purchase decision making. The utility gap between organic and conventional milk resulted in 1.6538 conditional utility points. However, considering possible variations with other attributes, this gap can be used to diminish customers’ resistance to the variations with other attributes.

The price of milk could be taken under consideration in this instance. The most favourable price for milk was 2.39 Lt. The utility gap between the prices of ‘2.39 Lt’ and ‘2.99 Lt’ results in 1.1538 conditional utility points. Considering these gaps, a consumer gets greater utility, while buying 1 litre of organic milk for 2.99 Lt, than the same amount of conventional one for 2.39 Lt. The latter utility results in 0.5 conditional utility points. The second favourable price was 1.89 Lt. The explanation of the respondents’ irrationality of choosing higher product’s price instead of the lower, could be assumption about distrust in cheaper product’s quality. Continuing the variations with attributes’ levels, the purchase of 1 litre organic milk for 3.99 Lt instead of 1 litre of conventional milk for 1.89 Lt, results in greater utility...
for the consumer. The utility gap between given price levels of ‘1.89 Lt’ and ‘3.99 Lt’ results in 1.3154 conditional utility points. According to the given example, consumer’s choice of more expensive organic milk instead of cheap conventional one would result in 0.3384 conditional utility points.

Considering the research results, Lithuanian milk market can be characterised as ethnocentric (12 respondents were considering ‘Country of origin’ firstly and 2 - secondly, while making their choices) and price-concerned (‘Price’ was the main factor for 6 and the second factor for 6 consumers), also, taking into consideration milk’s richness (milk ‘Richness’ was the main factor for 6 and the second factor for 3 consumers). The other three milk-attributes, presented in the research did not receive satisfactory attention. While talking about ecology, the ‘Organic’ factor firstly affected one consumer’s choice and was the second considerable attribute for 4 respondents. All the participants of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent’s ID</th>
<th>Relative Importance of Milk’ Attributes (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Naturalness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>23.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>23.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>23.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>23.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>5.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>11.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>9.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the research can be classified into the segments, provided in Table 4.

According to the research results provided in Table 3, there can be determined six main consumer segments: (1) Ethnocentric; (2) Ethnocentric ecologists; (3) Price-and-Richness concerned; (4) Price concerned; (5) Ethnocentric price-concerned; and (6) Richness concerned. All the respondents, who were making their choice decisions based on milk’s naturalness, were concerned about product’s country of origin.

The researches of public opinion often indicate tendency to buy environment-friendly products, however, conventional products are being bought, if consumer has to choose between product attributes and its friendliness to the environment. Expectancies related to “Green” products are often baseless; the doubts about product’s quality or reality of environmental characteristics arise. However, the segment which is ready to pay higher price for the product’s naturalness or environment-friendliness is growing.

There is no doubt, that the product’s or organization’s destiny in the market depends on the consumer. The question arises: why the impact of consumers on the processes of organizations’ ecologization is so trivial? Why the organic factors are not important in buying or consumption decision making?

Where are the reasons of the indifference of Lithuanian consumers? Firstly, the environmental movement in Lithuania is relatively young. There are no procedures and structure established which could affect the consumers’ sophistication level (not only environment related), there is no common culture of consumption, which would encourage the responsiveness for one’s actions. The principal problem is the Western consuming culture, which is based on excess consumption often exceeding capacities.

Environmental aspects affect all the human activities. However, few academic disciplines encompass “Green” aspects to their theories. The problem is very common, while considering marketing. The societies’ considerations about the protection of natural environment is growing, organizations tend to adopt their behaviour to the new public attitudes.

Few organizations have adopted such methods as systems of environment protection management, pollution lowering, and have integrated environment-friendly aspects in their activities.

**Conclusions**

- Seeking to determine the influence of ecological factors on the consumers’ choice, the product’s organic origin was chosen as a factor and milk was chosen as a product. According to the principles of the Conjoint analysis and as a result of two Focus groups discussions, milk was divided into six attributes: ‘Country of origin’, ‘Naturalness’, ‘Package size’, ‘Package type’, ‘Richness’, and ‘Price’. Every of the attributes was divided into its levels.
- The research results showed that Lithuanian origination was the main attribute, while making the purchase decision for milk. Lithuanian milk market can be characterised as ethnocentric and price-concerned, also, taking into consideration milk’s richness. The other three milk attributes, presented in the research did not receive satisfactory attention. While talking about ecology, the ‘Organic’ factor firstly affected one consumer’s
choice and was the second considerable attribute for 4 respondents.

- According to the research results, naturalness of milk was the least important attribute in the purchase decision making. However, considering possible variations with other attributes, this attribute can be used in diminishing the customers’ resistance to the variations with other attributes.

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EKOLOGIŠKUMO POVEIKIS VARTOTOJO PASIRINKIMUI

Santrauka

EKOLOGIŠKUMO POVEIKIS VARTOTOJO PASIRINKIMUI


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EKOLOGIŠKUMO POVEIKIS VARTOTOJO PASIRINKIMUI

S ant rau k a

Nuo vartotojų teikimos pirmenybės organizacijai priklauso produktų sėkmė rinkoje – pajamos ir pelnas. Savo ruožtu vartotojai tampa vis reikšmėni perkamiems produktams bei jų gamintojams. Tai ypač aktuali aplinkosauginių produktams ir jų gamybai. Organizacijoms būtina suvokti vartotojų preferencijų ir jų elgesnio ypatumus, susijusius su produktų ekologiškumu.

Verslo organizacijos turi tinkamai išnaudoti pastaraisiais dešimtmečiais juntamą ir matomą visuomenės susidomėjimą aplinkai bei didėjančią aplinkos apsauga. Tai gali tapti daugelio verslų sėkmės veiksniumi. Intensyvėjant konkurencijai, organizacijoms iškyla būtinybė gaminti ne tik paklausius rinkoje žemės ūkio ir maisto produktus, bet ir taikyti ekonomiškai naudingus užkininkavimo metodus. Tuo tarpu didėjantį vartotojų išrinkamus bei išprumus motyvuoją žemės ūkio ir maisto produktų gamintojus rinktis tokius produktų gaminimo būdus, kurie saugotų aplinką ir prisidedėtų prie socialiai priimtino užkininkavimo.


Tyrimo objektas – ekologiškumo poveikis vartotojo pasirinkimui

Tyrimo tikslas – nustatyti, kokia yra ekologiškumo santykine svarba vartotojui, renkantis produktų.

Tyrimo tikslui įgyvendinti keliami uždaviniai:

• nustatyti produktų poziūrius ir poziūrių lygius, darančius įtaką vartotojo pasirinkimui;
• nustatyti kiekvieno iš pasirinktų požymių santykine svarbą, vartotojai renkantis produktą;
• nustatyti, kaip vartotojai vertina skirti kas nutraukiant požymių lygius;
• nustatyti, ekologiškumo svarbą bei teikiamą naudingumą vartotojams.