

Saimaa University of Applied Sciences
Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Lappeenranta
Degree Programme in Tourism and Hospitality Management

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Organic Food in Young Generations' Opinions

Thesis 2019

Abstract

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This thesis was written to summarize the research of young generations' opinions about organic food. The main idea of the research was to know how much attention young people pay to organic food, their willingness to buy it as well as to solve the question "Is money the main reason why young generations do not buy organic food?" In order to figure out the answer, the author of this thesis interviewed sixty young people from different ages and backgrounds with fixed online and paper questionnaires.

The theoretical part provides readers with general information of organic food, related products and its benefits on human's health with specific numbers and statistics. The empirical part was conducted by interviewing young people who were carefully chosen with fixed questionnaire online and its paper versions.

As the result of this thesis, all the research questions regarding the willingness of young people to buy organic food, reasons behind not buying organic food are answered. This research's result also gives recommendation to organic brands in order to reach more customers in the future and promote more young people to buy organic food in their daily lives.

Keywords: organic food, young generations, opinions, buy organic food, money

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1 Introduction

1.1 What is organic food

According to Whfoods.com, organic is known as a label which is attached on a number of foods which have been produced with specific methods and practices followed the regulations of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and its National Organics Program (NOP). Organic food is proved to be environmental-friendly and has good quality due to the decrease in risks from food contamination while applying prohibitions to synthetic chemicals and other harmful methods from normal agriculture practices.

According to L. Robinson, J. Segal, and R. Segal, organic products are made with natural fertilizers including manuring or composting. Farmers, instead of using chemical herbicides and synthetic pesticides, use natural methods such as crop rotating, hand weeding, mulching, and tilling for resisting weeds; birds, insects, traps and naturally-derived pesticides for restraining pests. For organic meats, eggs and dairy, livestock are provided all the organic, hormone- and GMO-free feed. In order to protect livestock from diseases, farmers clean housing usually, use rotational graze and maintain a healthy diet for their animals. Instead of preventing livestock from accessing outdoors as in conventionally-grown farm, farm animals can have contact with outside.

As being grown naturally, organic products contain fewer chemicals and harmful pesticides. Several chemicals such as fungicides, herbicides and insecticides are added to products in conventionally producing process. These chemicals are, at some point, harmful for human's health. Fungicides can cause irritation to skin and eyes, herbicides can result in vomiting, a burning sensation in stomach, diarrhea, and muscle twitching. (Roberts & Reigart 2013.) Overall, these chemicals if they are still in food after production, they can cause several health effects for humans.

Organic food is often fresher as it does not contain preservatives which make food last longer. Organic products are normally sold near small farmers where they were grown. Nowadays, even though organic food is available in almost all markets, it still looks fresh and more beautiful from outside compared to other conventionally-grown products.

Organic farming is proved to be better for environment. It decreases pollution, preserves water, increases soil quality and prevents soil erosion as well as reduces human and other animals' health risks by not using pesticides. In organic farms, farmers do not feed animals with antibiotics, growth hormones or animal byproducts. According to FDA, feeding cattle with animal byproducts can cause BSE often called "mad cow disease". As of December 4, 2017, two hundred and thirty-one people worldwide are known to have become sick with variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) according to the University of Edinburgh's National CJD Research & Surveillance Unit. Therefore, using organic food can somehow prevent humans from getting vCJD (U.S. Food & Drug Administration 2018.)

Furthermore, organic meat and milk contain more nutrients. Tom Sander, professor emeritus of nutrition and dietetics at Kings College, has said "*generally, cows that eat grass produced milk and meat that contained up to 50% more omega-3 fatty acids than those fed on grains. In countries where there is a lot of rain such as the UK, Ireland, Brittany and New Zealand most milk and cheese comes from cows fed on grass and you can tell this from the bright yellow color derived from the carotene present in grass*".

Organic food does not contain GMOs. Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) or genetically engineered (GE) foods are plants whose DNA has been altered in ways that cannot occur in nature or in traditional crossbreeding, most commonly in order to be resistant to pesticides or produce an insecticide. The use of GMOs in food production process and animals is still a controversial issue. In the mid-1990s, researchers organized examination in GM soybeans which contain protein from Brazil nuts, the report in the New England Journal of Medicine showed that it caused allergic reactions in people with Brazil nut allergy (Colbert 2016.) In 2013, the journal Food and Chemical Toxicology published paper which provided research's results of the connection between GM corn to cancer and premature death in rats (Colbert 2016.) Even though after that, they found out that the number of tested rats were too small and could not give a clear conclusion, there were still people who wondered the effects of GMO products on human's health. Hence, organic food is the better choice in comparison with GMO food as it does not contain controversial ingredients as well as is grown naturally in mother nature.

1.2 Types of organic food

Basically, the term “organic” can be added to different kinds of products in the market. It can define agricultural products such as crops, meat, poultry, eggs and other dairy goods.

In term of organic food, there are seven kinds of food that are under organic standard. First and foremost, organic fruits and vegetables including mushroom are commonly sold in markets. They are usually in high quality and have an “organic” tag on the cover. Moreover, there are grains, legumes, nuts and seeds which follow organic standard.

Dairy products and eggs are also in the list of organic food. According to organic standard, recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH), genetically modified ingredients, and antibiotics cannot be used in organic farming for livestock. Milk from all dairy animals such as cow, goat, sheep can be certified organic if the cattle is not fed with animal byproducts, hormone or GMOs products. Certified organic stocks include almost all dairy products such as milk, cheese, yogurt, butter, ice cream, etc. The reason why artificial hormone and chemicals cannot be used in organic farms is that those hormones might affect the effectiveness of some medicines on human treatment. If humans take antibiotic-added milk every day, their bodies will gradually become resistant to similar kinds of drugs. Hence, when they get flu or suffer from some diseases, it will take longer time for treatment as their bodies are familiar with those medicines (Phillips, et al. 2004.) So far, organic dairy products can prevent humans from several health risks relating to hormones and antibiotics in the future.

Livestock feed can be produced organically with no herbicides and pesticides applied to grain crops. This is the “cleanest” animal feed in the market. Due to higher risks of grain losses by pests and weeds, organic livestock feed is considered the most expensive compared to other conventionally-produced feed. Organic meat is produced in organic farms where animals are fed with organic feed, and treated humanely. No antibiotics or hormones are allowed to use in organic farm. If an animal is sick and has to be treated with antibiotics, it will be removed from the herd. Hence, if animals are treated well and happily, their meat quality will be higher. Consuming organic meats can help prevent human’s health from unexpected diseases created by sick animals.

According to “Guidebook for Organic Certification”, there are three types of label for organic food including 100% Organic, Organic and Made with organic ingredients. The label “100% Organic” is only for agricultural products which are 100% certified organic, excluding salt and water. “Organic” label is for final products which contain at least 95%(by weight or fluid volume) organic ingredients, excluding salt and water. All remaining ingredients have to be allowed in National List as well as no ingredient may be irradiated, genetically engineered or grown using sewage sludge. Finally, the “Made with organic ingredients” label is about the final products which contain at least 70% of organic ingredients and the remaining 30% of agricultural ingredients can be conventionally produced but cannot be irradiated, genetically engineered or grown using sewage sludge. Hence, depending on customers’ need, they can choose the products they want by taking a look at the label to see if the products are 100% certified organic or partly organic (Behar, et al., 2005.)

1.3 Benefits of consuming organic food

Organic food is not only good for human’s health but also environmentally-friendly. There are numbers of research on how organic farming methods and organic food help to improve both environment and human’s health.

Organic farming protects the health and fertility of the soil (Lipson 2001). With the application of organic farming, soil is improved naturally to be rich, which results in high quality plants without the need of chemicals and artificial nutrients. Organic farming also protects the water supply as it does not use any harmful chemicals. Hence, it prevents groundwater as well as surface water from contamination. In addition, organic farming boosts biodiversity as organic farmers promote the diversity of all species, unlike in “factory farm”, they only focus on mono-cropping method growing one product over several years, which leads to the soil’s depletion of valuable nutrients. That is why in conventional farms, the soil is often weaker and in needed of using chemicals and other harmful methods to protect it from weeds, pests, etc. Compared to factory farm, organic farm helps to promote biodiversity which results in stronger and richer soil with natural

pest controls. By enhancing the harmony of eco-system, organic farming produces healthier products with less or no dangerous chemicals.

Organic food also brings the freshness and most flavor sensations to customer. As organic food is mostly produced in a small farm, it is carefully grown day by day with rich soil, clean water, exposed to sun instead of using toxic chemicals. Therefore, organic food often tastes better, especially fruits. During summer time in Finland, you can easily recognize which fruits are from conventional farm and from organic farm just through their smells and tastes. For instance, organic strawberry's smell can be pointed out from 50-meter distance. Its appearance is always fresher with vivid red color. It tastes sweet and full of flavor, unlike the conventionally-produced strawberry which tastes a bit sour with bigger sizes. Some might say that organic food tastes less good than the conventional ones. However, it can be the result of the fact that they have not tasted the real organic food or because of their style of eating that they are too familiar with conventional food.

Furthermore, organic farming helps to save energy. There is more petroleum used to produce synthetic fertilizers in conventional farming factory than in other single industry. While organic farming bases on practice such as crop covers instead of synthetic fertilizers, it saves the energy in the food production process. Organic food is normally delivered short distance from farms to your plate, which requires less fuel energy than other conventional ones.

In conventional farm, pesticides, herbicides and other harmful chemicals are used to kill living organisms including pests, weeds, etc. These chemicals might be dangerous for human's health. There are several relations between pesticide use and cancer among farmers and farm society. According to United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 60 percent of all herbicides, 90 percent of all fungicides, 30 percent of all insecticides are carcinogenic. Pesticides relates not only to cancer but also to birth defects, nerve damage, and genetic mutation. *"Pesticides in children is a big deal", says Alan Greene, M.D., a pediatrician and faculty member at Stanford University School of Medicine. According to Greene, pesticides are directly responsible for premature births,*

which is leading cause of death in babies, stunted brain growth, and learning disabilities. He cites a CDC study analyzing DDT pesticide levels in blood samples taken from 44,000 pregnant women between 1959 and 1966. The study found a 50 percent increase in premature births among women who had small levels of DDT in their blood and a 300 percent increase among women who had high levels. Based on the study, Greene says DDT was “responsible for thousands upon thousands of death.” (Roseboro 2006.) Therefore, using organic food can help humans prevent several health problems which are the results of using pesticides in conventionally farming methods.

By consuming organic food, customers can contribute to the maintenance of smaller farms. As organic food is normally produced in small farms, more organic products are bought can be the hope for farmers in organic farm, especially when it was estimated that there were 650,000 small family-owned farms closed in United States in the past ten years. While many people choose to consume conventional food, organic farms cannot maintain their farms by selling organic food. As a result, more and more organic farms cannot afford production expenses and are finally closed. Supporting organic food can help to create more jobs for farmers in small-sized farms, which is truly humanitarian (Roseboro 2006.)

Organic food's prices seem to be more expensive than conventional one's. However, the price for conventional food does not show the hidden costs for its production process. For instance, factory farms have to pay for synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and other harmful chemicals. In addition, as using chemicals, soils and water supply in the farms as well as surround areas are contaminated, which results in billions of dollars to be wasted to resolve environmental damage. Therefore, using organic food can somehow help the Earth, solve environmental pollution problems and increase the standard of living for humans (Roseboro 2006.)

Additionally, organic food is proved to be more antioxidant than conventional food. Low-molecular antioxidants from fruits and vegetables help to protect the cells and their structures against oxidative damage. With high amount of α -tocopherol, ascorbic acids,

β -carotene, which are high in antioxidant. “Organic strawberries had significantly higher total antioxidant activity (8.5% more), ascorbic acid (9.7% more), and total phenolics (10.5% more) than conventional berries, but significantly less phosphorus (13.6% less) and potassium (9.1% less).” (Reganold, et al. 2010). In addition, according to Forman J. and Silverstein J. in 2012, 21 of 36 (58%) of studies show that higher amount of vitamin C is found in organic leaves such as spinach and lettuce than conventional vegetables. Organic fruits and vegetables, at some point, can prevent people from having health problems such as cancer as they may provide more antioxidant and nutrition than conventional ones. As growing in rich soil without harmful chemicals, organic food is often cleaner and has more chances to contain more nutritious ingredients than conventional food. Therefore, it is better for human’s health to use organic food in daily life.

Organic farming is also less damaging to the environment than conventional methods. It does not release pesticides and other dangerous chemicals to the surroundings, which prevents neighbors from suffering health problems such as respiratory problems and memory disorders. Furthermore, it is not harmful for oceans as well as aquatic wildlife. No animals and the ecosystems are threatened by organic farming methods. Additionally, organic farms produce less waste than the conventional ones. Hence, it costs less money and efforts of the community to resolve environmental problems.

1.4 Main factors which affect customers’ behaviours

There are several factors which affect decisions of consuming organic food. There are numbers of studies showing that gender is one of the most important factors for buying behaviours. Females tend to purchase more than male (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel 2001). It happens quite normally in an organic shop in Finland called “Ruohonjuuri” that there are more women who come to buy organic products in a day than men.

In addition, financial status may decide if a person will buy organic food or not. As organic food is often more expensive than conventional ones, only a group of people can afford it in daily life. Prices of organic food are about 20-50% higher than

conventional food. According to the prices in Lidl, organic food prices are often two-third or double the prices of conventional food, which is proved with pictures in the part 1.6.

Marriage status also affects the willingness to buy organic food. It seems that families with children are likely to purchase healthy food instead of junk food. While numbers of single people do not really care about what they eat every day. Some of them even have habits of consuming unhealthy food.

Lifestyle of a person is vitally important in choosing their daily intake. If a person follows healthy diet, he or she is more willing to buy healthy products than others. Otherwise, those who treat themselves freely prefer to buy all they want including unhealthy stuffs and conventional food.

Modern self or following trend is one of the reasons for purchasing organic food. For instance, in Vietnam, young people tend to update trend as well as follow lifestyles of celebrities or social influencers. Having been encouraged by trending lifestyles in the world, Vietnamese people are now paying more attention to consuming organic food and products (Vu, et al. 2018). It means people can be affected by trend and lifestyles of other people. Hence, they may follow healthy diet as well as start using organic food.

1.5 Trendy lifestyle

Consuming organic food is becoming a trendy lifestyle which seems not to be out-of-date in the future. There are more and more people who are aware of the benefits of using organic food in their daily lives.

According to K Food Trend 2019 journal, organic products gain the 6th place in the Finnish shopping basket in 2019. Eighteen percent of the Finnish shopping basket is organic food, which is quite significant. The trend of promoting healthy lifestyle has been growing so fast since 2017. Finnish people are now taking care of themselves better than ever before. Forty-seven percent of respondents in K market's survey said that they invest in better everyday food. In 2019, the Finns choose more Finnish vegetables, local food as well as organic products. They gradually avoid using unhealthy products such as sugar, fat and additives. Thirty-three percent of respondents agreed that they

only buy healthy food including organic products, which grew 1.5 times compared to 2018's statistics (Hovi 2019.)

According to The Finnish Organic Food Association Pro Luomu, the value of the sales of organic food was 309 million euros in 2017, which was 13% more than in 2016. The sales of organic products raised double during the period from 2011 to 2017. The highest organic sellers were fruits, vegetables, milk and other dairy products in 2017 (Pro Luomu 2018.)

In Yle News in 2018, they indicated that organic food gains three percent in overall grocery sales in Finland. Finnish customers spend most money on organic fruits, milk, vegetables, eggs and coffee. Some most popular products in specifics include banana, low-fat milk, eggs and minced meat. The journal stated that organic baby food, breakfast flakes and groats gain significant attention, which are up to 14% of market share. "Younger consumers are most particularly interested in organic products, so we expect demand to keep growing. Young people buy organic food for reasons related to the environment, well-being and animal welfare," says Kottila, director of Pro Luomu. Young generations are getting more aware of using organic food in their daily lives. It is also easier to promote young people to start using organic products as they are often open-minded as well as desiring for a perfect and healthy body.

In another case, Vietnam, one of developing countries in South East Asia, Vietnamese people have their own reasons to choose organic food. *"According to the Vietnam Organic Agriculture Association (VOAA), the Vietnamese population consumes about 2-million-euro worth of organic food per year. Also, the organic farming area has increased by 3.6 times since 2010 to about 77,000 hectares in 2017. Popular organic food products consumed include rice, fruit, vegetables, fish, meat, and dairy products. Essentially, Vietnamese consumers perceive that organic food products are safer to eat because they are produced in sustainable ways. They also believe that organic food helps consumers to reduce risks of contracting diseases."* (Le, et al. 2019.) The research shows that Vietnamese people also care about using healthy products and organic –based products in their daily lives. Significant statistics prove that Vietnam is a great place to expand organic food market.

Food safety is one of the most common problems in Vietnam as the country is reported to have incredibly high cancer fatality rate which is the result of contaminated food (Vu, et al. 2018). Hence, Vietnamese people have no choice but to choose organic food since it is proved to contain no pesticide, no chemical, and more nutrition. Vietnamese people are suffering from environmental pollution such as air and water pollution. According to Hoang, et al. in their journal in February 2017, people in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh city are breathing dust ten times more than that of WHO regulations. The “Rang Dong” lightbulb factory fire in Hanoi in August 2019 caused mercury leak, which leads to the emergency threat of air pollution and the official warning not to eat vegetables, chickens or fishes from the area (Channel News Asia 2019). Vietnamese people are also suffering from water pollution. What happened in October 2019 is that Hanoians do not have enough clean drinking water to use, which is the result of Red river contaminated with oil. According to Vnexpress, 250,000 households in Hanoi were affected by water pollution. With all polluted surroundings Vietnamese people have to live with in daily life, many of them choose to eat clean to protect themselves from chemical products and maintain their wellness.

1.6 The price of organic food compared to conventional food

The price of organic food is normally higher than conventional ones. There are several reasons why it happens. Organic food costs more than conventional food. But if we look closely on all indirect costs from both farming method, the organic farming method might cost less than the other one, according to Organic Trade Association (OTA)’s statement. All hidden costs including prices for resolving polluted water, replacement of eroded soils, health care for farmers, etc. should be counted to the bills of conventional farming. With organic farming method, all those problems are solved as the method itself is not harmful to the environment, boosts the ecosystem and the richness of soil as well as does not apply any harmful chemicals which are dangerous to farmers’ health (Lipson 2001.) In addition, organic food costs more because organic farms need to pay more labor fees as all actions are required by hand. Smaller farms do not have economical scale as in conventional farms. They are not subsidized by government to

run the farms while conventional farms receive a large amount of governmental funds to reduce prices.

In Finland, based on Lidl's prices, the price of organic food is two third higher or double the price of conventional food. For instance, the price of normal lemon costs 2.70 EUR per kilogram (Figure 1) while the organic (luomu) one costs 4.99 EUR per kilogram (Figure 2) which is nearly double the price of conventional lemon. Another example is apple price. The conventional apple costs 1.59 EUR per kilogram (Figure 3) while the organic one costs 1.99 EUR for 600g (Figure 4) which means a kilogram of apples costs 3.32 EUR. Therefore, organic fruits in Finland cost about 2 times more than conventional ones. In addition, in terms of vegetables, conventional mushrooms cost 5.15 EUR for a kilogram (Figure 5) while the organic one costs 10.75 EUR for a kilogram (Figure 6). Price for cherry tomatoes with organic label is 19.40 EUR for a kilogram (Figure 7), while the price for conventional ones is 11 EUR for a kilogram (Figure 8). Hence, the prices of organic vegetables are around 50% more expensive than those of conventional ones. Furthermore, after research on dairy products, low-fat milk from Valio company costs 0.87 EUR per one-liter bottle (Figure 9) while the same amount of organic low-fat milk from same company costs 1.05 EUR (Figure 10). The price for organic milk is about 20% higher than that of conventional milk. Additionally, 12% fat organic minced pork costs 12.83 EUR for a kilogram (Figure 11), meanwhile the same amount of conventional pork meat costs 9.13 EUR for a kilogram (Figure 12). The price of organic meat is around 40% higher than that of conventional one. The difference between the price of organic meat with conventional one can be demonstrated through the example of organic chicken's filet compared to normal one. The price of organic chicken's filet is 29.95 EUR per kilogram (Figure 13) while the other costs only 11.98 EUR per kilogram (Figure 14). The price of organic chicken's filet is 2.5 times higher than the conventional chicken's filet, which is a significant difference between these two types of chicken. In terms of eggs, a case of ten organic eggs costs 3.99 EUR (Figure 15) more than double the price of same conventional egg case which costs only 1.89 EUR (Figure 16). Therefore, according to Lidl supermarket's prices, organic food is from 20% to 60% more expensive than the conventional one. Hence, the

prices of organic food are much more expensive than that of conventional food in Finland.



Figure 1. Conventional lemons



Figure 2. Organic lemons



Figure 3. Conventional apples



Figure 4. Organic apples



Figure 5. Conventional mushrooms



Figure 6. Organic mushrooms



Figure 7. Organic cherry tomatoes



Figure 8. Conventional cherry tomatoes



Figure 9. Conventional light milk



Figure 10. Organic light milk



Figure 11. Organic minced pork



Figure 12. Conventional minced pork



Figure 13. Organic chicken's filet



Figure 14. Conventional chicken's filet



Figure 15. Organic eggs



Figure 16. Conventional eggs

In another case, Vietnam, a small country in South East Asia, witnessed the development of using organic products by Vietnamese customers in their daily life (Vu, et al. 2018).

The prices of organic food in Vietnam are also higher than that of conventional one. According to research on a healthy supplier store, the price of organic food seems to be double the price of conventional one. The price of organic cucumber is 60,000 VND per kilogram while the conventional one costs 27,000 VND per kilogram (Figure 17). In conclusion, the prices of organic food in Vietnam are approximately three times more expensive than that of conventional one.



Figure 17. Organic cucumber (on the left) and conventional cucumber (on the right)

2 Methodology

The methodology part illustrates the choices of quantitative and qualitative approach as well as introduces the research process, which includes the definitions of the participants, the research methods, delimitations, gathering and interpreting data. The specific data collection method chosen is a short survey with yes/no and open-ended questions.

The study's main objective is to analyze young people's opinions on organic food as well as to find out the answer for reasons why young generations do not purchase organic food. Since this is a broad topic, the author organized survey publicly to gain as many responses as possible from young people, mostly from Finland where the author is living at the moment and Vietnam which is author's home country. In this case,

quantitative method seems to be the most suitable tool to collect data from large number of participants. As the topic is broad, data has to be collected from a large number of participants. However, the main aim of the thesis is to find out what young generations think about organic food; hence, the author decided to add the qualitative methods through the existence of the last two open-ended questions in the survey in order to get to know more about participants' opinions of organic food. Quantitative research uses random selection of subjects so each of results is equal to the other, hence, possibly makes generalization from samples to the total population (Bamberger 2000). In other words, qualitative methods have dimension on interpretive perspective which focuses on participants' uncovering views (Lapan, Quartaroli & Riemer 2012) Therefore, quantitative research with simple touch of qualitative research is the best choice for the author's thesis.

2.1 Research population

As the topic about young generations is wide, the research survey is opened to public. The author has posted her survey to some social media groups to ask participants to answer the survey. All participants involved in the survey were choosing to do it by themselves without any force from the author. The limitation of the survey is young people from 15 to 30 years of age. There is no border in nationality, gender or social status which would prevent interested people from doing the survey.

The sample size was quite large as the author sent her survey to several social media groups which contain more than thousands people. Although, not all people in those groups participated in the survey, there are still huge number of people taking part in the survey. Hence, the author believes that result of the survey can partly demonstrate young generation's opinions about organic food in general. According to Bamberger (2000), quantitative method uses random sampling to make sure results can be generalized. The research is trusted to find out non-biased results with large number of participants in the survey.

The key figure of participants are young people who are from 15 to 30 years old. The limitation of age is under 30 because when the author was searching for information

about age of organic customers, she found out that some researches stated that frequent customers who consider buying organic food in daily life are often middle-aged. Based on some researches of Govindnasamy and Italia, 1990; Van Doorn and Verhoef, 2011, young household females from 30 to 45 years of age are likely to purchase organic food (Paul & Rana 2012). As a result, it created author's curiosity about why there was not many researches about young people buying organic food, which leads to this thesis where the author actually did research about young generations' opinions about organic food.

2.2 Research method

The research method is chosen to be a semi-structured survey with yes/no and multiple-choice questions as well as open-ended questions in the end of the survey. The survey is publicly published on many groups of social media to gain as many responses as possible. It is a short online survey which includes twelve questions divided into 3 parts. Participants are kindly asked to provide information in three aspects: (1) basic information and social status such as age, nationality, current position, monthly income; (2) whether or not they buy organic food and how was the experience if yes; (3) opinions about organic food for improvements and changes so they can buy it in the future if they answer no in part (2). The first two parts of the survey are multiple-choice and yes/no questions while only the last part contains open-ended questions. As open-ended questions are used to find out what improvements and changes customers want to see (Brace 2008), the author manages to put open-ended questions in her survey to get real opinions about why young people do not buy organic food and their suggestions to improve it in the future.

Despite the fact that the author does not have many experiences in gathering a survey, she still wants to try to create a semi-structured survey which is later sent to public groups on social media. While considering this thesis is a broad subject, the combination of quantitative and qualitative method was a legitimate choice. The aim of quantitative research questions is to examine variance (Osborne 2008) while qualitative research methods focused on the viewpoints of the subjective (Flick 2018). Therefore, in order to collect a large number of responses as in this thesis research, the

combination of quantitative and qualitative method is the most suitable option which provides structured and open-ended questions to huge groups of participants which are more than 100 people.

2.3 Delimitations

As the survey is published online to different social-media groups, the number of participants in different ages can be difficult to be equal. For instance, there are three groups of participants which are from 15 to 18 years old, 18 to 25 years old and 25 to 30 years old. It can happen that the numbers of participants in each group are not equal compared to each other. Furthermore, when applying quantitative methods in the research, questionnaires are usually used (Osborne 2008). One limitation of surveys is that the questions are mostly structured yes/no and multiple-choice questions which cannot show deeply young generations' opinions. However, with the touch of qualitative method in the last two open-ended questions, the opinions of young people about organic food are clearly analyzed.

2.4 Data collection

Thesis's primary data is collected through a short online survey which was published on different social-media groups involving large number of participants. Some social-media groups used are Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp and LinkedIn. The survey is provided only in English. Although it is quite difficult to handout an English online survey in Finland where official language is not English, the author still decided to do it all in English and received quite positive responses. Also, it is more generalized to do a survey in English to get more international viewpoints than to do the survey in Finnish. In addition, as English is a popular language, it cannot be a barrier which prevent modern young people from answering a short survey in English. The author also used really simple English vocabulary in the survey in order not to confuse participants.

The final form of survey was posted to Facebook groups, Instagram messages, Whatsapp messages and to the author's LinkedIn page. The author did not expect the number of participants taking part in the survey. The samplings can be young people

from Finland as well as Vietnam as the survey was sent to some Finnish and Vietnamese groups. However, participants can come from anywhere in the Earth if they have seen the author's posts as the survey does not set any limit about nationality, gender, etc. The only limitation is the age of participants which has to be from 15 to 30 range. In order to get as many responses as possible, author also asked help from her friends and family to share her post via social media. The data collected is from several different young people randomly. The author did not send her survey privately to any person in her networking.

The questionnaire was opened to public on October 5th, 2019 and was closed on November 3rd, 2019. It means the participants had nearly a month to respond to the survey. There were 148 responses with 43.7% of participation rate and 97.3% of completion rate. In total of 148 respondents, there were 144 qualified ones who answered all twelve questions.

2.5 Questionnaire design

The survey includes in total twelve questions divided into three parts which are general background of participants, whether or not respondents buy organic food as well as their experiences, and their opinions about improvements or changes of organic food. The official survey was designed and finished in Surveyhero.com which is one of the most popular survey tools in the Internet.

The primary part of the survey which contains four multiple-choice questions was organized to get the idea of participants' demographic background. The aim of this section is to collect the basic data of respondents as well as get the overall view of participants' status. Additionally, this section helps to eliminate those who are younger than 15 years old or older than 30 years old from participating in the survey. As the purpose of the survey is to research data from young people, children below 15 years of age and adults over 30 years of age were not allowed to do the survey.

The first part of the questionnaire is short enough to not get deeply into personal information but still cover general information of participants. There are four questions

which are “What is your age?”, “What is your current position?”, “What is your nationality?” and “What is your monthly income range?”

For the first question about how old the participant is, there are three answer ranges including 15 to 18, 18 to 25 and 25 to 30 years of age. As young people who are between 16 to 18, their relationships with their families are almost completely closed to the courts (Lockton 1993), people under 18 years of age still rely on their parents in law. That is the reason why author chose people from 15 to 18 years old as 15-year-old boys or girls will soon come to 16 when they can somehow access to all support services (Lockton 1993) and those who are nearly 18 when they will soon become adults. The range between 18 and 25 years of age is because normally at these ages, people are still studying. According to a 2007 survey, the average age at the time of Bachelor graduation is 25.9 years of age (Schomburg & Teichler 2011). Furthermore, some researches of Govindnasamy and Italia (1990), Van Doorn and Verhoef (2011), showed that young household women from 30 to 45 years of age are often buy organic food. Therefore, the range from 25 to 30 years of age was included in the questionnaire as the barrier preventing people over 30 years old from participating in the survey.

The second question is about respondent’s current position. There are three answers for this question which are studying, working and other which can be both studying and working or unemployed. As a 15-year-old boy or girl is still required to attend school but they can still do some light work as well as the minimum wage of workers normally starts at the age of 20 or 21 (Price 2011), young people from 15 to 30 years of age can be studying, working or do both at the same time.

The third question is about participants’ nationality. As the author’s nationality is Vietnamese and she is studying in Finland so there are Vietnamese and Finnish in the answer boxes. There are also Chinese, a big country, Russia, a Finnish neighbor, and other for those who do not belong to above nationalities.

The last question in the first section is about participant’s monthly income. The range of income is below 500 EUR, 500 to 1000 EUR, 1000 to 2000 EUR and above 2000 EUR. The reason for choosing these ranges is based totally on the author’s view. She believes that below 500 EUR per month is quite low for paying rent, food and

transportation, especially for people who are living in Helsinki, Finnish capital, while 500 to 1000 EUR is literally better when people can have extra money to shopping after deducing other important costs. One thousand EUR to 2000 is the base when a normal person can live well, pay all costs, and somehow think about buying some healthy goods for themselves. Above 2000 EUR per month is more than enough for people to purchase things they want not including luxurious goods but healthy organic food is totally on budget for those who gain above 2000 EUR monthly.

The second part is about whether or not young people buy organic food as well as their opinions about it. It mostly contains yes/no questions with open-ended answer for “no”.

This section starts with yes/no question “Have you heard about organic food?”. The question plays a role as an introduction to the main purpose of the survey about organic food.

The next question is “Have you ever bought organic food?”. With this question, participant can choose “yes” or “no” and they have to answer why not if they choose “no”.

The third question is “What is your experience with organic food?” There are three range for the answer which are good, bad or average. Then, participants are asked if they often buy organic food. It is still the same yes/no question with reason for answer “no”.

The last question in this section is which type of food participants purchase when going to grocery stores. The answer includes organic food, conventional food or depends which the participants give their comments for the type of food they buy.

As financial status is vitally important in customers’ buying decisions (Pfenninger & Fowler 2010), there is an additional question if money is the main reason why participants do not purchase organic food. It is also a yes/no question with comment space for respondents to give the reason if they choose “no”.

The last part includes two open-ended questions with the aim of finding participants’ opinions in improving or changing organic food so they will buy it in the future. These

questions are for people who answer “no” to question number (6) and (8) as they chose not to buy organic food. The author wants to collect different viewpoints from participants about the improvement or changes that they can suggest for organic farm or factory.

As there are still several factors which prevent people from purchasing organic food, it would be better if young customers can give their own opinions to improve organic food or organic-related products in the future.

Overall, the survey contains only twelve questions with short and direct answers. The survey was predicted to finish in around 2 to 5 minutes. The results of the survey were promised to be anonymous with no personal information published.

2.6 Questionnaire procedures

The questionnaire was created on October 5th, 2019. It was then checked during five days until author’s seminar was organized on October 10th, 2019. The survey was opened publicly for nearly a month from October 10th, 2019 until closed on November 3rd, 2019. The author did not limit number of participants nor their general background.

At the beginning of the collecting data process, the author found it difficult to reach a large number of people by just posting the survey to her Facebook page, as well as asked her friends around. However, after the first two weeks, she realized that she can post her survey to bigger groups and use as many social – media pages as possible to achieve her goal. The process during the last two weeks was going through quite well. As the author did not choose to interview specific groups of people, her job was only to publish her survey online so that it would reach hundreds of people or even more. The survey was created using surveyhero.com platform. It was a really professional online survey website as it kept sending author notification emails when someone answered to the survey.

As the survey is randomly sent to public, the results it brings can be truly generalized. It did not focus on any specific person, and people from 15 to 30 years old can freely

answer these questions if they want to be part of the research. All results shown in this thesis were given permissions by participants who took part in the survey.

2.7 Data analysis process

As the survey was conducted on surveyhero.com website, all results were gathered and summarized in the overview thread. The results are mostly clear as well as performed logically and carefully on the website. The author only has to take a look at the results and start analyze it in her own way.

With the support from surveyhero.com, the process of analyzing data for the research turns out to be incredibly easy for the author. It takes only 30 minutes to read all the results and comments from participants. The results of the survey will be informed in detail in the next chapter of the thesis.

3 Research results

3.1 Participants' profile

According to results of 145 respondents who complete this part of the survey, the group of 18 to 25 years old is the largest one with 80 out of 145 people (55.17%) while the group of 15 to 18 years of age is the smallest with 13 out of 145 people (8.96%).

What is your age?

Number of responses: 145

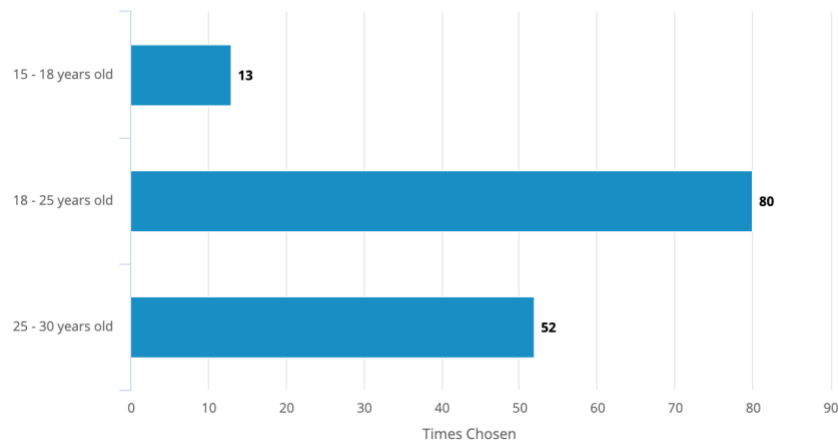


Figure 18. Ages of participants

Therefore, it can be clearly seen in Figure 18 that people from 18 to 25 years of age are more interested in organic food as well as healthy goods than others from different ages. In addition, people from 25 to 30 years of age are also having significant interest in the subject with 52 out of 145 people (35.86%).

More than half of participants are students with 95 of 145 people (65.51%). As the number of working people is 61 out of 145 people (42.07%), it seems that there are some people in the list who are both studying and working at the same time. It was shown in the Figure 19 that 4 of them answered that they are “full-time student, part-time worker” or “both studying and working” or “working part-time and study part-time”.

What is your current position?

Number of responses: 145

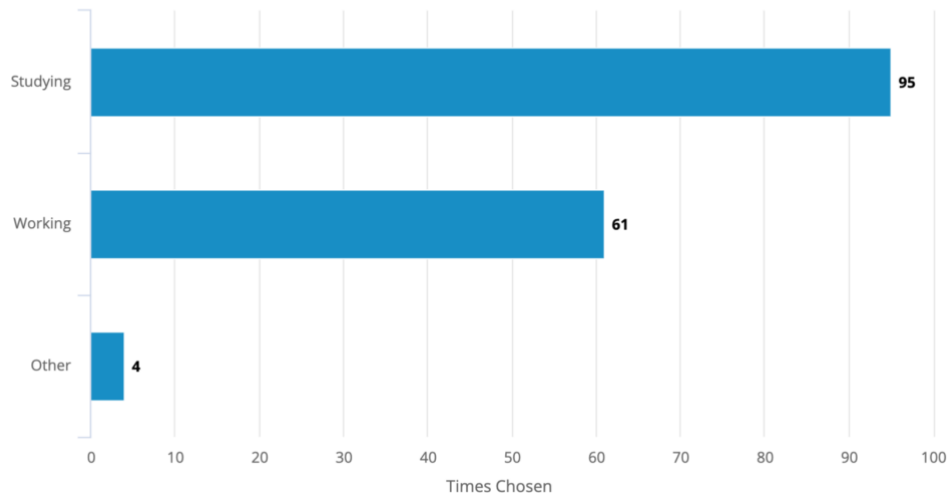


Figure 19. Current position of participants

Basically, it shows that most of respondents are studying at the moment while only nearly half of them are also working or working full-time. Hence, there are three groups of people who have different general background.

What is your nationality?

Number of responses: 145

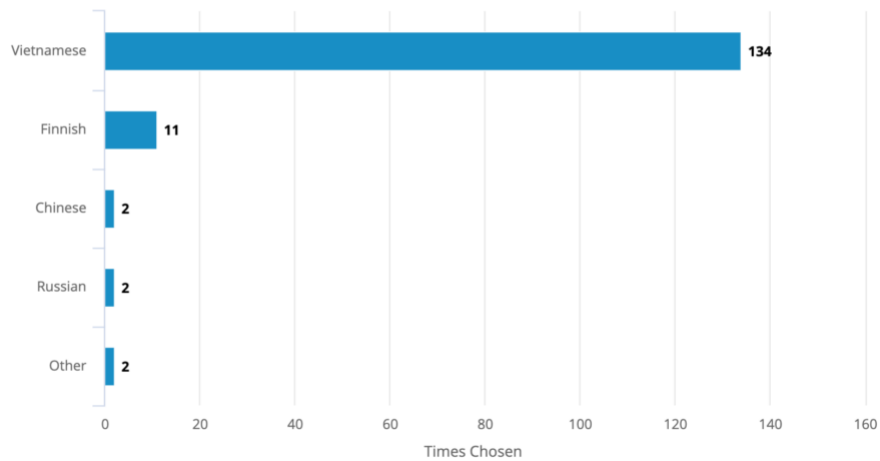


Figure 20. Nationality of participants

As clearly seen in Figure 20, most of participants are Vietnamese with 134 out of 145 respondents (92.41%). It was such a huge number of Vietnamese people involved in the survey. It was followed by Finnish category with only 11 out of 145 people (7.58%). Chinese and Russian produced the same result which is 2 out of 145 people. The two other answers were recorded as “Mexican” and “Kenyan”.

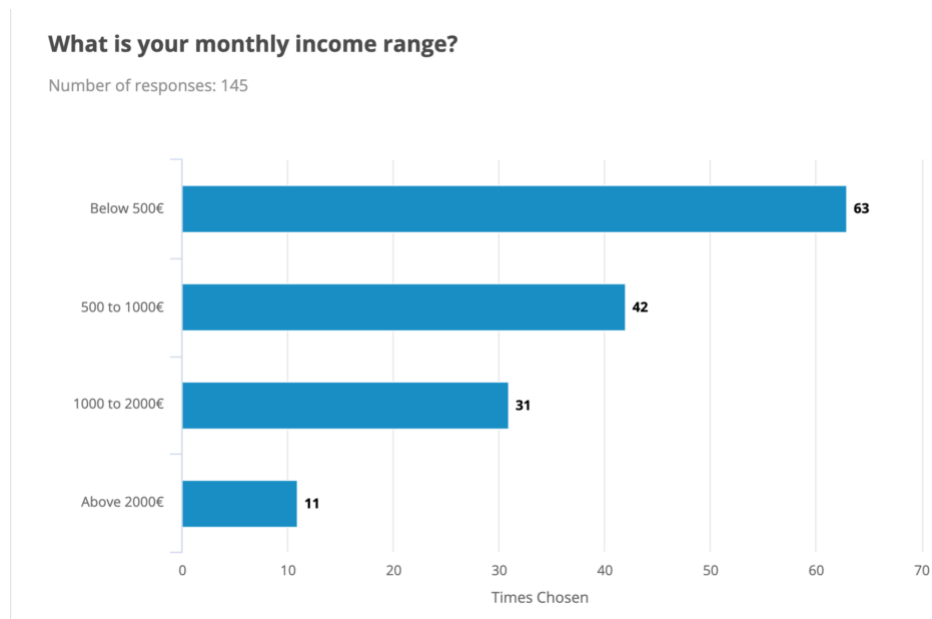


Figure 21. Monthly income of participants

In the next question about monthly salary of participants, 63 of them agreed that their income is below 500 EUR per month (43.44%) while the smallest number of people which are 11 out of 145 stated that their monthly salary is above 2000 EUR (7.59%). There are 42 people, which is 28.97% of participants, saying that their monthly income is from 500 to 1000 EUR. It was followed closely by the group of 31 people who earns 1000 to 2000 EUR. It seems that most of participants are student; hence, more than 72% of participants confirms that their monthly salary is below 1000. In other words, people who earn more than others are only minimal group less than 10% of the total participants. This question’s answer can affect the results of other up-coming questions as the financial status of participants witnessed a significant difference between who gain less and the others gain more. The differences range from double to four times more money earned by the last group which makes more than 2000 EUR per month compared to other groups.

3.2 Organic food in young generation's opinions

This part is a starter of getting to know more about topic from participant's viewpoints. The responds for this section are quite positive with 142 to 145 respondents answered to all questions.

In the first question "Have you heard about organic food?", there are only 1 respondent said "no" while 99% of participants have already heard about organic food.

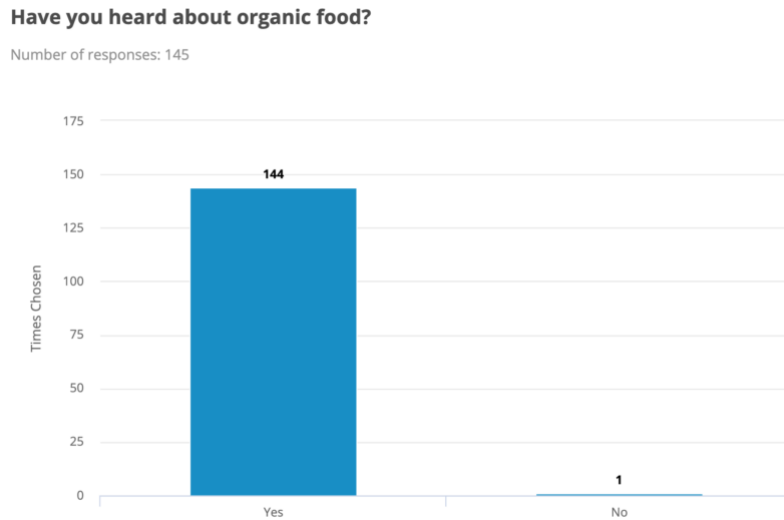


Figure 22. Numbers of participants who have heard about organic food

It means that organic food nowadays is getting more popular. There are more and more people paying attention to its existence.

Have you ever bought organic food?

Number of responses: 145

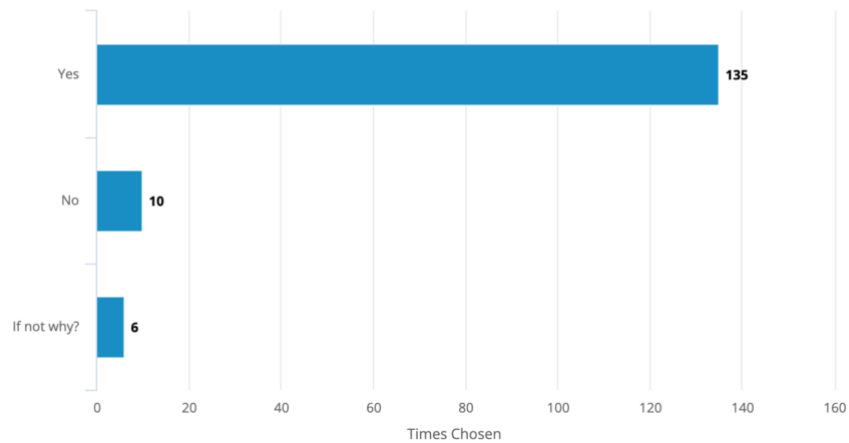


Figure 23. Whether or not participants have bought organic food

In Figure 23, 135 out of 145 people have purchased organic food (93.1%) while there are only 10 people who have not bought organic food before (6.9%). Out of the 10 people who chose “no”, only 6 responded to the question “why not?”. “I think it is unnecessary for me”, “save money”, “buying food in supermarket, in my opinion is already healthy and toxic-free” are their answers. There are three people who stated “expensive” as the reason for not buying organic food. Hence, personal needs also can be a reason for not choosing organic food. There are also people who normally think that supermarket food is healthy and good enough so they do not need to care about organic food. In other context, financial status provides a significant influence in spending money on food. Furthermore, people with saving characteristics want to save budget instead of buying something not worthy in their opinion.

What is your experience with organic food?

Number of responses: 142

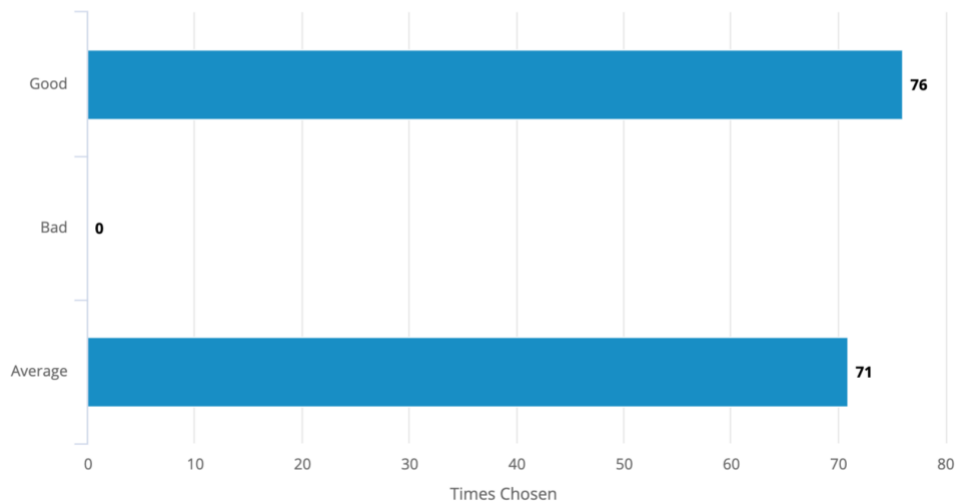


Figure 24. Participants' experiences about organic food

According to results in Figure 24, there is no bad experience witnessed by respondents when buying organic food. The data of good and average experience are not so different that there are only 5 people more who had good experience in purchasing organic food than those who had average experience. There is a total of 76 out of 147 people (51.7%) who chose “good” answer while 48.3% of people thought that they had average experience when purchasing organic food. In overview, participants’ experiences with organic food are really positive with high percentage of satisfied customers who voted “good experience”. This result proves that organic food is generally good, which meets a large number of customers’ expectation.

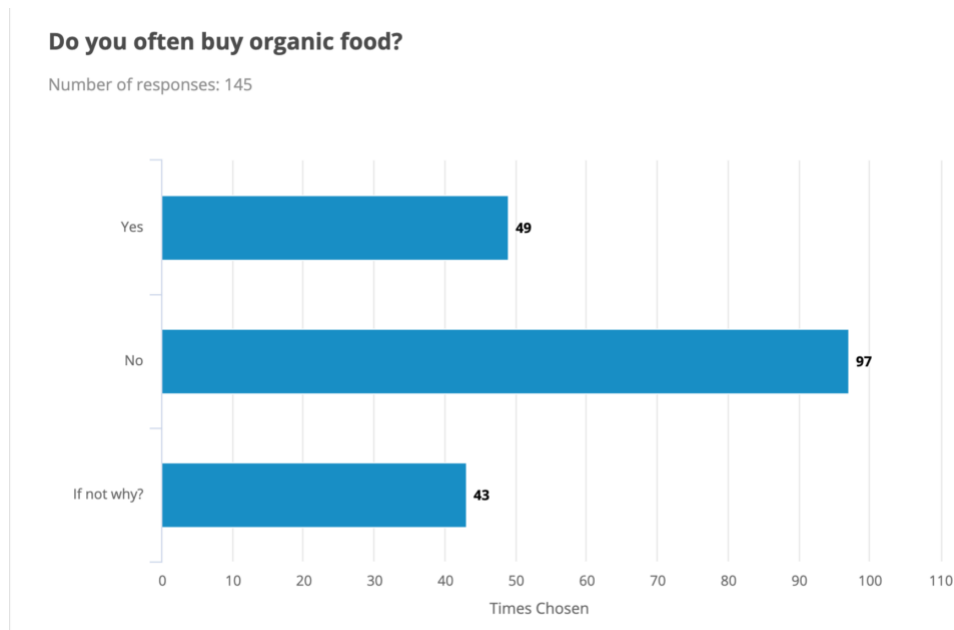


Figure 25. Whether or not participants buy organic food

In the next question, even though participants had good experiences with organic food, not many of them choose to purchase it in their daily lives. Out of 145 participants, only 49 were committed to buy organic food on a daily basis, which covers only 33.79% of total respondents. Meanwhile, 66.89% of participants said that they do not often purchase organic food. It shows in the Figure 25 that 97 people said “no” when being asked if they buy organic food frequently. In this result, only 43 people answered to the question “why not?” which is also important while analyzing the reason for not purchasing organic food from young generation’s viewpoint. There are 16 people who answered exactly one word “expensive” while some others stated “They’re simply a bit pricier than conventional ones”, “high price”, “overpriced”, “higher price”, “too expensive”, “more expensive than regular food”, “expensive, young, dumb and broke”, “more expensive than normal food”, “It is expensive and it is not easy to go to farm and there are not so many fairs”, “they are more expensive than the others”, “It is a bit too expensive for students”, “It is not common in my country and it is quite pricy”, “It costs too much”, “It is quite expensive. There are not many choices available in the market”. Almost all of them describe expensive or overpriced organic food being the reason why they are not buying it in their daily lives. There are only 6 out of 43 people whose answers are not about the price of organic food. “Don’t have much info about it, don’t

feel like I need it”, “I don't mind about organic products, I'm just interested in food's taste”, “It's not better than other food like people make it out to be”, “The wider range and higher availability of non-organic options”, “Because I have not been able to focus on daily meals”, “I usually don't check if it is organic” are reasons those people provide in the comment box. It seems that young people these days do not really care about what they eat in daily meal, hence, organic or conventional food does not really matter them. Also, a number of people do not get enough knowledge about organic food so that they choose not to buy it. There can also be people who only care about the taste of food, and do not pay attention to the food intake. In addition, as the availability as well as generous options of conventional food sold in supermarket, some people just do not think about using organic food which is not variable as well as it is more expensive compared to regular food. While collecting data, as “why not” question does not restrict participants' answers, the author received some funny as well as detailed answers such as “Price tag, and since it's organic sometimes there are bugs in it and I'm afraid of bugs” or “Part of it is the price. Also, I'm skeptical when it comes to the benefits of organic food. I also believe that certain pesticides and fertilizers help prevent diseases and increase crop quality”. The result also shows that there are still many skeptical people who do not believe in the benefits of organic food as well as think that organic food is not better than conventional ones. After reading these comments, the author hopes those who are still unbelieving in organic food should read this research as soon as possible to get more information about its benefits towards humans' and environment's health.

If you go to the grocery shop, which kind of food do you buy?

Number of responses: 145

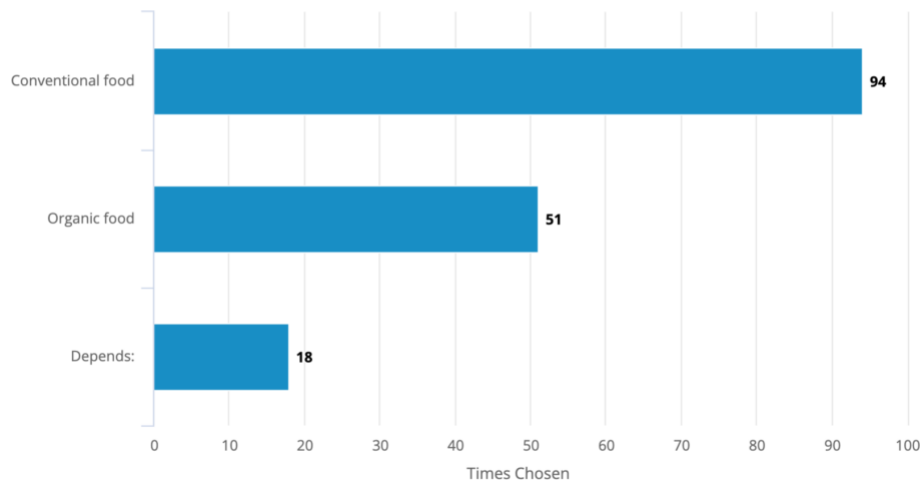


Figure 26. Type of food participants buy when going to grocery stores

To the question about which type of food participants buy when arriving a grocery store, 94 out of 145 people (64.82%) chose to buy conventional food. Meanwhile, about one third of respondents said that they will fall for organic food, which sums up to 51 people in total. The other 18 people said it depends. There are five general answers “depends” from participants. It can depend on their moods, prices, availability, for example. Some said it depends on price and their budget. “Depends on my mood, the prices and what the stores have”, “If the organic food comes with a reasonable price”, “If the prices are not too different, I go with organic one”, “Whichever looks more delicious and whether the price difference is acceptable”, “I prefer organic foods if the price is reasonable”, with these statement, they both have some other reason for “depends” answer but the only thing that does not change is the existence of price in all of these answers. Those young people seemed to fall for organic food but still have to think about the price of it. Additionally, “Both. I try to use as much of the organic products that I can find”, “food in general but organic”, “prefer local produced food”, “It depends on my demand at that time. But I usually buy normal foods like chicken, beef, vegetable to cook at home”, these people are likely to buy food in their personal preference. Some of them love to use organic while others also care about organic but still need to think about their intentions before purchasing it.

Is money the main reason why you do not buy organic food?

Number of responses: 145

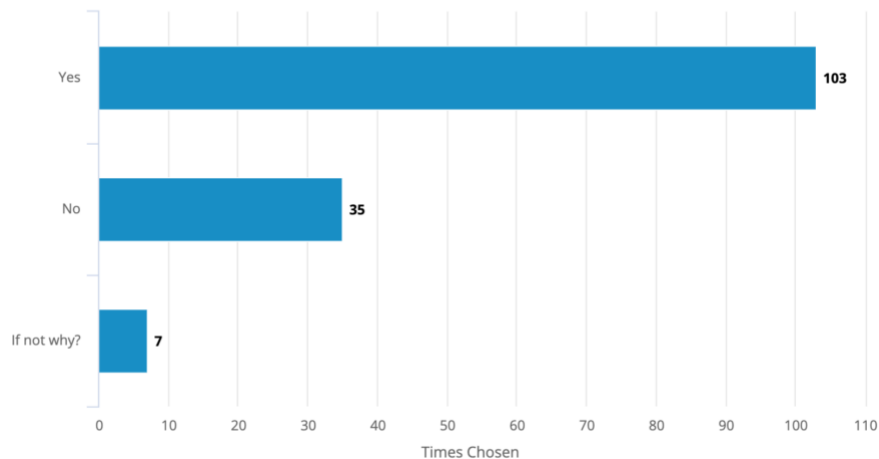


Figure 27. If money is the main reason why young people do not buy organic food

Aligning with results from some above questions, one can somehow demonstrate and expect the result of this question. There are 103 out of 145 people (71.03%) agreed that money is the main reason which prevents them from buying organic food. In comparison, only 42 respondents (28.97%) said that money is not the main problem for their decision on purchasing organic food. There are 7 answers for “why not” question. “Maybe”, “Money is just a small reason. The main reason is because I do not know much about it” are not answers which the author expected. There are still many people who are not educated enough about organic food. Therefore, their background knowledge about this topic is nearly zero. They are confused while making decision on purchasing their daily food. “One of the reasons” and “Because organic food does not seem to be better than conventional ones (the way they are grown)” are quite negative. There are still several reasons why young people do not buy organic but they are just uncovered in this thesis research. As there are still those who are skeptical about organic food’s benefits, organic food is still not the choice for all people. However, there are still some who said “health is priceless”, “How do I answer to this question if I do buy organic food very often?”, “I care about my health more” that shows the positive view from individual buyers who actually care about their health as well as their food intake.

For those people, money is not the excuse for not purchasing something which is beneficial for their health.

3.3 Participants' views about improvement or changes of organic food

Coming to the last part of the survey, this part is for those who do not buy organic food or make any reason for not purchasing organic food to express their ideas.

In the first question "What do you want to improve organic food?", there are 86 responses to it. Some highlight answers are "To ensure the food is safe, government must care and run a policy to protect organic food", "Packaging-related issues need to be improved", "More types of food produced as organic food. Organic food should be grown by really right methods (planning, harvesting, preservation, supplying...)", "At the moment, I have no suggestions. Perhaps, in the near future, organic food can be produced in a larger scale, then it can offer more reasonable price for consumers in order to motivate more people to buy organic food", "It could be a little more widespread also the price could be lower since it will boost its sale", "It should be more tasty and attractive to customers", "Its declaration of the percentage of "organic", since some aren't 100% organic and the note isn't that observable", "Better information on sustainability", "Less/no pesticide (I know that organic foods still contain a limited amount of pesticide)", "More affordable price. More visually prominent packaging so that I can quickly identify whether the product is organic or not. Packaging offers info about where/how the organic product is grown/harvested", "Make it more popular and gradually instead of conventional food, cause that's the good thing for the environment", "Higher promotion targeted on youngsters", "The price and the taste because I think the price of organic food is too high for what I receive from it was not that good. It may be healthier for people and safer for the environment but I don't really enjoy the taste, it is nothing special and sometimes even worse than conventional food", "The pesticides they use during the growing process. Clearer information on the package of how environmental friendly the products are", "Currently, I don't think organic food need to be improved. Almost the grocery shops I went to they stayed the organic food very well", "Better transparency on farming techniques and procedures. Guarantee on environmental relief, efficient transportation and reduced waste compared to normal

food. Organic farming could be wonderful if successfully implemented within cities (on roofs, top of buildings etc), to increase the self-sufficiency of the urban food market”, “Organic food brands and producers can improve the advertisement so that it becomes more well-known. Also, it would be better if prices are cheaper”. After mentioning those above comments from respondents, most of them prefer cheaper price for organic food so they can afford it better. Meanwhile, several people really care about the taste of food as well as hope to increase the quality of organic food’s taste in the future. There are also ones who desire more varieties of organic food sold in supermarket; hence, they can have more choices to choose what they want instead of having only few options which are not really out-standing for purchasing decision. The farming methods as well as delivery transportation have to be improved in order to reduce the cost of producing, cost of labour, food and wastes created during the whole process. Furthermore, the label and packaging of organic food should be clearer and well-informed statement written on label. More advertisements need to be invested on young people to provide them well enough with organic information as well as boost the motivations of people in purchasing organic food. In addition, organic food itself has to be produced in the right way which prevents all pesticides and other harmful chemicals in the production process. Government should provide support for organic farms instead of conventional factory in order to reduce the cost of organic food production, decrease bad impacts of conventional farm factories to the environment and protect humans’ health.

In the second question which is “Which problem about organic food do you want to solve so that you will buy it in the future?”, there are also 83 comments which are mostly from those who do not buy organic food. “Have tools to separate them from normal food”, “Favorable in times of need, reasonable price with income level”, “I think that's the information and origin of the product distribution stores”, “More diverse, cheaper prices”, “Expand distribution system and provide traceability tools”, “In Viet Nam, many types of food sold as organic food aren't produced by exact methods”, I thinks main problem is about high price and the place where to sell organic food. The conventional food is more popular because of traditional market being cheaper, while organic food is distributed through modern market such as supermarket, retail mart. Beside, organic

food is really expensive. If we can solve that, more people can buy organic food in the future”, “Price and reliability”, “Mostly about the price as mentioned earlier, and it becomes rotten pretty fast compared to normal food. I would suggest the organic food should be wrapped in paper or other non-plastic materials to raise environmental awareness”, “Less plastic packaging, stop being overpriced”, “The price would reduce and the package would be more appealing. Sometime I cannot see if the products are organic by just going fast in the market”, “Personally, I don't have enough awareness of organic food and I need to get more information about that. Maybe there are more marketing strategies about organic food that should be promoted”, “The manufacturer should be able to point out how organic food is better than conventional option”, “Well-rounded information about how it's brought to customers (e.g resources to grow and store, transportation and carbon footprint) instead of fear-mongering”, “There is limited number of organic food to compare with normal product. So it would be better it in near future, we can have more choices”, “Environmentally friendly packaging. I've seen many organic products in plastic packaging, which somehow lowers its “organic-ness”, “Be transparent about the harvesting process to see what can actually harm us, rather than simply tap the "Organic" stamp on the product”, “(1) Less costly would be nice. But it's not my biggest concern personally. (2) More importantly is the persistence in quality of the product I purchase. It may not happen in Finland but for Vietnamese products, the packaging can sometimes be giving falsified information, i.e. what's is categorized as Organic may not really be organic, they just tag it in so that they can sell at a higher price. (3) Most often the organic products I find here in Vietnam do not have Nutrition Facts statement on the packaging. Thus have this added-on would be great”, “The suppliers should give the consumer more choices. Lower tax from government”, “It should be last longer without any chemical”, “As I wrote above, there are two things about organic food that I hope the producers will improve: the price and the taste. If they focus on the quality of the product, make the taste of it more flavor and savory and also lower the price, I will consider buying it in the future”, “Maybe the its contribution to global warming should be reduced, for instance transporting process and plastic packaging. As well as the exclusivity of it. Because organic food as it is now, with its high price and distribution, it's only for the upper middle-class and the upper class who

can afford it. Is organic food another way of dividing the rich and the poor? Another way to blame the responsibilities of causing global warming on individual rather than the huge corporations?”, “More providers/suppliers so that organic food can be reached more. Cost-effective production in order to minimise the production expenses, thereby becoming more affordable. Does organic food really do wonders for people’s well-being? Is it really healthier than conventional food? Is it utterly composed of no toxic elements in the slightest?”, “the price, the availability, the variety of kinds, the perception of other people around me towards organic products”, “Price and imported tax make organic food a big question whether to buy or not in Finnish supermarkets”. The results seemed to be quite focusing on price, taste and variety of organic food. Furthermore, there are some really detailed thoughts of people who are hungry for more information about organic food. They want to be provided enough information, promoting the use of organic food through different types of marketing methods. There are skeptical people who do not believe in organic food’s benefits; hence, the problem of organic food in their opinions is not including sufficient information, using too much plastic bags or wraps around organic food. Some said that organic food providers should care more about packaging and transportation as these actions are also responsible for environmental problems while organic food is promoted to be environmental-friendly.

4 Conclusions

In conclusion, although organic food is proved to have several benefits not only to human’s health but also to environment, there are still huge problems in organic production and selling process organic farms and providers have to consider improving in the future in order to gain more customers. The thesis is conducted to provide general and deeper information of organic food to readers. The author also believes that it can help to promote the use of organic food in young generations which are open-minded and easily follow trends. The main purpose of the thesis was accomplished through the survey’s results. After analyzing results of the questionnaire, the author gets more ideas as well as suggestions from different participants who put much effort on answering the survey. The study contains two separate sections: literature or theoretical

research which explains clearly the idea of organic food and its benefits while empirical part demonstrates the research methodology and answers all subject matters by gathering data from the online survey. The research method used in the thesis is semi-structured questionnaire, conducted online through different social-media groups.

The collected data from the survey was answering the main three topic questions of the thesis including (1) the willingness of young people to purchase organic food, (2) whether or not money is the main reason which prevents young generations from buying organic food and (3) which problems of organic food should be improved or what changes made in the future to reach more young customers.

The first matter was clearly stated in the survey: that not many young people are willing to buy organic food. There are only about 35% of participants saying “yes” to organic food unconditionally while the rest are still afraid of spending their money on expensive organic food which some of them thought a waste of money and others do not have any clue about the organic food.

The second matter was to answer the question whether or not money is the main reason why young people do not buy organic food. It is surprisingly true to huge number of respondents, more than 70% saying “yes” to the question. It seems that financial status as well as organic food’s price are core problems which prevent young generations from purchasing organic food. Hence, the relations of financial status (monthly income) can somehow connect with the decision on buying organic food from young people.

The last matter was for participants to freely express their ideas on how to improve or change organic-related things so that young people can buy them in the future. There are several aspects that the author could not think of when she created the survey. However, with numerous participants, great and realistic ideas are built to answer the whole problem of organic food. The author believes that her thesis research can be beneficial to anyone including individuals who are struggling to find a healthy way of eating or confused with several sources of information about organic food as well as companies which produce and provide organic food to both retail and wholesale market.

Overall, the thesis plays a role as a reference source which provides information of organic food from general to deeper level to readers, analyzing the reasons provided by participants of not buying organic food; hence, motivating the intentions of buying organic food from young people, finding problems and solutions for organic food production. Organic food is proved to be beneficial to human's life in several aspects. Therefore, the use of organic food nowadays is more important than ever before. According to the survey's results, organic food is gaining more attentions from young generations. However, its providers should manage to improve or do some changes which are suggested in the thesis to reach more young customers. It shows that young generations are willing to pay for organic food if some problems stated above are fully resolved. Hence, appropriate understanding and simple touch of organic providers can actually change the whole situation of organic food in young people's viewpoints.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Questionnaires

To whom it may concern,

I am a fourth-year student of Tourism and Hospitality Management. I am conducting this online survey as a part of my thesis. The purpose of research is to find out the opinions of young people about organic food and their willingness to buy it.

By responding to the attached questionnaire you can help to promote the idea of using organic food to other young people, especially those who actually care about their health.

The responses will be processed anonymously and confidentially. Individual candidates cannot be recognized from the published results.

Please, return the filled questionnaire to me at the latest 3.11.2019.

For further information about the research, please, contact me by email: uyen.mai@student.saimia.fi. I am more than happy to answer any questions concerning the study.

Thank you for participating!

Uyen Mai

1. What is your age?
 - 15 to 18

- 18 to 25
- 25 to 30

2. What is your current position?

- Studying
- Working
- Other: _____

3. What is your nationality?

- Vietnamese
- Finnish
- Chinese
- Russian
- Other: _____

4. What is your monthly income range?

- Below 500 €
- 500 to 1000 €
- 1000 to 2000 €
- Above 2000 €

5. Have you heard about organic food?

- Yes
- No

6. Have you ever bought organic food?

- Yes
- No
- Why not: _____

7. What is your experience with organic food?

- Good
- Average
- Bad

8. Do you often buy organic food?

- Yes
- No
- Why not: _____

9. If you go to the grocery shop, which kind of food do you buy?

- Organic food
- Conventional food
- Depends: _____

10. Is money the main reason why you do not buy organic food?

- Yes
- No
- Why not: _____

11. What do you want to improve organic food?

12. Which problem about organic food do you want to solve so that you will buy it in the future?
