

Sustainable Organic Market Development with International Trade (SOMDwIT)

Transcripts of all interviews (WP2)

Deliverable 2.3.

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Project homepage: www.icrofs.dk/forskning/dansk-forskning/organic-rdd-22/somdwit/

Introduction

The purpose of SOMDwIT WP2 is to explore the influence of “made-in-Denmark” relatively to competing countries of origin on how organic food products are evaluated on quality dimensions that consumers perceive as important (both organic food in general and specific product categories) at important and emerging markets. Hence, interviews with consumers in Germany, China and Thailand were conducted employing two different qualitative methods: In-store interviews and focus groups. The choice of methods, the underlying reasoning and the content of the interview guides can be found in Deliverable 2.2.

The data collections were conducted in March to August in 2016 and again in March 2017 in China, since it was possible to collect more in-store interviews in China.

In-store interviews

Procedure

The in-store interviews took place in stores supplying at least some imported organic food from various countries. The organic consumers were intercepted directly at the point of purchase, in a natural buying situation, where cues used to identify and evaluate organic food products are naturally plentiful. The study focused on organic vegetables (carrots), meat (pork), and dairy products in order to capture potential differences between product types, and hence, consumers were intercepted at these shelves in the store. The actual aim of the study was not revealed to the consumer in order to avoid a potential bias due to priming associations with the topic. Before starting the interview, permission was asked to audio-tape the interview.

In Germany, interviews were conducted in the cities of Münster, Munich and Hamburg. The interviews took place in Rewe (the second largest general food retailer in Germany (Tagesspiegel, 2015)) and denn’s Biomarkt (the largest specialty store for organic products (Pabst, 2014)). In Rewe, consumers were approached after they had made a decision and placed an organic product in their shopping basket, while consumers in denn’s Biomarkt could be approached already before putting products in their shopping basket, as denn’s Biomarkt only sells organic products.

In Thailand, data were collected in 16 different stores in Bangkok, and in China, interviews were carried out in 15 stores in Guangzhou. The choice of these big cities (Bangkok, 8.2 mill. residents)

and China (Guangzhou, 17 mill. residents) was based on the assumption that both the supply and demand of imported organic products would be higher in big cities. In both locations, the stores were a mix of supermarkets and larger specialty stores with a bigger supply of organic products.

In Germany, the interviews were conducted by two interviewers, while in Thailand and China the interviews were conducted by MBA-students from local universities. All interviewers were thoroughly instructed by the authors and followed the same structured interview guide (see Deliverable 2.2.).

Sample

Consumers were approached and screened for knowledge and purchase of organic food products. Only consumers that knew what organic food is and bought it at least occasionally were interviewed. See Table 1 for socio-demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 1: Sample characteristics of in-store interview participants

	Germany	China	Thailand
Number of participants	255	57	63
Conducted in	Münster, Munich, Hamburg	Guangzhou (26 in 2016 and 31 in 2017)	Bangkok
Stores	Rewe (160) denn's Biomarkt (95)	15 different stores with imported organic products	16 different stores with imported organic products
Gender male/female, %	32/68	22/78	22/78
Age, years Mean (SD)	45 (14)	33 (11)	36 (13)
Youngest	21	18	22
Oldest	84	71	70
Education, %			
Master degree or higher		35	43
Bachelor degree	64*	61	46
Other education after high school	11	0	6
High school or lower	25	4	5

* Covering both bachelor and master degrees

Transcription

All interviews were audio recorded. The audio recordings were transcribed in the native languages by the interviewers (native speakers) and then translated to English. Another person compared the audio recordings, the transcriptions and the English translations to ensure consistency.

Focus groups

Procedure

Focus groups were conducted with consumers in all three countries (March 2016 in Germany and China and August 2016 in Thailand). In Germany, participants were recruited by distributing an illustrative flyer addressing organic consumers through various media channels, supplemented by snowball sampling, that is, a non-probabilistic sampling method (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In China and Thailand, consumers were recruited through personal and professional networks of partners in the SOMDwIT-project.

In the recruitment communication, a reward for participation was mentioned, but not specified in order to reduce the possible detrimental effects of such a rewards on organic consumers' intrinsic motivation to participate and share their thought, including a possible increased risk of careless or random answering (Hyman & Sierra, 2012).

All focus groups were led by a native speaking moderator and supported by an assistant. The focus groups lasted between 45 and 110 minutes. The focus groups were audio recorded with the consent of the participants, and the participants were informed that they were allowed to leave the focus group at any time. Details on the content of the focus groups and the interview guide can be found in Deliverable 2.2.

Sample

Potential participants were screened for being at least partly responsible for grocery shopping in their household. In Germany, participants were also screened for having bought at least one organic food

product during the past two weeks, while this was during the past six months in Thailand and China, since organic consumption is not as widespread there as in Germany.

Table 2 provides the characteristics of the focus groups in each country.

Table 2: Sample characteristics of focus group participants

	Germany	China	Thailand
Number of focus groups	6	2	2
Conducted in	Münster, Munich, Hamburg (2 in each)	Guangzhou	Bangkok
Number of participants	38	19	16
Males	14	8	5
Females	24	11	11
Age, years			
Mean	36	32	36
Youngest	21	25	27
Oldest	70	37	55
Occupation			
Student	17	2	1
Employed	18	17	14
Retired	2	-	-
Unemployed	1	-	1

Transcription

The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim in the native languages by a native speaker that was present during the focus group and then translated to English by another person. Then the moderator compared the audio recordings, the transcriptions and the English translations to ensure consistency.

The transcripts of all in-store interviews and focus groups in all three countries will be available at OrganicEprints, when the project ends December 31, 2017.

References

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