

Abstract:

This paper presents findings from two explorative studies. One is a consumer study based on interviews with consumers in real store settings and one is a study based on interviews with fruit and vegetable managers of stores affiliated with a major food retail chain in Sweden. The aim of both studies was to explore the role of the grocery store for the consumers' choice of organic versus conventional fruit and vegetables. The empirical data was analysed by using Perspective Text Analysis (PTA), an approach that aims at revealing the central message of a verbal or written text. The analyses showed that the main approach towards how to choose fruit and vegetables differed between consumers who bought and consumers who did not buy organic fruit and vegetables. While the first group was health-oriented, the second group was more meal-oriented. Organic fruit and vegetables were perceived as coherent with the first group's health-oriented buying approach, but as incoherent with the basic quality standards of the second group. The meal-oriented consumers perceived the grocery store as a source of inspiration for their meal planning, and for that reason the store could play a significant role by promoting organic alternatives. However, the study of fruit and vegetable managers indicated that grocery stores could not be expected to promote organic fruit and vegetables, since the fruit and vegetable managers considered organically grown to be of marginal interest from both a store and a consumer perspective. The two studies highlight one of the main difficulties that lie ahead of continues market growth of organic fruit and vegetables, i.e. how to reach the less devoted majority of consumers if the food retailers perceive organically grown as uninterested products.