

Abstract:

Numerous studies have been carried out in Sweden in order to find the organic consumer. A conclusion from an analysis of most of these studies is that this consumer does not exist. There may be a heavy user, who cannot, however, be characterised by simple segmentation. Instead, consumers have complex buying motives. The aim of this paper is to spread some light on consumers' perceived utility of organic products. The hypothesis that many consumers may have preferences for Swedish rather than organic products has proved right by a conjoint analysis of carrot consumers, which demonstrated that the respondents have greater utility of origin than of production method. In a qualitative study, the same respondents were asked to associate freely to organic/conventional and Swedish/imported. The positive quality associations made to the concept Organic were similar to those made to Swedish, with the exception of healthiness, which was only associated with Organic. Imports were related to chemical spraying and long transportation, and other negative expressions. Since imports of organic products are increasing, there are contradictions on the market. The question if the concept "organic" is important to consumers can be answered by, yes by some consumers, who have an approving view of these products. Price was by far the most important criterion, and the perception most frequently used for organic products was that they are expensive. One conclusion is that consumers are susceptible to marketing activities that should take into account the values and associations that consumers give to different attributes.