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Master’s Degree

One rapidly growing market of Sweden: organic food

A qualitative study portraying some consumers’ decision to purchase organic food

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**Abstract**

In recent years there has been a significantly rising trend amongst consumers for health and environmental issues, which has resulted in greater attention for and sales of organic food. Organic food production strives to use natural resources, such as land, energy and water in a sustainable way and the products does not contain artificial fertilizers or chemical pesticides. However, organic food products are also often more expensive and less available in comparison to conventional food products. Despite this, interest for and sales of organic food products have increased around the globe, and in Sweden particularly, the increase in sales has grown largely from an international perspective.

This thesis is of qualitative character and is focused on studying some consumers from the Swedish market of organic food. The purpose of this thesis is to contribute with a better understanding on the buying decision process regarding organic food purchase. To achieve this, the authors have studied some consumers that purchase organic food and have searched for patterns that could be identified in the decision process. The consumer buying decision process model has been used for portrayal of the chosen consumers’ decision to purchase organic food products. Interviews with six Swedish consumers were conducted, whereas each respondent continuously purchase organic food products.

Results show that the purchase of organic food products begins with discovering an unsatisfied need state, which the consumers of this study desired to change with the purchase of organic food products. This study show how six consumers reason when passing through the stages of the buying decision process, in order to satisfy their desired need state. The authors found that the respondents feel satisfied with purchasing organic food products, which lead them in to continuously buying these products. Altogether, the findings contribute with knowledge that can come to be helpful when wanting to understand more about the consumer decision to purchase organic food.

**Keywords:** organic food, consumers purchase decision, buying decision process
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1. Introduction

In recent years there has been a significantly rising trend amongst consumers for health and environmental issues, and greater attention and an increase in sales of organic food has emerged (Smith & Paladino, 2010). Up to the 1980s organic food products were mostly available directly at the farmer, at smaller specialty stores or local cooperatives (Perrini, Castaldo, Misani & Tencati, 2010). But segments change over time. Some segments are less attractive at one point but get more attractive in the future (Hooley, Saunders & Piercy, 2004). During the 1980s, the environmental issues started to receive greater interest and environmentalism became a competitive advantage in the marketplace (Davies, Albert & Cochrane, 1995). These so called cultural, social and economic changes that affect living standards, changes demand for products and services (Hooley et al. 2004). At that time consumers increasingly claimed to be environmentally conscious and started to put pressure on producers, manufacturers, distributors and market strategists for organic products (Davies et al. 1995). The demands for healthy or organically grown foods increased along with sports and leisure equipment, which were not as attractive in the 1980s, but now are booming (Hooley et al. 2004). Due to the increased pressure from consumers retailers nowadays have expanded their businesses for organic food products (Perrini et al. 2010).

But what does organic food actually mean? Firstly, what mostly separates organic food products from conventional foods is that organic food is produced differently than conventional food. Organic food production strives to use natural resources, such as land, energy and water in a sustainable way and the products does not contain artificial fertilizers or chemical pesticides (Jordbruksverket, 2014). Also, feed given to animals is mostly grown on the producing farm and it is of great importance that the animals can be outdoors and live according to their natural habitats (Svenska Livsmedelsverket, 2014). It is almost not needed to say that the ways in which organic food is produced have affected the price for these products. According to Magnusson, Arvola, Koivisto Hursti, Åberg and Sjödén (2001), organic food products are often more expensive, along with less available, in comparison to conventional food. However, this has changed in time as the organic food products nowadays are more available than they used to be. But nevertheless, the range on conventional products still outcompete the organic alternatives. Regarding prices on organic products, in the USA organic food products are approximately 25 % more expensive than conventional food.
products (Ekologisk Livsmedelsmarknad, Ekoweb, 2015). Despite the higher prices and some limited availability, in comparison to conventional food products, sales of organic food products have grown tremendously (Çabuk, Tanrikulu & Gelibolu, 2014). Estimations for global sales of organic food suggest an increase with approximately 10% under 2014 and were estimated to be worth between 54 to 60 billion USD (Ekologisk Livsmedelsmarknad, Ekoweb, 2015). Also, around the globe interest for and sales of organic products has increased, but in Sweden particularly, an eco-boom has occurred that is large in its kind from an international perspective. With only 9.7 million residents [SCB 2015, Internet] sales of organic food in Sweden during 2014 was worth 1.9 billion USD, i.e. 273 billion SEK (Ekologisk Livsmedelsmarknad, Ekoweb 2015). In 2013 sales of organic food in Sweden was worth 11.2 billion SEK and increased with 4.3 billion SEK in 2014, i.e. an increase of 38%. Of all food sales in Sweden, organic food accounted for 5.6% in 2014 (Ekologisk Livsmedelsmarknad, Ekoweb, 2015).

Hence, it is evident that sales of organic food have increased, but what do we know about the consumers buying these products? First of all, studies show that people that buy organic food mostly are women. This is because women's attitudes towards organic food mainly are more positive (Davies et al. 1995; Magnusson et al. 2001; Krystallis, Fotopoulos & Zotos, 2006; Holmberg et al. 2007; Chen et al. 2014; Nasir & Karakaya, 2014). Why women buy organic food to a greater extent than men, likely depend on the fact that women are more likely to perform the household shopping and in many scenarios have a greater responsibility of the family (Lockie et al. 2004; Onyango et al. 2007, as cited in Chen et al. 2014). Moreover, researcher’s state that consumers with a positive attitude toward organic food are younger (Magnusson et al. 2001; Nasir & Karakaya, 2014) and those with the least concerns for organic food are older (Jolly, 1991; Padel & Foster, 2005). Regarding educational level amongst consumer of organic food, previous studies indicate that consumers with higher education also are more likely to purchase organic food products (Magnusson et al. 2001; Fotopoulos & Krystallis, 2002; Padel and Foster, 2005; Krystallis et al. 2006; Tsakiridou, Boutsouki, Zotos & Kostantinos, 2008; Nasir & Karakaya, 2014).

Further, when consumers are willing to purchase organic food, there are factors that can intervene on the actual purchase intention. One of those factors are availability. According to Jolly (1991), Davies et al (1995), Fotopoulos and Krystallis (2002) and Padel and Foster (2005), availability is a barrier for consumers when desiring to purchase organic food. The
problem with availability can be explained as if the supermarket does not offer a wide range of organic products; the consequence could be that many customers do not buy organic food (Xie et al. 2015). However, from a Swedish study conducted by Magnusson et al (2001), limited availability did not appear to be one major obstacle for purchasing organic products amongst Swedish consumers. Further, price is one aspect that can intervene on consumers’ intentions for purchasing organic products. If the price is too high and the income of the consumer too low, that consumer might not be able to overlook the price in relation to the benefits of buying organic products (Xie et al. 2015). According to Zanoli and Naspetti (2002), lower prices on organic food would increase demands for these products.

Despite the above mentioned barriers for purchase of organic food, consumers cannot avoid to be promoted with the positive aspects of purchasing organic products. When it comes to the organic food industry of Sweden, marketing campaigns of organic products have increased significantly amongst the larger retailers (Ekologisk Livsmedelsmarknad, Ekoweb, 2015) and corporations try to position an environmental image by promoting their organic products towards consumers (Axelsson & Agndal, 2012). Also, retail chains are more and more promoting their locally produced products to a group of consumers that are more aware and knowledgeable about the organic market (Ekologisk Livsmedelsmarknad, Ekoweb, 2015). However, the power of purchasing a product does not lie in the hand of the selling company and their marketing strategies. The consumer plays the most important role in the decision to purchase a product. When it comes to consumers of organic food, they are willing to pay these premium prices for organic products, which indicates that there are something consumers value with their purchase of organic food, that conventional foods cannot satisfy. Hence, the question we ask ourselves is: why is it that a consumer decides to purchase organic food? And in what way does the consumer reason when deciding to purchase these products? By reaching out to consumers of organic food and ask them these questions, can we learn more about the decision to purchase organic food?

Moreover, regarding previous studies about this issue, it is clear that we can learn more, and more knowledge about the decision to purchase organic food should be available to retrieve. Also, a lot of the previously conducted studies regarding organic food consumption is focused on demonstrating sales in different sectors in the society and differentiate between specific food groups, and consumer segments. However, there is a lack of research focusing on the consumer decision to purchase organic food products.
1.2 Purpose and research question

Due to the previous discussion, this study will focus on the consumer decision process to purchase organic food. The purpose of this thesis is to contribute with a better understanding on the buying decision process regarding organic food purchase. To achieve this, the authors have conducted six qualitative interviews with persons that may be referred to as typical consumers of organic food and see if there are any common patterns that can be identified in their decision process. The authors will address the following research questions:

- Why do consumers decide to purchase organic food?
- How do consumers decide to purchase organic food?

As this study is of qualitative character and based on a small number of respondents, the authors do not claim to provide with results that are generalizable. However, by studying this, the study may contribute with insights that can come to be helpful when wanting to understand more about the consumer decision process when purchasing organic food. This in turn, can be useful for marketers that are trying to further increase consumer interests for organic food products.
2. The organic food market in Sweden

This chapter consist of statistics about the organic food market of Sweden. The purpose of presenting this is to provide with a background to this accelerating market.

2.1 The organic food market in Sweden

A lot of the information presented in this section is collected from a market report published 24 of January 2015, and conducted by the Swedish company Ekoweb. Ekoweb have 17 years of experience working with the organic food industry and has for the past seven years conducted market reports on the organic food industry of Sweden (Ekologisk Livsmedelsmarknad, Ekoweb, 2015). Ekoweb is an independent organisation that mainly focuses on statistics of the organic food industry of Sweden, but also monitors the industry internationally [Ekoweb 2015, internet].

Retail chains in Sweden have increased their efforts to launch new organic food products and the organic food range has been an important issue for stores in 2014. Organic products have received better shelf visibility and better shelf placements at stores. Also, marketing campaigns have increased significantly amongst the larger retail chains. Today, almost all stores and retail chains offer a basic range of organic food products and the range of self-produced and owned organic food brands continues to increase. Retail chains are more and more promoting their locally produced and organically produced products to a group of consumers that are more aware and knowledgeable about the organic industry, and that are willing to pay premium prices for these products. 2014 was a year that the availability of some products was limited, due to the fact that producer could not produce products in the same speed as it was sold in the stores. (Ekologisk Livsmedelsmarknad, Ekoweb, 2015)

In Sweden 2014 turnover of the food industry was worth approximately 273 billion SEK, including the public market, retail industry, the Swedish state liquor store Systembolaget and restaurants and hotels. In 2014 total sales of organic food was distributed in these sectors and a compilation of the total distribution of the different market shares owned by each distributor is illustrated in the figure below. The statistics in the figure illustrates sales with mdr kr, which is the same as billion SEK. (Ekologisk Livsmedelsmarknad, Ekoweb, 2015)
In the retail industry, sales of organic food increased with 41 % from 2013 to 2014, with sales of totally 10.4 billion SEK in 2014. With that said, of the total sales of organic food in Sweden 2014, i.e. 15.5 billion SEK, the retail industry accounted for 67 % of the sales. (Ekologisk Livsmedelsmarknad, Ekoweb, 2015)

Moreover, sales of organic food have increased rapidly in Sweden over the last few years. Since 2008 total sales of organic food has increased from 6 billion SEK to 15.5 billion SEK, which is an increase with 158 %. When it comes to the retail industry, sales of organic food have increased from 5.5 billion SEK to 10.4 billion SEK, which is an increase with 89 %. (Ekologisk Livsmedelsmarknad, Ekoweb, 2015) The growth of the organic food industry in Sweden since 2008 is illustrated on the next page (figure 2). The red line illustrates total sales of organic food, and the blue line illustrates sales of organic food in the retail industry.
In Sweden, some commonly known and popular organic food brands are KRAV, I love Eco, Coop Änglamark and Garant Eko. These products are produced according to EU's regulations for organic food certification. [Medveten konsumtion 2015, Internet]. KRAV is Sweden's most known organic food brand and is produced with considerations to animals, nature, climate and humans. However, KRAV is a label for organic food certification, and can be found on any product fulfilling the international, and national, set regulations. [KRAV 2015, internet].
3. Theoretical framework

This chapter will present the model of the consumers buying decision process. The authors consider this model to be useful when studying the process inducing the consumer to the decision of purchase organic food products.

3.1 The consumer buying decision

Most purchases are not well planned in advance and the decision to purchase is taken in the store (Marin, 2015). The human behaviour of making a purchase decision is therefore not a mechanically repeated act, but is rather a multifaceted situation of accumulative life experiences (Marin, 2015). To perform an economic analysis of the consumers’ decision makings is therefore characterized by complexity (Marin, 2015). However, to understand consumers’ decision to purchase products, marketing scholars have developed a five-stage model of consumers buying decision process. The explicit purpose of the five stages of the consumer buying decision process model is to step-by-step explain the full range of the decision making (Marin, 2015). The model is explanatory and is useful for its applicability to analyse a wide range of situations. The strength of this model is that it enables the researcher to interpret a wide range of research findings and almost any consumer purchase decision situation.

Moreover, this model is designed to interpret the purchase decision in one specific event, i.e. one purchase. However, this study applies the model in a series of purchases, and do not focus on one specific purchase event. This is perhaps an unusual way of applying this model, but there are still good reasons to consider the model to be useful in this study. Nonetheless, one thing that should be acknowledged about the model in this study is that all stages of the process portrays differently for the consumer when the consumer decides to continuously purchase the organic products, in comparison to the first purchase. This is because the consumer receives experiences and knowledge from the first purchase, which can be used when further evaluating a purchase of an organic product. It is however so, to apply the model of the consumer buying decision process, it enables us to study the way consumers think and perceive their decision to purchase organic food. Hopefully, this can give us one explanation to the rapid growth in sales in the organic food and provide us with an insight to the consumer decision to purchase organic food.
The model below is an illustration of the five stages presented by Kotler et al (2012). The model consists of the following stages: (1) need recognition, (2) information search, (3) evaluation of alternatives, (4) purchase decision, and lastly, (5) post-purchase behaviour.

Figure 3 - The buying decision process (Kotler et al. 2012).

3.1.1 Need recognition

The first stage in the consumer buying decision process is named need recognition (Teo & Yeong, 2003). In this stage, the consumer recognizes a need that he or she wants to address (Kotler et al. 2012). The need can be considered as a problem and the consumer is motivated to solve the purchase problem that has been identified (Thiagarajan, Ponder, Lueg, Worthy, Taylor, 2009). Basically, the consumer notifies that there is a difference between the desired satisfaction and the current experienced satisfaction (Marin, 2015). The emerging of needs that are unsatisfied causes this difference (Marin, 2015). According to Thiagarajan et.al (2009), the recognition of this state can be caused by (a) new need circumstances, which can be due to other family life cycle stages, (b) new want circumstances, (c) new product or services opportunities, or (d), purchase of products or services that trigger a recognition of a new need state.

The unsatisfied needs can be triggered by external or internal stimuli (Kotler et al. 2012). In marketing, stimuli’s are often used as a way to catch consumers’ interests, whereas it is
crucial that marketers identify what triggers these stimuli, and from this develop appropriate marketing strategies (Kotler et al. 2012). This means that marketing effectively can induce dissatisfaction with the current need state and, hence, change what consumers desire in the future (Thiagarajan et al, 2009).

Moreover, in order to catch the interest of consumers, Frambach, Roest and Krishnan (2007) states that it is critical to choose an appropriate communication channel. With the right communication channel it is possible to communicate with the consumer and to enable the consumer to identify information about the product. Which makes the consumer gain access to the product. However, it is not a guarantee that the right communication towards the consumer will lead to a direct effect, i.e. a purchase. According to Thiagarajan et.al (2009), when consumers purchase food products and experience significant time pressure, they can experience a desire to only purchase products that already exists in their current need state. To evaluate new purchases might take too much time and effort for the consumer and to purchase conveniently might be prior during these types of situations (Thiagarajan et al, 2009).

Furthermore, this stage of the buying decision process is affected by the last stage, post-purchase behaviour, when it comes to consumers that are continuously buyer of a product. As stated previously, consumers that continuously purchase organic food goes through this stage the first time they decided to purchase organic food. But when they decide to purchase organic food again this stage of the process is different as they possess knowledge and experience from their first purchase. Hence, this stage portrays differently for consumers that continuously purchase a product, and this should be acknowledged regarding how the models is applied in this thesis.

### 3.1.2 Information search

Information search is the second stage of the consumer buying decision process (Kotler et al, 2012). When an unsatisfied need arises and if the gap between the present need state and the desired need state is large enough, the consumer will be search for information about products or services that will satisfy that need (Marin, 2015; Teo & Yeong, 2003). Obviously, consumers gather information about products or services that might be of interest to satisfy the need (Kotler et al, 2012). The information search is essential as a way to find existing
alternatives and to fundament the decision to purchase (Marin, 2015). It could also be that the level of information search is higher when the frequency of purchase for the product is lower and the value of the product is higher (Marin, 2015). However, many experienced consumers keep themselves updated with information about market changes, which makes them constantly searching for information (Marin, 2015).

Moreover, there are four main information sources that consumers use in order to gather information about the product: experiential, commercial, public and personal (Kotler et al. 2012). Experiential information source is when consumers examines the product or test it in order to learn how it works. Commercial information sources are when consumers receive information by advertisements, websites, packaging or talks with salespeople. The third information source, public, is information obtained by consumer-rating organisations or the mass media, for example. The fourth information source, personal, includes family, neighbours, friends or acquaintances introducing them to the product. According to Kotler et al (2012) the most effective information source is often the public and personal source, although each information source tends to have different functions in the way it influence the buying decision. However, Frambach et al. (2007) claim that consumers prefer online channels, i.e. Internet, when gathering information about products with many attributes.

Further, Kotler et al (2012) divide the information search stage into two different categories, namely, active information search and heightened attention. The active information search can be when consumers go online and search for information about the product, calls friends for information about their experiences about the product or gather reading material about the product, all with the purpose to receive increased knowledge about the products. Heightened attention is different from the active information search and consumers within this category are only more receptive to information about the particular product. (Kotler et al. 2012)

What is notable in the information search stage is that according to McGuire (1976), the structural characteristics of one’s personality influence one’s information processing greatly. For example, peoples beliefs influences decisions on what portion of the information to be accepted as a valid and appropriate basis for determining his or her attitudes and actions (McGuire, 1976). Also, one person's past experiences can be a type of “internal filtering mechanism”, which can affect what pieces of information a person will be exposed to and selectively perceived by the person (McGuire, 1976). Human decision making actually is a
complex dynamic process which is deeply influenced by a person’s past experiences (Tversky, 1972; Tversky and Kahnman, 1974; Kahneman and Tversky, 1983 as cited in Chen, Shang & Chen 2008).

Lastly, when it comes to information search about a product, it portrays differently the first time a consumer purchase a product, versus, the next time the consumer decides to purchase the same, or a similar product. In this thesis, it must be said that consumers that decide to purchase organic food the first time have gone through some kind of information search that enabled them to make their decision. However, the second time the consumer decides to purchase an organic food product, they already have some pre-conceived knowledge about the product, which enables them to perhaps spend less effort in this stage. It could also be that the consumers feel that his or hers knowledge about the organic product were too little in the first decision making, that more information is searched for.

3.1.3 Evaluation of alternatives

After information search has been carried out, the consumer will end up with a set of potential alternatives (Teo & Yeong, 2003). This is when the third step of the buying decision process steps in, i.e. evaluation of alternatives (Teo & Yeong, 2003). In this step consumers evaluate alternative brands or solutions that can satisfy their need or solve their purchase problem (Teo & Yeong, 2003; Kotler et al. 2012). In this stage consumers process and evaluate competitive brand information differently and the most topical process is rational and conscious. Firstly, consumers try to satisfy a certain need. Secondly, consumers try to find particular benefits from the product. At last, consumers regard all alternatives as a bundle of attributes or criteria’s, with different features for delivering certain benefits that can satisfy the need (Teo & Yeong, 2003). The consumer pays most attention to attributes that will give the most desirable benefit. These desirable attributes and benefits will of course differ due to the existence of different consumer groups. For instance, when consumers evaluate hotels some search for the cheapest one, some desire clean hotels and some choose hotels based on location etc. Considered benefits or attributes are caused by beliefs and attitudes gained through experience and learning, which in turn influence consumers buying behaviour. As attitudes are very hard to change companies usually try to make a product that respond to existing attitudes instead of trying to change consumers’ attitudes. (Kotler et al. 2012)
Regarding purchase of food, consumers that are familiar with the store that they are shopping in and feel that they are not under time pressure might be more likely to compare and evaluate different alternatives in the store (Thiagarajan et al. 2009). This means that those consumers have the possibility to switch brands and products and make in-store decisions (Thiagarajan et al. 2009). To the contrary, consumers that feel time pressure might not be those consumers that make an in-store decision, as they do not priorities the evaluation of available alternatives (Thiagarajan et al. 2009).

3.1.4 Purchase decision

In the purchase decision stage, the consumer will choose what particular product to purchase (Teo & Yeong, 2003). Consumers can utilize extended decision, limited decision or routine decision making. The extended decision making is when the consumer lack previous experience in purchasing the specific product. This will make the consumer spend more time and effort in each of the stages in the decision process. Limited decision is when the consumer can link the purchase decision to a previous purchase, i.e. the consumer has made a purchase of that product or a similar product before. Though, the consumer can investigate other options in this decision making. Routine decision is when the consumer wants to lose as little time as possible on buying the product perceives the risks with purchasing the product to be minimalized. The routine purchase requires low effort from the consumer. (Marin, 2015)

Moreover, there are five different sub decisions that may influence the consumer in this stage of the process, namely: dealer, quantity, brand, payment method and timing (Kotler et al. 2012). According to Kotler et al (2012) there are also two general factors that potentially can intervene between the intention to buy and the actual purchase decision. One factor is the unanticipated situational factors. Such factors are unexpected and could be for instance that the consumer loses his job, other purchases suddenly become urgent or that the salesperson and the consumer may not come to equal terms. The second factor that can intervene is the attitudes of others. Another person’s attitude towards the product can reduce consumers’ willingness to purchase the product. To what extent this influence the purchase depends on how intense the other person’s attitude is toward the product and how close this person is to the consumer. (Kotler et al. 2012)
Further, Xia and Sudharshan (2002) suggest that consumers are not comfortable with making decisions on their own when many essential aspects of the decision cannot be controlled. Similarly, Kumra, (2006) states that everybody are concerned about how they are perceived by their family, friends, co-workers, neighbours, society, etc. People strive to achieve a certain image and to be considered as successful, attractive and impressive by others (Kumra, 2006). Products people purchase are consumed in the public view and people can purchase products that satisfy their social needs as consumers (Kumra, 2006).

Furthermore, a purchase decision involves risk when the consequences connected with the decision are uncertain and some results are more desirable than others (Kogan & Wallach, 1964, 1967; Pollatsck and Tversky, 1970; Rapoport and Wallsten, 1972; MacCrimmon and Wehrung, 1986 as cited in Cunningham, Gerlach, Harper & Young, 2005). It is theorized that when perceived risk falls below an individual’s acceptance value, it has little effect on intended behaviour and is essentially ignored (Cunningham et al, 2005). On the other hand, an extremely high level of perceived risk can cause a consumer to postpone or avoid a purchase entirely. The extent of the exposure depends on the importance or magnitude of the goal, the seriousness of the penalty for not attaining the goal, and the amount of means committed to achieving the goal (Cox, 1967; Dowling & Staelin, 1994 as cited in Cunningham et al. 2005).

Perceived risk is usually measured as a multidimensional construct: physical loss (the product poses a threat to the consumers health), financial loss (the product may not be worth the price), psychological loss, time loss, performance risk (the product does not live up to the expectations), and social risk (the purchase may cause embarrassment) (Roselius, 1971; Jacoby and Kaplan, 1972 as cited in Cunningham et al. 2005; Kotler et al. 2012). Thus, it is crucial that marketers are familiar with potential risks and possible intervening factors in order to give consumers information and support, so that the perceived risks gets reduced and the consumers get urged to purchase the product (Kotler et al. 2012).

3.1.5 Post-purchase behaviour

The last, but certainly not the least important, step of the purchase decision process is post-purchase behaviour. Once the consumer has purchased a product the process of post-purchase
evaluation begins, whereas the consumer evaluate whether the product has satisfied the unsatisfied need and if the product has been purchased to a suitable price (Marin, 2015). Teo and Yeong (2003) state that it is in the post-purchase behaviour stage consumers decides upon their future decision-making, i.e. whether they will purchase the product again or not. Hence, the question the consumer will ask her, or himself, would be “am I satisfied or dissatisfied with the product?” (Kotler et al. 2012).

Furthermore, what would not support a consumer’s purchase decision, is whether the features of the purchased product not was as good as the consumer first believed it to be. On the contrary, the consumer might be pleased about the purchase decision if the consumer hears bad things about other brands that he or she considered to buy (Kotler et al. 2012). It all comes down to the experience of the total purchase. A good experience with a purchase may lead the consumer to that product again when facing the next need to make a purchase decision (Teo & Yeong, 2003).

Also, it is empirically supported that, even when information on the forgone alternative is not available to consumers, people can still experience regret if they feel that the forgone brands could have outperform the chosen brand, which may lead to brand switching (Tsiros & Mittal, 2000). With that said, a marketers job does not end just because a certain product has been sold. It is rather crucial that marketers monitor post-purchase product uses, post-purchase satisfaction and post-purchase actions, in order to maintain customers and make products more desirable. (Kotler et al. 2012)

When consumers continuously purchase products, they are affected by their post-purchase stage and bring with them their experiences from all the stages into their next decision making. Ultimately, this will lead to different approaches in the decision process when a consumer initially purchases a product, compared to the following purchases.
4. Methodology

In this chapter, methodologies undertaken in order to fulfil the purpose of this study is presented. The study is of qualitative character and interviews have been chosen for data collection.

4.1 Qualitative research approach

To achieve the purpose of this study a qualitative research approach has been applied. Gratton and Jones (2010) explain that a qualitative approach is best applied when the purpose of the research is to study people's perceptions and experiences. A qualitative approach is also suggested by Gratton and Jones (2010) when a researcher wants to describe and understand specific events, as in this case, the rapid growth in sales of organic food. Furthermore, as the authors want to study in what way a consumer decide to purchase of organic food products the qualitative approach is well suited, which relates to that consumers own experiences and perceptions from the purchase. Also, people’s perceptions and experiences tend to be rather complex and should be examined in depth. Qualitative studies have the intention to collect in-depth information, which is yet another factor that indicates that a qualitative approach is best suited for this study. (Gratton and Jones 2010)

4.1.1 Primary Data

There are two types of data to collect in business research, i.e. secondary and primary data (Sachdeva, 2009). Secondary data can be organisational records, statistics, reports, documents etc. Validity and reliability of secondary data has already been set, as it was initially collected, and needs to be re-evaluated by the researcher once it is used. Reliability describes to what extent a research approach measurements are reliable, i.e. if the research approach will produce the same results in different occasions with other than that, same circumstances. Validity is whether the study actually measures what it intends to measure (Bell, 2006) and is one of the most important scientific criteria that decides if the conclusions drawn are cohesive (Bryman, 2008). Primary data is on the other hand collected by the researcher as a new research is carried out. This type of data can be collected through various kinds of methods, such as interviews, questionnaires, observations, experiments etc. (Sachdeva, 2009).
In this study, primary data has been collected. This way, the researchers receive full knowledge about the collected data and are able to establish their own independent level of validity for the data. This was considered of great value for the authors of this thesis. Furthermore, in order to be certain of the reliability of a study it is crucial that the researcher describes the used research approach as thoroughly as possible (Bryman, 2008). The following sections has therefore been designed and declares in what ways the chosen research approach has been applied in this study.

4.2 Research validity

4.2.1 Semi-structured Interviews

The primary data was collected through interviews. Interviewing is one of the major sources for data collection in qualitative research (Carson, Gilmore, Perry, & Gronhaug, 2006). The interviews conducted in this study were semi structured interviews and was done over the phone. Interviews as a data collection tool is good when conducting qualitative studies and when the aim is to get insight about people's perceptions, experiences and feelings about a specific phenomenon (Carson et al. 2006; Denscombe 2009). Semi structured interviews allows an interview guide to be used when conducting the interviews. An interview guide covers some specific themes that the researcher wants to bring up but that leads to an open discussion and allows, unlike structured interviews, the researcher to ask follow-up questions. This way, the researcher can receive deeper information about particularly interesting areas that arises during the interview (Gratton & Jones 2010).

4.2.2 Interview Guide

When conducting the interviews, a prepared interview guide was used. The questions, or themes, prepared to discuss during the interviews were produced in order to make it possible to interpret and analyse the findings, related to the theoretical framework. Example questions used in the interviews can be found at Appendix 1. The following headlines of the interviews was used: (1) How to begin to purchase organic food, (2) Knowledge about organic food, (3) Deciding to purchase organic, (4) Risk with purchasing organic products, and (5) Satisfactions and experiences after purchasing organic. The first section included questions aimed to answer how the consumer found a need to purchase organic food products. For example, one question raised was how the consumer identified a need to initially start to
purchase organic food. The second section aimed to investigate the second stage of the consumer purchase decision process, whereas questions were raised focused on the way consumers actively searched for, or passively obtained information about organic food products before starting to purchase these products. The third section, deciding to purchase organic, included questions regarding in what way different alternatives was evaluated when choosing organic food products and the decisive factors that make consumers choose the organic product instead of a conventional product. The purpose of these questions was to study the randomness of people purchasing organic, or if starting to purchase organic was a well thought out choice. The fourth section of questions is about the actual purchase decision, and aimed to look further into what factors that trigger consumers to actually make the purchase of organic products. The last section, satisfaction and experiences after purchasing organic food referred to the fifth section of the five-stage model, post-purchase behaviour. In this section questions were asked about how the consumers felt after purchasing an organically produced product.

Worth mentioning is that even though the consumer buying decision process is intended for analysing a single purchase, the authors applied the model for analysing the respondents the initial and later purchases, when the later purchase refer to when they already purchase organic food continuously. Evidently, the stages of the process can become less considered by the consumer as the consumer grow confident with the product and its features. Nevertheless, the authors still consider the five step model as a reliable and suitable tool for analysing respondents’ perception about their organic food purchase.

Further, all respondents were not asked exactly the same questions and in some interviews further questions were asked, and in other interviews, follow-up questions fell out. The researchers were aware of the fact that all interviews would play out differently and was therefore not concerned when perhaps some interviews were more fulfilling than others or different when it comes to content.

4.2.3 Telephone Interviews

Moreover, there are some benefits and disadvantages when conducting interviews over the phone that were taken into consideration before data was collected. First of all, it is cheap and time effective, unlike face-to-face meetings, to collect data over the phone (Gratton & Jones
2010), this was obviously considered to be an advantage. However, interpretations of respondents’ body language and nonverbal reactions are not possible when conducting interviews over the phone (Gratton & Jones 2010). This was however not considered to fill such an important role and was therefore dismissed. Due to the smaller disadvantage of not being able to interpret the respondents’ body language and nonverbal reactions, the authors paid more attention to listen to the tone of the voice of the respondents, in order to interpret if the respondents sounded uncertain, uncomprehendingly, doubtful etc. and from that eventually asked follow-up questions. Furthermore, the two-way communication still remains in a telephone interview situation, which is of great importance when collecting qualitative data according to Denscombe (2009).

4.3 Sample

Subjective sampling indicates that the researcher possess some knowledge about what type of people that would be representative for the study (Denscombe, 2009). By using representative respondents it is likely that a study will obtain the most valuable data possible (Denscombe, 2009). As the study is focused on consumers of organic food, the researchers have applied a subjective sample selection, where only respondents that purchase organic food was of interest. The focus when choosing respondents was to provide with a spread of consumers, regarding age, sex, and educational level. No specified pre-set terms for the respondents was predetermined, as the purpose is not to find a representative sample to any specific group of consumers. The researchers talked to people that they knew cold bring valuable experiences into the interviews, and by that, contribute to an insight on the decision to purchase organic food. Respondents that were chosen are Swedish consumers as it was convenient to the authors. However, to choose Swedish consumers is not a limitation as results from these consumers should not differ to consumers from other countries, similar to Sweden. The respondents of this study will not provide with results that can be generalized for the whole population of Sweden. Hence, the purpose with this thesis is not to come to generalized conclusions as it is of qualitative character.

People that were asked to participate in the study were introduced to the authors and an introduction to the study was given. The authors and the chosen respondents discussed the fact that those that were of interest for the study ought to purchase organic food on a continuously basis, which they all claimed to do. Eight people were of interest for
participation in this study and were called for the actual interview to take place. Two of those chosen for the interview changed their mind about participating in the study. Below is a list of the characteristics of the respondents that participated in the study:

- Respondent one: Male, age 22 - University Education
- Respondent two: Male, age 32 – University Education
- Respondent three: Female, age 56 – University Education
- Respondent four: Male, age 52 – University Education
- Respondent five: Female, age 45 – Secondary Education
- Respondent six: Male, age 23 – Secondary Education

The chosen respondents are not representative to any conscious proliferation of sexes, ages or educational level. As the number of respondents are fairly low, the authors will not be able to draw any generable conclusions from the characteristics of the respondents, or in the study in general.

4.4 Research Ethics

Moreover, there are four categories of research ethics to consider when conducting a study, namely: (1) the requirement of information, (2) the requirement of utilization, (3) the requirement of consent and (4) the requirement of confidentiality (Nygren, Olofsson & Ågren 2003). These requirements have been established in order to maintain a good relationship and avoid conflicts between researchers and respondents (Vetenskapsrådet, 1990). In order to live up to the requirement of information, all participating respondents should be informed about the study and its purpose before participating (Vetenskapsrådet, 1990). The researchers gave an introduction about the study and the respondents were asked if they had understood it. The researchers hoped this would make the respondents provide with relevant answers in accordance to the purpose of the study.

Further, the second requirement regards utilization and indicates that collected data from respondents only should be used in scientific purposes (Vetenskapsrådet 1990). This has been taken into accommodation and all respondents were informed about the fact that their answers would not come to use in any other way than for the purpose of this study. The third requirement treats consent and means that respondents participating in a study can, whenever they want, cancel their involvement without any complications and that they have the right to
be anonymous (Vetenskapsrådet 1990). Respondents were therefore informed that they could cancel the interview whenever they liked to. Also, all respondents chose to be anonymous. Finally, the fourth and last requirement concerns confidentiality and implies that all personal data of the participants are protected and that the researchers have an obligation to save all data out of reach for anyone else (Vetenskapsrådet 1990). This is also taken into accommodation. Moreover, all interviews were recorded and transcribed, which is recommended to do when conducting interviews (Carson et al. 2006). As the respondents of this study are Swedish the interviews were conducted in their native language, i.e. Swedish. The transcriptions of the interviews were written in Swedish but those quotations used in the study were translated into English.

4.5 Data Analysis

Along as the interviews were conducted the authors received new and interesting information from the respondents. It is possible to believe that new information could have been retrieved if more interviews were conducted. Hence, the authors cannot state that a saturation of data was received by the six conducted interviews. However, as the aim of this study is to contribute with a better understanding of the way a consumer decide to purchase organic food, it is not motivated to collect data in order to be able to draw generalizable conclusion. However, it could have been interesting to strengthen the six conducted interviews with some more interviews. Due to time limitations, this was not possible.

Moreover, in order to fulfill the purpose of this study the theoretical framework has been used for analysis of collected data, i.e. the interviews. As it was previously mentioned, collected data in this study is of qualitative character and analyzing this type of data can be difficult and the results can be influenced by the authors’ interpretations. However, in order to facilitate this process, Denscombe (2009) states the urgency to identify themes and relations in the data, and through that, reach some general declarations. With this in mind, the authors constructed a matrix that demonstrates the results from all respondents related to the buying decision model in a clear way. To use the matrix was also beneficial in the way that it provided us with a foundation to support the analysis from. After demonstration of the matrix, an analysis of all respondents’ perceptions and experiences in each step of the decision process are presented. This include all interviews combined and shows in what way
the respondents had similar or different views upon their purchase of organic food and how this relates to the buying decision process.
5. Empirical Findings

This chapter will present the interviews separately in order to show the way each respondents decide to purchase organic food. In the end of this chapter a table will summarize the collected data.

5.1 Interview one

Male, 22
The first respondent discovered organic food products on the internet and started to read about the products there. When this respondent first discovered organic food products he had some motives for actually starting to purchase these products, which were to avoid pesticides in the food that he ate. However, as he began to purchase organic products he developed more profound motives in comparison to when he first started to purchase these products.

*First, my motives for purchasing organic food were to avoid pesticides in the food that I eat. Now my knowledge about organic food has grown, so now I also purchase it because of the benefit for the welfare of animals and the environment.*

Before starting to purchase organic food this respondent stated that he did not actively search for information about these products. Despite this, this person had some knowledge before starting to purchase organic food.

*I did not actively seek information in a way that I was thinking: Okay I think I want to start purchasing organic food, let's see if I can learn something about it first. But I did read about organic food before I started to purchase it because I read a lot of scientific articles and some of those were related to organic food.*

Moreover, this respondent evaluates several aspects and compares different organic alternatives available when purchasing organic food. First of all, he valuates price. He states that he wishes to be able to purchase organic food all the time. But considering the price difference between organic products and conventional products he cannot afford to purchase organic products all the time. Also, he is concerned about ethical aspects in his purchase of organic food and he stated the following about that:
I know that some large manufacturers or corporations do not treat their producers well enough in my opinion and that makes me rethink the choice of organic products, if the organic products available only are from those kinds of corporations.

This respondent also stated to be influenced by people in his surrounding when deciding to purchase organic food. His partner influences him to purchase more organic food than he perhaps would have done otherwise. At the same time, he also tries to influence others to start purchasing organic food.

When other peoples in my surroundings have little knowledge about organic food and do not purchase it, I am the one that informs them about the meaning of organic food. This is all in an attempt to change their attitudes and for them to start purchase organic food.

Moreover, media is one factor that influences this respondent, but not in a way that this person purchase more organic food. In fact, this respondent tries to learn more about organic food if he reads or hears something from media, and does not blindly believe everything that is stated in media.

When something is said about organic food in media I read more about the topic in independent journalistic forums and in scientific articles, where the source to the statements always can be found and validated by myself.

The critical mind-set by this respondent can be related to risks he considers when purchasing organic food, i.e. that he eats GMO’s even though there should not be any in organic products. In fact, this risk is something this respondent always considers and that can intervene on his intentions for purchasing some products organically.

At times, this can in fact prevent me from purchasing organic food. When I know a product contains GMOs I do not buy it. For example, sometimes I can tell by the size of a vegetable that it is unusually large and must have been produced with GMOs. In this case I go home and try to read more about this brand and the product in order to figure out how organic the product actually is.
When this respondent has purchased organic food products, he feels satisfaction and he also feels motivated to purchase more organic food once he has purchased it. This respondent also says that his motivation to purchase more organic food once he purchase these products, leads to him actually doing that.

*What makes me satisfied is that I hopefully get healthier and I feel better knowing I have done something good for the society. I want to reduce the use of poisons in our society and the environment and to purchase organic food is a good and easy way to contribute with an achievement of this. And I absolutely feel more motivated to purchase organic food once I have purchased it, I would like to buy all organic. I would say that I purchase more and more organic for each time I go grocery shopping.*

### 5.2 Interview two

**Male, 32**

The second respondent came in contact with organic food for the first time via his girlfriend but he also believes that the increasing trend of organic food influenced him to start purchase organic food. Today the respondent has several motives to why he purchases organic food and he has also increased his consumption of organic food products.

*I first bought organic food because it seemed to be good for your health. I believe the increasing trend of organic food also could be a reason to why I actually started to feel a need to purchase organic food. Now I have learned that the animals are treated better at farms that produce organic food and that is also something that I keep in mind.*

This respondent claims to have searched for information about organic food actively before starting to purchase these products, information that mainly was retrieved from his personal network. However, he also states that he believe he received information in an inactive way as well as information could have reached him via media, such as newspapers, television, from colleagues etc.

*I asked my girlfriend to give me some proper arguments on why organic food was a favourable option and what organic food really contributes with.*
Respondent two stated that he sometimes evaluate different alternatives of food. Mainly because there can be a lack of availability, which can force him to purchase conventional food instead of organic products. Also, this respondent does not seem to be completely loyal to organic food products or brands, but has at the same time developed clear and strong motives to why he purchase organic products. He explains it this way:

*First of all I search for the organic food marking, but in some cases I can find conventional products that are much cheaper or looking more fresh than my usual organic alternative and then it could be that I buy that conventional product instead. If there are different brands of organic food for the same food group I believe I choose the one with longest duration, best price and the one that look the best.*

When it comes to this respondent and his perception of the congruence with the values communicated from organic food brands and his own personal values, the following was said:

*In my case I value my health pretty high. Also, as I said earlier, I like animals and think it’s important to treat them correctly. That should be in congruence with organic food, at least from what I heard. Further, I think it is important to protect the environment. Unfortunately it also contributes to a lighter wallet to some extent, but it is worth the costs.*

This respondent also mentioned some risks that could prevent a purchase from taking place, even though the initial intention was to purchase a product organically. First of all, if the duration date is bad or if the product does not look fresh, this respondent could cancel his purchase. Also, prices were notably too high or if media revealed organic products not to live up to standards of organic production, it could cancel his purchase intentions. Moreover, the relation to people in his surroundings and their influence to the purchase decision, did not affect this respondent in a negative way as long as he shopped alone. However, when shopping with his girlfriend, the influence was notable and the impact is positive on his purchase decisions.

Respondent two also thinks that purchasing organic food often feels pleasing. When it comes to his motivation for purchasing more organic food as he has purchased it, he states to be
motivated to continue to purchase as much organic food as he already does, but not any more than that.

In general I would say it feels pleasing to purchase organic food, but in some cases I’m not totally satisfied because of the low duration date that occurs from time to time. I do not feel that I can purchase more organic food than I do today but I feel motivated to continue to purchase as much organic as I already do.

5.3 Interview three

Female, 56

The third respondent started to purchase organic food in order to live a healthier life by avoiding toxic substances that can be located in conventional food. Her motives have increased since she started to purchase organic food but being healthy is still of high priority.

I started to purchase organic food mainly because it does not contain toxic substances, which can be pathogenic and consists in conventional products. I believe in a healthier lifestyle with clean products. Also, I want to promote the nature which should live on in a sustainable way and I want my children and grandchildren to live a healthy and long life. These are my beliefs and it has always been like that for me. Maybe some new aspects have been brought up later on but those would only make me even more eager to only purchase organic. For instance, at first I did not know that organic food had a positive impact on the animals.

The respondent did not at first search actively for information regarding organic food products and was instead introduced rather randomly. She was introduced by mandatory lectures at her work place that concerned organic food. However, after being introduced to organic food she began to actively search for information through personal and public information sources.

I started to read a paper where they write about healthy and unhealthy foods. My colleagues, and I, work in a hospital so of course they have contributed with informing me as well.

Nowadays this respondent is very devoted to organic food and claims that the price is irrelevant and she will not purchase conventional alternatives even though the desired product
only exists in the store as a conventional choice. Although, she has certain preferences regarding organic food that she tries to find among the organic alternatives.

*It is possible that I look for the freshest product. The price is unessential for me as it’s crucial for me to purchase organic. If the desired product does not exist in organic I will not purchase that product or go to a different store.*

She also believes that organic food speaks to her beliefs and the most important one is the value of health.

*It is in accordance to my belief that I want to live long and healthy. Preserve a fine nature is also important. It is for instance good that we don’t acidify our lakes more than necessary.*

The only thing that could influence the respondent to cancel her purchase of organic food is if it seems to be below general standards of food. Not surprisingly, people in her surrounding cannot stop her to purchase organic food if they wanted to. The only risk she could come up with regarding organic food is if someone accidently put an organic label on a conventional product.

*No one can affect me the least to not purchase organic because I am very determined when it comes to organic food. I put much time in choosing the organic food I desire.*

The respondent feels very good and satisfied about purchasing organic food as it benefits herself, her surrounding and the whole world as well. She is also motivated to purchase organic food and she also believes that to some extent it could cause her to purchase even larger quantities.

*I get motivated to continue purchasing organic food and I become satisfied when I purchase organic food. Purchasing organic food feels good in the body and the soul. I contribute with something to the society but also to myself and my dearest. It is not possible for me to purchase even more organic food as I already do, all I buy is organic.*
5.4 Interview four

Male, 52
This respondent started to purchase organic food in order to avoid chemical substances, which can be found in conventional food products. The environment was also a factor that made him start purchase organic. This respondent still nurtures his health by consuming organic food but has also discovered something new that motivates him to purchase organic food, namely, taste.

I began to purchase organic food in order to avoid genetically modified substances. I also believed that it is good for the environment. I’ve also noticed that organically produced food taste better and that made me even more loyal to these kinds of products.

Respondent four searched actively for information in order to get more valuable knowledge regarding organic food, before starting to purchase these products. He retrieved information from several different information sources, i.e. product indexes, debates on television, cashiers at the store and friends. He claims that he only evaluates products by looking at them in order to find the one most appealing. Otherwise he is satisfied as long as it is organically produced.

I don’t stand in the store and really evaluate the products. I take the one that looks the best and if I can catch a glimpse if the price is cheaper than the rest, I might as well take that one.

Regarding his personal beliefs and those that in accordance to the values communicated from organic food, respondent four said the following:

I value health very high and I also like tasty food, which also is aligned with my values. I am also an animal lover and want the animals to feel and live as well as possible which I believe that organically producing animals do.

As the respondent sees his beliefs being in congruence with values related with organic food it is not surprising that there is not many things that can influence or intervene his purchase decision of organic food, besides from if the price is considered to be too high. He does not
believe that someone could influence him to cancel his purchase decision or make him think negatively about organic food.

If the price is too high it would maybe affect me. Also, if media would claim that certain organic products wouldn’t be healthy I would avoid it. For instance when media claimed that there were traces of arsenic in rice products, that resulted in my wife and I stopped eating rice completely.

After this respondent has purchased organic food he states to not feel anything in particular. At least he explained how that he is always motivated to purchase organic food but his motivation does not increase just because he has bought something organic.

I will always purchase organic food but I will not get more motivated just because I bought it once. I’m always motivated to purchase these products. However, it motivates me more that time when I realized that organic tomatoes tasted better than regular ones. Now it feels like all organic food taste better so at that point I became more motivated.

5.5 Interview five

Female, 45

This person said to have been introduced to organic food from her children, which initially lead her to purchase organic food. The children came home from school and told her about the positive aspects of organic food, which then made this respondent realize that it was something she wanted to embrace and thereafter she started to purchase these food products. Moreover, her motives for purchasing organic food changed into deeper concerns once she had begun to purchase these products.

I think it was because my children came home from school and asked why we did not purchase organic food, which they had been thought, was a good thing to do. This influenced me to actually start buying organic food. Nowadays I think more about myself and that I do not want to eat pesticides and chemicals. I did not think so much about that when I began to purchase organic food. Now I also think more about the animals and their well-being when the products are produced.
Despite the influence from her children, this respondent considers media and debates on television to also have triggered her need for purchasing organic food.

*I think I was influenced by media and debates on television that enlightened the importance of purchasing good food that does not put so much pressure on the environment and our planet.*

Before actually starting to purchase organic food, this person did not search for any information about the products. However, as she had followed media about organic food she had some preconceived knowledge about these products which enabled her to understand the meaning of purchasing organic food. Moreover, when it comes to choosing an organic food product this respondent do not spend much time evaluating the purchase towards available organic options. She stated to not be comparing different organic alternatives available, but instead evaluate the organic alternatives with the non-organic options. However, when this person does evaluate the product in some way, price is of most importance. Moreover, loyalty to certain brands does not occur for this respondent.

*I cannot say that I evaluate my options that much. However, I always compare the organic option with a non-organic option, when it comes to price, quality and maybe durability etc. I think I evaluate price the most between the products. Also, if I can find an origin marking I choose the option that has been transported the shortest distance. I do not think I am that devoted to certain brands and such. For me all organic brands are the same and I rely on the fact that they are produced equally.*

For this person, organic food is something that speaks to her beliefs. This is how she explains it:

*I do many environmental choices in my life and try to avoid purchasing products that has been transported from other countries, and organic food is very much related to this for me. I think I am doing a good deed, for the environment and for the planet. I contribute with my little share that hopefully will make a difference in the long run.*

Further, this respondent stated some factors that could prevent her from purchasing and organic product, even though the intention was to purchase the product organically. For
instance, if quality appear to be worse on the organic products in comparison to the conventional products, or if the product is unnecessary wrapped in plastic. Also, if she cannot find an organic alternative, i.e. the availability is limited, or if the price it too high. A risk she is considering when purchasing organic products is if the product is not produced according to standards for organic food production. As a result of acknowledgement of this risk, this respondent might not purchase some products organic if they were discovered to not be produced according to standards or organic food.

I would not stop purchasing all groceries organic but some specific ones I might stop purchase organic if I cannot rely on the fact that they actually are organic. But overall I think I still would purchase organic products.

Two aspects that influences this person positively when making a purchase decision about organic food, is her family and media.

My family influence me a lot. My daughter influences me at the store, when we are at home and so on. She has taught me about the impact some products have on works when they are produced, the environment and such. I also believe media influences me in a positive way as it has made me realize the importance of purchasing organic products.

After purchasing organic food this respondent feels positive and that it was a natural and good decision to make. Purchasing organic food also made this respondent motivated to purchase more organic food. She believes her purchase of organic food has increased year by year.

I think I get motivated to purchase organic food in more food groups when I purchase organic products. I think it gets more and more organic each year and more product categories are added in my purchase of organic products.

5.6 Interview six

Male, 23

This respondent said to have started to purchase organic food due to what he had heard and learned from advertisements and commercials. The message in these marketing activities and
that specifically spoke to him was the positive things organic food products contribute with for the environment and the animals. The motives for this respondent did not change from when he initially began to purchase organic food too today.

*I started to learn about organic foods and what it really means when food is produced organically, mainly through advertisements and commercials. When I realized the good things that came with organic production, I began to buy these products. I think my motives are the same now as when I began to purchase it. I know that organic products are good for the environment, and that is the main reason to why I purchase organic food today.*

The respondent also said to not have actively searched for information about organic food before starting to purchase these products. However, he did have some preconceived knowledge about organic food before starting to purchase these products, which was that they were more expensive in comparison to non-organic products. But after learning more, his idea about organic food products changed and the new knowledge lead to him realizing it was more than a higher price, and also something he wanted to support.

*Before I started to purchase organic food my only preconceived perception about these products was that they were more expensive than other products. I did not search for information before I started to purchase organic food but I did get information about organic food from media, and then felt that it was something I wanted to support, despite higher prices.*

Moreover, this respondent said to evaluate price the most between different organic alternatives. However, he does not evaluate alternatives to a great extent. When evaluation does come into his mind, except from price, taste and quality is important.

*I think I evaluate price the most between different kinds of organic food products. I purchase the products organic that I feel has the greatest appeal to me when I am at the store, I do not think so much about what product I choose. I choose products that clearly have better taste when purchased organic, like vegetables and fruit. Quality is also important.*

Moreover, organic food products are not something that speaks to this person's beliefs to a greater extent. This is how he explains it:
I purchase organic because I want to do something good. However, I do not put so much thought into my purchases of organic food.

Further, this respondent said that perceived quality is an aspect that could prevent him from purchasing a product organic, even though the initial idea was to purchase it organically. Also, this respondent identified one risk, namely, that the organic products not would be produced according to standards of organic production. This risk is something the respondent would take into more consideration if it was revealed that some products were not produced according to organic food production standards.

One risk I see is that I might think that I purchase a product organic and then the product might not be produced according to standards for organic production. You trust the organic label on the packages but at the same time you cannot really control the production. Also, if it was proven that products that has been sold as organic was not produced organically, I would of course be suspicious in the future and perhaps think twice before purchasing something organic.

Moreover, factors that can influence this person in a positive way, i.e. making the decision to purchasing a product organically, are people in his surroundings and media.

People in my surroundings, friends and so on is one of the aspects that influences me the most nowadays. I feel that is has become trendy to purchase organic food and that has partially made me to start purchase organic as well. Also, media has influenced me a lot in appositive aspect, as media was the first thing that made me realize the importance of purchasing organic foods.

After purchasing organic food products, this respondent believes he gets satisfied. He also states that he gets motivated to purchase at least the same amount of organic food products as he has purchased it, and if it was not for the higher prices, he probably would purchase more organic food. However, he also states that he believe he purchases more and more organic food products today.
If prices were not so high on some organic products in other product categories, such as meat, I would definitely purchase more organic than I do today. But overall I feel motivated to purchase at least the same amount of organic food that I already do. I think I buy more organic today than I did before. Today I am more aware of what good things organic food contributes with and I know more about what I should and should not eat.

5.7 Summary

The following tables are a summary of the collected data and illustrate each respondent’s answer from each stage in the buying decision process.

Table 1 – Compilation of Data collection - Part One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need Recognition</th>
<th>Respondent one Male, 22</th>
<th>Respondent two Male, 32</th>
<th>Respondent three Female, 56</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoid pesticides. Benefit animals and the environment.</td>
<td>Good for his health. Because animals are treated better.</td>
<td>Stay healthier, avoid toxic substances, promote the nature and to support a sustainable living, for children and grandchildren.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Search</th>
<th>Respondent one Male, 22</th>
<th>Respondent two Male, 32</th>
<th>Respondent three Female, 56</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not actively search for information. Had read about organic food in scientific articles.</td>
<td>Newspapers, media, television, colleagues provided with information in an inactive way. Asked his girlfriend to also provide with information.</td>
<td>Was introduced to organic food by pure chance, did not search for information in an active way at first. When introduced to organic food, she began to read about it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation of Alternatives</th>
<th>Respondent one Male, 22</th>
<th>Respondent two Male, 32</th>
<th>Respondent three Female, 56</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluates price. Considers ethical aspects.</td>
<td>He first look for an organic brand. Chooses the product with the longest duration, best price, and that look the best.</td>
<td>When evaluating he alternatives, price is irrelevant. Looks for the freshest product, goes to another store if the desired organic product is not available.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purchase Decision</th>
<th>Respondent one Male, 22</th>
<th>Respondent two Male, 32</th>
<th>Respondent three Female, 56</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People in his surroundings influences him in his decision (his partner). Influences other people to purchase organic. If a product contain GMO’s, he will not buy it.</td>
<td>Bad duration dates, does not look fresh, could prevent him from a purchase. Positively influenced by people in his surroundings. If media revealed bad things about the organic products, he could cancel his purchase intentions.</td>
<td>If the standard of the organic alternative is worse than the conventional one, she would cancel her intention to purchase organic. People in her surrounding do not affect her negatively, she is determined to purchase organic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-Purchase Behavior</th>
<th>Respondent one Male, 22</th>
<th>Respondent two Male, 32</th>
<th>Respondent three Female, 56</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More motivated to purchase organic once he has purchased organic products. He purchases more and more organic all the time.</td>
<td>He feel motivated to purchase the same amount organic in the future as he does today, but not more than that. In general he feels satisfied with his purchase.</td>
<td>She feels satisfied after purchasing organic. States that she cannot purchase more organic in the future, as she only purchase organic today.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2 – Compilation of Data collection - Part Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Respondent four</th>
<th>Respondent five</th>
<th>Respondent six</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
<td>Male, 52</td>
<td>Female, 45</td>
<td>Male, 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Need Recognition</strong></td>
<td>Avoid chemical substances, for the environment, health aspects and the taste.</td>
<td>Introduced to organic food by her children. Do not want to eat pesticides and chemicals and for the animals well-being.</td>
<td>Was introduced to organic food through commercials and advertisements. Wants to support the environment, animal welfare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information Search</strong></td>
<td>Searched for information actively to receive knowledge before starting to purchase these products.</td>
<td>Did not actively search for information before starting to purchase organic food. Had previous knowledge about organic, received through media.</td>
<td>Did not search actively for information, had some preconceived knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation of Alternatives</strong></td>
<td>Does not stand in the store spending much effort on evaluating his alternatives, satisfies with the product being organic.</td>
<td>Evaluates organic towards the non-organic regarding price, quality, durability and origin markings.</td>
<td>Evaluates price the most Otherwise does not evaluate his purchase to any greater extent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purchase Decision</strong></td>
<td>Thing that could prevent him from making a purchase decision is too high prices, or if media revealed something bad about organic products.</td>
<td>If quality is bad, unnecessary wrapped in plastic, produced below standards for organic production – are such things that could prevent her from purchasing organic. Positively influenced by media and her family.</td>
<td>Perceived quality (if bad) could prevent him from purchasing an organic product. If the organic product was proven to not be produced according to standards of organic food production, he could cancel his purchase intentions. Positively influenced by media and people in his surroundings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-Purchase Behavior</strong></td>
<td>Does not feel an increased motivation to purchase organic after an organic purchase.</td>
<td>Purchasing organic products makes her motivated to purchase even more organic food. Increases her purchase each year.</td>
<td>Feels satisfied after purchasing organic. Feel motivated to purchase at least the same amount of organic in the future, as he does today.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Analysis

This chapter is designed to analyse the empirical findings related to the consumer buying decision process, presented in the theoretical framework. The structure used in the theoretical framework has been applied in the analysis as well, i.e. each stage of this model is presented separately in the following order; need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post-purchase behaviour. All stages will be summarized with a table in the end of each stage.

6.1 Need recognition

Need recognition is the first stage of the consumer buying decision process model and treats the consumers first interest or need for purchasing a product, i.e. the consumer recognized a problem or need that needs to be addressed and the purpose of the product is to fulfil this need (Kotler et al. 2012). The need can be considered as a problem and the consumer is motivated to solve the purchase problem that has been identified (Thiagarajan, Ponder, Lueg, Worthy, Taylor, 2009). In this study, respondents share some, and differ in some, experiences when initially discovering a need for purchasing organic food products.

First of all, the respondents came in contact with and received an interest for organic food via external influence sources, such as a family member, a partner, the media, marketing campaigns, scientific writings and lastly, through the internet. This is called external stimuli’s by Kotler et al (2012). Regarding the fact that respondents were influenced by people in their surroundings can be explained by Kumra (2006), who states that people are very concerned about how they are perceived by their friends, family, co-workers, the society etc. To purchase organic food can then contribute to receiving a positive image amongst people in the surroundings, as you might seem to care about yourself and the world we live in. For instance, respondent two started to purchase organic food due to pressure from his girlfriend. Most likely he concurred in order to be perceived positively by his girlfriend. Further, marketing’s strives to trigger consumers’ stimuli’s, which then may impact consumers’ desires and the state of needs (Thiagarajan et al, 2009). Hence, it is not surprising that media and marketing campaigns was mentioned as where some respondents first came in contact with and received an interest for organic food products.
Moreover, Marin (2015) states that when consumer notifies that there is a difference between their current state of satisfaction and their desired satisfaction it motivates them to solve this identified purchase problem. The reasoning Marin (2015) suggest for consumers change in state of need is interesting when looking at the motives explained by the respondents as reasons to them starting to purchase organic food products. Most respondents claimed health aspects, such as avoiding chemicals, pesticides and GMO’s, to be important motivational factors for them when starting to purchase organic food and receiving an interest of these products. Also, the urge to comply with the increasing trend of purchasing organic products, the environment and contribution to workers and animal welfare appeared to be important. It is reasonable to believe that the respondents in this study felt unsatisfied with the attributes of their current purchases of food products, and that those products were missing the attributes the consumers desired from the organic products. How this change in the state of need can occur is explained by Thiagarajan et al (2009), who claims that the recognition of a new need state can be caused by (a) new need circumstances, which can be due to other family life cycle stages, (b) new want circumstances, (c) new product or services opportunities, or (d), purchase of products or services that trigger a recognition of a new need state. This reasoning fit well with some respondent that for example claimed to initiate a need to purchase organic food products due to a new partner or the arrival of children, which can be categorized as a new family life style.

Furthermore, what is interesting is that most respondents developed deeper motives and reasons to purchase organic food once the initial purchase had begun. For instance, respondent one stated to initially have received a need for purchasing organic products due to the fact that he wanted to avoid eating products with pesticides. But as time passed, he developed more profound needs, such as benefitting the environment and animal welfare. Similarly, respondent two mentioned personal health as the initial need, which then developed into concerns for the environment and animals. Respondent three has the same pattern when it comes to her need recognition for purchasing organic food. At first, health issues were the triggering aspect for starting to purchase organically produced food. Then the needs developed into concerns about animals, the nature and a better living for her children and grandchildren. Moreover, respondent four began to purchase organic food due to the need for a good health and for the sake of the environment. This developed into the desire for better taste in food products, which respondent four state organic foods to have. Respondent five need’s was initially to support the environment and for a better living on this planet for future generations. It was not until this respondent had started to purchase organic food that
she wanted to promote the working conditions and also developed personal needs, such as caring for her own health and not wanting to eat chemicals and pesticides. Respondent six perceived his initial needs for purchasing organic food to be for the good cause of the environment, animals and his own personal health. He was the only respondent who said that his needs for purchasing organic food has not developed or changed since he began to purchase organic food.

To sum up, all respondents recognized a need for starting to purchase these products due to external stimuli, i.e. influences from family member, a partner, media, marketing’s, scientific writings and the internet. These needs then developed into other more profound needs. The stage of need recognition is clearly something that exists for consumers that starts to purchase organic food, and what is notably, extends as their purchase continues for these products. It is possible to say that after starting to purchase organic food, the more needs consumer perceive for purchasing organic food products.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3 –Need Recognition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Respondent one**  
Male, 22 | **Respondent two**  
Male, 32 | **Respondent three**  
Female, 56 | **Respondent four**  
Male, 52 | **Respondent five**  
Female, 45 | **Respondent six**  
Male, 23 |
| **Need Recognition** | Avoid pesticides  
Benefit animals  
and the environment. | Good for his health.  
Animals are treated better. | Stay healthier,  
avoid toxic substances,  
and to support a sustainable living,  
for children and grandchildren. | Avoid chemical substances, for  
the environment, health aspects  
and the taste. | Introduced to organic food by her children  
Do not want to eat pesticides and chemicals  
and for animals well-being |

**6.2 Information search**

Information search, the second stage of the consumer buying decision process model, is when the consumer gather information about the product that might be of interest (Kotler et al. 2012). It is when an unsatisfied need arises and if the gap between the present need state and the desired need state is large enough, the consumer will seek for information about products
or services that will satisfy that need (Marin, 2015; Teo & Yeong, 2003). The information search is essential as a way to find existing alternatives and to fundament the decision to purchase (Marin, 2015). Respondents of this study show very different levels of information search. As previously mentioned Kotler et al (2012) states two categories for information search, active information search and heightened attention.

Active information search is according to Kotler et al (2012) when consumers actively search for information about a product in order to increase the knowledge about the product. For some respondents the information search was truly active, while others belonged more in the category for heightened attention regarding organic food purchase. One respondent was truly active in his search for information about organic food, and used internet as one source to find his information. Frambach et al. (2007) claim that consumers prefer online channels, i.e. Internet, when gathering information about products with many attributes. Despite, the numbers of attributes when it comes to organic food products, in comparison to purchasing a car for example, can obviously be questioned. The motive for this respondent to use the internet could then perhaps be due to some other positive aspects with using this information source. The other respondents of active information search used personal contacts as a mean for information search. Respondent two made contact with his partner in order to learn what organic food was all about. Notable is how respondent three acted, he took this a step further and started to read on content indexes, spoke with staff in the store, watched public debates and asked people in his surroundings before starting to purchase organic food.

Moreover, four of the respondents said to not have searched for information actively before starting to purchase organic food. All of those four respondents received information mainly through commercial and public contacts. According to Kotler et al (2012), the four information sources consumers can receive information from is commercial, public, personal and experiential (Kotler et al, 2012). One of the respondents that claimed to not have searched for information in an active way before starting to purchase organic food, but did note that once she unwillingly had been introduced to the phenomenon of organic food from lectures at work, and after that actively started to read about organic food.

Further, Marin (2015) state that many experienced consumers keeps themselves updated with information about market changes and constantly are searching for information (Marin, 2015). From this reasoning, it could perhaps be that information search not is conducted with
the specific purpose, i.e. to learn about organic food products and due to that information know whether to purchase that product or not. Perhaps heightened attention is a suitable way of receiving information on, due to the fact that consumers, more or less, constantly keep themselves updated with information about market changes.

In order to sum up in what way the information search stage is carried out by the respondents, some patterns was found. It was important for three of the respondents of this study to search for information about organic food before they started to purchase these products. However, for the remaining respondents it appeared to be less important to search for information before starting to purchase organic products.

Table 4 – Information Search

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Search</th>
<th>Respondent one Male, 22</th>
<th>Respondent two Male, 32</th>
<th>Respondent three Female, 56</th>
<th>Respondent four Male, 52</th>
<th>Respondent five Female, 45</th>
<th>Respondent six Male, 23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not actively search for information. Had read about organic food in scientific articles.</td>
<td>Newspapers, media, television, colleagues provided with information in an inactive way. Also asked his girlfriend to provide with information.</td>
<td>Was introduced to organic food by pure chance, did not search for information in an active way at first. When introduced to organic food, she began to read about it.</td>
<td>Searched for information actively to receive knowledge before starting to purchase these products.</td>
<td>Did not actively search for information before starting to purchase organic food. Had previous knowledge about organic, received through media.</td>
<td>Did not search actively for information, had some preconceived knowledge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3 Evaluation of alternatives

After information search has been carried out, the consumer will end up with a set of preferred alternatives (Teo & Yeong, 2003). This is when the third step of the buying decision process steps in, i.e. evaluation of alternatives (Teo & Yeong, 2003). Hence, evaluation of alternatives is when the consumer evaluates different solutions that can satisfy their needs (Teo & Yeong, 2003; Kotler et al. 2012). For strongly brand loyal consumers, this step could be skipped in the consumer buying decision process (Kotler et al 2012). The majority of the respondents appeared to be concerned about finding an organic alternative of the product that they are interested in, but do not spend that much effort in evaluating the products available for them. It can be said that the selection of a product is more or less left...
out to chance or that they find a product that is organic, and satisfies with that. Of course some attributes are desired in the product they choose, like an affordable price, durability, freshness, quality and that the product is produced in Sweden.

Regarding price in the evaluation process, normally, a less expensive product, but in other means the same, captures consumers’ interests and appears to be a more attractive offer (Axelsson & Agndal, 2012). This is interesting as organic food products more or less are more expensive than conventional food products (Magnusson, Arvola, Koivisto Hursti, Åberg and Sjödén, 2001). The fact that consumers purchase the organic products and pays a premium price for these products, in comparison to the conventional cheaper alternatives, must indicate that there is something else with the organic product that puts some extra value to it for consumers. In fact, Axelsson and Agndal (2012) states that there can be values in a product, for instance psychological and social values that make consumers feel that it is worth paying a premium price for the product.

Further, respondents of this study are buyers of organic food today, and by that, indicate a willingness to pay a premium prices for some products. On the other hand, some of the respondents claim to desire an affordable price on the product they choose. Also, if prices were to increase too much of organic products, the respondents would consider other options. This indicates that the price cannot be too high in order for them to look past the price differences between the organic and the non-organic products. This show that producers have been somewhat successful in their pricings of organic products, as people do purchase these products, but the market share of organic food in comparison to conventional foods could perhaps be even greater if prices were lower.

Moreover, the respondents mentioned health, concerns for the animals and nature, durability, freshness, quality and that the product should be produced in Sweden as important attributes. Maybe these desirable attributes are factors making consumers disregard the higher price? Despite the desired attributes respondents of this study are looking for, the effort is not that great when it comes to how they evaluate their alternatives at the store. For instance, respondent two evaluates duration dates, and desires that the product looks appealing. If this does not live up to his expectations, it could be that he decides for a non-organic alternative instead. This is similar to how respondent four, five and six reason as well when it comes to evaluation of alternatives. The actual process of evaluation is not something they put so much
Furthermore, there are one respondent who is very dedicated to organic food products and for that reason does not evaluate her alternatives when it comes to the organic alternatives compared to the non-organic alternatives. She chooses organic products at all her purchases. However, when she is to decide between different organic alternatives she looks for the freshest products. Also, price appears to be insignificant as she stated that the organic products could be expensive and she would not mind. Respondent one on the other hand is the one respondent who is very considerate and evaluates his purchase carefully. First of all, he stated that he evaluates prices of the products, but then he also mentioned the ethical aspects and the legitimacy of the organic alternatives. If he is unsure about the production process behind the organic alternative, he sometimes chooses to purchase a conventional product instead. He puts a lot of effort into his decision of what products he purchases.

To sum up evaluation of alternatives amongst respondents of this study, respondent one state to clearly evaluate available alternatives. For the other respondents evaluation of alternatives do not seem to be an important aspect when choosing an organic product. On the other hand, those respondents name different aspects that they consider when choosing an organic product, which mean that they do evaluate their purchase to some extent.

Overall, to spend less energy in evaluation of alternatives can be regarded as something positive and negative, dependent on the motives there are for evaluating or not evaluating your options. If we consider the positive aspects of consumers that do not spend so much time and effort in evaluating their alternatives, it can be positive as they might feel satisfied with their choice to pick an organic product, and do not feel the need to evaluate the upsides and downsides with that product. Looking at the negative aspects of not evaluating your alternatives, the consumer might not take the purchase serious enough and satisfies with the product possessing some desired attributes, and the purchase of an organic product can then be out of randomness and not a proper choice in the same sense.
### Table 5 - Evaluation of Alternatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent one</th>
<th>Respondent two</th>
<th>Respondent three</th>
<th>Respondent four</th>
<th>Respondent five</th>
<th>Respondent six</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male, 22</td>
<td>Male, 32</td>
<td>Female, 56</td>
<td>Male, 52</td>
<td>Female, 45</td>
<td>Male, 23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evaluating Alternatives**

- **Respondent 1**: Male, 22  
  Evaluates price. Considers ethical aspects.

- **Respondent 2**: Male, 32  
  He first look for an organic brand. Chooses the product with the longest duration, best price, and that look the best.

- **Respondent 3**: Female, 56  
  When evaluating he alternatives, price is irrelevant. Looks for the freshest product, goes to another store if the desired organic product is not available.

- **Respondent 4**: Male, 52  
  Does not stand in the store spending much effort on evaluating his alternatives, satisfies with the product being organic.

- **Respondent 5**: Female, 45  
  Evaluates organic towards the non-organic regarding price, quality, durability and origin markings.

- **Respondent 6**: Male, 23  
  Evaluates price the most. Otherwise does not evaluate his purchase to any great extent.

### 6.4 Purchase Decision

Purchase decision is the stage after the consumer has acknowledged a need for a product, possibly searched or received information about the product and evaluated available alternatives. In the purchase decision stage, the consumer will choose what particular product to purchase (Teo & Yeong, 2003; Kotler et al, 2012). There are several factors that can affect consumers in their purchase decision, both positively and negatively. One of those factors that have an impact on consumers is people in the surroundings. People purchase products in the public eye, and are constantly watched and judged by others (Kumra, 2006). In fact, other people’s attitudes can intervene on consumers from making a purchase (Kotler et al, 2012). However, when it comes to the respondents of this study, people’s attitudes in the surroundings of the respondents have a positive impact on the purchase decision.

For respondent one, his partner does have a great and positive impact on his purchase of organic food products. The same applies for respondent two, four, five and six. For those respondents, people around them have a positive impact on their purchase of organic food. One respondent that stands out once again is respondent three; she is so devoted to purchasing organic food that she states people in her surroundings to not have any impact on her, as she purchases organic food anyways. Why the other respondents are so influenced by people in their surroundings could perhaps be explained by Kumra (2006) who states that people are very concerned about how they are perceived by their friends, family, co-workers, society etc. Perhaps it could be that besides the inner motivations the respondents have for
purchasing organic food, as those mentioned in the section about need recognition, people feel a pressure from society to purchase organic food? Just as previously mentioned, the social values that is associated with a product and that make consumers feel that it is worth paying a premium price for a product (Axelsson & Agndal, 2012). In fact, one respondent even mentioned the increasing trend for organic food products as a reason to why he initially started to purchase organic food, which clearly is an indicator for social pressure behind the purchase of organic products.

Furthermore, when it comes to factors with a negative impact towards the purchase decision, different risks were mentioned. A purchase decision involves risks when the consequences linked with the purchase can cause uncertainties and some results are more desired than others (Kogan and Wallach, 1964, 1967; Pollatsck and Tversky, 1970; Rapoport and Wallsten, 1972; MacCrimmon and Wehrung, 1986 as cited in Cunningham, Gerlach, Harper & Young 2005). Respondent three and four could not identify any risks with purchasing organic food. However, the other respondents could. One risk mentioned by several respondents was whether the organic food product they purchased actually was produced according to standards for organic food production or not. Hypothetically, if it came to their knowledge that the organic products they had bought were not actually organic, they would consider to limit their purchase of organic products, or to be more considerate with their purchases. However, no one of the respondents would stop purchasing organically completely. This risk is what Kotler et al (2012) explains as a performance risk, i.e. the product does not live up to what is expected and the consumer might question the purchase. Extremely high levels of perceived risk can cause a consumer to postpone or avoid a purchase entirely (Cunningham et al, 2005). But when it comes to respondents of this study, the perceived risk would not make them avoid purchasing the organic products.

Other common risks that is mentioned by Kotler et al (2012), is physical loss, financial loss, psychological loss and time loss. Regarding Kotler’s et al (2012) potential risks, only financial loss was mentioned by the respondents. Other factors that can intervene respondents of this study from purchasing an organic product is if the product appears to be of worse quality than the conventional product, if there is a limited availability, if price is too high to overcome, i.e. the risk considered as financial loss where the product is not considered to be worth the costs (Kotler et al, 2012).
### Table 6 - Purchase Decision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Purchase Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>one Male, 22</td>
<td>People in his surroundings influences him in his decision (his partner) Influences other people to purchase organic. If a product contain GMO’s, he will not buy it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two Male, 32</td>
<td>Bad duration dates, does not look fresh, could prevent him from a purchase. Positively influenced by people in his surroundings. If media revealed bad things about the organic products, he could cancel his purchase intentions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three Female, 56</td>
<td>If the standard of the organic alternative is worse than the conventional one, she would cancel her intention to purchase organic. People in her surrounding do not affect her negatively, she is determined to purchase organic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>four Male, 52</td>
<td>Thing that could prevent him from making a purchase decision is too high prices, or if media revealed something bad about organic products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>five Female, 45</td>
<td>If quality is bad, unnecessary wrapped in plastic, produced below standards for organic production – are such things that could prevent her from purchasing organic. Positively influenced by media and her family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>six Male, 23</td>
<td>Perceived quality (if bad) could prevent him from purchasing an organic product. If the organic product was proven to not be produced according to standards of organic food production, he could cancel his purchase intentions. Positively influenced by media and people in his surroundings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 6.5 Post-Purchase Behaviour

Post-purchase behaviour is the last step of the consumer buying decision process model and refers to the satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, the consumer experience from purchasing a product (Kotler et al., 2012) and if the product has been purchased to a suitable price (Marin, 2015). Teo and Yeong (2003) state that it is in the post-purchase behaviour stage consumers decides upon their future decision-making, i.e. whether they will purchase the product again or not. Keller (2003) states that as long as consumers get satisfaction and can identify benefits with the products in question, they are likely to continue to purchase the product. This is aligned with our study as most of the respondents perceive themselves as satisfied after purchasing organic food. A lot of the respondents said that after they had purchased an organic product, they felt happy about it and motivated to purchase more organic products or at least the same amount as they purchase nowadays. For instance, respondent one said that his motivation for purchasing organic food increases once he actually purchases these products, and that this leads to him increasing his purchase of organic food all the time. Similar to respondent one, respondent five and six feel more motivation and actually purchase more organic food as time goes by. When it comes to respondent two and four, they feel motivated to purchase organic products once they have purchased them, but it does not lead to an increased purchase intention for these respondents. Respondent three is deviant.
once again and claims that her motives are the same as she has purchased organic food. Her purchase is not possible to increase as she states to only purchase organic food products. The reasoning’s by the respondents is in line with Teo and Yeong (2003) whom claims that a good experience with a purchase can lead the consumer to that product again when facing the next need to make a purchase decision.

Table 7 - Post-Purchase Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-Purchase Behavior</th>
<th>Respondent one Male, 22</th>
<th>Respondent two Male, 32</th>
<th>Respondent three Female, 56</th>
<th>Respondent four Male, 52</th>
<th>Respondent five Female, 45</th>
<th>Respondent six Male, 23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More motivated to purchase organic once he has purchased organic products. He purchases more and more organic all the time.</td>
<td>He feel motivated to purchase the same amount organic in the future as he does today, but not more than that. In general he feels satisfied with his purchase.</td>
<td>She feels satisfied after purchasing organic. States that she cannot purchase more organic in the future, as she only purchase organic today.</td>
<td>Does not feel an increased motivation to purchase organic after an organic purchase.</td>
<td>Purchasing organic products makes her motivated to purchase even more organic food. Increases her purchase each year.</td>
<td>Feels satisfied after purchasing organic. Feel motivated to purchase at least the same amount of organic in the future, as he does today.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Conclusions

In recent years there has been a rising trend amongst consumers for health and environmental issues. This has emerged into greater interest in and purchase of organic food products globally, and in Sweden particularly. However, organic food products are often more expensive and less available in comparison to conventional food products. But why do a consumer decide to spend the extra money and effort on purchasing these organic food products? And in what way do a consumer decide to purchase organic food? This study has been constructed to investigate this further. Having that said, the purpose of this thesis is to contribute with a better understanding on the buying decision process regarding organic food purchase. To achieve this, the authors have studied some consumers that purchase organic food and have tried to see if any patterns can be identified in the decision process. To illustrate this, the consumer buying decision process model has been applied and interviews with six consumers of organic food had been conducted.

First of all, the authors found that the respondents had some similar and some common reasons to why they started to purchase organic food. The total of reasons to why the respondents started to purchase organic food was to contribute to the environment, to benefit their health, avoid pesticides and for animal welfare. The need to purchase organic food developed in to more profound needs as they continued to purchase organic food, i.e. promote the nature, support of workers, for a sustainable living in the future and for the better taste of the organic food products.

Further, the recognition of an unsatisfied need state is what makes consumers motivated to search for information about products or services that can satisfy the new desired need state and solve the purchasing problem (Thiagarajan, 2009). The authors conclude that respondents of this study search for information before purchasing organic products. However, respondents of this study portray in the information search stage differently, as some searched actively and some received information inactively. Despite the form of information search, the respondents of this study prove to possess receptiveness of information about the product that they experience a new need to purchase. The fact that these consumers possess knowledge about the product they want to start purchase should emphasize a sense of security.
further on in the decision making, as they then can evaluate whether the product they purchased contributed with a desired outcome or not.

Furthermore, regarding the stage of evaluation of alternatives, it appears that the consumers participating in this study engage themselves differently in this stage. The authors found that respondent one clearly evaluates available alternatives. For the other respondents evaluation of alternatives do not seem to be an important aspect when choosing an organic product, as they more or less claimed to be satisfied as long as the products is organic. However, these respondents mention that they do consider some aspects when choosing an organic product, but it is not put so much effort into these considerations. Altogether, this show us that respondents of this study partially considers some aspects when purchasing organic food products but do not put that much effort into the evaluation stage of the buying decision process.

When it comes to purchase decision, the respondents seem to agree on the risks they consider before making the decision to purchase the organic food products. They all acknowledge the risk of the product not being produced according to standards or organic food production. If this came to the respondents’ knowledge, it could intervene on their purchase intentions. Also, factors that were mentioned to intervene on the purchase intention are too high prices, bad quality and bad duration dates. The authors also found that people in the surroundings of the respondents, could positively influence the purchase decision of organic food. No negatively influences from people in the surroundings could be identified.

Furthermore, the authors found that the respondents of this study mostly end up satisfied with their purchases of organic food products. Some respondents stated to feel motivated to purchase at least the same amount of organic products as they already do today and perhaps even more than that, after purchasing organic food products. A positive post-purchase behavior enables a consumer to continuously purchase a product. Could this be one reason to the growth in sales of organic food products? Hence, if a consumer do not feel that the new need state successfully has been satisfied, a continuously purchase of those more expensive and less available organic products would be unmotivated.

To sum up, results show that the purchase of organic food products begins with discovering an unsatisfied need state, which the consumers of this study desired to change with the
purchase of organic food products. The purchase of organic food is not a purchase only carried out to mitigate hunger, as that easily can be achieved with conventional products. The organic food products speak to some of the respondents personal beliefs. Also, the above mentioned aspects making consumers decide to purchase organic food are perhaps what has lead the organic food market to grow in such an immense speed over the past years. However, this cannot be concluded from this study as this research only has investigated the perceptions and experiences from six consumers of organic food. This study shows that these consumers are satisfied with purchasing organic food products, which makes them to continuously buy these products. Altogether, the findings contribute with a portrayal about why these consumers decide to purchase organic food, and in what way this decision making is conducted. By conducting this thesis the authors have contributed with knowledge useful to understand more about the consumer decision to purchase organic food, which in turn can be of interest for marketers that are trying to further increase consumer interests for organic food products.

7.1 Limitations and further research

One limitation in this study is that a lot of the questions asked to the respondents required the respondents to think back on how they have reasoned a while back, i.e. when they initially began to purchase organic food. One limitation with this is that the actions the respondents took back then may not have been something they put so much thought in, and could therefore be difficult to state something about. Also, according to Kotler (1988), consumers may not fully understand their motivations or what factors that might change their attitude during the purchase time. It is also the case that the respondent might not remember how they thought or reasoned whey began to purchase organic. However, none of the respondent mentioned any difficulties with remembering how they reasoned before. Also, the respondents take the same action nowadays, i.e. they are buyers of organic food; and therefore, could they underpin their answers in the interviews on how they reason now in comparison to when they began to purchase organic food.

Another limitation in this study is the number of respondents. The authors were not able to conduct more interviews, and can therefore not ensure a saturation of data. Also, to conduct a study with a larger population and with a quantitative character could be interesting, as then
general conclusions could be presented. Such a study could perhaps explain the rapid growth in sales of organic food products.
References


Appendix 1 - Semi-structured Interview Guide

Need recognition - Why begin to purchase organic food
- How the consumer identified a need for starting to purchase organic food
- What specifically triggered this emerging need for purchasing organic food
- In what way have the original need for purchasing organic food developed into today's needs

Information search - Knowledge about organic food
- What knowledge they had about organic food before they began to purchase these products
- Did they try to learn about organic food before they began their purchase
- In the case that knowledge did not exist and information was not searched for, how come the consumer started to purchase organic food

Evaluation of alternatives – What makes consumers decide to purchase organic food
- In what way was alternatives are evaluated when choosing organic food products
- Decisive factors that makes consumers choose the organic product
- In what way organic food products speaks to consumers personal beliefs

Purchase decision - Risk with the purchase of organic products
- Factors that can intervene the consumer from purchasing an organic food product
- The impact from people in the consumer's surrounding when deciding to purchase organic food
- Risks the consumer identifies with purchasing organic food
- In what way risks can intervene or change the consumer's purchase decision

Post-purchase behaviour - Satisfactions and experiences after purchasing organic
- The consumers experience after purchasing organic food, satisfied to dissatisfied
- Motivation for purchasing more organic food after organic food purchase
- In what way motivation for purchasing organic food leads more purchases