

**TRUE FOOD: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF
ORGANIC CONSUMERS IN CAPE TOWN**

BY

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THESIS

Submitted in the fulfilment of the requirements of the degree

BACHELORS OF HONOURS IN BRAND LEADERSHIP

at the

VEGA SCHOOL OF BRAND LEADERSHIP

CAPE TOWN

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OCTOBER 2015

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis hereby submitted by me for the degree Bachelor of Honours in Brand Leadership at the Vega School of Brand Leadership is my own independent work and has not previously been submitted by me at another university/faculty. I further transfer copyright of the thesis in the favour of the Vega School of Brand Leadership.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, I want to thank **Vega School of Brand Leadership** Cape Town, and all the amazing people that I've met here this year. Thank you for all the support along the way. Having the opportunity to study here has really been such a treat.

I want to thank **Konrad Vosloo** for sharing with me his knowledge and in depth views and opinions of the micro-green industry, as well as his experiences with the growing and cultivation of micro-greens.

I want to thank the people and community of **Oranjezicht City Farm** for taking me on a tour of their and sharing with me their knowledge of the market and the processes involved as well as making me aware of the various programs set out to expand the organic food trade.

I want to thank all you ladies in my **focus groups** that have given me their time and insights as well as personal views and opinions and everyday experiences they have with organic food. Without your input I would have nothing to base my research on. We had some great fun together!

I want to thank my mentor and navigator **Jonathan** for helping me understand and guiding me through this process and for having the patience to assist me. Thanks for all the calming cups of coffee.

Finally, thank you **mom and dad** for supporting me all the way. What would I do without your long chats and motivation.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research study is to explore the mind-sets of individuals in Cape Town who consume organic food. Trust and credibility are key factors involved in consumers' purchase decisions, and in their relationship with brands. This research paper focuses on investigating how organic food brands can influence customer purchase decisions. The study investigates the behaviours, values, motivations and perceptions of organic food consumers in Cape Town, South Africa. In Cape Town, there are various organic food brands, such as retail brands and specialty brands, as well as farmers' markets where consumers can purchase organic products. In depth research of the communications of specific organic food brands, and consumers, in Cape Town was done in order to gain an understanding of the current organic food market, as well as the consumers who are involved in this market. The data represents findings that reveal the communication strategies of organic food brands with regards to how they use these tools to build trust. In addition, the data represents the perceptions, knowledge and trust with organic consumers in Cape Town. The target population of the research study was females of all races between the ages of 18 and 35. Throughout the research, it was found that there was be a difference in transparency between retail brands, speciality brands and markets that sell organic products. In addition, there are different types of organic consumers, due to their organic food consumption habits and growing importance of health and environmental concerns. This study focused on two methods of data collection; an analysis of the brand communications of specific organic food brands in Cape Town as well as focus group interviews with organic food consumers. In addition to this, interviews with organic farmers in Cape Town were also conducted. The data analysis involved categorising the data into themes that were portrayed throughout the findings. The study involved Cape Town consumers' knowledge and behaviours towards organic food. It was found that there has been an emergence of considerations about the environment, ethical behaviour and health. The study revealed that organic food is no longer a niche market in Cape Town, but rather a rapidly growing

one. Thus, fresh and innovative ideas regarding the communications of organic food brands are needed to expand the industry and create more knowledge among consumers.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The topic of study deals with brand communications and consumer trust. The primary and secondary research that was undertaken in this study aimed at exploring the role of brand communications in influencing consumer trust. The research is necessary because the organic food sector in Cape Town is expanding, resulting in a number of consumers demanding more knowledge with regards to their food. In a study by Anisimova and Sultan (2014), a research framework is proposed that illustrates the central role brand communications play in influencing consumer purchases. In this framework, it was found that consumer knowledge and trust play mediating roles in influencing customer purchase intention of organic food. This research study follows up on research done by Kriege-Steffen, Boland, Lohscheidt, Schneider, and Stolze (2010) that signifies that transparency in the brand communications is integral in building consumer trust, and ultimately relationships. The following research study is unique as it explores the role of brand communications in influencing consumer trust towards organic food. The rest of this chapter introduces the research question as well as the secondary objectives of the research. A brief summary of the literature review is provided as well as the research methods followed throughout the study.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

1.2.1 Problem Statement

The purpose of this research study is to explore how organic food brands utilise brand communications as a key tool for influencing perceptions and knowledge, and ultimately relationships with customers.

1.2.2 Primary Research Question

How do brand communications play a role in influencing consumer trust towards organic food?

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to investigate the basic principles of brand communications in building consumer trust. The research focused on how organic food brands position offerings and communicate with customers to build awareness, knowledge and trust. The research aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the mind-sets of consumers in order to understand their perceptions, knowledge and trust towards organic food.

1.4 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How do organic food brands use communications as a tool to build trust?
- What associations and perceptions are formed in the minds of organic consumers?
- Where do organic consumers gain information about organic food?
- What are the factors that influence consumer trust towards organic food?

1.5 SECONDARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To investigate how brand communications is used as a tool to build consumer trust
- To explore the associations and perceptions with regard to 'organic food'
- To determine the sources of information that organic consumers use to gain knowledge
- To determine the subjective factors that influence consumer trust

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review within the study builds on a framework that focuses on how brand communications plays a central role in influencing consumer purchases of organic foods. The secondary research process shed light onto how consumer's values, are linked to their purchase intentions, and essentially how they form relationships with brands. One particular study by Schifferstein and Ophuis (1998) is relevant as it portrays that consumer purchases of organic foods are connected to values such as hedonism, self-direction and universalism. In terms of organic food, studies have found that brands facilitate a perceived sense of these values, and therefore influence consumer behaviours towards organic food. Effective brand communications are central to building these perceptions as the values that a brand portrays influences a consumer's trust and relationship with a brand. A study by Llorens, Puelles, and Manzano (2011) confirmed that brands have the ability to evoke feelings such as trust and confidence in consumers and therefore, brand communications should be utilised as effective tools in building consumer trust.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design of this study was exploratory and qualitative in nature. This study focused on two methods of data collection; an analysis of the brand communications of specific organic food brands in Cape Town as well as focus group interviews with organic food consumers. In addition to this, interviews with organic farmers in Cape Town were also conducted. The sample consisted of 40 female organic food consumers in Cape Town between the ages of 18 and 35. To explore the perceptions and knowledge among organic consumers, open-ended questions guided the focus group discussions, word association tests were used and lastly, respondents were shown ten organic labels and were asked to identify these labels. In addition to this, an analysis on the brand communications was conducted on three different organic brands in Cape Town; Woolworths, Think Organic and Oranjezicht City Farm. To gain a deeper understanding of brand communications, in-depth interviews with organic farmers were carried out.

The data analysis involved categorising the data into themes that were portrayed throughout the findings.

1.10 PROPOSED LAYOUT OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background to the Study

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Recommendations

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The following chapter will include primary and secondary research on the subjects of consumer trust and brand communication strategies within the realm of organic food. The chapter will initially introduce the topic of organic food and agriculture and provide an overview of the organic market in South Africa. The subject of consumer behaviour will then be discussed. The Theory of Planned Behaviour, which concerns individuals values, is used to describe the link between values and consumer purchases of organic food.

2.2 ORGANIC FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM) is an international organisation dedicated to ensuring the worldwide adoption of ecologically, socially and economically sound systems that are based on the principles of organic agriculture. IFOAM defines the principles and scope of organic agriculture through a Family of Standards that distinguishes between organic and non-organic products. The IFOAM Family of Standards lists the standards that are endorsed as organic by the international organic movement. According to IFOAM Organics International (2015), organic agriculture is defined “as a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved.”

The term ‘organic food’ is defined by the United States Department of Agriculture National Organic Program as food that has been produced by suppliers who are committed to “the use of renewable resources and the conservation of soil and water to enhance environmental quality for future

generations” (Organic.org, 2015). This definition is broadened and states that organic food is specifically produced without the use of pesticides, fertilisers and genetically modified organisms. All products that are labelled certified organic are evaluated against a certain set of standards. An official certifying authority takes on the role of inspecting the site where these products are grown to ensure that all necessary organic standards are met.

The aim of organic food production is to give consumers access to quality food products that are beneficial to the environment as well as to the health of the consumer. Organic food gives individuals an option to make an ethical choice with regards to their food consumption.

2.2.1 Lack of Legislation

Currently, South Africa has no legislation, regulations or standards that control the organic sector and thus it is fairly self-regulated (South African Organic Sector Organisation, 2014). There are a number of certification services which each have their own standards and regulations or are based on international guidelines for organic products. Among these certifying authorities are the British Soil Association, BDOCA, Ecocert, SGS and Afrisco. Although the local organic sector has begun to develop a set of standards as a voluntary measure, there is only a draft regulation which forms the basis for these voluntary standards. Furthermore, the labelling of organic products is subject to the Consumer Protection Act and the Advertising Standards Authority. This poses a problem regarding organic products sold locally as these laws are only in respect of misleading advertising. Thus, suppliers and retailers use international standards and certifying bodies to certify products that are of organic nature. Afrisco, has developed a set of standards for local certification (Afrisco Certified Organic, 2015). In developing these organic standards, the South African organic community has aligned these standards with those of the International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (South African Organic Sector Organisation, 2014).

In South Africa, there are two types of certification for organic products namely 'certified organic' and 'organic in conversion'. 'Certified organic' products are those where the producers of the products have gone through an official process which allows them to use an authentic organic label. Products identified as 'organic in conversion' are identified as those currently in the process of gaining organic certification. In the Lodestar Marketing Research publication (2013:9), it was revealed that a major barrier to the purchases of organic food in the local arena is the lack of understanding of what organic actually means.

2.2.2 Organic Market in South Africa

In South African society, the organic market is developing, as there are a number of brands expanding their organic offerings and promoting their consumption (Barrow, 2006:14). In addition to retail outlets, there are a number of speciality stores, health outlets, farmers' market and box schemes that are turning towards the organic sector and evolving their ranges to meet growing customer demands. Locally, as well as internationally, the organic trend is continuing to grow giving rise to a number of groups becoming more conscious of the part they play with regards to environmental issues.

Among South African consumers, it has been found that there is an increased awareness towards a healthier lifestyle (Lodestar Marketing Research, 2013:9). In addition to becoming more health conscious, South African's are demanding more knowledge regarding the origin of their food and how it was produced (Durham, 2012:27). Individuals are developing a consciousness towards sustainable farming and the positive economic, environmental and social benefits it can have on the future of South Africa (Durham, 2012:28). Thus, it has been emphasised that there is a growing demand for organic and natural food products in the market.

2.3 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

2.3.1 Motives to Purchasing Organic Food

2.3.1.1 Values

Values, as defined by Schwartz (1994: 21) are “desirable trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity” and can thus be used as predictors of an individual’s behaviour. In his values theory, Schwartz (1992) identifies ten value orientations namely; achievement, benevolence, conformity, hedonism, power, stimulation, self-direction, security, tradition and universalism. This theory has been used in numerous studies to explore the consumption of organic food, as it is used to study the link between values and consumer behaviour.

Schifferstein and Ophuis (1998: 119) argue that the consumption of organic food is related to a “value system that affects personality measures, attitudes and consumption behaviour”. The common values in this system, conformity, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, security and universalism, have all been connected to regular consumers of organic foods. Another study regarding the personal determinants of organic food consumption emphasises that organic food consumption decisions are explained by the values previously mentioned (Aertsens, Verbeke, Mondelaers & Van Huylenbroek, 2009). Thus, the motivation for organic food consumption can be influenced by the various value systems by which consumers regard as important in their life.

In a study by Hughner, McDonagh, Prothero, Shultz, and Stanton (2007) various themes were identified that reveal perceptions towards organic food. It was found that although most consumers know of the term ‘organic’, many individuals have contrasting perceptions towards the consumption of organic food. The themes identified among buyers and non-buyers of organic food were categorised as purchase motives and barriers to purchasing. The themes relating to purchasing motives were related to health and nutritional concern, superior taste, concern for the environment, concern over food safety, support of the local economy and concern over animal welfare. The

themes that have been identified in previous studies can be associated with certain values in Schwartz's value system. For example, the security dimension of the value system can be linked to the fact that some consumers may purchase organic food due to positive health effects. Others may tend to purchase organic food in efforts to protect the environment, animals or people, which portrays the value of universalism (Makatouni, 2002). Hedonistic values, such as better taste, are also the reason that some individuals prefer organic food. Bauer (2012) concluded in their study that brands should appeal to consumers' hedonistic motives such as healthiness. Research has shown that hedonistic values are evident when consumers make organic food choices. Appealing to the various values linked to the consumption of organic food can therefore positively influence an individual's attitudes and perceived benefits towards organic food.

2.3.1.2 Attitudes

As mentioned in the previous section, attitudes play a role as mediators between value orientations and the intention to consume organic food. Ajzen (1991) states that the intention to behavior is predicted by attitudes towards behaviour. Therefore, attitudes can portray consumers' intention to buy organic food, and thus can predict their purchasing behaviour (Gracia & de Magistris, 2007).

With regards to organic food, various factors have been found to influence consumer attitudes. Yin, Wu, Du and Chen (2010) argue that consumers have a positive attitude towards purchasing organic food as it is healthier, tastes better and is better for the environment. Magnusson, Arvola, Hursti, Aberg and Sjoden (2003) found that health consciousness, environmental concern and food safety concern influence attitudes towards organic food, as well as the intention to purchase these products. In a study by Cabuk, Ceyda and Levent (2014) the three motivators previously mentioned were found to drive the attitudes towards organic foods, which is portrayed through an individual's intention to purchase

2.3.1.3 Concerns

Concerns, regarding various factors such as those related to attitudes, have also been found to influence organic food consumption. These concerns may involve health, the environment or food safety. Yin *et al.* (2010), as well as other research studies, have found that health concern is an influential factor motivating the purchase of organic food products. Many consumers today believe that organic food products are healthier due to the absence of chemicals. Furthermore, Magnusson *et al.* (2003) state that product safety plays an important role as well. Thus, quality and safety concerns regarding organic food is a key factor for organic food consumers. In addition, in many studies it was found that ethically minded consumers consider the environment and animal welfare when making decisions about organic products (Dean, Raats & Shepherd, 2008). It is evident that concerns for various aspects play a role in consumer decision making with regards to organic food.

2.3.2 Theory of Planned Behaviour

Throughout various literature, the theory of planned behaviour and Schwartz' value theory have been used as models to investigate the personal determinants of organic food consumption. The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) is a model used to explain consumer food choice behaviour (Aertsens, Verbeke, Mondelaers & Van Huylenbroek, 2009). The TPB is used to model organic food choices in studies by Thøgersen and Zhou (2012) and Dean *et al.* (2008). This model predicts an individual's behaviour based on their "intention to perform the behaviour" and their "percieved behavioural control". Percieved behavioural control, as explained by Ajzen (1991), relates to an individual's own perception about their ability to portray a certain behaviour. Studies also suggest that subjective and personal norms have strong influences on consumer choice of whether to purchase organic food. Personal norms are known as an individual's beliefs about behaving in a certain manner. Environmentally friendly behaviour, portrayed through the decision to purchase ethical products for example, is a personal norm. Subjective norms are the influences that lead to actions of an individual in which they conform to the behaviours of others, such as those of family and friends. With regards to

organic food choice, a subjective norm exists when an individual decides to purchase sustainable products in order to follow the trends of their peers. Tarkianien and Sundqvist (2005) found that subjective norms positively influence consumer attitudes towards organic food. In a study, Aertsens *et al.* (2009) argue that personal norms play a role in translating one's individual values into attitudes. Thøgersen & Zhou (2012) found a positive relationship between an individual's purchase intention and their attitude towards organic food purchases, subjective norms and their perceived behavioural control. Gracia and de Magistris (2007) also produced findings that confirm organic food purchases are linked to the intention to purchase, positive attitudes and a higher perceived behavioural control. It has thus been concluded in various studies that organic food purchases are related to an individual's intention to purchase, along with their perceived behavioural control. The intention to purchase is furthermore influenced by the individual's attitude as well as their personal and subjective norms.

2.4 BRAND COMMUNICATIONS

In previous studies, brand communication is the significant element in achieving trustworthy brand relationships with consumers. Zehir, Şahin, Kitapçı and Özşahin (2011) found that brand communication is a medium through which brands can create and maintain a trust-based relationship between the brand and the customer. Thus, it has been concluded in studies, such as one by Anisimova and Sultan (2014) that organic brands should design communications that enhance consumer confidence and trust. A study conducted by Llorens, Puelles, and Manzano (2011) confirmed that brands have the ability to evoke feelings such as trust and confidence in consumers and therefore, brand communications should be utilised as effective tools in building consumer trust.

Consumers today hold high expectations for brands to create experiences for them that are authentic and trustworthy (Crosswaite, 2015). Brands are thus forming relationships, from an outside-in perspective, with their customers, on the basis of connectivity and emotional resonance.

Cues, such as the message and tone of the brand, form communication codes, which are used to appeal to consumers' and communicate a brand's trustworthiness. Crosswaite (2015) discusses that present brand communication messages are emotional and that trust is built through benevolent and welcoming cues. The author defines these as dominant trust communications, where brand communications are embedded in sociability. Certain codes that have been identified by the author in various dominant trust communications are empathy and care, social participation, partnership and localism. Brands use empathetic codes of communication to appeal to consumers' trust by showing that they understand their needs of well-being. Social participation communication codes are those that are used by brands to express that their offerings provide a way for their consumers to make ethical and socially responsible choices. Codes of communication that invite partnership reinforce trust by creating a sense of togetherness. Lastly, communication cues that portray a sense of localism also play a role in building consumer trust.

In the article, Crosswaite (2015) continues to explain that as consumers are faced with increased choice and clutter, brands are striving to incorporate codes of trust that communicates transparency, admirable social behaviour and the story behind the brand.

2.4.1 Brand Communications of Organic Food Brands In Cape Town

Within the organic food landscape in Cape Town, there are various organic food brands that fall into varying categories. This study maintains a focus on three categories of organic food suppliers namely, supermarkets, organic speciality stores and farmer's markets. In order to gain an understanding of the brand communications in each of these three categories, three organic food brands relevant in Cape Town are analysed. These organic food brands are Woolworth's, a supermarket that stocks an organic range, Think Organic, an organic speciality store that stocks products from a variety of suppliers and Oranjezicht City Farm, a neighbourhood non-profit Cape Town farm project that hosts a weekly farmers market. Each brand chosen within the three

different categories has a distinct way of communicating and engaging with their audience.

2.4.1.1 Woolworths

On the brand's website, Woolworths has a page dedicated to organic products, where the brand states that it is "proud to offer the widest range of certified organic products in South Africa" (Woolworths, 2015). Through the brand's webpage, Woolworths communicates that the company is committed to providing organic products in order to make it easier for customers to live a healthier lifestyle. In addition, the brand provides a short explanation of how its organic farmers adhere to certain principles of farming that protect the environment, natural systems and animal welfare. Each of the organic products offered by the brand are certified by independent certifiers against international standards such as the ones set out in EU.

The Woolworths 'Farming for the Future' initiative is part of their sustainability programme and commitment to their Good Business Journey. This long-term programme aims to bridge the gap between conventional and organic farming methods. For example, the 'Farming for the Future' initiative focuses on maintaining healthy soil, which is one of the standards of organic farming (Woolworths, 2015). Farmers have to comply with a number of different inspections in order for them to have the 'Farming for the Future' label on their products in Woolworths' stores.

In store, Woolworths incorporates messages on the walls about the brand's sustainability initiatives to educate their customers and give them a reminder that the company takes their future into account. The Woolworths website, as well as the brand's YouTube page, contains educational information for customers regarding the 'Farming for the Future' initiative. On the YouTube page, there are a number of video posts a number of videos in relation to their Good Business Journey. Some of these videos tell the stories of the brand's food suppliers, however, there is almost no transparent information about the particular organic food suppliers.

Through the brand's various communication channels as well as their overall positioning on environmental issues, it is evident that the brand uses a number of cues to communicate certain messages to customers. The major codes of communication that are evident through Woolworths' communication strategies are empathy, social participation and admirable social behaviour. The brand also makes use of transparency and localism in its communication to a certain extent, however these codes are not as convincing when compared to other organic brands in the two other categories.

2.4.1.2 Think Organic

Think Organic is a grocer based in Cape Town that stocks organic, free range and natural products. Jamie Feldman and Natalie Coyne established the company in 2013 as a result of their desire to "eat better, know where food has come from and how it is grown". The brand promotes goods as "100% organic and natural". The fresh produce sold by Think Organic is sourced from farms that employ organic and biodynamic agricultural methods.

Customers are invited to make use of the online store where they are able to browse through the various goods sold and are able to place an online order, which will be delivered to the customer each week. Customers are given a choice of ordering a pre-packed bag or putting together their own bag of produce that they would prefer.

On the brand's website, one can browse through the wide variety of goods that the store stocks. A key point of differentiation for the brand is that for each product it sells, the consumer is able to identify where it has come from. The brand partners with local farmers and other suppliers of organic food.

Think Organic also makes use of certain codes of communication such as empathy, social participation, partnership, localism and transparency. In comparison to Woolworths, the brand provides a more compelling communication strategy that incorporates localism and transparency, as

customers are able to source exactly where their products have come from. On the website customers are given information about which farm or supplier the product is sourced from. The brand also incorporates codes of trust in their communications by providing a story behind the brand.

2.4.1.3 Oranjezicht City Farm

The Oranjezicht City Farm is an urban farm situated on a provincial heritage site in the city of Cape Town. The brand is run by a group of volunteers and is committed to the education and empowerment of communities. A main focus is on providing assistance to individuals in the surrounding community that aspire to learn about urban farming. The brand achieves this through mentoring programmes and educational workshops. Oranjezicht City Farm also welcomes the local community to get involved by volunteering, picking their own harvest or taking part in training programs. Recently, the brand has recently partnered with Harvest of Hope, a local non-profit development organization, to support township communities by selling their produce. The brand states, “there will be no true sustainable agriculture or local food movement unless we challenge the status quo that impoverishes many and enriches the few. Race, gender, and economic equality are equally as important as soil health, crop rotations and farming techniques. The right to safe and affordable housing, a quality education, and equal job opportunities are intrinsically linked to the right to locally grown, healthy produce” (Ozinsky & Ackermann, 2014).

The brand’s mission is to engage the community in small-scale food production in Cape Town with the vision of improving green spaces to create possibilities for community-wide food gardening education. The brand conducts an educational programme for students that includes a guided tour and gives individuals an opportunity to gain practical experience on certain aspects such as organic farming. The farm is open to the public, and welcomes anyone to visit the site.

Through the brand's market days, Oranjezicht City Farm aims to reduce the gap between the farmer and the consumer. The brand supports micro farmers and local businesses by selling their goods at the weekly market days. All produce sold is organically grown and locally produced.

The brand openly communicates on their website that it is important for them to build consumer trust in organic produce. They openly state that the produce sold at the weekly market is of organic quality, however some farmers cannot afford certification. The brand states on their website that "It is critical that we are transparent and open, and that is why we cannot make the claim that our veg is organic if it is not certified and marked as such. We rather say, "locally grown by small farmers""(Oranjezicht City Farm, 2015). The brand also invites customer to raise any concerns about their products and that they will openly communicate which farm it is sources from and the organic status of it. The labeling, signage and informational displays at the markets are intended to support transparency and educate consumers.

Oranjezicht City Farm incorporates a number of different codes of trust in their communications. These codes of trust are empathy, social participation, partnership, localism, transparency, social behaviour and stories behind the brand. The brand appears to be completely transparent through all communications and therefore is the brand out of the three discussed that incorporated the most codes of trust in their communications.

2.5 THE IMPORTANCE OF BRAND COMMUNICATIONS ON KNOWLEDGE AND TRUST

In previous literature, (e.g. Kriege-Steffen *et al.*, 2010), organic products are referred to as credence goods. These types of goods are defined in such a way due to the fact that their expected characteristics, and ultimate value to a consumer can rarely be known with certainty (Smed, Anderson, Kærgård and Daugbjerg, 2013:91). Consumers thus form their own perceptions towards these products, and therefore these perceptions may vary considerably between individuals.

Due to the fact that organic products are credence goods, consumers rely on trust and their organic knowledge in forming perceptions and making decisions with regards to organic food. Studies have suggested that trust in an organic product's integrity is essential for consumers to get involved with them. Furthermore, Thøgersen and Zhou (2012) discuss that consumers need to believe the benefits of what they are buying as well as trust that the food is coming from the organic supply chain. The authors also emphasise the importance of consumers needing to trust the communication that informs them about the organic product.

The organic food landscape within South Africa is becoming more complex, with a growing number of brands, labels and certifications that can make it more complicated for consumers to determine how their products are classified. Due to the fact that there is a lack of official legislation in South Africa, brands play a vital role in informing their customers about organics. In Durham's article (2012:27), it is considered that there is a lack of accurate customer communication. It is said that there is a 'green washing' marketing trend in South Africa as companies claim that they do more than what they truly do with regards to sustainability and organic practices. Therefore, it is becoming more important for brands to reach their customers and communicate the processes, benefits and limitations of organic food to build confidence and trust among consumers towards these products.

2.5.1 Consumer Knowledge

Yin *et al.* (2010) argue that consumer attitudes can be influenced by the amount of information or knowledge they have, for example their previous experiences. Aertsens *et al.* (2011: 1356) found three categories of consumer knowledge that are relevant to consumer behaviour namely, subjective knowledge, objective knowledge and prior experience. Subjective knowledge is knowledge that represents the confidence of an individual as it involves their own knowledge on a subject matter. Subjective knowledge is what an individual perceives they know, whilst objective knowledge is what an

individual actually knows. Stobbelaar, Casimir, Borghuis, Marks, Meijer, Zebede (2007) argue that the knowledge a consumer has about organic food can influence their attitudes. Individuals with higher levels of subjective and objective knowledge with regards to organic foods are more likely to have a positive attitude towards organic food. This may be due to the more frequent use of information or previous experience. Gracia and De Magistris (2007) state that information about organic food influences the subjective knowledge of individuals. Magnusson *et al.* (2001) concluded that familiarity, which relates to information and experiences with regards to products, explains why there are only few consumers who buy organic products. The importance of credible information is stressed by Thøgersen & Zhou (2012) as the lack thereof leads to uncertainty, the lack of knowledge and the lack of trust among consumers.

2.5.2 Consumer Trust

Trust has been defined by, Agustin and Singh (2005:97) “as a consumer’s confident beliefs that they can rely on the seller to deliver promised services”. One of the perceived barriers to purchasing organic products is the lack of trust. Uncertainty, the lack of information, low knowledge and the lack of trust exist worldwide regarding local organic labelling and certification processes (Thøgersen & Zhou, 2012). The reasoning behind this lack of trust is the low levels of transparency that brands portray. Many consumers do not have faith in organic farming practices and believe that organic food is unreliable. These concerns have arisen due to the lack of communication and information that has been provided by the suppliers of organic food (Kriege-Steffen, Bolan, Lohscheidt, Schneider & Stolze, 2010:452). In the same study it is discussed that consumers mistrust those that are accountable for the production, marketing and control of the food.

In terms of brands, the instinct to trust is based on how a consumer experiences the brand, what has been said about it, how the brand has been communicated and the overall image of the brand (Crosswaite, 2015). Zanolli (2004) states that consumers of organic food experience an enhanced sense of confidence when buying products from speciality stores, or otherwise

directly from the farmer, where they are able to experience the competence, integrity and benevolence of the suppliers.

Kriege-Steffen *et al.* (2010) found various factors that affect consumer trust towards organic food. Firstly, consumers base their trust on the underlying values of the organic food industry that relate to environmental and health concerns. In addition to this, they depend on the benevolence, integrity and competence of organic food brands. Consumer trust also depends on the level of confidence that they portray towards the processes involved in the supply of organic food.

McKnight, Choudhury and Kacmar (2002) state that personal trust is a concept that combines two dimensions within an individual; their trusting intention and trusting belief. The former refers to the cognitive, emotional or habitual inclination to rely on another party in a given situation while the latter refers to the perception that the other party is trustworthy (Kriege-Steffen *et al.*, 2010). It has been found that benevolence, integrity and competence are the trustworthy characteristics that define organic food brands as these relate to the basis of brand communications.

2.6 THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

This research study is based on a research framework set out by Anisimova and Sultan (2014) that suggests brand communications plays a central role in influencing consumer purchases of organic foods. The adapted model in this study considers the perceived benefits of organic food, brand communications, the organic knowledge of consumers and consumer trust. The research model is graphically displayed below in Figure 2.1

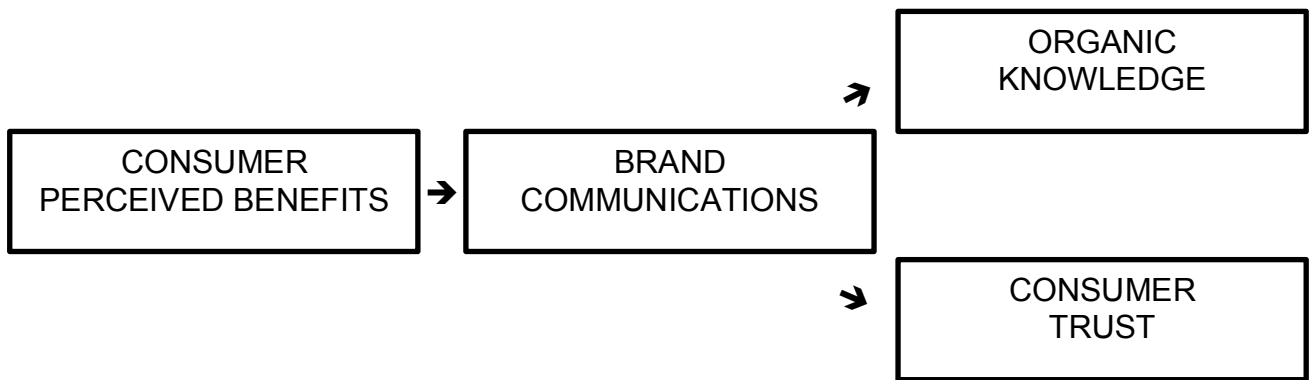


Figure 2.1 The role of brand communications in influencing consumer trust

Based on the literature review, the proposed research framework illustrates how brand communications plays a mediating role in the relationship between a consumer's perceived value and their organic knowledge and trust towards organic food. As discussed in the literature, consumer choice of organic food is connected to individual value systems, therefore influencing their perceived benefits of organic products. Brand communications can appeal to these values through codes of empathy, social participation, partnership, localism and transparency. Thus, through the use of communications as a tool, brands influence consumer knowledge and trust towards organic food.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The research design and methodology chapter is set out to discuss and substantiate the selected research approach utilised in this particular study. The following chapter describes the processes exercised in conducting research for this study. The third chapter includes detailed descriptions on the research methodology, the research design employed to collect data as well as the method of data analysis. In addition, as this study involves research on individuals, ethical considerations will also be explored. This chapter focuses on providing extensive literature in order for the reader to understand the techniques involved in conducting research for the relevant study.

In order to address the research questions and achieve the outcomes of the research, the research involved the collection of information provided by organic food brands in Cape Town, specifically Woolworths, Think Organic and Oranjezicht City Farm. These organic food suppliers are different from each other with regards to their brand communications and levels of transparency. Thus, an analysis of the brand communications of each of these organic food brands was carried out. This analysis formed part of the literature review. In-depth interviews with specific organic farmers were also conducted in order to gain a deeper understanding of particular brand communications. In addition, data concerning the perceptions, knowledge and behaviours of organic food consumers was collected. A focus on the actual consumers of organic food allowed the researcher to collect more information that was useful in addressing the secondary research questions.

For the purpose of this study, a focus is maintained on a qualitative research approach.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design represents the plan and structure that gives direction to the execution of the research methods and the analysis of the data that is collected throughout the process (Bryman & Bell, 2015:49). Essentially, it provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, the design of this particular study involved the use of a qualitative approach.

3.2.1 Research Methods and methodology

The research method is defined as the “technique for collecting data” (Bryman & Bell, 2015:49). Research methods are associated with different types of research designs. In order to produce valid and objective data, particular research methods were followed in this study. A qualitative methodology was considered as most appropriate for the study.

Two types of research methods were employed in this study namely, in-depth interviews and focus groups. The former allows for the researcher to collect data on individuals’ perspectives and experiences, while the latter is advantageous in gathering data on the cultural norms and broad overviews of concerns of a group (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005:5).

3.2.1.1 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research seeks to provide textual explanations of how people experience a particular issue. It therefore allows the researcher to gain a better understanding and interpretation of the reality in a certain situation (Mack *et al.*, 2005:2). Qualitative research aims at understanding the research topic from the perspectives of the population that is involved. It is useful for gathering information about the opinions, values, behaviours and social contexts of certain populations.

The research involves the use of qualitative methods as these make use of open-ended questions that allow participants to respond in their own words. In

this type of research, the relationship between the researcher and participant is less formal, therefore allowing for participants to answer questions in an informal, relaxed manner. According to Creswell (2014:14), phenomenological research involves the description of lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by these participants. This study involved a qualitative phenomenological design in order to collect data as the experiences of organic food consumers were researched.

This study employs the method of in-depth interviews and focus groups in order to explore communications, perceptions, behaviours and levels of trust. In-depth interviews are face-to-face conversations that aim to explore issues in depth and understand them in a personal context (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:60). A focus group is defined by Ryan, Gandha, Culbertson and Carlson (2014:329), as a group interview, or otherwise a collective discussion, in which the researcher presents specific questions that aim to obtain views and opinions on a particular topic. This research technique allows the researcher to interact with the participants. Throughout the focus group, a collection of materials can be utilised to stimulate the group discussion. Focus groups are suited for market-oriented research as experiences and diversity in society are explored. As this particular research involves these aspects of consumers, focus groups were used as the main data collection method. The focus groups allow for more in-depth discussion and a better understanding of attitudes, associations, opinions, motivations and behaviours (Creswell, 2014).

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

3.3.1 Population

There are three main parts of a research population. These are the total population, the target population and the sample population. The research maintains a focus on the organic food industry in Cape Town, with a focus on three organic food brands as well as specific consumers. The total population defined in this study would be all organic food consumers in Cape Town. However, for the purposes of this study, the population is defined as a portion

of the total population. This sample population is made up of female organic consumers between the ages of 18 and 35.

3.3.2 Sample

Sampling in research studies is the process of selecting respondents. For the purpose of this research study, nonprobability sampling techniques were employed as samples were selected in a way that relies on available subjects. Quota sampling and snowball sampling were exercised. In quota sampling, a certain number of people with particular characteristics are included in the study (Babbie, 2013:187). The participants of a focus group are usually chosen based on a similar characteristic, in which they engage in a group discussion that entails a certain set of topics. This research study utilises a quota sampling technique, as a certain number of people with a particular characteristic, that being a consumer of organic food, should be included in the study. Snowball sampling, as discussed by Babbie (2013:188), is employed when the researcher initially conducts research on a few individuals, and then asks them to suggest additional people for interviewing. These techniques were applied in the study in order to obtain the desired number of responses within the time frame.

In previous studies, such as one by Magnusson, Arvola, Hursti, Aberg and Sjoden (2001) it was found that women displayed a positive attitude towards organic food than men, and therefore, primarily females were the ones who purchased organic food. The research involved four focus groups, each consisting of 10 female organic food shoppers between the ages of 18 and 35. A total of 40 participants took part in the study. For convenience, the study concerned organic consumers in Cape Town, Western Cape. For the purpose of exploring a culturally diverse group of consumers, females of all races took part in the study. The group diversity stimulated discussion and allowed for respondents to reflect and share their own experiences. The study took place over a course of three months in Cape Town, Western Cape.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

In order to investigate the available information provided by organic food brands, in particular, Woolworths, Think Organic and Oranjezicht City Farm, a method of observation was employed. These organic food suppliers were analysed with regard to their brand communications with their customers. This involved investigation of the content of information provided by organic food brands. This analysis formed part of the literature review, however to further understand the brand communications of organic food brands, in-depth interviews with organic farmers in Cape Town were conducted. One in-depth interview was held with a farmer at the Oranjezicht City Farm, and the other with the farmer of Fresco Greens.

The goal of the focus groups was to recruit forty female organic consumers from Cape Town. The researcher recruited the initial participants for the focus groups from informal networks, and then obtained referrals from these initial respondents. The focus groups took place over the course of three months namely, between July, August and September 2015. The locations of the focus groups varied, one being held at the Vega School of Brand Leadership campus in Cape Town, another two at the researcher's residence and a final one at the University of Cape Town campus. The researcher moderated the focus group discussions and a predetermined set of semi-structured, open-ended questions guided the discussion. The participants were invited to freely share their opinions. The discussions lasted between sixty and ninety minutes and were recorded through the use of a voice recorder.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Once the research had been carried out, the data needed to be analysed. Data can take a number of different forms, however the majority of data gathered in this research study was of a textual nature. The aim of the analysis phase of the study is to explore the data collected in order to identify relationships and interpret aspects of the data that would be suitable to answering the primary and secondary research questions.

Krueger and Casey (2009) describe that the analysis of focus groups entails examining, categorising and tabulating the data with the aim of addressing the initial objectives of the study. In many studies concerning focus groups, the aim of the study should drive the analysis of the data. To a certain extent, there is a subjective analysis and interpretation of the data collected throughout the focus groups. Stewart, Shamdasani and Rook (2007) state that the amount of analysis required for focus group data varies depending on “the purpose of the research, the complexity of the research design, and the extent to which conclusions can be reached based on simple analyses”. The authors summarise the following steps in the analysis of focus group data.

The first step in analysing the data collected in focus groups is for the researcher to become familiar with the data in order to gain an understanding of the interviews. Initially, the data collected during the focus group discussions is transcribed and notes gathered during data collection are reviewed. The transcribed data serves as a basis for further analysis.

A thematic analysis was utilised to analyse the transcribed data collected throughout the focus groups. This type of analysis involves reviewing transcripts, creating codes for relevant themes and analysing these themes. The next phase in the analysis is to identify sections that are relevant to the research questions and classify them into major topics. The following step was to then arrange the responses of participants and categorise them into the relevant themes. Once the data was sorted and categorised, the researcher then summarised the findings to interpret the data more effectively.

Once the data had been analysed, the researcher then interpreted it with the aim of gaining a holistic understanding that would further lead to valuable conclusions and recommendations.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research ethics entails the interaction between researchers and the individuals involved in the study (Mack *et al.*, 2005:8). These ethics aid in ensuring that the needs and concerns of participants are addressed and that there is a basis of trust between the researcher and participant. In qualitative studies, the researcher often deals with unfamiliar individuals who are willing to share their time, thoughts and feelings. Thus, it is important to consider, as well as to safeguard, their privacy, safety and dignity throughout the study. The general well being of the individuals involved in the study is of utmost importance.

For the purposes of this study, the participants of the in depth interviews focus groups were given an oral introduction, prior to the interview, which identified the researcher, the intent of the study and how their input was valuable. It was made transparent that all information would be confidential, however respondents were informed that they would be free to stop participating if they felt it was necessary. During the focus group sessions, respondents were given a description of what was expected of them, how the information provide by them would be used and were asked for their consent which gave the researcher permission to use the information they provided during the in the research findings.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the analysis of the data collected and presents the findings of the study. The fourth chapter explains the findings of the study, and in addition, explores the insights that were obtained throughout the research.

Throughout the study, primary research was obtained through the use of in-depth interviews and focus groups to gather insights on how trust towards organic food, amongst consumers, is influenced by brand communications. The in-depth interviews provided findings that contributed to the researcher's knowledge on what information is provided by organic food brands in Cape Town, as well as how they attempt to build trust with their consumers towards their offerings. The focus groups produced insights on the perceptions of consumers towards organic food, their knowledge and their levels of trust.

4.2 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Two in-depth interviews were conducted throughout the study. One of these interviews was conducted with the farmer Mike at the Oranjezicht City Farm. The information provided in this interview was summarised and included in the analysis of brand communications of the Oranjezicht City Farm due to the short nature of this interview. The researcher gained limited data from this specific interview as the respondent referred the researcher to other sources of information such as the website and the weekly market.

An in-depth interview was held with an organic farmer of Fresco Organics, Konrad Vosloo. This farmer began organic farming, as he felt as though the environment contained enough minerals, and now grows micro-greens that are 100% organic but not certified. The benefits of organic food, according to

him are especially relevant to kids who in the early stages of their life shouldn't be too exposed to pesticides and supplements. It is thus healthier. Konrad is also quite chuffed with the fact that he is trading in a niche market and it allows him to ask a bit more for his products. This organic farmer markets his products mainly to restaurants and chefs. Konrad connects with customers via word of mouth, social media and is also prepared to take them on a tour of his personal growing space. He isn't yet certified as organic and says that the process is expensive and it could vary from country to country, however it would go a long way into getting him exposure into the established markets like Woolworths for example. He isn't too fussed about this and states that it does not diminish his label from being organic. Konrad wins his consumers trust by showing them his growing medium and uses a super organic stamp, but most importantly he says that his consumer trusts him, so they in turn trust his products. He will in future expand his grow and include baby greens and baby vegetables and hopes that the market will grow exponentially. He states that organic food is a lifestyle thing and that some people buy it to simply make a statement that they eat organic food, similar to a fashion statement. Konrad says that he thinks Woolworths and Pick n' Pay are truly organic and quite strict with their certifications, and they could gain consumer trust by exposing and promoting its health benefits and benefits to the environment. Methods that he uses include earthworm compost, rain water and he doesn't need to filter anything because nature does that for him.

4.3 FOCUS GROUPS

The focus group discussions focused on 6 core areas that focused on gaining insights into organic consumers' purchasing habits, perceptions, knowledge and trust. The findings and insights from each of the focus groups are presented below according to each core topic.

4.3.1 Organic Purchasing

The focus group discussions were initiated with an opening topic regarding which organic food products are generally purchased when shopping. Participants were asked "what organic food do you purchase?". The

responses were categorised into seven major organic food categories shown in the figure below. Figure 4.1 graphically represents the number of individuals that purchase organic products in each category.

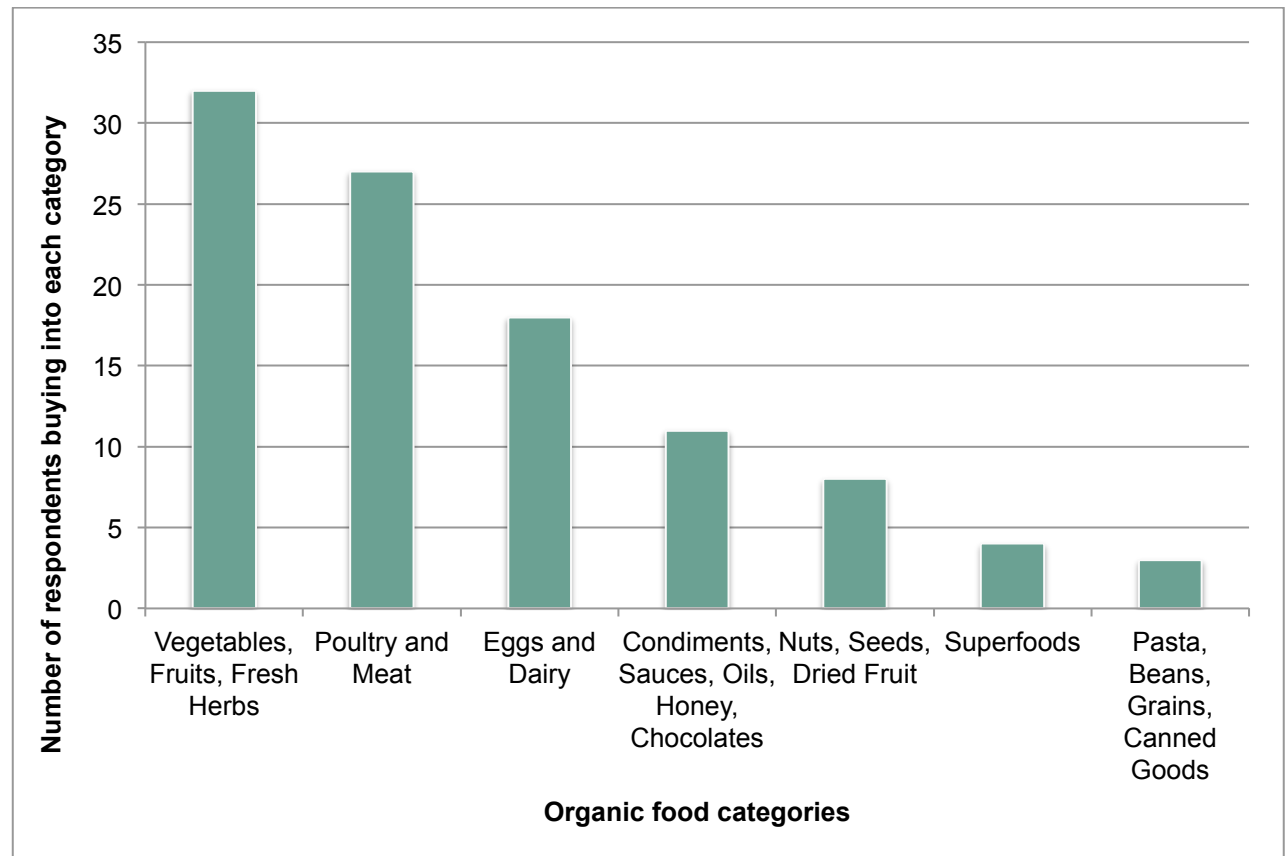


Figure 4.1 Popular organic food categories

In all four focus groups it was found that the most popular organic purchases are of fresh food products, such as fruit, vegetables and fresh herbs, poultry and meat products followed by eggs and other dairy products. Respondents revealed that they were most likely to shop in these three categories when buying organic products.

The next topic of discussion regarded the location of where consumers purchase their organic products. Respondents were asked “where do you shop for organic food?”. The responses were summarised into four different categories; supermarkets, organic speciality stores, farmer’s markets and box schemes/online stores. Figure 4.2 graphically represents the number of

respondents that purchase organic food products from each of the four main types of organic suppliers.

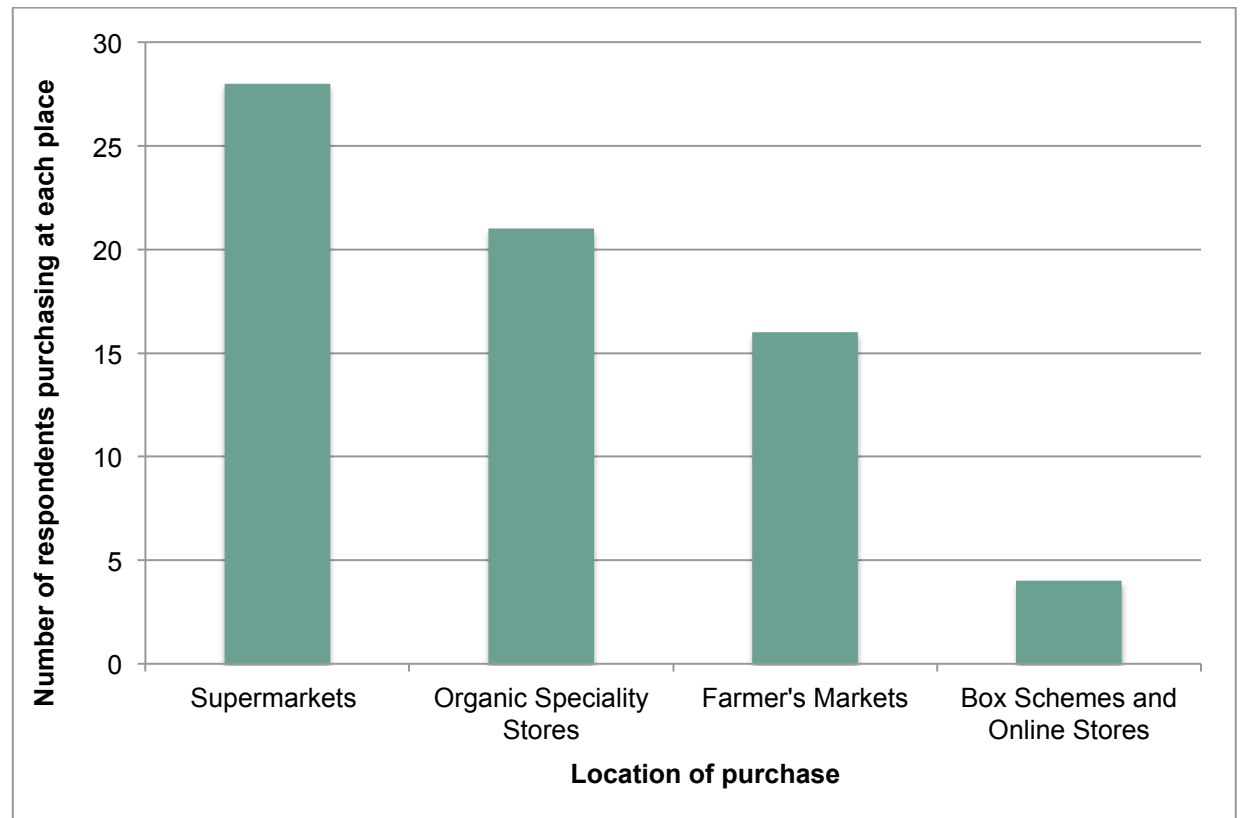


Figure 4.2 Location of organic food purchases

It was found that most respondents shop in supermarkets that have an organic food range such as Woolworths, Pick n' Pay and Spar. In addition, there was also a large portion of consumers who purchase their organic food at organic speciality stores such as Wellness Warehouse, Think Organic and Organic Zone. In addition to shopping at supermarkets and organic speciality stores, respondents also commented that they occasionally buy their organic goods at farmer's markets. For example, some responses to the question were, "I shop for groceries at Woolworths too, some weekends if I find myself at a market ill buy a few things"; "I find it much cheaper to buy my goods at the markets- I can spend less than R100 on my vegetables for the week" and "the market sells great organic stuff, from beauty products to honey."

Lastly, participants in the study also make use of box schemes and online stores to source their organic products. However, there were less than five respondents that made use of these suppliers. Some of the responses of these participants were, “I support the Harvest of Hope initiative-they deliver my weekly bag of various vegetables and herbs” and “sometimes online from Wild organics or the ethical co-op.”

4.3.2 Associations with Organic Food

A further dimension of the focus group discussion entailed a word association test. The respondents were asked to provide words and phrases that they associated with the term ‘organic food’. This task formed part of the focus groups, as the aim was to understand what associations Cape Town consumers had with organic food. Prior to carrying out the word association test, the participants were not given a formal definition of the term ‘organic food’ as their perceptions, knowledge and behaviours, in relation to it, were being explored.

The responses gathered for the word association test were categorised into nine different categories, depending on what the response related to. These categories were lifestyle, farming methods, local, fresh/natural, better for the environment, taste, healthy, food and green. The most significant association that respondents had were with a certain lifestyle. Responses related to this category were “wellness”, “the ‘in thing’”, “longevity”, “diet” and “healthier lifestyle”. Other responses relating to the category of farming methods were “urban farming”, “sustainable farming” and “cage-free”. Participants also associated the term ‘organic food’ with localism shown through responses such as “community”, “local market” and “local produce”.

Respondents in the study thus associate the term ‘organic food’ with a certain lifestyle, improved farming methods, local food and being fresh and natural. The majority of the responses had positive associations, however some

respondents had negative associations towards organic food such as being “expensive” and “untrustworthy”.

4.3.3 Perceived Benefits

The following subject concerned perceptions surrounding organic food as the discussion was directed towards its benefits. The perceived benefits were categorised into five major themes being better for health, contains less chemicals, better for the environment, beneficial to society/community and aesthetically pleasing/ tasting better. A respondent in the first focus group claimed that “organic produce is fresh and contains less of those funny ingredients most foods do these days”, while another stated that “it has also created a lot of job opportunities-some of the farmers at Oranjezicht are from Zim and I think its great that they get involved with initiatives like this”. Another respondent said that “it’s much healthier for our bodies in the long run”.

A respondent from focus group two stated that organic food has allowed them to “give back to local farmers who care about the earth and are trying to make a difference”, portraying the significant perceived benefits of organic food towards the community. The majority of participants in each of the four focus groups believed that is better for their health and lifestyle. Another benefit that is most recognised is that organic food contains less chemicals.

4.3.4 Sources of Information

The topic regarding the benefits of organic food lead to the subsequent discussion about the respondents sources of information about organic food. The sources of information that respondents mentioned were summarised into nine different categories. These categories were the packaging/label, the farmer, websites, social media, news, word of mouth, news, newsletters, advertisements and in store displays. The most notable source of information for respondents was word of mouth. For example, one respondent stated “many of my friends eat organic food, I got into it because of them” and

another whose cousin is an organic farmer commented, “my cousin has taught me the in's and out's of organic farming”. Many of the respondents also stated that the packaging or the label was a key element that they used in order to learn more about the products that they purchase. Another source of information was online websites and social media. For consumers who seemed to be more knowledgeable about organic food, newsletters, in store and the farmer were their main sources of updates and information. The packaging and label was found to be another important source of information for respondents as many claimed that they read the packet and look at the labels. One respondent said, “I wouldn't say I actively search for information on the products I buy, I rely on the packaging if anything”. The website was the third major source of information.

4.3.5 Influencing Factors of Consumer Trust in Organic Food

After discussing the sources of information, the respondents were asked what factors make them trust the communications of brands and organic food in general. For this, the responses varied. When consumers were asked about which aspects of organic food makes it more trustworthy for them, the packaging and label, as well as knowing the origin or farm that it comes from, were important to them. A number of participants also felt that depending on the brand of the product, or the claims that the brand makes, their trust of the product was influenced. Respondents shared that the packaging plays an important part in building their trust towards products as they often refer to it in order to find out more information about the product. A few respondents stated that their trust depends on “the fact that the products [they] buy are labeled organic” and whether they “can find out what is in it”. One respondent also commented “if I think about it, I often compare the design of the packages.”

Although there were a few responses that related to the packaging of products as a tool to build trust, the respondents that seemed to portray more confidence and trust towards organic food stated, “I speak to the vendors at

the market, and I trust their word that the goods are organic”; “I've volunteered at the Oranjezicht farm so I know that my food comes straight from the farm” and “Harvest of Hope openly shares their story and the stories of some of their farmers”.

These responses illustrate the importance consumers place on knowing the origin of food and being able to gain access to information straight from the supplier.

It was also seen that the brand name and claims of the brand also play a role in influencing consumer's trust. One female who shops at Woolworth's stated that the fact that “Woolworths claims that their farmers adhere to the principles of organic agriculture” makes her trust the products she purchases. Another respondent commented that “knowing that Woolworths have the best quality items” allows her to trust organic food.

Some respondents illustrated the fact that in some cases they do not completely trust their organic food. A respondent in the first focus group commented, “I am not certain that my food is certified organic” and similarly another stated, “I've always been skeptical about which products are actually organic”.

Two other significant determinants of trust portrayed in the study were the look of the actual product and the fact that the product is local. A respondent in the third focus group stated “organic produce looks different compared to other foods”. Another response relating to the fact that local food is more trustworthy was “when it comes to food in particular, I trust local products more than anything else”.

The participants were asked about the factors that would enhance their trust towards organic food. The majority of respondents from all focus groups replied that gaining more information about organic food and agriculture would make them trust this category more. An opinion from one respondent signified this, as she feels that “becoming involved in the process of harvesting

organics has made [her] completely trust the source of [her] food". A respondent stated that "finding out more about organic standards" was important and would influence their purchases.

In addition to this, consumers felt that if they had information on the origin of where their products were coming from, they would be able to trust that their products are organic. One respondent commented, "if I had to buy my organics at a supermarket, I would want to know the origin of the product" and another agreed by saying, "instead of advertising the farming methods, tell me where it comes from". "Being able to read the story behind the product" was also a key factor that respondents mentioned would enhance their trust. Consumers also said that more information contained on the packaging or a better label in general would better suit their needs. A respondent said that her trust would be enhanced if she "had more information about what is in[her] products".

Lastly, respondents felt that the fact that they have had experience with the brand, makes them trust the products that they buy from that specific brand.

4.3.6 Identification of Organic Labels

The last part of the focus groups involved the identification of organic labels. Respondents were shown a paper that contained ten labels, nine of which were organic labels used in South Africa, and seven of which were organic certification labels used in South Africa. Eight respondents could identify at least five labels, twenty-six identified at least two of the labels and six respondents identified less than two. The figure 4.3 graphically displays the number of respondents that could identify the various organic labels used in South Africa.

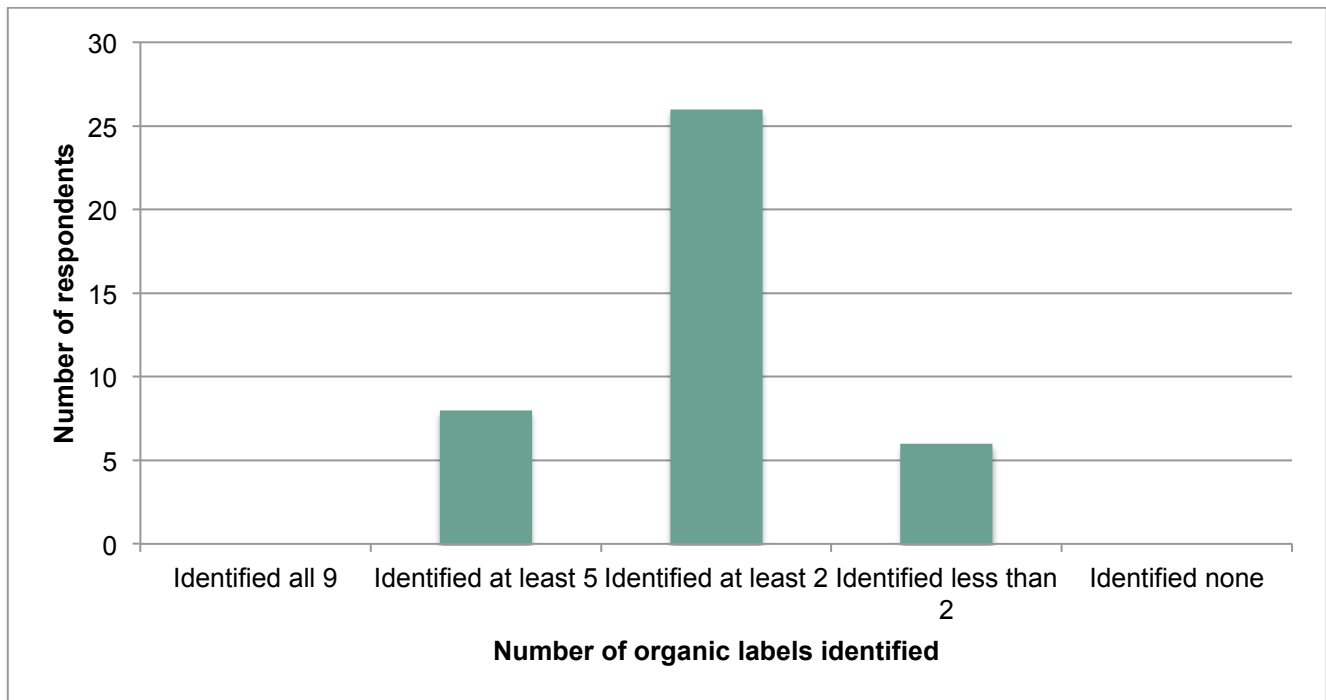


Figure 4.3 Respondents that correctly identified organic labels used in South Africa

This showed that respondents had a fairly good sense of the organic labels used in grocery stores in Cape Town, such as Woolworths and Pick n' Pay.

The participants were also asked to identify which labels were certified organic labels. The majority of respondents identifies less than two of the labels, twelve respondents could identify at least two of the labels and seven respondents identified at least five of the labels. Five respondents were not able to correctly identify which labels were certification labels. The figure 4.4 below graphically displays the number of participants that could correctly identify which certification labels were used in South Africa.

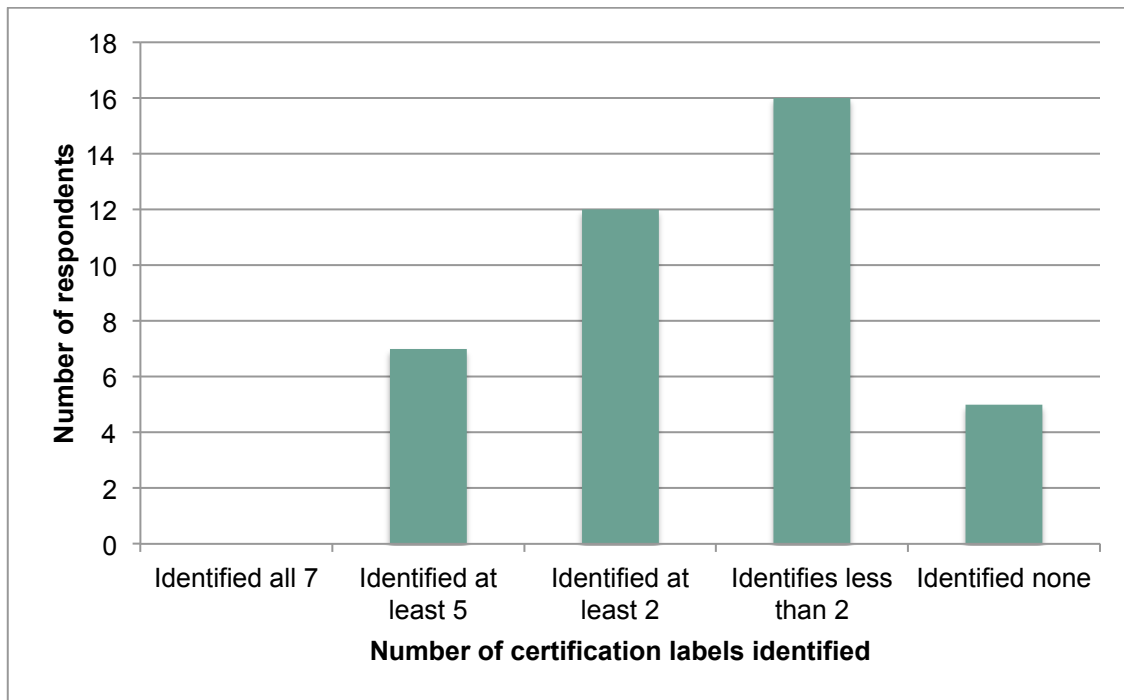


Figure 4.4 Respondents that correctly identified certification labels used in South Africa

The respondents of the study thus can recognise certain labels used to identify organic products in stores, however it was illustrated that there is little awareness and knowledge regarding organic certification. Respondents discussed that they only occasionally check the certification, however they generally refer to the brand's label to differentiate between organic and convention goods when shopping.

4.4 Values of Organic Consumers

According to the results of the focus groups, organic consumers in Cape Town portray values that are related to the value system presented in the literature review. The main categories of perceived benefits of organic food that were found throughout the focus group discussions were that it is better for health and lifestyle, contains less chemicals, is better for the environment and benefits the local community. Additionally, a few respondents stated that organic food tastes better and is more aesthetically pleasing. This is in correspondence with another research study by du Toit and Crafford (2003:5), stating that consumers portrayed positive attitudes and beliefs towards

organic food, as they had considered them to be, healthier, nutritious and tasty. These perceived benefits relate to consumers' attitudes, values and concerns with regards to organic products. It is evident that respondents portray values of security and self-direction as one of the main perceived benefits of organic food was that it is better for one's health and overall lifestyle. In addition, these values were portrayed among respondents who stated that organic food contains fewer chemicals. The value of universalism was also observed among respondents as individuals believed that organic food was better for the environment. Another value was universalism, as respondents identified that organic food benefits the local community in Cape Town. Lastly, the value dimension of hedonism was the least apparent value among the respondents as only a few commented that organic food is better tasting or more aesthetically pleasing.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Throughout the study it was found that organic consumers who have experienced brand communications that appeal to the various cues of trust such as empathy, social participation, partnership, localism, transparency and social behaviour tend to have a greater feeling of trust towards organic food. It was found in the study that there are various types of organic consumers; those who resonate more with the values of organic food and those who consume organic food merely for the benefits of themselves. Organic consumers in Cape Town indicated that they are concerned with the origin of their food, the transparency of their food supplies and appreciate the aspects of organic food that benefit the local community.

In order for organic food brands to maintain a trustworthy connection with their customers, they need to remain relevant and significant. Organic food brands need to fulfil their role as the research found that there was a lack of knowledge with regards to what organic food stands for. Brand communications should involve messages that inform customers about the story behind the product and should draw attention to the aspect of organic food that has contributed to the empowerment of individuals in the local community.

Organic food means something more than what conventional food does, and consumers are aware of this. There is a growing number of consumers that are concerned about consuming local products bought at markets, regardless of whether they are certified organic. It is therefore essential for consumers to be informed about the aspect of organic food that can achieve a greater sense of community and a more holistic food experience.

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APPENDIX A: ACTIVATION PROPOSAL

INTRODUCTION

In the context of South Africa, organic food consumers require more knowledge about where their food has come from and how it qualifies as organic. The topic, which this study delves into, concerns whether consumers of organic products are informed and educated with regards to the products that they purchase, as well as the brands that they engage with. Various factors influence the purchase of organic foods such as an individual's organic knowledge and trust towards brands. These are in turn influenced by brand communications and the organic consumer's perceived benefits. The majority of consumers have faith in organic labels, but they are uncertain about what the concept of organic is about, and consequently, they require more information. The current environment presents the potential to inform consumers in a variety of ways. Organic food brands need to open up about their impact; they need to share information about where the consumer's food is coming from, educate consumers about the concept of organic food and communicate the social contract the brand has with the world.

CORE INSIGHTS

The core insights of the final study entail findings from primary research and secondary research. The following core insights relevant to the study are:

- Certification does not always inform the customer about the origin of their food and how their food has been produced
- Organic consumers associate organic food with a certain lifestyle
- Organic consumers trust brands when they know the process of how their food gets to their fork

AUDIENCE

The audience relevant to this activation is organic food consumers in Cape Town.

Values play a large role in consumers' decision-making process in the organic food sector. The values of brands thus need to resonate with the values of the consumer. Socially, individuals are more health conscious than ever and are concerned about environmental and social responsibility. However, in the context of organic food, consumers don't necessarily consider these factors as the primary reasons to buy into the organic sector. Consumers in Cape Town associated organic food with a certain lifestyle, particular farming methods and local produce. If these consumers were informed about the true meaning of organic food, their trust towards brands and purchase behaviours may change as their values align with the definition of organic food.

MESSAGE

Message headline:

“Can you travel the distance your food does?... Lower your organic food miles and buy local.”

Consumers of organic food are motivated by health, wellness, sustainability and community involvement. They are invested in conscious decisions regarding the food they eat and are looking for a connection with the brands they associate with. Brands need to inspire their customers to engage with the brand in order for them to experience deeper knowledge and a feeling of trust with the brand. By being transparent and providing customers with the information they desire, brands can build create this emotional connection.

Organic food is not just about being healthy, free of chemicals or better for the environment. It is a concept that involves “integrating cultural, biological and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance and conserve biodiversity” (Lifehacker, 2012). Organic consumers need to be aware of the actual meaning of organic food as it aligns with many of their values. Not only do consumers need to be aware of the origin of their food, or the impact that it has on the environment, but also that local food specifically, fits best into the definition of organic food standard. Creating

awareness towards local organic food is the underlying message of this activation.

CONCEPT AND RATIONALE

The pursuit of a healthier lifestyle alongside busy schedules has led to greater value being placed on convenience. However, convenience is at odds with growing environmental values and social concerns. Consumers are increasingly expressing their values through their purchase behaviours, and ultimately through their relationship with brands. Their interaction with organic products is both functional and emotional and thus purchase decisions in this category are highly involved in the context of values. Purchase decisions are influenced by trust, which is built upon whether or not a brand's positioning on certain issues aligns with the customer's values, perceptions or knowledge. The opportunity exists in the organic market for brands to communicate how their brand uniquely fits into the customer's culture, lifestyle and social consciousness. Furthermore, organic brands need to put more effort into creating a community, story and experience around the brand. There is a fundamental value proposition to organics, and brands need to present this information in a way that resonates with consumers in a convenient yet compelling manner.

The concept of food miles is chosen for this activation as it creates awareness around organic food and the values that are associated with it. This concept aims to engage organic consumers in an alternative, compelling way in order to educate them about the real values of organic food. Persuading organic consumers to be conscious of their food miles communicates the significance of the origin of their food.

Creative Concept:

"Food Miles"

The concept of "Food Miles" refers to the relationship that organic food brands can build with customers by providing them with transparency in their value

chains through brand communications. Educating consumers about the brands behind their food and sustainable practices relating to their products will lead to resonance between the brand's values and purpose, and that of the customers. The trend to purchase socially and environmentally conscious products results in a storytelling element behind products in order to effectively educate consumers in the organic sector.

Food miles represent a measurement of how far food has travelled from the place it is produced to the consumer's plate. It symbolises the significance of creating awareness about the origin of organic food as well as creating an engaging experience for consumers. A value-cantered experience in terms of organic food focuses on education about the products, a sense of community and a sense of inspiration that the customer is helping to make the world a better place by purchasing their products. Encouraging organic food consumers to be aware of their food miles relates to the emotional engagement that they should feel with organic food. Food miles is a way to enhance consumer knowledge about organic food as it relates to social consciousness and the origin of food.

EXECUTION

To reach the target audience, organic consumers in Cape Town, an alternative contact point was utilised. This alternative contact point was in the form of bumper stickers that created awareness about food miles and local food. Three different bumper stickers were created which read the messages "How close can you get your fork to the farm?", "Wouldn't you say our markets are already super?" and "Can you travel the distance your food does?". Each of these also read a consistent message of "Lower your organic food miles and buy local". In order to reach the target audience in an unexpected and unconventional way, these bumper stickers were stuck on organic produce packages in various retail stores around Cape Town such as Woolworths, Wellness Warehouse and Pick n Pay. The bumper sticker also contained the address of a website that the target audience could access. This website acts as a platform for educating consumers about what organic food stands for and

creating awareness around local food. The website also invited organic consumers to take part in a challenge to lower their own food miles by supporting local organic food. The website contains a printable stamp card that could be marked by themselves when they purchase local organic food. The aim of the challenge is to get consumers to be more involved with their food decisions. Each time a consumer buys local organic food, they are able to give themselves a stamp, which lowers their food miles by a certain amount depending on the distance the food has travelled.

The use of bumper stickers sends a cheeky, personal message about organic consumers. These bumper stickers could further be used as a medium to communicate the values of organic consumers. This execution serves as a means to create awareness about the impact of food miles and the benefits of local, organic food.



