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The Green Marketing Mix and its influence on organic (green) food consumption:
A study from the food retailer perspective.

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to address the topic of how the leading Swedish food retailers applied the 4 Ps of the green marketing mix (product, price, promotion, place) when offering organic food. Firstly, the food retailers segment all the consumers in different categories, but the green consumer is not one of them. Subsequently, they target the whole market with varying strategies for positioning. For short-term positioning works the announcements of discounts in the shops. Launching promotional campaigns online and advertising on TV has given favourable outcomes of long-term and allowed the recognition of the people of the green food brand.

However, there is a lack of effective use of the elements of green marketing, especially in green product and the green promotion. Regarding green price, they strive to reduce overprices to attract more consumers. About the green place, all have a lot to improve. In sum, the strategies of green marketing mix of supermarkets could be slowing down the organic food consumption.

Keywords: green marketing mix, green product, green price, green place, organic food consumption, green consumers, non-green consumers.

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1. Introduction

The beginning of the twenty-first century faced environmental problems like climate changes, global warming and resources depletion, all related to business practices and consumption patterns that have a detrimental impact on economy, environment and society (Kumar et al., 2013; Anwar and Jan, 2016; Tandon and Sethi, 2017; Abzari et al., 2013). Nowadays, preserving the environment is a challenge for humanity, where businesses should be actively involved using the power of marketing, to achieve a superior goal beyond individual interests. As was contended by Firat and Venkatesh (1993), marketing and marketers will have a heavy burden; one that is no less than determining the conditions and meanings of life for the future. . .

The term of *green marketing* was introduced by American Marketing Associations, for the first time, in 1975. Green marketing is also called ecological marketing (Kumar et al., 2013). It consists of all activities to anticipate and meet human needs or wants as long as these needs and wants are met with a minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment and improve society and social welfare. Green marketing should not consider as just one more approach to marketing, it must pursue with much higher energy, as it has an environmental and social dimension (Wymer and Polonsky, 2015; Abzari et al., 2013; Kumar et al., 2013). Through green marketing, cleaner production and sustainable consumption can foster (Rex and Baumann, 2007).

Moreover, green marketing can use to convert the group of non-green consumers into green consumers (Chitra, 2007; Rex and Baumann, 2007; Chockalingam and Isreal, 2016; Mishra and Sharma, 2010). Green Marketing is essential to contribute to the preservation of the environment, as long as it is actively engaging in the green market creation. Green marketing increases the awareness about the conservation of the climate when promote, communicate and inform the consumers about the benefits of environmentally sustainable products and services (Chitra, 2007; Nadanyiova et al., 2015; Türk and Erciş, 2017; Mishra and Sharma, 2010; Rex and Baumann, 2007; Nagar, 2013). *Organic products* are also known as *green or eco-friendly products*, are those, that cause no (or at least minimal) damage to the environment (Tandon and Sethi, 2017; Chockalingam and Isreal, 2016). The organic

products consumption would help to preserve the current resources and also help the environment to sustain for a longer time, and it is of vital importance to market organic products to consumers (Anwar and Jan, 2016).

Green Marketing uses the most important classification of marketing, i.e., the McCarty or marketing mix, which is the basis of traditional marketing and comprises four elements (the 4Ps): green product, green price, green place (distribution) and green promotion (communication). Indeed, marketers have an indispensable role to play in safeguarding the environment by developing and delivering a socially responsible *green marketing mix* (Abzari et al., 2013; Chitra, 2007; Kumar et al., 2013). Green marketing mix could learn from conventional marketing in discovering other means to promote organic products. For instance, green marketing mix should target a wide range of consumers or work with the positioning strategies of price, promotion, place (Rex and Baumann, 2007). Many studies have been carried out about green food consumption, and what consumers demand from the businesses to convert intentions into real purchasing of green food. Some of these studies around the world have found that consumer purchasing behaviour is related to the elements of the green marketing mix strategy (the 4 Ps: product, price, promotion, place).

On the one hand, some studies reveal that the high *price* of organic products is responsible for the significant disconnection between green consumers' beliefs and their actual behaviours. Several studies agree that the overprice of organic food is the main barrier to green food consumption (Davary and Strutton, 2014; Türk and Erciş, 2017; Shamdasani et al., 1993). On the other hand, some scholars have found that consumers are willing to pay more for green or organic products (Chockalingam and Isreal, 2016; Anwar and Jan, 2016; Mishra and Sharma, 2010; Nagar, 2013). Whether the consumers tend to green consumption or not, according to these studies, is related mostly, to personal and social attitudes. All the above findings connect with the second element of green marketing mix green price.

Promotion, through green communication strategies, may influence the consumers' green attitude (Anwar and Jani, 2016; Nadanyiova et al., 2015; Nagar, 2013). One promotion tool is the labels. According to Rex and Baumann (2007), ecolabels should not consider as a promotion tool in the green marketing mix, but as merely part of the product like it occurs in traditional marketing because organic food promotion needs other tools to motivate consumers towards organic food consumption. In this sense, Green marketing mix needs to learn from traditional marketing (Rex and Baumann, 2007). Since studies suggest that

consumers should be informed about organic agriculture and food, marketers need to educate their customers about their firm's green offerings and how those offerings impact the environment (Vukasovič, 2016; Bosona and Gebrenset, 2018). Besides, different advertising campaigns can raise the level of awareness of organic products, among consumers (Türk and Erciş, 2017; Nadanyiova et al., 2015; Chitra, 2007). Furthermore, scholars (e.g., Tandon and Sethi, 2017; Vukasovič, 2016; Song-Turner and Polonski, 2016; Nagar, 2013; Shamdasani et al., 1993) have concluded that managers should adopt the development of more green displays in supermarkets in order to better communicate their value, create intention and trust of purchasing organic products.

Regarding the fourth element of the green marketing mix, *green place*, some consumers complain about lower availability of organic products (Essoussi and Zahaf, 2008). On the other side as greater and closer collaboration between forwarding and backward supply chain members can bring favourable environmental results for the industry and positive financial consequences for the firms involved (Leonidou et al., 2013).

Consumers pro-environmental attitude is not enough to turn good intentions into actual purchase actions, possibly due to many factors, such as loyalty to traditional products and weak credibility of "green" claims Alsmadi (2007). Therefore, there is a need to link consumers' good intentions to actual buying behaviour through a green marketing strategy, based on the 4 Ps. This is stressed by Alsmadi (2007) and Anwar and Jan (2016).

Previously to apply positioning marketing strategies (i.e., green marketing mix 4 Ps), firms decide marketing strategies on how to target consumers (Slater and Olson, 2001) when offering organic products. As was hinted earlier, there are two groups of consumers, green and non-green, a classification given by their preferences of purchasing green food or not, respectively (Shamdasani et al., 1993; Chitra, 2007; Rex and Baumann, 2007). On the one hand, it suggests that green firms should almost exclusively target consumers who have already indicated their own held environmental concern, because marketers, it appears, will gain more from aligning their green values with prospects or customers who already share those values as opposed to trying to change someone's mind (Davari and Strutton, 2014; Essoussi and Zahaf, 2008; Dangelico and Vocalelli, 2017). Consumers who are environmental concerned seek out possible ways to help with the preservation of the environment. They believe that with their green purchase decision can contribute to this

cause and listen carefully to green messages from firms. On the other hand, companies' green marketing strategy should penetrate the whole market, through the mass marketing of organic products (Dangelico and Vocalelli, 2017; Chitra, 2007; Rex and Baumann, 2007). Furthermore, according to Davari and Strutton (2014), consumers who are not concerned about the environment should be addressed with a different strategy, because they behave opposite to those who are environmental-concerned.

Additionally, Leonidou et al. (2013) concluded that although environmental activists have long advocated the benefits of greening marketing practices, many managers have remained unconvinced that such investments make strategic and financial sense for their firms. However, several authors (e.g., Leonidou et al., 2013; Nadanyiova et al., 2015 and Abzari et al., 2013) have found that companies can achieve a competitive advantage through transforming environmental friendliness into business opportunities, increase their profitability and achieve a strong position in the market through the green marketing mix.

Finally, despite the abundant literature, there is still a gap in the marketing mix scientific literature, for instance, on how to convert non-purchasers into purchasers of organic products, to augment eco-friendly product sales and to make consumers adopt green marketing (Chockalingam and Isreal, 2016; Bosona and Gebresenbet, 2018). As an example, Kumar (2016) concluded that researchers should investigate how a marketing department develops a market-oriented sustainability strategy, which means a marketing strategy focused on economic, social and environmental aspects (triple bottom), different from the traditional marketing strategy, which focuses solely on economic benefits. Kumar (2016) also concluded that methodologically, qualitative studies on green marketing are limited in the literature. Given the ability of qualitative studies to reveal underlying phenomenon that is difficult to capture using a quantitative approach, qualitative green marketing studies may produce useful insights for theory as well as practitioners (Kumar, 2016). Furthermore, some scholars (e.g., Tandon and Sethi, 2017; Rex and Baumann, 2007) suggest that future studies could focus on retailers of organic and conventional products. It is to understand the strategies that they adopt for both types of products.

The 4 Ps of the traditional marketing mix (product, price, place and promotion) are in force and widely used by Scandinavian companies (Zineldin and Philipson, 2007). However, there are no qualitative studies regarding the use of the 4 Ps of the green marketing mix theory in Swedish food retailers. The abounding research papers around the world tackle organic

consumption from the consumers perspective. There is scarce research regarding how the businesses approach the issues of eco-friendly utilisation. In addition to that, some say that Scandinavian consumers are more awareness with environmental problems and not much with health, because of their consumer policies prioritise on safety and consumer protection legislation (Squires et al., 2001). All this background drives the decision to make this study, to know how the particular Swedish consumer behaviour, might have an impact on the way on how Swedish food retailers offering their organic product. Therefore, this study attempts to narrow the research gap regarding this specific topic. In sum, the lack of studies of the green marketing mix and organic food consumption in the Swedish context and an identified problem in reality (empirical gap) such it is the slow pace growth of the organic market in this country trigger to carry out this research.

Regarding the empirical gap, there appear to be barriers hindering the green market consumption growth in Sweden. A recent report from the Statistics Swedish Government Agency (Statistikmyndigheten www.scb.se) and also presented by Ekoweb (2019) revealed that the organic food sales in the retail sector are still growing but at a much slower rate the past five years, (e.g., organic food sales in 2018 increased just 4% compared to 9.8% in 2017). This empirical gap is a call to study further the green marketing mix approach to the food retail sector. Hence, the Swedish context has been chosen to carry out this research.

The purpose of this thesis is to describe and analyse how food retailers, specifically supermarkets, use the green marketing mix and how they target consumers when offering organic and non-organic products. This study also seeks to unveil some underlying reasons why green food consumption is growing at a slower pace than expected and what is the business doing about it.

The general research question is: In what way are food retailers addressing and contributing to green food consumption? Specifically:

- How and why food retailers' segment and target consumers?
- How and why do food retailers use the green marketing mix to offer green food?
- How are food retailers facing the slow growth of green food consumption?
- What barriers have food retailers found regarding green food consumption?

2. Theoretical Framework

Firstly, the paper glances the differences between traditional and green marketing; by doing so, it put the green marketing mix into perspective. This comparison also points out that even though the green marketing mix is somehow a different approach from traditional marketing, still needs the techniques and tools from conventional marketing to succeed, i.e. green promotion. The following themes are the elements of green marketing strategy, although the topics of segmentation and targeting must introduce first, before the marketing strategy to position the product, i.e., organic food in the Swedish market. Positioning draws on the *green marketing mix* theory (the four Ps: product, price, promotion, place). The 4 Ps are extended recognised marketing theory to study the businesses approach on how to succeed a product in the market. In sum, the selected the assumptions that enable to fulfil the purpose of this thesis, which is to describe and analyse the influence of green marketing mix on green food consumption from the perspective of Swedish supermarkets and answer the research questions.

2.1 Traditional Marketing Vs. Green Marketing

The traditional marketing process involves a broad set of activities in a firm. Kotler et al. (2001) define the marketing process as the process of analysing marketing opportunities; selecting target markets; expand the marketing mix and managing all the marketing process. Therefore, the marketing processes covers issues ranging from strategic (what to do?) to tactical (how to do it?). However, the American Marketing Association (AMA) define marketing as the process of planning and executing the conception of the 4Ps, i.e., *product*, *pricing*, *promotion,* and *place of* goods and services to create exchanges that meet individual and organisational objectives (Zineldin and Philipson, 2007). The definition of "exchange" is the act of obtaining the desired product from someone by offering something in return. The exchange meets consumers' needs and expectations. In turn, firms can make profits (Kotler, 1994). The 4 Ps should work together in a single marketing plan to meet the customer's needs and enable the firm to make a reasonable profit.

Peattie (1995) defined green marketing, based on the definition given by the Chartered Institute of Marketing, as the holistic management process accountable for identifying,

anticipating and meeting the customer requirements. Marketing should provide profits to businesses but in a sustainable way, harmless to society. Green marketing, as well as, environmentally friendly habits, e.g., recycling, are essential to save the world from pollution. Consumers, industrial buyers and suppliers have to make efforts to minimise the downside effects on the environment (Mishra and Sharma, 2010). Later, Peattie (2001) defined green marketing as marketing activities which attempt to reduce the negative social and environmental impact of existing products and production systems, and which promote products and services that are harmless for the environment.

Moreover, green marketing needs to assist consumers in improving their decision making, which could include reductions in demand and limiting and reducing the waste and adverse environmental effects they cause. Indeed, lifestyle changes would result in great societal benefits that would occur if consumers only would switch from conventional to green brands (Wymer and Polonsky, 2015). Consumers, governments and competitive pressure can force companies to apply a green marketing approach (Abzari et al., 2013). As above, there are different ways how the stakeholders, both consumers and firms, may contribute to taking care of the environment. However, this study only focuses on how retailers apply green marketing mix in support of green food consumption.

Since traditional marketing emphasises customers' needs and does not consider social welfare and environmental issues, this issue has been addressed by the corporations, which has led to the appearance of the concept of green marketing (Abzari et al., 2003). In this context, green marketing is a part of the new marketing approaches which not only adjust or enhance traditional marketing thinking and practices but attempt to defy those practices and provide a considerably different perspective. Green marketing belongs to the group of approaches that seek to address the lack of fit between traditional marketing and the ecological and social realities (Tandon and Sethi, 2017). Green marketing shows an evolution of the concept over time, moving away from being a tool of traditional marketing to becoming a strategy affecting the whole company, from focusing on specific environmental problems to taking into account global sustainability issues (Dangelico and Vocalelli, 2017).

2.2 Green Marketing Strategy

Green marketing strategy takes the outline of the traditional marketing strategy. Following Slater and Olson (2001), marketing strategy face with decisions related to market segmentation and targeting, and the designing of a positioning strategy based on the marketing mix. The marketing strategy consists of a continuous diagram encompassing the sequence of segmentation, targeting, positioning and differentiation (Kotler and Armstrong, 2014). However, differentiation does not conform part of this study (see Fig. 1).

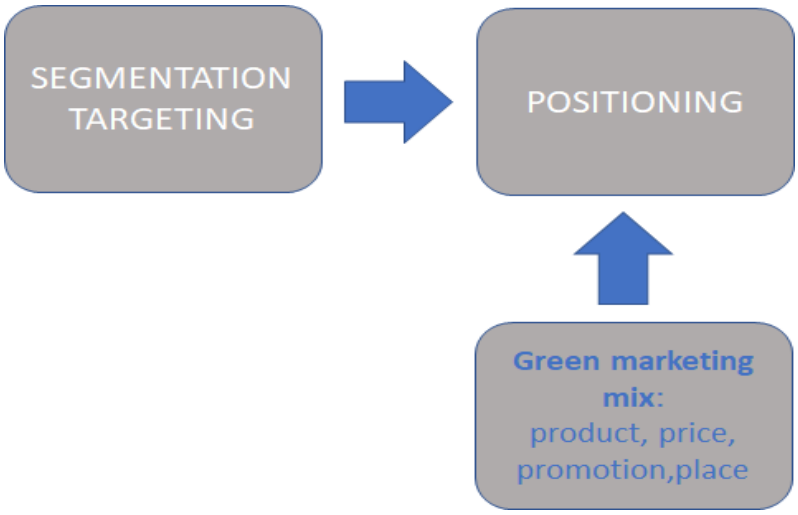

Fig. 1.- Green Marketing Strategy

This schema takes the same structure of the original scheme of the green marketing strategy by Kotler and Armstrong (2014) and Kotler et al. (2001). Except that does not contain 'differentiation' after positioning. Rex and Baumann (2017) presented a similar scheme.

2.2.1 Segmentation and targeting

Market research and segmentation underlie the market targeting decision (Kotler, 1994). Segmentation and targeting are closely related concepts. Market segmentation is the process of arranging a market into groups of consumers with different needs, characteristics or behaviors. In the targeting process, the companies evaluate the segments and decide which segment or segments to address (Kotler et al., 2001). Market targeting implies a commitment to fulfil the customer groups different needs through the development of specific capabilities and resources investments (Kotler, 1994). The capabilities enable the firms to create a value proposition for the targeted segment utilising the elements of the marketing mix (Slater and Olson, 2001).

Understanding customers and fulfilling their needs is the basis of traditional marketing theory because customers have different needs, and by treating them all alike, it is seldom possible to satisfy all customers. Davari and Strutton (2014) concluded that green product marketers should segment their target audience as follows: consumers environmentally concerned and environmentally non-concerned. To position organic products in the market is essential to segment consumers, e.g., consumers environmentally aware (Tandon and Sethi, 2007).

Many studies have highlighted that traditional market segmentation, such as demographic segmentation based on age and socio-economic groups, is not appropriate for green marketing. This demographic segmentation approach has led to the reporting of many conflicting outcomes and to the conclusion that it is simplistic and not the most suitable (Dangelico and Vocalelli, 2017). Instead, there are other types of segmentation, e.g., by using attitudes, values, knowledge, levels of environmental purchase behaviour (Tandon and Sethi, 2017). Bernyte (2018) concludes that traditional marketers are trying to promote sustainable consumption. They are concentrating too much on rational and functional benefits, neglecting how purchases contribute to the identity of the customer. The sociological and psychological aspects of consumption such as attitudes and beliefs, values and principles, embrace concerns about the way on how people perceive their behaviour as consumers are willing to buy more from companies that share their values and beliefs (Bernyte, 2018).

Similarly, the findings of Shamdasani et al. (1993) seem to suggest that the adoption of environmentally-friendly consumption decisions largely drive-by personal factors (e.g., personality and attitudes). Green consumers, when compared to the non-green consumer, have more favourable attitudes toward the environment and socially integrated. Additionally, there are no demographic differences between ecologically-concerned consumers and non-ecologically-concerned consumers (Shamdasani et al., 1993).

Chitra (2007) proposed a segmentation model based on the level of consumption of organic products. This scholar identified four types of consumers: 'aspirants', are the consumers who are aware of environmental problems and their effects. The "aspirants" wish to consume organic products and feel that they have a higher price due to their superior value; 'addicts' are those who are loyal to green (organics) products. This type of consumers recommends eco-friendly products and wait for the availability of the same instead of buying the alternatives. In contrast, 'adjusters' do not feel much difference between green and non-organic products and are happy with any product that fulfils their needs. They only care about product availability, low price and quality. The 'avoiders' feel that they cannot contribute to avoiding damage to the environment. They believe that organic products do not deliver what they promise, i.e., quality and that they have a high price. The study of Chitra (2007) have found that few respondents are 'avoiders' and 'adjusters' of eco-friendly products, but the majority are 'aspirants'. It conveys a positive signal to the marketers to further activate the attempts towards applying an eco-friendly marketing mix. Additionally, customer segment-specific strategic seek to explore the conversion of eco-friendly products 'avoiders' into 'aspirants' and 'aspirants' into 'addicts'. There is a likelihood of more and more eco-friendly food products to pour into the market as the concern for eco-friendly food products is increasing (Chitra, 2007).

Besides that, Essoussi and Zahaf (2008) also classified green consumers based on purchase behaviour. They found only two main categories of green consumers: regular consumers and non- regular consumers. This latter category of consumers is composed of occasional and irregular consumers. Regular green consumers are more knowledgeable about organic products, and some are reluctant to buy organic food from grocery stores because they trust local markets most. Health and environment care motivate regular green consumers, opposite to non-regular green consumers.

Despite a large number of studies on segmenting the market based on the level of the greenness of consumers, only a few studies are dealing with targeting. However, it would be very relevant for companies aiming to integrate environmental sustainability into their marketing strategy, to define the market targeting. For example, they can decide whether to address a market niche of "deep" green consumers, to differentiate their product offering so to address consumers characterised by different levels of greenness (Dangelico and Vocalelli, 2017). Furthermore, environmentally and non-environmentally concerned consumers need to be target differently (Davari and Stutton, 2014). Moreover, Tandon and Sethi (2017) stated that once the segmentation ends, then target the 'greener' consumer with the appropriate advertising and communication medium. The same marketing strategies that would work well for the first group may prove of little value to the second (Davari and Strutton, 2014).

However, another approach to targeting is to try to penetrate the whole market, through the mass marketing of organic products (Dangelico and Vocalelli, 2017). In the same line, is suggested an overall repositioning of products through redirecting consumers towards environment-friendly products (Tandon and Sethi, 2017).

2.2.2 Positioning

Once a firm ends with the segmentation of the green consumer, the product needs to be targeted and positioned on the market to appeal to this group. The positioning is through careful design of the marketing mix: product, place, price and promotion (Rex and Baumann, 2007).

In addition to the product offered, conventional marketing literature emphasises the whole range of the marketing mix, for example, pricing decisions (price), distribution channels and assortments (place) and advertisement, publicity and sales promotion (promotion) (Kotler et al., 2001). Chapter 2.3 presents in detail these 4 Ps of the marketing mix, which is the core of this study.

2.3 Green Marketing Mix

On the one hand, the traditional marketing mix elements are the four key decision areas that marketers must manage to facilitate the exchange or transfer of goods, services, or ideas so that they may meet customer needs better than the competition. The marketing mix elements are often viewed as controllable variables because the firms can change them. According to American Marketing Association and Zineldin and Philipson (2007), the strength of the 4 Ps approach is that it represents a noteworthy and practical framework for marketing decision-making and has proved to be useful for case study analysis in business schools for many years. The traditional marketing "Kotlerism" with its 4 Ps (product, price, promotion, place) called the marketing mix is still dominating Scandinavia (Zineldin and Philipson, 2007). On the other hand, Chitra (2007) summarised and explained the 4Ps of the green marketing mix: the product to create and make should provide healthy consumption, support the establishing price as the value of this product, as well as, the promotion of eco-friendly approach in the utilization of resources and awareness of pollution, place as the availability of the products.

One key difference discriminates green and traditional marketing mixes, i.e., the development of values aimed at satisfying pro-environmental and societal needs is weighted more heavily in green marketing mixes (Chan et al., 2012).

2.3.1 Green Product

Green or organic products are produced using environmentally friendly methods that do not involve modern synthetic inputs such as pesticides and chemical fertilisers (Alsmadi, 2007; Tandon and Sethi, 2017; Rex and Baumann, 2007; Squires et al., 2001). Organic products do not contain genetically modified (GMO) organisms or chemical food additives such as hormones and antibiotics (Essoussi and Zafah, 2008).

On the one hand, Squires et al. (2013) study found that conventional food concerns and distrust engage more green consumers in purchasing and consuming organic foods. On the

other hand, environmental concerns were the main reason for consumers to choose organic food, depending on the type of market. The latter one occurs in green developed markets, i.e., Denmark; the former one in green emergent markets with the deficient health system, i.e., New Zealand. Additionally, Essoussi and Zafah (2008) found that, compared to regular food, green or organic food are tastier, more nutritious, colourful, look fresh and not uniform, and lastly; it is not only produced locally but also not mass-produced. They are marketed using the shortest channel hence favouring local products over national/ international products, which helps to sustain local communities and local farmers.

The green product, as contended by some scholars (e.g., Davari and Strutton, 2014; Kordoshouli et al., 2015), plays the most important role among the four traditional green marketing mix elements. The other factors (i.e., price, promotion, and place) cannot overcome poor product design or product development. Furthermore, consumers traditionally pay more for products when they perceive that the offering delivers more value than conventional alternatives. The key, of course, is differentiation. Differentiating green values might emerge from performance improvements, superior designs, aesthetic appeals, new green features, functions, or environmental affinity (Mishra and Sharma, 2010).

Indeed, Swedish consumers evaluate the quality of the food before making buying decisions. They consider that organic products have higher quality in comparison with non-ecological food (Bosona and Gebresenbet, 2018). The first rule of green marketing is to aim attention on customers benefits because it is the primary reason why consumers purchase specific products in the first place. Do this right and encourage consumers to switch brands or even pay a premium price for the greenest alternative. Although if a product is not developed green in various aspects, it does not help because not pass the customer satisfaction criteria (Davari and Strutton, 2014).

Consumers no longer remain insensitive to environmental problems such as environmental pollution and global warming (Türk and Ercis, 2016). Consumers consider whether the products they purchase are environment-friendly or not, apart from the price. However, firms are choosing a strategy to emphasise the functional benefits of organic products to consumers rather than focusing solely on environmental attributes (Song-Turner and Polonski, 2016). Hence, companies have started to produce environment-friendly products and have tried to take the ‘green marketing’ concept to the consumers (Tandon and Sethi,

2017). In this line, a green marketing strategy would be focusing on the positive impact on the environment of organic products (Alsmadi, 2007; Anwar and Jan, 2016).

Some consumers also generally prefer healthy, sustainable food products and products with quality features. Hence, consumers must convince that organic food does not contain food additives or preservatives. Thus, organic foods' functional and psychological acceptability can increase (Türk and Ercis, 2016). Firms could apply the green product strategy by highlighting the green product's unique properties and characteristics such as quality, freshness, nutritional value, organically grown and safety, which were found as the most important reasons for purchasing organic fruits and vegetables (Vukasovič, 2016; Alsmadi, 2007; Anwar and Jan, 2016). Besides, Mishra and Sharma (2010) recommend that firms make sure that the consumer is aware of the issues that their product attempts to address.

Indeed, Bosona and Gebrenset (2018) found that with increasing consumer awareness of sustainable and quality food production, there is an increasing tendency in organic food production and consumption because organic food production has a connection with consumer health, animal welfare, food security, as well as environmental advantages. Besides that, the findings show that consumers who exhibit a positive attitude toward green advertisements also impose trust in the firm's organic products (Nagar, 2013). However, there is scarce evidence that widespread consumer demand for green products is enough to create meaningful profit incentives for the industry to produce more green products (Rex and Baumann, 2007).

According to the green product theory, it is evident that organic products need green promotion to attract consumers to purchase them.

2.3.2 Green Price

Generally, organic products do not need to be costly. In many cases, they are made and sold cheaper than non-organic products, because, there can be some cost-saving in regards to saving on materials, energy, or even processes (Alsmadi, 2007). However, some organic products may have an extra cost, i.e., using costly procedures to make the product environmentally friendly, which can offset by charging a higher price (Alsmadi, 2007).

Indeed, regular consumers of green food argue that the value of consuming organic food outweighs the cost of buying them, it means that price sensitivity is further largely overcome (Shamdasani et al., 1993). For instance, Mishra and Sharma (2010) found that green consumers are willing to pay more to maintain a cleaner and greener environment. Besides, the findings of Nagar (2013) suggest that consumers are willing to pay more for organic products and are loyal to them. Green consumers eager to pay higher prices for environmental-friendly products than non-green consumers, as they perceive these products as those that can provide value and it is worth paying the extra amount of money for them, especially if the green products possess the level of quality than a regular brand Nagar (2013). Firms are charging a premium price for a green product because many environmental products cost more due to the economies of small scale and the use of higher-quality ingredients and feel that it is worth it (Mishra and Sharma, 2010). Even more, according to Chockalingam and Isreal (2016), non-green purchasers will buy if the eco-friendly variant is a little bit more expensive than the regular product used by them.

In contrast, Davary and Strutton (2014) found that overall consumers often have difficulty accepting the notion that higher prices of organic products are because of the higher value embedded in green products. Instead, the overprices are degrading the likelihood that many consumers will purchase them in future purchases. Further, people believe that organic food is good for health, have higher safety and quality. This belief is associated with a positive attitude towards buying organic food. However, to reach these health benefits, organic food must be affordable. If organic food is not inexpensive, the purchase intention could not convert into purchasing behaviour (Türk and Erciş, 2017). Likewise, if the green products are priced very high, then, they will lose their market acceptability (Mishra and Sharma, 2010). Non-regular green consumers professing their willingness to buy organic food may

not do so because of price differentials and valued benefits in organic food consumption (Shamdasani et al., 1993).

Further, to motivate non-green purchasers to try for the first time the eco-friendly products, a price discount is essential (Chockalingam and Isreal, 2016). As the prices of organic products rise, consumers levels of loyalty towards, and trust in the organic brands are likely to decline. This issue clearly must be addressed by green strategists before they can close the gap that separates consumers' stated intentions to go green from their actual green behaviours (Davari and Strutton, 2014).

On the other side, Anwar and Jan (2016) found that it is not the discounts and offers (price) on organic products which can make people switch from non-organic products to green products, but the factors like health-consciousness of the respondents. Besides that, Essousi and Zahaf (2008) reveal that both green and non-green consumers consider health as the most valuable reason for buying organic food. Regarding the dilemma of price, companies can **persuade** consumers to pay more to generate a benefit to future generations or the natural environment (Chan et al., 2012). Indeed, strategically, companies can opt to either boost their delivery of green principles to the point where those principles justify higher prices in the green mind consumers or reduce the cost. It suggests that retailers should improve price communication by actively communicating and explaining price differences and emphasising the added value instead of lowering the cost of organic products (Davari and Strutton, 2014). Promotion (communication) is discussed extensively in the following section (2.3.3). Anwar and Jan (2016) see green price and green promotion as significant marketing mix components which overly influence consumers attitudes regarding green consumption, in comparison with other elements of the green marketing mix.

2.3.3 Green Promotion

Promotional activities of green brands make sense to consumers who already care for environmental problems and tap into opportunities to avoid damaging the environment (Davari and Strutton, 2014). However, despite green consumers differed from non-green consumers on their perceptions of the promotion of organic products, both groups could be

equally discouraged from adopting green products by the lack of promotion (Tandon and Sethi, 2017). Hence, the latter one could consider as a crucial element of the 4 Ps of the green marketing mix (Anwar and Jan, 2016).

Some say that the most critical factor among all is environmental-friendliness, which further impacts the purchase decisions of organic products. Moreover, many studies, such as the one of Alsmadi (2007) found that consumers demonstrated reasonably high levels of environmental consciousness, respect for environmental legislation, as well as all efforts to protect the environment and preserve its resources. Consumers recognise that man-nature harmony is environmentally imperative for survival (Shamdasani et al., 1993). Green consumers strongly believe that the environment should be well maintained and preserved for future generations (Alsmadi, 2007). On top of that, green consumers feel that the job of environmental protection should involve the government, business, environmentalists, scientists and people as consumers can also play a crucial role apart (Shamdasani et al., 1993).

Further, green consumers are more willing to sacrifice personal comfort and adopt environmentally-friendly behaviours for environmental gains. They are more probable to believe that the ecological crisis is real and are more concerned with the risks posed by environmental threats. Indeed, there is a vital sustainability consciousness argument that drives consumers' choice (Essousi and Zahaf, 2008).

On the other side, the results of Davari and Strutton (2014) suggest that most consumers are not overly aware of the future consequences of their current environmental behaviours. Nevertheless, unfortunately, the stable environmental positive attitudes of the consumers do not seem to materialise in the actual buying behaviour of consumers. Perhaps faithfulness to traditional products and fragile credibility of green claims could have been among the potential drawback to translate good intentions into green buying actions. Furthermore, these barriers could enhance with the lack of environmental concern by many companies, and a public display of consumption values, of which many were inconsiderate of ecological responsibility (Alsmadi, 2007). Using promotion tools offer an excellent opportunity to raise environmental awareness among all consumers and help them to change attitudes and to adopt green purchasing habits (Nadanyiova et al., 2015). Anwar and Jan (2016) found that

promotion techniques can make people switch from non-organic products to organic products.

Furthermore, the results of Bosona and Gebrenset (2018) show that consumers, including those who have a university education, might find it challenging to understand the concept of organic agriculture and to judge whether organic or conventional farming is sustainable. Therefore, more knowledge is required to generate more understanding of sustainability and ecological production concepts. Indeed, according to the research results, critical factors for the development of the organic market are education and information to consumers about organic agriculture and products (Vukasovič, 2016). Moreover, the results of Essousi and Zahaf (2008) indicate that consumers lack more in-depth knowledge with regards to organic food. It is assumed that the segment of green customers will increase hand in hand with increasing well-focused education (Nadanyiova et al., 2015). For these reasons, firms should clearly explain the environmental information about the product, make the customer fully aware and engaged (Nadanyiova et al., 2015).

Additionally, firms must inform consumers about organic products to achieve success with any given product or service offered. If consumers trust the information received and using this information, they become more familiar with green foods. Thus, knowledge can assist in increasing the purchase of organic foods (Türk and Erciş, 2016) Accordingly, Mishra and Sharma (2010) concluded that marketers have the responsibility to make the consumers understand the need for and benefits of organic products as compared to non-green ones.

In the same line, Squires et al. (2013) suggest that an effective marketing strategy would have a focus on the environmental benefits of organic food. The green consumers are interested in the eco-friendly properties of food as well as methods of production and marketing. All put a particular demand on marketers on how to communicate with and sometimes educate the buyers (Squires et al., 2013). Similarly, Song-Turner and Polonsky (2016) found that some green firm's innovative promotion strategies distinguish them from competitors. However, Davari and Strutton (2014) suggest that despite green marketing mix efforts, green firms still strive to persuade consumers that the environmentally friendly values engendered by green brands are worth the extra sacrifice that is needed to acquire

and use them. Perhaps this is because the benefits of organic products are usually long-term in nature (Davari and Strutton, 2014). However, some firms choose to emphasise the functional benefits of products to consumers rather than focusing solely on environmental attributes alone (Türk and Erciş, 2016). Therefore, if the firms were better able to provide potentially green consumers with the sense that they would experience more significant short- and long-term benefits when they elect to go green, the loyalty of such consumers towards and their trust in green brands might improve. Many of those benefits likely would need to be emotional. Strategic attention on psychological values of the sort that could arise once consumers understood they were doing the right thing, perhaps merely for the sake of doing good, and consequently helping others, might prove useful. Such psychological values could arise from accurate positioning initiatives which themselves deliver through intentional effort. This observation should trouble green marketers, given that this exact future-oriented value typically emphasises in green promotions. Green marketers should take note and adjust their green promotional messages (Davari and Strutton, 2014).

Another topic related to green promotion is advertising, i.e., through mass media (TV, radio, internet). Advertising influences and gives early satisfaction to consumers (Tandon and Sethi, 2017). Some green firms use limited paid advertising, and when firms do that, they emphasise their social responsibility through promoting their greenness which embeds in the firm management slogan "using fewer resources to achieve more, better, efficient results" (Song-Turner and Polonsky, 2016). Nowadays, with the use of social media, it makes easier the firms to advertise organic products, i.e., YouTube. In effect, according to (Chitra, 2007) different advertising campaigns can contribute to create or increase the level of awareness of organic products, among consumers

Furthermore, managers should develop more green displays (for instance, those made with recyclable materials, energy-saving and harmless ink) in supermarkets to create intention because people with incomes buy more products based on unplanned decisions than people without good economy (Tandon and Sethi, 2017). Indeed, green as well as non-green consumers, perceive a need for more promotion of organic products, through unique displays, dissemination of information and a distinctive labelling scheme (Shamdasani et al., 1993). Moreover, using on-site demonstrations and project displays allowed the firms to communicate the value better, increase publicity and trust. People who have more

knowledge concerning organic products are willing to purchase green products (Tandon and Sethi, 2017).

Another topic within promotion are the labels. For positioning, unfortunately, green marketing has focused on the product and on the use of ecolabels to inform about green credentials (Rex and Baumann, 2007). In contrast, in traditional or conventional marketing literature, labels have a subordinate role as positioning tools. A label is considered part of the technical information attached to the product. As such, it is classified as part of the 'product' in the traditional marketing mix (Kotler et al., 2001), not as a promotion tool. Conventional marketing literature does not accentuate the importance of labels for product positioning. Instead, the emphasis is on the classic promotion tools such as, for instance, advertising, campaigns, displays, which stands in sharp contrast against the emphasis placed on ecolabels in the more recent green literature (Rex and Baumann, 2007). In this context, green marketing mix should learn from the traditional marketing mix. Moreover, some regular green consumers feel distrust of certified labelling because they do not know what is behind the label organic (Essoussi and Zahaf, 2008).

Finally, green promotion and green price, both are major marketing mix components which make an impact on the consumers' attitude and their purchase behaviour towards organic products. Consumers will be willingly investing for using green products if the promotion may influence the consumers' belief (Anwar and Jan, 2016).

2.3.4 Green Place

Place or distribution are all activities and logistic functions that need to be considered in marketing to make available the product or service. It comprises distribution channels, which are relationships with intermediaries (e.g., agent, wholesaler, retailer) helping a firm reaches its ultimate customers to satisfy their needs and wishes (Zineldin and Philipson, 2007).

For a product to be accessible, a distribution channel is an essential tool in a marketing context to reach each customer and meet their demands. Decisions on how and where to make organic products available are crucial (Essoussi and Zahaf, 2008). Availability of green products is essential for consumers, especially when purchasing staple goods (Türk

and Erciş, 2017). Supply conditions play a crucial role in the development of the organic market and in an increase in the intention to purchase organic food. If consumers can find organic food in conventional supermarkets as well as farmers' markets and health food stores, this condition can trigger the intention to purchase organic foods (Türk and Erciş, 2017). In contrast, the narrow distribution of green products discourages green and non-green consumers from purchasing green products (Essoussi and Zahaf, 2008; Shamdasani et al., 1993).

Some consumers rarely actively search for organic products. However, some green consumers are prone to commit efforts to search for green alternatives, are aware of places where green products are sold and are more enthusiastic about visiting stores that sell these eco-friendly products (Shamdasani et al., 1993).

Likewise, some consumers trust highly in local farmers than superstores, and this also influences the choice, as does the direct marketing of food from the local suppliers to consumers (Essoussi and Zahaf, 2008). However, niche distribution (end consumers buying from the farming) does not seem to be a right choice for organic products since consumers should see the green products where they shop (Mishra and Sharma, 2012).

Organic food consumers will choose the store and product considering factors such as the type of retailer and the level of trust in the certification process. Consumers feel confidence and trust when knowing the distribution, labelling and certification of organic products (Essoussi and Zahaf, 2008).

Many firms ignore this marketing mix element (green place) when designing green marketing strategies. Strategists should address this to the extent possible, for example, third-party logistics providers (e.g., transportation suppliers) should also align with the green values of end-use consumers (Davari and Strutton, 2014), because physical distribution could be involved, both, in the storage or/and in other part of the logistics process, in environmental damage (Tandon and Sethi, 2017).

Some green companies seek strategically to implement innovative practices such as alternative distribution networks. To reduce costs, firms choose short distribution channels.

For example, some green producers work with high-end retailers for their products and reduce the number of intermediaries. Selecting high-end retailers also reinforces the high-end product image. Others chose to establish a joint venture with local producers which assists them in reducing transportation and logistics costs, and they sell directly to the end-users in local markets; some others using online marketing as part of their distribution networks, thus allowing them to have better direct relationships with their customers (Song-Turner and Polonski, 2016).

3. Research Methodology

The study executes according to the qualitative research paradigm, which tends to be theory generating, and *deductive* (working up from the theory), this type of research can take a prolonged time to finish because it is interpretative and there is no formula (Braun and Clarke, 2013). However, working from the existent theory of green marketing mix, and organising the interview according to themes and sub-themes led to be efficient with the time. Since this is qualitative research generates not generalisable, but rich data and thick descriptions, and a lot of intricate details obtained from each participant not many take part. Indeed, this study aims to gain no publicly revealed information from Swedish supermarkets. Indeed, the mathematical research methodology (quantitative) is by no means, appropriate for the intention of this study.

Qualitative research does not entail making statements about relationships between a dependent variable and an independent variable, as is common in quantitative studies because its purpose is not to test hypotheses (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Therefore, the reason of using qualitative research is because the paper aims to answer four research questions and by doing it, obtain a deep understanding of the meaning (Braun and Clarke, 2013) of the *green marketing mix* in the Swedish food retailers and its influence on green food consumption. Hence, the only way to do it is through face to face and semi-structured interview, which would not be possible through quantitative research which uses a fixed questionnaire or survey to collect data, cutting off the options of deeps answers and the possibility of ask further about the questioning.

The research questions in this qualitative study are statements that identify the phenomenon to be studied. It tells the readers what the researcher wants explicitly to know about this subject. Qualitative research is suitable to fulfil the purpose of this study. Besides that, the four specific research questions begin with the words: “how” and “what” harmonise perfectly with the chosen qualitative research methodology (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

3.1 Sampling Strategy

In this study, the sampling is purposive, which implies selecting participant son the basis that they can provide rich data to analyse (Patton, 2002). In this study, the participants chosen are the leading Swedish supermarkets. One of them is ICA Kvantum with 1300 stores in Sweden, withholding 36% of market shares (Icagruppen, 2018). The "ICA idea" is a business type, where a local store has its owner. The ICA head-office in Stockholm is the controlling shareholder of each shop, but at the same time, all the stores over the whole Sweden conform together a holding, which is the controlling shareholder of the entire retailer business in Sweden (ICA Sweden), this gives to each shop the power to make its own decisions, e.g. marketing and purchase decisions. Hence, this unique business model allows the owners to have total independence, but head- office (headquarter) set up in Stockholm could suggest and coordinate with the owner of each shop some business activities. However, the last word comes from each owner (Table 1)

The other two interviewees decided to keep anonymous, but one of them works for a known supermarket, which accounts for 21.5% of the grocery retail market in Sweden. The headquarter make the decisions of this supermarket. It explains why the communicator from head-office participated in this study in addition to the local store manager (Table 1).

The Swedish supermarkets involved in this study, together, have 60% of the total market share and are leading the Swedish market. Therefore, the stores in this study constitute a representative purposive sample.

3.2 Data Collection Techniques

Qualitative researchers mostly seek to understand perceptions and knowledge through in-depth and intensive interviewing (Patton, 1990). Accordingly, in this study, primary data is collected from interviews with the managers/ owners of the leading Swedish food retailers in the shops located in Sundsvall city (Table 1).

The *interviews* conducted have the following characteristics: in-depth, semi-structured, and face to face. In-depth, by having open-ended questions which encouraged the owners and store managers to give detail answers and discuss what is important to them; semi-structured, because it was flexible and responsive to the participants. The last three questions shown in appendix 1 came up naturally with the flow of the first interview. Afterwards, the three new inquiries constituted part of the following dialogues. The transcription of the first interview shed valuable outcomes for the study and fit the research questions, so the same queries served for the rest of the conversations. The face-to-face allowed a closer interaction, likewise read the body language to perceive if they have understood. It offered the opportunity to clarify some queries. In sum, there was excellent communication with the participants.

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Three of the four interviewees requested the guide-interview in advance. One of them asked for a translator of English language into Swedish. In this case, the translation was approved by the interviewee after each answer.

The usage of the academic searchers Google Scholar and Primo from Mid Sweden University, as well as the business database EBSCO, allowed gathering the secondary data from peer-reviewed articles. The articles chosen were those most focused on the thesis´s topic and best suited to provide an answer to the given research questions, there are both, recent literature from 2015-2019 regarding green marketing mix and organic consumption and also a few articles of the classical marketing literature, i.e. from Kotler. The gathering of secondary data served to find the academic research gap and support the questions for the interview.

Supermarket	Interviewee	Who makes marketing decisions	Interview Time
Nacksta- Sundsvall	Store manager	Local shop	1.5 hrs
Supermarket "X"- Alnö	Owner	Local shop	1.5 hrs
Supermarket "Y" Sundsvall	- Store manager (*) -Communicator (headquarter)	Headquarter	- 2 hrs - 30 min

Table 1. Details about Interviews
(*) He has been working over 15 years for Supermarket "Y" in different counties of Sweden.

3.3 Qualitative Analytic Methods

To analyse primary data, collected from the interviews, the approach to be used is *thematic analysis (TA)* (see table 1) which is a method of data widely used analysis for identifying themes and patterns of meaning across a dataset (Braun and Clarke, 2013). There are various types of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013). This study used a theoretical and *deductive* thematic analysis (TA), because themes are selected to tell the story such as segmenting and targeting, the 4 PS of Green Marketing Mix (price, product, promotion, place); and I observe and analyse the behaviour of the firms regarding green marketing mix and organic consumption. Scholars such as Bernytė (2018), De Chiara (2016), Zineldin and Philipson (2007) have carried out previous researches on the green marketing mix topic using the method of qualitative content analysis (QCA). QCA is very similar to thematic analysis, which is the chosen method in this thesis, the difference is that thematic analysis is a whole methodology that allows more interpretation of the content, while QCA is just a method (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

Themes (categories)	Sub-themes	Authors	No Quest.
Segmenting	Based on attitudes, values, knowledge, principles, personality.	Tandon and Sethi (2017); Bernyte (2018)	1
	Levels of organic food consumption.	Chitra (2007); Essoussi and Zahaf (2008)	1
	Organic/ environmentally concerned consumers vs non-organic/non-environmentally concerned consumers	Davari and Strutton (2014); Tandon and Sethi (2007).	1
Targeting	According to the levels of greenness	Dangelico and Vocalelli (2017).	2-3
	Environmentally and non-environmentally concerned consumers need to be target differently	Davari and Stutton (2014).	2-3
	Only target the greener consumer	Tandon and Sethi (2017)	2-3
	Whole market (organic and non-organic consumers)	Dangelico and Vocalelli (2017); Tandon and Sethi (2017)	2-3
Green Product	Good for health	Türk and Ercis (2016); Bosona and Gebrenset (2018).	2-3
	Good for the environment	Mishra and Sharma (2010); Tandon and Sethi (2017); Alsmadi (2007); Anwar and Jan (2016).	4
	Unique properties and characteristics	Essoussi and Zafah (2008); Mishra and Sharma (2010). Vukasovič (2016); Alsmadi (2007); Anwar and Jan (2016)	5
Green Price	A higher price is a barrier	Alsmadi, (2007); Davary and Strutton (2014); Türk and Erciş (2017); Mishra and Sharma (2010); Shamdasani et al. (1993).	6-9
	Willing to pay a higher price	Mishra and Sharma (2010); Nagar (2013)	6-9
	Value > Price	Shamdasani et al. (1993); Nagar (2013); Davari and Strutton (2014)	6-9
Promotion	Education/ Information	Nadanyiova et al. (2015); Vukasovič (2016); Essousi and Zahaf (2008); Mishra and Sharma (2010); Squires et al. (2013)	13
	Advertising	Tandon and Sethi (2017); Song-Turner and Polonsky (2016); Chitra (2007).	14
	Displays	Tandon and Sethi (2017).	15
	Labelling	Shamdasani et al. (1993); Rex and Baumann (2007); Essoussi and Zahaf (2008).	17-20
Green	Local and imported organic food	Essoussi and Zahaf (2008).	22-23
Place	Distribution channels	Shamdasani et al. (1993); Mishra and Sharma (2012).	23
	Eco-transportation	Davari and Strutton (2014); Tandon and Sethi (2017).	24
	Availability	Türk and Erciş (2017).	25

Table 2.- Research Method Thematic Analysis: Themes and sub-themes treated in this thesis.

3.4 Quality Criteria to Qualitative Research

Qualitative research, such as thematic analysis has its specific techniques on how to demonstrate quality criteria such as *member checking* and triangulation. In contrast, quantitative research, by being a fixed method based on numbers, has other quality criteria such as reliability, validity, generalisability and transferability (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

This study followed the *member checking* quality criteria for evaluating qualitative research. It refers to the practice of monitoring the transcription of the interviews with the participants. It typically involves presenting a draft written or oral report of the research, or just of the analysis, to some or all the participants and asking them to comment on the trustworthiness or authenticity of what has been produced (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Indeed, the interviewee received a draft for their review. Besides that, the interviews took place during 1.5- 2 hours, to make sure that they understood each question and clarification when something was not clear enough to ask them again in easier words. It happens due to the Swedish mother tongue of the participants.

Moreover, in the approach to thematic analysis, it was identified a checklist of 15 criteria for proper thematic analysis research (Braun and Clarke, 2013), this study used the most relevant standards taken from Braun and Clarke (2013) as follows:

- The interviews were voice-recorded and then transcribed as spoken, they were in the English language, and only one of them in the Swedish language, at the request of the interviewee. This study counted with the support of an interpreter in-situ, whose translation into English was approved by the interviewee and was voice-recorded.
- The interviews were formulated, taking into account all the themes and sub-themes presented in the theoretical framework chapter. The categorisation of the questions allowed the data collection according to the topics and sub-topics, and it facilitated the codification of each answer within them. Each response was given equal attention in the coding process. All relevant extracts of the interview coming from additional improvised questions, which flowed during the meeting were collated and categorised in each theme. The themes and sub-themes have been checked against each other and back to the original data set (transcription).

- Data and analysis match each other. They are presented together in chapter four.

4. Findings and Analysis

In this section is presented the information obtained from the interviews conducted to the store managers or owners of the leading Swedish supermarkets. While the findings are presented and classified in themes, subsequently it is analysed on the grounds of the theories about segmentation, targeting, green marketing mix (product, price, promotion, place) introduced in the previous chapter.

4.1 Segmentation and Targeting

The segmentation of consumers in ICA Kvantum is into eight types of consumers, the most relevant, according to the Store manager are three: organic, shopping lovers and home fixers. One of these segments are organic consumers, other are shopping lovers, who could be a little bit interested in a few green products and home fixers, who do not care green items, they look for cheap, simple products and mostly buy online.

The segmentation of the consumers of Supermarket "X" is provided by the headquarter in Stockholm, one of the segments is called healthy consumers, organic and non-organic consumers who often consume fresh food are within this category.

Swedish supermarkets are focused on satisfying the needs of their consumers, which is the basis of traditional marketing theory, mainly because different customers have different needs. However, by doing so, these supermarkets are not necessarily somehow considering a minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment and improve society and human welfare. Therefore, some can say that most of these supermarkets have not been using green marketing mix, since green marketing also has an environmental and social dimension (Wymer and Polonsky, 2015; Abzari et al., 2013; Kumar et al., 2013).

They are segmenting the consumers *determining who are the environmentally-conscious consumers* (Tandon and Sethi, 2007) and who are not environmentally-conscious consumers

(Davari and Strutton, 2014). As well as, they are not using the traditional way of segmenting based on demographic characteristics (age, occupation). Opposite these supermarkets classify the consumers based on the purchase habits which build the identity of the consumers (Bernyte, 2018).

On the other side, the suggestions of the segmentation by Chitra (2007) which consist of classifying the consumers just by the degree of organic consumption do not match with the segmentation policies of both any supermarket in this study.

The supermarkets ICA Kvantum and Supermarket "X" know how many organic regular and non- regular consumers have each other (Essoussi and Zahaf, 2008).

Once these supermarkets (ICA Kvantum and Supermarket “X” have segmented the consumers, they use this information to buy the quantity of organic and non-organic food and organise the store according to the preferences of the customers. For instance, the knowledge of the segmentation is used to know how the whole store will go. Whether the shop needs more cheap or organic products or not. This data is used to build the next step and the direction that should take the shop.

Supermarket “X” owner pointed out that they occasionally target the “greener consumers” those who are within the `healthy´ segment with some special discounts for organic food, just as Tandon and Sethi (2017) stated, once the segmentation ends, then target environmentally and non-environmentally concerned consumers differently. Likewise, the targeting strategy of Supermarket “X” confirm that the same marketing strategies that would work well for green consumers may prove of little value to non-green consumers (Davari and Strutton, 2014).

On the other side, the communicator of the Supermarket “Y” replied *"As part of our membership program, all of the members get the same discount for organic food when we have our membership days for example. We do not target specific customers to make them buy organic food*”. In addition, the Supermarket “Y” *store manager, replied "We have segmented our consumers in three big groups , "Price Hunters", "Families with children" and " Exclusive Clients", the ecological or green consumers are mostly in the families group,*

because they want the best for their children, some in the exclusive clients, who are used to expensive and imported items"

The targeting approach of the Supermarket “Y” is targeting the whole market, through the mass marketing of organic products (Dangelico and Vocalelli, 2017). Insofar ICA Kvantum and Supermarket "X" use the information of segmentation to organise the grocery shop for all the customers; it might interpret how that they are also targeting, mostly, the whole market.

The supermarkets in this study do not apply the approach of redirecting consumers towards environment-friendly products (Tandon and Sethi, 2017).

4.2 Green Product

Some studies like one from Mishra and Sharma (2010) have found that other elements of green marketing (i.e., price, place, promotion) cannot surpass the quality of the right product. In this context, the manager of ICA-Kvantum store manager was asked if the supermarket considers highlighting the benefits of organic products like healthier, freshness, nutritive, when offering to the customer, he responded "*we plan to rebuild the area of vegetables and fruits, located in the entrance of the supermarket. We have planned to set up a "health room", where will be displayed healthy products since this supermarket has obtained the information that consumers are aware of the health. However, in this section both, organic and non-organic vegetables and fruits will be offered, as well as other processed food considered as healthy, e.g. food without sugar”.*

On the other hand, the Supermarket "X" owner declared "*we have not used health and good for the environment when offering organic food”.* Supermarket “Y” answered *“we have occasionally used some announcements in the shop to highlight the environmental-friendly properties. However, we never say to our clients, buy organic food, because it is better than non-organic. We do not make comparisons to each with the other. We expect that clients compare themselves".*

It seems like these supermarkets are not leveraging from organic food. Otherwise, these supermarkets could have drawn upon the first rule of green marketing which is focusing on

customer benefits which is the primary reason why consumers buy certain products in the first place (Davari and Strutton, 2014). Indeed, the results of Tandon and Sethi (2017) about that companies have started to produce or sell environmental-friendly products is confirmed, but it is not approved the part that companies have tried to take 'green marketing' concept to the consumers (Tandon and Sethi, 2017).

According to the organic food sales report of the shop, the Supermarket "X" owner stated, "*the organic food consumption is slowly increasing, more than what we expect"*. On the other side, ICA Kvantum store manager declared *"consumers do not buy organic food, although the online survey reveals that the customers like organic food".* These responses are converse to what Bosona and Gebrenset (2018) found, that with increasing consumer awareness of sustainable and higher standards of food production, there is an increasing trend in organic food production and consumption due to organic food production is associated with consumer health, animal welfare, food security, as well as environmental advantages.

Additionally, ICA Kvantum supermarket store manager said, *"our customers say that they prefer organic food and do not purchase organic food, as they say*". Similarly, Supermarket "X" owner said, *"clients do not know what organic food is, they cannot find the differences between organic and non-organic food".* Both answers coincide with the result of Rex and Baumann (2007) about that there is scarce evidence concerning widespread consumer demand for organic products enough to create meaningful profit incentives for industry to produce more green products.

ICA Kvantum supermarket has the information that customers are aware of health, hence this store associates the awareness of the health of its customers with fresh food such as vegetables, fruits and some processed food without sugar. Nevertheless, organic food is not being exclusively associated with health and differentiated from non-regular one, by any of these supermarkets. Opposite to Rex and Baumann (2007) found in their study.

Besides that, the ICA Kvantum store manager responded: "*We believe that people already know that organic food has unique characteristics, e.g., quality, safety, freshness, in comparison with non-organic food. In this line, we do not need to tell the people this"*.

However, the store manager mentioned afterwards *"giving the step of creating a "healthy room" in the entrance of the shop. They might step forward in the future to encourage clients towards organic food consumption. Lack of time is the main barrier to doing this"*

Likewise, Supermarket "X" owner declared *"we could be better and try to inform the characteristics of the organic food" For the moment, there is also non-organic food considered as healthy too".* In the same line, Supermarket "Y" communicator said: "s*ince our organic food brand and our genuine hard work to offer our customers organic food has been something, we have done for close to 30 years, it's a natural part of our work, but we don't consider organic food to be against non-organic one"*

These findings do not apply the green product strategy suggested by many scholars (e.g., Vukasovič, 2016; Alsmadi, 2007; Anwar and Jan, 2016). These scholars concluded that a green product strategy is when firms highlight the green product's *unique properties* and *characteristics* such as quality, freshness, nutritional value, organically grown and safety, who found that the most important reasons for purchasing organic fruits and vegetables. At the same time, the supermarkets are not applying a green marketing strategy of focusing on the positive impact on the *environment* when consuming organic products (Alsmadi, 2007; Anwar and Jan, 2016).

Firms are choosing as a strategy not to emphasise the functional benefits of organic products to consumers and not focusing and the environmental attributes of organic food, totally converse what was suggested by Song-Turner and Polonski (2016). The supermarkets are also acting opposite to what Mishra and Sharma (2010) recommend, that is making sure that the consumers are aware of the matter that their product attempts to tackle.

4.3 Green Price

The ICA Kvantum supermarket store manager declared "*the organic food is mostly more expensive than non-organic food. The price difference variates, it depends on the product and season. The organic food prices are set higher than non-organic food because we also pay a higher price when purchasing the organic food to our main supplier, ICA headquarters"*. Likewise, the owner of Supermarket "X" replied: *"The price of organic food varies, depending on the type of food. The organic food price is around 5 to 10% higher than non-organic food*". These answers agree on the findings of Alsmadi (2007) in the part that says: some organic products may have an extra cost, i.e., using costly procedures to make the product environmentally friendly can offset by charging a higher price.

"Higher price of organic food does not affect the sales only if the consumers are ecological. Organic food consumers buy the products without looking at the price" replied the ICA Kvantum store manager. It comes to the same conclusions reached by Shamdasani et al. (1993), for regular consumers of organic food the value of consuming organic food outweighs the cost of buying them; and by Mishra and Sharma (2010) who found that green consumers are longing to pay more to maintain a cleaner and greener environment. Regular consumers professing their desire to buy organic food may not do so because of price differentials, but due to valued benefits in organic food consumption. This answer, likewise, coincides with the findings of Nagar (2013) upon green consumers are also eager to pay over prices for environmentally-safe products than non-green consumers, as they perceive organic products have more value than non-organic products. Inclusive, non-green purchasers would buy if the eco-friendly variant is a bit more expensive than the standard product used by them (Chockalingam and Isreal, 2016).

In contrast, Supermarket "X" owner answered *"If the price difference is only some crowns more, it does not affect sales, but if the price is much higher the sales are affected, it is hard to sell. Depends on the product, for instance, organic vegetables could be 10% higher and people still buy them, because the product by itself is not expensive, but regards of the meat turn out to be if organic meat price is 10% or upper, people do not buy the product, because*

meat becomes more expensive than it already was". Indeed, if organic food is not affordable, the purchase intention is not converted into purchasing behaviour (Türk and Erciş, 2017).

Regarding whether the price is a barrier of organic food consumption or not, and if so, how supermarkets cope with this problem, the answers were: ICA Kvantum store manager: "*The price is a barrier, we sell organic food more expensive because it has a higher cost …". "We cannot do anything because ICA headquarter sells us the products to a higher price in comparison with non-organic food".* It might suggest that ICA headquarter, as other firms charging a premium price for an organic product because many environmentally products cost more due to lack of economies of scale and the use of higher-quality ingredients (Mishra and Sharma, 2010). Green products' generally higher prices are affecting the probability that consumers will purchase them in future purchases (Davary and Strutton, 2014).

To the same question, the Supermarket "X" owner replied, *"organic food price is one the main barriers for consumers to buy them, that is why we lower the margin to make attractive the prices of organic food".* Even though it suggests that retailers should improve *price communication* by actively communicating and justifying price differences and emphasising the added value, instead of reducing the price of organic products (Davari and Strutton, 2014), however, there is also another problem "*people cannot find differences between organic and non-organic, they do not trust organic food because the food comes from abroad".* This statement could coincide with Davary and Strutton (2014), who found that consumers often have difficulty accepting the notion that higher prices of organic products are because of the higher value embedded in green products.

The Supermarket "Y" communicator retorted*, "It is a difficult question to pinpoint due to what season it is if we have discounts and the purchase price. So organic food is not in general much more expensive anymore".* This answer was reinforced by the store manager *"the price gap between organic and no-organic food prices are minimal, nothing compared with 10 or 20 years ago, even there is much non-organic food which is cheaper o has the same price of non-organic food, e.g., bananas. If we find that an organic food product has*

the same price as a regular one, we only buy organic products to offer to our clients. We want the best for them."

The above answers indicate that most food retailers are making efforts to promote organic food consumption with more attractive prices. For instance, they have been sacrificing part of their profits. It appears to be that these firms are taking into account that if the organic products are priced very high, then, the market acceptability of them will decrease (Mishra and Sharma, 2010). Further, the Supermarket "X" price strategy, is addressing the issue of organic products price, maybe because when price rise, consumers levels of loyalty toward and trust in the associated brand is likely to decline. This strategy also helps to close the gap that separates consumers' stated intentions to go green from their actual green behaviours (Davari and Strutton, 2014).

To the question whether non-organic food is more profitable than organic food, ICA Kvantum manager replied "*there is any difference in the percentage of profit when ICA Kvantum set the price up for organic and non-organic food. The profit rate is the same by selling both organic and non-organic food.* Nonetheless, Supermarket "X" proprietor answered *"unfortunately it is most profitable to sell non-organic food because we obtain a higher margin. We sell organic food with a lower margin because we know that it is better food for our clients. For instance, bananas, coffee".* The supermarket "X" approach goes hand in hand with Anwar and Jan (2016) who concluded that price and promotion are major marketing mix components which make a better impact over the attitude of consumers regarding green consumption. On the other side, supermarket "Y" store manager said that if they have sacrificed their profits to sell organic food, especially organic meat, because this product is hard to be sold out. Regarding fresh food, they try to earn less to push the purchasing of organic food" It implies that offering non-organic food is less profitable mostly for the supermarkets.

4.4 Green Promotion

Regarding the question about communication strategy to offer ecological food, the interviewees reply:

"We do not use any communication strategy to persuade consumers to purchase ecological food … The magazines or brochures that the head office in Stockholm company sends out to each consumer houses might contain special price offers of organic food or not. We do not persuade customers because they must choose between organic and non-organic food by themselves" asserted the ICA-Kvantum store manager. Similarly, Supermarket "X" holder declared: *"we do not really have a communication strategy to persuade consumers to buy organic food, but we can be better out*". *"We do not use methods of persuading in our communication strategy to make consumers buy organic food…"* replied the communicator and store manager of Supermarket "Y".

To the question of whether the supermarkets have an environmental concern or not that influence the consumer purchase behaviour, they replied:

"ICA Kvantum has a big responsibility with the environment, the way how works in different processes, for example, eco-friendly refrigeration, reducing the food-wasting, e.g., we order to produce juice with fruits and vegetables that we could not sell on time".

"Supermarket "X" is working a lot on the favour of the environment, for instance, reducing carbon footprint, saving energy, reducing wasting food by selling them to lower price even without earning any profit sometimes. The vegetables that we can no longer sell in the store give them for free to the rabbit's farmers. In the future, we are planning to sell the rabbit meat in the store. This project is just in the beginning. It is better than throw away food. However, we have not informed our customers about the sustainable behaviour of the supermarket. If customers know that their supermarket is doing good things for the environment, this could lead to the consumers to start buying organic food. We will think more about it. We have a lot to learn about environmental marketing" remarked the Supermarket "X" owner.

"Our brand of ecological food has become a household name and has proven to be a popular brand regardless of the changing food trends" stated the Supermarket "Y" communicator. The store manager added "*we are carrying out the project VI-SKOGEN (We-Forest) which allows our clients to buy a tree for 20 Swedish crowns to help supermarket "Y" to fight against the threats and poverty of people affected by climate change in developing countries". This project focuses on addressing sustainable issues like poverty, depletion of forests in states with these problems. It could be seen as a remarkable strategy if they actively spread this information among the clients and society.*

In sum, regards of pro-environmental behaviour, the supermarkets in this study seem to be aware that lack of environmental concern by firms could promote the not engagement of the customers with green consumption (Alsmadi, 2007). In this sense, they are making some efforts to show environmental responsibility.

The Supermarket "X" owner declared "*many people do not see the benefits of organic food or disagree with them…"*. This statement goes along with Alsmadi (2007) who hold that may be weak credibility of green allegations could have been among the potential barriers to translate good intentions into green buying actions.

"It is difficult to convince consumers who already do not believe in organic food and to those consumers who believe in organic food are easier to convince…We address this problem by pushing away to the end of the store and take away candies from the tills. We put vegetables and healthier food (ecological and non-ecological) forwards, in more seeable places" pointed out, the Supermarket "X" owner. As Davari and Strutton (2014) found, firms struggle to convince consumers that the environmentally friendly values of green brands are worth the extra sacrifice that is required to acquire and use them. Perhaps this is because the benefits of organic products are usually long-term in nature.

As previously, the supermarkets remark their environmental-friendly behaviour in the interview. However, they do not report these sustainable policies to consumers. Except for the supermarket "Y" which has posted on Facebook its viable project, unfortunately, has only got very few 'likes'. They could improve this because consumers are willing to buy more from companies that share their values and principles (Bernyte, 2018).

Additionally, according to the answers of ICA Kvantum, “X” and “Y” supermarkets representatives, they have not been, neither educating consumers about short term and long-term benefits of organic food nor emphasising psychological values**.** Opposite to what Davari and Strutton, (2014) suggested, these companies are not explaining the environmental information about the product to make the customer fully aware and engaged as Nadanyiova et al. (2015) by emphasising the functional benefits of products. Additionally, these supermarkets are not informing consumers about organic products and their practical benefits to succeed (Song- Turner and Polonsky, 2016 and Türk and Erciş, 2016). The supermarkets should implement this innovative promotion strategy because if consumers trust the information received and using this information, they become more familiar with organic foods. Thus, knowledge can contribute to increasing the purchase of organic food (Türk and Erciş, 2016).

Regarding advertising, neither ICA nor Supermarket "X" have used advertising to promote just organic food, according to the declaration of each representative. Whereas, the communicator of Supermarket "Y" said *"A lot of the advertisement makes the office in Stockholm, as a way of making sure all of our supermarkets, regardless of where in Sweden, spread the same message…Our customers are often well aware of our organic brand and what it stands for because we have been working on this for over 20 years".*

On the one hand, the manager of ICA Kvantum and Supermarket “X” declared respectively, that have not been using banners or displays to promote green food. It is divergent with the idea that green, as well as non-green consumers, perceive a need for more promotion of organic products, through *displays* and dissemination of information (Shamdasani et al., 1993). However, “*we can improve that*”, expressed the owner of Supermarket “X” in regards with installing banners or displays in the shop to promote organic food. On the other hand, the Supermarket “Y” manager declared “*we used to put some displays pointing out that organic food takes care of the world. We place these displays next to the organic food in the shop. We do this 3-5 times a year."*

Regarding promotional campaigns, Ica Kvantum replied: "*no, we have not made campaigns because it would cost too much money*”. On the other side, Supermarket “X” owner

responded "*yes, sometimes we sent postcards containing discount prices of organic food. It works quite well. It was done three times in 2018, but the offers mostly are done in the shop. Campaigns with reduced prices increase the sales of organic food, but it is hard to say if it would work in the long-term or it just works for short-term during the lasting of the offer with special price*". Just as Chitra (2007) recommended, organise various types of promotional campaigns to lift the level of awareness. However, it is an excellent point to remark the experience of the Supermarket "X" owner that 'special prices campaigns' only works in short-term. Therefore, it would be missing long-term strategies to increase organic food sales-consumption.

Additionally, supermarket "Y" started running in April a pro-organic food consumption campaign through the internet. They offer to give double points in the loyalty card by buying organic food than they usually give for buying non-organic food. Nonetheless, the most outstanding campaign was made by the supermarket "Y" to promote and persuade the population to swap by organic food. The store manager described "*This supermarket launched on May 2015 an online campaign called: 'The effect of organic food' It is a display of an experiment where a family takes urine samples and discover they have insecticides, fungicides inside their bodies; the next two weeks this family decided to eat only organic. After two weeks, they tested their urine again and discovered that nearly all traces of the pesticides had completely vanished. This online campaign was watched 1.8 billion times on the internet and was the cover of the leading newspapers around the world".*

The positioning of the green brand of supermarket "y" has been enhanced by, among other promotional activities, this touchy and successful audio-visual campaign to promote organic food consumption. The video ends with the following phrase "Supermarket "Y" is a Swedish supermarket chain that promises to do everything it able to support organic farming and urges others who sell food to do the same".

Furthermore, regarding labels,*" we label the shelves of the shop containing organic products with a sign to differentiate them from non-organic ones" asserted the ICA store manager.* Shamdasani et al. (1993), green products should have distinctive labelling scheme to promote them. The store manager additionally affirmed *"the sales are not increasing as we expected"* replied the store manager. *"If the label of the organic product is big, it is easy to*

be seen by the client, but if it is small, not. It is not a promotion tool if we do not place the organic food separately from the non-organic food" expressed Supermarket "X" owner.

In some measure, the supermarkets are trying to support labels of organic food with other technique promotions such as labelling the shelves (ICA and "Y" supermarkets) and putting apart the organic food (Supermarket "X"), these are right decisions in accordance with the scholars (e.g., Rex and Bauman, 2007; Kotler et. al., 2001). Nonetheless, their respective sales report indicates that the techniques used appear to be insufficient to encourage consumers to choose organic food in their purchase decision.

To the question, if the supermarkets have used other promotions different from the above mentioned (i.e., education, campaigns, advertising, displays, labels), the answers were:

"Not really, the magazines or brochures send out to each consumer houses which could contain price offers of organic food or not," said the ICA manager.

On the other side, the Supermarket "X" owner answered "*most of the decisions happen in the stores" so that the most effective could be discounts close to store, postcards and inside the shop. Put a sign of price offers by the product works well, to promote products in the short-term, but long-term it needs something big. Long-term would imply to make big campaigns on TV and media to raise awareness the consumers about what their purchase behaviour is impacting the environment negatively. Like the campaigns against the plastic, for example. It is also essential to show the local environment impact to touch more consumers."*

By doing so, Supermarket "X" might be motivating, even, non-green purchasers to try for the first time the eco-friendly variant by discounting in price (Chockalingam and Isreal, 2016).

"…We are also used to have demonstrations in the shop, and we give us to try organic food to customers who visit the shop" affirmed the Supermarket "X" and "Y" representatives. Using on-site demonstrations allowed the firms to communicate the value better, increase publicity and trust (Tandon and Sethi, 2017). Even more "*supermarket "Y" organises 2-3 times a year an event to promote organic and fair- trade coffee, customers can visit different kinds of organic coffees…*" replied its store manager.

4.5 Green Place

"Regards to fresh organic food, *95% of the organic food comes from other countries, e.g., Spain and Italy, and only 5% is coming from Sweden (local), e.g., tomatoes from Härnosand. This grounds on that in Sweden, there are not many organic local producers, and the weather does not help much, e.g., orange cannot grow in Sweden. The processed organic food 70% imported, 30% Swedish"* stated ICA manager.

"The 65% of de food is from abroad (e.g., banana for Costa Rica); 35% Sweden (carrots, apples, pears) … W*e try to buy organic and non-organic food from local producers"* said Supermarket "X" owner.

Consumers trust is higher for local farmers than superstores, and this also influences the choice, as does the direct marketing of food from a local supplier to consumer (Essoussi and Zahaf, 2008). It might be a reason why organic food consumption is not much as it should be.

"The availability is ok for the moment, we expect to sell more organic products, and we hope that customers consume more and more organic products" declared the manager of ICA. Similarly, said the Supermarket "X" owner *"the availability is quite good. There have rare occasions been someone who asked for a specific food that it has not been available in the shop, e.g., fish".* According to the supermarket "Y" store manager "every time more and more consumers are interested in buying organic food is growing, the supermarket is always trying to satisfy the needs of the green consumers widening the variety of green food. Almost everything has its organic version" he said. In sum, the availability is quite excellent in all supermarkets. If consumers can find organic food in conventional supermarkets as well as farmers' markets and health food stores, this condition can trigger the intention to purchase organic foods (Türk and Erciş, 2017).

According to the testimony of both managers, there is intermediation in the distribution channel. The leading organic food supplier (95%) is the headquarter whose big storage is in Dalarna county, further south of Sweden. The supermarket headquarters purchase large quantities and sell to different supermarkets of the same brand around Sweden. It would

come to be a kind of wholesaler. Just about 5% of the supermarkets buy directly from the farming's. The head office of these supermarkets also supplies transportation. They use regular trucks, those who work with fuel to transport the goods. Although, the Supermarket "X" owner commented, *"…my supplier tried to transport the goods by train, but it did not work well, so they had to go back to use trucks."*. The unique business model that these supermarkets have with the headquarter makes them buy organic food and the rest of the products from it. Hence, the distribution has an intermediary supplier (the headquarter) duly. Therefore, the suggestions of Song-Turner and Polonski (2016) about alternative distribution networks to shorten the chain and buy directly from the farming´s are not able to be implemented for these supermarkets. Similarly, "*Supermarket "Y" centralises the large-scale purchasing in its regional headquarter they distribute the goods to the stores within the region…"* but at least they use partly public transportation *"we use both means, train and regular trucks rented from Postnord to transport the goods…"*

In sum, is confirmed that many companies, such these supermarkets, on the one hand, ignore this element of green marketing mix 'green place' when designing green marketing strategies. For example, transportation logistics providers should also align with the green values of end-use consumers (Davari and Strutton, 2014), because physical distribution could be involved, both, in the storage and of the logistics process, in environmental damage (Tandon and Sethi, 2017). In this line, their supplier could switch to friendly-environmental transport like electric trucks. On the other hand, when the ICA store manager commented "*we have an online channel to reach our customers. The segment of "home fixers" are those who mostly use this channel*" confirm that they use a distribution channel online as part of their distribution networks, which allows them to have better direct relationships with their customers, as it suggests Song-Turner and Polonski (2016). However, the clients that use this channel are those who are not green-consumers.

4.6 Organic food sales and consumption

"We do not sell all the organic food as we would like to do it. However, the amount of the organic food offer is increasing over time in our shop, because the people demand more and more of ecological food" said the Supermarket "X" owner. Similarly, declared the

Supermarket "Y" communicator "*with the demand for more organic food from aware customers over the past few years, our organic brand has grown even more. Regardless of the competition from other companies. It is a solid brand"*. Hence, there is a likelihood of more and more eco- friendly food products to pour into the market as the concern for an eco-friendly food product is increasing (Chitra, 2007).

"We have not had wasting problems, neither with milk and other dairy products nor with organic processed food because they have the longest best before date. However, we have wasted the most expensive products such as meat, sausages, cheeses, even we have tried to low the prices of the organic food, often without any profit, before the expiry date. In the end, after many attempts, for instance, we stop selling organic minced beef and sausages, because it did not succeed in sales", declared the Supermarket "X" owner.

"The organic food consumption is increasing slower than we expected. We do not have the information about percentages. People prefer local food produced. For them, local food is organic food, and even the food does not contain the label as organic food. When customers read the labels of the organic food and see that food coming from other countries, e.g., Ireland, they could consider that it is not organic anymore, although the label said that it is organic. Even the customers who want to behave environmentally, they could find confusing what they choose to buy" expressed the Supermarket "X" owner. In the same way, Essoussi and Zahaf (2008) found that some regular green consumers feel distrust of certified labelling because they do not know what is behind the label organic.

The findings above confirm the official statistical information which shows organic food sales has been growing slowly. In total, the sales of organic food were SEK 28.8 billion in 2018, a 4% increase compared with SEK 27.9 billion in 2017. The latter grew 9.8% in comparison with 2016, which in turn means an increase of 8.7% compared with 2015 (Ekoweb 2019). Inclusive the last year (2018) the growth rate was about a half in comparison with those in past years.

"... In a perfect world, the supermarkets could sell only products that are ok for health and environment, but it depends on the government policymakers to work in food regulations" ended the owner of Supermarket "X".

5. Conclusions

The present chapter answers the research questions raised in the introductory part of this thesis regards of segmenting, targeting and green positioning through the 4 Ps of the green marketing mix (product, price, promotion, place). Besides that, the paper discloses some theoretical and managerial implications

5.1 Answering the Research Questions

a) How and why food retailers' segment and target consumers?

Demographic factors coming from traditional marketing have not influenced the strategy of food retailers when segmenting consumers. Alternatively, they have used other factors such as purchase habits (i.e., type of products). In one of these segments have been found the organic consumers, together with non-organic consumers in the sector of healthy consumers, those interested in vegetables, fruits and dietetic products. Organic consumers are also in the group of family with children mixed with non-green consumers. In brief, when classifying or segmenting consumers, the supermarkets obtain valuable information, such as organic consumers are aware of preserving the health of their children, for example. The supermarkets have mostly been using the *whole market approach* to target consumers, which consists of targeting consumers, both organic and non-organic together, without any distinction. All the supermarkets often use this targeting in the shop. The usage of whole market approach could be a convenient way on how to target consumer, considering that non-green consumers are far more from the total amount of consumers.

b) How and why do food retailers use the green marketing mix to offer green food?

The food retailers in the study have been using the elements of the green marketing mix partly. They have not been using the green product unique characteristics and the relation with health and better for the environment when offering organic-food. Two of three believe that clients already know the features of organic food. The third one even does not conceive the differences between organic Vs. non-organic food. Overall, firms strategy is not to emphasise the functional benefits of green products to consumers and not focusing and the

environmental attributes of organic food. The supermarkets have decided not making sure that the consumer is aware of and concerned about the issues that the organic food that they sell attempts to address. Any of the supermarkets exposes comparisons of both (green and non-green food). They expect that customers do it for themselves. However, one of them recognise a weakness in not practising green product strategy and affirm that they will improve this.

Most of the supermarkets recognise a higher price for organic products as a barrier and use a green price strategy to offer them. The supermarkets have chosen the policy of reducing the margin of organic food. Even so, some expensive organic food (i.e., meat, cheese) are still tough to sell. Upon a time one of the supermarkets has tried to makes understand consumers that the high value of organic food overweighs the higher price, demonstrating that their health is in risk with due to the consumption of non-green food. The same supermarket launched a shocking video on YouTube to persuade and change the mind of people by describing the hazards of regular food. In contrast, one of the three supermarket leaders even does not the differences between organic and non-organic food prices.

In closing, it is evident that most of the food retailers of this study are making efforts to promote organic food consumption with more attractive prices, by sacrificing part of their profits. This environmental-friendly behaviour implies that the leader's beliefs and the organisational culture consist of growing their business and doing good for the world. Likewise, it appears to be that these firms are taking into account that if the organic products are priced very high, then, the market acceptability of them will decrease.

However, in fairness, there are no economic incentives for the supermarkets to push organic food consumption up. If supermarkets had not sacrificed profits how they have been doing it, it would mean that price differences between both types of products, organic and non-organic could be higher to the extent that it might be still deterring more the increase of green products sales-consumption.

The supermarkets do not use any communication strategy to persuade consumers. Some think that consumers must choose themselves, the other recognises a weakness in this point and could make changes in this direction. Most of the supermarkets have some environmental and sustainable practices well underway in their different process (i.e., saving

energy, reducing carbon footprint). However, most of them accepted that it is missing to convey this eco-friendly message effectively to the consumers. By doing so, it could change the mind of the consumers and push them to buy organic products. Thereby it has been found that consumers decide to purchase in companies who share the same green values than them. The supermarkets leaders also admit that its missing active participation in marketing organic food.

Additionally, the supermarkets in this study have not been providing the environmental information about the organic food to make the customer fully aware and engaged. They have not been informing consumers about organic food and the difference in comparison with non-organic food. Curiously, even people who run these businesses do not have clear what organic food means. It might imply that supermarkets are not able to inform their clients something that they do not know.

The only supermarket that invests in advertising and campaigns of organic food in TV and social media coincidently has an established and recognised organic brand in the market. Besides, most of the supermarkets have promotional campaigns with reduced prices and extra points in the loyalty card. These campaigns increase the sales of organic food, but it appears to work only for short-term until the offer finishes. There is a lack of long-term policies and strategies to encourage and promote organic food consumption.

Labels of organic products could not be as much useful if another other promotion techniques do not go hand in hand, such as label the shelves and put the organic food separately and different types of promotion tools, such as advertising, campaign. Most of the supermarkets in this study, for instance, display organic food separately.

The availability of organic food meets the demand in the Swedish market. Buying from local producers to satisfy the requirement is not possible due to the reduced number of organic farming's, and the unfavourable Nordic weather conditions, thus, organic food is mostly imported.

c) How are food retailers facing the slow growth of green food consumption?

The barriers of organic food consumption-sales that supermarkets found are the consumers' beliefs, knowledge about organic food, as well as the weak trust in the green claims of organic food. Besides, Organic imported food is not attractive, inclusive for environmentally aware people.

The higher price is also considered as a barrier, according to most of them, however, as one the store managers pointed out, while more people commit in buying organic will unleash the reduction of food prices over time.

Besides, most of the supermarkets in this study agree that government would have to work together with them to overcome these barriers. They cannot do it by themselves. It needs teamwork because they demand many resources. Another obstacle is the lack of economic incentives of the supermarkets to promote organic food consumption. It also might be solved perhaps with some tax regulations.

d) ***What barriers have food retailers found regarding green food consumption?***

There are strong weaknesses on how Swedish supermarkets use green marketing mix. Indeed, the dominant element is the third one of the green marketing mix*: promotion*, which involves communication, education to consumers about the benefits of organic food, for the health and environment. It could summarise in that the combination of "green product- green promotion" need to be reinforced. Likewise, it would help them to understand that the higher price it is worth it "green price- green promotion". Many scholars have found that with information and excellent communication, consumers become more familiar with organic foods, and it would be easier for them to be engaged in organic food regular consumption.

After answering each question, all the issues above mentioned could be slowing down the organic food consumption in Sweden.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

The theoretical implications found in this study is mainly reinforcing previous research. Although, this research adds some new approaches to the existing marketing theories regarding organic food.

Segmentation theory states that it is crucial to classify the consumers and use this outcome to target the consumers in specific ways according to the different type of consumers and their needs and habits. However, this study has found that segmentation when applying in organic food offering is not input for a differentiated targeting. As a result, most of the supermarkets might give signs that are not concerned with gaining loyalty from organic consumers or attracting new organic consumers.

Regarding the first P of the green marketing mix, the theory states that firms should emphasise organic products´ unique characteristics and properties. Even more, when traditional marketing has demonstrated that it works. Although, this study has found that supermarkets are not promoting explicitly organic products focusing on their strengths, such as highly beneficial for the environment and health in comparison with non-organic food.

The theories about the second P of the green marketing mix, i.e., price, suggest that businesses should persuade consumers to pay an extra amount of money for organic food "the green price" because the real value of eco-friendly food surpasses the monetary cost. Nonetheless, this study found something unexpected; some supermarkets are often constraining their profits, to be able to sell organic food.

Green promotion theory says that communication strategy through advertising, campaigns, displays, labelling could boost the organic food consumption. Indeed, this study confirms that the supermarkets by not having a developed green promotion might be affecting the organic food consumption. As well as, this study added to the existing theory: if the owners or top managers do not share the eco-friendly values, it is quite unlikely that their businesses take initiatives to implement an adequate promotion of organic food. Promotion programs based on reducing prices of organic food attract consumers only for the short term. Long-term accomplishments are missing to boost organic food consumption. Advertising and

campaigns on social media conveying persuasive and provocative messages are probable to contribute to changing the consumer mindsets. This study confirmed that marketers need to work harder on it. Apart from the formal label on the product, labelling the shelves where organic food is displayed, both work to gain more consumers. However, most of the supermarket have not found how to engage consumers in the habit of organic food consumption effectively. If firms do not tackle the above issues, the prices might continue higher and organic food consumption stagnant.

5.3 Managerial Implications

From this thesis has emerged some issues that seem to be relevant. For instance, this study provides clear directions to the marketing managers, store managers and owners of supermarkets willing to integrate environmental sustainability into their strategies, specifically on how to develop and implement a Green Marketing Mix to boost organic food consumption. In sum, segmenting is a fundamental starting step. If firms identify separately, green consumers from non-green consumers can apply different strategies to target each one. Although if segmenting green-consumers is not implemented in the approach of the shops, to aim at the whole-market is the remaining option. This targeting strategy should be more effective and long-term through promotions on mass media (TV, radio and social media) such as advertising and campaigns to persuade non-green consumers to switch their purchasing choice. Green promotion is a crucial component. This study would dare to affirm that the most important one of the 4 Ps or four elements of the green marketing mix. Green promotion can overcome higher green prices of organic food because with active promotion techniques (information, education) the higher costs of organic food can make sense to consumers, as well as, help them to differentiate the organic from non-organic food. A promotion campaign appealing to the consumers' emotions would be the most powerful marketing tool to attract more consumers to the point of converting non-green consumers into green consumers, for instance, using Edward Bernays advertising techniques such one to promote the tobacco industry successfully. He conquered the large segment of women and convert them into tobacco consumers. He linked tobacco with positive concepts, i.e., feminism and women liberation and tobacco advertising became an apotheosis and revolutionary success. Indeed, organic food has also high-minded ideas and as well as compelling reasons, i.e., good for health and environment, which marketers can work with

to internalise organic food consumption in the consumers. Although firms do not have the motivation beyond the economic one to invest resources in these type of campaigns and pursue this objective, some of them try to do their best. However, the active role of the government, together with businesses, could revert this and bolster the organic food consumption. One way of enhancing organic food consumption might be creating a sort of ´benefits´ for supermarkets involve in this 'social' and environmental project.

5.4 Limitations

The default limitation comes from the nature of the research, being qualitative research, the conclusions of this study cannot be generalisable; the results depend on the context. Further, another limitation is the sample which could have included more supermarkets in Sweden, not only the main ones. Moreover, the topic of this thesis, per se, inconvenience some leaders of the supermarkets to the point that a couple of them preferred to keep the names anonymous, it precludes to be unable to make some explicit comparisons between different supermarkets green marketing mix strategies. Not to mention that one of them rejected the interview, and when he heard that the topic is organic food marketing, he replied: "I cannot do that".

During the process previously to the interviews, the complicated part was to arrange meetings with store managers and owners because they were mostly busy leading projects or outside of Sundsvall. To the extent that one of them postponed the interview three times.

6. Future Research

During the data collection, some issues arose that could be interesting to investigate in Swedish supermarkets. Such as the influence of the beliefs and knowledge of the owners or top managers in the pro-organic behaviour of the business. Another topic that shed light was on how the government could motivate the supermarkets to boost organic food consumption. Future research about organic food consumption in Sweden is necessary. New studies could be carried out from the perspective of the consumers and the supermarkets in a triangulation as qualitative research. Likewise, green marketing mix in Swedish supermarkets could be

carried out a longitudinal study, rather than just a cross-sectional to see the evolution of organic food consumption over time.

Appendix No 1: Interview Guide

Firstly, thanks so much for accepting this interview, which is about organic food marketing in this supermarket.

As this is qualitative research, please give detailed answers. The results of this study are just for academic purposes; therefore, revealing the name of the interviewees and the supermarket is not mandatory. The interview will be audio-recorded, once it is transcripted will receive a transcript copy.

Thanks ever much again for the valuable contribution to this study!

Segmentation and Targeting

Segmenting

1) Has this supermarket classified its food consumers into segments? What segments? On what grounds?

Targeting

2) Once the consumers are segmented, what is the strategy to target consumers with the offers of organic food?

3) On what grounds is that targeting strategy? Is it different when targeting to offer non-organic food?

Green Product

4) Many studies have found that consumers relate organic food with health and good for the environment. Has this supermarket used this information to offer organic food? Can you give some examples?

5) As a marketing strategy. Does this supermarket highlight the organic food unique characteristics, e.g. quality, nutritious, freshness, grown organically and safety, in comparison with non-organic food? Can you give some examples?

Green Price

6) Is organic food generally more expensive? How big is the price difference in general in comparison with non-organic food?

7) How does price differences between organic and non-organic food seem to affect sales?

8) According to many studies, the higher price of organic food is the barrier for consumers to buy them. How is this supermarket coping with this?

9) What is most profitable for this supermarket to sell organic or non-organic food?

Green Promotion (Communication)

General questions

10) What type of communication strategy has this supermarket been using to persuade consumers to purchase organic food?

11) What is the behaviour of this supermarket regarding environment aspects?

12) What do you see as other barriers for customers buying organic food in addition to a higher price? Is this supermarket addressing these issues?

13) Has this supermarket been communicating (educating) consumers the short- and long-term benefits of organic food in comparison with non-organic food? Can you give some examples?

Advertising

14) Has this supermarket been using advertising to promote organic food sales? What type of advertising in the last year? If yes, do you notice many differences in the increase in sales of organic food after advertising? Give me an example of such successful advertising. If no, why not?

Displays

15) Has this supermarket been using displays (banners) to promote organic food? If yes, do you notice many differences in the increase in sales of organic food after using displays? Give me an example. If no, why not?

Campaigns

16) Has this supermarket been using promotion campaigns to promote organic food? If yes, do you notice many differences in the increase in sales of organic food after promotion campaigns? Give me an example. If no, why not?

Labels

17) Do the labels in organic food mean a promotion tool for this supermarket, or is it just part of the product? Why?

18) Do you think that clients mostly understand the labels of organic food?

19) Do customers ask questions in the shop about what the labels of organic food mean?

20) Do you notice many differences in the increase in sales of organic food with the use of just labels? If yes, can give an example? If no, why not?

21) What kind of promotions different to advertising, campaign, display and labels has been this supermarket using to promote organic food, which seems to increase the sales most?

Green Place

22) What percentage of Swedish organic food does this supermarket sell in regards to imported food? What is this policy grounds?

23) Does this supermarket have an agreement with local producers regarding organic food? If yes, could you give some details? If no, why?

24) Does this supermarket consider choosing environmentally friendly suppliers, e.g. ecological transportation, local organic food producers?

25) How is the availability of organic food? Is it meeting the demands of the consumers?

Organic Food Sales-Consumption

26) Does this supermarket sell organic products according to its expectation?

27) Where do you have the most waste, with organic or non-organic food? What is the percentage of waste?

28) Is organic food consumption sales growth over time, if so, Is it growing as you expected or is very slow.

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