

THE POSSIBILITY OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS OFFER' DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREA – TOURISTS' PERSPECTIVE

MOGUĆNOST RAZVOJA PONUDE EKOLOŠKIH PROIZVODA NA RURALNOM PROSTORU - PERSPEKTIVA TURISTA

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Abstract: *This work analysis whether females and males being interested in visiting rural area of Istria County have different reasons for buying organic food (environmental protection and availableness of organic food on the market), and whether there was an interaction between gender and interest in visiting rural area of Istria County.*

Keywords: *organic product, rural area, tourists' interest, Istria County*

Sažetak: *U radu se analizira da li žene i muškarci zainteresirani za posjetu ruralnog područja Istarske županije imaju drugačije razloge kupovine ekoloških prehrambenih proizvoda (zaštita okoliša i dostupnost ekoloških prehrambenih proizvoda na tržištu) kao i da li postoji interakcija između spola ispitanika i njihovog interesa za posjetu ruralnog područja Istarske županije.*

Ključne riječi: *ekološki proizvodi, ruralni prostor, interes turista, Istarska županija*



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1. Introduction

Environmental concern is just one of several key factors commonly identified as influential in the decision to purchase and ingest organic foods - other factors including the health, animal welfare, safety, quality and taste claims of organic production [1] [2] [3]. Hartman and Wright [4] identify two groups of organic consumers; the first of which actively prioritises the purchase of "earth-friendly" products" and is prepared to pay premium prices for them; and the second of which is concerned about the environment but which perceives barriers to the purchase of more organic foods in the form of price and availability. This group is likely to be growing, Cunningham [1] suggests, with the increasing availability and selection of organic and other "green" products. Lockie, Lyons, Lawrence and Mummary [5] showed in their study that there were a number of demographic differences between consumers and non-consumers of organic foods. There was a clear gender dimension to organic consumption with 44.1 percent of women respondents claiming to have consumed certified organic foods compared to only 33.8 percent of men. Cunningham [1] suggests that the higher level of responsibility taken by women for feeding children and other family members may go some way to explaining this gender difference, with people often more concerned about what their children eat than what they eat themselves. The purpose of this paper was to assess whether females and males being interested in visiting rural area of Istria County have different reasons for buying organic food (environmental protection and availableness of organic food on the market), and whether there was an interaction between gender and interest in visiting rural area.

2. Methodology

In August and September 2008 a survey was conducted by the Institute of Agriculture and Tourism concerning tourists' interest in consuming organic food during their stay in Istria County. It was focused on tourists visiting coastal area. Basic sample in six researched towns was chosen. Total of 1300 questionnaires were collected from tourists in shares Umag 51%, Poreč 12.31%, Rovinj 17.62%, Pula/Medulin 8.92% and Rabac 10.15%. The sample was stratified based on accommodation category. English, German, Italian, Russian, Slovenian and Croatian language was used in questionnaire. Research was conducted in 18 facilities, a structure pattern is following: three-star hotels, 35%; four-star hotels, 63%; and high category villas, 2%. Guests were given questionnaires and were asked to fill them out and hand them to researches. Tourists were explained the purpose of the questionnaires and were told that the questionnaires were anonymous. Persons fewer than 16 were excluded from the research. Convenient sample was used.

Questionnaire contained 16 questions divided into three groups. The first group of questions involved questions relating to the purchasing of organic food by tourists in their home country. The second group of questions focused on the stay of tourists in Istria County and tourists' interest in buying and consuming organic food during their stay in Istria County. Additional question about an interest in spending summer

holidays in rural Istria County was posed to the tourists. The last group of questions was related to demography: country of origin, age, gender, education, profession, income and media used in gathering information about Istria County.

Data was processed through standard statistical procedure: univariate and multivariate analysis of variance. Total of 865 responders were taken into analysis.

3. Results and discussion

To assess whether females and males being interested in visiting rural area of Istria County have different reasons for buying organic food (environmental protection and availableness of organic food on the market), and whether there was an interaction between gender and interest in visiting rural area, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted. The assumptions of MANOVA were not violated. Data presented in table 1 and table 2 was obtained as part of research on tourists' preferences concerning organic food which was conducted by Institute of Agriculture and Tourism in 2008 and processed by authors. Table below presents Means and Standard Deviations for Environmental protection and Availableness of Organic food on the Market as a Function of Interest in Visiting Rural Area and Gender.

		Environmental protection		Availableness on the Market	
Group	n	M	SD	M	SD
Interested					
Females	90	4,19	1,141	3,56	1,062
Males	79	3,89	1,204	3,35	1,115
Do not know					
Females	132	4,08	0,981	3,56	0,984
Males	91	3,84	1,078	3,14	1,086
Not interested					
Females	271	4,04	1,081	3,62	1,079
Males	202	3,77	1,123	3,13	1,039

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for Environmental protection and Availableness of Organic food on the Market as a Function of Interest in Visiting Rural Area and Gender

Environmental protection and availableness of organic food on the market was more important to female responders than male on both outcomes and to responders interested in visiting rural area environmental protection was more important than those not interested, while availableness on the market was more important to men interested in visiting rural area than those not interested, while it was reverse for women.

The interaction was not significant, Wilk's $\Lambda = 0,995$, $F(4,1716) = 0,649$, $p = 0,627$, multivariate $\eta^2 = 0,002$. The main effect for interest in visiting rural area was not significant, Wilk's $\Lambda = 0,997$, $F(4,1716) = 0,602$, $p = 0,661$, multivariate $\eta^2 = 0,001$, while the main effect for gender was significant, Wilk's $\Lambda = 0,973$, $F(2,858) = 11,932$, $p = 0,000$, multivariate $\eta^2 = 0,027$. This indicates that the linear composite differs depending on gender of responders for both variables. Follow-up ANOVAs (Table 2) were conducted.

Source	Dependent Variable	df	F	η	p
Interest	Environmental protection	2	0,929	0,05	0,395
	Availableness on the Market	2	0,470	0,03	0,625
Gender	Environmental protection	1	10,825	0,11	0,001
	Availableness on the Market	1	20,173	0,15	0,000
Interest x Gender	Environmental protection	2	0,030	0,00	0,970
	Availableness on the Market	2	1,038	0,05	0,355
Error	Environmental protection	859			
	Availableness on the Market	859			

Table 2. Effects of Interest in Visiting Rural Area and Gender on Environmental protection and Availableness of Organic food on the Market

ANOVAs indicate that the effect of gender was significant for both environmental protection and availableness of organic food on the market, while interest in visiting rural area proved not to be significant.

After conducting multivariate analysis of variance and follow up ANOVA we confirmed influence of gender on reasons for buying organic food as was proven by Lockie at al. [5], but we did not found influence of interest in visiting rural area on reasons for buying organic food so our assumption that there was a significant difference among groups concerning interest of tourists in visiting rural area on different reasons for buying organic food was not confirmed.

4. Conclusion

Environmental protection and availableness of organic food on the market are important factors for organic food consumers. These consumer, that are in some part tourists, might be interested in consuming organic products during their stay in a certain tourism destination, but, since interest in visiting rural area was not significant, it can indicate that tourists visiting costal area of Istria County would also be interested in consuming organic products in certain facilities along the coast, not just in rural area. Since organic market in Istria County is not jet very developed, there might be possible to offer tourists (those in costal and rural areas) this kind of offer in rural area, but there are few issues that had to be taken into consideration. Promotional and distributional channels should differ for tourists based on their preferences for visiting rural or costal area. It might be advisable that this kind of offer is included into a certain package arrangement, excursion for tourists visiting coast, integral part of a certain product e.g. wellness. Further researcher should be conducted on both kinds of tourists to determine their interest in consuming organic food in rural area and best way of promoting this kind of offer.

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Photo 184. Fish pond / Ribnjak