The influence of socio-demographic characteristics of tourists on their interest for organic food in Istria, Croatia

Vliv socio-demografických charakteristik turistů na jejich zájem o ekologické potraviny v Istrii v Chorvatsku

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Abstract: Due to the consumers concern about their health and the rise of their ecological consciousness, demand for organic food is generally increasing. According to this trend, there is an increase in the amount of agricultural land surface used for organic farming and market rise for organic products. The survey was conducted in 2008. Market development possibilities for organic farming in Istra had a focus on organic food consumption during their stay in Istra. This paper represents the analysis of the survey in six tourist places in Istra on a sample of 1 300 tourists. We used a questionnaire as the research method. The purpose of this paper was to determine socio-demographic characteristics of tourists interested in organic food consumption and the influence on the mentioned interest. Our assumption was that there exists a certain tourist profile interested in consuming organic food. We confirmed through correlations their statistical importance.

Key words: organic food, socio-demographic profile, tourists, Istria, Croatia

Abstrakt: Poptávka po ekologických potravinách obecně roste díky zájmu konzumentů o vlastní zdraví a všeobecně nárůstu ekologickému povědomí. V souladu s tímto trendem se zvyšuje výměra ekologicky obdělávané zemědělské půdy a trh s ekologickými produkty. Výzkum byl proveden v roce 2008. Důraz byl kladen na tržní možnosti rozvoje ekologického zemědělství vzhledem ke spotřebě ekologických potravin turisty v rámci jejich pobytu v Istrii. Článek prezentuje analýzu dotazníkového výzkumu v šesti turistických destinacích v Istrii na vzorku 1 300 turistů. Cílem článku je determinovat socioekonomické charakteristiky turistů, kteří se zajímají o ekologické produkty a jejich spotřebu a vliv tohoto zájmu na ni. Předpokládali jsme, že existuje určitý profil turisty, který se zajímá o ekologické potraviny. Tyto předpoklady jsme potvrdili prostřednictvím korelací jejich statistické významnosti.

Klíčová slova: ekologické potraviny, socio-demografický profil, turisté, Istrie, Chorvatsko

Starting from traditional economical views, consumers' behavior during purchase is based on maximizing usage and minimizing costs for a person. Food as a basic need of each person is a necessity highly ranked comparing to other needs, therefore, it is satisfied first (Maslovljev acc. to Foxall et al. 2007). Maslowljev theory explains the difference between what we can call a physical/inherited need and the learned need which a person gains through social interactions. Taking in mind these facts, a consumer who buys food wants to maximize the use and minimize costs (Myung et al. 2008).

Generally speaking, the process of making a decision about purchase has five phases: a consumer passes focusing to a problem; search for information; seeking alternatives; decision about the purchase and post- purchase reactions. Depending on the level of complication in this process, the consumer might

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skip some of the decision process steps (Grbac, Meler 2007). Zhang T. and D. (2007) identified some factors which affect the consumer during the decision process and pointed out personal, physical and social factors. The authors showed a purchase process model in which the socio-demographic features affect the consumers sensitivity to quality and price and finally the motivations and purchase decision.

For most people, consuming food and beverages is a central point of their tourist experiences and an experience in itself (Beer 2008). To consume interesting food in a nice environment is one of the aims of the tourists stay (Hjaleger, Antonoioli-Corigliano 2000). In this way, food has a big role in the destination presentation, in tourism catalogs it is an attractive factor, it connects to the regional activities and finally it increases the income of the destination facilities (hotels). As a point of tourists interest, food is a part of heritage, tradition, but also an inventive part of the future, for example food festivals, food as a part of local culture which is presented in a lodging place or in the rural surrounding (Hjaleger, Antonoioli-Corigliano 2000).

When we discuss consumption of food produced in organic production system and consumers behavior in the purchase process, there are some specific features. Ureňa et al. (2008) stated that consumers' see organically produced food as a healthier food with a higher quality and the ways of production that respect the environment. Consumers that buy such food products are more conscious about their health, the nutritive value, and the importance of environment protection. A survey of AC Nielsen (2005) on a global sample of consumers examined food with specific health benefits. Two thirds of the questioned consumers considered organically produced food as healthier for them and their children. Europeans, comparing to consumers in other continents, were most interested in environment protection and every fifth European considers that such food conserves the planet Earth.

Although food is a primary need, the purchase of organic food cannot be put among primary needs because of higher selling prices it is not available to all consumers in the market and that cuts down the hypothesis of minimizing costs and maximizing the use for consumers.

The rise of demand for organically produced food rises with the environmental concern and the consumers' care for their health. Decisions about purchase of organically produced food for a family or an individual are a complicated process in case they had never purchased such food. Individuals that have never purchased organically produced food pass through all phases of the decision process, while the ones that have already purchased it skip some of the five phases.

Several factors affect decisions to purchase organically produced food. Primarily, it concerns the consumers purchasing power since the prices of organically produced food can be fifty percent higher than those of the conventionally produced food. In the survey of AC Nielsen (2005,) the main reason for not purchasing organically produced food items were in the price difference considering the conventionally produced food. Hartman and Wright (in Foxall et al. 2007) also identified two groups of the consumers of organically produced food; the first one is ready to pay the higher price and actively gives priority to organically produced food purchase, while the other is concerned about the environment but considers the price of organically produced food as a limitation for purchase.

Lockie et al. (2002) mentioned that in the decision process, consumers give importance to environment, their own health and food quality and taste. The authors state similarly two types of consumers; the ones environmentally friendly and willing to pay the premium prices, and the others also concerned about the environment but not willing to pay the higher premium prices.

The stereotype that the organic food production is specific because of lower yields comparing to the conventional and sustainable production is one reason that organically produced food is more expensive than the conventionally produced. Several authors showed the opposite results, however. From a longitudinal research (Mader 2004; Mader et al. 2002), the authors showed that organically produced crops gave by 20 percent lower yield than the crops in conventional production. Similar findings were presented by Lampkin (1990 and 1992), showing by 20 to 40 percent lower yield of vegetables in organic production compared to the conventional. Opposite to this survey, in others organic production had higher yields than conventional (Busemann, Heusinger 1999; Buys 1993; Lampkin 1999). In the case of lettuce production in Croatia, Oplanić et al. (2006) showed in some trial years higher yields in organic production compared to conventional and a similar production costs level. Considering the overall lower yields during the trials, the market prices were by 40 to 50 percent higher comparing to the conventional produced lettuce (Oplanić et al. 2006: 200).

According to the data of theAgriBioCert from 2006, Istra had eight registered legal persons with certified ecologically produced food. According to the survey in 2008 in Istra (Težak et al. 2008), organi-

cally produced food was present in shops but had a marginal share comparing to other food offers. The authors found that catering facilities had organically produced food in their offer but the question was whether consumers can recognize organic food in restaurants without visual labels.

METHODOLOGY

In order to strengthen the comparative concurrent possibilities of Istra as a tourist destination, in the scientific project "Valorizacija selektivnih oblika turizma u održivom razvitku ruralnih prostora" (Valorization of selective forms of tourism in sustainable development of rural spaces, No. 147-1470497-3034) financed by the Croatian Ministry of Agriculture, during 2007, a survey was pursued on a sample of tourists with the intention to determine their interest in organically produced food during their stay in Istra. The survey determined the existence of such needs. The project was carried on with the research in order to quantify the interest of tourists for organically produced food. During 2008, a survey "Tržišne mogućnosti razvoja ekološke poljoprivrede u Istarskoj županiji" (Marketing possibilities of ecologically produced food in Istra County) was carried out. The research was divided into two phases; in the first phase, the specific features of organic production were identified by using the literature sources which were then used for the questionnaire concept. In the second phase of research, we questioned tourists during July and August 2008.

The sampling was carried out in several phases: since in first phase of the research we determined that organically produced food is in general more expensive compared to the conventionally produced food, we stratified the sample of tourists which stayed in the three and more star hotels.

In the second phase, we chose the basic sample in six researched cities (according to the State Statistical Survey Office, HDZSS), that was 559 014 tourists. With the confidence level of 95% and the confidence interval 2.71, the statistically significant sample size was 1 305. We collected 1 300 questionnaires from the tourists in the shares Umag 51%, Poreč 12.31%, Rovinj 17.62%, Pula/Medulin 8.92% and Rabac 10.15%.

The structure of the questioned tourists according to nationality was considered during the preparations of the questionnaires, therefore English, German, Italian, Russian, Slovenian and Croatian language was used.

The tourists were informed about the purpose of the research and that the questionnaire was anonymous, then they were asked to hand them over when finished to the receptionist or to our researchers.

Persons less than 16 years of age were not taken into the sample because we did not take them as serious decision making persons in purchasing organically produced food. We speculated that they eventually might have some influence on the decision making along with other family members.

Demographic data were put into categories as follows: country of origin (six options), age (five categories 16–24, 25–34, 35–44, 45–54, and 55+), gender (male/female), occupation (eight options: entrepreneur, manager, officer, worker, student/pupil, retired, unemployed and other), income (five categories: up to 500 €, 501 to 1 000 €, 1 001 to 2 000 €, 2 001 to 5 000 € and more than 5 000 €). Education level was put into five levels: lower (basic education), middle (secondary education), higher education (college), university education and master and doctorate level.

The questionnaire consisted of 16 questions divided into three sections. In the first section, we asked questions about the organically produced food and its purchase in their native country. By this question, we tried to identify: the pleasure of tourists with the daily food purchases (tourists were offered with five options: very unsatisfied, unsatisfied, satisfied, very satisfied and do not know). The question if tourists are buying organically produced food in their country had two options (yes or no). In the question where they purchase organically produced food, the tourists had six options with several response options. In the question regarding how much the tourists were willing to pay for organically produced food, there were six options (in rates: up to 10%, 11 to 20%, 21 to 30%, 31 to 60%, 61 to 100% and more than 100%). Regarding the fact how much the tourists were informed about organically produced food and organic production in general we asked four questions in which their subjective grade was asked for. Their answers were rated as three information level options (not informed, partly informed and totally informed). The importance of the elements in the decision process in purchasing organically produced food was rated from 1 to 5.

In the section two, we asked questions that relied on the tourist stay in Istra. They were asked about their interest in buying and consumption of organically produced food during their stay in Istra (options yes or no). The ones who responded that they were interested had four options in rating for paying the premium prices (in rates: up to 10%, 11 to 20%, 21 to 30%, 31 to 60%, 61 to 100% and more than 100%). The ones who responded as not being interested had five options for explaining their non-interest.

In the section three, we had a question about the boarding facilities – there were seven options (with several response options) – and about the tourists willingness to stay in the rural Istra during their holidays (options yes, no and do not know). The ways of arrival and the information about Istra had six options with several response possibilities.

Table 1. Socio-demographic indicators of tourists

Socio-demographic indicator	Respondents	
	frequency	%
Age group		
16–24	99	9.63
25–34	196	19.07
35–44	268	26.07
45–54	266	25.88
55+	199	19.36
Gender		
female	591	57.49
male	437	42.51
Education level		
basic education	92	8.95
secondary education	308	29.96
higher/univ. education	501	48.74
master/doctorate level	127	12.35
Occupation		
private entrepreneur	144	14.01
manager	191	18.58
civil servant	314	30.54
worker	65	6.32
student/pupil	55	5.35
retired	80	7.78
unemployed	10	0.97
other	169	16.44
Country of origin		
Austria	143	13.54
Great Britain	126	12.00
Italy	168	15.54
Germany	152	14.46
Russia	305	28.92
Other	138	13.08

Source: questionnaire

The technical base of the data processing was the statistical program SPSS. The data were processed through the standard statistical procedure: the univariate analysis (frequencies, percents, mode, and arithmetic measure) and the bivariate analysis (ex-square test, coefficients of correlation). By the univariate analysis, the general description of the sample was presented, while in the bivariate analysis, the variables of the socio-demographic features of tourists were correlated to the depending variables of the tourists interest for consumption, places of purchase, decision processes in purchasing the organically produced food during their stay in Istra. Our hypothesis was that certain socio-demographic features (age, gender, education, occupation, income and land of origin) of the tourists will be correlated to the depending variables of the interest for organically produced food, to the place of purchase and the causes of choosing these articles.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The research was carried out in 18 tourism-hotel facilities with the following features: two star hotels 0.46%, three star hotels 34%, four star hotels 63.54% and high category villas 2%.

The country of origin of tourists was as follows: Austria 13.54%, Great Britain 12.00%, Italy 15.54%, Germany 14.46%, Russia 28.92% and other countries 13.08% (and about 1% share in the total sample: Slovenia, France, Netherland, Switzerland, Sweden).

The sample profile of 1,028 tourists which gave an answer to the questions of socio-demographic data showed in average the following results: more than one half were of the age 35 to 54, the majority was in the age group 35 to 44. More than one half of the tourists were female, which was positive, regarding the aspect that women usually purchase food for the family and are more dominant in the family considering the decisions in the purchase process phases (Kesić 1999).

Two thirds of the respondents have finished higher education (college of university). By occupation, most were civil servants and one third was managers and entrepreneurs. Most respondents were from Russia, and about equal parts from Austria, Italy, Germany and Great Britain. The structure of tourists according to their socio-demography features is shown in Table 1.

Table 2 showed the tourists responses that declare the levels of interests for purchasing organically produced food, their willingness for the purchase,

their readiness to purchase it by premium prices and which criteria the tourists use in the decision process on purchasing organically produced food.

Table 2. Description of the dependent variables

Variable	Frequency	%
Health benefits	1 137	87.46
Environmental protection	1 050	80.77
Availability in the market	1 002	77.08
Selling price	1 023	78.69
Wide offer	1 002	77.08
Interest for purchase of organ. produced food in Istra	1 289	99.15
Readiness to pay premium prices for org. produced food	852	95.41*
In hotels as part of gastronomy offer	551	61.70*
In camp shops	89	9.97*
In restaurants on menus	259	29.00*
In specialized restaurants	90	10.08*
In green markets	259	29.00*
In local shops	294	32.92*
Other	10	1.12*
Small number of selling points	96	24.24**
Premium prices too high	130	32.83**
Organic products better than conventional	90	22.73**
Unsuitable range of price and quality	42	10.61**
No need for such products	62	15.66**

*in case responses were taken only for respondents that declared their interest for organically produced food during their stay in Istra; **in case responses were used only for respondents that were not interested in organically produced food during their stay in Istra

Source: questionnaire data processing

Table 3. Correlation of socio-demography features with satisfaction of organically produced food

Independent variable	X^2	df	Cc
Age	15.6	12	0.206
Gender	5.6	3	0.132
Occupation	21.2	21	0.443
Income	12.8	12	0.382

Source: questionnaire data processing

These variables were chosen for the statistical (bivariate) analysis in order to determine the correlation with the socio-demographic indicators.

From Table 2, it is evident that the answers were quite equal in the terms of interest to purchase organically produced food during their stay in Istra. Most responses related the purchase to the health reasons and the environmental protection. Only a few less responded to the availability of such products in the market and the range of products offered.

The tourists were in majority satisfied with the items that they purchased and were rating these items with the average grade 4 (grades possible from 1 to 5, 5 was excellent). Also they were pleased with the organically produced food and in average they rated such offer with 4.

The bivariate analysis showed that age and gender had a low influence on the level of satisfaction with the organically produced food, while the occupation and income level had statistically significant higher correlation levels Table 3.

Considering the age level, the analysis showed that tourists in the age group 16 to 24 showed the least satisfaction with organically produced food, while the other age groups were equally pleased with the organically produced food items.

Occupation and income had the statistical influence on the satisfaction with the organically products in ways that the ones with a higher income were more satisfied than the ones with a lower income. Also managers, entrepreneurs and civil servants were more satisfied with organic products than students, pupils, unemployed and other persons.

In the decision making process on purchasing the organically produced food, the highest grade was responsive to the health benefits (the average grade 4.29), then to the environment protection (the average grade 3.97) and selling price (the average grade 3.64).

In the whole sample, the tourists were in average willing to pay by up to 30 percent more for the organically produced food compared to the conventionally produced food. A certain number of tourists were willing to pay by 31 to 50 percent more, while the number of tourists willing to pay by 100 percent more for the organically produced food was very small.

Taking into consideration the differences between market prices for the organically produced food and the conventionally produced food that range from 30 to 100 percent, we can state that each group of tourists can chose the affordable range of food prices on the market.

The age of tourists in our sample was statistically significantly connected to the premium price that

the tourists were willing to pay for the organically produced food: so the tourists aged 25 to 34 were willing to pay by 20 percent more. The tourists aged 35 to 54 were willing to pay by 30 percent more, while every fifth was willing to pay by sixty percent more for the organically produced food, in the age group above 55 years the willingness dropped to twenty percent.

According to the education level, the most willing to pay the premium prices were the most educated ones, whereas the tourists with primary education were the least likely to pay the premium prices for the organically produced food (Table 4).

The criteria for decision making in purchasing the organically produced food showed that a wide offer of products was most important to the persons above 45 years of age, and important only for every third respondent younger than 24.

According to the occupation, entrepreneurs and managers were most concerned about the environment protection as their criterion for purchasing the organically produced food, while this criterion was the least important one for workers. Other criteria, such as the selling price, the availability in the market, a wide offer of products and the number of selling points were not statistically significantly related to age. The Lockie et al. (2002) survey showed that one of the most important decision criteria for purchasing and consuming the organically produced food was environmental concern.

Table 4. Correlation of socio-demography features with willingness to pay premium prices for organically produced food

Independent variable	X^2	df	Cc
Age	15.7	20	0.734
Education level	14.0	15	0.519
Occupation	37.0	35	0.373

Source: questionnaire data processing

Table 5. Correlation of socio-demography features with decision making criteria in purchase of organically produced food

Independent variable Criteria	Dependent variable		
	X^2	df	Cc
Age			
Wide offer	13.7	16	0.615
Education level			
Selling price	8.2	12	0.766
Environment protection	10.9	12	0.532
Boarding category			
Availability on market	17.7	12	0.465
Selling price	11.4	12	0.490
Occupation			
Environment protection	30.5	28	0.333

Source: questionnaire data processing

The education level was significantly correlated to selling price and was more important to the lower educated respondents because we can speculate that they had a lower income and therefore the organically produced food was less available to them. The lower educated tourists were less concerned about the environment protection compared to the university and higher levels of education. The criteria for choosing the organically produced food such as the availability in the market, a wide offer of products and the number of selling points were not statistically significantly related to education.

Our findings were confirmed in the literature as well; a survey of Lockie et al. (2002) showed that women were more often consumers of the organically produced food (44%) compared to men (33%). Further, the consumers with higher education were more often consuming organically produced food (47.9%) compared to the ones with primary education.

The stereotype that the consumers with the highest income levels were the most frequent buyers of the organically produced food was not proven, and also the consumers with lower education levels were interested to buy such products and were buying them, but because of the limited income, they were not able to purchase the desired larger amounts of such food.

Regarding the sensitivity to price, the consumers of organically produced food were, compared to the conventionally produced food, equally sensitive to price, quality, taste and the availability of food markets. Other criteria such as the selling price, environment protection, availability in the market and the number of selling points were not statistically significantly related to age. The only difference was regarding the sensitivity of consumers to health benefits (Table 5).

Boarding facilities in which the tourists stayed showed the correlation that the tourists in three and four star hotels were the most demanding according to the price and availability of the organically produced food, while for the tourists located in two and five star facilities, these criteria were not statistically significantly correlated.

Gender was statistically significantly correlated toward the decision making process in the terms that women were more likely to pay the premium prices for the organically produced food compared to men. Every fourth female was willing to pay by up to sixty percent more for organic food in compared to the conventionally produced food.

The tourists with university or higher education were more willing to pay the highest premium prices for the organically produced food, while the least willing to pay were the ones with primary education. The same was found regarding the level of satisfaction with the organically produced food for managers and civil servants.

In choosing and consuming the organically produced food, the statistically significant correlation was found for women that were purchasing food in camps and at green markets as well as in the local shops.

According to the occupation, since the majority were entrepreneurs, managers and civil servants, the consumption of the organically produced food was most usual in the gastronomic offer in the non-specialized restaurants.

In the literature, we found similar findings of Hjalager and Antonioli-Corigliano (2000) that the organically produced food can be an attractive factor in a tourism destination, but in the long term, as a consumer group they are highly unstable as a factor in spreading the offer of destination management (Table 6).

Table 6. Correlation of socio-demography features and place of purchasing organically produced food

Independent variable Choice of organically produced food	Dependent variable		
	X^2	df	Cc
Age			
Part of gastronomy offer	6.1	4	0.189
In camp shops	2.7	4	0.601
In restaurant menus	6.4	2	0.170
In specialized restaurants	4.8	4	0.307
In green markets	10.6	4	0.031
In local shops	8.9	4	0.062
Gender			
Part of gastronomy offer	3.3	3	0.340
In camp shops	1.1	3	0.753
In restaurant menus	6.5	3	0.086
In specialized restaurants	3.2	3	0.356
In green markets	1.3	3	0.720
In local shops	3.4	3	0.642
Occupation			
Part of gastronomy offer	1.4	7	0.983
In camp shops	13.6	7	0.058
In restaurant menus	8.3	7	0.303
In specialized restaurants	10.7	7	0.149
In green markets	9.8	7	0.197
In local shops	20.1	7	0.005
Education			
Part of gastronomy offer	2.8	3	0.421
In camp shops	7.4	3	0.059
In restaurant menus	6.6	3	0.084
In specialized restaurants	11.0	3	0.012
In green markets	9.8	3	0.020
In local shops	5.3	3	0.146

Source: questionnaire data processing

Regarding the reasons for not purchasing the organically produced food, our findings showed explanations such as too high premium prices for such food and the unclear quality definition. A very strong correlation of age, gender and occupation was detected with the explanation that there is no need for such kinds of food in the market and that the price and quality relations are not connected. Our finding was similar to the ones of Zhang , Zhang (2007) and AC Nielsen (2005) that in general the consumers have doubts about the fairness of premium prices compared to other food prices.

The causes of the non-existent interest in the organically produced food were statistically significantly correlated to the socio-demography features of tourists. Therefore, according to age, the oldest, above 55, considered the price as most important. The unsuitable relation of price and quality was the most important to the tourist of the age 25–34, while for the other age categories, this relation was important for only one half of the respondents, while for the other half this had no influence.

Women, who represented more than one half of the respondents and were the ones in the majority responsible for food purchases, were not interested in the organically produced food primarily because of a small number of selling points, the unsuitable relation of price and quality and no need for such products.

The respondents who were workers were not buying the organically produced food primarily because of the unsuitable relation of price and quality (Table 7).

For higher educated tourists, the least important criteria for not purchasing the organically produced

Table 7. Correlation of socio-demography features and non interest for buying organically produced food

Independent variable Reason	Dependent variable		
	X^2	df	Cc
Age			
Small number of selling points	14.3	4	0.006
Premium price too high	3.6	4	0.457
Organic food not better than conventional	3.6	4	0.456
Unsuitable relation of price and quality	1.9	4	0.749
No need for organic products	1.4	4	0.829
Gender			
Small number of selling points	2.1	3	0.543
Premium price too high	8.0	3	0.046
Organic food not better than conventional	6.6	3	0.084
Unsuitable relation of price and quality	0.6	3	0.866
No need for organic products	2.7	3	0.437
Occupation			
Small number of selling points	10.7	7	0.151
Premium price too high	18.2	7	0.011
Organic food not better than conventional	11.6	7	0.112
Unsuitable relation of price and quality	3.0	7	0.877
No need for organic products	7.7	7	0.356
Education			
Small number of selling points	2.4	3	0.485
Premium price too high	2.7	3	0.433
Organic food not better than conventional	2.7	3	0.436
Unsuitable relation of price and quality	7.1	3	0.068
No need for organic products	0.7	3	0.864
Income			
Small number of selling points	0.4	4	0.975
Premium price too high	4.1	4	0.391
Organic food not better than conventional	0.7	4	0.950
Unsuitable relation of price and quality	3.7	4	0.437
No need for organic products	0.4	4	0.974
Land of arrival			
Small number of selling points	4.8	5	0.440
Premium price too high	11.4	5	0.043
Organic food not better than conventional	10.0	5	0.075
Unsuitable relation of price and quality	23.3	5	0.000
No need for organic products	1.8	5	0.868

Source: questionnaire data processing

food was the small number of selling points, the selling price and the comparison to the conventional food prices. On the contrary, for the least educated tourists these reasons were the main ones for not purchasing the organically produced food.

For tourists with the monthly income above one thousand euro, the least important criteria were the number of selling points, the selling price and the comparison of the organic and conventional food, while for the tourists with the lowest incomes, these two criteria were important because they could afford less organic food items with their income.

According to the country of origin, the Slovenians and Italians were not interested in the organically produced food because of a small number of selling points. The Austrian and German tourists were most concerned about the premium prices that were regarded as too high, while for the Russians, the non-existent interest was related to the fact that there was no need for the organically produced food at all.

CONCLUSION

The survey was conducted in six tourist destination in Istra on the sample of 1,300 tourists during August and September 2008. We determined that there exists a certain interest for consuming the organically produced food and the rating of such food was 4 in the average and for such food, the tourists were willing to pay premium prices by about 30 percent more than for the conventionally produced food.

The survey showed the statistically significant correlations between the socio-demographic features of the tourists and their potential in the markets of the organically produced food through the potential of purchase, interest for consumption, places of purchase and ways of making decisions while purchasing the organically produced food during their holidays stay in Istra.

Women were more often the consumers of the organically produced food but within the circumstances of the sufficient number of selling points and with a good relation of price and quality. The age above 45 and the boarding facility level were important for the purchase criteria. Tourists with higher education were willing to pay the premium prices more frequently than the lower educated ones. According to the country of origin, the Austrians and Germans were the least willing to pay the premium prices for the organically produced food. And in general, the offer of the organically produced food in non -specialized restaurants was the most important place of consumption for all tourists in general.

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