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The change in buying behavior after becoming a mother

In the aspect of ecological food

Bachelor's thesis within Business Administration

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Title:	The change in buying behavior after becoming a mother – In the aspect of ecological food
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Abstract

Background for study:	The ecological trend has grown in the latest years, and earlier studies has shown that women are most likely to buy ecological food. However, becoming a mother comes with new expenses connected with the baby. The aim of this study is to investigate how women's buying behavior changes when they become a mother and we will connect this to ecological buying behavior..
Purpose:	The purpose with the thesis is to find out how and why the buying behavior of food changes after becoming a mother and in what way this affect the purchasing of ecological food.
Research questions:	What are the factors affecting mothers, when deciding to buy ecological or regular food? How and why does becoming a mother change the buying behavior of food?
Theoretical framework:	The frame of reference contains models of the buyer decision process that leads to the purchase, and the consumer decision making model show how the characteristics influence the purchase. The authors also used the means-end chain model to see which attributes affects the consumer.
Method:	To be able to carrying out with the study, we used an qualitative approach with focus groups as our method of data collection to get a deeper understanding for the subject.
Conclusions:	The conclusions to be drawn from this study is that the price is still the most important factor but also the time that many participants feel that they don't have when it comes to grocery shopping.

Kandidatuppsats i företagsekonomi, 15 HP

Titel:	Förändringen i köpbeteendet efter att man blivit mamma – Med hänsyn till ekologisk mat
Författare:	Danny Andersson, Fredrik Magnusson, Miran Futic
Handledare:	Olga Sasinovskaya
Datum:	2010-05-24
Ämnesord:	Ekologisk mat, köpbeteende, konsumentens beslutsprocess

Sammanfattning

Bakgrund till studien:	Den ekologiska trenden har vuxit de senaste åren och tidigare forskning har visat att kvinnor är den mest troliga ekologiska handlaren. Att bli förälder innebär nya kostnader på grund av barnet, målet med denna studie är att undersöka om kvinnors köpbeteende ändras när de blir mamma, med hänsyn av ekologiskt köpbeteende.
Syfte:	Syftet med uppsatsen är att ta reda på hur och varför köpbeteendet av mat förändras när man blir mamma och på vilket sätt detta påverkar köpandet av ekologisk mat.
Frågeställningar:	Vilka faktorer påverkar mammor i deras beslut om att köpa ekologisk eller vanlig mat? Hur och varför påverkas köpbeteendet av att man blir mamma?
Teoretiskt ramverk:	Den teoretiska referensramen innehåller modeller av köparens beslutsprocess som leder till köp, och köpbeteendets processen visar vilka egenskaper som påverkar köpet. Författarna använder sig utav means-end chain modellen för att se vilka attribut som påverkar konsumenten?
Metod:	För att kunna genomföra denna studie använde vi oss utav en kvalitativ metod med fokusgrupper som vår datainsamlingsmetod.
Slutsatser:	Slutsatserna man kan dra ifrån studien är att priset fortfarande är den viktigaste påverkningsfaktorn men även tid som många av mammorna kände att de inte hade när det kommer till mathandlande.

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I Introduction

In this chapter the authors will present a background to the topic and explain why this area is studied.

I.1 Background

“Interest in organically produced food is increasing throughout the world in response to concerns about conventional agricultural practices, food safety and human health concerns, animal welfare considerations and concern about the environment.” (Yiridoe, Bonti-Ankomah and Martin, 2005)

In the latest years the interest of ecological food and additives in food have grown as a lead of the climate changes and increased knowledge about additives in food.

According to Statistiska centralbyrån (2009) more and more ecological food is being sold, between 2004 and 2008 the sales have raised from 1,9 % to 3,4 % out of all grocery sales in Sweden. Olausson (2007) refers to a study by Statistiska centralbyrån (SCB) which claims that 55% of the Swedish population actually prefer ecological food, but still it only stands for about 3,5 % of the total grocery shopping.

There is a difference between ecological food and food without additives, ecological food is produced without chemical pesticides while food without additives is pretty much what it sounds like, food without artificial additives added. However there are similarities, and that is that ecological food must consist of ecological ingredients to a minimum of 95% (Livsmedelsverket, 2009). In the thesis we will talk about them both under the word ecological since there is a small difference, and the fact that ecological is a more commonly known and used word in Sweden.

Grocery store retailers have seen this changed behavior among their customers because of this ”trend”, and have therefore started their own concepts to target these customers. While COOP, ICA and Axfood have started own brands consisting of ecological food (Änglamark, I love eco and Garant), Citygross started using a concept called Äkta varor, which focuses on products without additives(Citygross, 2010).

Research on buying behavior has been made many times before in many different areas and trade situations. The consumer behavior area is wide and there have been studies on for example obesity like in the article from Story and French (2004) where the U.S. market is studied to see the connection between purchasing behavior and child obesity.

There are other researches on buying behavior like for example the article from Wandel and Bugge (1997) where they in Norway study what attributes consumers prioritize in their grocery shopping. In their research they found out that consumers prioritize freshness, taste and nutritional value. The article also researches how the environmental aspects affect the consumers buying behavior.

1.2 Problem discussion

Based on the statistics from Statistiska centralbyrån(2009), which shows that the buying of ecological food are increasing, however Olausson (2007) claims that 55% of the Swedish population prefer ecological food. The statistics from SCB is based on the total of all grocery shopping and it doesn't show how it's allocated over the population. However it can be said that that the sales in ecological food are growing and a lot of people prefer it if compared with conventional products.

Kotler, Wong, Saunders and Armstrong (2005) says that women to a higher degree are the primary grocery shopper and they are according to Statistiska centralbyrån (2009) home more with the children.

Research on the subject ecological food has also been made earlier and there are also many studies and articles in that subject. Davies, Titterington and Cochrane (1995) have conducted a study in Northern Ireland and examined who actually buys ecological food and their research shows that the main reasons for buying ecological food are the taste, environment and health, also the authors write that the main reasons why people do not buy ecological food is the lack of availability and price. In this article the authors argue that women in the age 30-45 with good disposable income and children at home are the most likely to buy ecological products. Worth mentioning is that the presence of children was not a crucial factor, until you added household income, then the result showed that children living in the highest income bracket had parents that was the largest purchasers of ecological food.

Also in an article written by Zanolli and Naspetti (2002)that researched consumer perception and knowledge of ecological food in Italy and uses a means- end chain model to link attributes of products to need of the costumers. They also found out that many consumers felt that the ecological food was expensive and difficult to find but still the consumers think positive about the ecological products. Worth mentioning from the article is that many consumers associate ecological food with health and nourishing and tasty products.

The article written by Yiridoe, Bonti-Ankomah and Martin (2005) also shows that price and lack of ability is the main reasons why people don't buy ecological food.

Price and lack of ability seems to be the main reasons of why consumers hesitate to buy ecological food and there are several article and researches that confirm that theory. The authors want to research this phenomenon and how the ecological trend affect women that recently have become mothers.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose with the thesis is to find out how and why the buying behavior of food changes after becoming a mother and in what way this affect the purchasing of ecological food.

1.4 Research questions

- What are the factors affecting mothers, when deciding to buy ecological or regular food?
- How and why does becoming a mother change the buying behavior of food?

1.5 Definitions

Additives - Food additives are substances added to food to preserve flavor or improve its taste and appearance (Wikipedia, 2010)

Ecological food - are made in a way that limits or excludes the use of synthetic materials during production (Wikipedia, 2010)

Laddering – “an indepth one-on-one interviewing technique used to develop an understanding of how consumers translate the attributes of products into meaningful associations” (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988)

2 Frame of reference

In this chapter the authors will present theories that will help us analyzing our empirical findings, to answer our research questions and purpose.

2.1 Consumer decision making

Every day people have to make numbers of decisions, according to Schiffman and Kanuk (1987) decisions are generally made without thinking about how they are made and without thinking about the underlying process of the decision making.

The consumer purchasing behavior is according to Kotler et. al. (2005) strongly affected by four characteristics (Figure 2.1) :

Cultural				
Culture	Social			
Subculture	Reference group	Personal		
Social class	Family	Age and lifecycle stage	Psychological	
	Roles and status	Economic circumstances	Motivation	Buyer
		Lifestyle	Perception	
		Personality and self-concept	Learning	
			Beliefs and attitudes	

Figure 2.1 – Characteristics of consumer buying behavior (Kotler et. al., 2005)

These are the underlying factors that affect how customers make different choices.

2.1.1 Cultural

According to Kotler et. al. (2005) the deepest influence on the consumer behavior comes from cultural factors.

Kotler et. al. (2005) says that the culture factor is the most basic source of a person's wants and beliefs. Human behavior is learned from when growing up, for example child learns values and perceptions from the family. Marketers try to spot cultural shifts in order to imagine new products that might be wanted, for example a shift towards a greater health concern have led to a large industry for natural and healthier food.

A subculture is according to Kotler et. al. (2005) a group of people with common life experiences and situations, for example nationalities, religions, racial groups and geographic regions. These influences affects according to Blackwell et. al. (2006) the values, norms and rituals a person do. Values can for example be how products are used in society, like what food should be used and how long should it be prepared (Blackwell et. al.,2006; Asp, 1999)

According to Asp (1999) culture makes an important food contribution to food decisions, also food habits can be seen as a standardized cultural behavior for individuals that has been given a cultural tradition. Although the food habits are changing and adapting to other food from other cultures, due to for example travelling, immigration and the socio-economic environment. Asp (1999) also says that food always is used to satisfy hunger and meet nutritional needs, but also to promote family unity with the whole family eating together.

2.1.2 Social factors

The social factors influence the consumer behavior from factors like groups, family, social role and status. Blackwell et. al. (2006) means that humans learn their norms by imitating and observing others, this process is called socialization.

According to Kotler et. al. (2005) there are two main categories of different types of groups that influences a person's behavior:

- Memberships groups, which is a group that a person belongs to and that group has a direct influence on a person's behavior. These groups can for example be family, friends, neighbors and fellow workers.
- Reference groups, are groups that a person doesn't belong to but wishes to belong to and therefore be compared with, these have either a direct or an indirect influence on a person's behavior.

Kotler et. al. (2005) also says that family members influence the buyer behavior, first of all through the parents since they provide a person with an attitude towards for example politics, economics and personal ambition. Even if the buyer don't interact much with those anymore it's still likely to have an indirect impact on the buying behavior. On the other hand the buyer get's influenced by the family, for example by husband, wife and children, this influence is more direct then from the childhood experience. For example in the husband-wife relationship product category and stage in the buying process, the involvement in the buying decision varies widely and the buying role changes with the evolving consumer lifestyles. Having food as an example, the women in most cultures have been the main buyer, however Kotler et. al. (2005) says that this is changing and more and more husbands' willingness to do more of the family's purchasing have increased, especially in Western Europe.

2.1.3 Personal factors

Personal factors do also influence the buying behavior, according to Kotler et. al. (2005) examples of this can be that people buy different goods and services over their lifetime, since the taste in for example food and clothes changes when they are getting older. Also if a person get a baby and start a family the buying behavior changes, for example a person doesn't buy baby food if not having a baby and a person might plan a holiday somewhere that suits the kids better than if a person without kids should have planned the trip. Other personal factors are occupation, economic circumstances and lifestyle which also changes the attitude for different kinds of products and how the person expresses themselves.

2.1.4 Psychological factors

According to Kotler et. al. (2005) there is four important psychological factors that influences a person's buying choice:

- motivation, why a person is interested in a product or service.
- perception, the process of how people select, organize and interpret information.
- learning, how people's behavior changes when learning and getting more experience.

- beliefs and attitude, the thoughts that a person has towards something and how these thoughts affect the evaluation process in an unfavorable or favorable way.

Asp (1999) says that psychological factors are one of the strongest deciding factors for choosing food. These factors can for example be food preferences, food likes and dislikes and also response to sensory attributes related with making food choices. The most important sensory factor based on several studies are according to Asp (1999) how the food tastes, however it can also be for example texture, color and shape.

This theory about factors influencing consumer behavior will help understanding how the consumers act on the market and when compared with the empirical findings, an understanding of why the consumer behavior makes a certain choice.

2.2 Means-end Chain

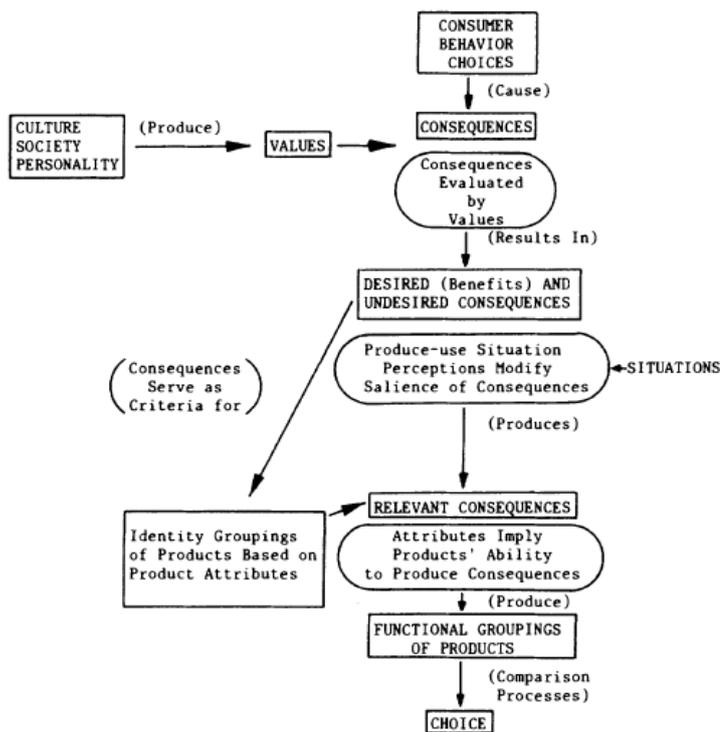


Figure 2.2 – The Means-End Chain model (Gutman, 1982)

The Means-End Chain (MEC) model uses a laddering technique to seek to explain how a selection of a product helps the consumer to reach a desired end state (Fotopoulos, Krystallis & Ness, 2003). Means are product attributes that connects to ends, which are different states that are valued to the consumer, like for example happiness, security and accomplishments. The MEC model has a hierarchical cognitive structure, and explains how a consumer’s product knowledge is connected with their self-knowledge (Fotopoulos et. al., 2003). Gutman (1982) says that the MEC model is based on two assumptions, the first one is that the consumer’s values are of major importance when guiding choice patterns, second people handle the great diversity of products by grouping the satisfiers of value into categories to reduce complexity of choice. This suggests that in addition to product groups, consumers can based on product functions create categories (Gutman, 1982). In addition to these two assumptions Gutman (1982) also says that there are two

more assumptions of a more general nature that all consumer actions have consequences and that consumers learn to associate different consequences with particular actions.

The consequences can be both of physiological and psychological nature, these can affect the consumer both in a positive or a negative way. Physiological consequences can be for example that hunger and thirst needs are satisfied, while psychological consequences can be for example an improved self-esteem, but it can also be of sociological nature like for example improved status and group membership (Gutman, 1982).

This means that the consumer choice is based on product attributes that in turn lead to different consequences that satisfy personal values (Kaciak & Cullen, 2006).

Grunert and Grunert (1995) have a criticism to the model and say that it's easy to pressure the respondent to answer "why" questions, and the result from this will be that the respondent thinks more strategically to find arguments that supports their buying behavior. To avoid this we will use what Grunert and Grunert (1995) calls a "soft" laddering technique where the natural flow of speech is restricted as little as possible, and then interpret the information to reduce the number of different answers by grouping synonyms.

This theory will help us to determine why a consumer chooses to buy certain products and the underlying motivation for this depending on the personal values of the consumer.

2.3 Buyer decision process

The buyer decision process (Figure 2.3) starts long before the actual purchase, according to Kotler et. al. (2005) there is five stages in this process:

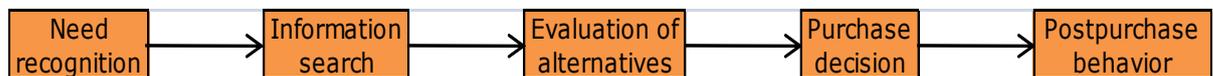


Figure 2.3 – The buyer decision process (Kotler et. al., 2005)

However Kotler et. al. (2005) says that even if the model implies that consumers pass through all stages with every purchase, this is not the actual case, with for example routine purchases there's often only a recognized need and next the purchase decision.

A similar model is developed by Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2006) and has the same steps as the model by Kotler et. al. (2005) but includes the steps consumption, divestment and have replaced post-purchase behavior with post-consumption behavior (Figure 2.4). Thompson and Yon Ding (2003) say that the advantages with the EBM model is that it's so general and is applicable for a wide range of situations.



Figure 2.4 – How consumers make decisions for goods and service, Blackwell et. al. (2006)

Thompson and Ying Ding (2003) also say that the model is consistent in its way of presenting the consumer behavior and introduces memory, information processing and consideration of both positive and negative purchase outcomes. Therefore the model has strength in the ability to interpret research findings in almost any situation. Our empirical findings will be analyzed with the EBM model to determine how the buying behavior has changed.

2.3.1 Need recognition

The first stage of the buying decision process, where the consumer recognizes a problem or a need, according to Kotler et. al. (2005) a need can be triggered from either an internal or an external stimuli. Internal stimuli are when the normal needs (hunger, thirst and sex) of a person raise to a level high enough to become a drive. External stimuli on the other hand is needs that are created to trigger the need of a person or trigger a feeling of need, for example the smell of fresh baked bread outside a bakery or advertising that affects the person.

Blackwell and Blackwell (2001) say that the need, customer problem or wish is the starting point of any purchase decision. The customer recognizes the need when there's a difference with what the consumer perceives to be ideal when compared to the actual state. When about to buy food, Blackwell and Blackwell (2001) says the most important factors that triggers the need is family size, health, age, income, health and reference group.

"Today, consumers are looking for combination of wellness and indulgence, bold flavors, and convenience in their food choices" (Blackwell & Blackwell, 2001)

According to Blackwell et. al. (2006) consumers in addition to need have desires. While need is more of something that the consumer need in order to for example solve a problem they have, desire is more of what the consumer would want. Blackwell et. al. (2006) says that the cost affects the consumers' willingness to sacrifice some of their desires, for example by buying affordable products that fulfills their needs, however they still will try to fulfill their desire when able to afford it.

An example of this can be found in a study conducted by Thøgersen and Ölander (2003), it shows that people's ethical beliefs give them a desire to be environmental friendly, however to a certain cost. If the personal cost gets too high for a sake that primary benefits others, a defense mechanism starts and the individual excuses the situation and claims that the actions doesn't have any serious consequences for the society.

Also according to Blackwell et. al. (2006) and Schiffmann and Kanuk (1987) the need changes depending of different life-stages, for example before and after having a family.

2.3.2 Search for information

The stage of customer decision making process, according to Blackwell et. al. (2006) the consumer starts to search for information and solutions to satisfy the need. The length of the information search depends according to Blackwell et. al. (2006) on factors like for example personality, social class, income, size of purchase, past experiences, prior brand perceptions and customer satisfaction. If the consumer are satisfied with the brand they currently use they probably will repurchase the product almost without any searching behavior, this makes it difficult for competitive products to catch their attention. On the opposite if the customer are dissatisfied with the current products and brands, Blackwell et. al. (2006) says that the search expands to include other options.

There are according to Kotler et. al. (2006) and Blackwell et. al. (2006) two ways for information searching, internal and external. Internal search is when using knowledge from for example the memory and the external are when information is collected from for example the marketplace or friends and family.

Kotler et al. (2005) explains the external search like when the consumer actively searches for information about a product. Increasing active information search makes the customer look for more extensive problem solving with the product and Kotler et. al. (2005) also says there are four channels that a consumer can obtain information:

- Personal sources, like for example friends and family
- Commercial sources, like for example advertising, salespeople, the Internet, packaging and displays
- Public sources, like for example mass media, consumer-rating organizations
- Experimental sources, like for example handling, examining and using of the product

The reason for making the external search is according to Blackwell et. al. (2006) because of the consumer wants to make a better choice and feels that it can't trust only previously gathered knowledge stored in the memory.

2.3.3 Evaluation of alternatives

Blackwell et. al. (2006) says that in this stage the consumer compare, contrast and select depending on questions like for example "What are my options?" or "Which is the best?". Consumer narrows down their choices by comparing the different products and brands with what they believe is most important. Also according the Blackwell et. al. (2006) the consumers often monitor products, like for example quantity, size, quality and price. If these attributes changes, the consumer starts to evaluate what the change depends on, if for example a consumer comes to the conclusion that a price change is motivated only to increase profits the purchasing intentions are reduced.

2.3.4 Purchase

According to Blackwell et. al. (2006) the consumer moves through two phases in the purchase stage. First the choice of one retailer over another, and second the actual choice when in the store. Kotler et. al. (2005) says that the intended choice isn't always the product that in the end are purchased, since there are two factors influencing the buyer to make a different choice.

First attitudes from others, which means that other people influences on the buying decision, for example a family member can have strong beliefs and with that influence a person that prefers a different option and which may lead to that a different product then intended is purchased. Kotler et. al. (2005) also means that there can be unexpected situational factors, like for example losing a job, then the price factor might have a big importance for the purchase and therefore the buyer must settle for a cheaper product then intended.

Blackwell and Blackwell (2001) also talks about how the intended purchase always isn't the purchase made due to for example coupon or discount, lack of money or talking to another consumer which changes the decision.

2.3.5 Consumption

According to Blackwell et. al. (2006) the consumption stage takes place when the consumer have the possession of the product. The consumption can either take place immediately or be delayed, for example if the consumer stocks up and fills the freezer with products. How the product is used affects the likelihood of the consumer buying the product in the future.

2.3.6 Post-consumption evaluation

At this stage Blackwell and Blackwell (2001) says that the customer can have two experiences, satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Satisfaction occurs when the experience matches the expected level of performance, while dissatisfaction occurs when the experience fail to do so.

This stage is according to Kotler et. al.(2005) how the consumer feels about the product after having bought and used it and have a big importance whether the consumer will buy the product again or if the consumer will recommend the product for others.

The outcome of this stage is according to Blackwell et. al. (2006) important, since consumers store their evaluations in the memory, and therefore refer back to it when making decisions in the future. Even if the product works well, the consumer often second guess their decision, especially if the price was high, also emotions play a big part in the evaluation stage, this can for example be joy, anger, guilt and contempt, associated with the product.

2.3.7 Divestment

Is according to Blackwell et. al. (2006) what happens to the product after consumption, depending on the product the consumer can choose to recycle, sell or just dispose it, the consumer's environmental concerns play a role in the consumer's divestment methods. According to Blackwell and Blackwell (2001) after consuming the food, the leftovers and packaging needs to be disposed. For example is the food container easily disposable or recyclable.

The model helps us map the participants in our focus groups study (will be described in chapter 3.4), how their thoughts go and how it affects their purchasing choices.

3 Method

The method section aims to give the reader an insight into how information were collected and analyzed in order to answer the purpose and research questions with our final conclusions. We have designed this chapter after the guidelines of Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill's (2009) Research Onion.

3.1 Research method

To begin the research of this thesis, the authors started by looking into literature in different food alternatives; ecological and non-additive. We also read literature that were in the areas of marketing and the psycho-social-cultural context, where parents buying- and decision behavior were the focus. When the authors had collected and read the literature, a good theoretical framework had been developed, to come up with the thesis purpose and problem discussion. To obtain the more recent findings within these areas, academic search engines have been used in order to get this research identified, such as Emerald, Google Scholar, Diva, ABI/Inform, JSTOR and ProQuest Entrepreneurship. Search words that we used were, ecological-, organic- and non-additive food, buying behavior, consumer decision-making and eco trend. We also searched within the area of motivation, triggers and drivers that effect buying decisions.

3.1.1 Interpretivism

We chose to conduct our research in an interpretive way due to our research design and how we collected our data. Interpretivism “is an umbrella term which is mainly associated with qualitative methods of research, but quantitative techniques can also be used” (Williamson, 2002). Researchers with an interpretive approach want to perform field work in its natural surroundings, they also think that the social world is constructed and interpreted out of people, like if that world is different from the one of natural sciences (Williamson, 2002). The authors of this thesis thought that using a mother group that recently has started up, as focus groups, would take the phenomena studied into its usual social settings. This was made to let the participants feel comfortable and being able to talk about the chosen subject area. According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992) in Williamson (2002) interpretive researchers have a special assignment regarding their studies, and that is to understand how the social settings influences the participants in their created, living environment. Positivism on the other hand believes that social sciences should reason in the same way as natural sciences, but also the positivist will search for the causal and effect relationship (Williamson, 2002). We wanted to see the mother’s motivations in their buying behavior for buying or not buying ecological products. Williamson (2002) argues that an interpretive are concerned about the participants interpretations, beliefs and feelings.

Since we interpreted this study subjectively and moderated the direction of the focus groups when going off topic, the interpretive approach is nearest at hand. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) argues that researchers that are being a part of the research cannot be separated from the study therefore are characterized as interpretivism, and that will be subjective in opposite to a positivistic thinking which according to Williamson (2002) means that knowledge only can be based on objective observations and experiences.

3.1.2 Inductive

For this study the research approach has been the inductive way. Inductive reasoning is most often used for the research design of interpretive character (Williamson, 2002). According to Saunders et.al. (2009) induction emphasizes through the qualitative gathering of

data and gaining understanding of humans' attachment to specific events. According to Williamson (2002) positivist research are based on the majority of deductive reasoning that are used in science studies.

In the focus groups we observed what mothers had to say about their food buying behavior, and that data were analyzed with our theories. According to Saunders et.al. (2009) the purpose of doing this type of study is to better understand the nature of the phenomena by making sense of the interview data collected. The authors of this thesis wanted to understand why mothers felt like they did, when it came to their buying- decision and behaviors. According to Saunders et.al. (2009) researchers that want to understand why certain things happen in their choices of the research instead of just describing them, should take on an inductive research.

3.1.3 Research purpose

According to Esaiasson, Gilljam, Oscarsson and Wängnerud (2003), there are three categories for the purpose of research when writing a research topic: descriptive, explanatory and exploratory. Descriptive studies deals with the description of a situation, problem or context. These studies make use of existing theories and methods, they can answer the questions how, where, when and who. Exploratory studies collect information and data and then develop ideas about the problem or its context. Esaiasson et al (2003) argues that explanatory studies moves one step further than descriptive and tries to find the answer to why questions.

When we looked at our purpose with this thesis and research questions we could not fit our research into just one of these categories. Because we want to explore the factors that affects mothers in their decision making process the study will partly be exploratory. When conducting an exploratory study, you often use qualitative activities when collecting the data that is needed for the research (Saunders et.al., 2009; Williamson, 2002). We also have explanatory studies applicable to this research, since we wanted to know why there is a change in their decisions and behaviors when buying ecological food. According to Williamson (2002) explanatory research answer the researched phenomena's questions *how* and *why*, and how variables have interrelationships and causal links between each other. Saunders et. al. (2009) argues that explanatory studies also can be of qualitative nature and have variables establishing causal relationships.

3.2 Research design

To achieve the purpose of this thesis we have used a qualitative research design to produce qualitative data where the participants' perspectives have been kept intact. The qualitative method is according to Andersen (1994) used with the thought that everything cannot be measured; every phenomena consist with unique sets of qualities or characteristics and therefore cannot be measured or weighted.

When discussing how we should collect our qualitative data, we decided that focus groups would be the appropriate way to collect the data to analyze. Focus groups have an open research and unstructured strategy unlike the quantitative methods where hypothesis are made to be falsified or approved. The qualitative method have been used because it is difficult to quantify social relations and behavior by using quantitative methods, the gathering of data and results had become too difficult to get a deeper understanding of the phenomena. The quantitative method is to make the study measurable and that the results should be presented in numbers (Andersen, 1994). Qualitative research also involves interpreting

and analyzing interviews and texts in order to investigate specific patterns (Auerbach, 2003).

In our thesis we have used research questions to answer our purpose that is to find out how the buying behavior of food changes after becoming a mother. According to Jacobsen (2002) most people agrees that scientific research is one or several questions being systematically researched.

3.3 Data collection

The authors of this thesis wanted to see how the ecological trend was received, and how and why the buying behavior of ecological food amongst women that recently had become mothers has changed.

According to Esaiasson et al. (2003) the general rule is that primary sources are more reliable than secondary sources. Statements made by people who have experienced an event are simply easier to rely on than statements from people who simply describe what others have said. Primary data is collected for a specific purpose, and it is the researchers that have to collect it (Esaiasson et. al., 2003; Jacobsen, 2002).

3.4 Focus group

Because we wanted to collect qualitative information for our research purpose, we chose to use focus groups. This is a structured and planned group interviewing format (Esaiasson et al. 2003).

The good thing with a focus group is that the leading role of the moderator decreases, the point is that the contenders will start a conversation and give each other questions and statements to answer (Esaiasson et al. 2003). Greenbaum (2000) argues that a focus group's aim is to study feelings and attitudes in a specific subject, to understand the *why* of the subject chosen to research. With focus groups there are also really important with participants that have opinions on the research topic chosen for the study (Williamson, 2002).

3.4.1 Setting up focus groups

In this thesis the authors agreed upon that to answer the research questions, we should contact women that in the recent year had become mothers. How you pick your group members must be related to your purpose of the research, so one important mutual feature should be in common (Esaiasson et al. 2003). According to Jacobsen (2002) homogenous groups are having a common background to discuss from; they easier share experiences and have low communication barriers.

The authors used their connections and got in touch with a family forum on the internet which helped us getting in touch with mothers that suited our criteria. According to Williamson (2002) it is important to first know who should answer the research questions, thereafter the researchers should use their network of connections to find participants that are suitable to answer.

After we got the knowledge about how to reach the participants we decided that the focus groups should be conducted in one of the author's private home, since it is located central and easy for the attendants to find the location. The authors then argued how long a high quality focus group could last, because we realized that if there were going to be mothers attending with children, we had to use the time wisely. We decided to tell the participants that the focus group would last for approximately two hours, because we feel that it is bet-

ter to announce a longer time than it takes so the participants don't feel stress over the time limit. According to Williamson (2002) a typical focus group interview should take between one and two. The authors of this thesis understand the difficulties that could occur with children so we had 1-1,5 hour as timeframe. To make it more convenient for the attending mothers and have similar conditions for the groups we decided to divide our focus groups into three days, taking place after lunchtime, so that the children should be more at ease when they have had food and slept. According to Williamson (2002) it is a good idea to find an appropriate location for the focus groups, and before informing the participants, decide how long time the focus group should take.

3.4.2 Designing the focus groups

For this thesis the authors have chosen to use three smaller focus groups, we aimed for having 6 participants in each focus group. We did this choice since small groups have fewer than six people, and if the participants have a low-level of involvement with the topic or don't get along with the other participants, the focus group can be unproductive, however, smaller groups give the participant longer time to talk and it is easier for the researcher to sense each participant's reaction (Morgan in Williamson, 2002). Since the participants have a high-level of involvement with the topic, the authors thought that this would give all the participants time to talk and also give us a chance to capture the individual participant's reaction.

The data that the researchers collect shows how the group together thinks about the phenomena; you might not get so many themes from the group but a broader insight on the subject, the purpose is to get deeper values or cultural images from the group (Esaiasson et al. 2003). DePoy and Gitlin (1999) argues that a focus group contains between five to ten participants and according to Greenbaum (2000) a focus group with four to six participants are called mini-groups, but there is no actual distinction between smaller and larger groups. Morgan in Williamson (2002) argues that a rule of thumb is that there should be between three to five focus groups discussing the topic of research. The reason for this is that more groups usually do not generate any data that provides any new understanding. The mothers had their children attending during the focus group meeting and with larger groups there had been possibilities that the distraction from the children had interfered with the quality of the focus group.

When it comes to the focus groups questions, we chose to use broad questions about buying behavior and decision-making before going to the more specific ecological questions. The focus groups were conducted in Swedish and translated to English because of the convenience for the participants who all had Swedish as native language (the questions can be found in appendix 1). Developing questions for the focus groups, Stewart and Shamdasani referred in Williamson (2002) says that the interviews should start with more general questions and then become more specific to the research topic.

Before the moderator started each of the focus group meetings we had an introduction of ourselves and pointed out that we recorded the meeting and took notes but everyone should be anonymous. According to Morgan in Williamson (2002) the focus group should be recorded and transcribed as literal as possible.

The moderator was the same person for all the three focus groups, since we tried to have so similar circumstances as possible, for the different days of interviews. After the interview we thanked the participants by serving up with a lunch.

3.4.3 Sample of the focus groups

The authors invited 20 participants that had shown interest in participating in the study that we divided into three groups on different days, due to maternity leave there was no objections from the participants which day they got assigned. The authors randomly chose six participants for the first day from the sample, then seven mothers for day two and three. Because of factors that the authors could not influence, four of the participants did not show up, so therefore we ended up with five participants for the first and second day, and on the last day there were six people attending, the authors believe that this didn't affect the result of the focus groups. Williamson (2002) says that it is important to over-recruit people to the focus groups, whatever size is selected since people often fail to turn up.

Our focus groups were conducted at following days and there were different ending times due to that the length of the interviews varied;

Day 1: Tuesday 20 April 13.00 - 14.05

Day 2: Wednesday 21 April 13.00 – 14.00

Day 3: Thursday 22 April 13.00 – 14.15

The sample for our study can be found in appendix 2.

3.5 Data analysis

3.5.1 Qualitative analysis

When we had finished our focus groups, we had over 3 hours of interviewing material on our mobile phones and notes was also taken from the two researchers that did not moderate the interviews, for multiple inputs to transcribe from. According to Williamson (2002) the data should be transcribed from recordings and notes into documents so the analyzing of the data will be easier to grasp.

When we started to listen to our interviews when transcribing them into documents, we soon found out that we needed to pause and rewind in the file to hear what people said. We transferred our mobile files to our computer and listened to the interviews over and over again to hear better what was said.

After we had transcript everything we read through the documents to get a good view over our empirical findings. The authors categorized and summarize their empirical findings after their focus group questions to easier get a grasp of it. All documents should be read through so the researcher familiarizes with the findings and the data should be categorized to help the researchers think about their empirical findings at a more in-depth level (Williamson, 2002). According to Jacobsen (2002) the data have to be *reduced* and structured to have the possibility to get an overview of the empirical findings.

The next process in our analyzing was to place our categorized data under review to find where our theories were applicable. According to Esaiasson et.al. (2003) a qualitative method is good to use when critical view and systematize of contents in the text is necessary. According to Jacobsen (2002) your categories need to be controlled against theory and data so they are relevant in the subject chosen to investigate.

We wanted to show the causal links between the different attributes that the participants talked about, so we therefore draw a couple of simple models to give a clearer view how the answers was connected. Jacobsen (2002) argues that to show links between different phenomena you should illustrate it with describing models. When doing the systematizing researching you are clarifying the thinking structure in those participants who have been important for the study, and also fix the logical in the texts as well as the classification of the content in the text (Esaiaasson et al., 2003).

By doing the qualitative approach by collecting and analyzing data we have started with specific questions, then we have generalized our findings into manageable and viewable data, and finally looked for specific answers to our research questions. According to Jacobsen (2002) a qualitative process can be looked at as a “down and up process”; first you have data that is un-comprehensible, thereafter a time consuming process to get a grip of the data is followed, to finally have the important main discoveries.

3.6 Method part of Means-end chain model

The attribute (A), consequence(C) and value (V) factors will be analysed using a ladder method. Reynolds and Olson (2001) says that the laddering technique is used connect the A-C-V factor to get the respondents connection between a product’s attributes and the personal motivation. First the key factors from the respondents should be summarized in a data table using numbers to represent the connections between the elements. This information can then be graphically presented using hierarchical value map (HVM) in figure 3.1, which shows the connections in a tree format (Reynolds & Olsen, 2001). This will help us interpret our data from our focus groups, according to Reynolds and Olsen (2001) qualitative data permits and understanding of the underlying motivation of the consumers. Each unique pathway in the HVM model will then show a possible orientation with respect of the product category.

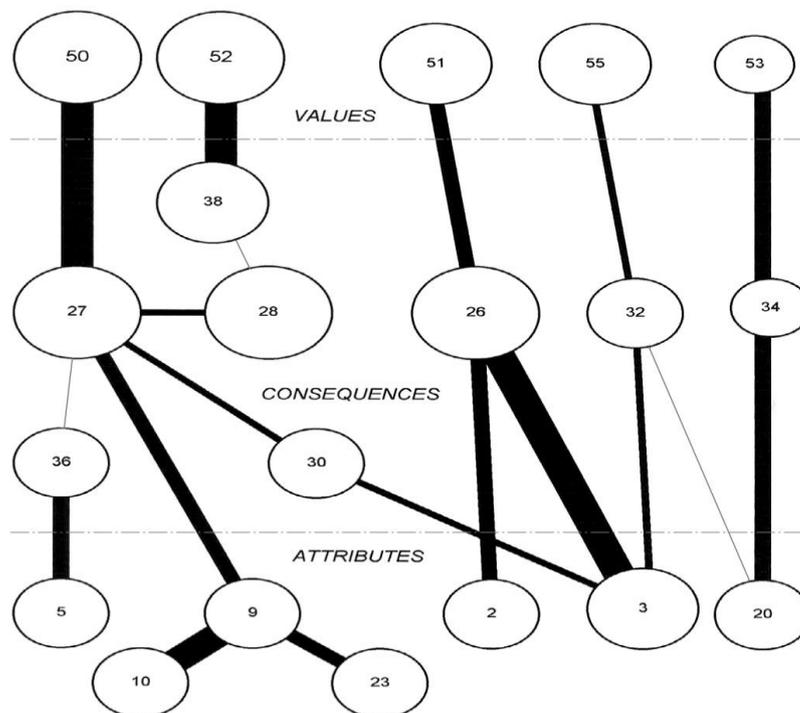


Figure 3.1 Hierarchical value map Baker, Thompson, Engelken and Huntley (2004)

3.7 Trustworthiness

In this study we wanted to go more in-depth to the problem, therefore a qualitative approach was better than a quantitative, since a questionnaire should not give us the same chance to find those answers. We wanted to know how the mothers felt and you cannot measure feelings in a good way with a scale. A qualitative approach gives the researcher *richer* data than a quantitative does (Jacobsen, 2002). When using the quantitative method the study needs at least a hierarchy measurement, quantitative is also one way communication because the study is all about the scientist's conditions and this view of science is clearly inspired by the logical positivism ideas for a science unit, and the starting point is often the ideal of scientific research (Andersen, 1994).

Even that validity often is connected with quantitative methods, qualitative researching also need critical viewing to see if the conclusions are trustworthy and valid. According to Silverman (1993) validity is important disregarding theoretical point of view and the use of qualitative and quantitative data. Jacobsen (2002) argues that no matter what method you use there are pros and cons for every part of the study, theoretically and practically is it impossible to get every little detail from the reality. It is "important to establish some level of confidence that qualitative research represents the meanings of its participants" (Lietz, Langer and Furman, 2006).

We tried to keep small groups so that everyone could speak up, but in cases when participants did not speak, or other participants taking over, the moderator tried to repeat the question personally to the participant not speaking, so everyone was contributing to the discussion. As all data collection techniques there are not only advantages, in the case of using focus groups there are according to Williamson (2002) the possibility that some participants might not express their private views, or be easily persuade because of domination from others attending the focus group. There are threats to trustworthiness with problems of reactivity and biases on the part of the participant and the researcher (Lietz et. al, 2006). A study is credible if the conclusions of it are perceived as applying to the social context in which the people the study involves live within (Daymon & Holloway, 2002).

Because we had three focus groups we think that it is a high level of trustworthiness, the members of two focus groups knew each other since earlier because they had met in the mother group. The third one was assembled by parents that did not have participated in the mother group before. This was to get a broaden image in case the two focus groups that already knew each other had influenced the other members in the group to have a similar view on the topic. We made this choice in order to raise the trustworthiness of our result.

4 Empirical findings

In this chapters the authors will presents the empirical data which was obtained during the focus group study.

4.1 General food buying behavior

In the focus group of mothers a common thought is that they're in first hand do major shopping to a large extent, all of those which have access to a car chooses a major department store with a wider choice, such as Maxi ICA, Coop or Willys. How often the shop varies from once a week to once a month and is then supplemented when necessary from the "nearest" store. One parent in the focus group didn't have access to a car so the family did major shopping using the stroller to being able to carry as much as possible.

Another common phenomenon is that the parents try to indulge in a little extra when they have just got their salary. All respondents does their shopping by using a shopping list where they divide the grocery store up in a systematically order. However, they also leave room for other things to buy if it should turn out to be good deals in the grocery store. The grocery shopping in the families was made mostly from the women, only in five of the families the men did the shopping and three of those men had a shopping list made by the woman.

One of the mothers does her shopping twice a week because of her large family, she tries to have basic goods at home at all time so she doesn't have to buy so much every time. She does her shopping at Netto because she thinks it takes too long to buy food in the larger stores, she values the time saving. She also buys food at ICA Maxi but then it takes several hours.

Another participant tell us about how her husband did one big shopping once a month but they got a problem with the food getting old and they had to throw a lot away and by doing that they lost money. Now thanks to better planning they do their shopping once a week and save up to a thousand SEK and don't have to throw away as much food. They do their shopping at Willys but most of their food they buy at ICA Maxi because they experience it as a more pleasant environment. They write their shopping list based on the different departments in the grocery store.

A participant in the focus group buys a lot of vegetables and it often ends with her having to throw it away or trying to eat it all. She does her shopping at ICA Maxi because of the better supply and she also mentions that it's a risk that she buys a lot of candy if she's hungry when she does her grocery shopping.

Some participants says that they like to go around the Ica-Maxi store and check out other products also, not just groceries.

Many of the mothers agreed on that it is very irritating when you go into a store and can't find what you're looking for, they think that ICA Maxi is a good store because it's easy to find what you're looking for there. They feel that they live a stressful life and don't have the time to go around in a store that they can't find what they looking for.

4.2 Changes in grocery shopping after having a child

Since the participants had children the biggest change in the buying behavior is that you have an entirely new shopping, you need to buy goods previously not needed such as for example baby food and diapers. One of the mothers said that earlier on you could focus on yourself and could afford more things, now it's not just me anymore, it made me buy less ecological food, now instead I think more about the price tag. To think more about the wallet is a very common phenomenon and it has become more common to check for example the price per kg, previously they didn't care so much about an extra SEK here and there before, this is something everybody in the focus groups agreed upon.

They later on began discussing whether the amount of meat in for example different brands of minced meat and that you actually may pay more if you compare the amount of meat you get for your money when buying the cheapest one with lots of additives and the more expensive kind with a higher amount of meat. But there were also those in the focus groups who didn't care about what is in the food as long as you got full, the content in the products didn't matter.

Many participants in the focus groups agreed on that ICA's minced meat that was Swedish and locally produced were no good, one of the participants says that she had to return the meat several times to ICA because of the poor quality. The participants also agreed on that when they bought meat directly from the slaughterhouse the meat was better. All the participants agreed on that the fresh produced minced meat was good.

One mother told us that she buys more semi-finished food and choosing ecological products occasionally. She rather selects ham that is produced and smoked locally instead of ham that has been flavored with additives. She doesn't like the vacuum-packed meat in the shop because she wants to keep her minced meat as fresh as possible. Where she lives there is a butcher that she buys from, she says it's more luxurious but also more expensive. One of the participants husband is a "gourmet" eater and eats the food he finds good, doesn't look at the price so much. They buy more ecological food because they think that it tastes better, eggs and vegetables and other ecological food tastes better than ordinary food. She says that it costs more but she thinks it's a matter of prioritization.

A participant said that how the child affects what kind of food you buy, for example if having a colic child you might not have the strength left to prepare own meals. Another mother argued for this and said that her son cried and screamed a lot, and since she didn't want to stand and cook for herself whenever she got a free moment, this made her buy more semi-cooked food. This topic came up in all three of our focus groups in different ways, if the children wanted something and didn't get it straight away it started screaming and crying so they tried to be as effective as they could to actually have time to not only do household duties on their free time.

Almost all of the participants said that they use the discount coupons that they get in the mail and tries to buy the products that the discount applies. All the participants feel that diapers are a major cost and also expensive.

Some of the participants in the focus groups said that they have become very aware of what it says on the contents and checks it carefully when they do their shopping, they feel that there is too much additives in the food.

4.3 Thoughts about ecological food

The participants in the focus groups had very little knowledge about ecological food and it was due to several reasons. Some participants felt that they didn't have enough knowledge because of the fear that knowing too much about the content of the food and the additives used in food could lead to fear and hysteria that would make the buying of food a burden. Some participants in the focus group thought that if they bought ecological food, it would result in that the animals were better off.

There was also guilt feelings in the buying of ecological food, few considered themselves obliged to buy ecological food because they were better for the nature and the animals, while a participant felt that it was ok not to buy ecological food because if she did not buy ecological food herself someone else would do it.

There were also those in the focus group who previously had had more knowledge about ecological food but more recently have been less observant about it. One group participant felt that she gladly would consider buying ecological food but if someone else would pay for it, she means that the price of organic food is so much higher that it is not worth paying. Participants in the focus groups was united on the whole ecological food concept and meant that it was a great hype about it and that media magnified it just so businesses could earn more money on the ecological food hype. They also thought that the price on ecological products was higher because of the marketing on these goods and she meant that that's the reason of the expensive price.

This price was a common opinion for a total of eight persons in the focus groups and they have started to look more at the price tags when doing the grocery shopping and always pick the cheapest option unless the price difference was very small.

Many of the participants in the focus groups had bought and tried out ecological food and almost all of them agreed on that they would buy it more often if it was cheaper.

Some of the participants said that they have not started to buy more ecological food since the baby came, and mean that they instead started to buy more fast food and mean that they had to take the opportunity while the child is not eating the same food.

One of the mothers tells us that she did eat a lot more healthier food before having a baby, but now she mostly purchase cheap food and therefore not likely ecological. Among baby food, however, some of the mothers agreed on that they could buy ecological food because it comes in different flavors than the regular baby food.

One of the mothers bought the food that her child wants to eat, it doesn't matter what it costs.

Many mothers thought that the price was very important when they bought their food and therefore they take the regular baby food instead of the more expensive ecological food.

There were only two participants in the focus groups that did buy ecological food regularly. One of the participants used to work with purchasing of ecological spices, she then discovered that there was a high level of bacteria in the ecological spices, which made her frightened. In the ecological spices the amount of bacteria was exactly at limit value allowed and because of this she now has stopped buying it.

Some of the participants differs slightly from the others relating to buying the cheapest food, instead they prefer to buy certain products because of the brand that they believe is tastier, for example Kalles Kaviar they think tastes better than ordinary caviar. One of the participants told us about how she earlier always complained to her mom at how often they ate for example pasta and wanted potato gratin instead, but now she have begun to understand that it's not possible to do because of the cost.

Many participants in the focus groups felt guilt with their grocery shopping, one mother tells us that she really wants to buy ecological food, because of the thought that it will be much better for the animals and the environment, however the price tag is simply a too big barrier. Many of the mothers agree on that and say that they try buy ecological when there's extra price on those products, it makes them feel that they have done something good. Some of the participants also wants to buy ecological as a treat to themselves since they believe it is tastier, but it is simply too expensive.

One of the participants says that in the end of the month she don't go and buy ecological products because money reasons, except for the ecological bananas and milk that they always purchase, in one of the other focus groups there another mother who had the same buying behavior. The reason for this is because they simply have decided to always go ecological with these products. She has also started to become more aware of the salt in the food, she checked the table of contents on the wafers that she was supposed to give to her son and saw that it contained salt. She said; "you do not think that everything contains salt but it does". Salt is the next thing that is dangerous according some of the participants when mentioned that there are a lot of salt in foods.

A mother says that if she for some reason would become a vegetarian, then she thinks she would buy more ecological eggs since she believes chickens are the animals that have it the worst. She personally thinks they taste better and she knows then that the hens have a higher standard of living. When you buy ecological eggs, you do something active and you know they have it better. She is also very disturbed when she sees documentaries about animals who are abused, if it is from a slaughterhouse where you can see how animals have it, it sometimes makes her not to buy meat for about a month, or until she has forgotten about it. However it becomes like a little warning bell that affect her much. It is influenced simply by what comes up in the media and what is happening right now. A participant says that then another subject comes up and pushes away the previous. A mother say that we in Sweden take two or three times as much salt as is normally the limit for recommended daily intake. In Finland, they find out how much salt there is in the products. Some of the participants find it hard to make the choice of whether to buy ecological or locally produced food. The regular milk is produced in Falköping while the ecological milk have been transported a long distance. However, no matter which choice you choose, it is a good deed says a participant. The others agree and guilt seems to be there among the entire group. She thinks it is tragic that there is always something you have to think about, you can't eat anything without having to think about what it is you put in yourself, for example carbs and healthy diets, etc.. It becomes too much, overfishing of salmons and other things that become visible when the animal is suffering. She has stopped using salt in the food at home for the sake of the children and since its salt in everything. A mother says that if nothing differs in price, the choice is, of course, an ecological option, but she thinks it's worse when it distinguishes about 10 SEK, which also the others agrees upon. If it's like that she doesn't care about the ecological option.

She thinks that ecological food tastes better and tries to buy it as often as possible. She doesn't just buy ecological food for the sake of her daughter she also does it because it tastes better and she thinks it's worth spending more for the better taste, for example she thinks the ecological apples taste better and buys them instead of the ordinary which she think has no taste and have to throw them away in the end.

Like we previously mentioned some of the participants chose to buy ecological food because of different flavors but there were also those who chose to buy ecological baby food because the usual baby food is more watery and had clumps in it which their children didn't like. The participants of the focus group started to talk of other ecological products not just food and they felt that the supply wasn't big on those products, but still ecological stood for food and nothing else for many of the participants. Almost all of the participants said that they were a bit concerned about additives in food, however the price tag simply decides which product they buy.

One mother told us says that she only sometimes buys ecological because of some bad experience when she was working with ecological food, she got little afraid of ecological food because of the experience at work.

4.4 Thoughts about additives in food

Most of the participants in the focus group had no greater knowledge of additives, they only knew that it wasn't good with too many additives in the food. There was also a fear of having too much knowledge of additives in food, some of the group members were afraid that if they knew too much, they would begin to be careful with what they bought and that would lead to more expensive food buying. Some participants in the focus group thought it was important with the meat content, they wanted a high meat content percentage as possible. The food's origin was not important for the majority of participants, but one mother thought it was important where food came from and always tried to buy Swedish chicken. Some participants felt it was important that the food did not contain a lot of additives and used to check the contents, they said that some of additives were dangerous and that it was good to stay away from them.

One of the participants husband had great knowledge of additives, she said that she didn't care so much for the additives instead it was here man who was more careful with that.

A participants says that she examines the contents, no matter if it's baby food or to the adults. She don't do it on every shopping occasion, since sometimes she's in a rush and just put the things she need in the wagon.

Another participant says that she is bad at checking out the labels when she buys food, it's her husband who look up the table of contents. She hears what everybody else has to say about additives and sweeteners, but is very self-aware of this at the store and shops as usual. She buys what she actually likes and what she believes tastes good.

A mother says that she usually checks the contents and amount of meat when buying sausages, she's curious of what the other half is when only about 50% are meat. She wants meat with a good looking appearance, not slimy, so if it looks good it's fine with her.

When she buys baby food jars, she reacted on that there are about 5 percent chicken in the jar and she also says that it is difficult to find real strawberry cordial, it is usually expensive and can only be purchased in small packages at a expensive price otherwise there is only light products, that only have around two percent of strawberry in them.

Some of the participants doesn't think so much about the additives in food, but tend to check color additives when they are about to buy jam. They are interested about which kind of food that is high in additives.

A participant thinks that it is a disaster with additives in children's hot dogs, as they contain 17 percent meat, the rest is potato flakes, salt and dirt. She tends to look for easy-sweetened cordial as it contains a higher percentage fruit. Her family has bought a soda

streamer to avoid all the empty bottles back and forth, but finds it difficult to find extracts, that doesn't contain added sweeteners. One mother says that there is a lot of additives in cold cuts like for example ham that you put on your sandwich. This concern have made her buy more ecological food then she did before, one of the other mothers agreed but her reasons for buying more ecological food was the fear of food containing additives in general.

4.5 Effect on buying behavior from external sources

All the participants in the focus groups were influenced by external factors to some extent, some very much while others have not noticed it much. One mother also felt that advertising is more an annoyance and that she did not take much notice of it. Many of the participants say that they tend to watch the weekly sheets from Ica Maxi and tries to find bargain prices on groceries while one mother says that she does not check on advertising at all, she feels that the special deals in the stores affect her more than the regular advertising.

Also many of the participants thought that advertising on television influenced a lot and that if they saw something that looked good they would try it while. Many of the participants in the focus group felt that offers such as "take 3 pay for 2" attracted and often took the opportunity to make use of such offers.

A participant said that she would consider changing grocery store for a special product that she had seen in an advertisement even if the grocery store was further away.

Many of the participants in the focus group felt that they were influenced by family and friends where one of the mothers says that her mother used to call her every week and advise on deals in grocery stores. But there were also those who did not think that they got influenced by family or friends, they felt that they were more influenced by growing up where they say that they are cooking much like their mothers did when they were young.

A participant said that she also thought it was interesting to try samples in the stores and thought that she might be influenced by this kind of advertising if she thought the product tasted good. The thing that all participants in the focus group could agree on was that all too some extent are influenced by external factors; advertising, family or friends.

Almost every participant agree that it is money that controls when they shop for something and guilt feelings seems to be connected with purchasing of ecological products, on one hand towards the children and on the other hand towards the animals. A mother says that money affects, but also when she read something about products containing lots of additives. She has read "Hemliga kocken" and the "Åkta vara" which has led her to think about different food choices. She can't eat eggs that are purchased in stores and must buy them from a nearby farmer where she knows that the animals are fine. However even thou she can't stand eggs purchased in stores she still does tolerate that others buy them there. Some participants agrees and says that it got they thinking about what content there might be in the food that the chickens that you take the eggs from and is being sold in the stores.

5 Result and Analysis

In this chapter the authors will present how the frame of reference is connected with our empirical findings and present the result from the focus group using the means-end chain model as a basis.

5.1 Decision process

During the focus groups the cultural factor was a very visible factor, one of the participants said straight out that the culture or how she grew up have a big influence on her current buying behavior of food. She pretty much buys and makes the same kind of food that her mother did for her. Another one of the participants actually preferred ecological food, however she couldn't afford it and therefore gave her child regular food, the thought in her mind was that she didn't get ecological food while she was young and she hadn't taken any damage from it. These aspects affected the way the participants looked upon ecological food and additives in food, makes it easier for them to motivate themselves when about to make a choice.

However a factor that had a bigger influence on the actual decision making was from the current family (in opposite to the one growing up in), if a person in the family had a strong belief that something tastes better they took this in to a consideration and if the economy allowed it they bought it. Another aspect of how the family have a part in the decision making is because it allows the family members to share knowledge, while the participants in our focus groups didn't possess much knowledge about for example additives in food, a few of their husbands did, and this affected to some extent what was being bought.

Even though family members had an influence on the decision making in the families, at the end the woman was the primary grocery shopper in the family and decided which products to buy. During our study we found that in the family of five of the participants, the partner did the shopping, however in three of these the husband got a shopping list with what to buy.

The economical effect of having a baby was the biggest reason for not buying ecological food, and the effect of this is that you can't spend as much money on yourself as before. Instead many of the participants have become more controlled by the new economic situation, which in those cases have led to looking more on the price tag than before, the effect from this is that less ecological food is being bought after having a baby.

The psychological factors also play a big role since the participating mother didn't possess much knowledge about ecological food, that played influence when comparing regular end ecological food, even thou they did think that ecological food is better, they didn't have knowledge enough to motivate the higher price. This was also something they didn't want to learn, because they believed this would make them scared and therefore buy more of the ecological food, which would impact the economy in a negative way and can't buy other necessary things for the family.

5.2 Motives for buying and not buying ecological food

After the focus group was done we started processing the data, based on our interpretation this made us able to sort the information and find motives for: Why and why not the participants were buying ecological food.

In our empirical findings we found out that it's not very common that families that just had a child buys ecological food. Only 19% (3 of 16) actually bought ecological food regularly, however a thought that is shared by a majority of the participants in our focus group is that they would want to buy ecological food. As much as 85% (11 of 13) of the participants that didn't buy ecological food wanted to buy it. The other two participants didn't care what was in the food.

5.2.1 Motives for not buying ecological food

The motives for why people aren't buying ecological food are shown in figure 5.1. This shows that the main reasons for not buying ecological food is due to economic circumstances and quality in life.

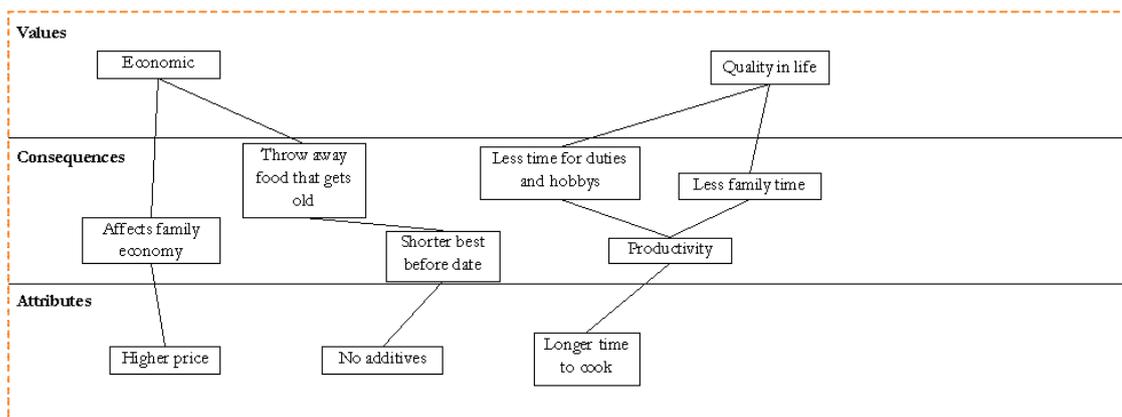


Figure 5.1 – Why ecological food isn't bought

The economic factor is influenced by mainly by the higher price of ecological food, but also that the absence of pesticides in the food shortens the time before the food gets old and participants have had to throw away food, which in turn affected the economy when having to buy new. The reasons for this is that the economic circumstances have changed since getting the child and because of new expenses connected with the baby, for example like buying baby food, diapers, clothes etc.

The other reason quality in life is affecting the buying behavior due to the reason that participants in our study wanted to indulge themselves more and therefore bought for example semi-finished food. This is faster to cook than if cooking from scratch, and the participants valued having more time which made them able to handle the rest of the household duties, have time for hobbies and also spend more time with the family, the mothers felt that these factors increased their quality in life.

This was the biggest reasons for the mothers to not buy ecological food, however in our interpretation from the information the focus group it is clear that the economical factor was

the biggest barrier for not buying the food. Also the knowledge attribute could have been in the result since many of the women that participants in the focus groups didn't have much knowledge about the differences between ecological and regular food, however this was a reason why they couldn't motivate the higher price.

5.2.2 Motives for buying ecological food

Motives of why people buy ecological food can be found in figure 5.2 and was mainly: personal achievement, responsibility for other creatures, environmental responsibility and well being.

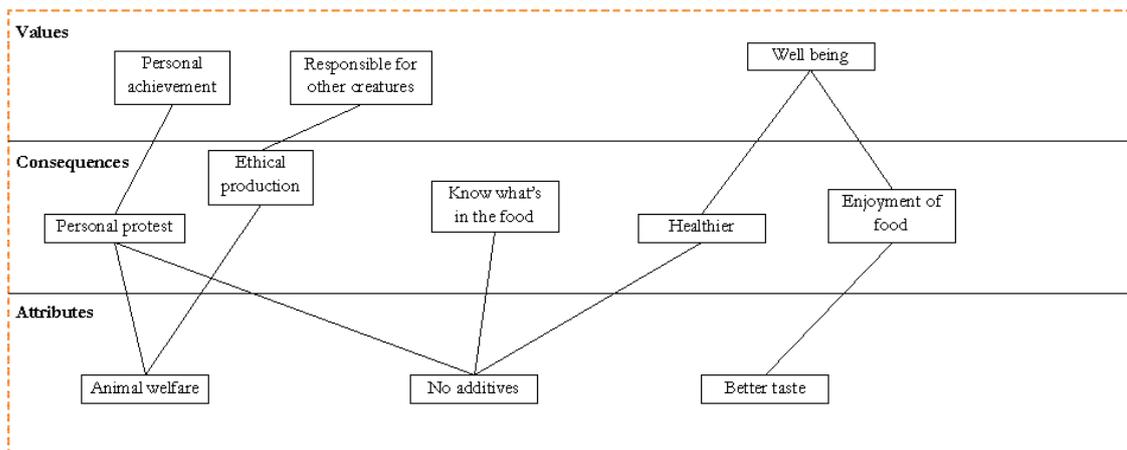


Figure 5.2 – Motives for buying ecological food

The first category, personal responsibility connects with both animal welfare and absence of pesticides through personal protest, the participants didn't for example like what they seen on TV about animals having poor conditions at the farm or the amount of pesticides that can be found in food, and therefore wanted to make a statement.

The poor conditions for animals also reflect to the value of responsibility for creatures through ethical production. This value wasn't as important as the personal achievement, the main reason for caring of animal welfare was to have the feeling of pride with having done something good. The last value which is well being comes from the absence of additives and the belief that the taste of ecological food is better. The consequences from this is that the participants thought it was a healthier choice and also that they enjoyed eating the food more.

The absence of additives also led the participants to talk about how they felt comfortable and safe by knowing what was in the food. This mainly came from that many of the participants felt they had a lack of knowledge about additives in food, but this was among most of the participants just a feeling or a belief based on what they had heard from for example friends and media, and they didn't really have any knowledge in this area.

5.3 Buyer decision making process

Here we apply the buyer decision making process on our empirical findings.

First we have the need recognition stage that can be triggered from internal and external stimuli. Obviously the internal stimuli that affects the participants buying behavior of food is hunger. Many of the participants felt that they were affected by external stimuli also es-

pecially commercial on the TV, this did for example increase their willingness to try new products and in particular from that brand.

Our empirical findings shows that health is a reason for some of the participants to choose ecological food since they believe it's a healthier choice. From the participants in the focus groups we found that many had a desire to buy ecological food but due to their economical situation the cost was too high. For some of the participants the ethical part concerning the treatment of the animals was far more important than the price and that's why they chose the ecological alternative.

A mother in the focus groups said that if she didn't buy the ecological food it didn't matter because somebody else would do it and therefore she bought regular food instead of an ecological option. This kind of behavior like when the personal cost gets too high for the sake that it doesn't primary benefit the individual, they make excuses and claim that their actions have no consequence for the society.

The next stage is search for information and we can see an example from our empirical studies is the case with the ICA minced meat that many of the participants agreed on was bad and that a participant had to return due to the bad quality, which made them start an external information search for different options to buy instead. One of the participants talked to her mother every week about great deals in grocery stores. Something that was very common was the external information search by looking in weekly advertisements sheets from the stores.

Another example of external search for information that we got from our empirical studies is that some of the participants use to check the packaging of the products for additives.

The next step is the alternative evaluation and the most common attribute that the participants in our empirical study compared was the price, that many found very important and therefore compared for example price per kilogram.

An attribute that the participant felt was important beyond the constantly recurring price factor was the quality. With quality there were two aspects that were considered among the participants except from additives in the food, the taste and the appearance of the food. For example one of the mothers thought that regular apples were tasteless and therefore choose an ecological option, another example with the taste as a deciding factor was that one of the participants chose Kalles Kaviar instead of a low price alternative. An example where the appearance was important is that one of the participants looks very carefully when buying meat, she chose the option that had an appealing appearance and didn't want it to look slimy.

Next in the buyer decision making process is the purchase stage. The participants mostly had a store they usually made their shopping in, one reason for this is that they felt familiar with the store and didn't want to waste time looking for products. However at some occasion it could happen that they made another choice of grocery store, for example one participant said that if she found out that one store had good offers on a product she needed, and then she considered going there instead. If doing so, she also bought all of the other products she needed there, since it was the most convenient solution.

We found out in our empirical study that many of the participants tries to use the discount and the offers they get from their grocery stores, for example "take three pay for two".

After having bought the product the consumption of the product takes place before the consumer make their evaluation. This stage affects whether the consumer will repurchase the product and recommend it for others. Once again the example with the minced meat from ICA, that the participants had a bad experience with, and therefore became dissatisfied and didn't want to repurchase it.

The last stage the consumer goes through in the buying decision making process is the divestment stage. In the case of food it's mainly how to dispose the leftover food and the packaging. For example one of the participants earlier did monthly shopping, however she also often bought ecological food. The result from this was that the shorter lifetime of ecological food have compared to regular food, the family couldn't eat everything before it got old and therefore they had to throw it away. This made her change the buying behavior and nowadays she do weekly grocery shopping.

6 Conclusions

In this chapter the authors will summarize our findings with the purpose and the research questions as a basis.

By doing this research we wanted to see how the buying behavior of food changes after becoming a mother, and also find out the reason for why this happened.

The result to answer our first research question shows that the reason mothers buy ecological food is because they want to feel like they done something good, and protest against the poor conditions that animals have and the amount of additives that can be found in today's food. Also well-being is a factor that is valued, and this is because the participants thought that it was healthier due to lesser additives and also that it tasted better, and therefore they could enjoy the food. These values doesn't really connect with having a child, instead they have been affected by the culture they grew up in, other family members and learning from media, mostly documentaries on television.

The other way around how the mothers argue why they don't buy ecological food there is two factors that are valued the economy and quality in life. These factor are however directly connected with having a child. Even thou there's a belief that ecological food does taste better and are healthier due to the absence of additives, the mothers feel that they don't have enough knowledge about it, at least not to motivate the higher price tag.

The economical situation for the family has due to the child become different, since the mothers are home with their children, this have had a negative impact on the family's economy, also due to the children there is new expenses that didn't exist before which also impacts negatively on the economy. Since the children needs to be taken care of all the time there is also less free time, the mothers didn't want to use all of this free time cooking, therefore they didn't buy ecological food, but instead more semi-finished food that is much faster to cook. This way they had more time to do things they enjoyed and increase their quality in life.

The result of our second research question are connected to the factors for why ecological food isn't being bought. Earlier many of the participants bought ecological food, but the economic situation due to the child have led to more expenses and less money, therefore it has become common to think a little extra before making a purchase and also to look more on the price tag than before having a child. Through this study we found that this factor and the lesser free time both influenced the buying decision in a way that reflected to a disadvantage for ecological food.

These findings were the most common from our research, however of course not everybody had the same opinion, a few of the participants had strong beliefs and valued animal welfare and the absence of additives in food more than the factors that was to the disadvantage of ecological food. Therefore they did buy it, if not for every product group, then at least for a few products they had decided to always buy ecological. However only a few of the mothers bought as much ecological food after having a baby as before.

7 Discussions

In this chapter the authors will discuss our contributions from the research as well as our recommendations for further studies.

In excess of previous research on ecological food, our research using women who have recently become mothers can contribute with our finding that even though the economic factor is very important, like shown in many previous research, mothers also are very keen on the free time and want to have time for things that they enjoy doing, for example hobbies.

Since our study was done using a qualitative method, this does provide some limitations since we can't generalize and say that these findings are applicable for all mothers. However one aim with the research was to get an understanding of why having a child affected the buying behavior and we believe it's best conducting using the qualitative approach. One thing that can be done for further research is to investigate this area using a quantitative approach and try to generalize the area more. This way it's also possible to see how different attributes like for example income, education and nationalities affects the buying, a thought is that if for example having a high income would make the price-gap less dependent as a factor for not buying ecological food. But do draw these kinds of conclusions a higher sampling group is required. Also since our focus groups only contained Swedish people there is a possibility that we should have got a different result instead, if we had used groups with mixed nationalities.

Since the price gap between ecological and regular food was so large, seemed unmotivated to many of the participants and one reason for this is that the participants didn't possess knowledge about the differences. However the participants showed a great interest in ecological food and thought that they would buy more in the future when their child is older and eats the same food as them, it could be good for retailer to use more information in their marketing for ecological food. The lack of knowledge was mainly what we came up with during our focus groups as a factor for not being able to motivate the higher price, however it would be possible to research about different strategies that could be done to convince the consumer to pay the price difference.

Another potential topic for future research could be using the same as our, but instead of using women that recently have become mothers, families with older children can be used.

A recommendation if using parents or as in our research using mother groups, is to have small groups if conducting a focus group, or if using bigger groups make sure that the children aren't at the same place. Even with our small focus groups the children created a distraction due to crying and screaming for shorter periods of time, and if using larger groups we think this will really create a problem.

Another subject that came up during the focus groups that wasn't very applicable for our study was ecological clothes, which is becoming more and more common, also the way how clothes are swapped between mothers who have kids in different ages and reused, and therefore more environmental friendly then buying new clothes all the time. During the study some of the participants thought that the choice between ecological and locally produced food was hard to make, but thought that whatever choice that was made was a good deed, therefore another research topic could be the buying behavior of locally produced food.

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Appendix I- Questions for the focus groups

1. How is your usual grocery shopping made ?
 - Where, how, how often, who is the primary shopper
2. Do you feel that your grocery shopping have changed since you got a child ?
 - New products for example
3. Have you bought ecological food ?
 - Additives
 - Main factors influencing decision
4. What are the main influences on your food decision ?
 - External influences – commercials, advertisement, friends, family et.
 - Internal factors – bought before etc.

Appendix 2 – Sample of the focus groups

In the chart below the sample of the focus groups are summarized into age, number of children, birth year of children, highest education and income of the whole household.

Age		
	20-25	3
	26-30	7
	31-35	1
	36-40	4
	41-	1
Number of children		
	1	12
	2	3
	3	1
Birth year of the children		
	<2006	3
	2007	2
	2008	1
	2009	12
	2010	3
Highest education		
	Public school	0
	High school	6
	University	10
Household income		
	0-149 999	0
	150 000-299	7
	300 000<	9