

“Purchase of Organic Products in Discount Supermarkets in Dublin”

Dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Msc Marketing
At Dublin Business School



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Declaration of Ownership

Declaration: I, Tai Pui Yee, declare that this research is my original work and that it has never been presented to any institution or university for the award of Degree or Diploma. In addition, I have referenced correctly all literature and sources used in this work and this work is fully compliant with the Dublin Business School's academic honesty policy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'T' followed by a smaller 'P' and a horizontal flourish.

Signed:

Date: 20th August 2018

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Finally, I wish to thank my family for the remote support throughout my study.

Abstract

Ireland sees the greatest growth of organic market in Europe with a positive future outlook. At the same time, the growth of discounter supermarkets in Ireland is crowned the top among multiple western countries with a growing market share, greatly altering the consumers' shopping habits in the country. Therefore, this research is concerned with "Purchase of Organic Products in Discount Supermarkets in Dublin". It aims to find out the factors that drive Irish consumers' purchase of organics products in discounters. This finding is conducive to their ambitious business goals. Based on this main research question, two main focuses – commercial and environmental areas – form the sub-research questions as well as running through the entire research.

This research is conducted in Ireland by quantitative method and using questionnaire for data collection. The sample size consists of 101 respondents who are above 18 years old. The findings are analysed by using Microsoft Excel. The result shows the five features of discounters contribute positively to purchasing organic products in discount supermarkets. They are their price, brands / products, product diversity, shopping environment and shop location. Last but not least, recommendations are made in the end of the research to provide incisive directions to the retailers.

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1. Introduction

Aldi and Lidl are German-based global discount supermarket chains, founded in 1913 and 1930 respectively in Germany. They have a different operation model from traditional retailers, contributing to a very low retail selling price. This includes a private label strategy, focused product assortment to limit the amount of product range, shelf-ready packaging to reduce handling and wastes and no-frills approach in store layout and supply chain.

The success of discounters in Europe and Ireland

The success of this model has been driving them to expand out of Germany quickly. From the most recent figures, Aldi and Lidl had almost 10,720 and 10,500 stores respectively around the world (Aldi 2017i; Lidl 2017). In 2015, their combined market share (%) grew dramatically in numerous markets to enjoy a double-digit growth, accounting for more than 40% market share in some countries as shown in the graph below (Jacobsen et al., 2017). The main reason for discounters' rapid growth or the change of consumer shopping habit was attributed to the cost-conscious drive after the impact of recession (Ipsos MRBI, 2014). However, this growth did not stop after it. They were even estimated to grow by a staggering 82.2% between now and 2020 (Food Manufacture UK 2015).

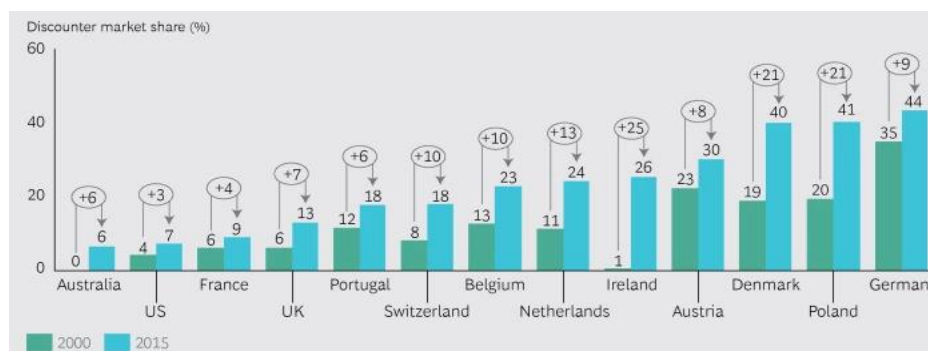


Figure1: Discounters are growing quickly in many western markets (Source: Jacobsen et al., 2017)

There was no presence of Aldi and Lidl in Ireland until 1999. Currently, the duo operated over 300 stores across the country (Aldi 2017i; Lidl 2017). Their market share in Ireland had grown astonishing 260 times in the past 15 years to enjoy a 26% market share in 2015,

demonstrating the highest degree of aggressiveness among many western markets. Since 2015, they have grown at their fastest rate. A study showed that each achieved a sales uplift by over 15% while the category grew by just 3.6% (McKevitt, 2017). From the most recent study of supermarkets in Ireland, the market share of discounters surged by 9% while that of the traditional supermarkets dropped 3% in May this year, compared to January 2018. The discounters' combined market share (22.7%) has already been ahead of Tesco (22.3%), SuperValu (22%) and Dunnes (21.8%) (Kantar World Panel, 2018). Under the success of discounters' models, traditional Irish supermarkets have taken actions against discounters which aggressively entice shoppers in through their doors (Newton, 2017).

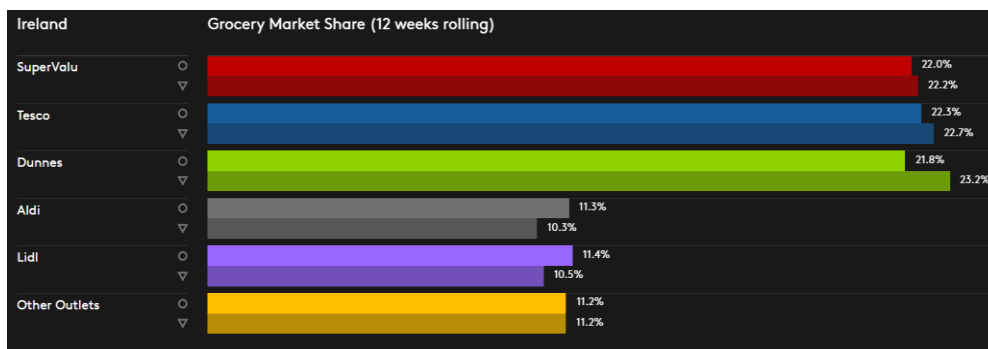


Figure2: Market share of the key supermarkets 2018 (Source: Kantar World Panel, 2018)

The glory of discounters will not be put to a halt in the near future. The duo will have aggressive business goals to achieve. Aldi said it planned to open an additional 20 stores in Ireland by 2019 and Lidl will expand 50 stores additionally in the country by 2021. Both are going to achieve unprecedented sales growth by 2020, implying their growing importance will continue influencing Irish consumers and other retailers.

Organic product development of discounters responding to organic demand in Ireland

Regarding product development, they have never stopped evolving their product variety. Aldi has offered a selection of organic products since 2006 (Organic-Market.Info, 2018). It has also expanded its range of organic fruit and vegetables by 400% since 2014 locally. In Lidl, its organic products have been available regularly around 2700 stores since 2006 (Organic-Market.Info, 2018). Today, they have 130 kinds of organic products available in Irish market

(Lidl, 2018). Both of their development in organic range has been answering the growing demand of organic food from Irish people who have jet up the budget for organics by 24% in 2016 compared to 2015, synchronizing the sales growth of organic sector in the country.

Although the market size of organics in Ireland was still not vast in Europe - ranking only 15th in retail sales value of this sector - with 142 million euro (Statista, 2015), it gained the highest organic market growth in Europe by 23% in 2015 compared to 2014 (FiBL-AMI Survey, 2017). Recently, 43% of Irish consumers consumed organic products at least once per month (Ipsos MRBI, 2014). Furthermore, the proportion of rejecting the organic food produce had fallen from 39% to 25% since 2008 (Ipsos MRBI, 2014). Therefore, it is not surprising that Ireland has been expanding the fastest in the national organic crop area among the western European countries to fulfil the increasing demand (Eurostat, 2018).

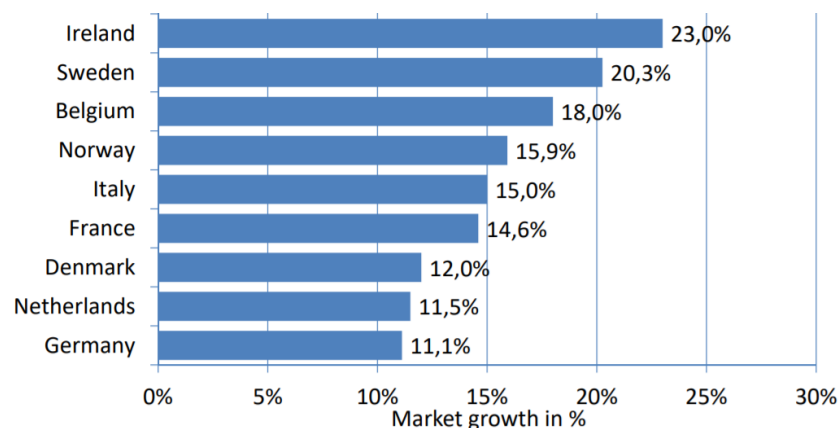


Figure3: Countries with the highest growth of the organic market 2014-2015 (Source: FiBL-AMI Survey 2017)

Organic consumption change in Ireland

Organic consumption have changed in the last few years in Ireland. There existed a downtrend of organic vegetables purchase while an uptrend of organic meat, dairy, and cereal & bakery products since 2008(Ipsos MRBI, 2014). Irish consumers experienced a change in shopping habit. They were more sensitive to the price after the economic recessions, such as shopping around for cheaper options and showing more concern on price than brand (Ipsos MRBI, 2014). This Irish consumer report also stated the increasing number of respondents agreed the higher costs of organics stopped them from purchasing, compared

to 2008. Besides, they did not purchase organics until they were on promotion or special deal. This behaviour may predict losing popularity of organics in conventional supermarkets.

From a latest study about Irish consumer's shopping behaviours towards organic food (Bordbia, 2017), it showed the traditional supermarkets were still dominant the local organic market segment. However, they have been losing the momentum recently. The share of organics in Aldi and Lidl saw a strong growth in this market, bringing a 17% growth in 2017 compared to 2016, while that in the traditional supermarket saw a 4% drop. In line with the overall performance by the discounters, their efforts of organic range development made have been widely recognised by Irish consumers, indicating the importance of their role in the future organics development. It is, however, yet to know what and how the specific factors motivate Irish consumers' purchase of organics in their stores. Although their low price strategy seems to be the dominator quite obviously, other factors cannot be ignored and need investigating. There exist a few studies about why people shop in discounters, but it is not necessarily identical to the context of organics that are considered premium or having added values.

Some academic studies also revealed that consumers literally had a different expectation of organic products. Consumers asked for more information about the products, environmentally friendly packaging and more marketing of organic goods (Makatouni, 2003). So, their specific expectation of organics urges marketers to market organic products differently. It fuels the significance of this study that provides marketers business strategies of marketing organics in discounters.

In the future, it will look bright for the organic sector in Ireland with 70% showing the intent to buy more organic products in the next 12 months (Bordbia, 2017), extending the momentum of organics purchase further. Not surprisingly, environmental concern has been the growing factor to explain the uptrend of organic purchase from many studies (Mhlophe, 2016). The rise of awareness of environmental degradation and knowledge level of environmental protection, as well as the climate change, explained the trend (Mhlophe, 2016). Yet, others rejected the importance of this influence (Baker et al. 2004; Chrysosoidis and Krystallis, 2005). Therefore, this study is to verify this influence that forms another pillar of the dissertation structure.

Research Question and sub-research questions

The findings above articulate the currently growing edge of discounters' organic segment in Ireland, giving rise to a strong curiosity and a need of profound understanding of the research topic. The main research question of this topic is:

- What are the factors that drive Irish consumers' purchase of organics products in discounters?

In order to have an in-depth investigation, this thesis is academically framed into two main themes that are commercial and environmental areas of concern. These themes run throughout the entire thesis to resolve the research questions. They are not only served as individual aspects, but also inter-relating ones, giving rise to a comprehensive analysis of this research topic. In the first chapter, they form the sub-research questions, and to be further examined in the literature review chapter and primary research chapter. The sub-research questions are:

- Commercial perspective: *Any significant differences between product/service offered by German discounters and that by Irish indigenous supermarkets relating to driving the purchase of organic range?*

Explanation: As found, discounters has hurt the market share of organics of traditional supermarkets recently. It is assumed there should be some attractive organic offerings provided by discounters and some non-appealing implementation by traditional supermarkets to drive the difference in consumers' response. The variations of their own business models also possibly contribute to consumers' response. These assumptions shape the first research hypothesis. By comparing and contrasting the facts, the marketers of discounters can understand their strengths and weakness, so they can leverage the invaluable insights to reinforce or rectify the organic product development. It paves the road to hit the business goals. In fact, it already happened in the past that discounters in Germany successfully leveraged organic range to give their businesses a significant boost (Vaclavik, 2006).

- Environmental perspective: *Is the environmental concern related to Irish consumers' behaviour towards the purchase of organic food?*

Explanation: It was documented that environmental concern has developed in consumers' mind in many countries. Their desires to purchase environmentally-friendly products or services have been growing (OECD, 2011). Irish consumers may or may not follow this consumer behaviour, giving rise to the second research hypothesis. In this dissertation, consumer behaviour is discussed in chapter two based on the existing theories. It was a study of people's action in psychological, social and physical areas during select, purchase, use and dispose products or services (Solomon, 2006; Olson and Peter, 2008).

Research Objectives

Research objectives are set accordingly for each sub-research question in order to make the discoveries logically:

- Commercial perspective: To identify the effective business strategies that marketers can carry out in order to attract more people to consume organic products in discounter retailers?
- Environmental perspective: To identify the opportunities to implement environmental plans to influence consumers' behaviour, resulting in improved profits.

Research Hypotheses

- Commercial perspective: The distinctive features of discounters from the conventional supermarkets are the factors driving the organics purchase in discounters
- Environmental perspective: Environmental concern positively influences Irish consumers to purchase organics that are considered environmentally-friendly products (De Backer et al., 2009, Mondelaers et al., 2009a).

Reasons for studying this supermarket format in this country

This research is to examine the purchase of organic products in discounters of Ireland. Here is to summarise the reasons for the choices.

- 1/ Ireland saw the greatest growth of organic market in Europe with a positive future outlook.
- 2/ The growth of discounter supermarkets in Ireland was crowned the top among multiple western countries with a growing market share, greatly altering the consumers' shopping habits in the country.

Significance of this study

The organics offering by discounters has been increasingly popular among Irish consumers who shy away from traditional supermarkets, further weakening the traditional supermarkets' share of organics. More importantly, this sector is playing an important role in fulfilling the companies' ambitious sales targets since organics carry higher sales value than traditional food. So, a right development strategy of organic range can help meet the sales target. It also greatly increases the operational efficiency when this successful strategy is replicated to the growing amount of new stores in the future under their store expansion plan.

In the past, many studies have been carried out to analyse the consumer shopping behaviours towards organics globally as it is a lucrative market with continuous growth across countries. The studies generally look into the broad (non-commercial) factors influencing organics purchase across multiple formats of retailers, but does not provide a specific study on particular supermarket format. Since retailers possess quite various business operation models, a sweeping generalization has to be avoided when it comes to discussing the issue specifically of discounters. Likewise, there exists studies about the general development of discount supermarkets globally or regionally, but not specifically about organic range of Ireland. The marketing approach of organics has to be different from conventional products as studies showed consumers' expectation on them is not the same.

As a result, this study is very important to provide brand managers of Aldi and Lidl valuable and focused consumer and industry insights for further improving their organic range by identifying the gaps that they may neglect when developing organic products initially. Indirectly, it also brings the positive influence in consumer experience in the future during shopping organics in-store.

The rest of the dissertation is organized as follows. The next chapter is literature review that is structured in two main parts – commercial and environmental perspective – to answer

partly the research questions and objectives. Chapter three presents the research methodology that results in data collection method based on the model of research onion. Chapter four is data presentation, followed by discussion of findings in chapter five where the research questions, objectives and hypotheses are completely addressed. Recommendations and conclusion is written in chapter six.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, organic products are first defined. The second section is commercial based discussion. It aims to focus on the in-depth comparison between the formats of conventional supermarkets and discount supermarkets. The significant differences identified then shape the factors that drive or stop consumers' purchase of organic goods in the shops. Next is to identify the effective strategies to attract more Irish consumers to consume organic products in discount supermarkets based on those factors. The following section of this chapter is environmental focused. By using the existing theory of consumer behaviour, it is to look at any environmental concerns influencing consumer behaviours towards purchase of organics. Likewise, in terms of the environmental impact, "any opportunities that brand managers can grab to draw more people to the front door of discounters?" is discussed. Thus, the chapter form a balanced and logic discussion between commercial and environmental perspectives to answer the research question and objectives as explained in the first chapter.

2.2 Definition of organic products

Organic products were made from the process - including how they grew/manufactured, stored and yielded - without getting chemicals involved, such as fertilizers and pesticides (Allen and Alabala, 2007). Another definition offered more explanation on chemical fertilizers by stating that organic good was produced without using pesticides, herbicides, antibiotics, non-organic fertilizers and growth hormones (Honkanen et al., 2006). From consumers' perspective, organic product was environment-friendly since no added chemicals were found in the production process. It was also in line with animal welfare standards (Darnhofer et al., 2009, European Parliament, 2018). Although the definition of organic goods is clear and

generally consistent across countries, it does not imply that the products consumers consider organic are actually organic. As the authors said, the manufacturers or farmers nowadays might have varied understandings on the word 'organic'. They might confuse it with other similar terms, such as 'green', 'eco', 'environmental friendly' or 'natural'. The products labeled with these terms sometimes were not necessary equal to organic at the same time. In some worse case, the business may intentionally do that for gaining more profits. Thus, we sometimes heard of the food was fraudulently claimed as organic might probably be because of ignorance or industry malpractice (Leong & Ng, 2014).

Since the present research is concerned with the purchase of organic products in Ireland, how the correspondent authority of Ireland defines organic products contributes an insightful value to the study. Based on the existing definition by Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI, 2018), organic food was produced from a systematic agricultural farm that stressed heavily on animal welfare and environmental protection. This system served as an important role to tell the difference between organic and no-organic food as their agricultural farming systems appeared absolutely different. Compared to the definitions from others, FSAI defined organic very clearly that food cannot be labelled and positioned as organic until it was produced on a farm that has been certified as organic and inspected by an official certification institute(FSAI, 2018). This gives the industry and consumers a straightforward guideline. It is worth highlighting that the production of organic food has no limitation on individual or organizational level, thus anyone can do that as long as they comply with FSAI.

2.3 Any significant differences between product/service offered by German discounters and that by Irish indigenous supermarkets relating to driving the purchase of organic range?

According to the existing studies, five key significant differences between the offerings by these supermarket formats have been consistently identified – brand / product, product diversity, price, shopping environment and store location. Consumers' reactions towards their offerings are also documented in this chapter. However, some issues are still unknown, e.g. do Irish consumers' reactions towards the purchase of organics remain the same as the general findings? The literature review lays a good foundation of primary research, paving the way to identify any gaps of the existing literature and the current research questions of this

topic. They further shape the questions in primary research. Obviously, there exists many other differentiations between their offerings that are also interesting to be documented, but they are comparably minor and thus beyond of the discussion here.

2.31 Brand or Product – Private Labels (PLs) or National Brands (NBs)

Discount stores rely a lot heavier on low-priced PLs, or own labels, than traditional supermarkets do. In 27 countries of European Union, about 80% of discounters' retail sales stemmed from PLs (Warschun and Schmidt, 2011). A study even suggested retail sales share of PLs was up to 95% in Aldi of Europe (Queck, 2006). For Tesco, only 45% of sales came from PLs (Queck, 2006). Even for the Irish grocer leader, Supervalu, the overall sales of PL just accounted for a half (54%) of their revenues (McHugh, 2017). Although the domination of PL makes discounters distinct from the conventional supermarkets, this significance may get weakened in the long run. As introduced in the first chapter, traditional supermarkets started to accelerate their PL business in order to fight back against discounters. Hence, PL last year accounted for 55% of total grocery spending in Ireland, according to Kantar, up from 47% since 2012.

They can never be successful without the appreciation of consumers. When looking at how consumers reacted with PL recently, almost 80% of German consumers revealed that PLs were usually extremely good value for money. Besides, about 72% of them perceived PL quality were as good as national brands (Nielsen, 2014b). However, the same study showed only around 50% of Swedish perceived they were good as described above. In Ireland, 86% of consumers somewhat agreed or strongly agreed Aldi's products were always high quality, and 75% at least somewhat agreed the quality of Aldi's PLs exceeded NBs (Briedyte, 2014). This piece of consumer study supports an author writing numerous essays about PL and discounters. He suggested that Irish consumers still expected quality even when trading down (Pope, 2012). Therefore, consumers incline to the store where offers cheaper and high quality options.

Although it is very clear that Irish consumers consider discounter's products as high quality, there is a need to verify if Irish consumers also perceive (private-labelled) organics in

discounters as high quality - the same as the general products - since the above findings only studied Aldi's general products.

More interestingly, discounters, on the other hand, also took action against supermarkets' strategy of PL expansion by offering more NBs. However, in order to maintain its own distinctiveness, they only offered a limited number of leading NBs (Deleersnyder et al. 2007). Their actions eroded the business position of conventional supermarkets as the ones offering leading NBs. Nowadays, both Aldi and Lidl carry leading NBs such as Coca Cola, Kelloggs and Nestle. In the end, this research can provide discounters some insightful ideas that what kinds of national brands to be carried for boosting competitiveness.

2.32 Diversity of product Assortment

Many academic and industrial studies pointed out supermarkets offered a broader and deeper product assortment with 30,000 selling key units (SKUs), compared to discounters with only up to 1,400 SKUs (Cleeren et al, 2010; BBC 2015; IGD 2011). By keeping minimum SKUs, they were able to keep costs down (Lin et al. 2012), giving rise to another significant variation – Lower price.

To respond to this disparity, consumers were welcome for a limited range of choices (Mantrala et al. 2009). Other authors supported this saying as consumers who shopped at discounters could save the time and effort of deciding what to put into the basket given that not many choices were provided. (Kumar and Steenkamp 2007). However, it is not yet known that if Irish consumers prefer limited range of product choices when it comes to purchasing organic goods.

2.33 Price

Price obviously is the significant difference between the two retailer formats. PLs in discounters can be up to 60% lower than the price of leading name brands. Furthermore, their prices were lower than traditional retailers' PLs, as much as 40% (Cleeren et al, 2010). A recent survey done in 2018 revealed that the notable price difference was still valid these days, with the variation up to 50% (Pope, 2018).

Types of organic products	Price of the PL organic product in Aldi	Price of the PL organic product in Lidl	Price of the PL organic product in Dunnes Store	Price of the PL organic product in Supervalu
Milk(1L)	€ 0.99	€ 0.99	€ 1.09	€ 1.09
Carrot (750g)	€ 1.09	€ 1.09	€ 1.59	€ 1.59
Banana (5 pieces)	€ 1.59	€ 1.59	€ 1.69	€ 1.69

Table 1: Price of PL organic product across supermarkets (Price found in-store on 1st Aug 2018)

Obviously, the low price of products in discounters positively affected consumers' purchase in-store, according to a UK study (Shopper IQ, 2014). This statement was also true to premium goods, like organic range. Consumers even paid more attention to the price tag than the quality of organic products in some cases (Voss and Parasuraman, 2003). Some researchers also found discounters' customers were price-oriented for both conventional food and value-added organic food products (Gottschalk & Leistner, 2012).

According to an industrial report, Irish consumers were still under the influence of the recessions that they had been lowering the weekly grocery budget although their weekly disposable income recently increased (Shopper Watch, 2016). Therefore, it is assumed that their caution on spending probably further switch them to the budget groceries.

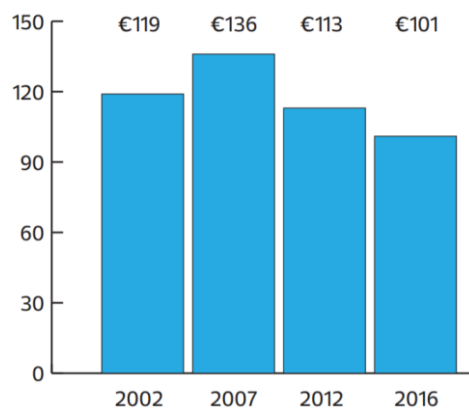


Figure4: Decreasing Weekly Grocery Budget from 2002 to 2016 among Irish consumers (Source: Shopper Watch, 2016)

It is worth noting again that a positive future outlook of organic range in Ireland will be seen as discussed previously. Although it may sound contradictory, it can be interpreted that Irish will be looking for low-priced organic products under a negative growth of grocery spend as above. An industrial study also agreed with this preliminary interpretation by stating that high price was the main barrier to Irish to purchase organics. Worse still, it has been an increasingly dominant factor since 2008, up from 63% to almost 80% of Irish found it was the main obstacle for them from purchasing organic food (Ipsos MRBI, 2014). It was academically supported by a couple of researchers (Thompson, 1998; Wier & Calverley, 2002)

To reinforce the argument of an inclination towards budget goods in this country, an academic study showed people with a foreign ethnicity were usually more price sensitive (Hoch 1996). In Ireland, there was 11.8% of foreign population, being the sixth highest proportion of foreigners in Europe (Eurostat, 2015), where was even expected to grow in the future (Begley, 2017). Therefore, it will be expected to witness a stronger shift to the low-price discounters in Ireland where increasing numbers of foreigners are anticipated.

Despite that many findings reinforce the tendency of shopping low-price products, a current study below prompts marketers to rethink the significance of price. According to a UK study, when comparing to other factors, price actually had the least influence in deciding shoppers' supermarket habits (34%), while location or being convenient geographically mattered the most (48%) (Newton, 2017).



Figure5: Factors driving shoppers' supermarket habits (Source: Newton, 2017)

As a result, the numerous findings see the complex issue of price. Although consumers in Ireland exhibit a strong preference towards low-priced options, simply offering cheap organic products may not necessarily lure consumers to place them into the basket. It is because other factors exert a stronger impact on consumers, e.g. location of the store, service and product assortment as shown above. The product quality issues discussed in chapter 2.21 cannot be neglected as well since Irish consumers are concerned of product quality. This is another invaluable insight to marketers that multiple factors influence the purchase decision. Consumers may purchase the organics in other supermarkets due to the combination of their geographical advantages, attractive price offerings and finer quality.

Therefore, this research is not only going to confirm if the low-priced organics in discounters drive their purchase, but also show the priority of factors influencing their purchase decisions of organic products. In other words, it provides discounters' managers the understandings of what the existing advantage(s) they possess to drive this growing popularity of their organics as discussed in chapter one. It is also a beneficial managerial implication on organics development in a long run.

2.34 Shopping Environment

There appear distinctive in-store environment differences between these two types of supermarkets. Discounters apply their no-frills approach without many shelves and walls. They simply display the groceries in cardboard boxes that are stacked on pallets or half-sized pallets in order to optimize the floor space. Some researchers agreed with this observation. (Cleeren et al. 2010; Warschun and Schmidt, 2011) Regarding to the physical area, discounters are typically smaller than conventional supermarkets. Some studies showed they only had 10,000 to 15,000 sq ft where shopping only took 20 minutes on average (Felsted, 2014; PlanetRetail, 2006). In spite of the smaller physical area, their shopping environment was very functional, and few services were offered to consumers (Cleeren et al, 2010).

Based on a retail and shopper specialist from Kantar, discounters' smaller format stores were appealing to consumers. People preferred to shop in a smaller store where carried what they need instead of having everything (Paglia, 2017). Huddersfield University consumer behavior expert explained a fancy-free in-store display could create an urgency and prompt consumers

to discover and purchase the goods quickly (Douglas, 2017). Although discounters generally offer a positive shopping experience, there exists a need of product display improvement when it comes to purchasing organic food. Many consumers always found the organic foods were mixed together with non-organic foods. Yet, they preferred an individual display carrying organic products only (Ipsos MRBI, 2014). There are still many other in-store environment factors marketers can incorporate into their business strategies. It is going to discover what types of shopping environment factors contribute hugely to consumer's decision of purchasing organics.

2.35 Shop Location

Today, the number of discount stores in Ireland are still considerably smaller than that of conventional supermarkets. However, their ambitious store expansion plan is going to catch up the physical presence of the conventional ones to respond to the consumer behavior. Supported by some studies, convenience was the important determinant of shopping habit (Newton, 2017; Knudson and Vu, 2017). Consumers expressed the key reason not shopping in Aldi was location concern. They wanted to visit it if there was one nearby (Knudson and Vu, 2017).

Types of supermarkets	Number of stores in Ireland
Aldi	129
Lidl	150
Tesco	149
Supervalu	222
Dunnes	117

Table 2: Number of stores in Ireland by supermarkets (Source: Aldi, 2017i; Lidl, 2018; Newton, 2017)

2.4 To identify the effective strategies that marketers can carry out in order to attract more people to consume organic products in discounters?

Based on the five significant differences outlined above, they can be further examined and strategized for marketing organic goods in discount stores.

Price strategy: For the majority of grocery shoppers, price remains the most important factor in choosing a grocer. Based on present the industrial research, the combination of Aldi's good value and low prices overshadowed that of traditional supermarkets' as perceived by shoppers (Knudson and Vu, 2017). So far, their low price strategy is very strong and distinguished, continuously threatening conventional supermarkets. However, as discussed previously, the primary research is necessary to devise the price strategy. Because it is to confirm the priority of this factor in influencing the purchase of organics, and to identify if the existing price gap between these two formats matches consumers' expectation.

Private Brand strategy: The continuous effort made by Aldi and Lidl on their PL quality has made themselves topped the list of brand index in the UK. It implied more consumers found the products / brands offered by the two retailers more positive than others' (Yougov, 2018). The same studies revealed Aldi even received the largest number of awards on its own products than any other Irish retailers did. However, merely striving for high quality was still not sufficient as articulated by an industrial study. Retailers were required to develop a successful PL business requiring significant management focus, brand strategy and product development (Knudson and Vu, 2017). The authors suggested the retailers today did not emphasize enough on the brand strategy of their PL business. They showcased some successful PL business examples for the industry to take reference. Costco's Kirkland brand products gained shoppers' laud of their quality. Consumers were fond of the innovative products and lines launched by Walmart such as premeasured spices and marinades, and vacuum-sealed, frozen paleo diet meals.

Therefore, an unarguable change of PLs is seen. They are no longer perceived as low quality and cheap products that shoppers do not want, but private BRANDS. They can be attractive consumer goods' brands. Unlike conventional supermarkets, the private brands of discounters are not named based on the retailers' name. It makes their brand names more story-telling and emotional.

Name of the PL	Bread	Vegetables	Biscuit	Milk
brands in the major Grocers				

Aldi	Ballymore	The Salad Box	Benton's	Clonbawn
Lidl	Connell Bakery	Oaklands	Tower Gate	Coolree
Tesco	Tesco	Tesco	Tesco	Tesco
Dunnes Stores	Dunnes Stores	Dunnes Stores	Dunnes Stores	Dunnes Stores
Supervalu	Supervalu	Supervalu	Supervalu	Supervalu

Table 3: Name of the PL brands in the major Grocers (Source: Product check in-store on 1st August 2018)

The primary research is to explore the brand strategy and product development of the organic PL in discounters as the industry report just emphasizes these elements without offering in-depth insights.

Location strategy: Understanding the importance of location, Aldi and Lidl have already got the plan to boost their footprint in the country with the investment of and €100m and €700m respectively (Mulligan, 2017; McLoughlin, 2016). It will drive them to achieve an unbeatable position in the market.

Product Diversity strategy: Although a limited product assortment could speed up the shopping period that many shoppers appreciate for, researchers found consumers were also open for more options if possible. (Briedyte, 2014; Knudson and Vu, 2017).

In the primary research, consumer preference of product assortment is explored to come up with the product development strategy. It is no point to carry excessive types of SKUs but it must be profitable to the retailers to have the popular items available. A recent industrial report proved that retailers could effectively reduce their assortments by 10% to 20%, while simultaneously maintaining the perception of a wide assortment and improving category sales by 2% to 4% under a systematic implementation. It was because they kept what people liked (Knudson and Vu, 2017).

Shopping environment Strategy: The store characters and atmosphere impacted a consumer's mood and behavior when they shop in the store (Donovan et al., 1994). The writer also advised that the positive emotional state of the consumer within the store could lead to an increasing shopping time and unexpected purchase. Another study supported the importance of an overall store image can determine how a consumer behaves during shopping there (Ryu et al., 2012). Store background music, brightness, smell and store/product display also contributed to the degree of consumers' shopping mood (El-Bachir, 2014). The influence of in-store environment has been exerted the influence on consumer shopping behavior for many years. Brand managers need to realize the significant benefits of paying more attention to in-store environment, which is constructive to differentiate themselves from rivals. The primary research is to discover the importance level of this factor and how discounter can leverage their existing unique store-layout to implement consumer-favorable in-store environment. By integrating these insights, the shopping environment strategy will be framed.

The influence of store assistants is to be looked into. Their knowledge, experience, customer services could influence the behavior of a customer. As the employees are the key asset to the firm, Aldi and Lidl should consider how they can rely on their employees to positively influence consumer behaviors.

2.5 Is the environmental concern related to Irish consumers' behaviour towards the purchase of organic food?

2.5.1 The theory of consumer behavior

Consumer behavior was the study of processes how people research, select, purchase, use and dispose products or services. Any influences of these processes on consumers and society was also a part of this study (Deshpande & Saxena, 2017). It was supported by another author who also fueled the importance of understanding consumer buying behavior. The processes how the customers chose their products and services were crucial for manufacturers as well as service providers because these provided them with competitive edges over their rivals. For example, they could utilize the knowledge obtained from studying the consumer buying behavior to map out proper marketing strategies to offer right consumers the right products

and services, satisfying their needs and desires effectively (Kotler and Keller, 2011). Therefore, by understanding any environmental impact on Irish consumers' behaviour towards the purchase of organic products, Aldi and Lidl can then establish right marketing strategies to reach right audience and defeat the competitors. It is expected the current study is follow this model of consumer behavior. However, the first sub-research question focuses on in-store "purchase" factors so the study here does not cover the other stages such as " how they research", "how they use" and "how they dispose". Instead, it focuses on "how they purchase in-store".

Another study suggested that consumer behavior consisted of feelings and experiences of a consumer apart from one's action. Therefore, taking account of one's feelings during the shopping process can influence their actions. This author also explained consumer behavior was dynamic due to the continuous changes in perceptions, ideas and actions of consumers. Moreover, they stressed a successful marketing strategy could change one's behavior and cognition (Olson and Peter, 2008). Besides marketing strategies, they mentioned numerous factors affected consumer behavior, e.g. demographics, personality, lifestyle, knowledge, learning, culture, social class, family, and a lot more. Therefore, the primary research takes some into considerations such as demographics and lifestyle to observe the thorough consumer behaviors.

From the theories above, a cycle can be seen: many factors contribute to the consumer behaviors that influence the marketing strategies of a firm. The strategies subsequently pose influence back to consumer behaviors. The cycle gives an important implication to marketers that marketing strategies that are situated in the middle of the cycle, carrying much weight in changing consumer behaviors. Thus, up-to-date study is significant.

2.52 Environmental concern in relation to Irish consumers' behaviour towards the purchase of organic food

As explained in chapter one, environmental concern is the growing factor of organics consumption. In this section, this finding is to be examined under the current study context. First, it is to find out "Does consumption of organic goods pose positive influence to the environment?", followed by the investigation of "Does environmental concern motivate consumers to purchase more green products?". Last but not least, it is to discuss if environmental concern is able to propel consumers to purchase organic products?"

First, to answer any connection between consuming organics and the environmental impact, it is verified that organic products are beneficial to the environment. Researches that have been conducted in the past 10 years backed up this statement as the organic production methods positively contributed to the environment (De Backer et al., 2009; Mondelaers et al., 2009a; Verma, 2015; Defra, 2004).

Below illustrates the key reasons how or why organics positively influence the environment (Verma, 2015).

1/ Restricted usage of artificial fertilizer for pesticides

2/ Reduction in non-renewable energy usage

3/ Mitigation of the greenhouse effect and global warming through its ability to cut the amount of carbon in the soil.

From the consumers' perspectives, organics production was also considered more environment-friendly (Hoefkens et al., 2009; Mondelaers et al., 2009b).

Next is to look into any environmental concern of consumers exerted on their shopping behaviors. An increasing number of consumers have been supportive of environmental friendly products (Stratton and Werner, 2013) to respond to the growing environmental impacts (Daniel, Perinaz and Chris, 2013). Consumers have also been demonstrating their concerns about the green products. It is dated back to the 1990s. In the United States, the number of federal laws for environmental protection had more than doubled since 1970. Compliance with laws also reportedly increased. The number of non-governmental environmental organizations (NGOs) have approximately tripled in the U.S. between 1970 and 1990 as well (Ausubel et al., 1995). Under such a strong regulational influence, over 80% of Americans started to have green practice by implementing recycling and shopping in a greener way to avoid the degradation of environment (Coddington, 1990). Around 90% of Americans purchased from companies that made effort to the environment protection (Hume and Strand, 1990). Hume and Strand even noticed the environmental consciousness appeared across all demographic range. Despite such evidence, many American consumers still found the government and large organizations had larger responsibilities in preserving the environment (Maibach, 1993). It may be expected the growth of the environmental

consciousness among consumers was due to the multiple-fold green advertising in the 1990s, compared to the 1980s. However, approximately 47% of Americans did not believe the environmental claims in advertising (Fierman, 1991).

In the 21st century, a globally recognized organization supported the extension of this consumer behavior by showing 66% of respondents were willing to spend more money on products and services from the organizations showing commitment to a positive environmental impact while only 55% in 2014 and 50% in 2013 (Nielsen, 2015). There was also 5% sales uplift of products with promoting sustainability while only 1% of those without such claims (Nielsen 2014a). The report also indicated respondents aged from 21 to 34 were more responsive to sustainability actions representing 51% of the total respondents, and 51% of this group checked the packaging for sustainable labelling. However, at the same time, customer skepticism of firms' green production and product claims has also been increasing (Peattie & Crane, 2005; Thøgersen, 2000 & Moisander, 2007). This long-standing problem is discussed in the next session so as to identify who, how and what can address it?

The findings above see the positively strong relationship of organics production and environmental benefits, as well as the consumers' environmental concerns and purchase of environmentally-friendly goods. Now, it is to test the purchase of organics is due to the environmental consciousness. According to a writer, it was reasonably foreseeable to witness shoppers to purchase environmentally-friendly organics due to the environmental concern (Pearson et al., 2011). Pearson demonstrated a generalization over years that it had remained a strong reason for purchasing organics in spite of the small discrepancies between nations and product categories. Some other academic studies also echo the general consensus by Pearson of the connection between environmental concern and consumption of organics.

An American study indicated that both environment and health were the driving forces of organic purchasing, but that environmental motivation was more impactful than the latter one in determining higher levels of purchases (Durham and Andrade, 2005). A British consumer study also claimed green consumers in the UK were more likely to live sustainable lifestyles and to buy green (Gilg et al., 2005).

Interestingly, some European consumers behaved against this consensus. A study revealed that the UK consumers made no connection between organic food consumption and the environmental care (Baker et al., 2004). The other writers said the Greek consumers showed it is not relevant to associate care for the environment and nature and the purchase of organic food (Chrysohoidis and Krystallis, 2005). More recently, consumers indicated that health and nutrition, taste and food safety were the three most motivating factors behind organic food purchases, while the environment factor ranked fourth (Dimitri and Oberholtzer, 2006).

Doubtless, the environmental concern is still valid in relation to the influence on organics purchase. However, the inconsistent findings from literature stop from confirming this relation. Instead, it prompts to carry out the primary research to understand the level of such impact under the current research context. Moreover, the growing distrust of environmental claims over decades is urging marketers to consider how to tackle this problem, in order to gain consumers' confidence and benefit to the business ultimately. The details are discussed in the next session of this chapter.

2.6 To identify the opportunities to implement environmental plan to influence consumers' behaviour, resulting to contributing the business's profit.

Although an inconsistency of the relationship between environmental concern and organic consumption exists, it cannot be denied that environmental concern exerts the influence of organic consumption in certain extent. However, as consumers has been displaying skepticism over the environmental claim, it is pressing to resolve this fundamental issue before implementing other high level of environmental programs. Otherwise, this vicious situation will continue in a long run.

Environmental claims, also referred to green claims, were declarations made by companies about the environmentally beneficial features of their products or services. The claims can be related to how products were grew, manufactured, packaged, delivered, consumed and/or disposed of (OECD, 2011). As discussed in the previous session, a long lasting skepticism of

environmental claims was found. People even thought the firms were to deflect the criticism of not being involved of environmental protection and to increase sales. (OECD, 2011)

Due to the continuous negative perception of the environmental claims, government around the globe has implemented strict labelling regulations to improve the value and effectiveness of these claims. Meanwhile, green bodies have multiplied to provide practical environmental education to increase consumers' understanding of environmental issues (OECD, 2011). According to many studies across countries, it was found that the involvement of the government improved the consumer's acceptance and effectiveness of environmental communications (Atkinson & Rosenthal, 2014; Banerjee & Solomon, 2003; Sønderskov & Daugbjerg, 2010). Some studies found that consumers even had a bias towards non-government organizations, or NGOs, in terms of the trust in environmental communications (Mario, 2001).

Next, it is about how and what these trust bodies should communicate with the public. For example, leveraging internet can be an effective and innovative way to execute environmental plan. It is because a webpage can provide much more information about a product than a simple label to cater for consumers' demand of environmental claims' evidence. Moreover, products or relevant information can be displayed visually and presentably using distinct colors, graphs or borders (Ngo, 2008). Rating system, however, was quite controversial.

Academically, researchers also agreed environmental claims on the product labels were positive to consumer's purchase decisions recently (Durif et al., 2011; Lin and Huang, 2012; Tandberg Group, 2007).

2.7 Conclusion of Literature Review

Five key significant differences between the offerings by these supermarket formats are identified – brand / product, product diversity, price, shopping environment and store location. They form the commercial drives of purchasing organics. Consumers' reaction towards these characteristics, in terms of general product range, are also documented.

However, details of consumer behaviors specifically about organic range, and the in-depth investigations of the five features are still missing.

Regarding to the PL business of discounters, it is doubtless their general products are high quality but it is necessary to verify if the organics are also perceived the same since the topic of this dissertation is organic product based. A brand communication plan is suggested to come along with the high quality PL brands, and directions of this plan need answering. The variation of the product diversity preference and the influence of low price strategy are to be tackled. Moreover, concrete answers of product choices and the price range that consumers prefer are anticipated in the primary research. As found, shopping environment carries much weight in the purchase decision, but many in-store factors are available such as lighting, smell and background music. A better understanding of their degrees of influences towards the purchase of organics is needed. Last but not least, it is required to quantify the perception of shopping convenience where many authors just simply articulate its importance.

In the environmental perspective, there is an urge to verify the degree of connection between environmental concern and the purchase of organics due to the inconsistent findings, and understand Irish consumers' trust on environmental claims. Some follow-up questions are required to give the industry more insights, such as "do current retailers do enough to build this trust?", "what platforms can be leveraged to enhance their trust?" and "any positive change will be seen if they implement the practices?"

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This research is to look into factors driving consumers' purchase of organic products in discount supermarkets of Dublin, Ireland. The secondary data carried out in the chapter two however cannot fully answer the research question, or the verification is yet to make. Therefore, it brings to primary research that supplement the entire research by providing more findings that the secondary research lacks. The whole research process is linked very closely with the research question and is based on a multiple-layered research onion created by Saunders (Saunders et al., 2009). The research onion describe the procedures through

which researchers need to pass when formulating the methodology. In this chapter, the covered details are research design that include research philosophy, research approach and research strategy, sampling, data collection and data analysis method. Research ethics is also an important part of methodology.

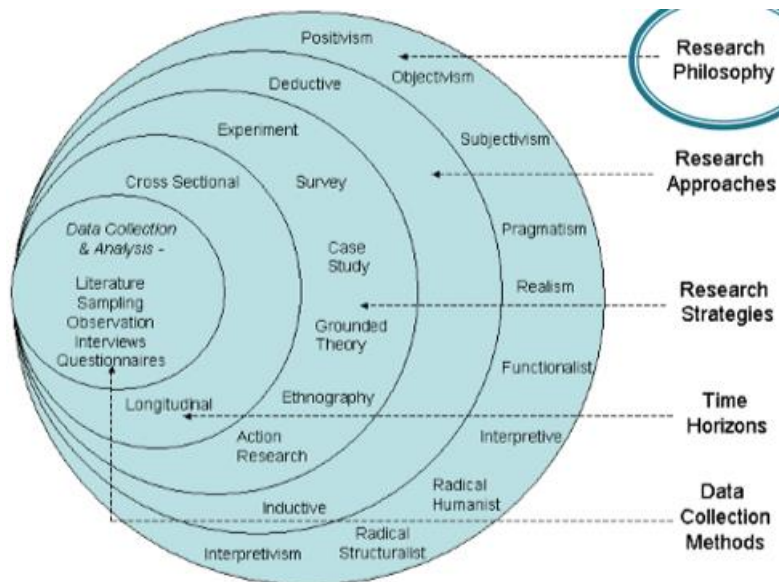


Figure6: The research Onion (Source: Saunders et al. 2007)

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy, the outer layer of the “research onion”, is the beginning and very crucial step of the research methodology, referring to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge. It is important to give an overarching research structure including research strategy, what kinds of data to be collected, how/where to collect, and how the data to be interpreted. It also identifies what research designs work and which does not.

When referring to the research question of this study, it is to identify the factors that drive consumers’ purchase of organic products in discounters of Dublin, Ireland. Therefore, it is to deal with the nature of reality or a study of being, so ontological assumption is applicable in this research. It is because ontological assumption represents the interpretation by a person in relation to factual information. To put it differently, it was about how an individual saw the nature of reality (Saunders et al. 2012). That is the reason why Epistemology is not applicable as it was about how to obtain, understand and use the knowledge that could be understood or interpreted by other people (Burrell & Morgan 2000; Wahyuni 2012). There are two

important perspectives of ontology – objectivism and subjectivism. To choose between them, a question is usually asked, “Do the social entities need to be regarded as objective or subjective?”

Based on that, subjectivism is adopted in this research, as opposed to objectivism. Subjectivism referred to perceptions or resulting actions of social actors. These actions changed constantly because they were socially constructed (Saunders et al. 2012). It exactly fits the context of this study which is to learn the subjective reality of the consumers and their perception in purchasing organic products in discounter supermarkets in a meaningful way. It is believed consumers as social actors interpret the scenarios based on their perceptions of organics in both supermarkets and the environmental concerns. Then, this interpretation is served as an insightful implication to discounter supermarkets for any consequent actions of their organic range development. However, objectivism reflected that social entities existed in the world that was external to social actors (Saunders et al. 2012). This philosophy cannot be applied to the study as the development of organic range of supermarkets cannot be completely isolated from consumers. It is also not likely that researchers view the reality separately from social actors (consumers).

3.22 Research Approach

After selecting subjectivism as research philosophy, the research approach is the next layer of the research onion to discuss. Deductive approach, or “top-down” approach is chosen as there is a hypothesis set in the study, and the research is designed to test this hypothesis. In the contrary, inductive approach, or “bottom-up” approach, is rejected as it aims to generate key ideas, insights based on the patterns or meaning from the data collected without having hypotheses applied in the beginning.

In this study, the research topic is to look into the factors that drive organic’s purchase in discounters. It is then narrowed down into the two more specific hypothesis in commercial and environmental perspectives. After obtaining the sufficient data, the two hypothesis can be validated. This approach moves down from a broader idea to a more specific answer, fitting the idea of this research.

3.23 Research Strategy

The research strategy meant how the researcher planned to carry out the research (Saunders et al., 2007). It was the action to answer the research questions, so the choice of research strategy was guided by research questions and objectives. The available amount of time and resources needed considering as well (Saunders et al. 2009). Besides, the choices of research philosophy and research approach in chapter 3.21 and 3.22 respectively contributed to research strategy based on the research onion model. As a result, this study adopts a survey strategy to collect abundant quantitative data to cater for the above-mentioned criteria. The explanations are as below.

First, the research question is to identify the commercial and environmental factors that drive organic purchase in discounters. In the other words, it is required to find out:

1. The relationship between the commercial factors and the organic purchase by Irish consumers.
2. The relationship between the environmental concern and the organic purchase by Irish consumers.

According to Saunders, a survey could be used for determining particular relationships between variables (Saunders et al., 2007).

Second, to cope with the limitation of a master dissertation, survey can resolve the obstacles of researchers' budget and available time.

Third, a deductive research approach is chosen in the research. According to Saunders, a survey strategy was often associated with deductive approach (Saunders et al., 2009).

Therefore, a survey strategy well fulfills the present study regarding to the above-mentioned issue. The advantage of the survey is to offer a budget, convenient and quick way to collect large amounts of quantitative data to test the hypotheses. The great amount of data enables the result to be representable and reliable because the current study is highly consumer-oriented and those consumer insights, in the end, possibly contribute to the business decision of discounters. The details of sampling is illustrated in chapter 3.3.

When looking at the other strategies, interviews and case studies are rejected due to the limitation of time allowed. Experiments are not applicable as well since only a limited factors are allowed to examine in each time during one experiment. Although observation studies can collect quantitative data quickly, it requires extensive training and experience to maintain objectivity in assessing the consumer behavior. Store operation issues in Aldi and Lidl are the other hurdle.

Therefore, survey is adopted to collect the quantitative data from a huge number of consumers in Ireland. The quantitative data (e.g. where, why, how often) is to answer the research questions, fulfil the objectives, and test hypotheses. There exists many forms of surveys. The discussion of selecting the right type of survey is in chapter 3.4.

3.24 Time Horizon

Cross-sectional study - common in social science to figure out the social prevalence - is used since it is a one-off study that lasts for approximately 3 months, from May 2018 to August 2018, to capture a snapshot of the situation - purchase of organics in discounters of Ireland - at this particular period of time instead of numerous different points of time.

3.3 Sampling - Selecting Respondents

Conducting the survey for the entire population – Dublin of Ireland - is impractical in the present study. Suggested by the researcher, sampling was the possible alternative to a census (Saunders et al., 2009). The sample size of a survey was recommended as large as possible in order to obtain more reliable findings in a quantitative research (Saunders et al. 2009). However, given that the factors of time and budget, the survey is undertaken with minimum 100 adults in Dublin as the population of interest. Compared to other pieces of European research on similar topic, the sampling size of this research is considered reasonable as it is in line with the rest. Non probability sampling is used because a person's opportunity of being selected for participation of the sample is unknown. Probability sampling is always an ideal approach as everyone in the population has the equal chance for being selected, very likely representing the entire population. However, due to the budget and time concern of the

master dissertation, it is highly unlikely to access the contact list of the entire Dublin population in the 3-month period.

Convenience sampling as a type of non-probability sampling is selected as it is economical and quick. In order to improve the representativeness of non-probability sampling, further steps are taken in this study. According to an author, diversity gave strength to a convenience sampling. It could be done by distributing surveys to diversifiable groups instead of only schoolmates even they were easily approached in certain research context. When giving out surveys, minimizing the judgments of who were invited to the research could strengthen the representativeness. (Dolores Skowronek, 2009). More details of primary data collection are discussed in chapter 3.4

3.4 Data Collection

In this research, both primary and secondary data is collected to answer the research questions and objectives. According to a study, the primary data was the one accessed by researchers as first-hand information, and the secondary data was accessed from the third party's academic research such as journal, book, report and website (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). The latter one has been well explained and analyzed in literature review in chapter two. Since it is a master dissertation, academic study from the literature is necessary.

In this study, questionnaire is used to collect the first-hand customer insights as the primary data among multiple survey research methods. It is to fully answer the research questions and objectives as they are only partly fulfilled from the secondary data. Questionnaire was defined as a way to collect the data by asking individuals the same set of questions (Saunders, 2010). Questionnaire is able to gather statistical data from large groups to yield representative results that are standardized. A standardized format is critical in the current study because a representative finding is required to present in chapter four. If the respondents do not provide the answer based on the shaped format, huge variation may be resulted and no conclusion can be made. This survey research method also enables a convenient, quick and cheap solution to collect primary data. These three factors fit well in a master dissertation. Very importantly, the format of a written questionnaire with well-structured questions and answers enables respondents to read as many times as they need. It facilitates them to make

the right choice when they need to review the question. Yet, other survey research such as verbal-formatted ones may not be able to cope with.

Although there exist other survey research methods, like telephone survey and face-to-face interview, questionnaire fits the context of this study the most as the sample size is at least 100. Telephone survey requires sophisticated skills that may not be simply acquired in 3 months because the intonation, voice and the speaking manner is suggested to be standardized throughout all telephone conversations. It is also very time-consuming to conduct all surveys by one person and hard to maintain the high quality of conversation throughout the entire research. If there are more than one interviewers to conduct the telephone survey, it will be even harder to achieve the same standard of quality and expensive although it will be faster. Face-to-face interview may take substantial amount of time to achieve this sample size. Also, no standardization is guaranteed in an interview.

The questionnaire appears various question types in order to fully fulfill the research questions and objectives set in chapter one. The type includes multiple choice, matrix and five-point scale, with closed-ended questions widely used. Multiple choice questions were described to offer respondents three to five options while only one answer was accepted. It was also advised to provide a final option "Other (please specify)" (Fisher, 2004). Rating-scaled questions asked respondents to rate a service, product or statement (Fisher, 2004). The respondents can reveal the preference of their opinions by marking the appropriate place on the scale. For example, "from strongly agree to strongly disagree" can indicate the level of agreement towards a statement. Matrix or grid of questions enabled researcher to record the answers to more than two similar questions at the same time (Saunders et. Al. 2010). It serves as a good technique when comparing several factors.

The questionnaire contains 21 questions including demographics and consumer insights. It is written in precise and understandable English to avoid confusion and to facilitate respondents to pick the most suitable answers. The order of questions provides a logic flow to guide the respondents throughout the entire research. It is in an electronic version and was designed using Google tool.

The questionnaire was distributed via email with a URL embedded in the message for inviting respondents to click on the link to fill in it. The recipients are adults and are from diversified groups including students, white collars, blue collars, housewives and unemployed people. Very importantly, they are based in Ireland to respond to the context of this study. The reason for selecting email is because it is convenient to reach the respondents. Importantly, it reduces the embarrassment in some questions. For example, when an individual is asked about any influences of environmental concern over their organic purchase, they may feel uncomfortable to look environmentally-unfriendly in a face-to-face situation. Thus, the results generated may not be reliable under such case. As a result, email questionnaire is a good approach to collect data in this study.

3.5 Data Analysis Method

The primary data is presented in the next chapter before analysis in chapter five. The in-depth interpretation and analysis of data can draw the meaningful conclusion of the research question – the factors that drive Irish consumers to purchase organics in discounters in Ireland. Besides, the secondary data mentioned in literature review is integrated in data analysis chapter in order to compare and contrast the findings.

Before executing any kinds of data analysis, it is necessary to code the quantitative data. It brings to a reduced amount of data for easy handling, especially by computer programs. For example, male = 0 and female = 1 in the gender; 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree and 1 = strongly disagree. In the matrix-styled question, each answer is given a total score after counting the number of “strongly agree”, “agree” and so on. It can enable the readers to get a good understanding of research findings. The data is input to the analysis tool exactly the same way for each questionnaire. A codebook, referring to a file holding all variables in the questionnaire, is created before data entry since it can ensure the research data is entered accurately and consistently in case that it is handled in different days.

In order to facilitate the analysis of quantitative data, Excel spreadsheet is used since it is a free of charge software with all-in-one function. Data entry, data analysis and graph

generation can be achieved in one single software. It can be secured by a password to address the ethics issue that is discussed in the next session.

3.6 Research Ethics

Research ethics were referred to the appropriateness of the research's behavior about the rights of those who became the respondent of a research study, or who were likely to be impacted by it. (Saunders et. al., 2009)

The research does not get involved of people at the age below eighteen. An informed participant consent is aimed in this research. An Informed consent cover sheet is used to inform the voluntary research participants that what they volunteer for, how their data is used, and what they agree in participating this research. This written consent also well explains their participation rights, and assures them that their personal data (only gender and age) is kept confidential, and only used for the purpose of this dissertation. Their anonymity is protected during collecting data and presenting the statistical data. For example, the direct identifiers like addresses and postcodes is avoided. The personal information like name, date of birth and etc. is not be required. The text variables are generalized to minimize identifiability while it does not influence the purpose of the research. As the data controller, the process of data collection and usage is taken a great care. For example, electronic survey is only accessed by the researcher and is signed out every time after access. When the data is transferred to the spreadsheet for analysis, the spreadsheet is installed with a safe password and also named irrelevantly to dissertation primary data.

The research findings is presented based on the data obtained directly from the participants without showing favor towards some while ignoring the others. No data is distorted when doing data analysis.

3.7 Conclusion of Methodology

To summarize this chapter, all sessions above well describe the reasons why each procedure of the research onion is selected. A considerable amount of care and time is invested in each step, as this chapter is involved of third party's contribution and contingency plan if

unexpected cases happen. The key challenges of budget, resources and time run through the whole chapter. After going through all the 'onion layers', questionnaire by email is chosen to collect the primary data for this research as it can answer the research questions and objectives. In the end, the research can reveal a comprehensive and representative outcome.

4. Findings

4.1 Data Presentation

In this session of the chapter, the 21 questions of this questionnaire are grouped based on the research questions logically – commercial and environmental perspectives. The findings are illustrated in tables, graphs or charts and short descriptions. After that, the findings are summarized in the end of this chapter for further discussion in chapter 5.

4.11 Demographics and basic organics shopping habits

Question 1: What is your age?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
18-27	46	45.5%
28-37	48	47.5%
38-47	5	5%
48-57	0	0%
58+	2	2%
Total	101	100%

Table 4: Age

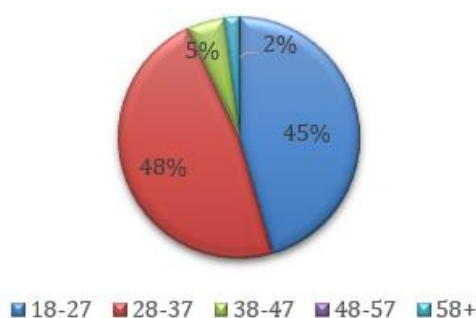


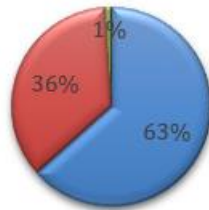
Figure7: Age

The survey is only limited to respondents at the age over 18. Most of them fall into 18 – 37 age range accounting for 93% of the total number of respondents. The age range of 28-37 is slightly dominant with 47.5% whereas that of 18-27 with 45.5%. People aged from 38 to 47 only contribute 5% to the questionnaire. The remaining 2% is from those aged over 58.

Question 2: What is your gender?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Female	64	63.4%
Male	36	35.6%
Prefer Not to Say	1	1%
Total	101	100%

Table5: Gender



■ Female ■ Male ■ Prefer Not to Say

Figure8: Gender

The sample splits out into 63.4% female and 35.6% male respondents. One respondent was not willing to express the gender.

Question 3. How often do you buy organic products?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	3	3%
A few times a week	17	16.8%
Once a week	14	13.9%
Once per 2 weeks	17	16.8%
Once a month	17	16.8%
Less often	29	28.7%
Never	4	4%
Total	101	100%

Table6: Frequency to buy organics

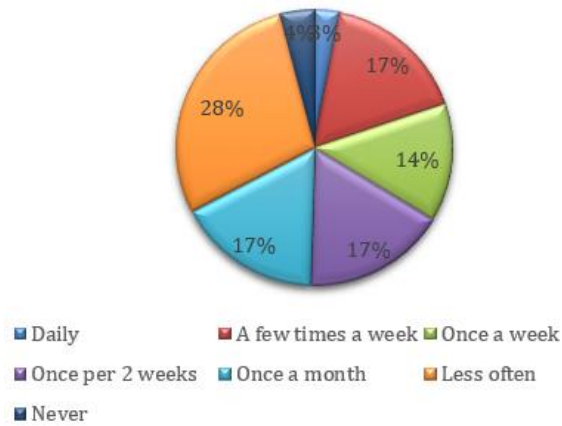


Figure9: Frequency to buy organics

The question about the frequency of shopping organic products reveals the highest number of “Less often” with 28.7%. There are three answers sharing the second highest number of 16.8%. These answers are “A few times a week”, “Once per 2 weeks” and “Once a month”. Respondents who shop organic products once a week account for 13.9%. Only 4% of respondents said they have never bought organics. The least common answer is “Daily” with only 3%.

Question 4. Where do you usually / will you consider to purchase organic products? Please select max. 3 options

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Aldi	35	34.7%
Lidl	58	57.4%
Tesco	54	53.5%
Dunnes Stores	42	41.6%
Supervalu	19	18.8%
Other: M&S	5	5%
Other: Asian Supermarkets	3	3%
Other: Fallon & Byrne	2	2%
Other: Holland & Barret	2	2%
Other: Fresh	1	1%
Other: Farmer Markets	1	1%
Other: Vegan Shops	1	1%
Other: Stand Alone Fruit and Veg Local Shop	1	1%
Other: Independent Stores	1	1%

Table7: The place to purchase organics

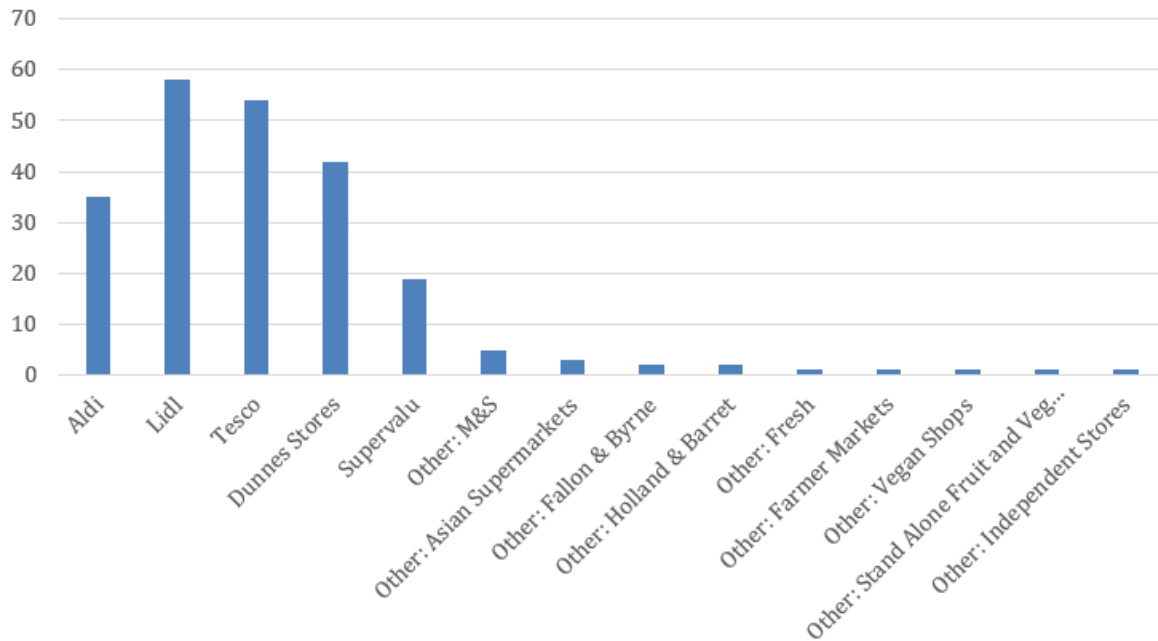


Figure10: The place to purchase organics

This question aims to show which retailer is more popular among consumers for purchasing organic products. Lidl (57.4%) is the most popular place with more than a half of respondents opting for, followed by Tesco (53.5%), Dunnes Stores (41.6%) and Aldi (34.7%). Supervalu is the least popular retailer among all the provided answers. Some participants provided other answers such as “M&S” referring to Marks and Spencer (4%), Asian supermarkets (3%), Fallon & Byrne (2%) and Holland & Barret (2%). Some insignificant answers such as fresh, farmer markets, vegan shops and stand-alone fruit and vegetable local shop only take up 1% each among all.

4.12 Commercial drives of organics purchase

Question 5. What are the reasons you (will) purchase organic products from there? Please select all that apply

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Product Quality	66	65.3%
Price	48	47.5%
Product Diversity	21	20.8%
Shopping Environment	11	10.9%
Shop Location	35	34.7%
Other: Health	1	1%

Other: Credibility	1	1%
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Table 8: Reason for buying organics from there

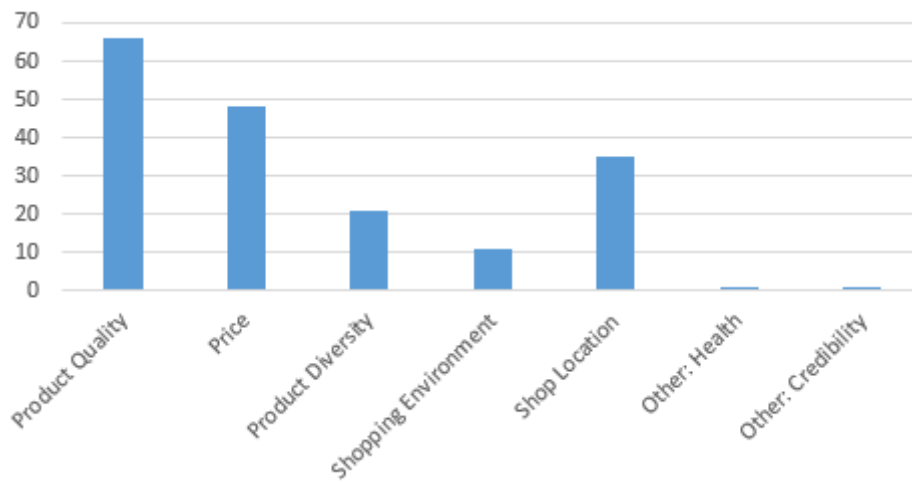


Figure 11: Reason for buying organics from there

Among all the reasons of purchasing organics, 65.3% of respondents consider product quality the most important. Price (47.5%) is the second most important factor, followed by shop location (34.7%) and product diversity (20.8%). The weight of the influence of shopping environment is only 10.9%. Two insignificant reasons are health and credibility with 1% each.

Question 6. How strongly do you agree their following factors that drive you to purchase organic products in Aldi or Lidl?

Answer	Frequency					Total Frequency	Total
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
Product Quality	32	44	21	2	2	101	405
Price	52	34	13	2	0	101	439
Product Diversity	19	40	33	8	1	101	371

In-store Environment	12	37	36	12	4	101	344
Shop Location	31	45	18	5	2	101	401

Table9: Influence of each factor driving the purchase of organics in Aldi/Lidl

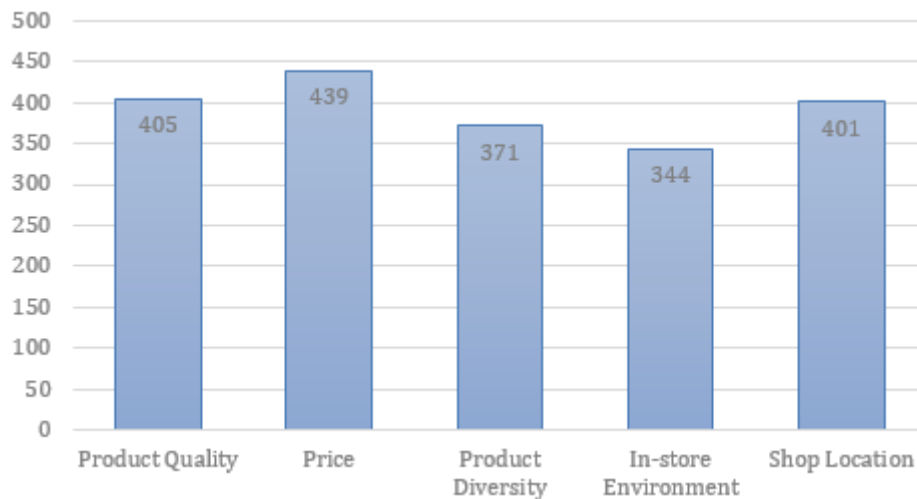


Figure12: Influence of each factor driving the purchase of organics in Aldi/Lidl

Respondents tend to agree all their factors driving the organic purchase. They claim their price is the strongest purchasing drive with 439 points, and their product quality comes next with 405 points. Their shop location with 401 points is almost as important as their product quality. On the other hand, their product diversity ranks second lowest with 371 points only. In-store environment contribute the least to drive organic purchase in the duo.

Question 7. At what level do you perceive the quality of organic products in Aldi or Lidl?

	Frequency	Percentage
Very High	7	6.9%
High	28	27.7%
Average	60	59.4%
Low	5	5%
Very Low	1	1%

Table10: Product quality of organics in Aldi/Lidl

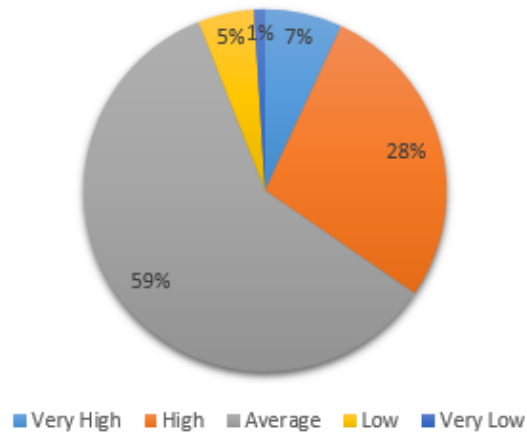


Figure13: Product quality of organics in Aldi/Lidl

With this question about quality of organic products in Aldi or Lidl, 59.4% perceive the quality of organic products in Aldi or Lidl is average, and 34.6% high or very high. Only 6% of the respondents claim their quality was low or very low.

Question 8. Imagine you are purchasing organic products in Aldi or Lidl, how many options of a type of organic product do you prefer to choose from?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
1-2 organic products	48	47.5%
3-4 organic products	44	43.6%
More than 4 organic products	9	8.9%
Total	101	100%

Table 11: Product diversity of organic products preferred

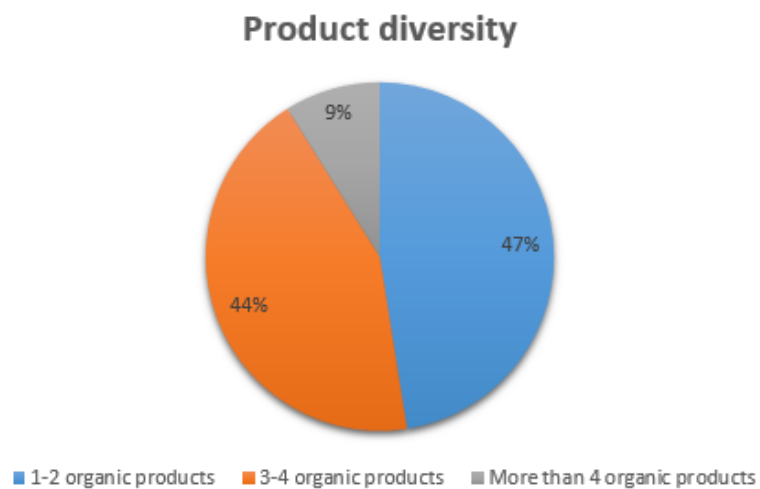


Figure14: Product diversity of organic products preferred

This product diversity question indicates people want limited choices when it comes to purchasing organics in Aldi or Lidl. Almost half (47.5%) of the respondent prefer one organic product or two to choose from. 43.6% prefer three or four. Only 8.9% suggest having more than four organics.

Question 9. How do you feel about introducing national brands* of organics in Aldi or Lidl?

I want Aldi or Lidl to introduce

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
as many as national brands, at the expense of their own brands	31	30.7%
some more leading national brands but still carry their own brands as the major business	48	47.5%
as few as national brands while carry almost all their own brands	14	13.9%
No Change	8	7.9%
Total	101	100%

Table12: Comments of introducing NBs in Aldi/Lidl

*It is usually owned by the producer or distributor, and marketed nationally through multiple retail outlets.

Comments of introducing NBs

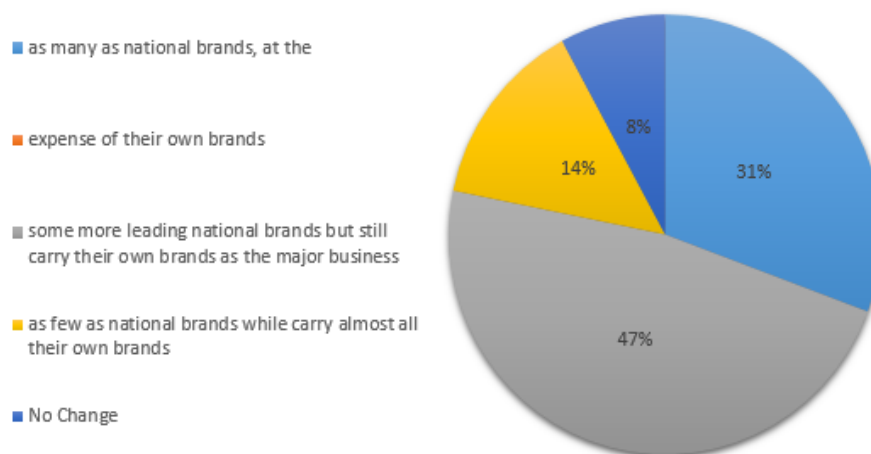


Figure15: Comments of introducing NBs in Aldi/Lidl

This question reveals the majority (47.5%) hopes to introduce some more leading national brands to Aldi or Lidl but carry their own brands as the major business. The portion of those

preferring to see as many as national brands on their shelves, at the expense of the own brands, contributes 30.7%. 13.9% suggest having as few as national brands in-store while carrying almost all own brands. The remaining ones (7.9%) opt for no change.

Question 10. How much cheaper of organic products in Aldi or Lidl do you feel comfortable to purchase, compared to those found in conventional supermarkets?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 10% cheaper	19	18.8%
10-20% cheaper	28	27.7%
20-30% cheaper	16	15.8%
30-40% cheaper	7	6.9%
More than 40% cheaper	4	4%
I do not mind to pay more for organics in Aldi or Lidl	27	26.7%
Total	101	100%

Table13: Price conception of organics in Aldi / Lidl

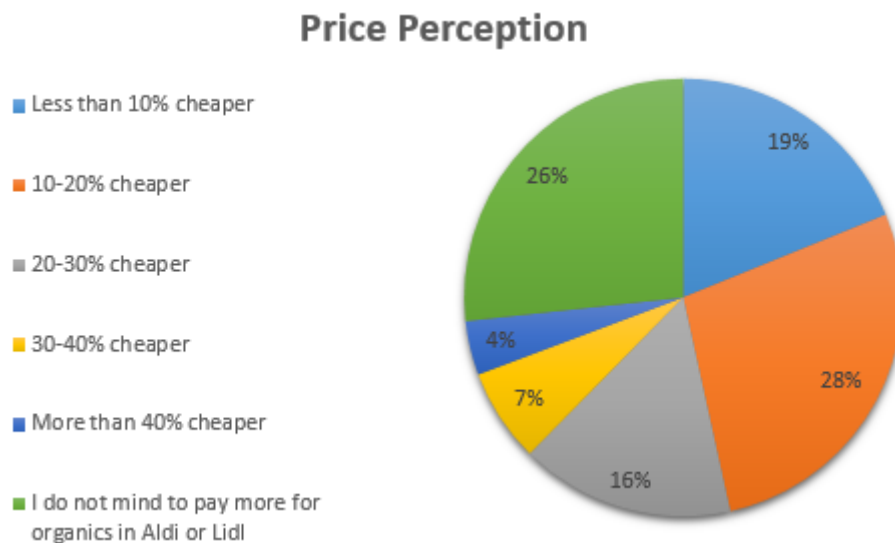


Figure16: Price conception of organics in Aldi / Lidl

10%-20% cheaper of organics in Aldi or Lidl is the most favorable price range, resulting in 27.7% of all answers. 26.7% have no concern to pay more for organics in this supermarket format. The third popular price range is less than 10% cheaper (18.8%), followed 20%-30% cheaper (15.8%). The preference of deep discount of organics is rare with only a few responses of "30%-40% cheaper" (6.9%) and "more than 40% cheaper" (4%).

Question 11. How strongly does the in-store environment of Aldi or Lidl drive you to purchase organics?

Answer	Frequency					Total Frequency	Total Score
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
Lighting	12	41	35	11	2	101	353
Smell	19	34	34	12	2	101	359
Product Display	19	47	25	9	1	101	377
Store assistants	13	32	40	13	3	101	342
Background Music	3	18	52	19	9	101	290

Table14: Influence of in-store environment factors driving the purchase of organics in Aldi / Lidl

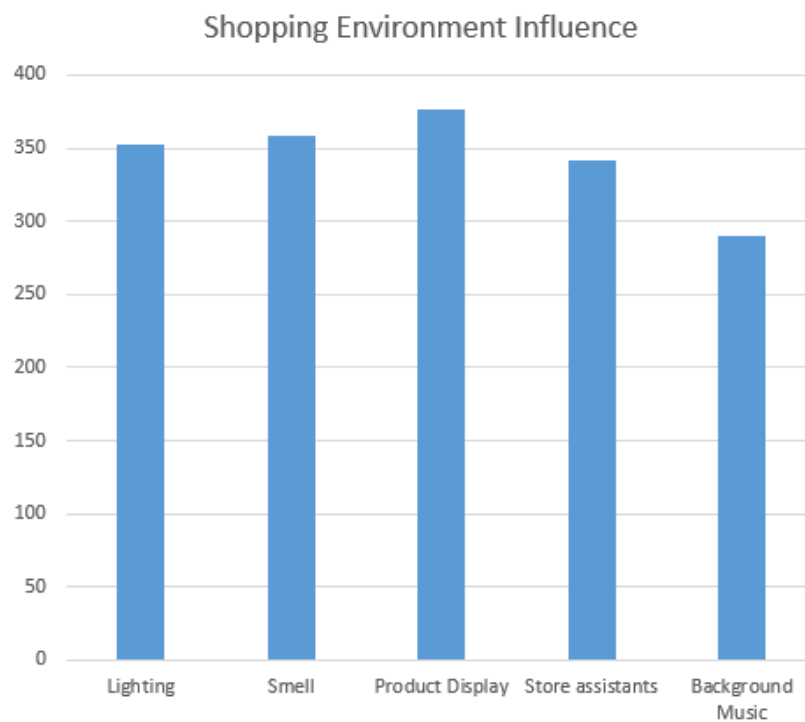


Figure17: Influence of in-store environment factors driving purchase of organics in Aldi/ Lidl

Although in-store environment is a relatively insignificant factor to drive organic purchase in this research as found in question 6, it is interesting to see which part of in-store environment plays the most and the least importance. Product display is crowned the most important factor with 377 points. Next, smell and lighting are nearly equally important with 359 points and 353 points. The importance of store assistants scores 342 points. The least important factor goes to background music that scores 290 points only.

Question 12. How long is acceptable for you to travel from your current location to the nearest Aldi or Lidl?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5 minutes	11	10.9%
Less than 10 minutes	32	31.7%
Less than 15 minutes	36	35.6%
Less than 20 minutes	19	18.8%
I do not mind to travel over 20 minutes to Aldi or Lid	3	3%
Total	101	100%

Table15: Acceptable travelling time to Aldi / Lidl

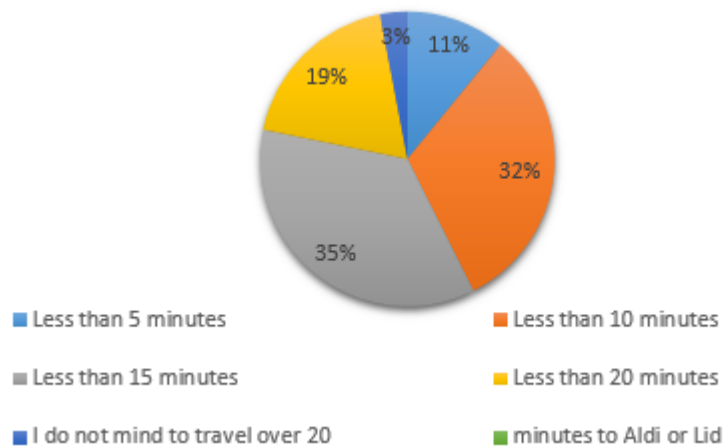


Figure18: Acceptable travelling time to Aldi / Lidl

More than one third of respondents (35.6%) accept the traveling time to Aldi or Lidl with less than 15 minutes. The other part of majority (31.7%) prefers to spend less than 10 minutes to visit these stores. The options of "Less than 20 minutes" and "Less than 5 minutes" take up 18.8% and 10.9% respectively of this survey. Only 3% are willing to spend over 20 minutes to there.

Question 13. Most of the organic products found in Aldi or Lidl are own brand, how do you find their brand activities done by Aldi or Lidl so far?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
motivate me to purchase more organic products	14	13.9%
raise my awareness of organic products	12	11.9%
drive me to understand more about organic products	9	8.9%
make me aware of the presence of organic products there	24	23.8%
are not sufficient	17	16.8%
are irrelevant to me	23	22.8%
Other: Do Not Know	1	1%
Other: Are no sure	1	1%
Total	101	100%

Table16: Brand activities of organic products of Aldi / Lidl

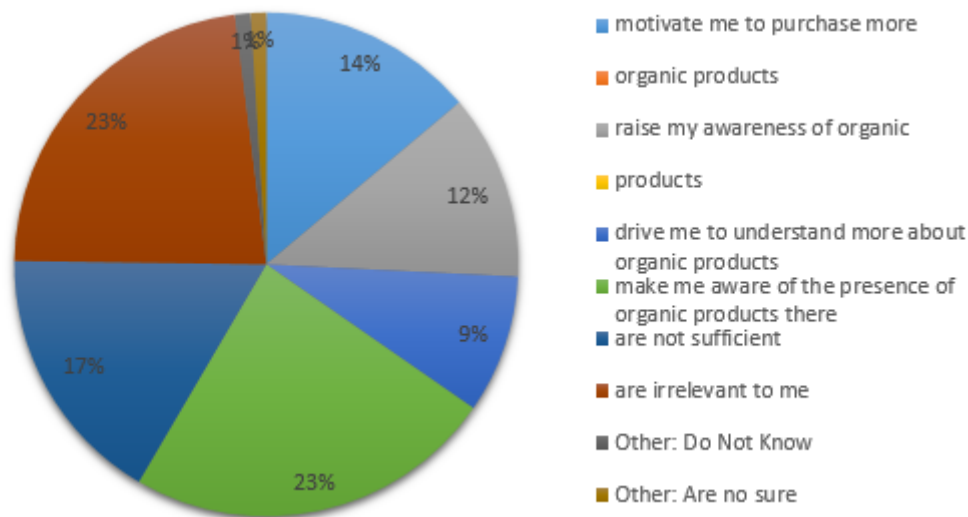


Figure19: Brand activities of organic products of Aldi / Lidl

This question is about the brand management of Aldi and Lidl. A few (8.9%) of the respondents agree the brand activities of organic products can drive them to understand more about organics. Some (11.9%) agree these activities can raise their awareness of organic products. 23.8% think these activities make them aware of the product presence in-store. On the other side, there are however almost the equal number of respondents (22.8%) saying these are not relevant to them. 16.8% show they are insufficient. 2% are not certain of these brand activities.

Question 14. What kinds of communication messages do you want to receive from their organic products?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Health benefits of organics	64	63.4%
Environmental benefits of organics	48	47.5%
Tips of cooking/using organics	30	29.7%
Promotion offers	40	39.6%
Other: Friend	1	1%
Other: No	1	1%
Other: Low cost	1	1%
Other: The chemicals that would normally be us	1	1%
Other: Where they are sourced	1	1%

Table17: Communication message of organic products preferred

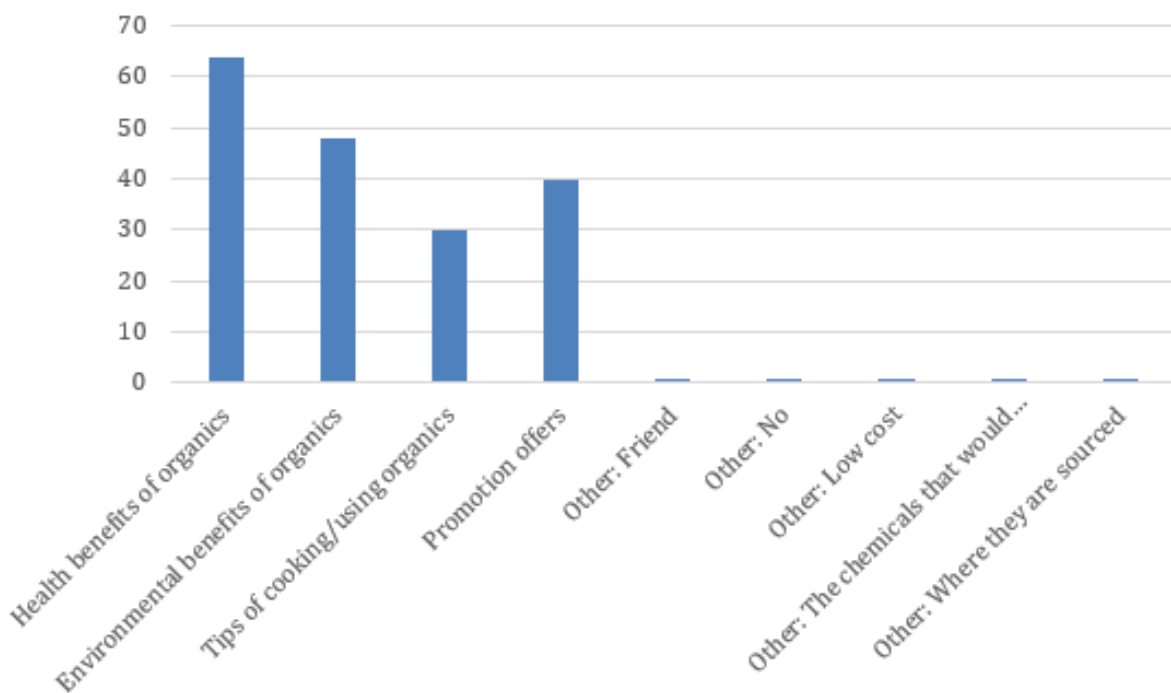


Figure 20: Communication message of organic products preferred

The dominant communication messages that respondents request are related to health benefits of organics, accounting for 63.4%. Environmental benefits of organics are the second most popular messages with 47.5%. Promotion offers come third with 39.6%. Tips of cooking / using organics have the least popularity with 29.7%

Question 15. Which categories of organic products do you expect Aldi or Lidl to be available on their shelves most of the time? Please select all that apply

	Frequency	Percentage
Vegetables	89	88.1%
Fruits	80	79.2%
Meat	54	53.5%
Dairy products	38	37.6%
Frozen Food	18	17.8%
Snack	23	22.8%
Tinned / Jars of goods	6	5.9%
Skin care product	24	23.8%
Baby food	16	15.8%
Other: Eggs	1	1%
Other: Pet Food	1	1%

Table18: Categories of organic products expected

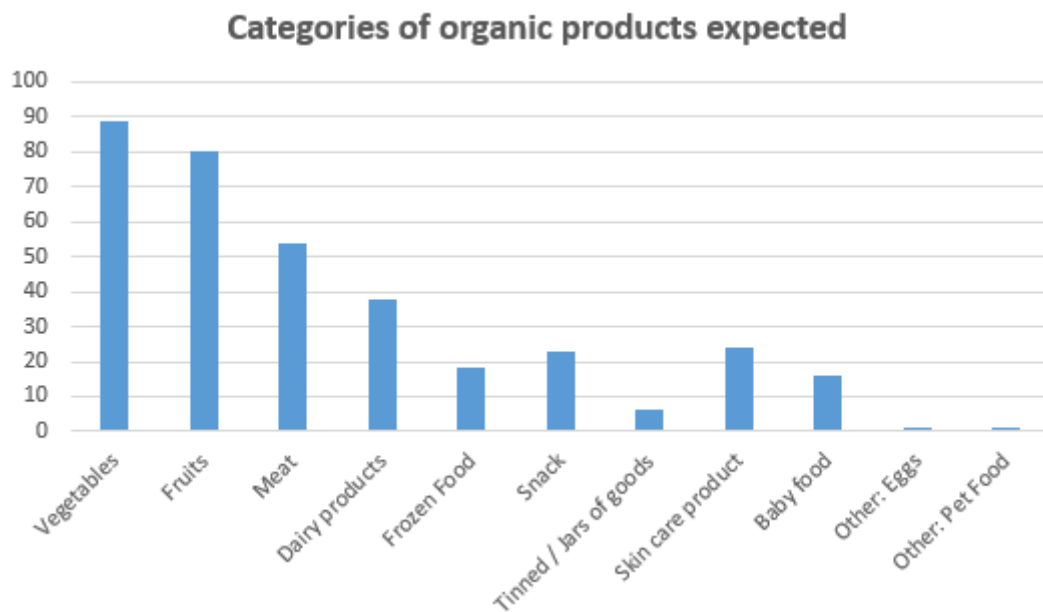


Figure21: Categories of organic products expected

Regarding to the popularity of organic categories, vegetables (88.1%) and fruits (79.2%) are expected the most to be available in the discounters. Meat ranks third with 53.5% and dairy products fourth with 37.6%. Snack and skin care products have similar popularity with 22.8% and 23.8%. However, some categories are relatively not necessary for respondents such as frozen food (17.8%), baby food (15.8%), tinned/Jars of goods (5.9%) and Pet Food (1%).

4.13 Environmental drives of organics purchase

Question 16. How strongly do you agree that you are willing to send more money on products contributing positively to the environment?

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	29	28.7%
Agree	45	44.6%
Neither agree nor disagree	18	17.8%
Disagree	7	6.9%
Strongly disagree	2	2%
Total	101	100%

Table19: Willingness to spend more money on environmentally-friendly products

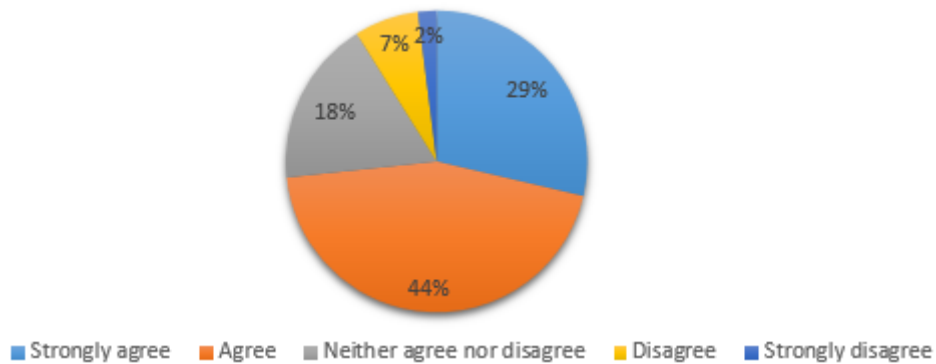


Figure22: Willingness to spend more money on environmentally-friendly products

73.3% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they are willing spend more money on environmentally-friendly products. 8.9% disagree or strongly disagree with it. The remaining 17.8% of respondents are neutral of it.

Question 17: How strongly do you agree the environmental concern drives you to purchase more organic food?

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	16	15.8%
Agree	6	5.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	28	27.7%
Disagree	41	40.6%
Strongly disagree	10	9.9%
Total	101	100%

Table20: Environmental concern influence the purchase of organic

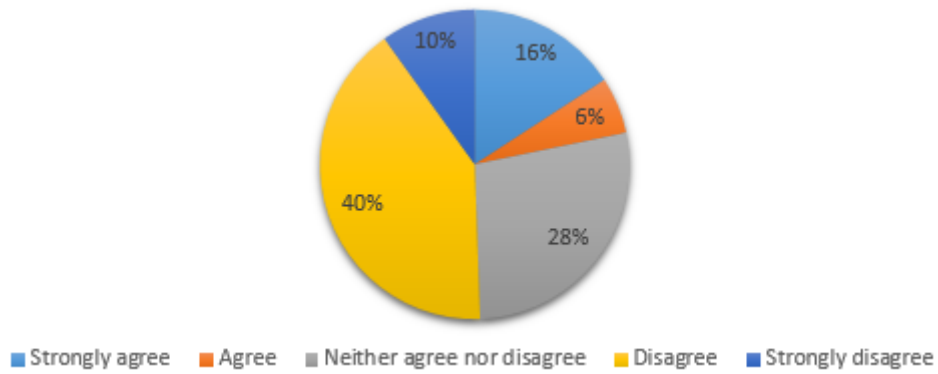


Figure23: Environmental concern influence the purchase of organic

Only 21.7% of respondents strongly agree or agree that environmental concern drives the purchase of organics. The number of respondents who strongly disagree or disagree with it is more than a double of those who agree or strongly agree with it. This opposite party account for 50.5% of total responses. The rest of respondents are neither agree nor disagree with this statement.

Question 18: Do you trust the environmental claims made on these platforms? Please select all that apply

	Frequency	Percentage
Product labels	52	51.5%
Product webpage	24	23.8%
Product social media sites	25	24.8%
Credible blogs or websites	30	29.7%
In-store displays	35	34.7%
None of the above	6	5.9%
Other: Scientific article	1	1%
Other: Proven research	1	1%

Table21: Types of platform that you trust the environmental claim on

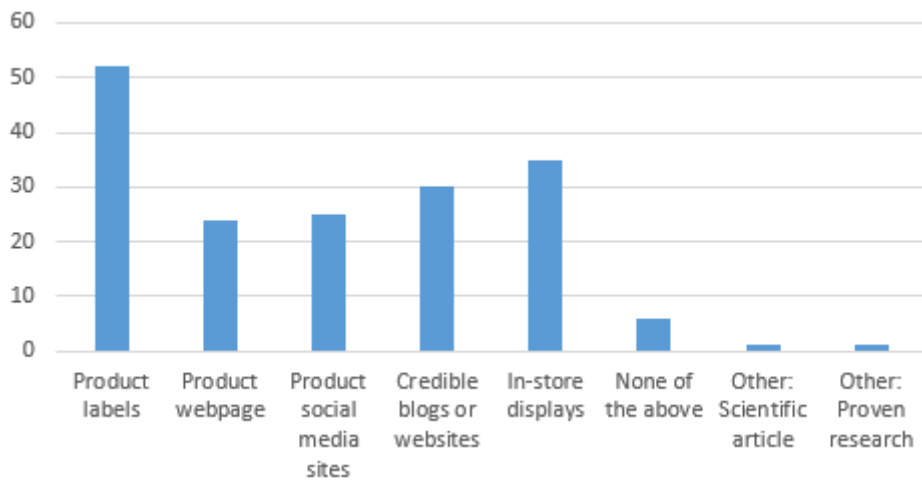


Figure24: Types of platform that you trust the environmental claim on

Environmental claims on product labels gain more than a half of the respondents' trust (51.5%). It is far more dominant than the second most trust-worthy platform, in-store display, with 34.7% trust. Three platforms with similar trust levels are credible blogs or websites (29.7%), social media sites (24.8%) and product webpage (23.8%). Respondents also provide other media that they trust but are not covered in this question. Those are scientific article (1%) and proven research (1%).

Question 19: How strongly do you agree the following information can reinforce the trust of the environmental claims of organics?

	Frequency					Total Frequency	Total Score
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
Support of credible third parties	31	51	17	1	1	101	Strongly agree:5/ Agree:4/ Neither Agree nor Disagree:3/ Disagree:2/
Sufficient product details	33	54	11	2	1	101	419

Numerical rating system	21	50	27	2	1	101	391
Product reviews	28	47	23	2	1	101	402
Openness of contact information (eg. Email address and phone number)	24	36	31	9	1	101	376

Table22: Information reinforcing the trust of environmental claims

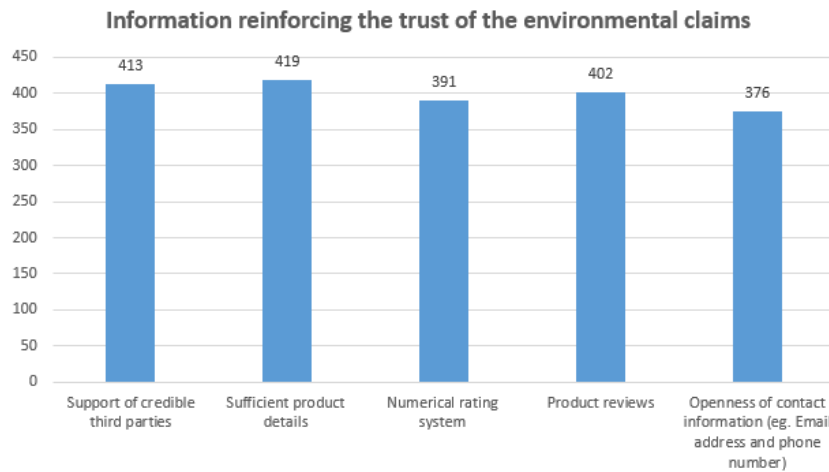


Figure25: Information reinforcing the trust of environmental claims

The most effective information to strengthen the trust of environmental claims is to provide sufficient product details. It scores the most among all with 419 points. Gaining support of credible third parties with 413 points is also effective to increase the trust. Product reviews (402 points) ranks third and numerical rating system (391 points) ranks fourth. Openness of contact information is a comparatively minor drive with 376 points only.

Question 20. Do you agree retailers have done sufficiently to gain your trust on the environmental claims of organics?

	Frequency					Total	Total Score
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Frequency	Strongly agree:5/ Agree:4/

			nor Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree:3/ Disagree:2/ Strongly Disagree:1
Aldi	11	34	43	12	1	101	345
Lidl	9	37	40	13	2	101	341
Tesco	8	39	41	9	4	101	341
Supervalu	13	38	40	7	3	101	354
Dunnes Store	14	40	38	5	4	101	358

Table23: Level of retailers' work to gain your trust on the environmental claims of organics

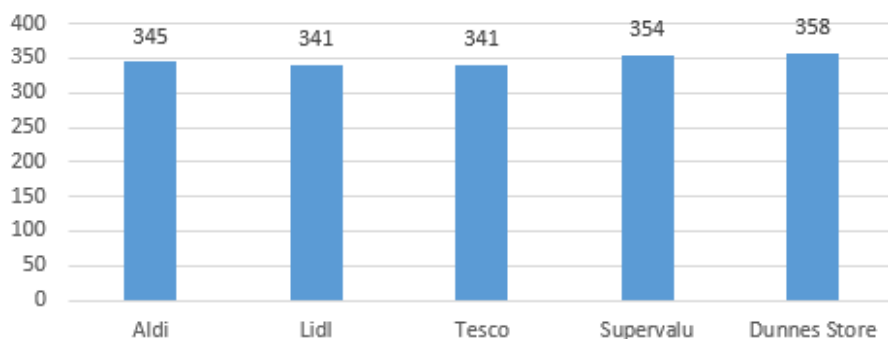


Figure26: Level of retailers' work to gain your trust on the environmental claims of organics

This question is about the performance of retailers in gaining people's trust of environmental claims. The best-performed retailer is Dunnes store with 358 points, followed by Supervalu with 354 points. Aldi comes next with 345 points. The least performers are Lidl and Tesco with 341 points for each. It is note-worthy that even the score in this question is fairly low, when comparing to other questions with this matrix format

Question 21. By increasing the trust of environmental claim, do you think you will purchase organics more or less?

	Frequency	Percentage
A lot more	16	15.8%
More	55	54.5%
The same	28	27.7%
Less	1	1%
A lot less	1	1%
Total	101	100%

Table24: Level of organics purchase change if the trust of environmental claims is improved

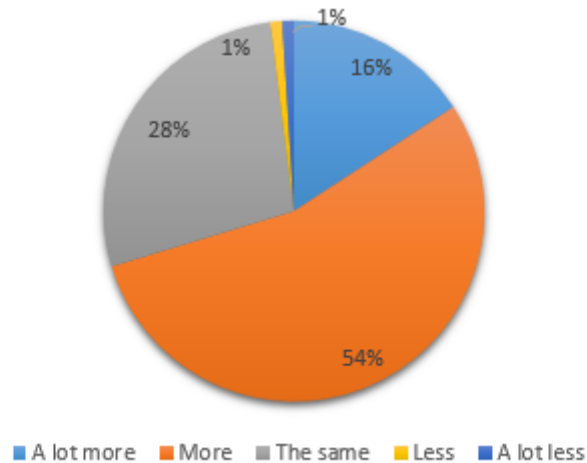


Figure27: Level of organics purchase change if the trust of environmental claims is improved

The final question aims to see the influence of increasing the trust of environmental claim. By raising the trust, over 70% of respondents tend to purchase more organic products, whereas only 2% reject to do so. 27.7% of respondents neither buy more nor less.

4.2 Summary of Findings

After presenting the primary data from 101 questionnaires as above, some findings are summarized as below for further discussion in the next chapter where a detailed investigation is expected. As stated, 2 main perspectives of this dissertation run through the entire study. Therefore, the summary is shaped in commercial and environmental perspectives.

Commercial:

Product quality is the key driven factor for consumers to consider where to shop for organics. However, when it comes to the drive of purchasing organics in Aldi or Lidl, price overrides product quality to become the most important driver, whereas product quality the second most important one and shop location the third.

Not only the priority of factors driving organic purchase in discounters is obtained from the questionnaire, the details of each factor are collected too.

Quality: Most of the respondents think their organic product quality is neither good nor bad. Around one third agree it is high or very high.

Product diversity: Respondents prefer limited range of organic product choice, and maintain PL as the core business.

Price: They do not prefer discounters to carry very low-priced organic products

Shopping environment: Respondents do not think in-store environment influences their purchase of organic hugely.

Shop Location: Less than 15 minutes of travelling time is acceptable

Environmental:

The majority is willing to spend more money on environmentally-friendly products, with more than 20% of the respondents purchasing organics driven by environmental concern. In the future, they will even purchase organics more if the trust of organics' environmental claim is getting improved.

Product label is the most trust-worthy medium for environmental claim of organics. A large number of people expect to see sufficient product details with the involvement of credible third parties, in order to gain higher degree of trust on the environmental claims.

At the present, among the major retailers, their performance of gaining consumers' trust of environmental claims is similar. Dunnes store is slightly better than the others.

5. Discussion of Findings

This chapter aims to refer to literature review and the findings of the interpreted data done previously. By comparing and contrasting the primary and secondary data, the research questions and research objectives as well as two hypotheses can be completely addressed in both commercial and environmental directions. To answer the main research question:

What are the factors that drive Irish consumers' purchase of organics products in discounters?

It is confirmed that all five commercial factors – brand/product, price, product diversity, shop location and shopping environment – can drive purchase of organic products. Yet,

environmental factor does not. More details are shown in the following sessions to illustrate how research questions and objectives are fulfilled.

5.1 Sub Research Question One

Commercial perspective: Any significant differences between product/service offered by German discounters and that by Irish indigenous supermarkets relating to driving the purchase of organic range?

Brand, product diversity, price, in-store environment and shop location are the significant commercial differences between these two supermarket formats, as found in a couple of literature pieces. The secondary research also documented consumers' reactions towards discounters' features but the findings from literature are not consistent. The primary data, yet, confirms all the five features or factors are able to propel consumers towards the purchase of organic products in discounters. Some are more important than the others in relation to driving organic purchase. Moreover, some details of primary research does not completely agree with the literature. Each variable is discussed in details below.

Brand: The business portfolio of discounters is heavily contributed by private brands whereas that of conventional supermarkets by national brands. Regardless of brands, it can be foreseen that product quality offered by the brand is the most critical factor influencing the shopping habit of organic products. The primary research reveals quality is even nearly 20% ahead the second most important factor – price, demonstrating the domination of quality when looking for organic products.

As the matter of fact, product quality is only the second most important factor among five factors driving (private-labelled) organic purchase in Aldi or Lidl while price is crowned the top. There is also an obvious gap between these top two factors. It implies that respondents are primarily attracted by the price tags of discounters' organics, followed by the PL product quality. To support this saying, the primary data is further narrowed down to examine the causes of shaping organic shopping habit. Shoppers of discounters tend to be drawn by their prices while indigenous supermarket shoppers do by the product quality offered by Dunnes / Supervalu. It reveals the organic product quality of discounters needs boosting in order to

attract other consumers from indigenous supermarkets. Discounters are suggested learning from the indigenous supermarkets when improving their own organic product quality.

A comparatively low product quality level of organics found in discounter is quite surprising. This discovery conflicts with the secondary research. The outcome of primary research reveals only 34.6% of consumers perceive the organic products of Aldi or Lidl as high or very high quality. This figure is very low when compared to the previous studies in Dublin and other European countries. The study conducted in Dublin in 2014 found up to 86% of people thought the overall products of Aldi were high or very high quality (Briedyte, 2014). A huge variation is observed. As both studies are conducted in Dublin of Ireland with the similar background and sampling size, it can be deducted that consumers do not agree the quality of organic products is as high as that of the general product of Aldi or Lidl. It makes discounters to re-think if there are any standard variations when sourcing different collections.

Another interesting observation is about the gender variation. Lower proportion of female respondents (30%) than male respondents (43%) agree discounters' organic products are high or very high quality. The discovery is very crucial to discounters as normally speaking female are the dominating gender in terms of grocery shopping (Shelf Life, 2017). If they can influence this critical group, it will hugely benefit to their organic product business. Further research about the difference between male and female shoppers are suggested for understanding the underlying causes, in order to give meaningful influence to discounters.

To further support the urge to enhance product quality, frequent organic product shoppers even rate product quality as the driving force notably greater than occasional shoppers do. As a result, enhancement of product quality likely brings stable sales revenue from frequent shoppers.

To summarize, product quality is the dominating determinant when shopping for organics. Although discounters have the edge of its pricing strategy, product quality should have given discounters stronger advantage to meet consumers' requirement. Aldi and Lidl have been doing well in the general product quality but there is plenty of room for improving the quality of organic range.

Product diversity: Conventional supermarkets offer a wide variety of product choice while discount supermarkets do not. The primary research indicates that consumers does not

attach huge amount of importance to product diversity, compared to other features, when shopping organic products in discounters. This feature is only the second least important one among all.

The finding agrees most of the existing literature discussed previously that discounters' shoppers were welcome a limited choice of products (Kumar and Steenkamp, 2007; Mantrala et al., 2009). More specifically, respondents only prefer one or two choices when they are shopping for organic products. This information is absent from the literature but specifically helpful for organic range development. As a result, Aldi or Lidl has the advantage over the conventional supermarkets by limiting the organic product choice to facilitate consumers to make the decision.

Price: Aldi or Lidl offers cheaper merchandises than the other supermarket format does. The findings of price perception from one hundred participants somewhat conflict with that from the literature review. It is quite surprising to see that price concern does not hugely contribute to one's organics shopping habit. Price is almost 20% outweighed by product quality, indicating respondents do not purchase the low-priced organics at the expense of product quality. This outcome is against several existing studies showing consumers were price-sensitive of organic products and price was the main barrier of purchasing organic products (Shop IQ, 2014; Gottschalk & Leistner, 2012).

However, when looking merely at discounters, their price becomes the strongest determinant for shopping organic products there, obviously overriding the second strongest determinant – product quality. This discovery offers an insightful learning to discounters' marketers that their price strategy is a distinct edge to consumers. However, discounters are suggested improving their organic range's quality as it, after all, is the top priority in consumers' mind when choosing organic products.

Although price is a strongly distinctive feature of discounters, driving people to shop organic products there the most, it clearly indicates it is pressing to step up the product quality development in order to propel more consumers towards their own organic range.

Shopping Environment: Discounters adopt the no-frill approach with a smaller physical area. The finding shows people do not carry much weight in the shopping environment when shopping organics. This factor has the least influence among five variables in driving organic

purchase, and is visibly less significant than the rest. Discounter's shopping environment also brings the least influence to drive the purchase of organic products in Aldi or Lidl. This information does not completely agree with multiple existing studies highlighting the great importance of the impact of shopping environment on consumers' purchase ((Donovan et al., 1994; Ryu et al., 2012)).

Therefore, discounters can prioritise this factor least on their organic range development while focus on the product quality. Yet, this factor cannot be overly underestimated. After all, respondents still agree it drives their organic purchase in discounters.

Shop Location: The total number of discount supermarkets is fewer than that of conventional supermarkets in the country. The primary data shows more than a third of respondents find their shop location motivates them to purchase organics there, ranking third among all factors.

Consumers are pleased of their current locations even their physical presence is not very strong. After the store expansion plan, discounters will penetrate further in the country to catch up with the number of indigenous ones. This feature may exert a stronger influence on consumers' organic food purchase.

To conclude, the sub research question one is well addressed. Product quality of PL, price and shop location play more important roles in driving organics purchase in discounters. Price is discounters' distinguishing as well as winning feature. However, their marketers are required to consider product quality improvement in order to fulfil the general consumers' need as this factor is the determining one.

5.2 Research Objective One

Commercial perspective: To identify the effective business strategies that marketers can carry out in order to attract more people to consume organic products in discounter retailers?

This objective is fully fulfilled with effective business strategies identified in the research. The finding of primary data points out the consumers' preference of the five commercial determinants of discounters, namely brand, price, product diversity, shop location and shopping environment. This priority gives discounters a very clear and critical indicator of their business strategy focus. The existing studies usually concentrate on non-commercial

factors such as health and taste, lacking business insights for retailers. Brand managers of discounters should emphasize the product quality, price strategy and shop location in their organic development plan while slightly play down on the shopping environment. This effective business focus can facilitate them to meet the ambitious business target. Besides, it helps weaken the market share of indigenous supermarkets by 'eating up' theirs. More details of each strategy are discussed as below.

Brand Strategy: It clearly illustrates that the product quality of organic products is the key purchase driver. The previous session discusses the room of private-labelled organics for improvement in terms of product quality. To dig deeper, it is even more important to raise female shoppers' confidence of the organic product quality.

As suggested by the industrial report, a brand strategy plays a role to establishing a successful private label brand. The finding here responds to this report by providing discounters some valuable consumer insights of the existing brand programs of the organic collection. The primary research suggests theirs are obviously not informative nor educative as most people think they only serve the purpose to indicate the presence of organic products in-store. The other similar portion of respondents even think theirs are not relevant to them. Before rectifying their brand programs, it is worthwhile to look at how consumers feel their existing ones. These added details result in a better implementation or revision of the brand strategy. More recommendations of establishing the private label brand strategy are discussed in chapter six.

Product Diversity Strategy: As discussed, respondents prefer to have one to two organic choices only to speed up the purchase process. Vegetables and fruits are anticipated to be the most favourable organic categories, but the category of meat cannot be neglected in their product development strategy as consumers look forwards to seeing them on-shelf, aligning with the industrial finding that organic meat was on the uptrend (Ipsos MRBI, 2014). As found in literature, Aldi and Lidl had the plan to strengthen their business portfolio of NBs to react with the conventional supermarkets that increasingly grew the PL business (Deleersnyder et al. 2007). However, the primary data reflects the fact that people are welcome for some more leading national brands only, and carry their own brands as the major business. Therefore, regardless of category, discounters should focus on developing their PL organic range instead of relying on introducing national brands.

Price Strategy: Generally, their pricing strategy does well and serves as the most important factor in driving the purchase of organics in discounters. The finding even offers marketers solidified information that consumers generally accept the organic products of discounters 10-20% lower than these of conventional supermarkets, as opposed to a very deep discount offering. This price range provides marketers an important understanding of consumers' pricing perception of organic products. As documented in chapter two, some product range is around 40% cheaper than that in Irish indigenous supermarkets. Therefore, they are suggested to review the existing pricing structure.

Shop location: As discussed in chapter four, the discount chains are now working out the business expansion plan to answer consumer's request of convenience. The primary data provides a very specific answer of how convenient they prefer. Less than 15 minutes of travelling time from the current place to the nearest discount chain is acceptable.

Shopping environment: The consumers attach the least importance in the environment of supermarkets when they shop for organics. Marketers can prioritise the above four elements before considering this factor. Yet, the discovery of the primary research still give some guidelines to marketers when implementing business strategy of in-store environment. It discovers the key areas of in-store environment, based on the results of the existing studies, which consumers tend to look at. They are product display, lighting and smell. Background music ranks least.

To conclude, research objective one is fulfilled with practical and effective strategies outlined mainly based on the findings of primary research with the support of literature.

5.3 Sub Research Question Two

Environmental perspective: Is the environmental concern related to Irish consumers' behaviour towards the purchase of organic food?

Respondents are concern of the environment when making the decision of purchase. The questionnaire exhibits over 70% of respondents are willing to spend more on the products contributing positively to the environment. This outcome is consistent with the industrial and academic studies. However, it is quite interesting to see that only 20% of the respondents

think environmental concern motivates them to purchase organic products. This level of concern is less significant than that in other researches. There appears a gap of the positive environment impact and the production method of organic products in Irish consumers' perspective, although many studies found the strong relationship between these two elements (De Backer et al., 2009; Mondelaers et al., 2009a; Verma, 2015).

This gap found is valuable to brand managers of discounters because they can leverage some appropriate platforms to convey this important message. If they can successfully strengthen consumers' awareness of positive environmental impact by the production of organic products, the sales revenue of organic products will increase. This is based on the finding that a vast majority is willing to spend more on environmentally-friendly products.

To conclude, sub-research question two is fulfilled by indicating the relationship of environmental concern and consumer behaviour of organic purchase. It is found that the relationship needs strengthening in order to be beneficial for organic range business.

5.4 Research Objective Two

Environmental perspective: To identify the opportunities to implement environmental plans to influence consumers' behaviour, resulting in improved profits.

This objective is fulfilled by identifying opportunities for implementing environmental plans. As discussed in the previous session, there is a need to implement environmental programs to reinforce consumers of environmental knowledge. Moreover, the questionnaire proves consumers hope to receive environmental benefits of organic food. A need and a desire of acquiring this knowledge related to organics are concrete. Therefore, It brings to questions of "Where should this environmental programs go to?" and "How should they be implemented?" This section is expected to answer all these questions.

As discussed in chapter two, there exists mistrust of environmental claim, causing a barrier of communication between manufacturer and consumers. This concern needs considering when implementing environmental programs, or they will lack credibility. As a retailer, Aldi or Lidl should take the responsibility to bridge these two parties. Based on the result, the vast majority of respondents trust the information on product labels, and in-store display is the

second most trust-worthy platform. Academic studies also supported the product label was one of the trust-worthy media from consumers' perspectives (Durif et al., 2011; Lin and Huang, 2012). The duo can communicate with the manufacturer/supplier to make use of their product labels, and take advantage of the in-store display. More details of the implementation are covered in recommendation chapter.

Regarding to "How" question, the results of primary research show involvement of credible third parties and sufficient product details can reinforce consumers' trust of environmental claims of organic products. Being in line with the secondary data's findings, consumers tended to trust the third bodies such as the government and NGOs in relation to these claims (Atkinson & Rosenthal, 2014; Mario, 2001). Yet, discounters can neglect the numerical rating system as the outcomes verifies the system does not significantly increase consumers' trust of the claim.

To conclude, research objective two is comprehensively addressed. This session identifies the reliable platforms of product labels and in-store displays for executing green claims. By getting credible third bodies involved and providing sufficient product details, the environmental claims can gain higher degree of trust. Although the environmental concern cannot effectively entice consumers to purchase organics currently, it is foreseen that implementing those environmental plans will be conducive to achieve that. In the future, the combination of commercial and environmental efforts can jointly contribute to the overall organic business in discounters.

5.5 Hypotheses

After comprehensive and critical analysis, the hypotheses set in the first chapter are to be answered in this session.

H1: Commercial perspective: The distinctive features of discounters from the conventional supermarkets are the factors driving the organics purchase in discounters.

The hypothesis is somewhat confirmed. The distinctive features of discounters are the five factors that run through the entire research – PL brand, Low price, no-frill in-store environment, shop location and limited product diversity. The primary research agree that all factors drive the purchase of organic in discounters, but slight variation is observed. Although

product quality is the main driver to determine the organic shopping habit as found from primary research, discounters' PL organic product quality is not strong enough to gain the top position. However, it is note-worthy it does not mean PL ones are bad quality to defer people from purchase as it is still the driving force for discounters. As a result, this hypothesis is still valid.

H2: Environmental perspective: Environmental concern positively influences Irish consumers to purchase organics that are considered environmentally-friendly products

The hypothesis is refuted. Consumers are found to be environmentally conscious as they are willing to spend more money on environmentally-friendly products. Yet, they do not agree the environmental concern drives the purchase of organic products. There exists a gap between their environmental concern and positive impact of organic purchase. However, this hypothesis is expected to be confirmed in the future after the effective education.

5.6 Limitation of the study

In the research, some limitations is resulted. First, due to the convenience in data collection, the research coverage is focused in the certain parts of Dublin. As a result, the findings may not perfectly represent the entire population in Dublin. As found from the finding, no respondents fall into the age group of 48-57, which may also create some impacts on the research. It is recommended to have similar amount of responses for each age group to draw the finding to represent the population.

Second, non-probably sampling is used as discussed previously. Thus, the study may not be able to completely reflect the behaviors of all consumers in Dublin.

6. Recommendations and Conclusion

6.1 Recommendations

Although chapter 5.2 has comprehensively identified the specific actions that discounters can consider, this session links all the individual parts discussed previously together to make an integral business recommendation to discounters from an academic and industrial angles.

The existing brand strategy of PL organic product is not well developed, yet it was crucial for a private brand based on academic and industrial studies. Brand strategy was about how, what, where, when and to whom you plan on communicating and delivering your brand messages (Kaira, 2015). To put it in the other words, all the brand communication, regardless of online or offline, should respond to the brand strategy, in order to establish a consistent brand image. When developing the brand strategy of PL organic products, research data informs the brand strategy (Johnson, Jackson and Himmelfarb, 2017). As a result, the brand managers should consider incorporating health and environmental benefits of organics into it in order to answer consumers' request. As such, the brand programs can be more relevant and attract the users. However, health is beyond the scope of the present dissertation, further investigation of this area may be required. A sophisticated brand strategy should contain four elements – brand architecture, brand positioning statement, brand personality and brand promise. Once marketers come up with up the four elements of PL organic products, brand message execution on any platforms can be easily followed and fall in the right brand framework. More explanations of the four components are as below:

Brand Architecture: It refers to the structure of brands within a business. These can include your corporate or product. Based on the current context, private labelled organic products constitutes the brand architecture.

Brand positioning statement: A short sentence or paragraph that describes the brand position of PL organic product in market place. For example, it can relate to the positive environmental impact exerted by the production of organics.

Brand personality: It is a mental exercise in personifying a brand and creating emotional connections with brands. For example, "caring for the environment" can strengthen the relevancy for consumers since they are conscious of it and expect to learn more of this information.

Brand promise: A brand promise should be clear, honest and realist. Trust is never compromised. This part can be referred to the trust of environmental claims. More are illustrated in the following part.

Regarding to environmental aspect, as discussed in chapter five, discounter can co-operate with suppliers / manufacturers to work jointly to strengthen consumer knowledge of the positive environmental impact exerted by organic products. Product label is one of the key element to work on as it is the most trust-worthy medium (Durif et al., 2011; Lin and Huang, 2012). Besides highlighting "Organic" on the label, supplier can simply feature "environmentally beneficial" on the size-limited product label to create the association of these two elements for educating consumers. The rationale is people are concern of the environment and willing to spend more on green products. As found in chapter four, product display is also another trusted platform. Discounter can leverage this large-size platform to convey that association as well as supplementing product information coverage, such as product origin, ingredients and expiry date. Apart from the primary research, providing sufficient product information was proved to enhance the trust level as supported by academic research (Makatouni, 2003). All the brand messages have to align with the brand strategy as discussed previously. It is believed that all the trust enhancement effort will catch consumers' attention and thus pay off. It is because all the retailers in this study have not done many to gain consumers' trust on the environmental claims so far.

A very strong linkage between environmental and commercial influence is established, multiplying the effect of organic products' purchase. One point needs reiterating. Whatever messages created and communication channels deployed, they need to be authentic as brand promise cannot be compromised as discussed in the above session. It is foreseen the combination of commercial and environmental efforts can jointly contribute to the overall organic business in discounters.

6.2 Recommendations for future research

- Female shoppers behavior towards purchasing organic products in discounters
- Healthy benefits of organic products

6.3 Conclusion

The research is to study the commercial and environmental factors propelling Irish consumers towards purchase of organics in discounters. The significance of it is to provide discounters a

comprehensive understanding about consumer's purchase of organics for strengthening their organic product development plan. It benefits them to beat Irish indigenous supermarkets' organic share, and thus achieve their business goals. Once the successful organic product plan is formulated, it can be applied on all future stores to multiply the effect.

To answer the main research question, all five commercial factors – brand/product, price, product diversity, shop location and shopping environment – can drive purchase of organic products. Yet, environmental factor does not.

Looking deeply at commercial factors, all five distinctive features of discounters exert a positive impact in purchasing organics in-store. They are their PL brand, low price, limited product diversity, shop location, no-frill shopping environment. The strongest driving force is price, followed by the quality of PL brand. Yet, very importantly, there is an urge for discounters to refine their organic product quality as it is the top priority of consumers. The findings also offer specific and useful advices for implementing strategies of organics.

Regarding to environmental aspect, although consumers are environmentally-friendly, no proof has been found that environmental concern drives consumers to purchase organics. This gives rise to the opportunity to execute environmental programs for educating consumers of the association between organic food and environmental impact. In the future, it is foreseen that combination commercial and environmental efforts contribute hugely to the total organic business in discounters.

As a result, all the research questions and objectives are completely fulfilled in the study. Moreover, recommendations are made in the research for discounters' review.

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Appendix

Self-Reflection

During the dissertation, I have gained strong knowledge of organic products and different formats of supermarkets. Many skills have been strengthened and developed as well. The process of doing my dissertation has made me reflect my own learning process, and inspired me the new learning methods. Not only is the learning during the dissertation covered here, but also my thoughts, feelings and behavior of the whole process. Moreover, it is important to highlight this is more than a descriptive writing of this dissertation. The self-reflection here is about my learning concerned with the entire master degree program. The aim of writing the self-reflection is to 1/ give myself a good understanding of self-learning and 2/ think through how the newly acquired learning to be applied to a business situation.

Although I have a full time job while doing my dissertation, I still spared some hours every day after work to write or do research. In the weekend when I did not need to work, I spent almost whole day on the thesis, in order to catch up the progress. I considered myself fairly engaged to it. The motives were my passion of the topic and a good grade of this work. This realization was my driving force every day after the busy work in office.

Learning Style

Based on an author, there are four main learning styles - Activist, Reflector, Theorist, Activist and Pragmatist (Mumford, A., 1997). I realize myself displaying more "Pragmatist" behaviors. In the past year, I have experienced numerous new things such as studying in a foreign country, working in a new industry and writing a master dissertation. I used to get afraid of trying new things but I am getting more open to look for new opportunities. This is consistent in the study and work situation.

Problem encountered and what I learnt

1. Develop the research topic

This is my first dissertation. I have experienced the difficulty in refining the research topic since I started “Research Method I” in semester 1, and have not confirmed the topic until April 2018. Because I did not understand the importance of a focused topic that I attempted to study many areas initially. By reading more dissertations and seeking advice from lecturer, I felt more comfortable to develop a proper research topic. When I was doing the assignment of “Research Method II”, I did a final alteration on the topic as my mind was clear enough to decide the right direction to work on based on the research I have done so far. Moreover, the supervisor gave me confidence to stick with it as the confirmed dissertation topic. The change throughout the whole process was valuable to me, especially when handling something new. It is important not to get scared of making a draft in the beginning. By reading what others have done and seeking advice from professionals, the work will get improved. I even found looking at people’s work was hugely beneficial as I can view many references to identify the common ideas before verifying with lecturer or supervisor.

2. Many available sources

There was abundant information related to the topic. It was challenging to select the appropriate one at first. However, when I referred to my notes jotted in other courses, I recalled the literature with “peer review” is more reliable and credible. It simplified my research action. As learned in “Research Method I”, I equipped the skills of making notes of some useful literature during research. This was practically applied in this dissertation.

3. Different findings between primary research and literature

It was surprising to see some differences between the primary research and secondary research. The findings were meant to support the secondary research. However, it is usually helpful to do an in-depth comparison of the researches as this practice can explain the difference between primary and secondary research findings.

Skills Improved or gained

1. Time Management Skill

It was one of the greatest skills I have strengthened throughout dissertation process. As I have to handle both work and dissertation at the same time, a realistic timetable is very important

to me. Although I learnt this skill from other courses, the part of “Data Collection” can spoil the whole process as the pace is out of my control. Therefore, I spared two more weeks on it. Although this process went very smooth finally, I still considered this practice coupled with a contingency plan should be applied to any tasks that are completely out of my control.

2. Motivation Skills

Tiredness was the greatest challenge that I have experienced. I discovered some ways to combat it, e.g. doing some stretching exercise or eating before starting to write. Another important thing was to remind myself of the motives all of the time.

3. Organization Skills

Thanks to my supervisor’s recommendation, my dissertation had a very balanced and logic structure based on the two big areas. I divided the chapter clearly into the two main pillars and organized my key points systematically. This will be very practical in the work situation too. To strengthen the coherence of this lengthy work, I was told not to be afraid of repeating that I was not comfortable with initially. Yet, this change enables the whole writing to look logic, consistent and easy to follow.

4. Data Analysis

I did not realized I was quite strong in handling figures until this dissertation. It hugely strengthened my analytical skills during comparing and contrasting all primary and secondary data. This experience of numerical analysis made me well equipped in the work.

How to apply in my job

1. Writing blog posts or articles

As learned from organizing a long-formed writing, I am familiar with identifying key pillars of a given blog topic. To give it a good structure, an appropriate amount of repeating phases can boost the coherence. During the research for the topic, I will refer to industrial reports from widely-recognized authorities or institutes to give rise to a credible post.

2. Digital marketing campaign analysis

I think data analysis instead of only data presentation will add much value in clients' campaign reports in work situation. As learnt in chapter five, comparing and contrasting data can give valuable insight on a given topic. Therefore, I will apply this inspiration at work to refer to clients' previous campaigns or other similar campaigns for analysis.

3. Exploring new opportunities at work

It was my first time to write dissertation and do primary research. I found exploring new things are interesting and challenging. In the work, I will encounter more opportunities to make new attempts. I will try not to get nervous initially. Because as proved in this dissertation, I will get more confidence in the new knowledge after conducting more research, and performing "trial and error". Even facing frustration, recalling my work motives will be constructive to driving myself.

4. Note-taking

Last but not least, the notes that I have made during the master program greatly facilitated me to do this dissertation. However, I think there is a need to improve my note-taking skills to make the searching process quicker. I think it will be a better practice to put the date and name of the topic on the top of every sheet, speeding up the searching process. I will definitely continue note-taking habit in my work as it can always recall my memory and observe the progress I have made in the work. Hopefully, I will see the benefits of the refined note-taking skills.

Conclusion

Looking back in the past year, I can confirm my learning style is very consistent. I found myself effective in learning individually. Before discussing with lecturers or within the group, I need to get myself familiar with the topic first. Without doing individual research in advance could diminish my concentration and even result in burnout. The self-understanding was very important to my future learning and at work.

By writing this self-reflection, the key points discussed can be solidified and are easy for my future review. I look forward to seeing the skills learned in the program to be positively applied in the work, and more skills acquired in the future.

Questionnaire

A Study on Purchase of Organic Products in Discount Supermarkets in Dublin, Ireland

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

PROJECT TITLE:

A Study on Purchase of Organic Products in Discounted Supermarkets in Dublin, Ireland

You are being asked to take part in an academic research study on the factors that drive Irish consumers' purchase of organic products in discount supermarkets in Dublin, Ireland. This survey is part of my final project for an MSc in Marketing at Dublin Business School. This study aims to find the significant factors that drive Irish consumers' purchase of organic products in Aldi and Lidl in Dublin.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN: In this survey, you are being asked to select one of the options (or more, in a specific question) which best express your opinion. There is no right or wrong answer. After reading this information sheet, scroll down to the next section. There are 21 questions, and the study typically takes just a few minutes.

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS

You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation required from you. You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn / destroyed.

You have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you.

You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered (unless answering these questions would interfere with the study's outcome).

CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

The data I collect does not contain any personal information about you except age and gender. All information will be only used for academic purposes, in order to complete the data collection stage of my dissertation. None of the participants will be identifiable.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

I or my supervisor will be glad to answer your questions about this study at any time. You may contact me at email2iky@gmail.com or my supervisor at michael.maguire@dbs.ie .

By selecting the option below, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, (2) questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily, (3) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion).

*Required

I accept *

Yes

No

What is your age? *

- 18-27
- 28-37
- 38-47
- 48-57
- 58+

What is your gender? *

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

How often do you buy organic products? *

- Daily
- A few times a week
- Once a week
- Once per 2 weeks
- Once a month
- Less often
- Never

Where do you usually / will you consider to purchase organic products?
Please select max. 3 options

- Aldi
- Lidl
- Tesco
- Dunnes Stores
- Supervalu
- Other...

What are the reasons you (will) purchase organic products from there?
Please select all that apply

- Product quality
- Price
- Product diversity
- Shopping environment
- Shop location
- Other...

How strongly do you agree the following factors that drive you to purchase organic products in Aldi or Lidl? *

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor...	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Product quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Price	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product diversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In-store environm...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shop location	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

At what level do you perceive the quality of organic products in Aldi or Lidl? *

- Very high
- High
- Average
- Low
- Very low

Imagine you are purchasing organic products in Aldi or Lidl, how many options of a type of organic product do you prefer to choose from? *

- 1-2 organic products
- 2-3 organic products
- More than 4 organic products

How do you feel about introducing national brands* of organics in Aldi or Lidl?

*It is usually owned by the producer or distributor, and marketed nationally through multiple retail outlets.

I want Aldi or Lidl to introduce *

- as many as national brands, at the expense of their own brands
- some more leading national brands but still carry their own brands as the major business
- as few as national brands while carry almost all their own brands
- no change

How much cheaper of organic products in Aldi or Lidl do you feel comfortable to purchase, compared to those found in conventional supermarkets?

- Less than 10% cheaper
- 10-20% cheaper
- 20-30% cheaper
- 30-40% cheaper
- More than 40% cheaper
- I do not mind to pay more for organics in Aldi or Lidl

How strongly do you agree the in-store environment of Aldi or Lidl drive you to purchase organics? *

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor...	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Lighting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Smell	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product display	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Store assistants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Background music	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How long is it acceptable for you to travel from your current location to the nearest Aldi or Lidl? *

- Less than 5 minutes
- Less than 10 minutes
- Less than 15 minutes
- Less than 20 minutes
- I do not mind to travel over 20 minutes to Aldi or Lidl

Most of the organic products in Aldi or Lidl are own branded, I find their brand activities *

- motivate me to purchase more organic products
- raise my awareness of organic products
- drive me to understand more about organic products
- make me aware of the presence of organic products there
- are not sufficient
- are irrelevant to me
- Other...

What kinds of communication messages do you want to receive from their organic products? Please select all that apply *

- Health benefits of organics
- Environmental benefits organics
- Tips of cooking/using organics
- Promotion offers
- Other...

Which categories of organic products do you expect Aldi or Lidl to be available on their shelves most of the time? Please select all that apply *

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Meat
- Dairy products
- Frozen food
- Snack
- Tinned / Jars of goods
- Skin care product
- Baby food
- Other...

How strongly do you agree you are willing to spend more money on products contributing positively to the environment? *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strong disagree

How strongly do you agree the environmental concern drives you to purchase ^{*} more organic food?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Do you trust the environmental claims made on these platforms? Please ^{*} select all that apply

- Product labels
- Product webpage
- Product social media sites
- Credible blogs or websites
- In-store display
- None of the above
- Other...

How strongly do you agree the following information can reinforce the trust ^{*} of the environmental claims of organics?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor...	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Support of credibl...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sufficient product...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Numerical rating ...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product reviews	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Openness of cont...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Support of credible third parties, sufficient product details, numerical rating, product reviews and openness of contact information

Do you agree retailers have done sufficiently to gain your trust on the ^{*} environmental claims of organics?

	Strongly agree	agree	Neither agree nor...	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Aldi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lidl	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tesco	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervalu	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dunnes Stores	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

By increasing the trust of environmental claim, do you think you will purchase ^{*} organics more or less?

- A lot more
- More
- The same
- Less
- A lot less