Meeting Customer Expectations with Green Marketing

A Case Study of the Swedish Retailer ICA

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Tyra Ragnhild Fredrika Carlzon
Eva Christine Lööb
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Fredrika Carlzon & Christine Lööb
Abstract

Ecology is gaining attention in Sweden, and the demand for ecological commodities is growing. This has lead to increased incentives for food retailers to incorporate and strengthen their ecological focus. However, a breach has been identified between the demand for ecological products, and the amount of products actually purchased. On the Swedish food market, ICA is the largest retailer with an impressive market share of 50%. Thus, this thesis explores how retailers can motivate consumer behaviour, and with green marketing increase their ecological consumption, by specifically studying ICA.

To be able to get a thorough stance of data, the researchers have used a mixed methods approach and included both qualitative and quantitative methods. Moreover, to structure the method choice, ‘Research Onion’ has been employed. Findings indicate that consumers’ expectations of ecological commodities may be overseen by ICA. There appears to be a link between health and ecology. To analyse ICA’s current green marketing in relation to customers’ expectations for ecological commodities, the researchers have employed the conventional marketing tool ‘4 P’s of Marketing Management’. The model was proven rewarding, as it assisted the researchers in finding where ICA may not meet customers expectations. Recommendations suggest that ICA should expand their private eco-brand ‘I Love eco’, merge their ecological and health focused brands, expand their communication strategy, and facilitate customer co-creation. Conclusively, this study contributes primarily with implications to ICA however, additionally adds value to academia by transferring a conventional marketing tool to the area of green marketing.

Keywords: Ecology, Retail, Green Marketing, Purchase Behaviour, Habits, Private eco-brands
## Table of Contents

1 Introduction ................................................................................................................. 6  
   1.1 Purpose .................................................................................................................. 7  
   1.2 Research Question ................................................................................................. 7  
   1.3 Definitions ............................................................................................................ 7  
   1.4 Delimitations ......................................................................................................... 8  
   1.5 Contribution ......................................................................................................... 8  
   1.6 Disposition .......................................................................................................... 9  

2 Method & Data .............................................................................................................. 10  
   2.1 Methodology ......................................................................................................... 11  
      2.1.1 Philosophies .................................................................................................. 11  
      2.1.2 Approaches .................................................................................................. 11  
   2.2 Method ................................................................................................................ 13  
      2.2.1 Research Strategies ...................................................................................... 13  
         2.2.1.1 Case Study ............................................................................................. 14  
         2.2.1.2 Experiments .......................................................................................... 15  
         2.2.1.3 Focus Groups ....................................................................................... 18  
         2.2.1.4 Questionnaire ...................................................................................... 20  
      2.2.2 Research Choices ........................................................................................... 21  
      2.2.3 Time Horizons ............................................................................................... 21  
      2.2.4 Techniques and Procedures .......................................................................... 21  
         2.2.4.1 Data Collection ....................................................................................... 22  
         2.2.4.2 Transcribing the data .......................................................................... 22  
         2.2.4.3 Data Analysis ........................................................................................ 23  
      2.2.5 Trustworthiness ............................................................................................. 24  

3 Literature Review ....................................................................................................... 26  
   3.1 Ecology in Sweden ............................................................................................... 26  
      3.1.1 Retailers and Ecology .................................................................................... 28  
      3.1.2 ICA and Ecology .......................................................................................... 31  
   3.2 Green Marketing .................................................................................................. 32  
      3.2.1 Eco-Branding ............................................................................................... 37  
      3.2.2 Eco-labelling ............................................................................................... 40
3.2.3 Green Advertising .................................................................................................................. 43

3.3 Consumer Behaviour ............................................................................................................. 45
   3.3.1 The Traditional Approach ................................................................................................. 45
      3.3.1.1 The Relational Approach ......................................................................................... 47
      3.3.1.2 The Community Approach ..................................................................................... 48
      3.3.1.3 The Cultural Approach ............................................................................................ 49
   3.3.2 The Neuromarketing Approach ......................................................................................... 49
      3.3.2.1 Motivated Behaviour ................................................................................................. 50
      3.3.2.2 Habitual Behaviour ................................................................................................. 52

3.4 Identification of research aim .............................................................................................. 53

4 Findings ..................................................................................................................................... 55
   4.1 Experiment ............................................................................................................................ 55
      4.1.1 Group 1 ......................................................................................................................... 55
      4.1.2 Group 2 ......................................................................................................................... 56
      4.1.3 Group 3 ......................................................................................................................... 57
   4.2 Focus Group ........................................................................................................................ 59
      4.2.1 Group 1 ......................................................................................................................... 59
      4.2.2 Group 2 ......................................................................................................................... 60
      4.2.3 Group 3 ......................................................................................................................... 61
   4.3 Questionnaire ....................................................................................................................... 63

5 Analysing Ecology at ICA ....................................................................................................... 68
   5.1 Green marketing .................................................................................................................... 69
      5.1.1 People ............................................................................................................................ 69
      5.1.2 Processes ....................................................................................................................... 72
         5.1.2.1 ICA’s Value Proposition for ‘I Love Eco’ ................................................................. 73
         5.1.2.2 Customer Benefits ................................................................................................. 73
         5.1.2.3 Customer Costs ...................................................................................................... 75
         5.1.2.4 Consumer Perceived Value .................................................................................... 78
      5.1.3 Programs ........................................................................................................................ 78
         5.1.3.1 Price ........................................................................................................................ 78
         5.1.3.2 Place ........................................................................................................................ 80
         5.1.3.3 Promotion .............................................................................................................. 83
         5.1.3.4 Product .................................................................................................................... 84
      5.1.4 Performance .................................................................................................................... 86
6 Discussion .......................................................................................................................... 89
6.1 Limitations ...................................................................................................................... 91

8 Concluding Remarks and Recommendations ................................................................... 92
8.1 Implications for ICA ...................................................................................................... 92
8.2 Suggested further research ............................................................................................ 94

9 Bibliography ..................................................................................................................... 95

Figures

9
Figure 1. Thesis Disposition 9
Figure 2. ‘The Research Onion’ (Saunders et al., 2007, p.102; 132) 10
Figure 3. the research process 13
Figure 4. Summaries the experiment outline and expectations from each stimulus 17
Table 5. Summary of the modern marketing management four P’s as described in Kotler and Keller (2012). 35
Figure 6. illustrates the percentage of ecologic products in the shopping baskets before and after the stimulus, among
the participants that had included at least one ecologic commodity. 56
Figure 7. Illustrates the percentage of ecologic products in the shopping baskets before and after the stimulus, among
the participants that had included at least one ecologic commodity. 57
Figure 8. illustrates the percentage of ecologic products in the shopping baskets before and after the stimulus, among
the participants that had included at least one ecologic commodity. 58
Figure 9. 64
Figure 10. 65
Figure 11. 66
Figure 12. 67
1 Introduction

With an increasing awareness regarding the preservation of the global environment (Tzilivakis, Green, Warner, McGeevor, & Lewis, 2012), consumers have become progressively interested in the consumption of ecological commodities (Daunfeldt & Rudholm, 2014). In 2013, Sweden ranked highest on the list of countries frequently working with sustainability (Environmental Leader, 2013), which is further reflected in the ecological food consumption’s market increase of 38% in 2014 (Ryegård & Ryegård, 2015). Among food retailers in Sweden, ICA is the largest, holding an impressive market share of 50.7% (Delfi, 2014) and a well embedded focus on ecology (ICA, 2015a). ICA’s focus on ecology is not a recent strategy, ecological alternatives have been included in their assortments since 1993 (ICA, 2015a). The ecological sales at ICA reached 3.3% in 2015 (Wennberg, 2015a), comparing that number to the increased interest for ecology over recent years, those 3.3% is arguably modest. Consumers view the extensive number of different ecological certifications as barriers to purchase (Rahbar & Abdul Wahid, 2011; Thøgersen, 2000; Strategic Direction, 2013; Daunfeldt & Rudholm, 2014; Punyatoya, 2014; Chkanikova & Lehner, 2014; Gulbrandsen, 2006; Sammer & Wüstenhagen, 2006; Nyilasy et al., 2014; Montoro Rios et al., 2006), which arguably may be one of the reasons to the deviation in demand and general interest in ecology.

As a result of the increased demand for ecological alternatives in Sweden, ICA is currently guiding strategic efforts to their private eco-brand, ‘I Love eco’ (Wennberg, 2015a; Wennberg, 2015b). When purchasing commodities, consumers tend to base their choice on habits (Genco et al., 2013; Daunfeldt & Rudholm, 2014). Changing habits is complex and time-consuming (Genco et al., 2013). However, firms that manage to make consumers choose their brand by habit, holds a strong competitive advantage (ibid). Recent marketing research shows that there are barriers to purchase ecological alternatives, where e.g. price is mentioned (Daunfeldt & Rudholm, 2014; Auger, Burke, Devinney, & Louviere, 2003). Moreover, Auger et al. (2003) suggest that price-sensitivity, may be overcome by communicating to consumers and ultimately provide them with a deeper understanding about ethical dimensions of ecological products. Thus, to change consumers’ habits it appears, as these barriers have to be overcome with communication.

Laroche et al. (2001) assert that the responsibility for the communication between firms’ and consumers rests in the hands of marketers, where green marketing function as a bridge between
ethical products and conventional marketing (Singh, 2013). However, green marketing is lagging behind, and there are few tools and strategies for green marketers to use (Rex & Baumann, 2007). Thus, the authors suggest employing conventional marketing tools in the area of green marketing to further develop the concept (ibid). This thesis will research green marketing, by applying the retailer ICA as a prominent case, with an aim to attain knowledge about how to overcome the barriers related to purchasing ecological commodities.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to explore and understand consumers’ ecological purchase behaviour. More specifically, this thesis aims at shedding new light over the concept of green marketing, and ultimately provide with suggestions on how to increase ecological consumption.

1.2 Research Question

The following research question will lie as a foundation for this thesis, and work as a guide throughout the process.

• What are the underlying motivations influencing consumers purchase behaviour, and can retailers influence consumers ecological purchase intentions with green marketing?

1.3 Definitions

Ecology - According to Naturskyddsforeningen (2013), the term ‘ecologic’ means that EU has approved the production standards. There are strict regulations on how to produce ecologic products, label them, and how to control them (ibid). This means, that when consumers see the ecologic name, the product has fulfilled the EU requirements (ibid). Thus, this thesis will view the term ‘ecologic’ as a protected name, fulfilling these EU requirements (ibid, p.3). Additionally, ICA supports and follows the restrictions from EU, and adds that they value the Swedish label ‘KRAV’ as a stricter ecologic name. More specifically, ICA’s private eco-label ‘I Love eco’ always follows EU restrictions for ecological products, and when possible they add the stricter label ‘KRAV’. All animalistic products, in the ‘I Love eco’ product range, have the KRAV label (ICA, 2015a). Finally, this thesis will separate ‘locally produced’ or ‘Swedish Produced’ from the term ‘ecologic’, since those labels does not necessarily mean that the production has followed ecologic requirements.
**Green marketing** - According to Singh (2013), the definition of green marketing does not limit itself to solely environmental-friendly products, but it “... involves developing and promoting products and services that satisfy customers wants and their need for quality, performance, affordable pricing and convenience without having a detrimental impact on the environment” (Singh, 2013, p. 55). Thus, in this study the view of green marketing will follow this perception. Additionally, green marketing includes three main concepts: green advertising, eco-branding, and eco-labelling (Delafrooz, Taleghani, & Nouri, 2014; Rahbar & Abdul Wahid, 2011).

**Customers at ICA** - According to Sandra Wennberg (2015b), ICA does not exclude any segment when communicating their ecological commodities, and claim that ecologic products are for everyone. Thus, the authors of this thesis will mirror this view throughout the thesis, when it comes to the general discussion of ICA’s consumers. However, when choosing the participants for this study, due to the geographical constraint, the authors narrowed the segment to Stockholm, and households of 1-2 people in the ages between 20-35, to be able to better compare the collected data and make findings more relevant in relation to the research question.

**Motivation** - When discussing the term motivation, the authors of this thesis refer to the driving mental force, guiding consumers in their decision-making. More specifically, Genco et al. (2013, p. 90), define motivation as “the action orientation of emotion, measured from approach to avoidance”. In other terms, motivation is related to how humans feel emotionally about a given item, and depending on the emotion, humans will approach it, or avoid it (Genco et al., 2013).

**1.4 Delimitations**

The term ecology applies to a wide range of products and services, however this thesis will focus solely on ecologic food commodities in retail. Additionally, there are several words to describe the term ecologic i.e. green, organic, or biologic (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2013), this study will only use the term ecology to describe the phenomena, primary to alleviate the reader but also to make the thesis more coherent.

**1.5 Contribution**

This thesis contributes to academia by providing experimental evidence to the area of green marketing. More specifically, the authors do this by transferring traditional methods used in conventional marketing, to the area of green marketing. Moreover, the authors expand the understanding of how to communicate with green marketing effectively, to influence consumer
behaviour efficiently. Further, this study contributes with a deeper understanding of what motivates consumer behaviour in terms of ecology. Finally the study contributes to ICA’s understanding of how to communicate ecology via green marketing, as a means to strengthen the image of their private eco-brand, I Love eco.

1.6 Disposition

This thesis is initiated with an introduction, which is followed by the method and data section. Next, relevant literature is defined in the literature review, and then the findings from the data collection is declared and followed by the analysis. Finally, the discussion will outline the concluding remarks, limitations, as well as recommendations.

![Thesis Disposition Diagram](image)
2 Method & Data

The following sections contain the methodology and methods used for the study. The first part includes the philosophical and theoretical assumptions of the research, whereas the second part describes the methods employed to gather and analyse the data. The goal of this section is to clarify and guide the reader through the process of this thesis data collection, data analysis, as well as stating what philosophies guide the chosen research approach.

The authors of this thesis have chosen to employ ‘The Research Onion’ (Figure 1.1.) as a means to structure and guide the methodology and choice of method in this thesis (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill 2007). The reasoning behind using this framework is that it assist the authors to structure, investigate, and support the choice of data, as well as function as a roadmap for the analytical procedures, by going through six layers: philosophies, approaches, strategies, choices, time horizons, as well as techniques and procedures (ibid). The research onion helps researchers increase their understandings and associations related to the design of the research (Saunders & Tosey, 2012). Additionally, it assist researchers in setting research boundaries, and make the research more consistent, while simultaneously set the study into a context (ibid). However, the Research Onion suggests a rather strict view on research methods and methodology, which rarely reflects reality of doing research (Saunders et al., 2007). Thus, for this thesis the structure of the onion only function as a guide within the complex area of research methodology and method (ibid). Starting out, the researchers have divided the onion into two sub categories already mentioned: Methodology and Method. The first, methodology will outline the philosophical background and contain the outer layers: Philosophies and Approaches. Whereas, the second part, method, will outline the methods applied to gather and analyse data, and will consist of the core layers: strategies, choices, time horizons, as well as techniques and procedures.

Figure 2. ‘The Research Onion’ (Saunders et al., 2007, p.102; 132)
2.1 Methodology

In order to determine the appropriate methods for the research, it is important to understand the underlying principles concerning methodology (Saunders et al., 2007). Important to note is that, no philosophy is better than another, they rather complement each other depending on the stated research question, affect the researchers understanding of the field of study, and how the researchers ‘view the world’ (ibid).

2.1.1 Philosophies

Philosophy should not be used as a blueprint, but rather to enlighten the general approach to the study, and is dependent on the field of research (Saunders et al., 2007). Saunders et al. (2007), mention three major ways of thinking within research philosophy, which determines how the researchers view the research process: ontology, epistemology, and axiology. For this thesis, epistemology poses as the most appropriate view and is the philosophy concerning composition of knowledge, and has three areas of focus: interpretivism, positivism, and realism (ibid). Defining what way the researchers will view the research process is essential to the method design and strategies chosen (Saunders & Tosey, 2012). Interpretivism, focus on comprehending the relationship between social actors (Saunders et al., 2007). Further, it focuses on attaining knowledge about the relationship between humans and objects, as a means to understand meaning of social actions (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Saunders and Tosey (2012), further explain that in interpretivism, the researchers seek to study social phenomena’s in their natural environment. As this research aims at increasing the understanding of relationships between meanings and actions, by using green marketing to investigate how to influence and change consumers’ purchase behaviour, it draws inspiration from the interpretative approach. Additionally, to get a true image of the reality at ICA, customers have been tested and researched in their natural shopping environments.

2.1.2 Approaches

There are two distinctive approaches when deciding upon how to acquire knowledge: deductive and inductive (Saunders et al., 2007; Bryman & Bell, 2011). For this research, the data collection will take place before gradually deciding on theories for analysing, since the researchers attempted to enter the analysis with as little theoretical bias as possible. Thus, this thesis follows the inductive approach, as researchers will tailor theory according to the findings and analysis (Saunders et al., 2007).
The interpretivistic researchers often attempt to find data from small clusters of people, through in-depth investigations employing qualitative methods (Saunders & Tosey, 2012). Qualitative methods are a commonly used research strategy, associated with both interpretivism and the inductive approach (Bryman & Bell, 2011). When collecting and analysing the data in qualitative research, the emphasis is on words rather than numbers (ibid). In contrast, quantitative research focuses more on number and statistics when gathering and analysing data (ibid). However, Bryman and Bell (2011) presents a third approach, where the researchers allow influences from both qualitative and quantitative research, and call it mixed-methods research.

Since this study aims at investigating the underlying reasoning and motivation for purchasing eco-labelled products it draws on the qualitative research approach (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Furthermore, to be able to measure and evaluate which green marketing approach is more affective for ICA, the researchers will also quantify the collected data. Hence, this study will follow the structure of a mixed-methods research approach (ibid). This study will as Saunders and Tosey (2012) suggest, collect qualitative data, yet to better be able to determine frequency of reoccurring factors, researchers will add a quantitative research method i.e. a questionnaire. Saunders et al. (2007), mention that using multiple methods enriches the study, and provide researchers with data that they otherwise would not have found.
2.2 Method

The methodology has pointed out the direction of the study and how the researchers will view the world by peeling of the first two layers of the onion. Following, the method will describe the design, i.e. the techniques and procedures used to analyse the data (Saunders et al., 2007). The process of this thesis started with a literature review of relevant topics i.e. eco-labelling, marketing, consumer behaviour and retail. By covering the topics in academia, it was possible to find a pertinent research topic and research aim. After settling a research topic, the researchers contacted the brand manager Sandra Wennberg, for the Swedish retail merchant ICA, and initiated the collaboration with the company. Before starting to collect the data, the researchers carefully set guidelines for the methods. The final step of the data collection was the transcription and coding of the gathered data.

![Figure 3. The research process](image)

2.2.1 Research Strategies

According to Saunders et al. (2007), before the research strategy can be determined, the researchers need to decide the research objective, through the research question and purpose. The research objective can be exploratory, explanatory, or descriptive (ibid). The aim of this study is to seek new insights into consumers’ decision-making for specifically ecologic commodities, in order to find what underlying motivations that drive the decision-making process, as well as explain and gain insights into the relationship between customers and ecological products, to find ways to further improve green marketing approaches. Since the objectives of this study are to both explain the relationship between consumers and ecologic products, and seek new insights into the decision-making process, this study follows the structure of both explanatory and exploratory studies (ibid).
Saunders and Tosey (2012) declare that research boundaries are often permeable, and thus it is difficult to associate a specific strategy to a specific philosophy. Albeit, experiments and surveys are often associated to positivism, however due to the mixed in-depth nature of this study, these strategies are seen as the most suitable methods even though the study follows more an interpretivistic approach.

After settling the research objective, the research needs a clear research strategy (Saunders et al., 2007). The research strategy is the plan that shapes and gives structure to the research procedures (ibid). To best be able to answer the research question of this study, the strategies have been decided on and first to narrow the focus the study will follow the structure of a single case study, and methods employed to gather data are; experiments, focus groups, and questionnaires. The first strategies will provide with insights and understanding to the exploratory objectives, by investigating consumers natural shopping behaviour before and after stimuli, and following discuss their behaviour in-depth in the focus groups to get a deeper comprehension (ibid). Whereas, the questionnaire will presumably provide a deeper explanation of the relationships and the explanatory objectives, by quantifying, measure, and comparing the responses (ibid). Important to note, no strategy is best, they rather work as a complement to each other and will provide the research with deeper insights and a more fruitful pool of data for the analysis (ibid).

2.1.1.1 Case Study

A case study is a study of a specific organization, location, person, or event, which in this study refers to the retail merchant ICA and their focus on ecology (Bryman & Bell, 2011). A case study is different from other research designs in that it is bound to a specific setting, hence appropriate for this thesis due to the focus on ICA (ibid). Additionally, applying a case study strategy is often appropriate in explanatory or exploratory research where researchers seek to answer “how” and “why” questions (Saunders et al, 2007). However, Bryman and Bell (2011) claim that tying case study to one specific method is limiting, and even though it is most common within qualitative research approaches, it is argued most fruitful to combine both qualitative and quantitative data collecting methods to get deeper insights into the case e.g. ICA.

In this research, case relevant data will be collected from the retailer ICA, and their customers by carrying out an experiment, conducting focus groups, and finally a questionnaire. Since all participants are Swedish, the researchers sent out the forms in Swedish and translated the replies to
English. The variety of methods applied in this study, enriches the data, provides with a wider set of opinions, lessens bias in the interpretation of the data, as well as enriches the analysis. Bryman and Bell (2011) mention that case studies should be employed where the opportunity to attain relevant information and learning is high, therefore when choosing the firm for this case study, it was important that they had a well developed ecological product range already at hand in the stores, and function as a market leader. This holds true for ICA, since they have a strong focus on ecologically (Wennberg, 2015a), are the largest retailer on the Swedish market (Delfi, 2014), as well as keep frequent collaboration with students and research (ICA, 2015b), which means that there is a large opportunity to attain both relevant data, and learning.

Bryman and Bell (2011) focus on two dimensions of strategies of case studies namely, single-case study, or multiple case study approach. This study has carried out a single-case study since it strives towards attaining a deeper understanding of the underlying motivations when purchasing a specific product [ecologic] in a specific context [ICA] (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Saunders et al. (2007) agree and further assert that when the aim of a research is to understand a phenomenon in its specific context, a single case study is most appropriate. Moreover, an advantage with using a single-case study is the opportunity to get unique insights to an untapped, or new phenomena (ibid). Alas, a shortcoming is the difficulty to identify correlations between findings from one case with another, which in turn makes it difficult to generalize from the single-case study’s findings (ibid). However, in the context of this research, using the one case is argued relevant as the research attempts to gain deeper understanding of the relationships and reasoning, at ICA specifically which further is a firm at the forefront among retail merchants in the Swedish market (Delfi, 2014). Additionally, hope is rather that other firms can use the findings of this study as a guide to their own research, rather than a general blueprint. Moreover, due to the range of researching how green marketing affect consumers and their ecological consumption in general the researchers saw it necessary to narrow the focus significantly, to only one firm and one city, since this study is rather time and resource constraint.

2.1.1.2 Experiments

Saunders et al. (2007), link experiments to social science and primarily psychology. Thus, to attain a comprehension about how to influence consumer behaviour, the researchers have decided experiments as the initial method in the data collection. The most common reason for choosing experimental research is to study causal links e.g. if a change in one independent variable
In this study, researchers carried out the experiments in three steps over three groups. Similar for all groups was that before they received their specific stimuli, their usual grocery shopping had been witnessed by gathering their receipts from their last purchase of groceries at ICA, where 200-500 SEK had been spent. The researchers had provided no information regarding the experiment and its following steps before the participants sent their initial receipts. When selecting the groups for this study, the authors had primary two requirements; that participants lived in Stockholm, and that they were regular customers at ICA. Additionally important, was that the groups were significant for the following data collection methods [focus groups and questionnaires]. The researchers decided amount of money spent [200-500 SEK] within the same interval to make the data more comparable, among, and across the three groups. When participants in all groups had sent their first shopping receipts, the researchers exposed each group to a stimulus. The stimuli were different for all three groups, and the selection of the three different stimuli was determined to be different over all three groups, affecting participants through different senses i.e. sight, sound, or a combination, and at different times. The decision on which group should get each stimuli was random.

The following explains when and what kind of stimuli each group was be exposed to:

1. The first group watched a documentary about bananas, two days before they planned their next grocery shopping. More specifically, the first group watched the documentary “BANANAS!” where the fruit giant Dole is facing a court order due to their use of pesticides (Appendix A). Their use of pesticides ultimately made the workers sick and infertile. This specific documentary point at frightening realities of non-ecological products. However, the documentary never mentions the term ecologic. Since the documentary is rather serious, showing poor working conditions, and how bad the workers are treated by the owners of Dole, the authors expect that participants will react emotionally. The authors further expect that the focus of unfair working conditions referred to, and the focus on fruit i.e. bananas, will colour the participants’ focus group discussion and second purchase behaviour.

2. The second group read an article about the individual footprints humans leave on the planet depending on consumption, one day before the shopping tour. The Swedish society for the conservation of Nature is behind the article (Appendix B) and the article use the term ecologic frequently, as well as focuses on the consequences of individual consumption. Therefore, the authors predict that participants will sense a responsibility for their consumption, and hence
react *emotionally*. The article is expected to plant a seed in consumers’ minds, and make them consider their choices more extensively after the stimuli, as well as the stimuli will possibly also colour the discussion in the following data collection methods.

3. The researchers asked the third group to go shopping at ICA Sabbatsberg (Stockholm) between 5-7 PM, on the 27th of March 2015, where an environmental landscape was set up. The researchers borrowed products from ICA’s private eco-brand and used both the article and documentary as stimuli, while loosely discussing ecological consumption with the participants. By exposing this group to ecological products from ICA’s private eco-brand ‘I Love eco’, the documentary, and the article, the group was exposed to several different stimuli through several senses, and the expected overall reaction is expected to be *emotionally*. However, the authors expect participants to sense an increased environmental responsibility, and guilt if not including ecologic products after discussing them. Additionally, the researchers foresee that this experiment may influence their purchase behaviour, and consumers’ guided attention, when entering the store, as the discussion have made them more conscious about ecology. Finally, the authors expect the personal contact and the fact that the researchers lift ecological matters at the point of purchase (POP), will increase the number of ecological commodities in their baskets, but possibly colour the discussion less then the two prior experiments.

**Figure 4. Summaries the experiment outline and expectations from each stimulus**
All stimuli were environmentally themed, and following the stimuli, the authors observed their new receipts after the second shopping tour, to identify whether or not the shopping habits had changed after the stimuli. Authors did this through a comparison between receipts, and measuring differences and similarities, as well as compiling the product categories found. Additionally, focus groups, and questionnaires were necessary after the experiments, to identify underlying motivations and reasoning. During the following methods, the groups remained the same to better be able to keep the discussions frequent, and make the data more comparable. Finally, the aim with the experiments was to affect the consumers unconsciously in their purchase behaviour and monitor what stimuli had most effect on their purchase behaviour. Additionally, the researchers stated time difference between stimuli and the second shopping tour to see if the time affects their behaviour. The researchers chose three different stimuli to get indications on how to influence consumers most affectively, and what source of information influences them the most. More specifically, as the focus of this study is green marketing, the time and presentation of stimuli appears evident, thus the choice of approach in the experiment. To avoid bias, the participants got explanations of the coming steps gradually. In other terms, the participants did not know anything about the ecological angle of this study starting out, since the authors wanted their purchase behaviour to be as natural as possible.

2.1.1.3 Focus Groups

According to Bryman and Bell (2011), focus groups contain several participants, for the researchers to be able to guide the discussions the topics have to be well defined, and interaction between participants is important. Researchers can apply focus groups to find out reasons why people feel a certain way about a specific topic (ibid). Further, it allow participants to discuss and share their experiences in a relaxed setting, releases participant view-points, allows participants to argue and challenge each others view-points to gain deeper insights into the topic, and it allows the moderators to understand more about meanings and symbolisms about the given topic (ibid). Limitations of this method are that the researchers have less control over the discussion, and where it might go (ibid). To overcome the issue of researchers in this thesis loosing control of discussions, they prepared discussion topics that functioned as a guide allowing researchers to guide the discussion back to the topic (ibid; Appendix D). Further, using focus groups results in a huge amount of data, which may be difficult to analyse (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The researchers thus set timeframes for each focus group and tried keeping the discussion tied to around one hour. Further,
The researchers used the checklist provided by Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 517), as a guide to prepare the focus groups.

The researchers recorded the focus groups to be able to later transcribe them (Bryman & Bell, 2011). During the recordings of the focus groups, the researchers also took notes and observed who said what, and saw to that all themes had been covered (ibid). The researchers further saw to invite all participants into discussions, and made sure that as many viewpoints as possible surfaced, and that participants expressed potential different opinions (ibid). Handing out notes to participants’ assisted with this, and when discussion had been slower, the researchers asked all participants to write their replies on their notes before they shared their insights with the group. Additionally, the notes helped to prevent group pressure and participants agreeing with each other. The role of the researchers during the focus groups was primary to function as moderators, who guide and fuel the discussion with general questions and topics, attempting to influence the participants as little as possible (ibid As suggested by Bryman and Bell (2011), the researchers constructed a topic agenda before the focus groups, which functioned as a guide for the researchers during each focus groups, and assisted the researchers in keeping track of important topics to cover.

For the researchers to be able to both take notes, follow the discussion, provide with topics and follow-up questions when needed, the researchers divided the responsibility between each other, where one functioned as the facilitator of the questions and the other worked in the background to take notes and observe participants. Usually, a focus group has six to twelve participants (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Thus, the number of participants in each focus group ranged from seven to ten. The reason being, that keeping the number of participants consistent enables comparability both among and across groups. Further, since the same experiment groups comply throughout the whole research, from the experiments to the survey, the number of participants had to be reasonably significant to be able to build statistics from the data collected later in the questionnaire. Thus, the focus groups had to be as large as possible without compromising the quality of the discussions. The number of focus groups held, differ according to the research (ibid). In this study, the researchers arranged three focus groups in accordance with each experiment. This was again to make the data more comparable, both within the three groups along the different methods, but also to compare the groups to each other. When deciding who should participate in the study, participants had to be customers at ICA, and living in Stockholm, as this is where the majority of the study will take place.
2.1.1.4 Questionnaire

To increase the understanding and back up the qualitative data with numbers, this research have included a questionnaire. Bryman and Bell (2011), assert that as the sample size increase, so does the precision of the data. However, by narrowing the area geographically to the area of Stockholm and one firm ICA, and considering the depth of the total data gathering, the sample size is arguably significant even though it is notably smaller than the totality of the potential sample population. Important to note, the collected data is not generalizable to a wider context, and primary function as a guide for how ICA specifically can use the findings to strengthen their brand and further link it to ecology.

When constructing a questionnaire, the design is essential to the result (Bryman & Bell, 2011). First, the style and format of headings, questions, and explanations should be consistent (ibid). Second, the content of the questions is vital, and there are two categories of questions: open and closed (ibid). Open questions have the advantage that they provide the researcher with the respondents own formulation of the answer, thus using open ended questions are good when researching e.g. the respondents knowledge of a given topic (ibid). Closed questions on the other hand have the advantages that they are easy for the respondent to answer and they increase comparability among respondents (ibid). As this study intend to use the quantitative data as a complement to qualitative data, the questionnaire will contain closed end questions to increase the width of the total data and ability to build statistics.

However, as the questionnaire function as a complement to the previous methods, there will also be open-ended questions to allow participants to explain their experiences. More specifically, the questionnaire will add closed end questions to better build statistics, as well as include open-ended questions to attain deeper understanding of reasoning in specific questions. The researchers handed out the questionnaire as a final step in the data collection, and the participants had to individually answer the questions. The questionnaire was constructed using Google Forms, as it is an effective way to compose, structure, share, and make the initial analysis of the collected data. Using Google Forms also enabled the participants to conduct the questionnaire using their own computers and smartphones, which made it less time consuming and more effortless to complete.
2.2.2 Research Choices

The research choice expresses an explanation of the design of the chosen research subject, and how the researchers will carry out the research (Saunders et al., 2007). This study employs a multiple method design, since this research will combine different data collection techniques and procedures, (ibid). Additionally, this research combine the quantitative and qualitative approaches even in the analysis of the data, which means that some parts of the qualitative data will be quantified, and some of the quantitative data will be qualified (ibid). More specifically, the collected data from the experiments and focus groups will be both qualified and quantified, and some of the open questions from the questionnaire will require qualitative analysis. Thus, this study follows the design of the mixed-model research (ibid). According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (as seen in Saunders et al., 2007), employing multiple methods approach is fruitful if it is suitable to the research questions, which ultimately will lead to more trustworthy findings. As previously mentioned, the researchers has deemed it relevant to employ several different methods as focus rests on finding underlying motivations to behaviour, as well as seek to find out how ICA specifically can strengthen their brand connection to ecology. Thus, this study will employ multiple methods and thereby increase the trustworthiness of the data collected.

2.2.3 Time Horizons

When conducting a research, it is important to state the time horizon, and as many other things in a research, it is determined by the research question (Saunders et al., 2007). There are two different types of time horizons, namely cross-sectional which refers to a “snapshot” in time, and the longitudinal, which refers to the “diary” perspective (ibid). This study will apply the most common time horizon, cross-sectional horizon, since this research is time constrained (ibid). Furthermore, the cross-sectional time horizon is suitable for this study since it appropriate when trying to describe a specific phenomenon, which in this situation is the ecological consumption among consumers at ICA (ibid).

2.2.4 Techniques and Procedures

When researchers have decided the methodology and methods, they have reached the core of the research onion, called techniques and procedures (Figure 2). It is where the researchers guide the reader more specifically to how the collection of secondary and primary data have been carried out, as well as how the data have been analysed.
2.2.4.1 Data Collection

The researchers initiated the data collection process with a literature review, where they used the databases CBS library, SAGE Publications, Google Scholar, and Scopus, to collect relevant articles and literature. The data collection is of great importance when attempting to answer the research question. Thus, to ensure article relevance of the secondary data set, the researchers ranked articles based on e.g. relevant keywords, year of publication, journal category, and number of citations. In order to widen the perspective, various data sources was used e.g. journals, reviews, company reports, books, blogs, websites, and news articles.

The primary data collection, was reached after a process following the concept of ‘Snowball Sampling’, where the researchers come in contact with a group of people, and is guided further through these contacts, like a snowball growing in size as it rolls on the snow (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In the light of this study, the researchers first encountered ICA due to their prominence within ecology, which in turn led to the contact with ICA’s brand manager Sandra Wennberg. Further, this guided the location of the study, which partly took place at ICA Supermarket in Sabbatsberg, and additionally led to the participant sample containing solely ICA customers living in Stockholm. Important to note is that this specific method may bias the study, since the sample might not be representative to a whole population. However, as this study focuses on exclusively ICA, as well as the great focus on the qualitative data, the researchers argue the method of snowball sampling appropriate (ibid). In addition, ICA’s own website, and other relevant topic relevant websites, have been used as a complement to attain relevant primary data.

2.2.4.2 Transcribing the data

To be able to transcribe the data, the researchers used a digital voice recorder to record the focus group discussions. Both a computer and an iPhone were recording to minimize the risk of technical failings. By recording, the researchers were able concentrate on the discussions and dynamics of the group and not having to take notes on everything discussed (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Further, the recording’s had to be audible to the transcribers, thus the members in each focus group were asked to not speak at the same time (ibid). The researchers held the focus groups in Swedish and relevant keywords were later used to transcribe the quotes into English, by focusing on the essence and meaning of each statement. Additionally, having good acoustic quality of the recordings made it easier for the researchers to transcribe.
The researchers made the transcriptions and the advantage of doing so, is that the researchers will gain knowledge about how good they are at interviewing (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). However, the disadvantage by letting the researchers transcribe is that they may be emotionally and socially engaged to the data, and might have a preconception of the meanings expressed (ibid). Transcribing a focus group includes an analytical process of transforming from oral to a written structure (ibid). The researchers transcribed the first focus group together to make sure that both agreed on how to transcribe and what themes, keywords, and categories was relevant. The researchers divided the following transcriptions to make the process more time efficient. Further, researchers transcribed statements verbatim, and word-by-word, but excluded padding words like pauses, and emotional expressions.

2.2.4.3 Data Analysis

Qualitative data in this study has been coded and analysed following Kvale & Brinkmann (2009), and their outline of meaning analysis and the grounded theory approach. To lessen bias, the researchers have gone through, discussed initial aspects of the data analysis, and then divided the sections among each other to be more time efficient. Further, the researchers made sure to switch sections to lessen the bias in the interpretations of meanings.

When employing an inductive study and analysing qualitative data, the process is less structured and relies upon interpretations of the data (Saunders et al., 2009). The data drawn from the focus groups was analysed by the guidance of Kvale and Brinkmann’s (2009) way of analysing qualitative data, focusing on meaning, more specifically, ‘meaning coding’, ‘meaning condensation’ and ‘meaning interpretation’. The first step in analysing the data is what Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) call ‘meaning condensation’, which means that you break down and summarize the data into shorter texts, or a few words. Next, the text was coded by deriving codes from the data, which means that the text was read several times and then relevant keywords was identified (ibid). A column with the keywords was placed on the right side of the transcribed text, which in turn facilitated the analysis by making it easy to trace where the keywords were taken from, this is called meaning categorization (ibid). Following, researchers translated these categories from Swedish into English.

The meaning categorization was followed by the search for representable themes, this is called meaning interpretation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In order to find applicable themes, question
like: what does the members of the focus group actually talk about? Are we able to identify and capture the underlying meaning of the conversation? Searching through all the keyword and categorizing what keywords aligned finally resulted relevant themes. The final procedure in Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) called qualitative analysis, is to evaluate whether or not the findings is of local interest, or are generalizable to other subjects and circumstances.

In the analysis, focus rested upon analysing the meaning of the data, however, one possible disadvantage of focusing on meanings is the risk of multiple interpretations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This means that the transcribers, in this case the researchers, had to be aware of the fact that they could interpret words and sentences differently (ibid). Thus, researchers made all steps where identified codes, themes, and keywords, together to avoid such bias. There are multiple difficulties concerning how reliable interpretations of data are (ibid). Primarily, the researchers individual pre-assumptions will affect the interpreted meaning (ibid). Secondly, the issue of finding if the expressed meaning or the intended meaning is more relevant (ibid). A third common issue related to meaning interpretation is whether it actually exist more than one correct interpretation of the meaning or several correct interpretations (ibid). These issues were taken into consideration while doing the data analysis, and the two researchers analysed each others transcriptions in order to stay as unbiased as possible. By switching the transcriptions the researchers also enriched the analysis by providing with a more honest picture of what the participants actually meant, as well as increasing the objectivity of the findings (ibid).

2.2.5 Trustworthiness

When conducting a qualitative study it is important to ensure trustworthiness and authenticity, in order to assess the quality of the study (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Trustworthiness contains of four main criteria, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (ibid). Credibility ensures that the researchers conduct the study in an ethical manner, both in terms of good practice and in respect to society (ibid). Involving both ICA and their consumers increases this study’s credibility since it provides two sides of ecological consumption. Additionally, researchers ensure credibility further by exercising several methods i.e. experiments, focus groups, and questionnaires, at different times, and in different manners.

Transferability refers to if a study can be generalised to a wider context (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Since this study focus on one company, ICA, it is mainly a tool for this specific company, however
other firms may use the recommendations as an inspiration. Dependability discuss the importance of keeping records of all different phases during the research process, in order to later justify reliability i.e. the stability of the data (ibid). For this study, the researchers have kept a clear schedule of when and where research takes place, as well as carefully saved and recorded all collected. Confirmability concerns the researchers ability to stay objective during the research process to avoid bias and involving personal values (ibid). The researchers have ensured confirmability through thorough planning of the process, and actively attempting to avoid interfering or bias the participants over the data collection, and providing them with information only when necessary.

The second method to assess quality of a study, namely the authenticity, the researchers e.g. need to be objective in involving several viewpoints, as well as provoke members of the study without influencing them (Bryman & Bell, 2011). For this study, the researchers have made sure to represent both sides of the topic. Furthermore, during the focus groups and questionnaires, information to participants has been careful, and the researchers have avoided leading questions by carefully plan discussion topics and use open-ended questions i.e. ‘how’, ‘could you elaborate further’, and ‘why’. The four concepts related to trustworthiness can primary be related to qualitative study, however Bryman and Bell (2011) mention reliability as a parallel to dependability, which is further claimed related to quantitative studies. Reliability refers to the repeatability of the study i.e. would the results of the study be similar if it would be conducted again or in another context (Saunders et al., 2007). The diversity in methods i.e. mixed-methods approach, for this thesis increase the reliability in the results. Additionally, the transparency of the study is essential (ibid). For this study, the researchers have ensured transparency through showing each step along the process of this thesis, which is included in appendix.
3 Literature Review

This literature review has three main areas of focus, first there will be a general presentation of retail and ecology, immersing on ecology in Sweden, and how the retail merchant ICA work with ecology. Second, as this thesis aims at influencing consumers product choice with green marketing, immersed literature focus on common green marketing tools i.e. eco-labelling, eco-branding and green advertising. Third, to better understand underlying influencers on consumers purchase behaviour, the final literature section focus on consumer behaviour, and covers both the traditional consumer behaviour views, and the more recent assessments from neuromarketing, to better understand how to motivate and change consumers purchase intentions, in favour of ecological alternatives.

3.1 Ecology in Sweden

An increased interest of the global environment, has characterized the last two decades, as a result, consumers tend to care more about sustainability (Tzilivakis et al., 2012). This is further supported and influenced by the EU commission targets for 2020, where the sustainability targets pressure both society in general, but also in smaller scales pressure farmers and individuals, to incorporate ecological solutions into their businesses and ways of living (The European Commission, 2015). According to Smith and Dahlbacka (2012), the ecological food demand among Swedish consumers is constantly increasing. However, producers in Sweden have reported that the interest for ecological products is growing at such rate producers may not able to meet the growing demand (Forsberg, 2014).

Ryegård (2014) reports that Swedish consumers are not only concerned about their environmental impact, their attitudes towards ecological products have also changed dramatically during the recent years, instead of asking why they should purchase ecological products, they rather ask why they should not purchase ecologic products. Firms have acknowledged the increased consumer demand for ecological products, and realized that by developing ‘green’ technology to produce environmentally friendly products, they are able to differentiate and develop a competitive strategy (Clemenz, 2009). By differentiating with ecologically labelled products, firms are verifying that the product meets a specific standard hence, providing consumers with valuable information when making purchasing decisions (Sønderskov & Daugbjerg, 2010). In alignment, Clemenz (2009) reports a substantial rise in the quantity of ecological labels, or also known as ‘green product certifications’.
Ryegård and Ryegård (2015) reports that the Swedish food market had a total turnover of 232 billion SEK in 2014, including retail, the Swedish alcohol monopoly (Systembolaget), hotels & restaurants, as well as the public market. Out of the 232 billion SEK, there was a 38 % increase in sales for ecological food in 2014, and the value of the ecological food market in Sweden went from 11,2 billion SEK in 2013, to 15,5 billion SEK in 2014, and the ecological food market share increased from 4,1 % in 2013, to 5,6 % in 2014 (ibid). Moreover, Ryegård (2014) reports that during 2014, the Swedish retailers focused on providing their customers with ecological alternatives within each product category by constantly working with new product launches in order to better profile themselves in their highly competitive markets (Ryegård & Ryegård, 2015). The retailer’s increased interest in ecological products has resulted in basic assortments of ecological products in most stores in Sweden (ibid). Furthermore, the increased production and larger volumes sold, has enabled lower prices for ecological products, providing consumers with additional incentives to purchase ecological products (ibid).

The increase in sales for ecologic products has favoured the largest players in the Swedish retail sector, namely, ICA, Coop, and Axfood, and together they hold a market share of 76 % (Ryegård & Ryegård, 2015). The product range in foods within retail, included 118 952 products in 2012, where 3,9 % where ecologic products, and among the ecological commodities, around 80 % had the KRAV-certification (ibid). The most popular product categories in 2012 ecological range of products were dairy (27 %), vegetables (15 %), and fruit (10%), whereas the least ecological commodity categories purchased were waters and sodas (3 %), oil and fats (3 %), and fish (1 %) (ibid). The last years have been successful for the Swedish ecologic market however, there are difficulties associated with meeting the high demand of ecologic products (Kirchmann, Bergström, Kätterer, Andersson, 2014). Kirchmann et al. (2014) criticize the ecologic food sector and argue that the most drastic effect associated with if Swedish agriculture turned into 100 % ecologic, would be that the crop yield would decrease with 30-60 % depending on which crop is grown, which in turn will have to be compensated by larger areas of land to grow on, or increased import. In other terms, the farmers will not be able to meet a heavy increase in demand for this product category, with the land and production capacity they currently hold (ibid).
3.1.1 Retailers and Ecology

As previously mentioned, the turnover in the retail industry for food in Sweden has, despite societal economical downturns, had a steady increase on a year-to-year basis (Delfi, 2014). The largest retail food merchant on the Swedish market is ICA, who on its own had a turnover of 117.7 billion SEK in 2013 (ibid). As previously mentioned, the demand for ecologic products has led to an increasing category within the food industry (Daunfeldt & Rudholm, 2014). It appears as researchers have guided most research on ecologic food towards consumer attitudes, and preferences (ibid). Daunfeldt and Rudholm (2014), illuminate the results from these previous studies, and assert that most indicate that consumers’ are motivated to purchase ecologic food products due to perceived health benefits, better taste, and perceived higher food quality. More specifically, private benefits appear significant when attempting to explain consumption of ecologic foods (ibid). Thus, the public benefits, such as pollution, appears less important to consumers in their decision making process of this product category (ibid).

A critical barricade for purchasing ecologic food may be the price-difference between ecologic and non-ecologic commodities, as well as the overlapping certifications (Daunfeldt & Rudholm, 2014). Auger et al. (2003) claim that firms may overcome price sensitivity and influence their consumers to purchase ethical and ecologic products, even though the prices are higher, by understanding the ethical dimensions related to the products they sell. Alas, educating consumers requires work and efforts for firms (ibid). What is more, firms need to understand and adapt the way in which they attempt to influence the consumers, as different consumers care about different ethical parameters (ibid). The study made by Auger et al. (2003), attempted to influence consumers by presenting e.g. that a shoe producer used child labour, and that a soap provider employed animal testing. The results indicate that by providing consumers with information about ethical issues, it indeed affect consumers purchase decisions (ibid). Auger et al. (2003) further suggests research to focus on why consumers care more for familiar products, and how brand personality and equity can affect consumers to purchase ethically produced commodities.

Chkanikova and Lehner (2014), mention a recent phenomenon in retail, emerged from the increased ecological demand, namely private eco-brands. Chkanikova and Lehner (2014) discuss private eco-branding and third-party certification as a means for retailers to gain competitive advantage and assist the process of mainstreaming ecologic products. The authors explain that there is a growing
interest among retailers in having their own eco-brands (ibid). Previously, retailers used their own brands to provide consumers with low cost alternatives (ibid). More recently, retailers have put the brand name on e.g. eco-labelled commodities, which have been an effective tool to engage consumers further, and make them even more devoted to the brand (ibid). By introducing private eco-brands, retailers have been able to lower the prices of ecological food commodities and make the product category more accessible for their consumers, ultimately increasing the demand for this product category (ibid). Additionally, retailers have employed private eco-brands as a way to differentiate in highly competitive markets (ibid).

When retailers choose to launch private eco-brands, they simultaneously increase the standard requirements for eco-certified products in general (Chkanikova & Lehner, 2014). Numerous retailers choose to employ ‘best standards’ for their eco-branded products, which leads to an increase in the brands value and further allow retailers to gain competitive advantage (ibid). However, Thøgersen (2000) claim that environmental labels are only useful and valuable tools for influencing consumer decision making, if the consumer notice them and manage to both understand and trust the label. Consumers are more attentive to, and tend to consume labels they trust (ibid). In other terms, the certification of eco-labelled products is vital (ibid). Further, trust is influenced by the attitude consumers hold towards a given label or product (ibid) and consumers’ willingness to purchase eco-labelled products is dependent on their attitude towards the environment in general and their willingness to make an environmental change (ibid). Thøgersen (2000) assert that his study lacks depth on how eco-labels may attain credibility, as well as that their outline on attitudes towards eco-labelled products is weak, thus suggesting that these might be fruitful areas of further research.

No doubt, there are several advantages for retailers to launch private eco-brands (Chkanikova & Lehner, 2014). Alas, there are some limitations to the strategy such as it may be difficult for retailers to monitor the suppliers, since they often are numerous (ibid). However, retailers have overcome this issue, by using third-party certification schemes, which means that the process of ensuring the products meet the sustainability criteria, is outsourced to a third party (ibid). The authors recommend further research to focus on inter alia, how private eco-brands affect production, and if private eco-brands and third party certifications as a strategy may be related to green washing (ibid).
Consumers often base their purchase-decisions on habits, which makes it problematic for retailers to affect their customers decisions with product-labels and in-store information ads (Daunfeldt & Rudholm, 2014). However, Daunfeldt and Rudholm (2014), attempt to affect consumers purchase decisions of ecologic food commodities at the point of purchase (POP), by using low-cost shelf labelling in an ICA store in Sweden. The researchers chose three ecologic products namely, olive oil, flour and coffee (ibid). They placed a green label with white text telling the consumer that the good was ecologic, and had the sign pointing out from the shelf beside the chosen products (ibid). The results showed that after 521 days, the sales of each product had increased significantly, where the ecologic coffee had increased the most with 48% (ibid). Even though consumers shop food commodities by habit, retailers may influence consumer purchase behaviour at the POP (ibid). Daunfeldt and Rudholm (2014), recommend further research to expand these results and focus on comparing the effect POP displays, between ecologic and non-ecologic food commodities.

In a study made by Fader, Bradlow, and Hui (2009), they consider ecologic products as ‘virtue’ products. The authors claim that consumers purchase virtue products to boost their self-concept, and thus use these commodities to compromise for products mentioned as ‘vice’ products i.e. beer or ice cream (ibid). By this logic, if a consumer’s shopping basket contain more vice commodities, they will become more likely to visit departments in the store, where they may find virtue products (ibid Fader et al. (2009) explain that this phenomenon as ‘Licensing’ (ibid). The authors found that the longer time consumers spend in a store, the less they explore, and they become more purposeful in their shopping behaviour (ibid). Additionally, they found that licensing appears to hold true for guiding the consumer to certain areas in a store however, it does not appear to influence the actual purchase decision (ibid). Fader et al. (2009) suggest areas for future research to focus on testing consumer goals prior and after purchase, and investigate shopping behaviour in different stores to deepen the results further and make them more generalizable.

Seifer (2007), explain the importance of consistency for retail brands throughout the rising number of touch points and the growing expectations from consumers. Additionally, there is an increase in competition from online retailers (ibid). Seifer (2007) claim that the digital retailing is one of the driving trends within retail, and traditional retailers have to find new ways to differentiate. E-commerce is indeed a growing trend in Sweden, and in 2013 e-commerce stood for 6% of the total
retail sales in Sweden, which was an increase of 17% compared to previous year (Svensk Digital Handel, 2014). Among the categories within e-commerce, (i.e. clothing, shoes, and consumer electronics) food is minor, and not even 1% of the total sales are from online shopping (ibid). Svensk Digital Handel (2014) further state that even though the percentage is minor, the number of consumers that try e-commerce for food commodities is increasing, and among those who try, several decide to continue. Further asserted in the report is that, the younger part of the population has the highest presence online, and use the net to a greater extent that older generations, hence e-commerce is predicted to increase even more as the younger population pass on their routines (ibid). The most prominent categories for online food shopping are those who offer specialized assortments i.e. ecologic (ibid).

Conclusively, today’s consumers demand environmental friendly products (Tzilivakis et al., 2012), which has led to that firms see a strategic advantage in producing and selling more ecologically labelled products (Clemenz, 2009; Sønderskov & Daugbjerg, 2010). Moreover, The European Union has set environmental goals and standards for the year 2020, which has been an additional contributing factor to the increasing eco trend (The European Commission, 2015). As a result, when attempting to influence consumers purchase behaviour in retail settings, it appears significant to know more about eco-labelling (Thøgersen, 2000; Daunfeldt & Rudholm, 2014; Chkanikova & Lehner 2014) and branding (Auger et al., 2003; Chkanikova & Lehner, 2014). Additionally essential is attaining an understanding of how to overcome consumers’ price sensitivity, and motivations to purchase ecologically labelled products (Auger et al., 2003; Daunfeldt & Rudholm, 2014). Further, consumers appear most receptive to the information at POP (Daunfeldt & Rudholm, 2014), and private eco-brands appears as a useful retail tool to both attain competitive advantage as well as, increasing the certification standards for this type of commodities (Chkanikova & Lehner, 2014).

3.1.2 ICA and Ecology

ICA is Sweden’s largest food retailer, and recent numbers show that ICA holds a market share of 50,7 % (Delfi, 2014). The increased ecological interest among consumers, has led to that ICA have a 3,3 % sales of ecological commodities, where fresh foods i.e. meat, fruits, and vegetables, are among the most purchased commodities (Wennberg, 2015a). Out of the 3,3 %, ICA’s private eco-brand, I Love eco, stands for 5,5 % of the ecological sales (ibid). ICA name their incentives for offering consumers a rich ecological product range, as that they can be a part of preserving the
ICA’s ecological goals revolves around an increase in consumers awareness and higher trust to their private eco-brand, I Love eco, which is aligned with their overall objective of making ICA a food retailer where consumers always will find the products they seek (Wennberg, 2015a). More specifically, their strategy concerns guiding their consumers in making sustainable purchase decisions, where they see ecological products as a contributing factor (ibid). Through this, ICA aims at becoming the most sustainable actor within the Swedish food retail sector (ibid). To increase the consumers’ ecological awareness, ICA sees price and communication as essential tools (ibid). ICA regularly tries to meet the consumer demand by consequently introducing ecological alternatives to further strengthen their ecological sales (ibid). In relation to ICA’s green marketing approach, Wennberg (2015b), claim that ICA primary communicate their eco-brand through the concept campaign they call ‘Välj eko’, where the focus is guiding the consumer to choose ecologic alternatives. Additionally, ICA uses their promotional paper, store TV’s, their recipe magazine Buffé, and occasionally include the eco-brand ‘I love eco’ in their usual TV commercials (ibid). I Love eco, is one among nine brands with different areas of focus in their portfolio where five of them are linked to food, and the rest represent products for the home e.g. washing powder, and interior (ICA, 2015c)

**3.2 Green Marketing**

The concern for the environment has received increased attention on a global scale in recent decades, and consumers’ behaviour has changed as their awareness has increased (Rahbar & Abdul Wahid, 2011). Previously, the environmental awareness and interest for ecological commodities have been the largest in western countries i.e. US and Europe, but lately the eastern countries have increased the interest for these products and the issue in general (ibid). Teisl, Roe, and Levy (1999), conducted a research where they investigated how eco-marketing and eco-labels influence consumers purchase decisions and product preferences. They conclude that products that had an
eco-label, affect consumers’ preference for the product, more than the actual purchase decision (ibid). Green marketing, or eco-marketing, is a branch from conventional marketing, but less elastic and provide markets with a different perspective (Singh, 2013). This type of marketing exists to bridge conventional marketing and ecological products (ibid). Sing (2013) assert that green marketing does not limit itself to solely environmental features, but concurrently includes the market needs and requests for sustainable products that deliver on i.e. quality, performance, reasonable prices, usability, and accessibility.

There are three parameters frequently described as concepts of green marketing namely, eco-labels, eco-branding and green advertising, which marketers use as tools within green marketing (Delafrooz, Taleghani, & Nouri, 2014; Rahbar & Abdul Wahid, 2011). Moreover, green marketing focus on persuasion strategies, which are used to increase consumers’ knowledge and awareness of environmental issues, and ultimately change their habitual purchase intentions (Delafrooz et al., 2014). Additionally, marketers may use these green marketing tools as a way to explain more about the green products characteristics (Rahbar & Abdul Wahid, 2011). Rahbar and Abdul Wahid (2011) acknowledge a limitation to the three green marketing tools concerning the credibility, especially in connection to eco-labels. The authors discuss that there are no clear governmental policies certifying products rewarded with an eco-label (ibid). This matter triggers an issue in the credibility for the whole process, and may lead to that consumers hesitate to finalize the purchase (ibid). Finally, the authors assert that there should be better incentives for firms and manufacturers to be truly green, and that consumers needs more information about the meaning of the labels and brands, and that the responsibility for this lies in the hands of governments (ibid).

Laroche, Bergeron, and Barbaro-Forleo (2001) discuss responsibility and find that among consumers who are less price-sensitive, the majority articulate that they do not trust that firms take their full responsibility for the environment. The authors continue and claim that managers need to better articulate that the responsibility does not solely rest on them, but also on every individual (ibid). The communication between the firm and consumers is the responsibility of the marketer, and the communication is important to induce desirable behaviour among consumers (ibid). Hence, marketers should communicate and encourage consumers to make a difference on an individual basis (ibid). In other terms, Laroche et al. (2001), suggest that the responsibility is collective, and that communication is vital, as is consumer encouragement and marketers should function as
facilitators of that communication between firms and consumers. Strategic Direction (2013), further discuss that firms need to be credible in their green marketing, and they have to make sure that retailers have the correct information and knowledge about the green products. Additionally, faith in the green product is vital, for both firms and the retailers, as well as for the end consumer (ibid). In other terms, in order to increase trust and value for the green products among consumers, knowledge and faith in the product has to be consistent through the whole supply chain (ibid).

In a study made in Tehran, eco-labels, eco-brands and green advertising was compared to investigate which method were more effective in terms of influencing consumer behaviour (Delafrooz et al., 2014). What was found by the authors in the study, was that green advertising appeared most effective, whereas eco-brands was the least effective influencer on consumers purchase behaviour (Delafrooz et al., 2014). According to Rex and Baumann (2007), eco-labels have become one of the most employed tools in green marketing. Alas, eco-labelled products have failed to reach to the great mass of the population since they only target the consumers who already have an interested in ‘green’ products (ibid). The authors claim that marketing for ‘green’ products is lagging behind conventional marketing, and suggest that ‘green’ marketing should widen the marketing strategy from solely focusing on eco-labels, and use other means to promote the products i.e. the Marketing mix, as a means to deeper engage a wider consumer population (ibid).

The four P’s compiles the essential marketing tools required for a brand, and McCarthy (as seen in Kotler & Keller, 2012), first identified the different marketing activities as tools in the marketing-mix, classified as the four P’s of marketing. However, Kotler and Keller (2012), assert that the traditional four P’s are outdated, and suggest that marketers can no longer use them to see the complete story. Thus, the authors incorporate four new P’s namely, People, Processes, Programs, and Performance (ibid). Moreover, it is said that the extension of P’s, will assist managers and marketers to align the total brand actions, not only the marketing initiatives (ibid). The table below clarifies the meaning of each P in the ‘Modern Marketing Management Four P’s’ (ibid).
The four P’s is a way for marketers to compile all required actions and tools, i.e. eco-labels, eco-branding, or green advertising (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Eco-labelling is a tool used by marketers to assist consumers in identifying the green products by using environmentally informative labels, with the goal of facilitating consumers in their decision-making (Delafrooz et al., 2014). Eco-brands are described as “…a name, symbol or design of products that are harmless to the environment” that can “…help consumers to differentiate them in some way from other non-green products” (ibid, p. 4). The use of Green advertising to inform consumers about environmentally concerned products, through different media channels i.e. newspapers, digital media, or websites (Delafrooz et al., 2014). Finally, Delafrooz et al. (2014) suggest that further research should focus on examining other relevant marketing tools, how to improve the effectiveness of eco-brands and eco-labels, or if there are any differences in purchase intentions for these commodities between genders.

Cornelissen, Dewitte, Warlop, and Yzerbyt (2007), present a procedure that marketers could apply, and suggest social labelling as a marketing tool. The authors describe social labelling as a technique, where people receive a proposition, word or meaning, regarding their personality i.e. a social label [healthy], with the goal of influencing them to act in accordance with that label (ibid). More specifically, if a marketer tells a group of people they are healthy, they are more likely to behave healthier (ibid). Traditionally, social marketing strategies focus on “…provoking active contemplation of behavioural alternatives” (ibid, p. 278). In other terms, marketers’ focused on
making consumers consider costs and benefits of their behaviour, both in terms of public and private alternatives (Cornelissen et al., 2007). Often, the private costs and benefits are more prominent for consumers and they tend to choose the more ‘selfish’ option (ibid). Cornelissen et al. (2007), suggest that marketers can affect consumer decision-making by employing instruments that induce behaviour more direct. More specifically, they suggest social labelling, where they recommend marketers to use personal norms and values to evoke the desired behaviour and persuade consumers to purchase the social products (ibid). The authors promote the ethics of using social labelling to affect consumers to purchase more socially considerate products, since it may affect the self-perception among consumers (ibid). However, they conclude that as long as the marketer attempt to influence consumers to act in accordance with the norms of the general population, the method appears acceptable (ibid). Cornelissen et al. (2007), suggest further research to focus on the ethics of using social labels as tool for social marketing.

There have been plenty of efforts in making eco-labels more effective and credible, however Rex and Baumann (2007), assert that marketers cannot expect the market to expand if they only rely on the labels, and thus suggest that focus should rather lie on making green marketing in general, more effective. The authors recommend further research to focus on how firms communicate their green products to consumers, and how they align their communication with market indications (ibid). Additionally suggested is that researchers should focus on analysing what the consumers need, and how green marketing affects consumer’s behaviour (ibid). In-store demonstrations are heavy influencers on consumer behaviour (Nordfält & Lange, 2013). Nordfält and Lange (2013), assert that having in-store demonstrations closer to the weekend are most effective, and the location of the demonstration appears essential. Additionally, the authors assert that it is more effective to demonstrate close to the target products compared to heavily trafficked areas in the store (ibid). The authors suggest that future research should investigate how consumers’ mental preparation affects the in-store behaviour (ibid).

Conclusively, the concept of green marketing bridges conventional marketing with market needs without compromising the planet (Teisl et al., 1999). There are three main tools within green marketing, namely eco-labelling, eco-branding and green advertising (Delafrooz, Taleghani, & Nouri, 2014; Rahbar & Abdul Wahid, 2011). The marketers of ecologic products, function as a communicator between the brand and its consumers, where the communication goes in both
direction, and consumer encouragement is vital (Laroche et al., 2001). The main goal of green marketing is to influence and inform consumers, with the ultimate goal of having consumers make more environmentally considerate purchase decisions (Teisl, Roe, & Levy, 1999; Delafrooz, Taleghani, & Nouri, 2014; Rahbar & Abdul Wahid, 2011; Cornelissen, Dewitte, Warlop, & Yzerbyt, 2007; Nordfält & Lange, 2013). Finally, most of the identified literature focus on the understanding of consumers ecological consumption, how, why, when and what is purchased.

3.2.1 Eco-Branding

Eco-branding is an important tool within green marketing (Delafrooz et al., 2014; Rahbar & Abdul Wahid, 2011), and private eco-brands are an increasing retail strategy (Chkanikova & Lehner, 2014). In brand management in general, the authenticity is vital, more specifically, meeting consumers’ requests and act with honesty, coherence, and credibility (Beverland, 2005a). Important to note, is that managers does not create brand meaning on their own, but rather together with consumers and other participants linked to the brand, i.e. through communities (ibid). Beverland (2005a) conclude his article with “…brand managers must ... engage consumers in a two-way dialogue about brand meaning, and let their brands be adopted by communities” (ibid, p. 2). In other terms, it is vital that brand managers constantly strive towards becoming better at meeting customer needs, and brand communities are powerful influencers on brand meaning (Beverland, 2005a). Brands often confuse the application of authenticity as a marketing tool (Beverland, 2005b). Beverland (2005b), assert that in order to create convincing and authentic brand, it is essential to create a compelling and genuine story about the brand. For brands to be able to take a higher price for their products, differentiate themselves from competitors, and strengthen their brand status, the authenticity of the brand story is vital (ibid).

Heding, Knudtzen, and Bjerre (2009), concur with Beverland (2005a; 2005b) as he asserts that communities are useful tools when creating authenticity and a strong brand. Heding et al. (2009) further elaborate and claim that in brand communities, the “…brand is the focal point of social interaction…” (ibid, p. 182). More specifically, the brand assembles passionate consumers into a community (Heding et al., 2009). Hereafter, members of the brand community can share opinions, experiences, and stories regarding the brand, to other similarly passionate consumers (ibid). Thus, brand communities strongly depend on interaction between consumers, the brand and consumers, and marketing and consumers (ibid). Communities are strong inducers of brand value since members often carry high engagement for the brand, and the brand carry meaning to the consumers.
lives (ibid). However, Heding et al. (2009) explain that it may be a risk for firms attempting to influence and openly sell or market inside the community, since members of a brand community tend to prefer to be in charge of the communication. Firms should rather use the community to try to understand what drives the members, and use their feedback to innovate, as well as use the recurring attitudes to further progress and strengthen the brand (ibid). The marketers should function as facilitators inside the community, and enable co-creation of brand meaning together with community members (ibid).

McElhaney (2008) defines a firm’s Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as “Business strategies that is integrated with core business objectives and core competencies of the firm, and from the outset is designed to create business value and positive social change, and is embedded in day-to-day business culture and operations” (ibid, p.1). During the past decade, CSR has influenced the world of business tremendously (McElhaney, 2008). Most brands have realized that in order to stay competitive they need to recognize the importance CSR policies and turn this recognition into an opportunity (ibid). Further, in order to become and stay competitive brands must follow the recent trends within CSR (ibid). Analysing the CSR trend, McElhaney (2008) found that consumers see CSR as a motivating factor decreasing their own environmental impact, as well as it means taking action against climate changes. Partnership with e.g. NGO’s can increase the firm’s credibility, since it is hard to fight a problem like global warming alone (ibid). Additionally, the report state that if a firm hesitate to develop CSR strategies, their competitors will, which in turn will give them a competitive advantage over the brand that did not focus on CSR (ibid).

Girod and Michael (2003), also explains that retailers can use CSR as a way to differentiate their brands. The authors claim that we no longer consume goods or products, but rather signs or brands (ibid). Even though a strong brand survive on solely a good corporate image today, it is the social forces i.e. CSR initiatives, that will determine the brand strength tomorrow, and will help the brand to further differentiate in a highly competitive and ever-changing market (ibid). Hartmann and Ibáñez (2006) raise a challenge when it comes to adding value to eco-brands and discuss that consumers’ have an issue of perceiving the private benefits of purchasing an eco-brand, compared to a non-eco-brand (ibid). Moreover, the authors suggest further researchers to investigate how eco-brands motivates consumers’ emotionally, what consumers may gain from purchasing environmentally considerate products, and how to apply green marketing for eco-brands more
effectively (ibid). The authors claim that eco-brands have a rising future, since the interest and health of our planet is gaining more attention, or that the use of these brands might even “...serve as a substitute for real contact with nature” (ibid, p. 678).

He and Lai (2014) explore how using CSR as a marketing tool can influence consumer loyalty to the brand. The authors discover that firms should seek out consumers expectations, and from those expectations, alter key dimensions of CSR in their marketing (ibid). The authors have proven that both functional and symbolic images influences brand loyalty (ibid). The authors further assert that symbolic images had a more positive effect than the functional images on brand loyalty, mainly because functionality is easier for competitors to replicate, compared to symbolism and meaning (ibid). Further noted, is that there is a positive relationship between environmental associations and brand attitude, and that utilizing environmental certifications increase the convincing of the products environmentally concerned production (Montoro Rios, Martinez, Fuentes Moreno, & Canadas Soriano, 2006). Even though there is a positive relationship between the environmental features of a brand, and the consumer’s attitude towards that brand, consumers found non-environmental functionalities more important (ibid). The study supports that environmental labels have a positive influence on how consumers perceive and evaluate a brand (ibid). The authors suggest further research to focus on evaluating the usefulness of introducing a single certification system for all product categories, as an attempt to ease the communication to consumers and society (ibid).

In a study made by Punyatoya (2014), the author finds a positive correlation between ‘perceived brand eco-friendliness’ and ‘environmental awareness’. More specifically, the author found an indication on that consumers’ general awareness about environmental issues, is closely linked to how and if the consumers’ perceive and trust the brands eco-friendliness (ibid). Further noted, is that the higher trust the consumers’ hold towards the brands eco-friendliness, the more likely it is to lead to a positive purchase decision (ibid). Thus, credibility in the brands ecological communication strategy appears essential in the process of creating trust and affecting consumers’ purchase intentions (ibid). Punyatoya (2014), suggest further research to focus on how personal values influence on behaviour and trust in eco-friendliness brands.
Di Somma (2015), mention in his blog about strategic branding, that previously firms CSR strategy focused on how firms were doing good, and that firms accounted for the things they managed to do right. However, consumers and the general population today request more from firms than just doing a few good deeds (ibid). This has led to brands attempting to increase their likability by being generally good throughout the whole brand strategy (ibid). Thus, the focus today lies more on the brands ability to communicate and show its consumers that they are ethical in all their actions, and that the brand acts consistently and in accordance with their ethical reputation, throughout the totality of firm and brand actions (ibid). Di Somma (2015) continues and argues that ethical actions should not be just ‘nice-to-have-actions’, but rather a way to create competitive opportunities and stay ahead of competition. Additionally, it is suggested that rather than just telling consumers that the firm take ethical actions, the firm should explain why they do so, and how it aligns with firm strategy (ibid). More specifically, firms should focus on ethical actions that suits their brand image, and communicate to their consumers what difference they make in world when choosing their brand over another, and how and why that is additionally important for both the firm and the consumer (ibid).

Conclusively, brands that have an ecological focus should be authentic (Beverland, 2005b; Beverland, 2005a), customer co-creation may lead to authentic brands since it innovate and strengthen the brand, hence, enabling brand communities (Heding, Knudtzen, & Bjerre, 2009; Beverland, 2005a; Beverland, 2005b). Additionally, focusing on labelling the brand as socially responsible has proven to increase brand loyalty (He & Lai, 2014), increase perceived brand value (Hartmann & Ibáñez, 2006) and as a fruitful method to differentiate (Girod & Michael, 2003). Finally, environmentally responsible labelling and certification has proven as a positive influencer on consumers’ attitudes towards the brand (Montoro Rios et al., 2006).

3.2.2 Eco-labelling

A common way for retailers to attain a competitive advantage is thorough introducing eco-labelled brands (Gulbrandsen, 2006). The eco-label was in the beginning of its lifetime, introduced and monitored by governments, where a product category was chosen, and the product that had the least environmental impact, was rewarded with a label (ibid). However, in recent years, with help from NGO’s, and voluntary programs that work on certification of eco-labels, the requirements for getting an eco-label on your product has substantially increased (ibid). Gulbrandsen (2006) explains that the advantages associated with getting a product eco-labelled, is that it may provide firms with
a better reputation, improve their credibility to consumers, and even help them gain a competitive advantage. Consequently, there is a deeper interest for firms to obtain a certification i.e. eco-label, even if their consumers does not demand it (ibid).

Often, both companies and customers demands, are seen as important influencers on the certification and labelling of environmentally and socially responsible products (Gulbrandsen, 2006). Gulbrandsen (2006) assert that international environmental networks have worked hard on targeting firms, which have been essential to the development of global eco-labelling schemes. However, firms only chose to participate and follow these global eco-labelling schemes after other firms had decided to do so (ibid). Thus, firms and consumers have been heavy influencers on the qualification of products that receive ecological certificating labels today (ibid). Further, the author claims that eco-labelling was primary introduced to provide customers with a wider product range (ibid). However, rewordings in the form of eco-labels encouraged firms to adopt sustainable principles and practices (ibid). Sammer and Wüstenhagen (2006) further support Gulbrandsen’s (2006) claim about using eco-labels as a tool to add value, and assert that “…a label could be very useful for marketers to differentiate themselves” (Sammer & Wüstenhagen, 2006, p. 197). However, in a market where most products have some form of certification, and in several cases the same rated certification labels, there is no space left to differentiate (Sammer & Wüstenhagen, 2006). Thus, Sammer and Wüstenhagen (2006) suggest that politicians should introduce greater incentives to fulfil the criteria of receiving an eco-label (ibid). More research is required in the area of customer preferences for eco-labels (ibid).

Loureiro, McCluskey, and Mittelhammer (2001), researched ecologic product preference, and found that consumers prefer ecologically labelled products before regular products. The authors make a distinction in regular, eco-labelled, and organic products, and look specifically at appels (ibid). When retailers offered the ecologic and organic appels at the same price, consumers tended to prefer products with the ‘organic’ label, as they considered that as an even better product (ibid). The authors further claim that there is a distinction in the segments regarding who chose to purchase eco-labelled appels, and who chose the organic alternative (ibid). Families with high concern for the environment tended to purchase the organic apples whereas, the customers seeking higher quality preferred eco-labelled apples (ibid). More specifically, the organic apples appear to pose as a safer and more considerate alternative, whereas the eco-labelled apples pose as the higher
quality option (ibid). Loureiro and Lotade (2005) immerse this research further and find that consumers are willing to pay more for e.g. fair trade coffee compared to ecologic coffee. The authors assert that this is a valuable insight for organisations working in developing countries, as consumers indicate that they are willing to pay more for a product, where workers have been treated well by their employer (ibid).

In 2002, EU introduced a new legislation on food safety, which in turn pushed the Swedish Food Agency to enforce a minimum requirement that follows Hazardous Critical Control Points (HACCP) (Orsato & Öström, 2006). Additionally, Swedish producers make their own certifications, and retailers are often involved in the process of directing foreign suppliers to follow the qualifications of Swedish certifications e.g. KRAV (Sønderskov & Daugbjerg, 2010). Development of ecological products requires close collaboration between retailers and suppliers, which makes it difficult for retailers to work with small suppliers since they might not be able to guarantee the same product safety, or low price, as larger suppliers can (Orsato & Öström, 2006). As seen in Bladh (2009), Klintman and Boström question the trust of eco-labels and investigate how they can become more credible, and additionally examine the difference between labelling in EU compared to US. Their studies show that the public lack trust towards the ecological industry in general as well as towards its regulations (Bladh, 2009). According to Bladh (2009), Klintman and Boström argue that, an eco-label is a simple message used in a complex reality, where environmental issues continuously change and there might be a compromise between environmental goals and interests groups.

In literature, researchers often discuss the importance of eco-labelling and the authors Sammer and Wüstenhagen (2006), look deeper into eco-labelling as an influencer on consumer behaviour. Certain product features that assist consumers in their search for products, are identified by the consumer before the purchase i.e. price, size and colour (ibid). However, when it comes to the features related to the actual experience, consumers tend to first recognize them after the purchase (as cited by Nelson, 1970, in Sammer & Wüstenhagen, 2006). Another intangible feature is product credibility (Sammer & Wüstenhagen, 2006). The authors describe that there is an imbalance in knowledge concerning product features between what the retailers know and the knowledge their customers have (ibid). The retailers have to overcome this imbalance in knowledge, especially for commodities with features where credibility is essential, i.e. ecological, and environmental products.
(ibid). In order to overcome market errors caused by imbalance in the information and knowledge about environmental products, eco-labelling is essential (ibid).

Conclusively, the requirements for achieving an eco-label have increased the past years (Gulbrandsen, 2006). Furthermore, it evident is that eco-labels are influencers on consumer behaviour (Sammer & Wüstenhagen, 2006). Additionally, there is a frequent discussion concerning eco-labels credibility (Bladh, 2009; Tzilivakis, Green, Warner, & Lewis, 2012).

3.2.3 Green Advertising

In 1995, Kilbourne attempted to clarify the concept of green advertising by providing with an establishment of the term ‘green’ to better be able to evaluate the concepts usefulness (Kilbourne, 1995). He found that the concept of green marketing was highly complex and said that it is two-dimensional, consisting of both political and human positional concepts (ibid). More specifically, green advertising focus on transforming consumer consciousness rather than behaviour [political], and change the view humans as ‘the centre of the universe’, to rather see planet and nature as the central focal point [human positional] (ibid). He asserts that green advertising is essential as a first and important step in the processes towards saving the planet (ibid).

In 2001, Kärnä, Juslin, Ahonen and Hansen, shift focus on the topic of green advertising, and investigate whether or not firms employ it as a sincere precaution for the environment, or as green washing. The authors find that in general, firms use green advertising as a reflection of their ‘level of greenness’, and that they have substantial actions behind the words and promises made in their ads (ibid). D’Souza and Taghian (2005) test consumers’ responses on themed advertising, i.e. green advertising, and measure if consumers’ high and low involvement with the environment changes their attitude towards those ads. The authors’ finds low environmental involvement consumers’ have a stronger disregard for green ads (ibid). On the contrary, the higher involvement the consumers have with the environment, the less convincing they find the green ads (ibid). For further research, the authors suggest focus to rest upon how green advertising may affect consumer behaviour (ibid).

Nyiilasy, Gangadharbatla, and Paladino (2014), further mention the issue about green advertising being perceived green washing. The authors found that the application of green advertising can harm a firm’s brand image (ibid). The found results indicate that consumers may become
increasingly sceptical when they see a variance between green advertising and firm performance i.e. the credibility of firms’ environmental actions or when green messages appears to differ from firm general values (ibid). In other terms, the consumers perceive the green advertising as green washing (ibid). The authors elaborate on the oil firm BP, and assert that if BP where to employ green advertising, it may very well backfire, and rather than improve their brand image, consumers’ would perceive it as egoistic attempts to increase their image, and as green washing, and hence lead to a weakening image for BP (ibid). The authors claim that understanding consumers’ is vital to the process of successive green advertising, and knowing what consumers’ are sensitive to is seen as an essential first step to delivering on their expectations in an ethical and credible way, that could strengthen the brand image (ibid). Nyilasy et al. (2014) suggest further research on different industries, to better evaluate where green advertising is more or less credible.

In the more recent study, Finisterra do Paco and Reis (2012) immerse the above-mentioned assumptions, and attempt to clarify the high involvement consumers’ scepticism towards green communication. In line with D'Souza and Taghian (2005), the authors claim that the higher involvement the consumers’ have with the environment the more sceptical they will be towards the green communication in ads, and on product labels (Finisterra do Paco & Reis, 2012). In the long run, it is suggested that marketers can attempt to change consumers’ attitudes and behaviours by sending green messages repeatedly, being consistent, and work with resemblance (ibid). More specifically, advertising plays an important role in the attempt of influencing purchase intentions, and should thus be planned with carefulness and managers should make sure that the messages are true and clear to avoid restraints and reluctance among green consumers (ibid). Finisterra do Paco and Reis (2012) suggest further research to focus on understanding how different types of media used to communicate the green messages may influence consumers’ scepticism.

Kong and Zhang (2014), examines how the effectiveness of green product attributes, differs according to product category. The authors assert that advertising for green products are complex and “Few consumers purchase products with the sole purpose of protecting the environment” but rather base their purchase decision on the products offered usefulness or convenience (ibid, p. 207). The study made by Kong and Zhang (2014), claims to prove that the products affect on the environment do make a difference on consumers’ purchase decisions. Additionally, consumers’ describe a stronger motivation to choose the ecologically labelled alternative, in product categories
with the higher negative environmental effect (ibid). More specifically, they articulate that choice has a stronger positive affect on the environment, and that they have had a stronger impact on the environmental state through that choice (ibid). The authors conclude that environmental associations in advertisements, should primary be employed as a way to add value for consumers, and increase environmental awareness, rather than using it as a persuasion method (ibid). The authors suggest further research to look at how familiar brands using green ads influences consumer choice (ibid).

Conclusively, when it comes to green advertising the early research had focus on defining the concept of green advertising (Kilbourne, 1995). More recent research has rather put focus on firms’ sincerity in their green advertising (Kärnä, Juslin, Ahonen, & Hansen, 2001), how to overcome perceived green washing (Nyilasy, Gangadharbatla, & Paladino, 2014), how to apply green advertising in an effective manner and for what products and brands it may be most affective (Kong & Zhang, 2014; Finisterra do Paco & Reis, 2012).

3.3 Consumer Behaviour

The section will outline relevant literature and academic findings regarding consumer behaviour. Due to the scope of the topic, this section consists of two subsections. First described, are the traditional thoughts of consumer behaviour in relation to brand management and marketing. Following the more recent views of neuromarketing related to relevant topics in relation to the research question to increase the understanding of underlying motivations of ecological consumption.

3.3.1 The Traditional Approach

In consumer behaviour, one of the main theories is “the four perspectives of consumer research” by Østergaard & Jantzen (2000), which in short describes how we view consumption behaviour, and how to research consumption patterns. The most relevant findings appeared after the interpretive turn in the 1980’s, which showed a different way of understanding why and how consumers approach consumption (ibid). Østergaard & Jantzen (2000) research went from observing the consumer from a utilitarian point of view, to a more emotional and social view, where factors like creation of meaning and symbolisms are of greater importance (ibid). The authors call the two perspectives after the interpretive turn ‘consumer research’ and ‘consumption studies’ (ibid). The interpretative turn lead to a change in how consumers are perceived, which led to that the old view, of the consumer as a rationally driven individual, had become obsolete (ibid).
According to ‘consumer research’, the consumer is emotionally and narcissistically determined and the authors describe him or her as a tourist who frequently seeks new experiences through consumption (Østergaard & Jantzen, 2000). Additionally, Østergaard & Jantzen (2000) argue that when consumers attempt to create a meaningful life, their hearts desires guide them. The perspective of ‘consumption studies’ goes beyond these narcissistic and emotional features and instead the authors assert they see the consumer as a social tribe member (ibid). Product symbolism creates a universe for the tribe, and by adopting the “right” symbols, the consumers strives for recognition from other tribe members (ibid).

Østergaard and Jantzen (2000) ‘consumption studies’ and ‘consumer research’ are closely related to Belk (1988)’s theory of extended-self, where the symbolic meanings and experiences are essential as extending features of ones self. Belk (1988) argues that possessions are the main contributors to who we are “we are what we have and possess” (ibid, p. 139). By embedding symbolic meanings in brands, consumers search for identity through consumption (Elliot & Wattanasuwan, 1998). Belk (1988), claim that symbolic meaning of products, operate within ones self, and social symbolism (ibid). In other terms, symbolic meaning resides in products, and by purchasing, or possessing these products, consumers can attain social recognition or sense belonging, and even see the product as an extension of them selves (ibid).

Further, Cova and Cova (2002) treats the latest perspective of ‘consumption studies’, also by viewing the consumer as a tribe member, the authors argue that “…products and services are consumed as much for their liking as for their use value” (Cova & Cova, 2002, p. 595). The authors continue and describe society as built upon networks of societal micro-groups, where members share strong emotional links, similar subcultures, and visions of life (ibid). In order to fulfil human’s desire for being part of a community or tribe, consumers use products and services which permit and support social interaction that align with the specific tribe through, linking the tribe values with the service or product (ibid). Cova and Cova (2002) further argue that this theory is credible in relation to consumer behaviour since “today consumers are looking not only for products and services which enable them to be freer, but also for products, services, employees and physical surroundings which can link them to others, to a tribe” (ibid, p.600). In other terms, to consume at this micro-level is above all, to construct social links and to create a societal frame.
Finally, Cova and Cova (2002) define a tribe as “a network of heterogeneous persons - in terms of age, sex, income, etc. - who are linked by a shared passion or emotion; a tribe is capable of collective action, its members are not simple consumers, they are also advocates” (ibid, p. 602).

Heding et al. (2009) provide brand management with seven approaches to understand consumers behaviour in relation to branding, where they similar to Østergaard and Jantzen (2000), divide the seven approaches into two periodic paradigms: positivistic and constructivist, where the latter one is also referred to as interpretative nature. In the positivistic paradigm, similar to before the interpretive turn, the marketer is the brand owner, and main controller of the brand, and the consumer is simply the recipient of information (ibid). The authors use a quote by Hanby (1999), which describe the brand as “A manipulable lifeless artefact” (as seen in Heding et al., 2009, p. 21).

In contrast to Østergaard and Jantzen (2000), Heding et al. (2009) claim that the shift from the old paradigm to the new occurred over the 1990’s, rather than the 80’s. However, Heding et al. (2009) agrees that the approaches after the paradigm shift went to become more social, dynamic and the consumer becomes a vital aspect of the brand meaning creation. The shift, three brand approaches have emerged; The Relational Approach, The Community Approach and the Cultural Approach (ibid).

3.3.1.1 The Relational Approach

Heding et al. (2009) clarifies that relationships are essential parts of our lives and the importance of each relationship differ considerably to us. The authors refer to Fournier (1998), who clarifies that “… consumers experience relationships with brands… and just like human relationships, consumer-brand relationships are of a very diverse nature” (Heding et al., 2009, p. 152). Brand relationship theory is closely linked to brand loyalty, with the major difference that brand loyalty focus on if a consumer continuously chooses the same brand, whereas relationship theory provide a broader explanation of why the loyal consumers choose a brand, and how it is consumed (Heding et al., 2009). The relational approach suggests that the exchange of meaning between brand and consumer is equal, and both parties are vital in the creation of brand value (ibis).

Important to note is that if a brand manager attempts to apply the relational approach to strengthen the relationship between the brand and consumer, the relationship has to be meaningful, stable, and lasting in the eyes of the consumer (Heding et al., 2009). Heding et al. (2009), refer to Fournier
(1998) and her model on ‘The Brand Relationship Quality’ (BRQ), and its effect on relationship stability. The model describes how brand and consumer behaviour simultaneously create meaning, and that brand relationship quality is dependent of six factors; Love/Passion, self-connection, interdependence, commitment, intimacy, and brand partner quality (Fournier, 1998 as seen in Heding et al., 2009). Additionally, by brand actions, and the interplay between the brand and consumer, influence the stability and durability of the relationship (Heding et al., 2009).

3.3.1.2 The Community Approach

Heding et al. (2009), continues and presents the community approach, where the “…the brand is the focal point of social interaction among passionate consumers” (ibid, p.82). Brand communities are heavy influencers on brand value, since social engagement are the primary infusions of meaning (Heding et al., 2009). The authors suggest that there are two ways to manage a brand community; as an observer, or as a facilitator (ibid). In the first, the community is used as a source of information and marketers may extract brand meaning, and in the latter, the brand value is co-created with the consumer, and marketers facilitate consumer interaction (ibid).

Fournier and Lee (2009) describes how humans are becoming more eager to sense a connection and belonging to a community, as well as to build new relationships by uniting shared goals and values. Fournier and Lee (2009) further discusses the common misunderstanding by firms is that brand communities exist to serve the businesses, however, a brand community do exist, but not to serve the business but serve the individuals within it. This is something managers often forget, consumers are individuals facing several needs and interests, and a brand community should facilitate by meeting these needs, not increase sales (ibid). Consumers want to be apart of a community primary to receive and share emotional encouragement (ibid).

Additionally, community members seek to share and cultivate interests, and when these needs are satisfied, the community can contribute to the brand (Fournier & Lee, 2009). Hence, a community brand strategy is appropriate for firms with the correct mind-set and skills, and if managed successfully it can increase customers loyalty towards the brand as well as decrease marketing costs and generate ideas on how to further grow the brand (ibid). Fournier and Lee (2009) further argues that being committed, supporting and engaged the firm can generate great returns on a brand community.
3.3.1.3 The Cultural Approach

The seventh approach mentioned by Heding et al. (2009) is the cultural approach, which “...emphasizes the cultural forces in society and how these can be used to build iconic brands...” (Heding et al., 2009, p. 208). In the cultural approach, the consumer culture is researched rather than the individual culture and brand meaning is essential (Heding et al., 2009). The core theme of the cultural approach cultural branding and how brands become icons (ibid). Heding et al. (2009) say “Iconic brands are the ones that have managed to integrate themselves in the culture more skilfully than others” (ibid, p. 212).

At first glance, the community approach may pose as similar to the cultural approach, but the most significant difference is that in the cultural approach, the brand is not the central focal point (Heding et al., 2009). What is more important is the exchange of meaning and how branding and culture affect one another (ibid). Thus, movement of meaning is highly important in the cultural approach and McCracken (1986) mention culture as powerful influencer on purchase behaviour, as he displays that products have the ability to carry and communicate cultural meaning. Further, he defines culture as “…the ‘lens’ through which the individual views phenomena; as such it determines how the phenomena will be apprehended and assimilated” (ibid, p. 72). In order to understand and illustrate how meaning moves, McCracken (1986) is using three locations to illustrate the movements, namely the culturally constituted world, consumer goods, and the individual consumer. McCracken (1986), claim that meaning move from the culturally constituted world, to the consumer goods, through e.g. advertising. Further, these movements continue and move from the consumer good to the individual consumer through different rituals; possession rituals, exchange rituals, grooming rituals and divestment rituals (ibid). More specifically, the consumer choose a consumption ritual, and thereby read in specific meaning to the good, depending on his or her cultural belonging (ibid).

3.3.2 The Neuromarketing Approach

Neuromarketing is a relatively recent extension to consumer research, and is defined as “...any marketing or market research activity that uses the methods and techniques of brain science or is informed by the findings or insights of brain science” (Genco, Pohlmann, & Steidl, 2013, p. 8). The primary aim of neuromarketing is to communicate firm values to consumers while at the same time generate firm revenues, by researching consumers beahviour with assistance from brain science (Genco et al., 2013). Neuromarketing is fruitful in the attempt to better comprehand both marketing
and consumer behaviour, and there are three major ways of increasing that understanding (ibid). First, all marketing materials can be called stimuli, which could be e.g. an add or a TV commercial, and neuromarketing provides marketers with a better understanding of how consumer react to different types of stimuli (ibid). Second, neuromarketing enrichens the understanding of the different brain reaction to stimuli according to its situational context i.e. where and how, the stimuli is presented e.g. online or in a retail setting (ibid). Third, neuromarketing can give the marketer information on the reactions to stimuli and situational context, and how consumers turn those reactions into a behaviour or decisions i.e. if we buy the presented product or not (ibid).

Genco et al. (2013), mention six areas where marketers frequently employ neuromarketing tools; Branding, Product Innovation, Advertising, Shopping & In-store marketing, Online shopping experiences and Entertainment. In branding, marketers mostly work with associations that connects to the brand, and though that create a competitive advantage (ibid). In relation to product innovation, there is focus on package design and how to make consumers more attentive to the product displayed (ibid). In advertising, there is a lot of research on what makes one ad better than another, and on catching attention and evoke emotions with the add (ibid). When it comes to in-store shopping behaviour, consumers shop by habit and routine, thus by better comprehending how to influence consumers habitual behaviour, retailers can influence consumers purchase intentions (ibid). In online shopping, the consumer often have conscious goals with their visits to certain websites, and the human brain acts in a very unique way when we act online, and neuroscience provide marketers with valued information for online marketing strategies (ibid). Finally, in entertainment brain science provides with information on why we have a preference for some stories before others (ibid).

3.3.2.1 Motivated Behaviour

Genco et al. (2013), mention that marketers can influence consumers’ non-conscious minds and thereby influence their behaviour with something called priming. This method is a process, which plays out automatically, quick and effortless in our minds, though that our brains makes automatic associations to a given stimuli, or prime (ibid). By employing priming as marketing method, marketers can attain a deeper understanding of consumers mental associations and automatic behavioural responses (ibid). Genco et al. (2013) explain that “brands are primes that are supposed to associate inanimate products and companies with our deepest personal aspirations and goals” (ibid, p.84), and “Displays in stores and images on packages are primes that are supposed to
influence immediate choice in a shopping situation” (ibid, p.84). Further, the authors claim that priming is an essential tool to all marketing activities inter alia, adds, displays, celebrity endorsement and so on, since it ultimately influences consumer attitudes as well as their purchase behaviour (ibid).

There are two different types of priming: Associative Priming, and Motivational Priming (Genco et al., 2013). Associative Priming triggers ideas and concepts, which in turn triggers behaviour (ibid). Motivational priming on the other hand grows stronger over time, often starts with associative priming, and rather than just triggering ideas from our memories, it triggers a goal which will affect our behaviour until the goal is reached or given up (ibid). Important to note is that there are barriers to priming, which might cause consumers to associate negatively to the prime (ibid). ‘Current-state to goal-state gap’, is the first mentioned barrier, which is dependent on the mental state of the consumer, e.g. if a person is trying to loose weight, they are more receptive to primes that will help them reach that goal, but if the person is not interested in loosing weight, they will not be receptive to that specific primes (ibid). The second barrier that is mentioned is ‘positive feelings towards the goal’, which basically means that the primed person must have positive feelings towards the primes, since people cannot be primed into doing things they do not want to (ibid). More specifically, priming only infuses behaviour towards already existing goals (ibid).

Since motivational priming has a stronger long-term effect, related to goals, and ultimately consumer behaviour it is the most common approach for marketers, (Genco et al., 2013). Genco et al. (2013) describe that the pursuit of a goal, occurs over four steps. Primarily, the goal needs to be triggered by e.g. a prime. Second, the information given through the e.g. prime has to be processed in the brain to guide us to the third step, which is the behavioural response e.g. if we buy the product or not (ibid). Finally, in the forth step, the consequences of the behaviour follows e.g. did the product meet the expectations (ibid). Goals can be both conscious and non-conscious, where the first means that we are aware of what goal we have, and to attain these goals we have a deliberate strategy (ibid). The non-conscious goals function similar to the conscious goals with the main difference that they are less receptive to interruption and that they are persuaded without us knowing it, and they are activated through priming (ibid). Motivation often drives goals (ibid), which in turn is reflects to how we feel emotionally about a given item, and depending on the emotion we will approach the item, or avoid it (ibid). Genco et al. (2013) continues to explain that
the, “Emotional connection is very important to the idea of loyalty, both to brands and products” (ibid, p.90). More specifically, the brand or product has to ‘earn’ the positive emotions through usage, experience, or social validation (Genco et al., 2013).

Eyal and Hoover (2014), present a model on how firms can ‘hook’ consumers to their brand by creating habit-forming products, by seeking to get consumers to repeatedly move through four vital steps: Trigger, Action, Variable Reward, and Investment. The first step is trigger, and means the feature that fuel or initiate the behaviour (ibid). The second step is action, which is the actual performed behaviour (ibid). Third, is a variable reward, which the authors discuss as a powerful fuel to the repeated behaviour (ibid). More specifically, firms can employ variable rewards as a means to attract consumers to take action again (ibid). Further, the authors claim that by employing variable rewards, firms will be able to create a craving for their products (ibid). The authors mention that there are three types of variable rewards; tribe, hunt, and self (ibid). The reward of the tribe refers to the quest of attaining acknowledgement from others, the reward of the hunt refers to the quest for e.g. physical objects i.e. food, and the last reward of the self refers to fundamental rewards and the search for personal gratification (ibid). The fourth step called investment is about making the user invest, inter alia; time, money, or effort in the product, with the ultimate goal of making them hooked to the brand and have them repeat the behaviour continuously (ibid). More specifically, the authors assert that the more the consumer invest in the product the more engaged they will become, and it is about the investments facilitating an improved customer experience (ibid).

3.3.2.2 Habitual Behaviour

In contrast to motivated behaviour, we have habitual behaviour (Genco et al., 2013). Habitual behaviour is not goal driven, but rather a triggered reaction (ibid). Several of the leading brands today have managed to use consumer habits to their advantage (ibid). Further mentioned is that most shopping decisions are based on habits, and not only for everyday shopping decisions, but also for major choices (ibid). Creating habits is an extensive process, which must be learned through four brand strategies, stressed by Genco et al. (2013). First, brands needs to keep the triggers consistent at the point of sales, e.g. changing displays and uneven promotions may interrupt the habitual behaviour (ibid). Second, one should not ask consumers to think about their decisions it may lead to them starting to think about other brands (ibid). Third, the brand should be careful in changing aspects of the product than disrupt the experience i.e. changing price, place, packaging, or
ingredients (ibid). The fourth and final suggested strategy is to “trigger behaviour, not attitudes” (ibid, p.151), as a brand you want to activate a behaviour and not make the consumer remember an attitude, since attitudes are less predictable than behaviours (Genco et al., 2013). Evident is that habitual behaviour can be interrupted, thus it is a constant challenge to keep a strategy that interrupts competitors habitual buyers, but not ones own (ibid).

If a new brand enters the market and seek to create habitual behaviours, rather than focusing on disrupting existing market leaders associations it may be more effective to create new associations to create value for consumers (Genco et al., 2013). More specifically, new brands do better in attempting to change consumers’ implicit (spontaneous, effortless and non-conscious) decision-making to an explicit (emotional, methodical and conscious) decision-making process (ibid). To change consumers’ implicit decisions to explicit decisions, Genco et al. (2013) suggest that they new brand needs to catch their attention, it has to make sense, and there has to be an explanation to the brand-shift, as well as that the new brand must engage and satisfy counterarguments fulfilling a need that the other brand cannot.

3.4 Identification of research aim

It is clear that over the last two decades there has been an increase in the interest for the environment, which also has influenced consumption patterns (Tzilivakis et al., 2012). Incentives from the European Union state that by 2020, specific targets have to be reached, which simultaneously pressure society, farmers, and individuals to think more about sustainable actions (The European Commission, 2015). This in turn has led to a rising number of firms following the ecological trend, and exploiting the related challenges of it, turning them into strategic opportunities and competitive advantages (Clemenz, 2009). Thus, it is clear that ecology is a relevant area of research both in terms of consumption, and consequently to business strategy.

Auger et al. (2003), request further research within reasoning behind consumer preference for ethical commodities, and how brand personality and equity may affect purchase decision. Literature found indicates that the credibility of the ecological labels may serve as a barrier to purchase (Rahbar & Abdul Wahid, 2011; Thøgersen, 2000; Strategic Direction, 2013; Daunfeldt & Rudholm, 2014; Punyatoya, 2014; Chkanikova & Lehner, 2014; Gulbrandsen, 2006; Sammer & Wüstenhagen, 2006; Nyilasy et al., 2014; Montoro Rios et al., 2006). Additionally, Rahbar and Abdul Wahid (2011), mention retailers and manufacturers need to better communicate what the
different labels and brands imply. Chkanikova and Lehner (2014) discuss that retailers who choose to launch private eco-brands, simultaneously induce the requirements for the certifications of eco-labelled products. This is evidence that green marketing is a vital focal point for retailers.

Rex and Baumann (2007), suggest that marketing for green products, should be more inspired by conventional marketing strategy, and they further propose more research on conventional marketing strategies applied to green products. Arguably, including conventional marketing tools, i.e. the 4 P's of modern marketing management is deemed as a relevant framework for the analysis, both as it is mentioned in literature (Rex & Baumann, 2007), but also since it is an extensive and common approach to conventional marketing (Kotler & Keller, 2012). As identified, the area of green marketing is lagging behind and conventional marketing tools need to be adapted. Furthermore, ICA is in the process of developing their private eco-brand, yet the consumer demand appears larger than the actual purchases.
4 Findings
In this section, the authors have outlined the collected data, divided it into three parts according to methods, the experiments, focus groups, and finally the questionnaire. The groups were consistent throughout the process and the number of participants ranged from 7-10 people per group, and in total 25 people participated in this study. The authors collected data over a period of three months, specifically from the 15th of January to the 15th of March. Participants went through the research process in the order presented below.

4.1 Experiment
The first part of the data collection was as an experiment, consisting of three steps. First, participants went grocery shopping as usual, followed by the authors collecting their receipts. Second, the authors exposed participants to one of three stimuli, or prime. Finally, participants went to ICA for grocery shopping once more, and their new receipts was collected. All groups got a different stimulus, as outlined in section 2.2. The first group watched a documentary about pesticides at a banana plantation in South America two days before their second grocery shopping. The second group read an article about ecological “footprints” related to consumption patterns, the day before their second shopping tour. Finally, the third stimulus was at the POP where the authors had a discussion, while being exposed to both the documentary and the article, before the participants went to shop groceries. The experiment was individual within the groups. The authors have examined and compared the receipts to find similarities and differences before and after the stimulus. Outlined below is the found data from the experiments. Important transcripts and coding’s are included in appendix E.

4.1.1 Group 1
The first group consisted of seven participants. The first receipts show that 71 % purchased at least one ecologically labelled commodity. In the first round the average percentage of ecologically labelled products, among those who bought ecologic products, was 13,8 %. The ecological product categories represented among those who bought ecologic commodities was, fruits and vegetables (75%), and dairy (25%). In the fruits and vegetables category, 14 % was ecologic bananas and 14 % had the stricter eco-label, KRAV.

After the stimulus [banana documentary], 28,5 % had increased the quantity of ecological products in their basket. The number of participants who included any ecologic commodities in their baskets, had decreased from 71 % to 57%, thus one of the participants who bought ecological products in
the first run, did not purchase any in the second. The average percentage of ecologically labelled products in the shopping baskets, after the stimulus, increased from 13.8% to 24.1%, among those who purchased any ecologic products. More specifically, even though the number of participants purchasing ecologically labelled products decreased, the quantity of products among those who bought ecologic, increased, leading to a larger proportion of ecologic products in the average shopping basket after the stimulus. The most prominent ecological product categories after the stimulus were still fruit and vegetables (73%), as well as dairy (27%). In the fruits and vegetables category, 14% bought ecologic bananas, leaving the number consistent. However, the KRAV-labelled products increased from 14% to 28% after the stimulus. Further acknowledged was that one of the participants donated money to charity after the stimulus, and one item among the ‘regular’ commodities was labelled as Swedish produced.

![Pie Chart](image)

*Figure 6. Illustrates the percentage of ecologic products in the shopping baskets before and after the stimulus, among the participants that had included at least one ecologic commodity.*

### 4.1.2 Group 2

The second group consisted of eight participants. The first receipts showed that 25 % of the participants had included at least one ecologically labelled product in their shopping basket. On average, 4 % of the average total quantity of products, was ecologic. Out of the 25 % who purchased an ecologically labelled product, 50 % bought ecologic fish, and 50% bought ecological vegetables. Additionally, 1 % of the products among the ‘regular’ products were Swedish produced. Two participants bought non-ecologic bananas and none included KRAV products.
After the stimulus [article], the receipts showed that 37.5% had increased the quantity of ecological products in their basket, whereas 12.5% had decreased the quantity of ecologic products in their baskets. However, the total percentage of participants purchasing ecological labelled items after the stimulus had increased from 25% to 50%. The total percentage of ecological commodities per shopping basket increased from 4% to 10.3%. Among the ecologic products after the stimulus, 86% can be categorized as vegetables and fruits, and 14% as dairy. Additionally, receipts in the second run did not show any Swedish produced items or KRAV labels. However, the same two participants who had purchased regular bananas in the first run had switched to ecologic bananas after the stimulus.

![Figure 7. Illustrates the percentage of ecologic products in the shopping baskets before and after the stimulus, among the participants that had included at least one ecologic commodity.](image)

### 4.1.3 Group 3

The third group consisted of ten participants. After the first receipts it was evident that 50% of the participants had included ecologically labelled products in their shopping baskets. In the ecologic baskets, on average 8.5% out of the total commodities had an ecologic label. Out of the products that had an ecologic label, 83% can be put in the category of fruits and vegetables, and 17% within dairy products. Three people had bought ecologic bananas, and two had bought bananas without an ecologic label. None included any KRAV items. Yet, 1% of the products were Swedish produced.

After the stimulus at the POP, it is evident that all participants had included more ecologically labelled items in the second shopping baskets. Among those who included ecologic products in the first round 80% had increased the total quantity of ecologic products in their baskets. The average percentage of ecologic products after the stimulus increased to 24.4% per basket. Further, 52% of the purchased ecologically labelled products was in the fruits and vegetables category, 9% can be
categorized as ecological dairy products, and 39 % was considered as other ecological products i.e. fruit drinks, tea or salsa. None had included ecologically labelled meat however, 2 % of the products were labelled as Swedish produced. After the stimulus, none bought regular bananas, but two bought ecologic bananas and two participants included the stricter Swedish eco-label KRAV in their baskets.

![Before and After Comparison](image)

*Figure 8. illustrates the percentage of ecologic products in the shopping baskets before and after the stimulus, among the participants that had included at least one ecologic commodity.*

**Summary**

Conclusively, the experiments indicate that after all groups had been exposed to their specific stimulus the ecologic consumption changed. More specifically, looking at the volume of products in their shopping baskets, all groups had on average increased the quantity of ecologic commodities after the stimuli. Most evident was the change in the final group where 90 % of participants changed their behaviour. Furthermore, in group number two, where two participants had purchased regular bananas before the stimulus, they changed that behaviour to the next shopping tour and both chose the ecologic alternative instead. The most prominent ecologic product categories appear to be fruits, vegetables, and dairy. Where the average percentage for all three groups, the fruit and vegetable category was the largest before the stimulus on 75 %, and dairy was 25 %. After the stimulus, fruits and vegetables decreased to 63% on average, dairy 14 %, and other products had 22 %, where all in the ‘others’ category was from the third group. True for all groups, were that ecologic products were chosen more frequently than Swedish produced products. Additionally, everyone who chose Swedish produced products, did not choose any ecologic alternatives, which was true for all three groups where Swedish produced products was included in the shopping baskets.
4.2 Focus Group

The second part of the data collection was a focus group. After the second shopping tour at ICA, the participants of each group met for focus groups. The groups were set according to the stimuli from the experiments to keep consistency and discussions relevant. After the focus groups, the authors transcribed the recordings from each focus group. Next, the authors coded the transcriptions following the suggestions provided by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009). The most frequent codes and themes are outlined below.

4.2.1 Group 1

During the first group, the most discussed themes were trust and knowledge. In relation to trust, participants articulated a stronger trust towards Swedish brands, Swedish certifications, and Swedish producers. Moreover, ICA’s private eco-brand was mentioned as a brand participants trust. However, they mentioned lack of trust towards ecological certifications in general, and said that it is difficult to control the whole value chain, as well as that there are too many certifications. The lack of trust was mentioned in relation to firms abusing their power over employees. In terms of knowledge, the discussion revolved around that participants found it hard to understand the meaning of all different certifications, thus they found it difficult to know what actions to take, in order to do the “right” thing in terms of responsibility, and they expressed that food retailers i.e. ICA, should provide with more information about the meaning of the different certifications.

When the reasoning behind why ecological items were purchased Self-Fulfilment was discussed most, followed by selfish reasoning. When self-fulfilment was discussed, topics such as that the small actions do matter, working conditions, pride of contributing, and fairness were discussed most, and selfish reasoning mostly focused on ones own health. Following, participants stated that responsibility for informing consumers lies on the retailers. However, participants state that the responsibility for the certification, what firms need to do to acquire it, and the control of the productions, lies on governmental level, or even EU-level. There are several preconceptions mentioned in relation to ecological products, among the most mentioned is firms’ abuse of power, and that firms often care about money and power before their workers. Furthermore, participants mentioned distance as something difficult, and said that it was demanding to be a consumer that do the correct thing when the consequences of ones consumption is often seen geographically very far away. More specifically, participants expressed a frustration regarding the issues related to distance, as they found it problematic to know what choice was the right one for the people working at the
plantations. Additionally, the difficulty to relate to the consequences of their consumption, led to **ignorance** i.e. very little reflection of the issues, for both individuals and firms geographically located far away.

Products that were strongly associated with ecology were fruits, vegetables, and dairy. Prices were mentioned as a barrier to purchase, as they were seen as higher compared to non-ecological products. However, the ecological products were mentioned as providers of additional value, in terms of quality, environmental and social impacts, as well as health benefits. Hence some mentioned the price as less important. More specifically, some participants mentioned that they became less price-sensitive, due to high product functionality. Locally produced, Swedish certifications and Swedish producers had a higher trust and preference among participants, compared to ecological products, foreign producers and certifications. Finally, the majority of the group mentioned ICA and local farmers markets as the most preferred place for purchasing ecological products.

4.2.2 Group 2

The most prominent themes discussed in the second group were **knowledge**, **trust**, and **preconceptions**. Concerning knowledge, the participants asked for more concrete information about how they actually affect the environment through **not** buying ecologically produced products, as well how they influence the world through buying ecological labelled products. More specifically, the participants requested specific information about how their purchase behaviour influences our planet. The discussion on knowledge can be further connected to the occurring discussion on **distance**, as the participants mentioned that it is easier to understand the importance of purchasing ecologic products when you see the consequences of consumption up close. Viewing the consequences at a production plant in a country far away is more difficult compared to a plantation closer i.e. Sweden, thus a preference and **trust** for Swedish produced is surfaced. Moreover, participants articulated specifically an increased trust towards ‘I Love eco’. In terms of **trust**, they further expressed their lack of trust towards ecologic labels in general, and requested more specific information about what ecologically produced actually means in regards to rules and requirements, as well as concerns about the number of different ecological labels, and what each of them actually stands for, and how they differ. Furthermore, the participants expressed a higher trust towards ICA’s private brand ‘I Love eco’ compared to other ecological brands.
Another topic mentioned was responsibility, and who is responsible for informing about ecology. The participants agreed that primarily, it was each individual's own responsibility to decide upon how and what to consume, as well as gather information, nevertheless they mentioned both companies and governments responsibility, and continued to argue that it might be in the government’s interest to create incentives for firms to take more responsibility. Further surfaced, were preconceptions, and the discussion indicated that there are several preconceptions about ecologically produced items. The most common preconception appears to be that consuming ecologic is expensive and difficult as there are countless certifications, which makes the consumers confused and frustrated. The confusion was elaborated on and the participants expressed that they do not know what they actually pay for, and if the firms’ actually follow the rules, as well as the firms’ abuse of power over producers, since firms’ are seen to aim for as much profit as possible.

Another topic discussed concerning ecological products is price, as some of the participants appeared more price-sensitive. However, they were less price-sensitive if they could perceive the quality of the product as better, which was often true for ecologic alternative. More specifically, product quality was ranked as more important than price. The perceived higher product quality was expressed through that ecologic products were seen as a healthier and more natural alternative, containing more nutrients. They further discussed product appearance, and expressed that sometimes, ecologically produced goods did not appear as visually attractive, which made them choose conventional alternatives instead.

Products frequently mentioned in relation to ecology were fruit, vegetables, and dairy products. Finally, the participants talked about what motivated them to increase their consumption of ecologically produced commodities, and they were convinced that humans are selfish and thus, egoistic motives such as health, and ones own well-being, was considered effective motivational factors. However, some also argued that they bought ecological produced items for non-selfish reasons, mostly concerned working conditions for the employees, as well as general concerns about taking responsibility regarding the environment.

4.2.3 Group 3

The most frequent discussed themes in the third focus group were knowledge, trust, and responsibility. In terms of knowledge, the participants requested more knowledge about the consequences of their consumption behaviour, but also more knowledge about the meaning of
different ecological labels. In relation to trust, participants mention ICA as a distributor they trust, mostly for their private brand ‘I Love eco’, but also in relation to their wide selection of other goods. Additionally, they mention a lack of trust for firms’ incentives of including ecology in general, especially when it comes to the margin firms makes on commodities, and that ecologic options, at times appears hidden behind non-ecological alternatives. When it comes to responsibility most participants mention them selves first and foremost as responsible for their consumption, however they also mention media as a mediator of information, and that incentives for stores to include more ecological options should be approached by the government.

They discuss reasons for purchasing ecological items, and primary mention selfish reasons, such as their own health, ecology being a part of their image, and ecology being a trend. Second, they mention Self-fulfilment features, such as thinking in a chain perspective e.g., what happens to the farmers if they choose a specific product, and the fact that one person’s action today may make a difference in a larger scale in the future. Additionally, there was a discussion regarding the chain perspective, where participants surfaced and expressed a worry for non-ecological producers, and what would happen to those plantations if everyone purchased ecological products. Further, participants asserted that purchasing ecological products is good for the environment, but they have higher concerns for the environment for products such as cars, compared to groceries.

Price was mentioned as a barrier to purchasing ecological products, but it was also stated that the price difference is larger for certain products such as meat compared to dairy products, and that they are less price sensitive towards fruits and vegetables, as often those products are offered at almost the same price as non-ecological alternatives. Fruits and vegetables is also the category most mentioned as associated to ecological items. They further mention Product Quality as something that adds value to ecological products, and a factor that makes them less sensitive to price. Several mention that they value locally produced products higher than ecologically produced items, specifically if the products have been produced close to where they live. Swedish produced products are valued higher than other products because consumers trust Swedish producers more than foreign producers.
Summary
The two themes knowledge and trust is most common in all three groups. All groups request more knowledge about what ecologically produced actually means, as well as how individual’s choice of consumption influences the environment. ‘Trust’ as well as ‘lack of trust’ against ecological certification was also discussed in all three groups. Participant expressed lack of trust to ecological labelling due to the absence of one universal ecological brand, and trust towards locally produced products, and ICA’s own brand I Love eco. Furthermore, there was a general perception that locally produced products were more appealing than ecological products in all three groups, which conflicts with the behaviour found during the experiments. The perception of ecological products such as firms abusing workers was discussed in groups one and two. The individuals, firms and government’s responsibility of putting pressure, creating incentives, and taking other responsible actions were prominent topics in groups two and three. Self-Fulfilment, was mentioned in relation to consumption consequences, pride of being a part of the solution, and fair working conditions. Finally, the distance was discussed in groups one and two, where participants surfaced a difficulty to relate to consequences occurring far away, and it was mentioned that it is easier to related to aspects of ecology that lie closer.

4.3 Questionnaire
The third and final part of the data collection was an individual questionnaire. The questionnaire was presented as an online form, via Google forms. In this section the findings will be illustrated through graphs together with descriptions of questions and answers. The graphs contain illustrations of all groups, where group one is blue, group two is orange, and group three is grey. This has been done to alleviate the reader and the analysis of the found data, as it makes it easier to compare. To increase the relevance of the findings, questions that failed to provide with new or relevant information has been excluded.
In question number two, the respondents answered regarding the diversity of ecological commodities in their baskets. In group one and three the respondents most often choose the same products. Group two indicated that everyone purchase ecologically labelled items, yet 50% always choose the same products, whereas the other 50% alternate the products. Immersing in the following question, Group one mention dairy, fruit and vegetables as well as eggs, among the ecological product categories most frequently purchased, which is confirmed by group two, who additionally mention nuts as products that are frequently bought ecologic. Group three, also mentions fruit, dairy, and vegetables among the most common commodities, but adds store-cupboard products inter alia, tea, peanut butter, and olive oil.
In question four, the respondents chose among alternatives that stated reasons to purchase ecological products, where they could choose several alternatives. In group one, 71% of the respondents said that they purchase ecological items, since it is good for one's health. In group one, the respondents cared the least for what others did, and one's own image. The health factor was also the most popular in group two, where 72% said it was the most important factor to purchase ecologic products. Group two, cared the least about the taste of ecological products, as well as being a part of something bigger. In group three 60% stated that ecological items made them feel better about them selves, and taste was ranked as their least concern.

Figure 10.
In question five, the respondents ranked reasons not to purchase ecologic items and all three groups ranked price as their main reason not to buy ecologic products. Group one and two both ranked the mistrust for the certifications as the second reason, whereas group three said that they did not perceive the ecological alternative as better than other products, and that they rather choose products according to visual appearance than labels.

Figure 11.
In the replies for the reasoning behind purchase habits, and if participants had changed their behaviour as a result of this experiment most indicate that it did not change their behaviour to a large extent. However, as a follow-up question participants were asked to elaborate further on this. Group one explained that price was the main reason for why the behaviour did not change, as well as that they were already very up to date concerning ecological products before the stimuli. Group 2, assess that the pre-knowledge was a reason for a small change in habitual behaviour, as well as that the ecological products were difficult to find, and the certifications lack credibility. Additionally, group two said that the experiment increased the awareness for ecological products, and the discussion during the focus group increased it even further. Group three agreed with the two previous groups that due to high prices and pre-knowledge, the habitual behaviour did not change considerably.
5 Analysing Ecology at ICA
The analysis has been outlined in accordance with Singh (2013), and his view on green marketing as an extension of conventional marketing, with the main functionality of linking conventional marketing to ecological and ethical products. More specifically, the aim of this analysis is to better understand the link between green marketing at ICA and their private eco-brand, I Love eco. Additionally, Rex and Baumann (2007) suggest employing methods from conventional marketing to green marketing, to better engage a wider set of the market. Thus, for the analysis of this thesis, the authors have chosen to conduct the analysis using the model four P’s of marketing management presented by Kotler and Keller (2012). The model has been employed mainly for its comprehensiveness, but also since it has been specifically suggested in literature that adding the marketing mix to green marketing could be fruitful (Rex & Baumann, 2007). Initially, the framework function as a means to analyse the collected data, and to find relevant recommendations for ICA specifically. Additionally, the framework function as a way of analysing the models application within green marketing. More specifically, the authors hope that by applying the four P’s of conventional marketing to green marketing, provide both ICA and academia with new and interesting insights.

The authors of this thesis presents the analysis by placing ICA’s current green marketing strategy, into the new Four P’s of marketing management (Kotler and Keller, 2012), and compare to customer expectations. Furthermore, this analysis primary focus on how to motivate the consumers’ behaviour in favour of ICA’s private eco-brand ‘I love eco’, and not to all eco-brands i.e. KRAV. The reason for the fixated focus is to narrow the result and increase the relevance, trustworthiness, and credibility of the coming recommendations, as well as keep the analysis in line with the research question. Findings from experiment, focus groups, and the surveys, will be included, and compared to relevant literature to increase the substance. When citing to the focus groups, surnames, group number and row number will be included, and whole transcripts can be seen in appendix H-J.
5.1 Green marketing

Under this paragraph, the Four P’s of Modern Marketing Management will function as a framework, where each ‘P’ has been divided into separate headings, to alleviate the reader. First presented is ‘People’, followed by ‘Processes’, ‘Programs’, and finally ‘Performance’ (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

5.1.1 People

This section will elaborate on important players related to ecological consumption at ICA. Since this research focus on understanding if ICA influences consumers in their purchase behaviour, both consumers and ICA are considered important actors. Additionally, from the data collection regarding responsibility for relevant ecologic parameters, marketers, producers and the government are relevant people. Consequently, the aim is to get a clearer picture of who appears important to the ecologic consumption at ICA.

Senior Brand Manager Sandra Wennberg (2015b) states that, “With ICA I Love eco, we seek to make the ecologic lifestyle available to everyone” (Appendix G). ICA aims at reaching all their customers’ and thereby increase everyone’s interest in ecology (Wennberg, 2015b). Since, the focus groups appeared to be agreeing that ecology is a relevant phenomenon, targeting all consumers is argued relevant. Albeit, in focus group three, there were some deviation in this agreement, as one of the participants expressed mistrust to ecology in general, and whether relevant. However, this mistrust expressed appeared to be guided to producers rather than retailers and products, as the participant expressed a lack of trust regarding animal welfare.

All three groups mentioned producers in different contexts, yet in the first group the largest discussion on the topic surfaced. This may be since there was a lot of focus on production in their stimulus (Appendix A). Participants guided their ‘lack of trust’ primary towards the working conditions. Producers functionality, and how well they manage to incorporate fairness towards employees and animals, appear as an influencer on participants’ trust towards ecology. In group one, participants general thoughts of ecology was positive. Moreover, producers are mentioned in all three groups as influencers on consumer perception of ecologic concepts. Hence, producers may be seen as relevant people to the concept of ecology at ICA.
Some participants claim that the responsibility of setting demands on producers rests on retailers such as ICA. In literature, Montoro Rios (2006) assert that there is a positive relationship between environmental associations and brand attitude. Hence, employing certifications on ecological products may serve as a means to strengthen brand image. Arguably, incentives for ICA to work extensively with ecology, should suggestively come from higher instances. Lisa states, “Incentives needs to come from a governmental level, but I also believe that it is important that large firms such as ICA, set demands on suppliers and producers, and stop selling bad products” (Lisa, Group 2, row 127). This is in alignment with the discussion by Rahbar and Abdul Wahid (2011), as they mention that today, governments have not been successful in setting clear requirements for the certifications on ecologic products. This might mean that anyone can get a certification, and thus firms may actually lack incentives to increase their ecological sales, since it may be frustrating and confusing not knowing which producers are truly good.

According to Sønderskov and Daugbjerg (2010), Swedish producers create their own certifications this may be one of the reasons behind why consumers feel increasingly frustrated concerning the different meanings behind the labels. Moreover, the participants discuss incentives as a complex chain reaction, where governments pressure retailers, and retailers pressure producers. This is further mentioned by Rahbar and Abdul Wahid (2011), as they assert that responsibility for increasing knowledge regarding labels and brands lie in the hands of governments, which ultimately induce incentives for customers, firms and producers. This demonstrates a collective responsibility for creating incentives.

Arguably, incentives for consumers to take a larger ecologic responsibility, is vague. Michael suggests “Retailers have to take their responsibility and guide consumers to the ‘correct’ ecological decisions and show that they truly care” (Michael, Group 3, row 141). Michael’s statement indicates that retailers should provide consumers with incentives to purchase more ecologic. More specifically, his statement indicates that, if governments provide retailers with incentives, and retailers’ pressure producers, consumers will care and trust ecologic products as a result. What is more, Michael’s suggestion supports Beverland (2005a), as he similarly assert that brands need to be authentic in their communication, and i.e. show consumers that their ecological incentives are true and honest. Further, Jonatan claim, “Everyone should take responsibility for this issue, and to be able to care more and move the discussion forward, we have to practise as we speech and start
acting, the effort is pretty small really.” (Jonatan, Group 2, row 63). Jonatan’s claim develops Michaels statement, and adds that consumers need more knowledge about ecology, yet Jonatan surface an ignorance among individual consumers.

When participants discussed incentives for purchasing ecologic products, the discussion was dominated about their private health, and increased sense of self-fulfilment. These findings are in line with Cornelissen et al. (2007) and Daunfeldt & Rudholm (2014), who similarly found that selfish reasons were considered most important when choosing to buy ecologically produced commodities. Philip clearly stated, “The principal motivation for me to purchase ecologic products, is that I believe that it improves my own health” (Philip, Group 1, row 67). Kong and Zhang (2014), also discuss consumers’ incentives for purchasing ecologic, and similarly declare that it is rarely just to save our planet, but rather based on factors such as convenience and functionality of products. Arguably, retailers can use these motivations mentioned by consumers, as incentives to influence their purchase behaviour.

Group one’s participants argued that when they were geographically distant, they found it difficult to relate to the consequences of their behaviour, which ultimately meant a lack of incentives (Appendix H). More specifically, since selfish reasons i.e. health, is something that consumers actually can see the consequences of, they may be easier to relate to ones own consumption, compared to poor working conditions on plantations in South America, or environmental hazards in i.e. Antarctica. Tobias’s further elaborate on ICA’s private eco-brand, ‘I Love eco’, and that it should be changed to ‘I Love ego’, since consumers appears to care more about their own wellbeing, than others. Victor supports Tobias argument to focus more on health parameters in the marketing for ICA’s ‘I Love eco’ as he declares “I focus more on myself, and my wellbeing than the environment when I shop for food” (Victor, Group 3, Row 75). On the contrary, Karl explains, “I purchase ecological products to support ecological producers and farmers” (Karl, Group 1, Row 23). These quotes are examples of a deviation of views in the question of why to buy ecologic. However, the global incentives were significantly underrepresented, and these discussion further support that selfish reasons are primary incentives for purchasing ecologic products.

As argued above, consumers’ incentives appear focused on private benefits. Further, ICA’s main incentives are declared as to meet consumer’s increased demand for ecological products, and being
a part of the preservation of the environment (Wennberg, 2015a). Hence, ICA’s incentives rather appear to focus on social benefits. The deviation in incentives between consumers and ICA, may be a result of a disparity in knowledge, which is supported by Sammer and Wüstenhagen (2006), as they declare that there is an imbalance in knowledge between retailers and consumers. Today, ICA communicate environmental issues by informing consumers how they together with ICA, can take social responsibility for the environment by purchasing more ecological products i.e. ‘I Love eco’. However, ICA communicate health primary through one of their other private brands ‘Gott liv’, where they focus on people’s health. Nonetheless, ICA does not link the brands ‘Gott liv’ and ‘I Love eco’, thus currently, there is no connection between ecology and health in the direct communication of these two brands (ICA, 2015c).

From the focus groups, marketers were mentioned as those responsible for communication between firms and consumers. Arvid illustrated the matter of green marketing in group two, “The information about the consequences of our consumption is a marketing responsibility and firms need to better market and sell these products better” (Arvid, Group 2, row 36). This quote suggest that the effects of the way we consume should be better communicated to motivate consumers to purchase ecologically produced items. Additionally, this quote suggest that the responsibility rests on marketers, which is aligned with what Laroche et al. (2001) declared, that it is through communication that consumers will become encouraged to change their behaviour. Further, Arvid lifts that in general, this type of commodities need to be better marketed, which is again confirmed in literature by Rex and Baumann (2007), as they discuss that the branch of green marketing is lagging behind conventional marketing. Arguably, there is a breach between consumers and retailers in terms of their knowledge, which should be prevented with better marketing for ecological products. However, group two and three mentioned that even through retailers, producers, and governments carries obligations, they also see themselves as responsible, and that consumers have to embrace the information provided by marketers.

5.1.2 Processes
This section will outline relevant processes at ICA’s connected to ecology and marketing. Further, it follows the framework ‘customer perceived value’ (CPV), presented as relevant to firm processes, by Kotler and Keller (2012, p. 80-81). The framework comply customer benefits and costs, related with i.e. ICA’s private brand ‘I Love eco’ (Kotler & Keller, 2013). By understanding costs and
benefits for consumers is fruitful in terms of understanding how to maximize customer value, and ultimately improving relevant processes be able to exceed their expectations.

5.1.2.1 ICA’s Value Proposition for ‘I Love Eco’

When asked why consumers prefer to purchase ecologic alternatives at ICA, participants stated that ICA was trustworthy, familiar, and they offer a wide product range, especially in their private eco-brand ‘I Love eco’. Arguably these factors may be the consequence of a strong brand heritage and consequent market presence. Philip stated, “I associate COOP stronger to ecology, but I always choose ICA because ICA feels more familiar” (Philip, Group 1, row 57). This quote reveals a frequent discussion among participants, which indicates that ICA’s customers are loyal, and trust the brand, even though other retailers may communicate ecology more frequently.

ICA’s value proposition does not appear to differ between their ecological products and their general assortment, Clara states that, “ICA Sabbatsberg is my favourite store, since they have a wide range of products in general, but also have a great ecological assortment, which makes me loyal to ICA” (Clara, Group 3, row 9). Clara’s statement explains that in general she favours ICA since they have a wide assortment of products, both in general but also for ecologic alternatives. As outlined above regarding consumers incentives for purchasing ecologic products, the importance of taking care of ones own health appear to be a primary motivator, followed by the less mentioned factors of e.g. taking responsibility and encourage fair producers and environmental hazards. Arguably, these may be seen as additional value propositions to ICA’s ‘I Love eco’, which is further supported by the questionnaires (Appendix K-M).

5.1.2.2 Customer Benefits

Participants articulated several benefits of purchasing ecological products, among those taking responsibility for the environment, their own personal wellbeing, as well as a sense of being socially accepted, has been frequently expressed. Some argue that the only benefit they seek is their own wellbeing, while others state that they seek a clearer conscience through taking a social responsibility by purchasing ecological products. Further, a minority acknowledge both the private benefits as well as social responsibility benefits. Evidently there is a link between ecology and health, as well as ecology and environmental hazards. However, health benefits were identified as the most prominent benefit of purchasing ecologic, for both groups one and two, followed by parameters related to self-fulfilment (Appendix K: M). Whereas the third group, mentioned health benefits as the second most valued benefit, after self-fulfilment (Appendix L). These benefits, both
health and self-fulfilment, are related to private benefits, which is supported by Østergaard and Jantzen (2000) in their last theory consumer research, as they mention consumers as narcissist who consume to seek new personal and emotional experiences through consumption.

Furthermore, participants mentioned social acceptance as another self-fulfilling benefit related to purchasing ecological products, Sarah claims, “You also want others confirmation, as confirmation is a great motivator for consumers to increase their social value” (Sarah, Group 2, row 152). Line supports Sarah’s argument by adding, “You want to fit in in a community, if everyone bought ecological products and if you did not you would be ashamed” (Line, Group 2, row 153). These statements confirm the importance of self-fulfilment to consumers, in terms of both social belonging and confirmation (Belk, 1988). In literature, Cova and Cova (2002) discuss products as features permitting consumers to interact and initiate social belonging through tribes, or communities. More specifically, they mention self-fulfilling features i.e. social benefits, in terms of social acceptance and belonging in a community or tribe, functional benefits in terms of product taste, and private benefits related to their own health, as well as psychological benefits in terms of taking responsibility.

Sarah further reflected over social belonging, “I believe that environmental actions are related to a sense of belonging to some form of community or group. The strongest motivation occurs in a group with others” (Sarah, Group 2, row 40). Sarah continues, “All humans live for confirmation from others!” (Sarah, Group 2, row 42). Line further agrees, “If others see how I behave, I will act good, since I do not want to look bad in front of others” (Line, Group 2, row 43). These quotes clearly indicates that consumers feel motivated to act in accordance with others to get accepted and attain gratification for good behaviour, and to avoid feeling ashamed for deviating behaviour. By this logic, consumers seek social belonging, or as Eyal and Hoover (2014) name it, they seek tribal rewards. Values that motivate consumers to purchase ecological products, appear to be emotional rewards providing with gratification and acceptance of the self or tribe (Eyal & Hoover, 2014) through e.g. social acceptance, or pride. Additionally, Østergaard and Jantzen (2000) mention tribes as powerful tools to employ customer co-creation and strengthen brands. Arguably, ICA could use these motivational features in their communication to assist consumers to overcome costs, related to ecological commodities i.e. price-sensitivity, as well as facilitate customer co-creation.
Consumption consequences was lifted frequently in all three groups, yet mentioned differently, even though there was a frequent discussion about the consequences of their purchase behaviour, when asked why to purchase ecologic products, the majority still chose the selfish reasons before the global, which again indicate that customers value private benefits higher. More specifically, consumers could link the consequences of their behaviour globally when discussing about ecology as a general concept, but when taking the discussion closer to consumers, they felt more motivated about their private benefits. Arguably this indicates ignorance, as consumers might be aware of their consumption consequences, yet they care more about their own wellbeing. This can be further linked to the discussion on distance, as participants found it difficult and demanding being a consumer today, due to the various dimensions of ecological alternatives (Appendix H-J). This articulated frustration, induced ignorance towards ecologic commodities.

5.1.2.3 Customer Costs

This section, is associated with costs related to purchasing and consuming ecologic products. Participants mentioned monetary costs most frequently, and all groups discussed concerns related to high prices of ecological products. Linn argued, “Price is crucial, and ecological products are expected to be higher priced hence, if the product is high priced, people rather base their purchase on habit” (Linn, Group 3, row 120). Consequently, when consumers describe a reluctance to pay a higher price, they may base the purchase decisions on habits. Thus, both price and habits are possible barriers to choosing ecological products. Price appears to be a cost for customers, whereas habits may be seen as a cost more from ICA’s perspective. However, consumers assess that ecological products are more expensive than conventional products. Even though most participants guided concerns towards the high priced ecological products, it was questioned whether ecologic products may actually be too cheap for farmers to earn equivalent payments on the ecological productions (Appendix I). Currently, ICA inform consumers that ecological products are more expensive because crops require longer production and ecological agriculture requires more space per animal, which in turn will result in a more expensive product (ICA, 2015d). Arguably, there may be a breach in knowledge between consumers and ICA.

Additional costs associated with ecological products, were the demanding search for, and understanding of different ecological certifications. Lisa expresses “It is very difficult to trust the certifications, since they [suppliers] can do one thing good, but do other things bad” (Lisa, Group 2, row 119). Line further argues, “I fear that the certification may mislead me, since I do not know
what all of them imply” (Line, Group 2, row 99). These quotes express costs of purchasing ecological commodities in terms of a frustration caused by too many different certifications, which consequently leads to a fear of choosing the wrong certifications. However, ICA appears to be aware of the confusing numbers of certifications, as they provide a guide, defining the most commonly used certifications on their website (ICA, 2015e). However, none of the participants in this study mentioned that they had read these explanations, and participants in focus group two declared that consumers in general are lazy, and do not wish to search for the information. Arguably, the information has to be easy to access, and not too time consuming to attain. This can be connected to the previous discussion on habits, and that consumers sense that changing their behaviour has to involve as little effort as possible.

Participants requested more information concerning ecology in general, and mentioned that the lack of it, was a barrier for them to choose ecological alternatives, and could thereby be argued as a cost. This fact was clearly expressed by Evelina “I think that many do not know the difference between eco and non-eco” (Evelina, Group 1, row 71). Pernilla additionally declared “If you have the pre-knowledge and choose not to buy ecologic anyway, then the price is probably the main reason for choosing something else, but if you do not have the pre-knowledge, then the choice is probably based on habits” (Pernilla, Group 3, row 123). These statements indicate that knowledge is an important facilitator for ecologic product choice, as well in the attempt of changing non-ecological habits. Daunfeldt and Rudholm (2014), similarly declare in literature that consumers often base their choices on habits, yet that consumers are more receptive to information, which may disturb their habits, at POP. This was further confirmed in the questionnaires where participants declared in all groups that they often choose the same products when it comes to ecological alternatives (Appendix K-M). The experiments, confirm that providing consumers with information at POP, changed behaviour. Arguably, changing behaviour while in the store means a smaller effort for consumers to change their habits.

Genco et al. (2013) state that it is important to catch consumers’ attention, and maintain it in order to change behaviour. ICA appears to work on reducing non-monetary costs, minimize barriers related to ecological products, and catch consumers attention, by providing customers with green informative signs beside ecological products in the stores (Daunfeldt & Rudholm, 2014). The use of signs are supposed to make it easier for the consumer to locate the ecologic products, as well as
guide attention towards their ecological labelled commodities (ibid). However, Sophie expressed a worry in focus group three concerning these signs “There were too many different signs in the store [ICA Sabbatsberg], so it was difficult to find the green signs!” (Sophie, Group 3, row 8). Tobias and Fanny agree with Sophie, and confirm her statement on that the green signs were difficult to find, they suggest that the green signs should be redesigned to better catch consumers’ attention (Appendix J). Elsa suggests that some ICA stores have made the signs flashing so consumers can find them easier (Appendix J). This dialogue indicates a frustration concerning the difficulty to find ecologic alternatives despite the ecologic signs, hence it may be fruitful to develop e.g. products and make them more attentive and visual in the stores.

In literature, Tzilivakis et al. (2012) and Kirchmann et al. (2014) confirms the increased demand for ecological products. Where Kirchmann et al. (2014) is a minority who declares that the increase may not solely be positive, since farmers may not be able to produce as many products as the increased demand requests. This global worry surfaced as cost in focus group three, where participants on the contrary expressed a worry related the non-ecologic farmers, and consequences for them if everyone started purchasing ecologic (Appendix J). These discussions surfaced negative global consequences about consuming ecologic, which was a rare topic. However, since the discussion surfaced in two groups, as well as in literature, it still pose as a cost. When discussing the concept of ecology, private costs appeared as more worrisome to participants, compared to global costs resulting from the increased ecological consumption. Additionally, when mentioning the global consequences, it was more common to mention positive environmental and social affects than the negative. Even though there may exist negative consequences of ecology, the positive appear more significant.

Conclusively, several costs related to ecological consumption emerged, which all function as barriers for consumers to complete the purchase and change their behaviour. The costs mentioned was monetary, consumers perceive the price on ecological products as, and breaking habits was seen as a huge effort. Moreover, participants mentioned that they did not know the meaning behind the ecologic concept, and the wide variety of certifications, which additionally was seen as a cost as it caused a frustration and confusion, leading to a rejection of ecologic alternatives. These hazards, may be linked to the lack of knowledge, as consumers also expressed that did not really know to what extent ecology was rewarding, or the underlying incentives for firms. These costs are arguably
barriers for ICA in changing consumer habits, and thus, these may be essential for their future strategy to better cope with rejection of ecologic commodities.

5.1.2.4 Consumer Perceived Value

Participants have communicated barriers and costs related to ecological products more extensively than benefits. Consumers express concerns against the large quantity of ecological certifications, which may cause frustration and ‘lack of trust’. Karl declares, “Even though there are certifications, we do not know if we can trust them. We know that it has been difficult to control them in the past, so how can we know for sure that we can trust them today” (Karl, Group 1, row 104). This quote illustrate what several declared in the focus groups and data collection in general, and the mistrust towards the certifications, as it appears to be closely related to what they further express as a lack of knowledge concerning certifications. None of the participants said anything positive in relation to certifications. However, when participants were asked where they would prefer to purchase their ecological commodities, they replied specialist stores, online, or at ICA, revealing that despite the mistrust to the certifications, they hold a strong trust to ICA’s (Appendix H-J). This is aligned with what Thøgersen (2000) declare in literature, that consumers tend to chose labels they trust, and pay more attention to those. ICA’s customers appear to be more attentive to ‘I Love eco’, and claim they rather chose this brand over other brands due to its familiarity.

In alignment with what Auger et al. (2003) argue, the findings of this study suggests that price-sensitivity can be overcome by educating consumers about ethical dimensions i.e. the reasons for why ecological products are priced high. Important to note is that the findings indicate that customers relate more costs to ecology than benefits, this may be an alarming fact suggestively should be accounted for in order for ICA to strengthen their ecological brand image and induce consumers to increase their ecological consumption. From a marketing perspective, ICA may overcome the above outlined costs with communication.

5.1.3 Programs

This section, elaborate and include relevant marketing programs by the logic of the old marketing mix (Price, Place, Promotion and Product), including essential marketing activities (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

5.1.3.1 Price

In terms of ‘Price’, firms usually compare themselves to competitors, however for this study it appears more suitable to analyse price between ecologic and non-ecologic commodities, and rather
than focusing on actual price, focus on consumers perception about the price to better understand its dimensions. Participants declare, that price for ecologic commodities varies to a great extent according to product category (Appendix I: J). From the data collection, it appears as one of the main barriers for consumers when purchasing ecologic, is price-sensitivity (Appendix K-M). High prices are mentioned in all groups as a barrier to purchase, and often the reason behind the rejection of ecologic commodities (Appendix H-J). Interestingly, Ryegård and Ryegård (2015) declare that prices has decreased over the last years. This may indicate a lack of knowledge among consumers.

Line discussed price dimensions, “I believe we make this matter more difficult than it needs to be, I set unrealistic goals for my self, and tell my self I need to buy all products ecologic, which leads to it being difficult to fulfil and accomplish, and I quit” (Line, Group 2, row 17). This quote indicates that consumers may set too high goals, where they seek to replace all products at once, which would make the total sum on the receipt increase drastically. However, Line further suggest setting lower goals and simply replace a few products for ecological alternatives at the time, since this would mean a less significant change in total price. Arguably, consumers request assistance from retailers in setting reasonable goals for their ecological consumption patterns. Evelina surface another dimension of the price-sensitivity, as she declares that people purchase what they see, and ecologic alternatives may have a less perfect appearance, and if consumers then fail to notice the aspects behind appearance, they reject the ecologic alternatives based on looks (Appendix H). Evelina’s elaboration on product appearance is possibly another factor emphasising the importance of educating consumers about ecologic products.

Price-sensitivity was a frequent discussion and often mentioned as the primary barrier to purchase, and has also been mentioned as a barrier by Auger et al. (2003), as they declare that it can be overcome by increasing consumers understanding of the dimensions of the ethical products. Arguably, ICA could reduce customers sensitivity for higher prices by informing what consumers actually pay for. Price-sensitivity was additionally mentioned as a poor excuse. In focus group 2, Arvid initiates a discussion about price, “Money is just a bad excuse, generally speaking, people in the west afford to take the responsibility, and many minor actions will eventually make a larger difference” (Arvid, Group 2, row 55). This illustrates the discussion on using price as an excuse to not purchase ecologic, additionally Sarah elaborated and said “When you see ecologic on the package, you assume that it is more expensive and it is an effort to check prices” (Sarah, Group 2,
Consumers’ price-sensitivity affects their motivation to purchase ecologically labelled products. Yet, as discussed by Auger et al. (2003), this barrier can be further connected to knowledge. If consumers lack information about e.g. private health benefits, or what their ecological purchase decision actually means in a larger scale, they appear less motivated to complete the purchase and thus, price becomes a barrier. Participants also lift social confirmation as a powerful motivator to behaviour. Frida discussed her lack of motivation to purchase ecological products, “I trust ICA, but often use excuses such as, scepticism towards exotic fruits that have been transported from far away. I think that it is common for many consumers to use such excuses to feel better about not choosing ecological alternatives” (Frida, Group 1, row 23). This quote reveals that when consumers sense a reluctance to purchase ecological alternatives due to e.g. higher prices, or lack of information, they might come up with other excuses to justify their non-ecological behaviour. Hence, the barrier mentioned appears to be best overcome through increasing the consumers knowledge through improved communication.

Important to note is that some customer segments are more sensitive to price than others, and those may actually not have the purchase power to acquire ecologically labelled commodities. Elin stated, “When I was a student, I simply did not have the money to purchase ecologic products” (Elin, Group 2, rad 16). Further, Fanny made an observation during her second shopping tour “I compared some of the prices on ecologic products, to non-ecologic products, and what surprised me was that they actually was not priced that much higher” (Fanny, Group 3, rad 40). This again points towards a lack of knowledge that guides customers to view ecologic products as more expensive, even tough that may not always be true.

5.1.3.2 Place

In terms of place, during the focus groups a discussion on placement of ecological products surfaced, where participants mentioned that they had a difficult time finding ecological alternatives as they often appeared to be hidden behind other groceries. Pernilla expressed “What surprised me when I entered ICA Sabbatsberg, instantly was that regular products was promoted, and I actively had to search for ecological alternatives.” (Pernilla, Group 3, row 7). Sophie continued, “If it is ICA’s own brand, I Love eco, they have the largest margin on those products, so no matter what,
they should want to sell more of those products and promote them” (Sophie, Group 3, row 30). This reveals a lack of trust for ICA’s underlying incentives, and if they focus on profit or responsibility, since the ecological alternatives at times appeared difficult to locate inside the store. Arguably, it may be an opportunity for ICA to improve their communication regarding their true incentives for working with ecology.

On the contrary, Victor appreciated ICA’s ecological focus during his visit in the store in Sabbatsberg, which might have been a result of the stimuli (Appendix C), which ultimately may have guided his attention towards ecological alternatives to greater extent than usual (Appendix J). Moreover, Tobias expressed, “One corner in this specific store [Sabbatsberg] appeared to consist of only ecologic alternatives, which I found really positive. I also reflected on that all bananas were ecologic!” (Tobias, Group 3, rad 5). The bananas were also discussed in the other groups especially in group one, which may have been due to their stimuli (Appendix A), where Karl noted that “The ICA store I usually go to, offers ecologic bananas to the same price as non-ecologic bananas. I find this hard to trust, I mean, how is it possible that the same firm delivers two sets of bananas and only half are ecologic?” (Karl, Group 1, row 26). Karl’s quote reveals a possible reasoning behind the issue, and consumers describe a reluctance to choose the ecologic alternative when they origin from the same farm as the non-ecological alternative. The experiment show that before the stimuli, participants bought less ecologic bananas despite the fact that they often are offered at the same price (Appendix E), which Karl elaborated on above. Arguably, it may also be due to the promotion of products, and that it appears as the non-ecological alternatives are put in front of the ecological. Hence, this may lead to that several consumers only pick the products that lie closest to them, which may further lead to a confusion of ICA’s underlying incentives.

ICA puts a lot of pressure on their banana suppliers and declares that the bananas at ICA often have some form of ecologic certification (ICA, 2015f). Even so, from the receipts where bananas were purchased, few had chosen the ecologic option before the stimulus (Appendix E). After the stimulus, participants chose the ecologic bananas before the non-ecologic option (Appendix E). Hence, this indicate an ignorance or lack of knowledge among consumers regarding ecological options available. Participants in each group was asked where they prefer to purchase their ecologic products, and they mentioned specialist stores, both physical and online, but most mentioned ICA as the store where they prefer to purchase their ecologic products (Appendix H-J). Additionally
mentioned, COOP was associated with ecology however, participants still claim to favour ICA over the other available retailers (Appendix H). This further supports consumers high trust to ICA’s brand.

Svensk Digital Handel (2014) discuss, that it is the younger population that will set the future standards for consumption. Moreover, this part of the population has a high presence online (Svensk Digital Handel, 2014). Online retailing is also identified as a driving influencer on modern retail shopping behaviour (Seifer, 2007). The Internet was discussed in all focus groups in one way or another, in group three, Michael expressed “A new market is opening, and I have chosen to replace some purchases with an online retailer called Mathem, which I think feels safe. They offer a reliable brand, with a lot of local alternatives and a wide selection of ecologic options” (Michael, Group 3, row 143). Additionally, Frida mentioned “If firms increased their transparency regarding their certifications on their websites, perhaps it would be easier to trust them” (Frida, Group 1, row 39). These quotes reveals that participants trust firms online, and as Frida also suggest, by providing information online, she would trust the certifications more. Interestingly, in connection to Frida’s statement, ICA do include this information on their website (ICA, 2015e), yet it appears as this has not been recognized by consumers, thus this indicates an ignorance among consumers, where they do not wish to seek out the information as it requires a too large effort for them.

Participants in group two presented Internet as a part of the solution in surfacing consumers individual consumption patterns. Sarah suggested that social humiliation might be the solution “What if there was a website that showed everyone’s consumption patterns and ranked them. It would create panic, and no one would want to be ranked high on that site” (Sarah, Group 2, row 156). This was further debated, and applications for smartphones were discussed (Appendix I). Several participants mention the use of applications as a good solution for monitoring ones consumption and its consequences (Appendix I). Arvid expressed the idea clearly by stating that “An application like the budget app Tink would be interesting, which is linked to your credit card, and you can monitor your consumption patterns, the product categories, and the app calculate and declare your ecological consumption automatically!” (Arvid, Group 2, row 158). The discussion fell out in ignorance, where participants asserted that filling in the numbers your self, would only induce people not to use the application (Appendix I). These suggestions on digital solutions to increase the comprehension of ones individual consumption, indicates that ICA’s consumers have
an increased interest in digital solutions, and also see digital opportunities as a possible way to solve ecological issues in knowledge and understandings. However, as the discussion again highlight ignorance, usability of such digital solutions appear vital.

Seifer (2007) and Svensk Daglig Handel (2014), indicate that online retailing is a raising competitor for physical retailers. ICA offers the alternative to shop online for a selection of stores, additionally they provide three themed options of ready-to-buy grocery bags (ICA, 2015g). However, even if they have well assorted brands and goods in the health and ecologically categories, no bag is themed with those (ICA, 2015g). Their closest competitor COOP (Delfi, 2014), offers online shopping alternatives for all consumers, both where the consumers can compose their own groceries, and themed grocery bags, both alternatives includes ecologic alternatives to a greater extent than ICA (COOP, 2015). This may be a worrying fact, like Tzilivakis et al. (2012) assert, there is a raising demand for ecological alternatives, and even though ICA concurs with this claim (Wennberg, 2015a), they appear to fall behind competitors, in providing consumers with ecological options online, which as mentioned, is an increasing vital marketplace for retailers (Seifer, 2007; Svensk Daglig Handel, 2014).

The discussions above on increased Internet usage (Appendix H-J) indicate what was found in literature about consumer trends within retailing moving online, holds true (Seifer, 2007; Svensk Daglig Handel, 2014). Even though the part retail customers today, have a low online shopping presence, the number of customers choosing to shop online appear to increase. Arguably, online presence among consumers will increase in the future, especially since it mentioned in relation to both transparency of certification, and as an aid that prevent ignorance. When attempting to reach consumers in the near future, it appears important for ICA to use online medias.

5.1.3.3 Promotion

From our study it appears as the third stimulus at the POP influenced participants to purchase an increased quantity of ecological commodities after the stimulus (Appendix E). Demonstrated through the experiment, is that all groups were affected by their different stimuli as the group behaviour on average changed in favour of ecological alternatives (Appendix E). Additionally identified, the discussion in all groups were coloured by the groups different stimuli (Appendix H-J). Arguably, participants in this study most likely had an interest for ecology prior to the experiments, as Genco et al. (2013) assert that behaviour can only be induced with a prime if the
consumers already have existing goals. However, during the focus groups after the experiments, groups still requested more information about their consumption consequences, and the meaning behind certifications (Appendix H-J). Consumption consequences were lifted more frequently in groups two and three, which possibly is because of the article, which had a large focus on this matter (Appendix B).

Linn discussed the effects of marketing group three, “ICA’s I Love Eco, is a good alternative and it is easy to recognize and remember, compared to other different ecological certifications” (Linn, Group 3, row 63). This quote compare ICA’s private eco-brand to other ecological certifications, and indicate that ICA’s own brand is more reliable since it is easy to relate to and recognize. Arguably, this may be a result of good marketing for the totality of ICA’s brand portfolio, and that consumers trust ICA’s brand, and thus they also put a lot of faith to other brands in their portfolio. Arguably, consumers’ appear to put a lot of faith into ICA’s private eco-brand, compared to other available ecological labels and brands.

ICA appear to focus on the communication of ‘I Love eco’. The campaign ‘Välj eko’ mainly focus on promotional efforts in-store, and convenient informational brochures, as well as information on their website (Wennberg, 2015b). Alas, from this study, consumers appear to not recognize that the information exist, and also claim that they are hesitant towards actively search for it (Appendix I). Thus, communication initiatives may still demand too much effort from consumers, as it still requires them to search for most information themselves.

5.1.3.4 Product
This section will outline product features, both tangible and intangible aspects. The intangible aspects of ecological products, referrers to private costs and benefits whereas, the tangible aspects will be elaborated on below, in terms of product features.

In line with Ryegård and Ryegård (2015), this study confirms that dairy, fruits, and vegetables are the three most popular product categories among ecologic alternatives (Appendix E: K: L: M) However, this study deviates from Ryegård and Ryegård (2015), since they say that dairy is the most popular ecologic product category, this study found that fruits and vegetables was the largest category both before and after the stimulus (Appendix E: K: L: M). This deviation from literature may be the reason of the stimulus content, since there was an extensive focus on fruits (bananas),
meat, and working conditions, participants may have focused on products that had been fair produced and related to fruits to an even greater extent after the stimulus (Appendix A-C). This indicates that the information consumers are exposed to affect their behaviour, even if they may not consciously aware of it. Arguably, consumers may sense an increased motivation from what Eyal and Hoover (2014) state as rewards of the tribe and self, where they seek to attain confirmation from others, or to attain some form of self-fulfilment from their consumption. Moreover, consumers appear to seek motivation from ecological products that may affirm these emotional rewards.

The experiments indicates that participants bought ecological labels to a greater extent than locally produced products, or Swedish declared products (Appendix E). However, from the focus groups and questionnaires, participants expressed a strong preference for Swedish produced and labelled products, and that these products were seen as more trustworthy (Appendix H-M). Arguably, the reason for expressing higher trust to Swedish labels, may be due to the issue of distance, which has been discussed previously. Moreover, it may also be due to convenience and product alternatives, since all product categories are not possible to produce in Sweden i.e. bananas. Arguably, consumers have expressed that they prefer Swedish labels, but due to the existing alternatives in stores, they may be left with no other choice than selecting ecological products.

Evelina mentioned ecological product appearance in focus group one, “I think that ecologic products have a less tempting appearance, and even though I sometimes see that it must be so bad to eat those genetically modified lemons, I rather choose a big, yellow, lemon, than a small, ugly, and light green lemon.” (Evelina, Group 1, row 19). This quote may indicate that the product appearance can have an influence on purchase intentions, and since consumers have been exposed to perfect fruits for several years, they may now automatically associate those as the best option, even though the less attractive ecological option may serve as better in all other aspects. In focus group two, Sanna reflected further on the duration of appearance “The other day, I found some old apples in the refrigerator, they had been there for several weeks and still looked exactly the same as when I bought them. When I saw this, it made me want to buy ecologic in the future” (Sanna, Group 2, row 58). This quote suggest that when consumers see the effects of non-ecological products, and how the pesticides actually affects the products, it may be easier to find the motivation to purchase ecological alternatives. Additionally, this statement can be related to the distance mentioned in groups one and two, that participants found it difficult to relate to consequences far away. More
specifically, for Sanna when the consequences came closer to her own wellbeing, it made her rethink her choices.

Conclusively, very few mentioned quality and taste as incentives to chose ecologic alternatives. Most consider the intangibles i.e. health, and self-fulfilment, as more important. Moreover, the product appearance poses as a powerful influencer on consumer choice. Several of the declarations made by participants in this study in relation to product features, can be related to knowledge, as some mention old preconceptions may still reside in consumer minds. Thus, aspects mentioned in relation to products are aligned with previous findings on private benefits and consumers request of more knowledge.

5.1.4 Performance

This section reflect on possible outcomes of the holistic marketing approach outlined above for ICA’s private eco-brand ‘I Love eco’, in terms of profitability, as well as brand and consumer equity (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

ICA appear to have acknowledged what Tzilivakis et al. (2012) mention in regards to today’s consumers; they care more about the environment than ever before. Arguably, ICA have turned the consumer demand and change in preferences into an opportunity by being determined to offer ecologic alternatives in all product categories (Wennberg, 2015b). Notably, they offer a wide range of ecologic commodities, yet only 20% of the products are available through ‘I Love eco’, which may be an indication on that this is where they plan to focus their future improvements (Ryegård & Ryegård, 2015).

In the focus groups, participating consumers requested more and improved information about the different ecological certifications (Appendix H-J). However, when browsing on ICA’s website, the information already exist (ICA, 2015e). Arguably, focus should rather be on how to improve the already existing and well sufficient information on their website, and how to make consumers actually interpret it. Moreover, by reconsidering where to communicate the information, ICA could improve their communication further. Arguably, by effectively reaching consumers with the requested information, may lead to a higher yield of both financial long-term profits, as well as a possible increase in ICA’s brand equity.
Furthermore, by effectively communicating the benefits of ecologic commodities, ICA may arguably manage to grow the number of loyal consumers and simultaneously strengthen the brand further. Participants expressed that ICA was their preferred supermarket, which may indicate that ICA provide customers with an added value. The added value referred to, may range from habits, promotions, or wider assortment, which most likely differ according to consumers and depending on what value they seek. The expressed preference and strong brand involvement may indicate that the participants in this study are a part of ICA’s brand community. Heding et al. (2009) suggest, that communities indicate high engagement between the brand and the consumer, which was arguably communicated through the consumer loyalty and articulated trust for the brand (Appendix H-J). More specifically, participants expressed their engagement to the brand in terms of frequent store visits, and brand preference (Appendix H-J). Arguably, communities strengthens ICA’s brand, as participants communicated a strong preference and emotional connection to ICA through trust and familiarity, this further adds value to the brand equity and ultimately profitability.

ICA appear to work actively with customer loyalty, and initial contact with customers begin already when youths become students, as they offer ICA student card promotions (ICA, 2015h). This card is both a way to earn discounts, but may also be viewed as a loyalty program as it provides consumers with incentives to choose ICA (ICA, 2015i). Arguably, ICA appears to capture new consumers at an early age, which may create a strong bond and preference to ICA early in life. As a result as students grow and become working adults, they may have developed a preference to ICA or go there by habit, and as Genco et al. (2013) describes, habits are difficult to change and is most desired among firms and brands as it means a strong market position and advantage against competitors. Arguably, this strategy may yield an increased brand equity and profitability for ICA, but may also favour consumers as they are rewarded with discounts and promotions (ICA, 2015i). Further, participants mentioned that they had been loyal to ICA since their times as students (Appendix I: J). Students are often perceived as a price-sensitive, hence guiding promotions, towards specifically students and include ecology, may be a fruitful strategy for ICA. Thus, focusing on price-sensitive segments may create a demand for ecologic products, and even though the price-sensitive segments may not purchase ecology extensively right away, the created need could be possibly be expected to increase in the future as their purchasing power increase.
In order to maximize the market coverage, ICA offers a wide range of products divided in different brands to satisfy individual customers preferences (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Each brand in ICA’s portfolio plays a specific role, depending on its strategy. ICA offers three higher priced brands, ‘ICA Selection’, ‘ICA Gott Liv’, and ‘I love ECO’. These can all be identified as star brands since they offer higher value in terms of e.g. quality, social benefits, private benefits, and this type of brands ultimately adds prestige and credibility to ICA’s whole brand portfolio (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Arguably, these three brands contribute to ICA’s brand image. As mentioned, participants linked health to ecology, yet ICA have no evident link to health in relation to their ecologic brand, and vice versa.

The authors of this thesis predict an increased performance for ICA through an updated communication with and ecological focus linking to health. Arguably, this may lead to an increase in knowledge among consumers and thus, benefit the brand, as well as the consumers. The findings indicate that ICA have a strong customer base, which appear loyal to the brand. Finally, due to the strong link between ecology and health found in this study, the authors question the reason behind separating the brands ‘I love eco’, and ‘Gott Liv’.
6 Discussion

As Girod and Michael (2003) assert, today brands should incorporate CSR in order to stay competitive. Participants in this study claim that they desire purchasing ecological products (Appendix H-J). However, due to what may be described as a lack of motivation, customers do not act upon that desire. More specifically, from this research it is clear that costs of purchasing ecologic commodities exceed the benefits, in the eyes of the consumers. By appealing to articulated benefits, i.e. private benefits, through green marketing initiatives i.e. communication, consumers may become increasingly motivated to purchase ecological products. Additionally, this study has provided ICA with deeper insights into their customer motivations. In the recommendations of this thesis, the authors will provide ICA with implications related to the facilitation of customer costs and benefits. As Genco et al. (2012) mention, changing the habitual behaviour may be a difficult and complex as well as possible over time. Thus, by improving the understanding of customers motivations, this study function as a base for initiating that habitual change. More specifically, to be able to change customer habits, this study will have to be repeated over a longer time. By increasing the understanding of the underlying motivation to why consumers purchase ecologic products, ICA may be further induced to change consumers’ behaviour.

In terms of the 4 P’s of marketing management for green marketing, this study indicates that there is a difference in the focus and what to include under each P. The focus in the first P concerning ‘People’, do good in focusing on consumers driving forces and incentives to purchase ecologic commodities, and who appear relevant to the firm specific ecological context, as well as who may affect consumer decision-making. In the second P, ‘Processes’ the focus concurs with what Kotler and Keller (2012) state, concerning the Consumer Perceived Value, where the costs and benefits of the ecologic commodities is compared and discussed to better facilitate firms in finding what customers see as valuable to better be able to meet their expectations with relevant marketing processes. Third, under ‘Programs’, the old marketing mix was found fruitful as suggested by Kotler and Keller (2012), the main difference was that the focus rested on customers general perception of ecologic products compared to firms green incentives. Finally, under ‘Performances’, it was found that brands such as ICA, where there are several brands in the portfolio, it appeared fruitful to measure what the eco-brand could contribute with to the whole brand portfolio. Moreover, under the final P, it also appeared relevant to include the brands ecological focus in general, and how ecology may affect the brand and customers equity.
When employing this model to green marketing customer insights appears vital. Thus, it appears relevant that firms understand their customers, as well as their expectations, and adapt their marketing and branding strategy accordingly. More specifically customer co-creation appears rewarding for green marketing and brand authenticity. Additionally, Beverland (2005a), assert that customer co-creation is important to build a strong and authentic brand, further Beverland (2005b), declare that achieving high brand authenticity also permits the brand to take a higher price for the product. More specifically, by enabling customer co-creation, ICA could strengthen their brand authenticity, and thereby make their consumers less price-sensitive.
6.1 Limitations

Ecology is a wide topic, under extensive and constant development. Even though the literature found for this thesis mostly agrees, it is important to know that the area of sustainability and ecology constantly change. Thus, this made the search for relevant theories complex. Further, changing habits is done over a longer period of time, hence this study cannot measure if habits have changed. However, the authors have been able to identify behavioural changes.

Important to note is that ICA is a unique retail merchant, who have their own strategy in working with ecology. Thus, this study results in conclusions cannot be generalized to a wider setting without relevant adaptations. This is the outcome of employing a single case study, and the decision was carefully weight by the authors. What was found was that by looking at solely one retailer, the authors would be able to come closer to customer values and motivations, which ultimately would lead to more fruitful and specific results.

Since the store for the third group in the data collection, was suggested by ICA’s brand manager, it may have influenced consumers behaviour. Several expressed that the store appeared as having a strong ecological focus, and this may not hold true for all ICA stores. Important to note is that when discussing ICA’s ecological strategy, the authors have focused on the general strategy rather than the strategy for this specific store, to avoid further bias. Moreover, the participating groups were handed a timeframe for the stimuli that was difficult to control. However, the authors provided all participants with specific information and put emphasis on the importance of time.

The authors were aware of the above stated limitations throughout the process, and to diminish them the authors continually went back to the purpose and research question when making decisions, to make sure that every decision was aligned accordingly.
8 Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

This section will describe recommendations based on findings and analysis, which will be divided into two sub-sections. First, specific implications for ICA will be outlined following, academic suggestions for further research will be suggested. Important to note, is that ICA is putting a lot of effort into their ecological program, and are prominent in the area. Thus, these recommendations function more as improvement suggestions, rather than recommendations to change their complete strategy.

8.1 Implications for ICA

Arguably, in literature there has been a deviated focus on green marketing, where the different marketing tools have been divided into three categories (Delafrooz et al., 2014; Rahbar & Abdul Wahid, 2011). However, the authors of this thesis agree with Rex and Baumann (2007), as they assess the effectiveness of viewing green marketing as a complete concept. By employing the conventional marketing tool ‘The 4 P’s of Marketing Management’ of ICA’s private eco-brand ‘I Love eco’, the authors of this thesis have analysed green marketing activities and compared them to customer expectations. More specifically, the model has facilitated the measurement of ICA’s green marketing strategy’s alignment with customer expectations of ecological commodities. The analysis have provided three areas of improvement, which will guide the following implications.

First, consumers appear to sense a strong connection and trust to ICA’s private eco-brand, compared to other ecological brands found at ICA. Arguably, the strong trust to ‘I Love eco’ indicates brand loyalty, which could benefit ICA. More specifically, the brand loyalty enhances ICA’s opportunity to influence customers ecological consumption. This opportunity to influence consumers, may be seen as an incentive for ICA to further incorporate ecologic alternatives. Thus, the authors of this thesis suggest that ICA should focus on expanding their private eco-brand. Hence, in propositional form:

**Proposition 1:** ICA should seize the opportunity with their loyal customer base, and expand their private eco-brand ‘I Love eco’.

Second, participants in the study mentioned that they found it difficult to relate to issues geographically distant. In alignment, primary benefits of ecologic commodities mentioned by
participants in this study, were private benefits i.e. selfish reasoning. Private benefits are identified as motivators convincing consumers to purchase ecological commodities, and participants primary mention their own health as an incentive. Interestingly, even though a prominent connection to health and ecology has been identified, ICA have separated the two concepts in two separate brands, ‘I Love eco’ and ‘Gott Liv’. Thus, to increase brand relevance and better meet customer expectations, the authors of this thesis suggest that ICA combine the two brands to further enhance customers motivation to purchase ecological commodities. Thus, in propositional form:

**Proposition 2: To better facilitate the evident link between health and ecology, ICA should merge their brands ‘I Love eco’ and ‘Gott Liv’**.

Third, the stimuli affected participants notably, yet an indication on a long-term and a short-term change have been discovered. The two initial stimulus [documentary & article], arguably affect purchase behaviour over time. More specifically, participants behaviour increased after being exposed to their stimuli, which may indicates that to create a long term consumption change, ICA could provide consumers with information continuously prior to their store visits. Additionally, presenting consumers with information would also increase their requested knowledge. The short-term change was primary noted during the final experiment at the POP, where participants significantly changed their purchase behaviour. Indicating the importance of providing information concerning product labels and certifications in-store. Thus, the authors of this thesis, does not limit to one specific time that is more affective in terms of communication, but rather recommend ICA to increasingly provide their customers with information through several channels. Hence, in propositional form:

**Proposition 3: ICA should expand their green marketing strategy and communicate over an increased number of channels.**

Finally, a strong interest of ecology has been recognised among both consumers and ICA. However, it is vital for ICA to embrace customers willingness and facilitate their requests in order to move forward in the complex area of ecology. In order to better meet consumers expectations on ecological commodities and ultimately change consumption, the authors of this theses recommend
ICA to facilitate for customer co-creation and continuously work with their brand community, to benefit from customer feedback. Thus, in propositional form:

_Proposition 4: ICA should facilitate customer co-creation to be able to exceed customer expectations._

**8.2 Suggested further research**

Suggest further research should focus on making the findings of this research more general, by looking at e.g. the three major retailers on the Swedish market and compare them in terms of their ecological focus. Moreover, it would be interesting to develop this topic over a longer period, in order to see if habits actually have changed or been influenced.

Further research could also benefit from investigating if brands can become stronger by incorporating ecology and CSR. More specifically, looking at the competitive advantage created through continuous CSR work. Finally suggested is to convert other tools from conventional marketing to green marketing to improve the area further.
9 Bibliography


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