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Tourists' Attitudes towards Ecologically-Produced Food

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The purchase and consumption of ecologically-produced food is on the rise in the food markets of Europe. Consumers are becoming more aware of their health and well-being and, therefore, consuming ecologically-produced foods and drinks is a reflection of becoming more conscious about one's health and a lifestyle statement. The consumption of ecologically-produced food fosters healthier eating habits and a higher quality of life in comparison to consuming conventionally-produced food. Furthermore, such consumption relies on attitudes of responsibility towards 'Mother Nature,' connection to nature, saving the planet and protection of the environment. Therefore, such consumers are more socially responsible and conscious about the future of planet Earth. Regarding economic tourism, ecologically-produced food is seen as a part of what is on offer in terms of gastronomy. The availability and range of products from ecological production differs from destination to destination. In the Croatian case, ecologically-produced foods and beverages are quite a new trend. Istria as a destination leads these trends in terms of what is available, whereas they are scarce elsewhere. Therefore, in our research, we have attempted to validate the potential of ecologically-produced food on offer in tourist facilities in accordance with tourists' preferences. With respect to the scientific project, 'Valorisation of selective forms of tourism in the sustainable development of rural spaces,' a survey was conducted with a sample of tourists with the intention of determining their interest in ecologically-produced food during their stay in Istria. We examined 1,028 questionnaires and determined that tourists have different attitudes toward ecologically-produced food depending on the land of its origin and certain sociodemographic features.

Keywords: tourists, ecologically-produced food, Istria

Introduction

There are many motives for why people travel: holiday, business, health, education, among others. These motives are connected to different needs that long to be satisfied. Every tourist is different, and so are the factors that motivate them. It is not likely that one is influenced by only one motivation, such as personality, lifestyle, past experiences, self-perception and similar. Usually, it is a set of motivations and needs that require satisfaction. From the tourist point of view, they

seek to satisfy a wide number of needs simultaneously (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2007). For many people, food and drink consumption is one of the central components of their leisure/tourist experiences as well as being an experience in its own right (Beer, 2008, p. 153). To consume interesting food in a pleasant environment is one of the key aims of tourists according to Hjaleger and Antonoioli-Corigliano (2000). The gastronomy of a particular tourism destination may become one of the most cherished travelling memories, so it is crucial how it is presented to tourists. In this way, food has a significant role in destination presentation (such as in tourism catalogues), it is an attractive factor, it is connected to regional activities, and, finally, it raises the income of destination facilities (e.g., hotels). As a point of tourists' interest, food is a part of the heritage and tradition of a destination but also an inventive part of the future, such as in terms of food festivals, where food as a part of the local culture is presented in a lodging place or in rural surroundings (Hjaleger & Antonoioli-Corigliano, 2000). At its root, eating is a physiological need that should be satisfied daily, and satisfaction with local gastronomy should be considered as a crucial segment of the tourism services of a destination. As a novel trend in gastronomy, the use of ecologically-produced food was introduced a decade ago in Croatia. Based on the fact that tourists were requesting it, various boarding facilities introduced this type of food. The range of products and the possibility of purchasing them outside boarding facilities remain difficult and depends on farmers' capabilities in marketing such food.

Ureña, Bernabén, and Olmeda (2008) have stated that consumers' see ecologically-produced food as healthier and of a higher quality with the means of its production respecting the environment. A survey conducted by experts at the AC Nielsen agency (2005) demonstrated that in a global sample of consumers, two thirds of those questioned considered ecologically-produced food healthier for them and their children. Hartman and Wright (as cited in Lockie, Lyons, Lawrence, & Mummery, 2002) identified two groups of consumers of ecologically-produced food; the first is ready to pay the higher prices and actively gives priority to ecologically-produced food purchasing, while the other is concerned about the environment but considers the price of ecologically-produced food to be a limitation. Lockie et al. (2002) mentioned that in the decision process, consumers allocate importance to environment, their own health, food quality and taste. Based on the aforementioned research, it is plausible to extrapolate a certain segment of consumers of ecologically-produced food and suppose that this segment would be interested in this kind of food being provided on their travels. Based on the fact that ecologically-produced food is more expensive versus conventional food, and this segment of consumers is willing to pay premium prices, one might suppose that interested tourists would also be willing to accept the price premium.

In the market segmentation of tourists, the findings from the research are usually connected to specific destinations or products (Rudež Nemec, 2012, p. 20); it divides heterogeneous groups of consumers into more homogenous segments. Our work included both market segmentations of destination and product. In this way, we furthered our research by segmenting tourists that would like to buy and consume ecologicaly-produced food within Istria as a destination.

Moreover, segmentation of tourists can be achieved using different criteria: geographical, socioeconomic, demographic, psychographic, behaviouristic, price, purpose of travel, among others (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2007; Middleton & Clarke, 2001; Kotler, 2001). In our research presented in this paper, tourism market segmentation was based upon geographical segmentation (land of arrival), socioeconomic, demographic and behaviouristic segmentation.

Materials and Methods

To strengthen comparative concurrent possibilities of Istria County as a tourist destination, a long-term scientific project, 'Valorisation of selective forms of tourism in sustainable development of rural spaces,' was commenced (the project was financed by the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports nr. 147-1470497-3034 from 2007 to 2013). During the project, a survey was conducted on a sample of tourists with the intention of determining their interest for selective forms of tourism (farm tourism, wine tourism,

golf tourism, sport tourism, event tourism) and specific types of tourist offerings. The survey focused on tourists that visited the coastal area of Istria County. The part of the survey utilized for this paper considered the issue of attitudes toward ecologically-produced food. A total of 1,028 properly-filled questionnaires were collected (with a confidence level of 95%, distribution 50% and margin of error 3.05%).

Tourists were provided with questionnaires and asked to fill them out. Convenience sampling was employed. The questionnaire contained 16 questions that were divided into three groups. The first group of questions related to the purchase of ecological food by tourists in their home country. Through these questions, we attempted to identify the pleasure involved in tourists' daily food purchases (tourists were offered five options: very unsatisfied, unsatisfied, satisfied, very satisfied and do not know). The question of whether tourists buy ecologically-produced food in their origin country had two options (yes or no). In the question regarding where they purchased ecologically-produced food, tourists had six options with several response options. With regards to the question inquiring as to how much more tourists were willing to pay for ecologically produced food over conventional food, there were six options (in rates: up to 10%, 11 to 20%, 21 to 30%, 31 to 60%, 61 to 100% and more than 100%). There was also a question on how much tourists were informed about ecologically-produced food and ecological production in general, and we enquired about this through four questions in which their subjective grade was required. Their answers were rated as three options: not informed, partly informed and totally informed. The importance of these elements in the decision process for purchasing ecologically-produced food was rated from one to five.

The second group of questions concentrated on the stay of tourists in Istria County and tourists' interest in buying and consuming ecologically-produced food. They were asked specifically about their interest in buying and consuming ecologically-produced food during their stay in Istria (options being yes or no). Those who responded with positive interest had four options in ratings of willingness to pay premium prices (in rates: up to 10%, 11 to 20%, 21 to 30%, 31 to 60%, 61 to 100% and more than 100%). Those who responded as not being interested had five options for explaining their lack of interest.

The third section was about boarding facilities with seven options (along with several response options) and about tourists' willingness to stay in rural Istria during their holidays (options: yes, no, and do not know).

The group of questions related to demographics covered country of origin, age, gender, education, profession, income and media used in gathering information about Istria County.

Demographic data were categorized as follows: land of arrival (six options), age (five categories 16–24, 25–34, 35–44, 45–54, and 55+), gender (male/female), occupation (eight options: entrepreneur, manager, officer, worker, student/pupil, retired, unemployed and other), monthly income (five categories: up to €500, €501 to 1000, €1001 to 2000, €2001 to 5000, and more than €5000). Education level was gauged in five levels: lower (basic education), middle (secondary education), higher education (college), university education and master and doctorate level.

From our previous research (Ilak Peršurić & Težak, 2011), it was known that organic food is, in general, more expensive in comparison to conventionally-produced food so the sample was stratified based on accommodation category. High-category facilities (i.e., three-star hotels and higher and four-star villas) were selected. The research was conducted in 18 facilities and a structure pattern was followed: three-star hotels 35%; four-star hotels 63%; and high-category villas 2%. Hotels were visited on dates previously agreed upon with the hotel's management. In order to prepare adequate numbers of questionnaires per national structure of the examinees, data on tourist arrivals were received from the contacted hotels. The questionnaire was provided in English, German, Italian, Russian, Slovenian and Croatian.

This work was conducted in six Istrian towns with following patterns: Umag 51.00%, Poreč – 12.31%, Rovinj 17.62%, Pula/Medulin 8.92%, and Rabac 10.15%.

According to country of arrival, the national structure of the examinees was as follows: Austrian 13.54%,

Table 1 Socio Demographic Indicators of Tourists by Country of Arrival Independent Variables (%)

Sociodemographic indicator		Austria	UK	Italy	Germany	Russia	Other
Age group	16–24	9.52	4.11	13.92	10.73	10.58	5.42
	25–34	18.45	6.16	17.01	5.65	24.23	28.92
	35–44	26.79	9.59	26.29	28.25	23.96	29.52
	45–54	23.81	27.40	22.68	34.46	26.46	18.07
	55+	21.43	52.74	20.10	20.90	14.76	18.07
Gender	Male	48.00	43.80	45.40	50.68	29.29	48.73
	Female	52.00	56.20	54.60	49.32	70.71	51.27
Education level	Basic education	35.85	0.75	3.23	19.76	0.83	4.38
	Secondary education	40.88	34.33	39.25	55.09	14.17	16.88
	Higher/university education	7.55	55.22	44.62	17.96	75.83	49.38
	Master/doctorate level	15.72	9.70	12.90	7.19	9.17	29.38
Occupation	Private entrepreneur	11.80	4.73	22.40	14.72	13.84	14.65
	Manager	5.59	27.70	5.46	5.52	27.12	25.48
	Civil servant	37.89	14.19	30.60	47.24	24.58	23.57
	Worker	8.07	9.46	6.01	9.82	1.69	14.01
	Student/pupil	5.59	2.03	8.74	4.29	6.21	1.91
	Retired	14.91	27.03	8.20	7.36	4.80	6.37
	Unemployed	0.62	0.00	1.64	1.23	1.41	1.27
	Other	15.53	14.86	16.94	9.82	20.34	12.74
Monthly Income	Up to €500	2.50	5.80	1.27	3.45	10.78	2.67
	€500–1000€	23.75	13.04	10.13	15.52	29.74	14.67
	€1000–2000	37.50	17.39	37.97	25.86	37.07	36.00
	€2000–5000	33.75	44.93	31.65	44.83	20.26	29.33
	Over €5000	2.50	18.84	18.99	10.34	2.16	17.33

British 12.00%, Italian 15.54%, German 14.46%, Russian 28.92%, and 13.08% of tourists were from other countries.

When the questionnaires were distributed to the tourists, the researchers explained their purpose and the tourists were told that the questionnaires were anonymous. Minors under 16 years of age were excluded from the research. As mentioned earlier, convenience sampling was employed.

Data were processed using statistical methods (i.e. univariate and bivariate statistics available in SPSS). Univariate statistics was used for the general description of the samples while bivariate statistics was used to determine the relationship between sociodemographic variables and variables related to the consumption of ecologically-produced food.

Results and Discussion

Following data entry, five countries of arrival having a minimum share of 10% of the total sample were identified, and six groups were formed. A general description of the data (in Table 1) shows that in the sample according to the land of arrival, we reached mostly Russian tourists. According to age groups, the majority of the tourists were between the ages of 25 and 55, whereas the British segment had the most tourists aged greater than 55. The Russian and British tourists outnumbered the other groups with university educa-

tion. Austrians and Germans had almost equal numbers of tourists with secondary and primary/basic education. The segment of Russian and British tourists also had the largest group employed as managers and along with German tourists, were in the highest income brackets.

Through data processing, we had determined the statistically significant levels of the influence of certain general attitudes of tourists towards interest in ecologically-produced food. The responses on levels of interest in purchasing ecologically-produced food are listed in Table 2. It was evident that in general terms tourists had positive attitudes and on average were quite equal in interest regarding the purchase of ecologically-produced food during their stay in Istria. Most responses were related to purchasing for health reasons and environmental protection. Tourists had a positive attitude toward paying premium prices for ecologically-produced food during their stay in Istria. The only issue that had a negative aspect was related to the availability of such products in the market and range of products offered.

The majority of tourists were satisfied with the items that they purchased during their stay in Istria. The average grade for purchased ecological food was 4 (grades possible from 1 to 5; 5 was excellent). The offering of such food was graded also with 4 expressing a positive attitude. The positive health benefits of ecological food were rated highest by the Russian tourists (4.68) and lowest by the Austrian tourists (4.18). The positive impact of ecological production on the environment was graded highly by Italians (4.11) and less so by British tourists (3.95). Availability on the market was graded around 3, with the most importance being to it by Russian tourists (3.72) and less to Austrians (3.24). The price of ecological products was graded less important to British (3.91) and Italian tourists (3.80) and most important to German tourists (3.49). The variability and range of ecological food offerings was most important for Russian (3.60) and Austrian (3.50) tourists and less important to Italian ones (3.48). These variables were chosen for further statistical (bivariate) analysis in order to determine their correlation with sociodemographic indicators.

The bivariate analysis suggested several statistically significant correlations to satisfaction with ecologically-produced food. The socioeconomic and demographic variables of age and gender had a slightly lower influence on the level of satisfaction with ecologically-produced food, while occupation and income level had statistically significant higher correlation levels (Table 3).

When considering age, the analyses revealed that tourists in the age group 16 to 24 showed the least satisfaction with ecologically-produced food, while other age groups were overall equally pleased with ecologically-produced food items.

Occupation and income had a statistically sig-

Table 2 Description of Dependent Variables

Variable	*n*	%
Health benefits	1137	87.46
Environmental protection	1050	80.77
Availability on the market	1002	77.08
Selling price	1023	78.69
Wide offerings	1002	77.08
Interest in purchasing of ecologically-produced food in Istria	1289	99.15
Readiness to pay premium prices for ecologically-produced food	852	95.41*
In hotels as part of gastronomy offerings	551	61.70*
In camp shops	89	9.97*
In restaurants on menus	259	29.00*
In specialized restaurants	90	10.08*
Within green markets	259	29.00*
In local shops	294	32.92*
Other	10	1.12*
Small number of selling points	96	24.24**
Premium prices too high	130	32.83**
Ecological products better than conventional	90	22.73**
Unsuitable range of price and quality	42	10.61**
No need for such products	62	15.66**

Notes * Only respondents that declared their interest for ecologically produced food during their stay in Istria. ** Only respondents that were not interested in ecologically produced food during their stay in Istria.

Table 3 Correlation of Sociodemographic Features to Satisfaction with ecologically-produced Food and with Willingness to Pay Premium Prices for ecologically-produced Food

Dependent variable	Independent variable	χ^2	*df*	*Cc*
Satisfaction with ecologically-produced food	Age	15.6	12	0.206
	Gender	5.6	3	0.132
	Occupation	21.2	21	0.443
	Income	12.8	12	0.382
Willingness to pay premium prices for ecologically-produced food	Age	15.7	20	0.734
	Education level	14.0	15	0.519
	Occupation	37.0	35	0.373

nificant influence on the satisfaction with ecological products in a manner such that tourists with higher incomes were more satisfied than those with lower incomes. Additionally, managers, entrepreneurs and civil servants were more satisfied with ecological products than students, pupils, unemployed and other persons.

In the decision process for purchasing ecologically-produced food, the highest grade was responsive to health benefits (average grade of 4.29), followed by environmental protection (average grade of 3.97) and selling price (average grade of 3.64).

In the whole sample, tourists responded with positive attitudes regarding premium prices and were on average willing to pay up to 30 percent more for ecologically-produced food versus conventionally produced food. A certain number of tourists were willing to pay 31 to 50 percent more, while few tourists were willing to pay 100 percent more for ecologically-produced food.

Taking into consideration the differences between prices for ecologically-produced food and conventionally-produced food with a range from 30 to 100 percent premiums, we can state that each group of tourists could identify a comfortable range for market food prices during their stay in Istria.

The age of tourists in our sample was statistically significantly connected to the premium price in ways such that tourists were willing to pay more for ecologically-produced food. Tourists aged 25 to 34 were willing to pay 20 percent more, tourists aged 35 to 54 were willing to pay 30 percent more while each fifth tourist was willing to pay 60 percent more for ecologically-produced food, though in the age group above 55 years, this willingness dropped to paying twenty percent.

The criteria for decision making showed that wide ranges of products were most important to persons above 45 years of age and important only for each third respondent younger than 24.

The type of occupation had the strongest impact of all sociodemographic features and could be related to the fact that the higher income levels of managers and company owners rendered them more often willing and able to pay premium prices for ecologically-produced food. Also, according to occupation, entrepreneurs and managers were most concerned about environmental protection as a criterion for purchasing ecologically-produced food, while this was of least importance to workers.

Education was strongly statistically related to the willingness to pay premium prices for ecologically-produced food. According to education level, those willing to pay premium prices were the most educated, whereas tourists with primary education were least likely to pay premium prices for ecologically-produced food.

Education level was significantly correlated to selling price such that the range of food offered was more important to older tourists in comparison younger ones (under 25). The criteria for choosing ecologically-produced food, such as availability on the market, wide range of products and number of selling points, were not statistically significantly related to age.

Table 4 Correlation of Sociodemographic Features with Decision Criteria in Purchasing of ecologically-produced Food

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

The price of ecological products was more important to respondents with lower levels of education; it may be speculated that they had lower incomes and therefore, ecologically-produced food was less available to them. Tourists with less education were also not as concerned about environmental protection in comparison to those tourists with university and higher levels of education. Tourists with university or higher education were more willing to pay the highest premium prices for ecologically-produced food, while the least willing were those with primary education.

Although they expressed the most interest in ecologically produced food, the stereotype that consumers with highest income levels were the most frequent buyers of ecologically-produced food was not demonstrated to be valid in our research. Tourists with lower income levels were also interested in buying such products and were purchasing them, but because of limited income, they were not able to purchase larger amounts of such food.

Regarding sensitivity to price, the consumers of ecologically-produced food were equally sensitive to price, quality, taste and availability to food markets in comparison to tourists that purchase conventionally produced food. The price and availability of ecologically-produced food were most important to tourists at three- and four-star hotels, creating the most in-demand segment, while for tourists at two- and five-star facilities, these criteria were not as important and therefore not strongly statistically significantly correlated.

The gender of tourists was not statistically correlated to satisfaction with ecological food, the willingness to pay premium prices and decision criteria (Table 4). In these categories, women and men responded with the same sensitivity, but gender had a statistically significant correlation with choosing and consuming ecologically-produced food, especially while purchasing food in camps and green markets as well as in local shops (Table 5). This fact can be related to the overall purchasing habits in families, in which women buy most of the groceries and usually purchase most food products for the family. We can hypothesize that tourists in camps are more prone to buying ecological products at camp sites because they usually prepare their own meals; therefore, women are the primary cooks and most involved shoppers (showing correlation $Cc = 0.753$).

In our sample, most tourists consumed ecologically-produced food in non-specialized restaurants. In the literature, similar findings were reported by Hjalager and Antonioli-Corigliano (2000); ecologically-produced food can be an attractive factor of a tourism destination, but in the long-term, for a consumer group, such an offer is highly unstable as a factor in destination management.

In our sample, occupation had the highest correlation among all other independent variables with ecological food in gastronomy service. Along with higher education, higher occupation status would refer to greater purchasing and consumption potential. This could guide hotel managers when making future decisions about gastronomy services.

As not all tourists were ready to purchase ecologically-produced food, we wanted to determine the reasons for such negative attitudes. Such attitudes may provide insights to hotel managers with respect to making changes in gastronomy offerings. Further, our

Table 5 Correlation of Sociodemographic Features and Place of Purchasing ecologically-produced Food

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

findings put forth explanations, such as excessively high premium pricing for such food and unclear quality definitions. A very strong correlation with age, gender and occupation was detected and could be understood based on the fact that there is no need for such kinds of food on the market and that the price and quality relationships are not connected. Similar observations of AC Nielsen (2005) indicated that in general terms, consumers have doubts about the fairness of premium pricing versus other food prices.

Negative attitudes toward ecologically-produced food were statistically significantly correlated with the socio demographic features of tourists. Therefore, according to age, the oldest tourists, being greater than 55 years of age, considered price to be most important. Price and quality were most important to tourists between the ages of 25 to 34, while for other age categories, this relationship was important for half of the respondents, while for the other half, it had no influence.

Less interest and more negative attitudes were seen in women, who were responsible for food purchases due to a small number of selling points, disproportionate relationship between price and quality and no perceived need for such products. The segment of workers not buying ecologically-produced food primarily did not do so because of the relationship between price and quality.

Table 6 Correlation of Sociodemographic Features and Negative Attitudes towards the Purchase and Consumption of ecologically-produced Food

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

The negative attitudes of tourists with primary education were connected to the small number of selling points, the selling price, and the comparison to conventional food prices. in contrast, these reasons were not important for university-(or higher-) educated tourists.

Regarding income, for tourists with monthly income above one thousand euro, the least important criteria was the number of selling points, the selling price and the price difference between ecological and conventional food, while for tourists with the lowest incomes, these three criteria were important because

they could afford fewer ecological food items with their income.

The strongest statistical correlations were established for British tourists with regards to their occupations (managers) that influenced their interest in ecologically-produced food and its consumption during their tourist stay in Istria (value of connection $Cc = 0.436$). Moreover, their occupation was related to the volume of consumption of ecologically-produced food ($Cc = 0.333$). In relation to the average Croatian income, the British had one that is much higher and with the pound being a strong currency, much stronger than the Croatian kuna (in relation 1 : 10); we presumed that these features enhanced their ability to purchase and consume ecologically-produced food even though it has a relatively higher price than conventionally-produced food. In comparison to tourists from other countries, British tourists were the most prepared to pay premium prices for ecologically-produced food and among them, middle-aged tourists were the keenest to consume it. British tourists demand better organization of offerings and more information about prices, points of sales and availability of products. The information on food prices was most related to age ($Cc = 0.351$) and occupation ($Cc = 0.358$).

Gastronomy featuring ecologically-produced food is important to Italians as long as it is presented in restaurants as a menu offering. Italian general interest in ecologically-produced food offerings was related to occupation ($Cc = 0.313$) and education ($Cc = 0.296$). The education of Italians was also connected to consumption in specialized restaurants ($Cc = 0.313$): more highly-educated Italians were more keen to choose specialized restaurants and consume ecologically-produced food. The type of occupation of Italians was connected to consumption in non-specialized restaurants ($Cc = 0.449$). Regarding the offer of ecologically-produced food outside restaurants, the most important was the availability in camp shops ($Cc = 0.449$).

Russian tourists were the most indifferent to the purchase and consumption of ecologically-produced food during their stay in Istria. A low-grade statistical relationship was found when taking into account occupation ($Cc = 0.204$) and age ($Cc = 0.229$). Furthermore, the potential of enhancing consumption was also low because of weak statistical links found in relationships between ecologically-produced food prices and age ($Cc = 0.223$) and occupation ($Cc = 0.275$).

As consumers, Germans did not show a great interest in the consumption of ecologically-produced food in restaurants. They were more interested in what was offered in shops and at green markets, and, in general, they were more interested in expanding the existing offerings. Middle-aged Germans saw the strongest limitations in the small number of selling points ($Cc = 0.379$). They were most eager to purchase ecologically-produced food at green markets ($Cc = 0.270$).

Austrian tourists were most enthusiastic to consume ecologically-produced food as a part of gastronomy offerings in hotels, and this was connected to age ($Cc = 0.361$). Occupation was linked to consumption in specialized restaurants ($Cc = 0.352$). For enlargement of offerings, the availability in local shops was important to Austrians when considering age ($Cc = 0.293$) while in specialized shops, it was related to income ($Cc = 0.359$). Austrian tourists demanded a larger number of sales points ($Cc = 0.352$) and were more willing to pay premium prices for ecologically-produced food, most strongly connected to occupation ($Cc = 0.549$). Austrian tourists were demanding guests with regard to the information and organization of offerings, income ($Cc = 0.469$) and occupation ($Cc = 0.289$). Moreover, their occupation was strongly related to sales point information ($Cc = 0.492$).

Conclusions

As a conclusion, we can state that the survey of a sample of 1.028 tourists yielded valuable data about tourists' attitudes toward ecological food during their stay in Istria. Tourists had, in general, a positive approach to ecologically-produced food. Those who usually consumed such food at home were willing to purchase and consume it at their vacation destination, in this case in Istria. They were prone to consume such food as part of gastronomic offerings in Istria and purchase it at specialized shops and green markets. The possibilities of direct on farm purchase were very scarce and were related to lack of information. Regarding the socioeconomic and demographic features of tourists, occupation, age and education were statis-

tically highly related to positive attitudes towards the purchase and consumption of ecologically-produced food.

Geographical segmentation (land of residence) also demonstrated important relationships, such as how Italians believed that ecologically-produced food was interesting if offered on restaurant menus while Russian tourists were most indifferent to purchases of such food. German tourists were the most interested in enlarging the ecologically-produced food offerings in shops, green markets, and other places, while Austrians were most interested in consumption of it in hotels and purchasing it in local and specialized shops.

Behavioural segmentation suggested there was a positive attitude regarding willingness to pay premium prices for ecologically-produced food and there were positive aspects of the purchase and consumption of it for own health and environmental reasons.

Future recommendations for additional inquiry into this topic would best involve better marketability, visibility and wider offerings of ecologically-produced food.

The future marketing of ecologically-produced food should move toward certain segments of tourists; employed persons (managers, entrepreneurs and civil servants), middle aged (35–54) and highly educated persons who are more prone to pay premium prices and are more aware of environment protection and eco-quality.

Overall stronger promotion should reach more British tourists in all tourist facilities offering ecologically-produced food, while for Italians promotion should be forwarded in specialized restaurants. The availability of ecologically-produced food and number of selling points was most important to Austrian tourists; therefore, their number should be enlarged in the future.

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