

THE CONSUMPTION OF FOOD PRODUCTS IN SHORT CHAINS: the case of social and reputational labels

O CONSUMO DE PRODUTOS ALIMENTARES EM CADEIAS CURTAS: o caso dos rótulos sociais e reputacionais

EL CONSUMO DE PRODUCTOS ALIMENTICIOS EN CADENAS CORTAS: el caso de las etiquetas sociales y reputacionales

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ABSTRACT:

There have been an increasing demand for products of short food supply chains, which enable consumers to identify of the product and its origin, which is established through information transmitted by labels and certifications. This article analyzed consumers' motivations for demanding products with labels of local or social reputation. A survey was conducted with consumers in São Paulo. Descriptive statistics was used to raise the consumer's profile and their motivations for consuming these products. The consumer's motivations are related to aspects of the place of origin, as well as the benefits of acquiring it, without considering price aspects.

KEYWORDS: Alternative Supply Chains; Geographical Indication; Convention Theory; Quality Turn.

Introduction

Currently, people are looking for foods that convey confidence, as various diseases. In addition to obesity and bad nutrition can be the result of consumption of unsafe products, such as contamination by salmonella, E-coli, and others. In the face of such distrust, there is a change in the purchasing behavior of agri-food products, originating new alternative food geography based on regional chains (Ferrari, 2011). These regional chains are also known as short food supply chains (SFSCs), which make it possible to the consumer to connect with new production places, such as the union of agricultural activity, local resources, traditions, customs, and the quality source (Barjolle apud Renting et al., 2017).

These SFSCs are new ways of building interaction between production and consumption, where the product's identity and origin are considered, in addition to cultural, social, and environmental valuation (Schneider & Gazolla, 2017). It is

noteworthy that, according to Renting et al. (2017, p. 35), such SFSCs, “[...] are categorized into three types, being face-to-face, spatial proximity and spatially extended.”

The first dimension is characterized by face-to-face interactions, which is direct sales, where the communication between producer and consumer happens. The second dimension, spatial proximity, in turn, has a greater reach, making it possible to have relationships in the mercantile space of the producing region itself, increasing the visibility of the product in trade. And finally, the last dimension, spatially extended, with market relations expanded in space beyond production, since products are produced and marketed for the national or global market (Renting et al., 2017).

According to the same authors, all these dimensions are considered SFSCs due to the information included that is used to build an image of the product, in addition to transmitting values for the consumers to identify themselves. This makes the distance lose its meaning, as the product can travel across the nation or even international territory, and still carry relevant information about the place and mode of production, traditions, local culture, historical data, among others. However, the producer must have the essential information he wants to convey. In this sense, the certification of agri-food products is an important instrument for the transmission of such information from producer to consumer (Renting et al., 2017).

For the realization of this certification, a third party needs to carry out the conformity assessment whose meaning is “the demonstration of the specified requirements, relating to a product, process, system, person or organism” (Brazilian National Standards Organization [ABNT], 2005, p. 01). Such assessment is a systematized process with established rules to provide a certain degree of confidence to a product, process, or service, indicating that it meets the requirements pre-established by standards or regulations (National Service for Industrial Training [SENAI]; ABNT, 2008). In this way, the conformity assessment ensures that everything is following the technical standards and regulations, especially the factors related to health, consumer safety, and environmental protection (SENAI; ABNT, 2008).

The records of Geographical Indications (GIs) consists of granting characteristics or qualities to products that are associated with their region of origin, where production took place. In Brazil, according to the National Institute of Intellectual Property (INPI, for its acronym in Portuguese), the laws do not have a definition of their own for GIs, but for its two aspects, which are Indications of Origin (IO) and Designations of Origin (DO) (Dorr et al., 2012). Both are following the principles referring to valuing the origin of the product and its quality, that is, its identity.

These records and certifications convey confidence to the consumer since it starts to recognize the characteristics associated with the place where it was produced, influenced by the factors such as the production process, origin of the product, local culture, natural landscape, climate, and soil (Dorr et al., 2012). In addition to the GI records, other records were created by the Ministry of Agrarian Development (Brazil, 2019-a), which are 'Quilombos do Brasil' label, which has the purpose of identifying agricultural, handcraft, and food products from Quilombola Communities and 'Family Farming' label, which was created for the consumer to recognize products from the family agricultural sector, providing information about who produced them and production form.

To explain this behavior in the purchase of agri-food products, the theory of conventions has been used, since it prescribes a form of action to be adopted, considering in addition to the formal aspects, the informal aspects, which are, according to the theory, the most relevant (Niederle, 2011).

The evaluation of quality in chains is based on the 'theory of conventions' which is considered informal conventions (civic, domestic, and esteem) and formal conventions (product and production standards). The market convention (price and status in the purchase of products) is also added. The domestic convention refers to information shared between families, traditions, and neighborhood relations, on the other hand, the esteem convention considers criteria related to feelings of trust, friendship, respect, recognition and coexistence, and communication (Kirwan, 2006, Morris & Kirwan, 2011, Rikonen et al., 2013).

There is also the civic convention, which concerns the collective interest in searching for products, presenting the benefits in buying a local product and the last convention is the mercantile one, which values the networks formed, generating incentives and rewards related to economic activities, as local products are forming relationships within the market that generate trust, negotiation, and contracts that benefit both parties, whether producers or sellers, to improve their living conditions (Ferrari, 2011). Formal conventions refer to the appreciation of the formal mechanisms used to inform the attributes that make up the product, such as origin and food safety.

With the incidents that occurred previously, associated with food safety, caused a change in the search for food products, a movement called "quality turn" emerged, whose meaning refers to the change in consumer behavior, who search for products that improve the information regarding production and location, such as products with registrations and certifications that prove their origin and production following their principles, customs, habits, and values. In this context, scientific research focuses on the

following issue: "What are the consumer motivations in consuming products with registrations and certifications that carry local or social reputation". In this way, the main point of the research is searching and analyzing the consumer motivations in the consumption of products with local or social reputation labels.

The importance of this research is based on the behavioral change of consumers, who in the past were looking for fast and cheaper food consumption, and nowadays, most of those consumers are concerned with health and well-being. They link product-related information, especially intangibles represented by registrations and certifications, to help them make decisions.

The article discusses local and social reputation registrations and brands, above all, the importance of the origin of that label and registrations to attest to the quality of products, in conformity of the theory of conventions. This was followed by the research methodology, with the presentation of the scale validated by Scalco et al. (2020) used to carry out the identification of quality attributes. After that, there are the results and discussions with data analysis referring to the field research, confronted with the literature. To conclude, some considerations of the study will be shown, with possibilities for future research.

Literature Review

It is notorious that in the last decade there was an increase in the demand for quality and safe food, with this, new forms of production emerged in the market, with the manufacture of foods with unique characteristics, that is, differentiated attributes, traceability, and guarantee of origin. Such guarantees, in the case of products sold in long chains, strengthen the consumer-producer interaction, through the use of certificates and records, which transmit trust and transparency to the consumer (Brazil, 2012).

In addition to reaffirming those guarantees, records of GIs and certifications are used as a value-adding strategy, facilitating access to marketing channels, which results for farmers in an improvement in their life quality (Pereira, 2016). This practice is widely used by family farmers to help them with the difficulties of entering the market, given their unfavorable competitive position. This strategy enables local development, as there is a valuation of regional products, the incentive to tourism, such as wineries in the southern region of the country, due to the GIs of wines (Niederle & Silva, 2017).

The GIs constitutes a stand-alone intellectual property right, for example, a patent or a trademark. In the Brazilian territory, the right is recognized by Law Nº. 9,279, May 14th. A GI is a registration granted to a product or service, which stands out in a certain

geographic region. It is divided into two modalities: Indication of Origin (IO) or Denomination of Origin (DO), the use of one of these constitutes a strategy to qualify the product from its origin, which is rooting of the cultural factors and also local, or even by climatic, which help to differentiate the product quality (Brazil, 1996; Niederle, 2009). According to the legislation, articles 177 and 178 provide:

Art. 177 – An indication of origin is the geographic name of a country, city, region, or locality in its territory, which has become known as the center of extraction, production, or manufacture of a given product or provision of a given service.

Art. 178 – Designation of origin is the geographical name of a country, city, region, or locality in its territory, which designates a product or service whose qualities or characteristics are exclusively or essentially due to the geographical environment, including natural and human factors (Brazil, 1996).

GIs are used by producers or service providers in a specific location, exclusivity is given through registration, in one of the modalities. GIs objectives for the producer are to increase the price of the product or service, such as add value, due to the recognition of its origin, but above that, a place that shows the history of the region, which is, the culture, values, and reputation of the people in that place (Bruch, 2008).

Cerdan (2013) recognizes that GIs are treated as tools to promote family farming since they serve as a tool to safeguard, enhance and attest to product quality levels, related to natural or human factors in a delimited area. However, GIs have been an instrument for exclusion of family producers who are unable to meet the requirements established in the regulation for the use of the registry, thus failing to promote local development (Brazil, 1996; Froehlich et al. 2010).

The INPI is the organism responsible for establishing registration conditions, through Resolution No. 75/2000 (INPI, 2000), which lists several documents there are necessary for GIs recognition and registration, such as the regulation about using the geographic name, the instrument that delimits the geographic area, the product description and service are exclusively due to the geographic environment and proof of notoriety¹.

According to the INPI (2019) registration can be requested by institutes, associations, and legal entities, which represent a collective with the exclusive use of the geographic name. However, there are exceptions for individual requests, when a single producer or service provider is legitimated to use the geographic name (Bruch, 2008).

¹ Notoriety is the fame that a product has due to its qualities recognized by consumers, which may be linked to quality, to a producer or region (Velloso et al., 2014).

The labels and records are related to alternative channels, the SFSCs, since they have similar characteristics, as cultural, social, and environmental valuation, the importance of showing the consumer the origin and identity of the product, among other characteristics that refer to the place of production (Brazil, 2010; Schneider & Gazolla, 2017). In addition, other certifications are related to SFSCs, such as Fair Trade, Fair for Life, Family Agriculture label, and Quilombos of Brazil label, see Table 1.

Table 1 Certifications with reputation local or social related to SFSCs

Certification labels	Certification description
	<p>The Biodynamic Institute of Rural Development (IBD, for its acronym in Portuguese) Fairtrade certificate applicable to agricultural and natural products, concerns the payment of a fair price to companies, properties, and producer groups, with the objective of human, social and environmental development. Through those relations, there are based on Fair Trade, improving living and working conditions, in addition to environmental conservation and recovery. It is “[...] a trade partnership, based on dialogue, transparency, and respect, which seeks greater equity in international trade [...]” (European Fairtrade Association [EFTA], n.d.), the aim is to promote sustainable development and guarantee the producers' rights.</p>
	<p>The Fair for life certificate also promotes Fair Trade to producers and workers who have a disadvantage in accessing socio-economic benefits. In addition, the certification aims at “respect for human rights and fair working conditions, respect for the ecosystem and also promotion of biodiversity, sustainable agricultural practices and respect and improvement of local impact.” (Fair For Life, n.d.).</p>
	<p>To strengthen family production, the family farming label was created as a tool to help to differentiate the products in this sector. This certificate is an instrument for adding value since the product from family farming promotes a higher demand by consumers, such as sustainability, social and environmental responsibility, appreciation of local culture and regional production, which results in work, income and consequently, sustainable local development.</p>
	<p>According to Ordinance No. 5, of November 2012, the Quilombos of Brazil label, now has its issue associated with the Identification Label of Participation in Family Farming (SIPFF, for its acronym in Portuguese), it is also characterized as an origin certificate, which has as objective to attribute cultural identity to products from the Quilombola's through ethnic-cultural valorization. Thus, like the family farming certificate, this one also enables sustainability, social and environmental responsibility, valuing local culture and regional production, which generates work, income and consequently, sustainable local development.</p>

Source: Prepared by the authors based on Brazil (2012), Brazil (2019-a, 2019-b), EFTA (2019), IBD (n.d.), World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO, 2019).

Reputation labels (local or social) are used by producers to show the difference of their product among the other ones, whether in the form of production, edaphoclimatic aspects, local culture, or even product quality. In the face of various food scandals and outbreaks, as mentioned above, consumers seek greater transparency in food chains. Therefore, quality and localism, are attributes valued by consumers. In this way, in the '90s decade began a movement that prioritizes food produced and sold in short chains, the quality turn, which is presented in opposition to the relations of conventional or industrial markets (Matte et al., 2014). The emergence of this new economic dynamic is based on the notions of trust, quality, tradition, and place, to resocialize and give new meaning to food and allow consumers to feel secure in face of their food (Dvortsin & Brunori, 2017; Ferrari, 2011; Moragues-Faus & Sonnino, 2012).

Hence the SFSCs got notoriety, and the prominence of food production took place through localism, which values the relationships of trust, social roots of the place, and cultural identity. This new trade form contradicts the industrial format of selling, which is based on expansion and profit, unlike the alternative, which seeks to involve production-consumption more intensely (Matte et al., 2014).

Corroborating the authors, Schneider and Gazolla (2017) argue that the population's behavior change came from the awareness of what was being ingested, opting for healthier and nutritious products combined with "[...] environmental preservation, health human rights, animal welfare, adequate remuneration for farmers and agribusiness workers and non-exploitation of slave and child labor" (Schneider & Gazolla, 2017, p. 190).

The occurrence of such a phenomenon, the quality turn, made regional development, globalization, or socio-environmental justice possible since there was recognition of the particularities of the products by consumers. Quality is "[...] a social construction and, therefore, dependent on the socio-cultural, political and economic contexts within which production-consumption relations exist" (Ilbery & Kneafsey 2000, p. 219). The objective is based on strengthening the cultural identity of a place, which provides rural development. When it comes to product quality, this "[...] is defined in terms of various elements from the Granovetterian² sociological analyzes of regional industrial networks, especially interpersonal relationships, trust, rootedness, localized tacit knowledge, and other "non-interdependencies negotiated" (Goodman, 2017, p. 63).

² Granovetterian sociological analysis: deals with the notion that economic action is not an insulated action, like the notion that the Market is not a metaphysical entity, which hovers over us. On the contrary, markets are socially situated, immersed in networks of interpersonal relationships, which function as a coordination mechanism. Granovetter has a perspective that represents the analysis of social networks, as one of the main exponents (Bovo, 2014).

In terms of the notion of quality, existing in short agri-food chains, involves a social qualification process, being constructed and negotiated, depending on the context of production-consumption and the product to be traded. For this, natural, social, cultural, and economic attributes of the territory in which it was produced are taken into account, becoming the product's identity (Ferrari, 2011, Niederle, 2011).

There are no simple indicators and parameters for the quality concept, so the quality does not only depend on the objective characteristics of the product but also the perception by consumers of satisfying their needs, with this are analyzed a varied set of characteristics. Some distinctions can be made, such as when evaluating quality before purchase, by size, color, or price of the product, or when checking after purchase, through taste or smell (Migliore et al., 2015).

Specifically, about this work, where quality is interpreted as a set of social, cultural, environmental and sense of justice attributes, the Conventions Theory (CT) is used as theoretical support. CT is based on market coordination, since the reciprocal expectations about the behavior of others as well as the way to interpret situations and plan an action to be performed in the market/world (Thorsoe et al., 2016).

This theory seeks to explain how coordination occurs in social and economic exchange, in addition to the behavior of actors, through agreements made by themselves, to help in the interaction, so that it occurs more efficiently (Wills & Arundel, 2017). Conventions are not organized by a single principle, according to Ponte (2016, p. 13) "[...] they are not fixed in time and space: they include clarification mechanisms that are open to challenge." Which is the rules of the conventions are not decided before the action, but arise in this process, to solve problems related to coordination. CT is composed of the worlds of justifications; therefore, it is necessary to understand how these different worlds are articulated, and how they are made of. There are the world of esteem, civic, formal, domestic, and the market (Pontes, 2016; Wills & Arundel, 2017).

The relation of esteem or consideration convention is measured by the degree of attention that exists between farmers and consumers, and also the relation with these agents occurs from feelings such as trust, friendship, respect, recognition, and sociality that develop after repeated interactions between the parties involved in the transaction (Migliore et al., 2015).

In the civic convention, the principle is collective and anonymous solidarity. There is a vision of value placed on people and things that provide benefits beyond the individual. In this convention, the commitment is in the well-being of the consumer, plus the product quality is linked to the impact that it can bring to society and to the environment, which is the ecological benefits. Besides that, some searches prove the

increase in social justice and also the development of rural communities through values of equity, freedom, and solidarity (Ferrari, 2011; Migliore et al., 2015; Wills & Arundel, 2017).

The formal or institutional convention is based on respect for formal criteria or standards, such as procedures for institutional certification and control of authorities. Such procedures refer to standards that guarantee the quality of the product, through the certification transmitted to consumers on labels (Migliore et al., 2015).

In the domestic convention, personal relationships are based on trust and lasting connections with traditional modes of production, the common principle being traditional benevolence. It is also important to ensure the tradition, location, respect for hierarchy, and the succession of generations are emphasized. In addition to valuing close relationships, the direct link between people and objects (Ferrari, 2011; Migliore et al., 2015; Wills & Arundel, 2017).

According to the same authors, the last world, the market convention, has commercial relations based on the price and commercial value of goods. The common principle of the competition in the market, with the valorization of profit and personal utility, the organization of companies is based on competitiveness. This convention is used when price differences are equated with quality. In the market's world, there is an interaction of people there are far away through global value chains, which increasingly feature communication technologies. Briefly, Table 2 brings the main points of each world of justification.

The Convention theory was used in other studies to detect the quality conventions, which are generated in the form of SFSCs. It is highlighted that the identification of quality goes beyond a social and informal context such as the price regulation between activity economic (Ferrari, 2013; Migliore et al., 2015). According to the study by Migliore et al. (2015), consumers emphasize the location of production. Besides health or food safety reasons, it also includes the rediscovery of social connectedness values, along with recognition of the product's authenticity. It was observed through this study that reliability and reputation to the producer have a greater influence on consumer behavior.

Table 2 Quality Conventions

Conventions	Description
Estimates	Reliability, friendship, and recognition.
Civic	Equity, freedom, and solidarity.
Formal	Criteria, standards, and procedures.
Domestic	Tradition, immersion, and trust.

Market	Price, competitiveness, and competition.
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Source: Prepared by the authors based on Ferrari (2011), Migliore et al. (2015), Thévenot et al. (2000), Wills; Arundel (2017).

In the study made by Forssell and Lankoski (2017), the reason why the consumers were motivated was that they know that most retailers were directly committed to paying a fair price to their suppliers and helping them, which are expressive characteristics of the civic convention. In Ireland, the study made by Sage (2003) pointed out that the direct interactions that occur between production and consumption entail obligations and responsibilities to them promoting a certain morality in the agri-food sector. Personal interactions and localism are used as criteria for establishing reliability and reputation.

Regarding the esteem convention, Ponte (2016) adds, the range of quality attributes that are built around personal interaction, which means that the consumers have a more direct connection with the food and the producer. Moreover, such convention arises from the combination of domestic conventions, which is based on building trust over time such as tradition, and locality, together with the civic convention, which establishes the collective well-being of society.

Wills and Arundel (2017) also showed in a study that both online and offline consumers attribute some motivational factors, which are shared between them or not. The motivations permeated the civic and domestic justifications since the enthusiasm to buy a certain product was related to its origin. In addition, the motivation of fame was also mentioned due to being related to the brand, the image, as well as the product as itself (Wills & Arundel, 2017).

Presented the studies related to short chains as well as the attributes considered in the purchase of products are still incipient. This work aimed to identify the quality attributes that are considered by consumers of products with social or local reputation labels in short chains of the spatially extended type.

Materials and methods

In terms of objectives, it is descriptive research with a quantitative approach, which is characterized by the use of quantification (statistical techniques) both in data collection and in the treatment and analysis (Diehl & Tatim, 2004; Gil, 1999). The unit of analysis are the consumers of agri-food products in the spatially extended short agri-food chain typology. The research was developed with the public of two commercial channels, both located in the city of São Paulo, the first one is Empório A, located in (the) Brás, a cereal area in the capital. In this place, 37 consumers were interviewed.

Empório founded in 1950, was known as a grocery store, which over time became Empório A, due to its variety of products and drinks. The store offers a variety of wines, cheeses, sweets, jams and cookies, traditional from Minas Gerais.

The second place was the Municipal Market of Pinheiros, located on the west side of the city of São Paulo, this market was inaugurated in 1910, known as “Hillbilly Market” since it brought together merchants and producers from the interior of the state. In 2014, a revitalization project started, with the help of Chef Alex Atala, the market gets a gourmet look with outdoor tables on a wooden deck and renowned stalls, which share space with more traditional grocery stores, that sell meat, fish, sausages, fruits, and cereals (Pinheiros Municipal Market, n.d.).

The focus of the research was at Instituto Atá boxes, whose work aims to bring focus to Brazil's biodiversity, strengthening the end of the chain, so that small producers are remunerated fairly, facilitating their entry into the market and shortening the path between field to table (Instituto Atá, 2019). 103 consumers were interviewed in the boxes. Each one of the boxes represents five Brazilian biomes: Amazon, Atlantic Forest, Pampas, Cerrado, and Caatinga. It is possible to find very specific products in them, which are often unknown, such as pequi oil, charque (which is a kind of dried meat), maniva, tucupi, cambuci cachaça, etc., produced mainly by communities and small producers, but also those with GI.

To start the research a scale used was validated to identify the quality attributes, through a procedure that addressed theoretical investigation, item generation (quality variables or attributes), exploratory factor analysis, and confirmatory factor analysis. The result presented a composite scale with 20 quality attributes, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Scale with items for the investigation of motivators (quality attributes) in the acquisition of products in short agri-food chains

Constructs	Subdimensions	Items (assertions)
Esteem Convention	Friendship	Product that contributes to the rapprochement (friendship) with the producer
	Respect	Product produced by producers who deserve respect
	Life Quality	Product that provides health and well-being to workers
	Empathy	Product produced by people that I identify with.
Civic Convention	Ecological	Product that consumes less amount packaging
	Environment	Product that is produced without degrading the environment (soil, air, and rivers)
	Justice	Fair remuneration for all agents in the chain
	Distance	Product that contributed to reducing the emission of pollutants due to the short distance between production and consumption
Formal	Communication	Product that allows all necessary information to be

Convention		transmitted (safety in consumption).
	Place of Origin	Product with certificate that guarantees where the product is produced
	Producer	Product with certificate that guarantees who produces it.
	No pesticide	Product with certificate that guarantees that it has no pesticides
Domestic Convention	Relocalization	Product produced near where it is sold
	Landscape	Product produced in a place where the landscape is preserved
	Handmade process	Handcrafted product
	Handmade product	Product with handcrafted features
	Traditions	Product is produced in a place where traditions and customs are preserved and interfere in the product production process
	Geographical Characteristics	Product produced in a place where physical characteristics such as climate and vegetation differentiate the product
Market Convention	Status	Product conveys social status
	Expensive product	Product is more expensive

Source: Elaborated by Scalco et al. (2020).

As a data collection instrument, a questionnaire was made in the form of sentences with the items in a categorical scale, which allowed recording the consumers' opinion who purchase food or drinks in specialized stores. A seven-point semantic differential scale was used, from 1 ("I totally disagree with the purchase of the product at this specialized store") to 7 ("I totally agree with the purchase of this product at this specialized store"). The form also presents a block of questions aimed at characterizing the profile of those who responded to it.

After defining the form, a pilot survey was carried out to assess possible restrictions such as: filling time, understanding of assertions, among other characteristics. After the pre-test with 10 customers of a farmers' fair, adjustments were made to the form.

After data collection, these were submitted to verifications of missing values (missing data), straight lines (same answers), and outliers (atypical data), according to recommendations by Hair et al. (1998). The Mahalanobis distance technique of the Minitab 18® software was applied to test the multivariate outliers. Interactions were performed until the frequency of outliers becomes equals to zero or close.

The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics (tables, graphs, and descriptive measures). The frequency distribution of the agreement level looks to synthesize the results and categorize them into three blocks: agreement, disagreement, and indifference for the 20 variables considered motivating the purchase of these products by consumers.

The survey data were analyzed in two stages. First, a descriptive analysis was made to raise the profile of consumers, thus, crossing the data of variables that characterize them, such as gender, age group, family income, education. In addition, the second one was a description of the variables of product quality in short chains, whose results can be demonstrated through frequency tables, graphs, and numerical summary measures. Both were made in Excel and also in the SPSS® 20 software (Pestana & Gageiro, 2014).

Results and discussion

To characterize the consumers' profile, a descriptive analysis of the data was performed. It was observed that among 140 consumers of specialized stores, just have a minimal difference in the number of male and female respondents, who have, respectively, 53% and 47%. As observed in the study by Migliore et al. (2015), gender is not an indication that can conclude whether men or women purchase agri-food products with registration or certificates. The largest representativeness of the respondents is in the age groups, from 31 to 40, 41 to 50, and 51 to 60, totalizing approximately 65%, since the 31 to 40 age group corresponds to the largest number. Compared with the study by Migliore et al. (2015), the age group variable is not decisive to identify which group acquires these products. However, most customers are older than 30 years, which possible to have more information and knowledge.

Regarding the household income of consumers, classes are predominant from 3 to 5 minimum wages and 5 to 8 minimum wages, which represent 39%. As in the study by Migliore et al. (2015), income is considered a determining factor regardless of the profile of buyers in this category of products. During the study, the authors observed that income is directly related to the motivation in buying organic food (short-chain products). In addition, there are others, such as education that was considered in the purchase of products in short chains in this research, since more than half of the interviewers have higher education. In this sense, elder consumers with higher income and higher education levels are the most representative consumers in accessing these channels.

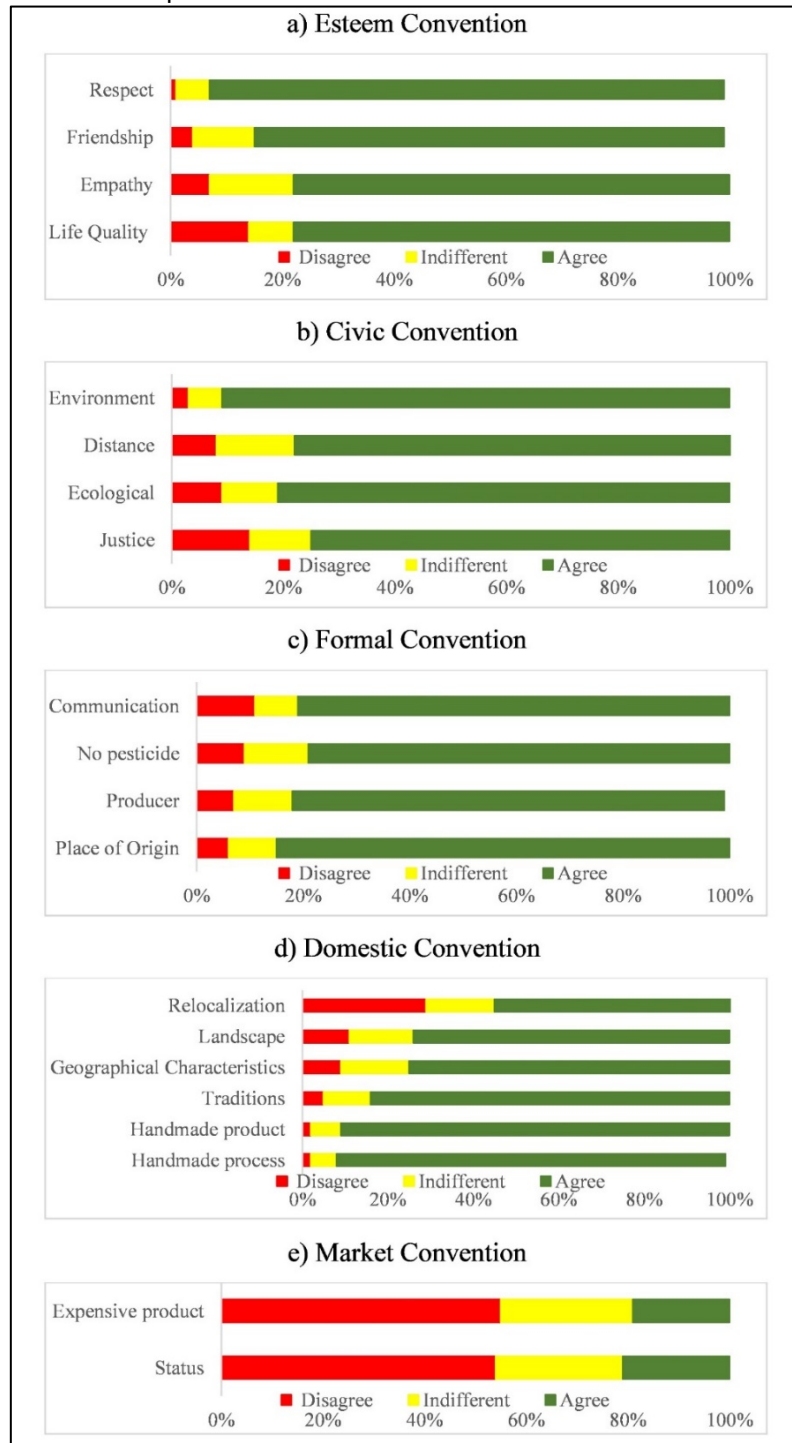
After raising the profile of the consumers, their purchasing habits were observed, which are the most purchased products in specialized stores: concerning fresh products, it was noticed that honey/propolis was the most purchased, followed by grains and cereals. For the processed products, it was identified that the most consumed are milk and its derivatives, mainly cheeses, and also wines and flour.

The most representative labels of the products purchased in the sample were: Family Agriculture (FA) (general products from farms with FA stamps), Serra da

Mantiqueira region of Minas Gerais (cheese), Quilombos do Brasil (general products from the region of Quilombo), Salinas Region (cachaça), Pantanal (honey), Farroupilha (wines and sparkling wines), Canastra (cheese) and ATÁ (general products from the communities that represent the Brazilian biomes).

However, what is truly behind these seals and what consumers should be aware of? The answer to this question was given by consumers, through the scale developed by Scalco et al. (2020). Then, it was possible to identify what matters to the respondents when deciding on the purchase of agri-food products. The results are shown below in Figure 1 and it is also possible to verify the frequency of the assertions' responses divided into conventions.

Figure 1 Frequency of agreement for the motivations of agri-food products in spatially extended short chains – specialized stores



Source: Prepared by the authors.

It was identified with the responses of the consumers in specialized stores, the existence of a significant agreement regarding the motivation to purchase agri-food products with seals or brands in geographic reputation, those variables were seemed for four quality conventions, except for one, which is relocation. The Market convention, on the other hand, is not representative of the respondent, since most of them disagreed

on the sub-dimensions that involve respondents' decision-making, either by the price attributed to the product or by the status that its use provides.

When analyzing the attributes separately, it was possible to identify their importance in decision making which each attribute had more than 70% of respondents' agreement, except for the Market convention, as mentioned above, and the relocation attribute, with 56%. Regarding the relocation attribute, it is emphasized that it was not considered for the majority of consumers since the products are not produced and marketed in the region of origin as it is a spatially extended channel, market relations can reach a national or global level (Renting et al., 2017), as with the products sold in the stores surveyed. Those identified by the respondents come from the States of Minas Gerais, Amazonas, Rio Grande do Sul, and others, whose representativeness of the biome is taken into the Pinheiros Municipal Market. This attribute was not placed as a preponderant factor because the consumer does not perceive a direct and closer relationship with the producer or place of origin.

The CT's contribution to the agri-food products market is seen through an understanding of how quality shapes production, exchange, and consumption. In CTs, quality assessment occurs through social interaction, where agents perceive and interpret information through a conventionalist economy, the result of which is presented collectively (Ferrari, 2011, Thorsoe et al., 2016). This was observed in the study by Guthey (2008), who analyzed the wine industry in Northern California. The respondents of Guthey study argued that changes in production and quality practices are brought about as a result of local collective social processes, which include the formation of conventions.

Regarding quality, it is clear that respondents from specialized stores take into account some "[...] complex and intangible attributes such as environmental awareness, health, ethics, taste and place of origin" (Dvortsin & Brunori, p. 386) which promote different products and services, allowing for new forms of economic interaction (Dvortsin & Brunori, 2017). According to Schneider and Gazolla (2017), consumers began to think about environmental preservation, human health and well-being, remuneration, and fair trade. This can be seen in the study, when looking at the frequency of responses, between 80% and 100% agreed with attributes such as ecology, environment, place of origin, respect, producer, process, and artisanal product and traditions, which contribute to decision making.

In another study, Coq-Huelva et al. (2012) analyzed the olive oil commodity chain in Andalusia, province of Spain, where CT was considered a basic element. They identified that the main conventions that characterize nodes – the relationships that

occur between more than one social actor – are formal (or industrial), domestic, and market conventions. It is observed that, as in the study, the respondents from the specialized stores also took into account the formal and domestic conventions, except for the market convention.

It is also noteworthy that the formal construct becomes important since as the commercialization is made far from the production point, there is a need for proof of origin. Therefore, it uses the communication of its intangible values as well as of information about the production since the SFSCs modality is of the spatially extended type (Renting et al., 2017).

Conclusion

With the conclusion of the research, it was sought to analyze using the scale developed by Scalco et al. (2020), consumer motivations in the consumption of products with local or social reputation certifications in specialized stores. Therefore, the convention theory approach was used to analyze the purchase motivation (quality characteristics of agri-food products) in the SFSCs. Such theory considers that the quality of agri-food products is presented in an intangible way, which is inserted through a social and local context, that is beyond the price of the product, based on a range of interpersonal and environmental concerns. The proof of intangible information occurs through labels, records, such as GIs, and origin marks, which were used in this research.

Through the scale by Scalco et al. (2020), it was evident that the consumption of agri-food products, according to the respondents, is changing as many of them disagreed that they buy the product for its price and the social status it gives it, but for the well-being and health that are provided by us. In addition to the purpose of strengthening agriculture and territorial/local development that is generated where production occurs.

There is a greater appreciation of the attributes of friendship and respect for the producer, which translates into the recognition of those who produce as well as the economy, through territorial development and place of origin, which indicates the origin of the product. And finally, the product as well as the process, are valued as they provide handcrafted characteristics, which contribute to the identification of the traditions, histories, and cultures of the place of production.

New research efforts must be carried out to better understand the factors and the motivational effects it has on consumers when purchasing agri-food products. It encourages further research incorporating other quality theories, besides the theory of

conventions, since quality is something complex and that interferes with consumer choice.

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RESUMO:

Há uma demanda crescente por produtos de cadeias curtas de abastecimento alimentar, que possibilitem ao consumidor a identificação do produto e sua origem, que é estabelecida por meio de informações transmitidas por rótulos e certificações. Este artigo analisou as motivações dos consumidores para a procura de produtos com rótulos de reputação local ou social. Foi realizada uma pesquisa com consumidores de São Paulo. A estatística descritiva foi utilizada para levantar o perfil do consumidor e suas motivações para consumir esses produtos. As motivações do consumidor estão relacionadas a aspectos do local de origem, bem como aos benefícios de adquiri-lo, sem considerar aspectos de preço.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Cadeias de Suprimentos Alternativas; Indicação Geográfica; Teoria da Convenção; Virada de Qualidade.

Ha habido una creciente demanda de productos de cadenas de alimentarias cortas, que permitan a los consumidores identificar el producto y su origen, lo que se establece a través de información transmitida por etiquetas y certificaciones. Este artículo analizó las motivaciones de los consumidores para demandar productos con etiquetas de reputación local o social. Se realizó una survey con consumidores en São Paulo. Se utilizó estadística descriptiva para elevar el perfil del consumidor y sus motivaciones para consumir estos productos. Las motivaciones están relacionadas con aspectos del lugar de origen e los beneficios de adquirirlo, sin considerar aspectos del precio.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Cadenas de Suministro Alternativas; Indicación Geográfica; Teoría de la Convención; Turno de Calidad.