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RIDING THE GREEN WAVE: THE CASE OF GREEN PRACTICES IN ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY SERVICES IN RIGA

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Abstract

In an era when an increasing number of consumers are faced with such issues as obesity, food safety and environmental problems, a growing number of companies are trying to target customers whose purchasing decisions are affected by environmental or health considerations. However, green consumption in Latvia remains extremely low. The explanation to this discrepancy might be that consumers are simply not willing to pay more for organic or environmentally friendly products in Latvia. This study examines the effect of different green practices (environment vs health focused) on consumer meal evaluation, company image and consumer willingness to pay more for meals in online food delivery (OFD) platforms in Riga. Results from the carried out experimental study indicate that environmental and health focused-practices both have a significant effect on all measured dimensions, such as company evaluation, willingness to pay a premium, meal health perceptions and prosocial meal benefits, with the exception of meal quality perceptions. Additionally, only in consumer meal health perceptions authors find that health-focused green practices have a stronger positive effect compared to the environmental-focused green practices.

1. Introduction

Nowadays it is more than clear that the natural environment is deteriorating at a rapid pace due to the unsustainable consumption behavior of our civilization fueled by the swiftly expanding nature of the global economy (Anwar & Jan, 2016). However, the destructive impact on the environment can be mitigated by changing the global manufacturing and consumption patterns. One possible solution is to increase the demand for food products that are grown and produced using environmentally conscious methods (green products). The term "green" is defined by actions that minimize the impact on the natural environment like ecological purchasing or recycling (Namkung & Jang, 2013). For example, by increasing the demand for products that are grown without chemical fertilizers or food that is manufactured by using only sustainable/green energy resources, the overall demand for the unhealthy and unsustainable alternatives would decrease (Thomson Reuters, 2018). Not only would it help to preserve the natural environment in the long term and increase the health of the general population, but it would also increase sustainable/green economic activity. As the current green food market is estimated to be around 100 billion USD and is expected to grow further on (Thomson Reuters, 2018).

When talking about large-scale paradigm shift in consumer behavior, marketing is the first communication tool that comes in mind (from a company's perspective). In the aforementioned situation, the type of marketing that would sway people's purchasing decisions in favour of sustainable options would be best described as "green marketing" since it supports practices that minimize any environmentally damaging or harmful impacts (Saxena & Khandelwal, 2010). In fact, green marketing efficiency, particularly in the restaurant industry, has been well researched and vast amounts of studies (Schubert et al., 2010; Jeong & Jang, 2010; Namkung & Jang, 2013) can be found describing the best tactics in swaying people's purchase decisions towards green foods. The most effective being (in most cases) product labeling practices with a focus on the environmental rather than the health perspective (Jeong & Jang, 2010; Namkung & Jang, 2013). However, within the last years, a new and quite unexplored segment of the multi-billion dollar restaurant industry has been developing and is growing at a rapid rate - the **online food delivery (OFD)** platform business, a segment where the effectiveness of green marketing is yet to be explored.

Food delivery itself isn't a new avenue, historically though the market had been limited to pizza and Asian cuisine. However, nowadays with the appearance of food delivery apps and decreasing delivery fees people are even more enticed to enjoy a meal at the comfort of their homes; thus, the overall demand for online delivery is growing (Morgan Stanley, 2017).

It has been estimated that in 2016 42% of the 500 billion USD dollar restaurant industry was comprised of meals eaten outside the restaurant, whereas the online food delivery (OFD) market represented 2.2% of the total market share in 2016. Although the size of the online delivery market share might seem minuscule if compared with the market share of the travel industry that is online (40%) or the e-commerce market share of total commerce (10%), there is no doubt that in the long term the online-food delivery market will acquire a much larger slice of the total 500 billion USD restaurant market segment (Morgan Stanley, 2016.) In fact, the online delivery sector is the fastest growing segment in e-commerce currently and online food delivery makes up more than 50% of all deliveries in 2018 (NPD Group, 2018).

Interestingly enough, the current online food delivery market growth rate and market share is very similar to the share of retail that had converged to online in 2008, which currently has transformed into a massive multi-billion industry (Halzack, 2018). Thus, it could potentially be taken as an indicator of the sheer size the online food delivery (OFD) market could reach just in a couple of years.

Along with changes in the digital landscape the methods of marketing and advertising tactics also change. The digital nature of the service itself in a combination with human primal eating behaviour creates a new environment where consumers might react to certain marketing approaches differently than in the traditional restaurant environment. Thus, regarding the novelty of this research paper, there are two core factors that make this research unique. Firstly, while there is a substantial body of research on green marketing in the physical restaurant and food retail industry (Anwar & Jan, 2016; Karakaya & Nasir, 2014; Tangari et al., 2015; Doorn & Verhoef, 2015), very little is known regarding green marketing practices in the online food delivery environment. Mainly due to the fact that the modern online food delivery market is very new and unexplored as far as marketing tactics are concerned.

Second, the majority of the research has been done in highly developed western countries like the USA (Schubert et al., 2010), yet green practices in Northern European countries like Latvia are still evolving. Thus, there is a lack of research regarding the perceptions, attitudes,

effectiveness and intentions towards green consumption in the online food delivery environment in Latvia.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate the role of different green practices on consumer attitudes and evaluations of food items ordered via OFD platforms in Riga. In fact, it has been found that especially within the online shopping context cognitive decision making is strongly influenced by the way in which the available information is presented (Chang & Chen, 2016). The same mechanics can be applied to green products. In essence, all green practices can be divided into two main categories: environment-focused green practices and health-focused practices (Namkung & Jang, 2013). Therefore, the research question can be formulated in the following manner:

RQ: What is the effect of different green practices on consumer meal evaluation and company image in OFD platforms among students in Riga?

The findings of this research paper provide an understanding of the working mechanics of green marketing practices in the online food delivery business in Latvia and valuable insights how to increase the demand for green products through OFD (online food delivery) platforms.

The research paper is structured in the following way: first an overview of the most relevant literature in the field of green practices, consumer behaviour and OFD platforms is presented. Thereafter, the authors introduce the methodological approach used in the study, which is followed by a thorough analysis of the core results. Finally, the authors conclude with a summary of the overall results and practical implications of the main findings, as well as providing suggestions and potential improvements for future research.

2. Literature Review

In the following paragraphs of the literature review, a brief overview of industrial agriculture and the current organic food market in Latvia is presented. Next, a detailed overview of the online food delivery business and its mechanics is summarized. As well as the core distinctive aspects that differentiate the consumer experience when ordering food online in comparison with a traditional restaurant visit is articulated clearly. As well as previous academic research in the field of green practices is reviewed.

2.1 Industrial Agriculture

It is well known that the current global food production methods are one of the most prominent contributors to the degradation of the natural environment as well as people's health. Nevertheless, across the planet, less than 30 countries have adopted laws or policies which are supporting local farmers to start or maintain their eco-farming operations (Win, 2018).

Direct environmental impact and health impact - the 2 main ways how industrial agriculture affects the environment and people's lives (Wallinga, 2009). The first being the direct environmental impact caused by polluting water sources, using harmful chemicals to fertilize soil, forest destruction, greenhouse emission creation by using unsustainable energy sources etc. In fact, the current agriculture methods are significant contributors to the degradation of the ozone layer by creating massive amounts of greenhouse gasses. In 2015, about 10 % of the EU's total greenhouse gas emissions were produced by agriculture alone, not even taking into consideration the impact created by further distribution and manufacturing of processed foods (Eurostat, 2018). Not only one third of all food that is being produced each year is being wasted (FAO, 2011), but also several food producers in many industries are overexploiting the environment and consuming at a much faster rate and quantities than the environment is able to regenerate. For example, in 2010 more than 23% of all fisheries were overfished (FAO, 2010).

The second negative effect of industrial agriculture and food manufacturing is the negative effect on consumers health caused by consuming unhealthy, processed foods, fruits and vegetables that contain toxic pesticide residues, and slowly developing a widespread resistance to antibiotics due to the consumption of antibiotics laden meat (Wallinga, 2009). For example, in 2002 around 58,000 consumers in America were reported having been unintentionally poisoned by pesticides. Different studies also argue that pesticide overuse in industrial agriculture is

associated with higher risks for cancers such as pancreatic, bladder or rectal cancer (Wallinga, 2009).

Unfortunately, taking into account the current trajectory of the global population growth rate, the current industrial food manufacturing and agriculture methods are not sustainable. Industrial food production practices are extremely detrimental to the environment, which means that a change must be made in order to ensure a prosperous future for the next generations (Win, 2018).

In fact, the worldwide organic food production utilizes only 1% of the world's total agricultural land (Reganold, 2016). However, Latvia is an outlier in the proportion of the total organic farmland used. In 2012 the amount of organic farmland reached almost 11% (in comparison Finland had 8.7%, Denmark 7.4% and Lithuania 5.4%). The share of the total organic agricultural land had increased by 26% in a 4 year period from 2012 till 2016. The area of organic farmland reached almost 260 thousand ha in 2016 in Latvia. Not surprisingly, organic processing enterprises in Latvia more than doubled in the period from 2010 to 2013, however, the green consumption was one of the lowest - only 0.2% from total retail sales (Loes et al., 2015) (see Appendix A). There is a sufficient lack of demand for green products in Latvia, which is why it is important to seek out new ways to increase the “green demand”, a goal that is the core end-goal of this research paper .

2.2 The Online Food Delivery Industry

The information and technological availability are fundamental reasons that have helped to radically reshape sectors like retail (e-commerce), taxi (Uber) and now the restaurant industry with the online business model. The ability to have access to the world-wide web from any location and at any time with a pocketable device has made food delivery apps a very attractive service for anyone with a mobile device (Lee et al., 2017). However, if one looks at a more fundamental level, then there are two core factors that drive the rapid blooming of the online food delivery (OFD) industry – convenience and time saving (Cheng, 2018).

In general, convenience is the core reason why the general population visits restaurants and other food outlets (NPD Group, 2017). Surely, ordering a certain food item at a restaurant takes less effort and time than trying to acquire the necessary ingredients and knowledge to prepare the same dish at home. According to a survey done by the NPD Group in 2017, 25% of

all U.S consumers have ordered a meal in the past three months. As for the demand side, young adults represent more than a half of the delivery orders, with 29% of millennials ordering weekly (NPD Group, 2017). Millennials being the largest customer segment with the largest internet service usage rate are the main drivers for the growing demand for online food delivery. In fact, millennials are 3 times more likely to order food online instead of going to a restaurant in comparison with older generations (Cheng, 2018).

The second factor contributing to the widespread appeal of OFD among millennials is time-saving. Nowadays people live in a very fast paced and productivity driven environment (Goh et al., 2017). Many people see eating as a large investment of time due to the hassle of having to go out for a meal and wait in a restaurant while the food is being prepared. This time might have been spent on working or other activities. To a lot of people eating is a task to be done while using as little time as possible; thus, the time-saving factor is seen as an extra utility gained from the OFD service (Goh et al., 2017). Therefore, having all of the local restaurants within a single platform allows one to make decisions and food comparisons much faster, than having to download separate application for each restaurant, not to mention the time saved by having the meal delivered to one's doorstep instead of having to visit a specific establishment (Goh et al., 2017).

The online food delivery business is best described as a platform that connects restaurants with customers. Further, the online food delivery services can be divided into 2 types of platforms. The first type can be described as „aggregators" or simply the retailers themselves providing the delivery of their own products; for example, Pizza Hut offering their assortment delivery. The second type is „delivery providers", who not only connect the two parties but also manage the logistics of the whole delivery process (Goh et al., 2017). In this paper the "delivery provider" model is analyzed, as it is the best representation of the OFD model (see Figure 1).

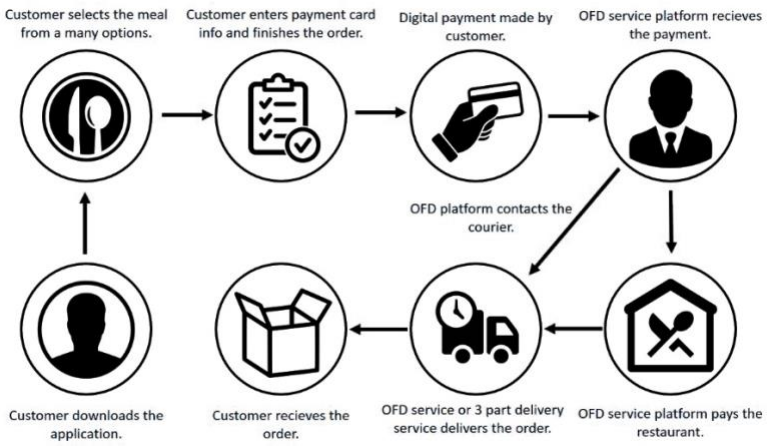

Figure 1. Online Food Delivery business mechanics. Created by the authors using data from Technavio (2018).

2.3 Online Food Delivery vs Restaurants

In this section the main differences between OFD platforms and restaurants are presented. Although visiting a physical restaurant and ordering food through OFD services might seem like close substitutes for the same service, it is speculated that the consumer behaviour and decision making patterns are different in these settings. Mainly due to the digital nature of the OFD services, the ritualist nature of human eating behaviour, the set and setting, and several other factors.

2.3.1 Utilitarian and hedonic motivation. First, one must consider that generally consumption goals and underlying motivations can be classified as utilitarian and hedonic. Hedonic consumption is characterized by a pleasure and emotion-driven approach to purchase decision making. Namely, in a hedonic consumption situation a person will rely on his feelings, emotional enjoyment, symbolism, fun and momentary emotions as to decide whether to purchase a given product/service or not (Goh et al., 2017). Which is why often after hedonic consumption decisions people feel guilty about their purchases as they find it harder to justify their purchases with any quantifiable measures. Thus, many associate their hedonically driven purchase with wastefulness (Jungkeun & Sungeun 2016). On the other end of the spectre, there is consumption driven by utilitarian motivation, which is characterized by a more goal, functionality, necessity and logic driven purchase behaviour. When making a utilitarian purchase decision, people will

put more emphasis on the functionality and usefulness of the product or service and whether or not the purchase fulfils their basic needs. Thus, consumers with a utilitarian mindset find it easier to justify their purchase with a quantifiable, consequence driven arguments (Jungkeun & Sungeun 2016).

Just as with traditional restaurants also in OFD platforms user behaviour is driven by both utilitarian and hedonic considerations. Interestingly enough, it has been found that hedonic enjoyment is a very important factor for customers when making purchases via the internet, mainly because of the fact that in most cases online purchases take place at home in a relaxed, safe and comfortable atmosphere (Goh et al., 2017). In fact, it has been estimated that OFD platforms cater to the household sector and around 70% of the orders are delivered to homes (Goh et al., 2017). From this statistic, one can indeed conclude that hedonic motivation plays an important role when using the OFD services. However, regarding green food consumption, utilitarian considerations like health benefits and nutritional value are prioritized over the hedonic aspect of purely enjoying the taste of the organic products (Karakaya & Nasir, 2014). Thus, it is hard to conclude as to what type of decision making structure would dominate in the OFD scenario as it combines the online shopping experience (hedonic) with green products (utilitarian) and what type of green marketing practice would be most effective.

2.3.2 Social signaling. Green food consumption can be viewed as a way to present oneself or one's values in social situations. According to Hwang (2016), self-presentation indeed is a very prevalent motivator for green food consumption. Younger consumers have shown to have a stronger self-presentation motivation of green food consumption in comparison with older consumers who have stronger inclinations towards food safety and environmental preservation motives. For example in the early 2000s green foods were perceived as something relatively “new” and it was connected with an innovative and progressive way of thinking; thus, the consumption of green food carried similar consumption traits as to luxury goods which are often consumed not only due to the utility of the good itself but also to convey one's status or self-identity (Hwang, 2016).

Interestingly, it has been found that in casual dining restaurants green practices with a focus on the environment have shown to be more effective in the sense of increasing a restaurant green image and behavioural intention in the eyes of the customer (Namkung & Jang, 2013).

This might be due to the fact that in a social scenario one might want to present himself as a nature conscious member of the society. However, as mentioned above, in the majority of the cases consumers who use OFD services consumed their meals at the comfort of their homes, which cannot be described as a social situation. This means that a person would not have the opportunity to demonstrate his willingness to incur additional costs for the sake of the general population. Thus, green purchase behavior might be disregarded due to the lack of satisfaction gained by other peoples recognition (Jang & Jeong, 2010).

To summarize, it becomes evident that in the case of green food being sold through online food delivery platforms, the available literature offers contradicting findings about consumer behaviors. Goh et al., (2017), suggests that in such case the consumer will be more inclined to make his decision based on hedonic considerations, while Karakaya and Nasir (2014) suggest that the utilitarian motivation will prove to be the most prevalent. What is more, in a social situation one's purchasing behavior might be influenced by the desire of self-representation in a certain way (Hwang, 2016). Thus, when ordering food via OFD services a person could be less concerned about the environmental impact that a food item creates and care more about the direct effect on one's personal health and pleasure. The reason being that without any witnesses one would be less likely to act in a socially beneficial, benevolent nature (given that one can gain personal benefit instead); and the hedonic motivation factor of home shopping would motivate the person to act in ones self-interest and pleasure (by the definition of hedonic decision-making).

2.3.3 Choice. Due to the ability to list several restaurant offerings in a single digital menu means that the choice of meals available in OFD platforms is significantly larger than at any physical restaurant (Goh et al., 2017). From one perspective, the theory of rational choice suggests that a higher variety of choice increases the customer's utility by increasing the chance of offering the customer a product that satisfies his needs best. However, there are recent studies that suggest a negative relationship between the assortment size and a customer purchase satisfaction (Huber et al., 2012). According to prior literature (Tversky and Shafir, 1992; Redelmeier and Sharif, 1995; Iyengar and Lepper, 2000), people tend to avoid decision making when the amount of available options is increased. The reason for the decision-making delay or even omission is the fact that consumers have the desire to justify their decisions both to themselves and others; however, in a

situation where there is a wide array of possible choices, the uncertainty of making an optimal solution increases; thus, the consumer seeks to decrease the uncertainty by avoiding the choice or by trying to obtain more information to make the optimal choice (Huber et al., 2012). This could mean that in a scenario where one has to choose among many menu items the ones endorsing green practices are more likely to be selected as the green practice can be perceived as an added value to the product; therefore, increasing the likelihood of selecting that product.

In short, it is believed that both practices (environmental and health) will have a stronger effect on all measured variables as the practices are seen as added value to the product. Also the authors posit that health focused practices will have a stronger effect compared to environment focused practices because of a lack of social signaling opportunities.

2.4 Green Practices

Lately, people have become increasingly aware of the magnitude of the environmental problems that have been brought upon the natural environment due to human action (Han et al., 2010). According to a Eurobarometer survey in 2011, the larger proportion of EU citizens considered environmental change and degradation to be a significant issue and expressed their willingness to pay a premium for environmentally conscious products or services (European Commission, 2014). However, environmental issues are not the only factors why consumers are ready to pay more for green products. It has also been found that an increasing amount of consumers are willing to pay a premium for green foods because of their personal beliefs that they are better, less harmful for their own health or tastier rather than because it is better for the environment, even if there is no real scientific support for these statements (Bloom & Ginsberg, 2004).

Consequently, an increased amount of attention and publicity in the media is being given to environmental protection (Schubert et al., 2010), which is why the focus on green operations is growing and the amount of research testing the effect of green practices on the financial performance of a business is increasing (Namkung & Jang, 2013). Specifically, in the past few years, a vast amount of research has been done with regards to corporate social responsibility (CSR). Studies have consistently found a positive relationship between CSR practices and business performance, more precisely in the form of growing profits and increased customer attitudes (Schubert et al., 2010; Prakash, 2002).

Schubert et al., (2010) describes Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a way of conducting business that not only benefits the firm in a financial way, but also produces socially desirable results in accordance with the ethical, legal and social standards set by the society. One way of increasing an organization's level of CSR is engaging in organic and environmentally friendly practices.

According to Choi and Parsa (2006), green CSR practices regarding the restaurant industry can be divided into 3 categories: environmentally focused, health focused and socially oriented. However, since the core focus of the study is on food-related effects on the environment, the authors focus on environmental and health-focused green practices. Environmental-focused attributes include actions that minimize the negative effect on the environment in the further part of the food manufacturing and distribution chain like minimizing harmful waste, using water efficiently, using green energy, using recyclable products, participating in composting etc. Health-focused attributes include actions like offering organic food, locally grown food, food produced without hazardous chemicals, meat from animals raised without growth hormones and antibiotics etc. (Namkung & Jang, 2013).

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Conceptual Model

The conceptual model used in this paper was adapted from Namkung & Jang (2013). It incorporates two different forms of consumer meal evaluation - individual-oriented food evaluation, such as consumer perceived food quality and healthfulness, as well as prosocial food benefits.

First, perceived food quality was examined. According to Doorn and Verhoef (2011), the perceived level of quality is not only the most essential dimension in the food selection process, but it also reflects the overall consumer perception about the quality of food. In accordance with the prior literature (Doorn and Verhoef, 2011), the perceived quality of a meal was measured by two simple questions (see Appendix B). Moreover, the perceived healthfulness was taken into consideration, since Doorn and Verhoef (2011) argue that it is one of the key individual-oriented incentives for consumers to choose green food.

Additionally, prosocial product benefits are considered which support sustainable practices. According to Doorn and Verhoef (2011), purchasing a product that possesses these benefits will underline the fact that the purchase might help the society; thus, demonstrating prosocial behaviour - benefiting the society even without having any obligations to do so.

Then, consumer willingness to pay a premium for the menu items depending on the applied green practice is analysed. According to the available literature in the area of green consumption, around 60% of all people indeed are willing to pay a premium for green products (Ferrari et al., 2013; Demirag et al., 2015). However, it is not clearly known which are the main motivating factors behind such behaviour. Thus, the authors include this variable in the model as a part of the consumer green product evaluation process.

Finally, the authors examine how green practices can influence the image of the company. According to Namkung and Jang (2013), companies can use different green practices to form and enhance their image. Very often restaurants use green practices such as recyclable bins or take out containers to elevate their image among consumers. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that green practices will have an affect on the image of the online food delivery platform as well. A detailed description of each measure can be found in Appendix B.

The effect of green practices is expected to be different on consumer product evaluations as well as on WTP and on company image depending on the framing manipulation used. The three manipulations being- health focused, environment focused and control group. Due to several differences between environmental green practices and green practices with a focus on health, the authors expect the effect of health focused green practices on products to carry a different effect on aforementioned variables when ordering food via an OFD platform. Hence the authors have designed the conceptual model as seen below (see Figure 2).

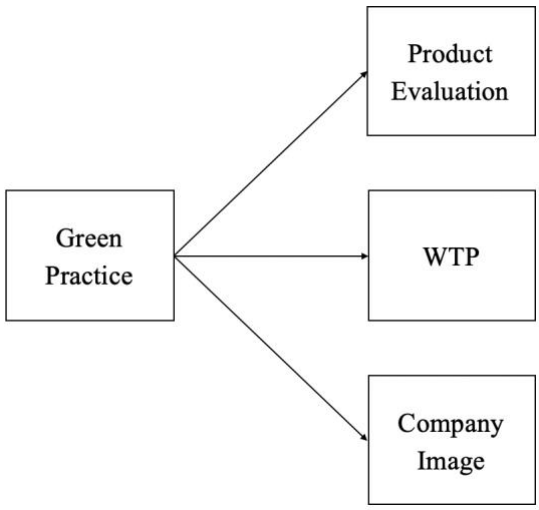

Figure 2. Designed by the authors using data from Namkung & Jang (2013).

3.1.1 Company Image. According to Namkung and Jang (2013), green practices can, in fact, shape the overall image of a company and it's brand. The image of a company can be expressed as a function of it's attributes and characteristics, which are compared to other companies. Thus, green practices can be seen as additional attributes that increase the overall image of a company highlighting the strengths or weaknesses that differentiate the company from its competitors in the market. However, it is not clear how different types of green practices affect consumers company image in OFD platforms. Yet, taking into account the considerations regarding social factor exclusion, the authors assume that health-focused green practices would have a stronger effect on the overall company image evaluations from the consumer perspective. Therefore, the following hypothesis is developed:

H1: Green practices with a health focus will have a stronger positive effect on consumer company evaluation in OFD platforms compared to the environment-focused practices and no practices.

3.1.2 Willingness To Pay a Premium. Almost 50% of all orders made online are on a discount due to access to the internet and the ability to costlessly compare several venues and find the best deals (NPD Group, 2017), something that was not possible in any industry before the advent of the digital era. Increased price sensitivity is a characteristic trait for online retail in general. Thus, the price sensitivity and bargain hunting are some of the ways how OFD services are different from the traditional restaurant experience.

In the majority of cases, organic food is sold at a higher price than similar non-organic foods, which technically would discourage consumers to purchase these green products (Karakaya & Nasir, 2014). However, it is not always the case. According to the available literature in the area of green consumption, the majority of people (more than 60%) indeed are willing to pay a premium for green products (Ferrari et al., 2013; Demirag et al., 2015). More specifically in the restaurant industry, 62% of consumers have expressed an increased willingness to pay more for restaurants that engage in nature-friendly practices. However, for which green practices consumers are willing to pay more and what are the underlying motivational factors, the literature provides contradicting findings. According to Bloom and Ginsberg (2004), consumers are willing to pay a premium for green foods that imply personal benefits because they believe they are better and safer for their health, and tastier. In contrast, Ahmed et al. (2016) proposes that green products with green messages stating the benefits to the general population and environment have a higher effect on consumer purchase intentions than messages that emphasize the health benefit associated with the product.

As argued before, the authors believe that when ordering food via OFD platforms, the social factor is canceled and there is no opportunity to present oneself in a benevolent, environmentally conscious manner. Thus, the authors believe that in the OFD case consumers will be willing to pay more for products that have green messages related to health benefits rather than environmental and societal benefits. These considerations lead to the following hypothesis:

H2: Health-focused green practices will have a stronger positive effect on WTP in OFD platforms compared to the environment-focused practices and no practices.

3.1.3 Quality Perceptions. Prior research has found that consumers identify organic food as better tasting compared to conventionally produced food, and among the main motivators to purchase organically grown food consumers place better taste and quality (Doorn & Verhoef, 2011). However, it is still unclear whether an organic claim can influence consumers perceptions towards organic food quality, and in many prior researches' consumers have indicated disappointing quality as the main reason to avoid organic food shopping (Doorn & Verhoef, 2011).

According to Zeithaml (1998), the perceived quality of a product is the consumers evaluation about the product's superiority, uniqueness and features. Perceived quality is also seen as one of the brand value elements. Thus, the higher is the level of perceived quality, the bigger will be the level of brand equity value (Namkung & Jang, 2013), which is why the brands whose products are perceived as high quality can often charge premium prices for their products. The same is applicable for food items in restaurants or OFD platforms.

Recently, increasingly more studies (Yoo & Donthu, 2001; Atilgan et al., 2005) have tried to understand and model the consumer perceived quality, because it is a key factor that can help evaluate the consumers' individual judgements towards the superiority of certain brands and their products. Since nowadays individuals pay more attention to their health or to the environment, restaurants have started using different strategies to influence consumer perceived quality of their products. For example, green restaurants often use different green practices (i.e. locally grown food or sustainably produced food) which are expected to make the restaurant food seem healthier or more nature-friendly (Namkung & Jang, 2013).

Considering the contradicting findings regarding the specific factors motivating higher quality perceptions and the lack of the social factor when using OFD platforms in most of the cases, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Health-focused green practices will have a stronger positive effect on perceived meal quality in OFD platforms compared to the environment-focused practices and no practices.

3.1.4 Health Perceptions. There are different ways how green food can be perceived. For example, it can seem environmentally friendly or can be beneficial to one's health (Jeong & Jang, 2010). It is of great interest for us to understand whether consumers perceive food items more healthful when environmental practices are mentioned or when health oriented green practices are mentioned.

A study done by Pirog and Larson (2007) examined the differences in consumer perceptions between conventional and organic food. Interestingly, more than half of survey participants believed organic food to be much healthier compared to conventionally produced food. Almost 70% of respondents also agreed that locally grown food has more health benefits than imported food. The question whether organic food has superior health benefits is still unanswered among literature so far, yet health benefits are one of the reasons why consumers choose organic food over conventionally produced one (Doorn and Verhoef, 2011). In fact, according to Pirog and Larson (2007), almost 40 % of respondents believed locally grown food health benefits are scientifically proven. And in most cases, consumers mentioned the absence of pesticides or artificial fertilizers as reasons in favour of organic food (Doorn and Verhoef, 2011).

However, considering the lack of empirical evidence and contradicting findings, it is still unclear whether and environmental or health-oriented green practices are more effective in increasing the perceived healthfulness of a food item, especially in OFD platforms. Nevertheless, taking into consideration the aforementioned differences between restaurants (in which most of the studies have been conducted) and the nature of decision making in the digital market, we derive the following hypothesis:

H4: Health-focused green practice will have a stronger positive effect on consumer meal health perceptions in OFD platforms compared to the environment-focused practices and no practices.

3.1.5 Pro-Social Benefits. Not only perceived health benefits are an important factor in determining customers overall organic product evaluations but also prosocial food benefits are an integral element. In fact, it has been shown that around 50% of all customers are willing to pay a premium for the prosocial features that a certain good might possess, as long as the added social feature does not compromise the core aspects of the good or in this case the food item (Doorn and Verhoef, 2011).

Prosocial product benefits reflect the idea that one can pursue purely personal interests while at the same time contributing to the environment. The reason being that the non-direct contribution to the environment from green product consumption can be seen as added value. Thus, even justifying the increase price of the product.

In fact, ethical motives like contribution to the natural environment or the welfare of animals is one of the most frequently mentioned justifications among customers for buying organically produced goods (Doorn and Verhoef, 2011). However, to the knowledge of the authors, the link between different green practice endorsement and perceived prosocial benefits in OFD platforms has not been explored. Yet, due to the previously described nature of decision-making in OFD platforms, the following hypothesis is presented:

H5: Health-focused green practice will have a stronger positive effect on prosocial meal benefits in OFD platforms compared to the environment-focused practices and no practices.

3.1.6 Control Variables. In order to ensure the validity of the selected dependent variables several control variables are used. First, the authors controlled for gender, since many prior studies have proved that males and females have differences in attitudes (Han et al., 2009), as well as females tend to be more attentive to social interactions (Darnall et al., 2012) and more aware about the environmental problems (Han et al., 2009).

Second, the level of hungriness as well as level of preference for a particular meal was controlled for, since according to Schuldt and Hannahan (2012) levels of hunger can affect the judgments of healthfulness and taste quality of food items.

Finally, such control variables as health-consciousness and sustainable attitude were added, since people with higher degrees of health-consciousness and people who pay greater

attention to sustainability might not only pay more for green food, but also are more likely to buy organic brands (Namkung and Jang, 2013).

Additionally, consistent with prior studies (Han et al., 2009), participants age was used as a control variable, even though most of the survey participants were of the same age.

4. Methodology

4.1 Study Design

Since the purpose of this research is to investigate the role of different green practices on consumer attitudes and evaluations of food items ordered via online food delivery platforms, the study is carried out using between-subjects experimental design. This approach has been chosen because it allows to compare the participants' responses in three different scenarios (1. green practices focused on the environment; 2. green practices with a health oriented focus; 3. a control group with no green practices mentioned); thus, allowing to determine which manipulation has the strongest effect on consumer attitudes and evaluations of food items. The methodology has been adapted from Namkung and Jang (2013), who studied the effect of green practices in physical restaurants with an emphasis on brand equity formation.

The scenarios manipulate the type of green practice an OFD provider endorses in its online platform. First, the participant is introduced with the hypothetical OFD scenario that incorporates the green practice (Appendix C). In addition to the OFD hypothetical scenarios, the participants are presented with visual aid in the form of a menu screenshot from an OFD platform depicting a sample menu item to be ordered (Appendix D). The visual aid is presented right after the hypothetical scenario in order to help the participant better imagine being in the suggested scenario. Thereafter, the participants are asked to rate (1) product healthfulness, (2) product quality, (3) product prosocial benefits as well as (4) willingness to pay more (WTP) and (5) company image on a 7 point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree) based on the given scenario. The aforementioned variables were measured using multiple statements (adapted from Doorn and Verhoef (2011) and Namkung and Jang (2013)) that can be seen in *Appendix B.* Altogether the first three variables formulate a clear representation of consumer product evaluations regarding the presented product options.

4.2 Visual Aid - Screenshot

In order to support the hypothetical scenario and increase the likelihood of the participants actually imagining themselves in such a situation, the survey was supplemented with a “mock menu” screenshot (see Appendix D).

Of course, it could be argued that the selected food item in the hypothetical menu could compromise the validity of the given answers and undermine the actual effect of the environmental and health-oriented frameworks due to individual preferences. Therefore, to minimize the possibility of this kind of bias, we conducted a pretest in the form of a short survey before constructing the actual survey. We interviewed SSE Riga students in this pre-test. The participants were asked to list 5 food items that they prefer and would be likely to order from an online food delivery platform. Overall, we received 87 responses from the survey, and after cleaning the data we were left with 81 valid responses. From the survey we concluded that the most frequently mentioned items were (in a descending order): pizza, sushi, kebab, burger, pasta, Chinese food, salad, French fries, chicken dishes and sweet pastries (see Appendix E). For the menu screenshot we selected the kebab as the final menu item, since it is the most diverse of all the above mention food items that can be filled with ingredients according to one's preferences. Additionally, control variables as kebab likeness and hungriness level were added; hence, the bias due to certain food preferences can be neutralized.

In all 3 manipulations the same mock menu screenshot was used. Only in the organic food oriented manipulation the menu was supplemented with the EU Organic label (European Commission, n.d.) , which is commonly used to mark organic products (only edibles). Whereas, the environmental manipulation the mock menu was supported with the EU Ecolabel- commonly used for non-food and non-pharmacy products, awarded also for services like hotels, campsites and restaurants that operate in an environmentally sustainable way (European Commission, n.d.).

4.3 Data Collection

A total of 475 survey responses were collected. After cleaning the data- eliminating extreme outliers and incomplete responses, 301 usable responses were left (organic scenario-99, environment scenario-101, control group- 101). 52.16% were female and 47.84% male. The survey participants age ranged from 17-31 with an average of 20.8 years. The average length it took to complete the surveys was 5.2 minutes. On average, the sample menu item was evaluated to be worth 4.1 EUR. On a scale of 1-10, the survey participants rated their momentary hungriness at 4.8 (neutral) whereas their general liking towards kebabs on a 10 point scale was 7.3.

Self-administered online surveys, which were distributed through e-mail and student communication groups by using the Qualtrics platform, were used as the main tool for gathering the necessary data. This method was chosen because it was most widely used among researchers in the restaurant and green marketing sphere (Doorn & Verhoef, 2011; Namkung & Jang, 2013). The following university students were approached: Stockholm School of Economics in Riga, BA School of Business and Finance, Riga Graduate School of Law, Riga Stradins University, Riga Technical University, Art Academy of Latvia, and University of Latvia. We choose students in Riga as the core target audience due to two reasons. Firstly, research shows that students and young adults are the most active OFD service users (NPD Group, 2017). Secondly, due to the limited amount of resources and time, we decided to approach students as it is the most accessible and appropriate audience for this study. For the sake of clarity, it is worth mentioning that the authors do acknowledge the fact that the study findings cannot be generalized for the whole population of Latvia or other geographies.

Three versions of the hypothetical scenario were created (see Appendix C) and the participants were randomly assigned to one of the three scenarios (health, environment or control group). Afterwards, the participants were asked to imagine being at the comfort of their homes in a situation where they are contemplating ordering food via an OFD platform, read the given scenario and examine the given sample menu screenshot (Appendix D). The scenarios were adapted from Namkung & Jang (2013) by slightly altering the wording in order to suit the research purposes. By combining the given hypothetical scenario and a real-life experience projection, the participants are able to clearly evaluate their perceptions and views on green practices in OFD platforms (Namkung & Jang, 2013). No information regarding the details of the research was disclosed, in order to avoid social desirability bias.

4.3.1. Participant allocation and bias. Additionally, several measures were taken in order to ensure the quality of the gathered responses. Firstly, in order to avoid confusion, simple sentences were used, vague language was avoided, and the question design was kept as precise, concise and understandable as possible. The answer options on the Likert 7-point scale was supported with written explanations and midpoint, in order to avoid confusion. We also conducted 20 test surveys with SSER students in order to see how people understood the given

questions and if there were any ambiguities. Afterwards, we made minor corrections to the layout of the survey and the phrasing of some questions.

Moreover, when creating the survey in Qualtrics platform, the authors used a function called “randomizer” together with an option “evenly present elements” in order to randomly and evenly distribute the survey participants to the 3 main manipulation groups. This function was used for 2 purposes. First, it helped to ensure that equal amount of surveys was collected for each manipulation group. Second, it helped to minimize the risk of external validity. For example, if two students were sitting next to one another and filling the survey in an orderly fashion then each would receive a different survey. This would mean that the possibility of one participant influencing his answers based on the other opinions would be minimized.

4.4 Analysis Methods

In order to analyze the effect of health and environmental practices on the 5 dependent variables that altogether express consumer meal evaluations and company image (WTP, Quality, Healthfulness, Prosocial Benefits and Company Image) as compared to no green practices, we performed an analysis of variance (ANOVA) test, similar to previous studies (Wan-Chen Jenny Lee et al., 2013; Namkung & Jang, 2013; Schuldt & Hannahan, 2012). The primary data structuring phase was performed in Microsoft Excel, whereas hypothesis testing and deeper analysis was done in the IBM SPSS statistical software.

The null hypothesis for the ANOVA test is that there is no significant difference between the manipulation groups ($H_0=\mu_1=\mu_2=\mu_3$). Whereas the alternative hypothesis is that there are at least 2 groups that differ statistically significantly from the mean-variance values. Where μ_1 =organic group mean, μ_2=environmental group mean, μ_3= control group mean. However, the ANOVA test only tells us whether or not there is a statistically significant difference in the mean variance of at least 2 groups but it cannot be determined which group differs statistically from which. Therefore, similarly to other studies (Namkung and Jang, 2013), we performed a post hoc Ducan's Multiple Range and Tukey’s test to determine between which groups, in particular, the difference in the mean variance can be observed.

Finally, before running the ANOVA test the authors made sure that the data meets the following criteria:

- Independence of observations- this criterion is ensured by the structure of this study and sampling methods both between and within groups, as each individual conducted the survey only once. However, there are some potential limitations which are discussed in the further research section.
- Normal distribution of the dependent variables. The ANOVA test by definition is robust against the assumption of non-normality; thus, no testing was needed as the number of observations is significantly larger than 12-20 (Pallant, 2013).
- Homogeneity of variance. This assumption was tested by running the Homogeneity of variance test in SPSS (see Appendix F).

5. Analysis of results

In the following results the three manipulation groups are denoted accordingly:

- 1- organic/health manipulation;
- 2- environmental manipulation;
- 3- control group (no manipulation).

5.1 Outliers

Although initially the data was manually cleaned in Excel, the Interquartile Range rule in SPSS was used to detect outliers for the variables of this study. Overall, 3 outliers (denoted with a circle (o) in SPSS boxplot) were found for Quality Perceptions, 1 outlier for WTP and 8 outliers for Company Image. All these cases were found based on an Interquartile Range Rule with a multiplier of 1.5. Which means that SPSS calculated the difference between upper and lower quartiles and multiplied that difference by 1.5. And then identified values beyond the upper or lower quartiles. However prior literature claims that the 1.5 multiplier is inaccurate in most cases and a multiplier of 3 should be used instead (Hoaglin & Iglewicz, 1987). Consequently, the authors found zero extreme outliers based on a multiplier of 3 (denoted with an asterisk (*) in SPSS boxplot). Thus there were no critical outliers in the main data sample.

5.2 Cronbach's Alpha

Even though all of the questions used in the surveys were taken from peer-reviewed academic studies, the internal consistency of the questions that describe each dependent variable was tested using Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha (0-1) shows how related certain items in a group are by correlating the value of each sub-group item with the total value of the group and then comparing that to the variance of all individual values. Although criteria determining the level of validity of Cronbach's alpha are arbitrary, the most often used reliability range is 0.65-1; however, if the variable is described by less than 10 items as in the case of this research, then a coefficient of 0.5 can be used as the lower bound (Pallant, 2013).

Health perceptions (α=0.809), quality perceptions (α=0.787), prosocial benefits (α=0.609), company image (α=0.892), health consciousness (α=0.866), sustainable attitude (α=0.836). From the results, the authors can conclude that the questions used to evaluate the core dependent variables are valid and internally consistent (see Appendix G).

5.3 Control Variables

To exclude alternative explanations for the observed effects, 6 control variables were included: age, gender, health-consciousness, sustainable attitude, hungriness and liking towards kebabs. The inclusion of control variables is theoretically motivated and according to the obtained results none of the control variables has a moderating effect on the dependent variables (except quality perceptions), which means that the observed effects represent the effect of the main independent variables **(See Appendix H).**

5.4 WTP by Experimental Condition

The one-way ANOVA test shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean values of at least 2 manipulation groups (p=0.002): organic manipulation (4.3293±1.40395), environmental manipulation (4.2603±1.48693), control group (3.702±1.10372).

The post-hoc Tukey's test shows that there is a statistically significant (at a 5% confidence level) difference between the organic group and control group (p=0.003), environmental group and control group (p=0.009). However, there is no statistically significant difference between the organic and environmental group (p=0.93). This means that on average students in Riga are willing to pay 0.63 EUR more or a 17% premium for a meal ordered in an OFD platform if it endorses organically oriented green practices and a 0.56 EUR (15.1% premium) if the platform endorses environmentally oriented green practices (compared to the control group).

Also none of the control variables moderates the effect of the independent variables on WTP.

Overall, both type of green practice endorsement has a positive effect on consumer willingness to pay a premium for meals in OFD platforms in Riga; however, different types of green practices do not have a different effect on willingness to pay a premium (see Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1. WTP by experimental condition

Manipulation			F (p -value)	Sig.
Health	Environmental	No manipulation		
4.33 ± 1.40	4.26 ± 1.49	3.70 ± 1.10	6.614	.002

Source: made by the authors

Table 2. Turkey post hoc multiple compressions test for WTP

(I) Manipulation	(J) Manipulation	Mean Difference(I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
1	2	.069	.1897	.930
	3	.627*	.1897	.003
2	1	-.069	.1897	.930
	3	.558*	.1887	.009
3	1	-.627*	.1897	.003
	2	-.558	.1887	.009

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Source: made by the authors

5.5 Quality Perceptions by Experimental Condition

As the quality perception dependent variable consists of 2 questions measured in different scales, the scales were standardized using the z-score method, which allows to compare different scales by subtracting the total mean value of each scale from every data entry and dividing by the standard deviation; thus, creating a normalized score (Carlson, Newbold, & Throne, 2007).

The one-way ANOVA test shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the three manipulations within a 5% significance level (p=0.098) (see Table 3). Thus, the authors cannot confirm H3 that health-focused green practices will have a stronger positive effect on perceived meal quality in OFD platforms.

However, when testing for the moderating effect of the control variables on quality perceptions the effect is significant at a 5% confidence interval (p=0.021) with kebab liking and health consciousness having the highest moderative effect with partial eta squared of 0.019 and 0.025. However, as the purpose and the methodological design of this study is built to explore the first-hand effect of the manipulations on the dependent variables, the authors shall leave deeper exploration of the moderative effects for further studies in the field of green marketing.

Table 3. Quality perceptions by experimental condition

Manipulation			$F(p$-value)	Sig.
Health	Environmental	No manipulation		
0.04 ± 0.89	0.12 ± 0.91	0.00 ± 0.91	2.338	.098

Source: made by the authors

Table 4. Turkey post hoc multiple compressions test for quality perceptions

(I) Manipulation	(J) Manipulation	Mean Difference(I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
1	2	-.080	.1281	.807
	3	.189	.1281	.306
2	1	.080	.1281	.807
	3	.268	.1274	.090
3	1	-.189	.1281	.306
	2	-.268	.1274	.090

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Source: made by the authors

5.6 Health Perceptions by Experimental Condition

According to the one-way ANOVA test, there is a statistically significant difference between the mean values of at least 2 manipulation groups (p=0.000) in health perceptions: organic manipulation (4.1313±1.2443), environmental manipulation (3.6369±1.2919), control group (3.4167±1.2239).

The post-hoc Tukey's test shows that there is a statistically significant (at a 5% level of confidence) difference between the organic group and control group (p=0.000), organic and environmental group (p=0.016). However, there is no statistically significant difference between the environmental group and the control group (p=0.427). This means that students in Riga perceive food items in OFD platforms to be more healthful if they are endorsed by organic green practices compared to no green practices and environmental practices. However, environment-focused practices have no statistically significant effect on consumer health perceptions compared to no green practices (see Table 5 and Table 6).

Also none of the control variables moderates the effect of the independent variables on health perceptions.

Table 5. Health perceptions by experimental condition

Manipulation			F (p-value)	Sig.
Health	Environmental	No manipulation		
4.13 ± 1.24	3.64 ± 1.29	3.42 ± 1.22	8.470	.000

Source: made by the authors

Table 6. Turkey post hoc multiple compressions test for health perceptions

(I) Manipulation	(J) Manipulation	Mean Difference(I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
1	2	.494*	.1773	.016
	3	.715*	.1778	.000
2	1	-.494*	.1773	.016
	3	.220	.1769	.427
3	1	-.715*	.1778	.000
	2	-.220	.1769	.427

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Source: made by the authors

5.7 Prosocial Product Benefits by Experimental Condition

Looking at prosocial product benefits, the one-way ANOVA test shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean values of at least 2 manipulation groups (p=0.000): organic manipulation (4.2727±1.2663), environmental manipulation (4.5396±1.3261), control group (3.7178±1.2677).

According to the post hoc Tukey's test at a 5% significance level there is a statistically significant difference between organic manipulation and control group (p=0.007) as well as environmental manipulation and control group (p=0.000). However, there is no difference between the organic manipulation and environmental manipulation both at a 5% and at a 10% significance level (see Table 7 and Table 8).

Also none of the control variables moderates the effect of the independent variables on prosocial product benefits. This means that students in Riga view meals in OFD platforms as having more prosocial benefits if they are endorsed by organic green practices or environmental practices compared to no practices.

Table 7. Prosocial product benefits by experimental condition

Manipulation			$F(p$-value)	Sig.
Health	Environmental	No manipulation		
4.27 ± 1.27	4.54 ± 1.33	3.72 ± 1.27	10.709	.000

Source: made by the authors

Table 8. Turkey post hoc multiple compressions test for prosocial product benefits

(I) Manipulation	(J) Manipulation	Mean Difference(I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
1	2	-.267	.1820	.309
	3	.555*	.1820	.007
2	1	.267	.1820	.309
	3	.822*	.1811	.000
3	1	-.555*	.1820	.007
	2	-.822*	.1811	.000

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Source: made by the authors

5.8 Company Image by Experimental Condition

Regarding company image, the one-way ANOVA test shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean values of at least 2 manipulation groups (p=0.000): organic manipulation (4.5959±1.0348), environmental manipulation (4.9208±1.0639), control group (3.7723±1.3349).

According to the post hoc Tukey's test at a 5% level of significance, there is a statistically significant difference between the health group and control group (p=0.000) and the environmental group and control group (p=0.000); however, there is no difference between the health and environment focused group (p=0.116) (see Table 9 and Table 10).

Also none of the control variables moderates the effect of the independent variables on company image.

Table 9. Company image by experimental condition

Manipulation			F (p-value)	Sig.
Health	Environmental	No manipulation		
4.60 ± 1.04	4.92 ± 1.06	3.77 ± 1.34	26.599	.000

Source: made by the authors

Table 10. Turkey post hoc multiple compressions test for Company image

(I) Manipulation	(J) Manipulation	Mean Difference(I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
1	2	-.325	.1631	.116
	3	.824*	.1631	.000
2	1	.325	.1631	.116
	3	1.149*	.1623	.000
3	1	-.824*	.1631	.000
	2	-1.149*	.1623	.000

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Source: made by the authors

6. Discussions and implications of results

Based on the study results the authors conclude that green practice endorsement in OFD platforms indeed can increase overall consumer perceptions and meal evaluations. However, practices focused on health in comparison to environment-focused practices do not have a superior effect on consumer meal evaluations and company image evaluations in OFD platforms (see Table 11). With the exception of meal health perceptions, since health-focused green practices indeed had a higher positive effect, which could be explained by the fact that the linkage between one's health and health oriented green practices is perceived as more clear from the consumer perspective. Also according to the available literature, health benefits are one of the main reasons why people choose green food versions over the conventional counterparts, even if there is no substantial evidence for the health claims (Doorn and Verhoef, 2011). This means that by endorsing health focused practices an OFD platform could position a product that is conventionally known as "unhealthy" as a healthy product. Thus appealing to the health-driven and environment conscious customer.

Table 11. Summary of hypotheses and results

Hypotheses		Result
H1	Green practices with a health focus will have a stronger positive effect on consumer company evaluation in OFD platforms compared to the environment-focused practices and no practices.	Partially confirmed
H2	Health-focused green practices will have a stronger positive effect on WTP in OFD platforms compared to the environment-focused practices and no practices.	Partially confirmed
H3	Health-focused green practices will have a stronger positive effect on perceived meal quality in OFD platforms compared to the environment-focused practices and no practices.	Partially confirmed
H4	Health-focused green practice will have a stronger positive effect on consumer meal health perceptions in OFD platforms compared to the environment-focused practices and no practices.	Confirmed
H5	Health-focused green practice will have a stronger positive effect on prosocial meal benefits in OFD platforms compared to the environment-focused practices and no practices.	Partially confirmed

Source: Created by the authors.

Even though non-statistically significant difference between the two manipulation groups was observed for most of the variables, the obtained results are in accordance with the available literature that the usage of green practices (of any kind) in the restaurant industry does increase

company evaluation, willingness to pay, perceived meal quality, health perceptions and pro-social meal benefits.

What these results might indicate is that people's purchasing behaviors in OFD platforms are similar to purchasing behaviors when visiting physical restaurants, even though there are significant differences between the digital and physical shopping environment from a consumer behavior perspective.

What is more, the authors can say that the social factor, which is cancelled out in most cases when ordering food from an OFD platform, does not have such a significant effect on consumer behavior as speculated before, which is why there are not statistically significant differences between the two main manipulation groups for most of the dependent variables. According to our findings, consumers behave quite similarly as they would behave at a physical restaurant visit.

One possible explanation would be that the consumer does not distinguish health-oriented green practices from environment oriented practices, because in the context of OFD delivery such details as green practice classification might seem minor. The customer might simply categorize the endorsement of any green practices as an added feature for the menu item; thus, an overall improvement in the meal evaluation and company image.

Another possible speculation could be that students in Riga have not had a significant experience with OFD platforms. Therefore when asked to imagine themselves being in a hypothetical scenario, the participants made judgements based on their past experience in physical restaurants as that is a much more familiar scenario.

Finally, basing on the findings the authors can suggest OFD platform operators to inform customers about any green practices that have been implemented in any stage of the meal preparation, as it would not only increase consumer evaluation of the company itself but it would also increase overall consumer meal evaluations and their willingness to pay a premium.

7. Conclusions

The results of this research carry both theoretical and practical implications. First, in an era when vast amounts of studies have found "green marketing" to be an effective tool in swaying peoples purchase decisions towards environmentally sustainable or healthy foods, more and more companies have started to target customers whose purchasing decisions are affected by environmental or health considerations (Schubert et al., 2010; Jeong & Jang, 2010; Namkung & Jang, 2013). Thus, on the practical side, this paper's findings findings suggest that any of the green practices (environment-focused or health-focused) are better than no green practices. Which means that OFD platforms should pay attention to green practices that are used in restaurants, and green practices that are employed by the platform itself. Not only does it increase the overall consumer willingness to pay for the chosen meal, but also increases consumer product evaluations and the overall image of the company. Consequently, by understanding the aforementioned findings, companies could increase their revenues and their overall marketing strategy effectiveness by attracting more environment/nature conscious customers and customers that either are not yet familiarized or have been neutral regarding green food. Additionally, they would also benefit the general society and environment by increasing the demand for environmentally as well as health consciously produced foods.

Theoretically, this paper adds both to the work on green practices and literature that studies consumer food evaluations and willingness to pay in a context of organic or environmentally sustainable food. This research paper emphasizes the often overlooked importance of rapidly growing online food delivery business and seeks to understand consumer food evaluations inside the realm of online food delivery platforms.

The main limitation of this study was the hypothetical nature of the experiment, which might not have produced as precise and representative results from the respondents as possible. Even though the authors did use a hypothetical scenario with a detailed description which was supplemented with a real life food delivery platform screenshot, still such a setting might have failed to place the participant in the "purchase" mind state. Further research could be improved by creating 3 functional food delivery applications through which to simulate a real OFD platform buying experience. Thus allowing the researchers to observe actual, unbiased behavior.

As already mentioned before, the OFD industry is an underexplored field in the scientific area; thus, there might be some other factors, other than the main control variables, that could

significantly impact consumer decision-making in the OFD environment which might not have been taken into account by our study.

What is more, the study was conducted in Riga and only students were questioned; thus, the conclusions aren't generalizable to other populations and regions. This could be improved by increasing the scope (sample size) of the study along with the available budget. Not only would this allow to obtain more accurate and possibly generalizable findings, but it would also allow the researchers to see how different age, nationality and demographic groups respond to the same stimuli.

This study attempted to examine how environmental and health focused green practices can influence consumer willingness to pay, consumer meal evaluations and company image in online food delivery platforms in Riga. Contrary to the initial expectations, in this study the authors reject four of the 5 hypothesis. The data suggests that environmental and health focused practices have a significant effect on all of the variables except meal quality perceptions, and only in consumer meal health perceptions did the authors find that health focused green practices had a stronger positive effect compared to the environmental focused green practices. As a result, this research can serve as a stepping stone for further studies to scrutinize the effect of green practices in OFD platforms in Latvia.

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8. Appendices

Appendix A. Proportion of organic farmland

Country	Population, mill.	Population, sq.km	Organic consumption, % of retail sales	No. Of certified organic procedures	Certified organic farmland, k ha	Proportion of nonarable land, %	Certified land, % of total | relative to consumption
Latvia	**2.2**	**56**	**0.2**	**3496**	**197**	**79**	**10.8 | 54**
Lithuania	3.3	72	0.2	2527	157	27	5.4 | 27
Estonia	1.3	36	1.2	1478	144	74	15.3 | 10
Sweden	9.3	27	3.9	5601	478	75	15.6 | 4
Norway	4.9	18	1.2	2590	55	77	5.1 | 4
Iceland	0.3	3	2	35	8	98	0.4 | 4
Finland	5.4	19	1.6	4322	198	67	8.7 | 5
Denmark	5.5	130	7.6	2651	195	58	7.4 | 1

Table A.1. Proportion of organic farmland in Europe. Made by the authors using data from Loes et al., (2015).

Appendix B. Description of measures

Willingness to pay a premium (WTP):

Consistent with prior literature (Doorn & Verhoef, 2011) willingness to pay a premium was asked as a simple open ended question:

- What is the highest amount of money (in euros) that you would be willing to pay for the food item?

Quality:

Consistent with prior literature **(**Doorn & Verhoef, 2011) food quality was identified in two questions, the first measured on a 10-point scale and the second measure on a 7-point Likert type scale. We asked participants the following questions:

- How do you rate these food items? (grade 1–10)
- These are high-quality food items. (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Healthfulness:

Consistent with prior literature **(**Doorn & Verhoef, 2011) food healthfulness was measured on a 7-point Likert type scale. Healthfulness items included:

- These products are (1) not at all healthy or (7) very healthy
- These products are suited for a healthy diet. (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)
- These products deliver an important contribution to my health (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Prosocial product benefits

Consistent with prior literature **(**Doorn & Verhoef, 2011) prosocial food benefits were identified in two questions, both measured on a 7-point Likert type scale. We asked participants the following questions:

- I feel good about buying these food items (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree);
- I contribute to a better world by buying these products (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree).

Company image

Consistent with prior literature **(**Namkung & Jang, 2013) company image was evaluated using three questions, both measured on a 7-point Likert type scale. We asked participants the following questions:

- I regard this OFD platform as a benchmark or standard of environmental commitment (1=not at all agree, 7=totally agree);
- This OFD platform is successful in terms of its environmental performance (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree);
- This OFD platform environmental concerns are well established (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree).

Appendix C. Survey questionnaire

(Manipulation 1. Health practices) Imagine that you are at home and you are thinking about ordering food via an online food delivery platform. The online food delivery platform you decided to use cooperates with several restaurants in Riga that:

-serve organic food;

-use ingredients that are produced in a sustainable manner without the use of harmful pesticides or hormones in the production process;

-the food is produced without the use of any genetically modified products or any other synthetic additives that might be harmful for human health.

You are thinking about ordering a kebab with your favourite fillings which is within your budget. Based on the given scenario and the OFD platform menu screenshot shown below, please, answer the following questions.

(Manipulation 2. Environmental practices) Imagine that you are at home and you are thinking about ordering food via an online food delivery platform. The online food delivery platform you decided to use cooperates with several environmentally friendly restaurants in Riga and:

-uses only electric vehicles to deliver food;

-the restaurants utilise methods of food production that minimise food waste;

-the food is delivered in recyclable containers instead of styrofoam.

You are thinking about ordering a kebab with your favourite fillings which is within your budget. Based on the given scenario and the OFD platform menu screenshot shown below, please, answer the following questions.

(Control group/ Manipulation 3. No green practices) Imagine that you are at home and you are thinking about ordering food via an online food delivery platform. The online food delivery platform you decided to use cooperates with several restaurants in Riga.
You are thinking about ordering a kebab with your favourite fillings which is within your budget. Based on the given scenario and the OFD platform menu screenshot shown below, please, answer the following questions.

General questions

1. How old are you?
2. What is your gender?
3. Do you study in Riga?
4. Please evaluate how hungry are you now? (Scale 1-10)
5. Please evaluate how much you like kebabs in general? (Scale 1-10)

Willingness to pay a premium

6. What is the highest amount of money (in euros) that you would be willing to pay for this kebab? (open-ended)

Quality perceptions

7. How do you rate this kebab? (Scale 1–10)

8. This kebab is of high quality. (Likert 1-7)

Health perceptions

9. This kebab is healthy. (Likert 1-7)

10. This kebab is suited for a healthy diet. (Likert 1-7)

11. This kebab delivers an important contribution to my health. (Likert 1-7)

Prosocial product benefits

12. I feel good about buying this kebab. (Likert 1-7)

13. I contribute to a better world by buying this kebab. (Likert 1-7)

Company Image

14. It seems that this OFD platform is a benchmark or standard of environmental commitment. (Likert 1-7)

15. It seems that this OFD platform is successful in terms of its environmental performance. (Likert 1-7)

16. It seems that this OFD platform's environmental concerns are well established. (Likert 1-7)

Appendix D. OFD platform mock image samples

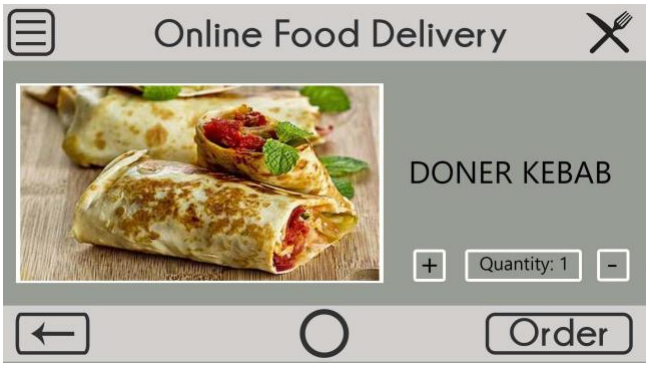

Figure D.1. OFD platform mock image for the control group, created by the authors.

Figure D.2. OFD platform mock image for the health group (EU Organic label), created by the authors.

Figure D.3. OFD platform mock image for the environmental group (EU Ecolabel), created by the authors.

Appendix E. Online food delivery food preferences

Figure E.1. Riga student OFD food preferences. Made by the authors using primary data.

Appendix F. Test of homogeneity of variances

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

		Sig.
WTP	Based on Mean	.027
	Based on Median	.091
Quality percepetions	Based on Mean	.989
	Based on Median	.974
Health perceptions	Based on Mean	.759
	Based on Median	.732
Prosocial product benefits	Based on Mean	.835
	Based on Median	.787
Company image	Based on Mean	.228
	Based on Median	.447

Table F.1. Test of homogeneity of variance. Created by the authors.

Appendix G: Cronbach's Alpha

Reliability statistics: Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Number of Items
Health perceptions	0.808	3
Quality perceptions	0.787	2
Prosocial benefits	0.614	2
Company image	0.892	3
Health consciousness	0.866	2
Sustainable attitude	0.836	2

Table G.1. Cronbach's Alpha for each variable. Created by the authors.

Appendix H: Ancova test

Dependent Variable: WTP

Source	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Age	.200	.109	.741	.000
Gender	2.186	1.194	.275	.004
Sustainable Attitude	1.916	1.047	.307	.004
Health consciousness	.745	.407	.524	.002
Hungryness level	.154	.084	.772	.000
Kebab likiness	3.931	2.147	.144	.008
Manipulation	10.407	5.685	.004	.041

Table H.1. Ancova test for WTP. Made by the authors.

Dependent Variable: Quality Perceptions

Source	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Age	.079	.098	.755	.000
Gender	.905	1.121	.291	.004
Sustainable Attitude	5.453	6.755	.010	.025
Health consciousness	.037	.046	.830	.000
Hungryness level	.422	.523	.470	.002
Kebab likiness	4.175	5.172	.024	.019
Manipulation	1.904	2.358	.097	.017

Table H.2. Ancova test for Quality Perceptions. Made by the authors.

Dependent Variable: Health Perceptions

Source	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Age	.915	.628	.429	.002
Gender	.086	.059	.808	.000
Sustainable Attitude	13.897	9.539	.002	.035
Health consciousness	2.711	1.861	.174	.007
Hungryness level	.734	.504	.479	.002
Kebab likiness	19.647	13.486	.000	.049
Manipulation	14.915	10.238	.000	.072

Table H.3. Ancova test for Health Perceptions. Made by the authors.

Dependent Variable: Prosocial Product Benefits

Source	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Age	1.334	.887	.347	.003
Gender	.865	.575	.449	.002
Sustainable Attitude	18.563	12.339	.001	.044
Health consciousness	1.011	.672	.413	.003
Hungryness level	.075	.050	.824	.000
Kebab likiness	26.297	17.480	.000	.062
Manipulation	19.353	12.864	.000	.088

Table H.4. Ancova test for Prosocial Product Benefits. Made by the authors.

Dependent Variable: Company Image

Source	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Age	.172	.131	.718	.000
Gender	7.024	5.334	.022	.020
Sustainable Attitude	2.324	1.765	.185	.007
Health consciousness	.446	.339	.561	.001
Hungryness level	.003	.002	.960	.000
Kebab likiness	24.787	18.823	.000	.066
Manipulation	34.183	25.958	.000	.164

Table H.5. Ancova test for Company Image. Made by the authors.