



Determinants of bioproducts consumption in Lithuania

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Introduction

A growing bioproducts' market in the world shows that contemporary consumers are becoming aware of environmental problems and their solutions take shape in environmental protection or sustainable consumption; moreover, the modern consumer's shopping cart often 'faces' some bioproducts. Therefore, **scientific problem** solved with this research is what are the determinants of Lithuanian consumers attitudes and behavior regarding bioproducts.

The **purpose of the research** is to identify the determinants of consumer attitudes towards bioproducts and their choice by Lithuanian consumers.

To reach the purpose of the study, four objectives were established:

- To theoretically identify the determinants of bioproducts' consumption.
- Based on the theoretical analysis, to compose a research model and methodology to empirically test it.
- To empirically validate the established model in Lithuanian context.

The contribution of the research is threefold. First, the theoretical generalization of the related literature will complement the body of knowledge regarding the bioproducts' consumption patterns. The theoretically established determinants will be valuable for the researchers in the field. Secondly, the established theoretical model and methodology will be applicable for the researchers representing various countries. Thirdly, the empirically verified determinants and the Lithuanian bioproducts' market-specific model will be beneficial to companies operating in Lithuania and international researchers for comparison.

Methodology

Theoretical analysis was provided to establish a background for the research. Based on the literature, characteristics of contemporary consumers were described, and the main trends of their daily life were identified. Consequently, the topicality and necessity of the research were theoretically grounded (Figure 1).

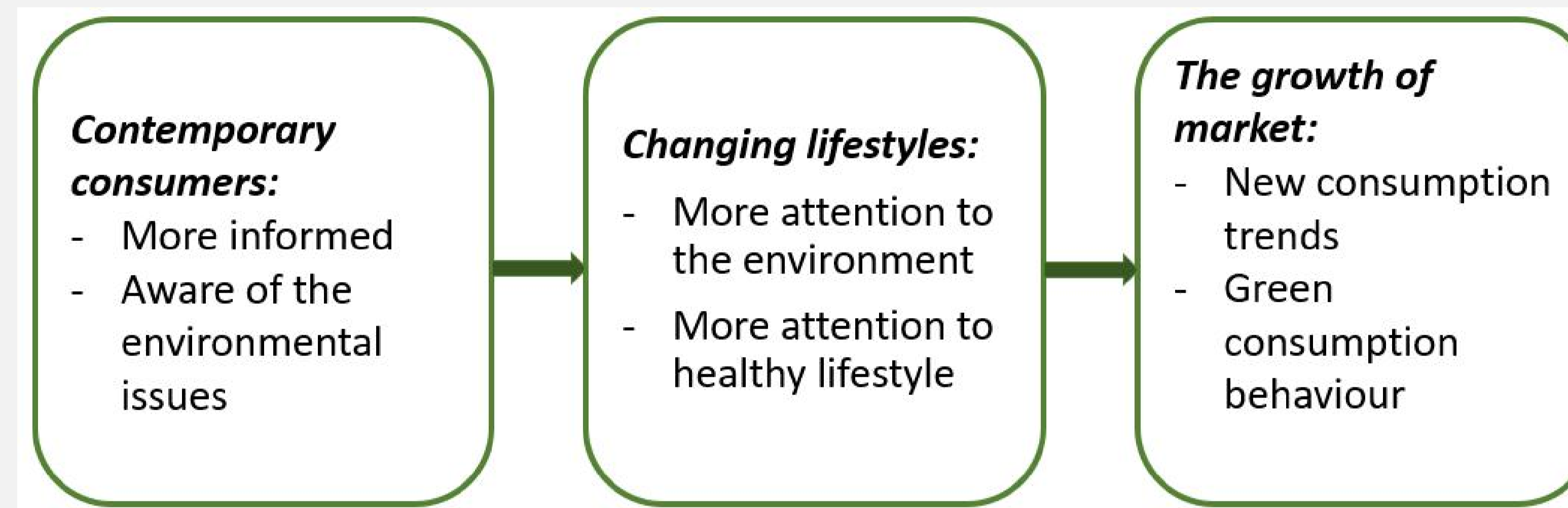


Figure 1. Research background

As bioproducts are those products developed from biological materials and may replace or enhance products derived from non-renewable resources, their acceptance in the society is growing. Realizing environmental problems, consumers pay more attention to the harm caused by consumption, adhere to pro-environmental behavior, and, also, consume more natural and environmentally-friendly products.

A questionnaire survey is provided in order to approve the theoretically established determinants in the Lithuanian market of bioproducts.

The questionnaire is comprised of 23 statements representing eight latent variables: six possible reasons for the choice of a bioproduct (health issues; environmental concerns; food safety and quality; economic reasons; social reasons; psychological reasons) and two possible outcomes (intentions to choose bioproducts; actual bioproduct purchases). In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to evaluate the provided statements in 10-point Likert scale ('1' - absolute disagreement; '10' - absolute agreement with a statement).

The survey results are based on the answers of 269 respondents representing the population of the four biggest cities in Lithuania.

To analyze the research results, the item evaluation rating was adapted from Bueno (2013). Accordingly, based on their evaluation means all the items were attached to a particular category of attitude:

- Favorable attitude (8.01 to 10).
- Fair Attitude (6.01 to 8).
- Indifferent attitude (4.01 to 6).
- Adverse attitude (1 to 4).

Results

The results of the questionnaire survey, enabled identification of factors determining bioproducts' consumption in Lithuania (Figure 2).

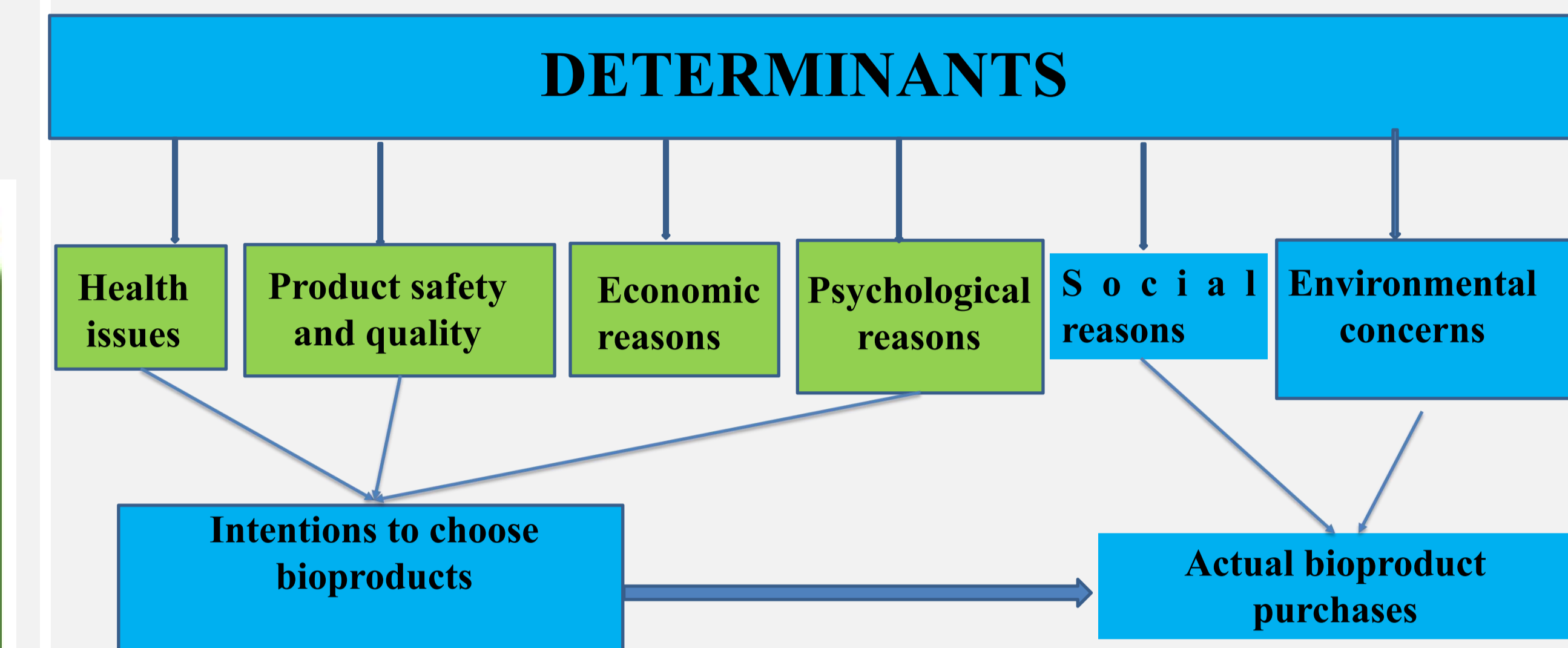


Figure 2. Determinants of bioproducts' consumption in Lithuania

Based on the research results, favourably evaluated factors, as having influence on actual bioproduct purchases, were identified: social reasons, environmental concerns, and consumer intentions regarding bioproduct choice.

Four factors, i.e., health issues, product safety and quality, economic reasons, and psychological reasons were evaluated as affecting consumer intentions to choose bioproducts; however, in a framework of actual bioproduct purchases their influence was evaluated as fair.

Main conclusions

- Three favorably evaluated determinants regarding bioproduct choice in Lithuania, can be named: environmental concerns, social reasons, and active engagement (intentions to choose bioproducts and actual bioproduct purchases).
- The established determinants affecting consumer attitudes and behavior can be further explored and modeled according to different market situations.