

### Information form

(must be completed and handed in if you wish to hold your master's thesis exam digitally)

Exam title:	IM_thesisDanielJesusAagaardSoto
Exam date:	2/6/2020
Name of the examiner/supervisor:	Svetla
Group number:	6
Students in the group: (full names and student emails)	Daniel Jesus Aagaard Soto – daagaa15 @student.aau.dk

### Deadlines

This form must be submitted to the study secretary as soon as possible, but latest on the same day as the master thesis submission.

The solemn declaration must be submitted together with the master thesis - both in Digital exam.

Only one form is to be submitted per group.

**Abstract:**

The purpose of this paper is to explore the best methods of promoting a premium product namely the plastic free produced biodynamic banana. This paper deals with a new sustainably produced product lacking in promotion. Throughout the course of this paper, the product itself will be analyzed using the International Marketing Mix to gain a better grasp of it. It will also cover the Marketing Communications Mix in order to discover which method of promotion would be the most appropriate for this product: accompanied by the literature researched alongside the interviews of the different supply chain members associated with this product, a conceptual framework was developed, analyzed, and evaluated to see if it could be considered as an appropriate marketing communication strategy. This paper ends in a discussion reviewing the generated conceptual framework including its advantages and drawbacks to understand which combination of Marketing Communication instruments would work best for Demeter in promoting this product.

## Contents

<b>1: Introduction:</b>	5
<b>1.1 Purpose of Study:</b>	9
<b>1.2: Problem Formulation:</b>	11
<b>2: Methods:</b>	12
<b>2.1: Philosophy of Science:</b>	12
<b>2.1.1: Ontology:</b>	12
<b>2.1.2: Epistemology:</b>	13
<b>2.1.3: Paradigm:</b>	14
<b>2.1.4: Constructivism &amp; Interpretivism:</b>	14
<b>2.1.4.1: Phenomenology:</b>	15
<b>2.1.4.2: Hermeneutics:</b>	15
<b>2.2: Research Approach:</b>	17
<b>2.2.1: Deductive:</b>	17
<b>2.2.2: Inductive:</b>	18
<b>2.2.3: Abductive:</b>	18
<b>2.4: Research Design:</b>	19
<b>2.5: Data Selection:</b>	20
<b>2.6: Data Collection:</b>	21
<b>2.7: Interview Analysis:</b>	22
<b>3: Theory:</b>	24
<b>3.1: Literature Review:</b>	25
<b>3.1.1: Lack of Biodynamic Literature</b>	28
<b>3.1.2: Barriers of Perception:</b>	29
<b>3.1.3: Need of Promotion/Informing the Consumer:</b>	30
<b>3.2: Marketing Mix In a General Perspective:</b>	31
<b>3.2.1: Marketing Mix Investigation:</b>	32
<b>3.3: Marketing Communication Strategy Research:</b>	35
<b>3.3.1: Marketing Communication Strategy: Factors of Creation</b>	40
<b>3.3.2: Key Factors of Implementation:</b>	44



---

<b>3.4: The Conceptual Framework:</b>	45
<b>4: Analysis:</b>	48
<b>4.1: Analysis of the International Marketing Mix:</b>	48
<b>4.2: Analysis of the Conceptual Framework:</b>	53
<b>5: Discussion:</b>	63
<b>5.1: Discussion of the Conceptual Framework</b>	63
<b>5.2: Difference In Approach</b>	67
<b>5.3: Changes in the Near Future: Legislation</b>	68
<b>6: Conclusion:</b>	68
<b>7: Limitations of Research:</b>	71
<b>8: Bibliography:</b>	73

## **1: Introduction:**

In today's world, sustainability and the environment have turned into a growing issue when manufacturing products across the globe. It can be observed that the consumers have become more conscious and informed on how products are manufactured such as the carbon footprint caused during the production, the material used and its recyclability to name a few (Oraman and Unakitan, 2010). As a result, this assists the consumer to be more aware of how the final product can benefit the environment throughout its journey. Due to the fact of this, products and the manufacturing process are becoming environmentally friendly to greater extents by becoming more sustainable regarding the use of natural resources, resulting in persuading the consumers of buying their products with this sustainable method of production.

However, this does not always succeed as there are times where a consumer is unable to see the difference between the sustainable and the unsustainable product and purely focus on the product's price (Akgüngör, Miran, and Abay, 2010). The consumer may be unable to see the difference between the products as the sustainability advantages have failed to be clearly communicated between them and the producers. As a result of this lack of communication, the benefits of the products are not shown or informed to the consumers (Reisch, Eberle, and Lorek, 2013) or how the methods of production can be sustainable and cause less harm to the environment compared to that of its competitors.

As for the consumers who are unaware, they compare the prices of the sustainably produced products with the regular or conventional products and may make the decision based on the price as sustainably produced products are normally more expensive compared to conventional competitors. Moreover, in certain cases, purchasing these conventional products may have the opposite effect when it comes to harming the environment. In several cases, the consumer is unaware of how a product is made due to the marketing communication strategy implemented by the firm or lack thereof. This may happen if the marketing communication strategy is aimed at the wrong audience, uses the incorrect methods to convey their message, or if the message is received with a negative reaction (Blythe, 2004) An example of this would be if an organization

aimed a marketing campaign for organic fruit when the targeted audience does not perceive the difference between organic and conventional fruit (Oraman and Unakitan, 2010).

A product that can be related to this issue would be the plastic free produced biodynamic banana. This variety of bananas differs from the conventional variety, the bio organic variety, and the regular biodynamic banana variety, and even though some of the assortments mentioned above are bio-organic and biodynamic, it still differs from this plastic free production. Yet there are consumers that do not see the difference as a result of the lack of marketing and communication. A reason for this could be because the fruit production industry is not as promoted as other industries (Oraman and Unakitan, 2010).

The production behind the plastic free biodynamic bananas revolve around a completely natural method of production, this being the absence of pesticides, fungicides, or toxins of any (organic or conventional) kind. This kind of banana is produced by the ecosystem of the farm that can be treated as a living organism (Demeter International, 2019). During the production of the plastic free biodynamic banana, all parts of the ecosystem are equally as important to the previously mentioned biodynamic banana. There are no organic or conventional fertilizers being placed in the soil, in fact the production can be considered to be powered by the compost formed by the falling leaves of the same banana tree from where the fruit originated as well as the natural manure from the animals on the farms (Demeter International, 2019) meaning that the nutrients needed for the banana tree to grow and bear fruit, are made by the tree itself ; in other words, sustaining itself and causing minimal negative effects on the environment thus encapsulating the difference between the organic banana and the biodynamic banana.

Organic banana certifications and standards allow to an extent the use of specific toxins, fungicides, and pesticides (Fairtrade International, 2019). Also, a considerable difference between the conventional assortment and the biodynamic are the fewer restrictions on how much of these toxins can be used on the fruit and soil. However, there is a key difference between biodynamic bananas and plastic free produced biodynamic bananas: this being that plastic bags are not wrapped around the bananas during the harvest as depicted in the figures (fig.1 and fig. 2) following.



Figure 1 taken from the banana farm

Source: Demeter Presentation



Figure 2 taken from the banana farm

In Germany, the biodynamic banana is sold in several different supermarkets such as REWE and EDEKA under the Demeter brand. However, over the last few months, plastic free biodynamic bananas have been put on the shelves of these supermarkets but have not been marketed or promoted differently (Christoph, 2020). Meaning that consumers are unaware of why this plastic free assortment of biodynamic fruit is more expensive compared to the other assortment of biodynamic fruit. Therefore, consumers are unaware of the difference in the products, which can occur when there is a lack of marketing communication (Denver, and Christensen, 2014).

For this to improve an appropriate marketing communication strategy needs to be implemented. This is done to inform and persuade consumers, and equally important to promote plastic free biodynamic bananas. The reasoning behind this kind of strategy is to reach the intended target markets, as well as influencing them with information persuading them to purchase the product (Blythe, 2004). At the same time, with this kind of strategy, new consumers can be gained by building awareness and encouragement to purchase this premium assortment of fruit (Blythe, 2004). Meanwhile, maintaining the present consumers and in fact strengthening their purchase behavior by providing them with information regarding the extra benefits that the product has of which they may not know (Blythe, 2004). Additionally, one of the other goals of this kind of strategy is to make and reinforce the connection that the producers have with all the consumers (potential and present) plus stakeholders and retailers (Todorova, 2015)

Alongside the marketing communication strategy, the plastic free biodynamic bananas can be promoted appropriately in the German market to differentiate this assortment from the other biodynamic fruit. In the German market, biodynamic bananas under the brand of Demeter are already being sold in retail stores. Furthermore, it is also important to note that Germany is one of the top countries in importing organic fruits in Europe, having imported 14.88 million tons of fruit in 2019, 1,257,000 of these tons are organic bananas (Fruit Logisitica, 2019). It also must be noted that there is an estimate of 17.2 kilos of banana being purchased weekly by a German household (Fruit Logisitica, 2019). According to this data, the German market has a strong demand for this product, also worth noting that it is ranked 13th in the Ratings Percentage Index Rankings (EPI, 2018) as one of the most sustainably oriented countries in the world. Consequently, implementing a marketing communication strategy for plastic free biodynamic bananas in Germany could be considered a great opportunity.

The organization responsible for the marketing of this premium fruit is Demeter. This firm originates from Germany and provides markets across the globe with high quality foods and guarantees the sustainable production of these foods. The firm grants certificates after highly detailed inspections to ensure that all the standards of Demeter are upheld. Their standards of zero pesticides, zero fungicides, and zero toxins on the farms originate from their philosophy of Demeter revolving around high quality food being produced via sustainable methods of production inside the “organism” or ecosystem that are the farms. Demeter views this manner of production as vital in caring for the Earth. As this improves the quality of the food produced, improves the value of the soil and its durability for the use of generations to come (Demeter International, 2019)

The biodynamic fruit on which this paper bases its investigation is mostly sold in the German market and are found to be sold in supermarkets, making them available to the public. However, with this improvement in plastic free production of biodynamic bananas there has not been a marketing campaign explaining to the consumer the reasons behind the different pricing among biodynamic bananas (Christoph, 2020). The plastic free produced biodynamic banana costs more to produce and therefore will have to be sold at a higher price than the standard biodynamic



banana. However, an uninformed consumer will only take note of the price difference resulting in the purchase of the cheaper product assuming them to be similar (Denver, and Christensen, 2014).

The Demeter organization is important to mention in this investigation as it is this brand certifying the plastic free produced biodynamic bananas which allows Hirsholmens Handelskompagni A/S (which will be referred to as HHK from now on) to sell to their biggest clients in Germany. Additionally, at previous conferences, the Demeter organization had stated that this plastic free produced biodynamic banana is the next steppingstone in agriculture, reducing pollution while maintaining the quality of the farm, the soil, and the fruit. However, Demeter seem to struggle in the promotion of this new product. This is apparent in the interview with Christoph where he states: *“Demeter want to make this a standard for their certificate but if there are no positive results in selling when you compare to the normal biodynamic, the producers will not agree to have this as a standard”* (Christoph, 2020) meaning that promoting this product and ensuring similar sales levels to the regular biodynamic banana is something that the Demeter organization has in mind. Furthermore, it will be the Demeter organization itself in charge of promoting this product, and if promoted poorly, it might negatively affect the new product thus leading to the purpose of the study.

### **1.1 Purpose of Study:**

While the author worked for HHK, travel opportunities arose to conferences discussing a new assortment of banana found in the German market namely the biodynamic banana. These conferences comprised of different CEOs and farmers who presented the process and sustainability of biodynamic production, leading to a much less harmful impact on the environment. The head of the farms having been inspired by these presentations, decided that there needed to be a way of growing bananas without wasting hectares of plastic weekly resulting in plastic waste left untreated and polluting. Therefore, a method of replacing the plastic used in banana production was introduced. Plastic has been replaced by 100% biodegradable paper which can also be used as compost later as seen in the images below:



Figure 3: Farm Owner Louis Hesselholt holding the new biodegradable bag – Source: (Hesselholt, 2020)



Figure 4: Hectare of the banana farm using the biodegradable paper – Source: (Hesselholt, 2020)

This method of production was implemented to the biodynamic section of the farm as it was thought that this would be part of the Demeter concept. However, the promotion of this product has not happened nor has it been implemented successfully giving rise to the questions why and how it should be done. In particular, how can this promotion inform, educate, and encourage the purchasing of plastic free produced biodynamic bananas? With that in mind, the purpose of this investigation is to identify and recommend a marketing strategy that will inform and educate the consumers about the new plastic free produced biodynamic banana. This marketing strategy must clearly differentiate the new plastic free produced biodynamic banana from the old biodynamic banana. With such a marketing strategy, the Demeter organization may consider which methods of promotion to apply to this product; applying the correct marketing strategy will achieve the desired goals of the organization which are referred to later in the paper. It will also be used for the problem formulation of this investigation.

## **1.2: Problem Formulation:**

The suppliers of HHK have advanced in the sustainability of the production for biodynamic bananas, removing all plastic and replacing it with biodegradable paper (Hirsholmen Handelskompagni A/S - News, 2020) with this being done, HHK thought that trading this premium product could be done with their German clients, who became intrigued to see the quality and were impressed by it which then resulted in the German clients selling the plastic free produced biodynamic bananas together with plastic produced biodynamic bananas. However, the two assortments were placed on shelves, with two different pricing structures due to the costs of production involved in each range. However, when speaking to Christoph, the General Secretary of Demeter, he said that: *“I have also been in contact with Markus Hyndes from Biofrusan about the possibility to market this separately from the other biodynamic bananas and make a kind-of campaign out of it”* (Christoph Interview, 2020) meaning this new premium of premium product, had been introduced at a higher price without a marketing promotion in order to illustrate the reasons for the price differences.

As the German market holds a high demand for organic fruit, selling the plastic free produced biodynamic bananas to the clients was not an issue as the traders and supermarkets saw this opportunity. However according to Christoph, there has not been any promotion regarding this product therefore he, and Demeter, believed that a marketing campaign was necessary to encourage more consumers to purchase this product. This gave way to a number of questions that will be used as guiding or research questions throughout the investigation of this paper:

- Who will be the targeted audience? Why will they be targeted?
- What channels can be used to promote this product to the consumers?
- What are vital elements in implementing and making a marketing communication strategy?
- What would be an appropriate method of promotion for the plastic free produced assortment of biodynamic bananas?

The mission of this paper is to investigate, analyze, and answer the guiding questions mentioned above concerning the promotion of plastic free produced biodynamic bananas in the German market. Additionally, how this premium of premium products could be promoted in the market. Throughout the process of interviews with different members of the supply chain of this product, it became evident that the consumers have failed to notice or identify the reasons for the difference in the price hence leading to the main focus of this paper, leading to the following problem formulation:

*What marketing communication strategy can be implemented to promote plastic free produced biodynamic bananas in the current German market to generate awareness and increase the sales of this product?*

## **2: Methods:**

The following section concerns itself with the method of approach that was taken to conduct this investigation. This will dictate the way the research is conducted. By stating the methodology, one may understand how a result was achieved due to the method of the investigation

### **2.1: Philosophy of Science:**

The following part of the paper explains what the root assumptions of this paper are. It explains the ontology of the research conducted, the epistemology of the investigation, the paradigm in which the investigation took place, and its features. This is significant as it dictates what methods of research are used, the way the knowledge was developed, and the understanding of the studies (Saunders et. al, 2016)

#### **2.1.1: Ontology:**

Ontology handles “*the nature of what the researcher seeks to know*” (Kuada, 2012, p58). There are two manners in which ontology can be perceived that question how the world functions: Objectivism and Subjectivism. Objectivism handles the manner of reality and social influences

separately from one another (Saunders et. al, 2016). Subjectivism on the other hand, deals with reality being socially constructed.

For the purpose of this paper, a subjective approach is chosen, as one of the methods of gathering data in this paper are interviews. This is done in order to understand the reality that the interviewee perceives regarding the promotion of plastic free produced biodynamic bananas. Additionally, the insight that can be gained from the interviews can be considered as valuable for this investigation as the opinions, and knowledge provided from the current actors in the supply chain, strengthen the issue that has been identified in this paper concerning the promotion of this product. This handling of what can be considered as acceptable knowledge is called Epistemology.

### **2.1.2: Epistemology:**

Epistemology handles the matter of what is acceptable knowledge. This continues as assumptions are being made during the process of gathering data. In agreement with Saunders, epistemology can be categorized into three approaches: Realism, Interpretivism, and Positivist. Realism concerns itself with the depiction of reality via perceptions and the senses. Interpretivism differs from realism as this approach accepts or recognizes that single individuals can perceive reality differently. Meanwhile positivism handles the observation making process which can lead to the “*generalization of a concept*” (Saunders et. al, 2016).

For the purpose of this paper, interpretivism has been chosen. Unlike the other approaches mentioned previously, interpretivism seeks to understand the different perceptions of all the actors involved (Saunders et. al, 2016). This grants an insight to the actors who are involved with the field being researched. In accordance to this approach, interviews will be conducted in order to gain an insight to the individual realities of the interviewees. Thus, permitting the researcher to gather data. However one must also consider in what paradigm the data is being collected in, as it works as a guide to the investigation

### **2.1.3: Paradigm:**

This section will be about the paradigm utilized to drive the process of research for this paper. This includes how the data was gathered. Paradigms are guided by certain questions such as: What is the essence of the research? Is the phenomena investigated found in the human mind or in nature? In what methods can this knowledge be achieved? Was the relationship created or conditioned between the individual and its environment? (Kawulich, 2012). All of the previously stated questions will be utilized to understand the reasoning of the investigation and the phenomena. According to Darmer, a paradigm is where knowledge is created in a closed system where basic guidelines are followed. He also states that in every field of research there are different values and beliefs in place. It has also been defined as a set of shared beliefs and assumptions (Darmer, 2010). Regarding this, there are several different paradigms to choose from. In this case, the chosen paradigm will be constructivism and interpretivism

### **2.1.4: Constructivism & Interpretivism:**

The chosen paradigm of Constructivism and Interpretivism seeks to comprehend and depict human nature (Kawulich, 2012). At its core, this paradigm is applied when the research method is descriptive. Along with this paradigm, the investigator attempts to grasp an understanding of a person's or a collection of persons' experiences (Kawulich, 2012). What guided the individual or group of individuals to take a certain action or make a specific decision. Moreover, this paradigm can be seen as subjective. This is because the foundation of this paradigm is the person's or persons' perception (Kawulich, 2012). In other terms: "*understanding the world as others experience it*" (Kawulich, 2012, Pg 9). To add on this point, these perceptions are not wrong. The reason why this paradigm was chosen is because the perceptions of the interviewees only differ from one another. One's perception is not more correct than another's. To further comprehend these realities, constructivism and interpretivism features phenomenology and hermeneutics.

#### **2.1.4.1: Phenomenology:**

This can be considered as the core of the constructivist paradigm and is involved in the studying of phenomena. Phenomenology involves learning how a reality or realities are formed in a person's or group of persons' minds. The goal of the author is to gain an understanding and investigate how these individuals experience the world encircling them. This investigation requires an open mind as the interviewees respond from their own understanding and depictions of the environment. In other words, according to Dalmer, it is the reality of the respondent (2010). It is vital to not explain the knowledge gained, but to understand it and describe it. Thus, the author must remember that everything said in this process of interviews is important. Moreover, as everything said in an interview is deemed as important, the second feature of this paradigm (hermeneutics) can be applied.

#### **2.1.4.2: Hermeneutics:**

Hermeneutics can be described as interpretation and explains that the knowledge gained of a field along with its perspective and understanding are alike. However, one must not confuse the interpretation of the subject as being identical to the explanation of the subject. It should be considered as solely the perception. This understanding or interpretation is a subjective point of view and the results gained from this understanding are involved in the methodology; this being a feature of the constructivist paradigm (Darmer et. al. 2010). This method of research is commonly used to create a pre-understanding/understanding of the phenomena being investigated. As a result, this method leads the author to create new knowledge via the interviews with the interviewees. This is then followed up until the difference between the discovered knowledge and the already known knowledge is no longer significantly different (Darmer et. al., 2010). Consequently, the social constructivist paradigm was used for this investigation. This paradigm can be depicted by the Hermeneutic Spiral:

## The Hermeneutic Spiral

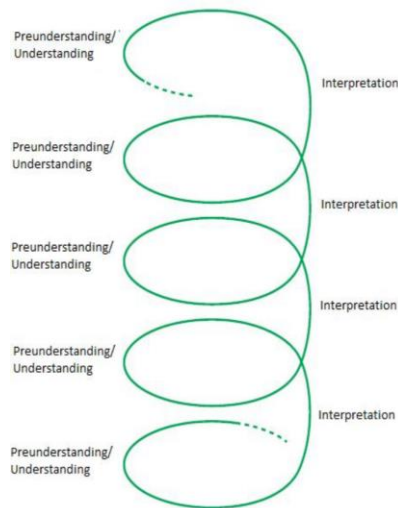


Figure 5 - Source: *Hermeneutic Spiral* (Primus, 2019)

Referencing the figure above (fig. 5), the investigation begins with the first step being the initial wondering. A concept or an idea that the investigator seeks to comprehend. Due to this initial wondering, the investigator starts the research of this concept. The research in this phase is done by collecting previous existing literature on the subject to create a fundamental understanding of the field of which the concept is involved in.

Once this has been done, the investigator can proceed to the following phase, creating the research questions. The manner in which the research questions are written rely on what the investigator wants to learn, therefore the questions can be written as exploratory or descriptive. This leads the investigator to create a questionnaire for the interviewing process in order to further the understanding of the subject in question. From this interview, new questions may arise and become part of the investigation.

Once this phase is complete and the initial interview has been done, the responses are examined, and themes are discovered. As a result, new questions may emerge from the information gathered during the first interview. Due to this, more specific questions pertaining to the discovered themes or keywords are added to the questionnaire in order to be asked in the following interview. This guides the investigator to the following phase where the next interview is conducted with the specific questions being added. The investigator can conduct the interview with the specified



questions with the same person or somebody else. The process is done repeatedly until this is not possible.

Thus, using the hermeneutic spiral allows the researcher to gain more knowledge as the process of interviews continues. New knowledge obtained in the first interview can later become a question or a point of discussion in the second interview. Deepening the understanding of the researcher. Once again, this new knowledge acquired from the second interview can be used for questions and points of discussion in the third interview. With this deepening of the understanding, more specific questions can be devised and used to uncover a subject which the researcher may not have considered at the start of the interviewing process. Which later on, could prove to be valuable information. Which leads to the approach that the investigator will take to conduct the research

## **2.2: Research Approach:**

This part consists of a reflection on the different research approaches: deductive, inductive, and abductive. In this paper, the abductive research approach has been selected. The reason being will be explained shortly in this section.

### **2.2.1: Deductive:**

The deductive research approach starts with theory. This research approach originates from a general idea that drives towards a certain point. In different terms, the investigators begin with a theory and construct towards a closing confirmation. Furthermore, this original theory guides the investigator to a hypothesis that further guides to deeper observations. In the end, this hypothesis is confirmed (Burney and Saleem, 2008). The aforementioned research approach can be classified as objectivistic. Along with this research approach, quantitative methods of research are commonly used. Stemming from this general idea to the definite answer. Another way of naming this approach is the “*top down*” approach (Burney and Saleem, 2008).

This approach was not chosen as the author wanted to avoid a preference in the selection of the theory and forcing the information to fit said theory.

### **2.2.2: Inductive:**

The inductive research approach originates with the investigators forming an observation. Following this formed observation, the investigators must identify a problem which guides them to a temporary hypothesis and theory. It is a temporary hypothesis as it can change throughout the investigation. Moreover, the original observations and temporary hypotheses are used as the bases for the theories. A qualitative research method is commonly used with this approach (Burney and Saleem, 2008). Additionally, from the gathered results, one is able to change the hypothesis as the initial questions are answered and additional knowledge is found (Burney and Saleem, 2008).

This research approach was not chosen as there was no tentative hypothesis made before the beginning of the research.

### **2.2.3: Abductive:**

The abductive research approach can be considered as a combination of both: inductive and deductive approaches. With the abductive approach, the investigators have the ability to adjust the theoretical framework continuously. This adjustment can be done at different points of the investigation: before, during, and after. Thus, the investigators have the ability to switch from the theoretical framework to the sources of data to the analysis and back (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). The abductive approach allows the use of both theoretical models and empirical studies.

For this investigation, the abductive research approach has been chosen. This is because the author sees the benefits of being able to adjust the conceptual framework as new information is revealed continuously. Meaning that throughout the investigation process, the conceptual framework can be best adapted to the knowledge gained during the qualitative or quantitative research and not vice versa.

### **2.3: Qualitative Research:**

This is the knowledge to be gained via the conduction of interviews, it can be discussed that the investigation in the fields of persona, complexity, and context require a qualitative research approach (Gummesson, 2006). Gummesson says that the social sciences have taken in the quantitative approaches of research. This has the possibility of leading the investigators to a better understanding concerning certain factors but can also affect the investigation as this understanding can be considered as superficial in social phenomena. Additionally, with this manner of data collection, new knowledge can be created from distinct issues that have not been considered previously. Therefore, turning into a beneficial contribution.

For this investigation, a qualitative research approach was chosen. As with this method, vital insights and comprehension can be found for the plastic free produced biodynamic banana rather than having incomplete details. Allowing the author to have a deeper understanding of the field being investigated. However, before the research can begin, a design for the research itself has to be made

### **2.4: Research Design:**

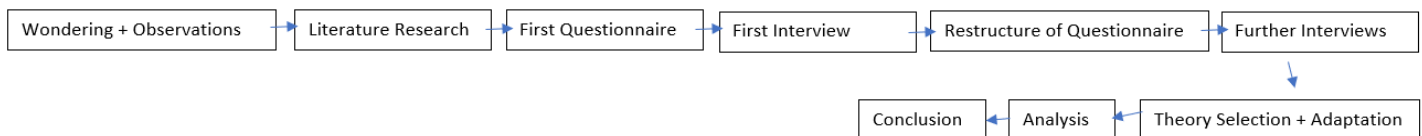


Figure 6: Inspired by John Creswell

The diagram above (fig. 6) shows the research design of how the investigation was driven. At the start of the investigation (the wondering and observations phase), notes taken from previous conferences were examined. There were several observations done regarding the plastic free produced biodynamic banana and the concept plus reasoning behind this change. Due to these written observations, an idea was conceptualized. Continuing on these observations, there was a

curiosity concerning the marketing of this new and more sustainable manner of production for this product. This guided the author to the research of literature (literature research phase). To gain more background knowledge as well as a better level of understanding; data from earlier literature was required. An example of this would be the general statistics of fruit purchasing and organic fruit purchasing in Germany from recent years.

However, this data was not specific enough. This was due to the reason that biodynamic products are categorized as organic products. Meaning that one can not see specifically the amount of consumption of biodynamic products there is in Germany. Therefore, more specific data concerning biodynamic bananas and the manner its marketing was needed. Therefore an initial questionnaire was made (first questionnaire phase) Thus, following up on the conferences, an initial interview was done in order to gain an insight of what had been done regarding the promotion of biodynamic products previously (first interview phase). After the interview was done, a more profound understanding of the topic was gained. Thus, the first problem formulation was created. Following this interview, it became apparent with the responses given that additional questions could be made (leading to the restructuring of the questionnaire phase). These additional questions were added to the questionnaire and were included in the following interview with the other interviewee (the further interview phase). This process was then repeated for the final interview.

These interviews are extremely important. That is why, it is imperative to select the right individuals to interview for this investigation.

### **2.5: Data Selection:**

To acquire a better understanding of what is required to promote plastic free produced biodynamic bananas successfully, interviews were chosen as the best method to obtain this knowledge. The reason being is that these interviews would function as a straightforward insight to what all the individual members of the supply chain perceive about the marketing opportunity for the plastic free produced biodynamic banana and Demeter. This method coincides with the subjectivist approach which illustrates that the social world is best understood or grasped from

the point of view of an involved actor as it is relativistic (Kuada, 2012) The interviewees selected for this investigation are different individuals from the supply chain: Marketeers and traders as mentioned in the following table:

Name of Interviewee	Firm Position	Supply Chain Link
Markus Hyndes	General Manager/Shareholder	Trader
Gerald Muller	Employee - Manager of Banana Trading	Trader
Christoph Simpfendorfer	General Secretary	Marketeer for Demeter

Table 1: The Table of Interviewees and Their Relation to the Plastic Free Produced Biodynamic Bananas

As the data is selected it is also important to state the way in which the data will be collected for this investigation.

## **2.6: Data Collection:**

The process of data collection involved doing interviews with the diverse links in the supply chain of the plastic free produced biodynamic banana. The reason being was to obtain an insight into the distinct points of view or realities of these links. However, before the interviews had taken place, a questionnaire was created based on the earlier investigation done concerning the consumption, purchasing, and sales of organic fruits. The questionnaire was formed in a semi structured format. Once the first interview had been done. It became the base for the author of which the existing knowledge had to be built upon. After the first interview had been conducted, the author's knowledge in this field had deepened. Consequently, there were questions that had been reformulated to obtain more detailed answers or to raise discussions with the objective of gaining more knowledge.

Following this, it was deemed as a necessity to include more questions over the already existing questionnaire to further the achievement of this knowledge, as well as broaden the author's

horizons. The previously mentioned process was repeated after the second interview had been conducted. Normally, because of the nature of research, more interviews would have been done yet due to restrictions of the project, the number of interviews done was limited to three. This process of interviewing, adjusting, and repetition directly aligns with social constructivism. Additionally, with the paradigm, the hermeneutic spiral will be used as it is a common theoretical approach utilized in the procedure of interviews.

Qualitative and quantitative interviews are both possible. However, for this investigation, the interviews done were in a qualitative nature and assisted with the depth of further understanding this field. When doing the interviews, specific features of romanticism were involved. This process allows the gathering of both the interviewer and interviewee to delve into the reality of the interviewees on the topic selected. Guiding the author towards a deepening in understanding regarding the specific topic. However, a feature of romanticism regarding the interactivity between the interview and the interviewee was not perfectly obtained. The interviewer did not perfect when to follow up an answer with another question pertaining to the answer previously given. At moments this was done, and in others the opportunity was missed. Therefore, the answers provided have a level of superficial value.

Marschan-Piekkari and Reis state (2004), there is an importance in taking into account cross cultural elements during the conduction of an interview. There are a number of variables of bias that could occur if not appropriately managed. The mother tongue of the individuals was different. All of the interviewees had German as their mother tongue differing from the interviewer's. Meaning that since the interviews were done in English, there is a possibility of misunderstandings and misconceptions. Which means that a possible issue concerning the interviews is that the interviewees may have stated something that differs from the real meaning of what they meant to say. Which leads to the interview analysis.

### **2.7: Interview Analysis:**

Throughout the interviewing process, there were different links from different sections of the supply chain which were interviewed to obtain the best knowledge possible on the marketing of

plastic free produced biodynamic bananas. Once the interviews were done, they were transcribed and analyzed in order to define what possible theories could be used and applied to the investigation. Afterwards, the theories were further investigated to a certain field, aiding the process of narrowing down the research field. Meaning, rather than investigating all of the fields of marketing, only one specific area had to be looked into: communication

Throughout the process of analyzing the transcriptions, the investigator searched for what overlapped in the conducted interviews with previous theories researched. Determining on how they overlapped relied on how the interviewees responded to the questions. Markus, Gerald, and Christoph had similar attitudes and responses to certain questions. The interviewees were all in agreement concerning specific questions and curiosities that the interviewer had asked. This overlap or agreement in the responses of the different interviewees means that there is a consensus with all the links in the supply chain for this product. Additionally, using this overlap in information strengthens the knowledge gained from the interviews. If all the interviewees agree on the same point it means that there is a concurrence concerning the issue of promotion of this product. This concurrence adds value to the investigation. This is because this is an issue which all of the links in the supply chain have also identified. Meaning that this investigation could be proven useful in assisting the Demeter organization in implementing a marketing strategy to promote and raise awareness on this new product.

Concerning the information gathered from the interviews, it is important that the researcher remain critical. It is vital to remember that throughout the interview process, the data gathered is subjective concerning what the different persons perceive. Meaning that there is a possibility of bias thus explaining the importance of context. Furthermore, Kuada states that an interview revolves around the interaction between the different parties with differing personalities which has the possibility of affecting the value of the information as there may be an influence over it. (2012). Taking that into account, they were semi structured interviews. As the questionnaire had an original set of basic inquiries which later evolved with more detailed questions as more information was collected. However, one must note that the questions were open ended allowing free expression of what the interviewees perceive.

Moreover, how the author understands the answers are imperative to the investigation. This is because the theories which will be applied throughout the paper used these interviews as a base. Additionally, while analyzing the interviews, one may go over statements that the different interviewees made opposing each other or in agreement to each other. Adding another aspect to this method. As the different interviewees are from separate sections of the supply chain, it is intriguing to find contradictions and agreements.

To summarize this section, the investigation conducted for this paper will have a subjective approach as the author interviews different actors involved with the plastic free produced biodynamic banana. It will also have an interpretivist epistemology as this deals with the different perceptions of the different actors that are being interviewed. Moreover, the paradigm of constructivism and interpretivism will be used as this paradigm at its core attempts to grasp an understanding of a person or a group of people's experiences (Kawulich, 2012). Additionally an abductive approach was selected as this seems to depict the interviewing process of the different actors chosen in the data selection (Markus, Gerald, and Christoph) most appropriately. And finally, the data collected will be from the interviews with the different actors. Their responses to the questions can assist in identifying what theories would be most appropriate for the subject of marketing premium fruit.

### **3: Theory:**

This section of the paper will go over the theories that were deemed relevant to the responses given in the interviews. This section begins with the literature review demonstrating the process of selecting relevant literature as well as excluding irrelevant literature through different filters such as: language, relation to subject, etc. Additionally, the literature review guides the author in the research being done by utilizing these filters and seeing what is relevant as well as what can be used for the investigation. Moreover, the literature review also indicates where there are gaps in the knowledge in the field being researched. Furthermore, from the relevant collected literature and the knowledge gained from the interviews, theories that best fit the knowledge can be selected and applied to the data. All of which lead to the creation of a conceptual framework.



### 3.1: Literature Review:

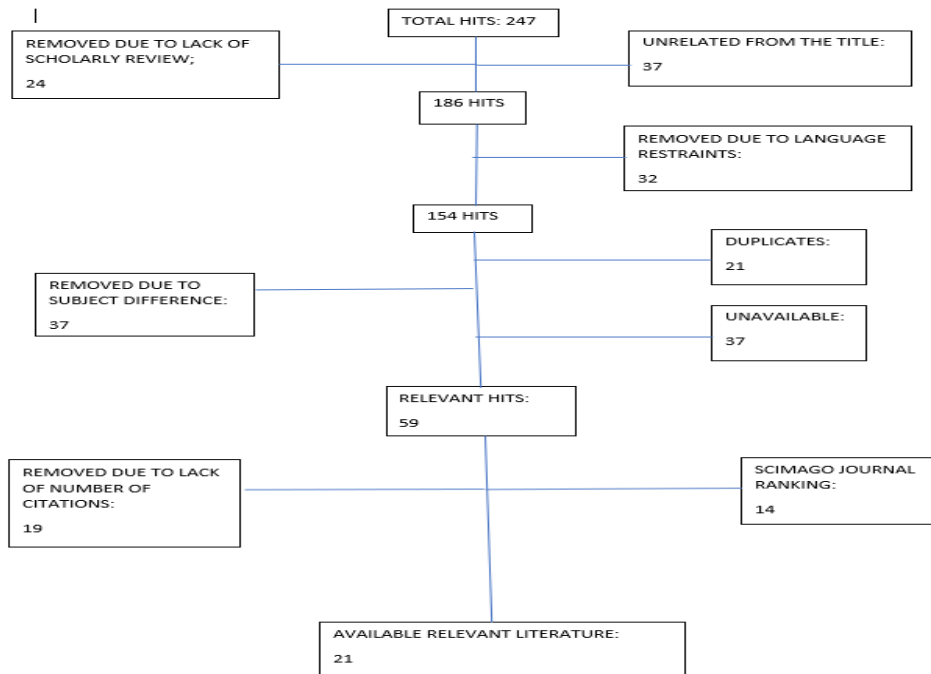


Figure 7: Literature Review

Above is the figure (fig. 7) demonstrating the breakdown process of the exclusion and inclusion of the literature analyzed. The purpose of this literature review process is done to ensure that only relevant information involved with the field of research is examined. Preventing confusion with other subjects and leading to an incorrect or inappropriate conclusion to the investigation conducted for this paper. Also to provide a complete conclusion based on the relevant knowledge gathered. Additionally, the information collected from the literature can assist the author in adding inquiries to the questionnaire for the interviewees in order to gain as much information as possible. This can also be considered as supplementary knowledge. The research of the literature was done primarily using the EBSCO online search engine to ensure that the literature collected was reliable as this had been used in several past investigations.

As mentioned in the hermeneutic spiral, the investigator begins the research with an initial idea or wondering. In order to gain more information about this, the investigator turns to existing

literature. However, keywords must be defined and determined in order to narrow down the search and find relevant information pertaining to the subject. This is where the keywords make their appearance. With keywords, the author's search is more efficient as it filters out any unnecessary information. Moreover, a combination of keywords will narrow the field of relevant information and preexisting knowledge further. At times this combination of keywords might not have many hits. It is also important to record the number of hits achieved to demonstrate the knowledge seeking process behind the final number of relevant and used hits. Using different combinations of keywords, led to a total of 247 hits. The keywords used to obtain this amount were:

- Sustainability/Sustainable
- Marketing Strategy
- Organic Fruit
- Green Marketing
- Consumption

The aforementioned keywords were used as they're relevant to the idea or initial wondering that the author had. The words: sustainable/sustainability are related to the investigation as the new method of plastic free production, is the newest sustainable method of biodynamic banana production. Additionally, this word was part of the initial wondering and was thought as a great marketing point to promote this new product. The key term: Marketing Strategy was used in order to find relevant research of marketing strategies in combination with other keywords such as: sustainability/sustainable and organic fruit.

Another keyword used was organic fruit. Reason why organic fruit was used rather than biodynamic fruit is because the information in the search engines related to biodynamic fruit is extremely limited, non-existent, or not related to the field of research the investigator is currently looking into. Plus, when looking at statistics, biodynamic fruit is regularly categorized as organic. Therefore, organic fruit was used as a substitute and this substitution has been recognized later in the paper as a limitation.

The second last keyword used to narrow down the search of literature was consumption. Although this term can be broad, combining this term with sustainability, marketing strategy, and organic fruit assisted in finding relevant information concerning the consumption of organic fruit and how it is marketed to consumers to create an increase in organic fruit sales. Lastly, green marketing was used as this plastic free production is less harmful to the environment and promoting this product can be considered as green marketing. Because in its essence, green marketing is about promoting environmentally friendly or less environmentally harming products (Naidoo and Verma, 2019).

After all the hits were found and recorded with the keywords, more filters had to be added to exclude irrelevant information or information that did not seem adequate for the investigation. A few of the filters such as language, duplicates, and availability were straightforward. The language filter excluded any literature that was not in English. The duplicate filter excluded all the literature that was repeatedly found throughout the literature seeking process. The availability filter was added, as there were a number of literature pieces that could not be found or were incomplete at the time of reading. Other filters such as; title relation, scholar reviews, and subject differences were also added to exclude more unrelated literature. Concerning title relation, if the title of the literature did not involve the subject of investigation, it was excluded. Regarding scholar reviews if the literature had not been reviewed or approved by other scholars, the literature was considered inadequate and therefore excluded. Concerning the differences in the subject, if the literature was unrelated or irrelevant to the current topic of investigation.

Finally, the last filters added were the number of citations and the Scimago ranking system. These were added as a filter of reliability. If a piece of literature has a high number of citations, it means that other researchers have used the knowledge mentioned in the literature for their investigation. Thus, the higher the number of citations, the more reliable it is assumed to be. This is the same with the Scimago ranking. Scimago is an engine that ranks the journals and universities where other researchers have written. It ranks them in four quarters, the first quarter being the best and the fourth being the worst. If any of the literature found is ranked in the 4th quarter, it is excluded immediately.

In the end, after applying all these filters, gives the literature review a structure for what information is relevant and what information is not. Additionally, using these keywords and filters provided structure to the literature review process. This is because, when using these keywords, the author will have a higher chance of identifying relevant information pertaining to the subject. Additionally, the structure of the literature review excludes any information that is not relevant and may derail the investigation towards another subject. Moreover, the structure aids the author in narrowing down the field of which the investigation is relevant to. Thus, this literature review attempts to guide the investigation in the direction of the field of interest. While simultaneously aiding in being critical of the knowledge generated from the literature. This is evident as the following subsections concern themselves with the criticalness of the information found or not found in the literature reviewing process. These subsections were divided into themes.

### **3.1.1: Lack of Biodynamic Literature**

Throughout the literature review process, it became apparent that there is a lack of biodynamic literature in regard to marketing. During the research process as stated above, most of the biodynamic literature discovered did not have to do with the subject being written in this paper. Most of available literature was concerning its sustainability and the benefits that biodynamic products (meats, poultry, fruit, and vegetables) have on agriculture. Including, the process behind biodynamic agriculture. Additionally, when conducting the research, there was more information available when it came to marketing and statistics of organic fruit. This raised one of the questions for the interviews as the lack of information on this topic could heavily affect the research. When holding the interviews, the question concerning this issue was asked to which the answers of all the interviewees was quite similar. This will be explained in more depth in the analysis section of the paper, but it is important to mention in the literature review what was stated in the interviews to remain critical and to justify the information collected from the literature.

Christoph, was asked about this lack of information and why there is no division between biodynamic products and organic products when it came to statistics. He said: *“Yes. This is a point that we have raised in the Fruit Logistica convention. Demeter asked the organizers of the convention if there would be a separate part for biodynamic products. Unfortunately they have not organized like this but they will in the near future”* (Christoph, 2020) When asking Markus about the lack of data available for biodynamic products, he stated: *“Well I think it’s biodynamic products are not as big in different parts of the world. Outside of Germany there are not many countries that sell Demeter. So they group both organic and biodynamic in the same pot”* (Hyndes, 2020) And when asking Gerald about this he said, *“Unfortunately people actually mainly people who are outside of Germany and Europe don’t know about this. And actually there are even some farmers that follow this sustainable way of farming but actually believe it is just more organic. So they don’t have the Demeter brand but they actually follow the Demeter way.”* (Muller, 2020).

As a result, in order to continue this investigation, as stated previously, “organic” was used as a keyword in order to nullify the gap of the lack in literature.

### **3.1.2: Barriers of Perception:**

Barriers of perception is one of the recurring themes in the literature concerning consumers and the purchasing of organic products. Consumer perception is one of the biggest issues when selling biodynamic products. Within this theme, different questions from the consumer rises such as: is the product really environmentally friendly? Or, is its method of production truly sustainable? (Vukasovič, 2016) In other words, what value is added to the product that makes the consumer willing to pay its cost when it is higher than its other assortments? This is caused by another barrier of perception: consumer awareness. The consumers are not aware of how this product is produced. This can originate from a lack of informing the consumers about the methods of production, as well as the product itself. In order to inform and educate the consumers of this product, promotion is needed.

Due to the literature review, this theme was discovered and can be considered relevant to the investigation conducted in this paper. This aids in guiding the investigation as the literature indicates that consumers are not aware of how the product is produced. Meaning that a lack of consumer awareness also occurs with organic fruits (Colom- Gorgues, 2009). It can be assumed that the reason behind this lack of awareness is a lack of marketing communication. The consumers are not informed and therefore will not purchase the product

### **3.1.3: Need of Promotion/Informing the Consumer:**

Another theme that overlapped in the literature was the need of promoting these products. Although biodynamic products are known in Germany, this new plastic free produced variety is still relatively unknown, and consumers are not aware of why the price is higher. This is due to lack of promotion and informing the consumer. Without knowing what goes into the process of production causing the increase in pricing, the consumer is less willing to purchase the plastic free produced biodynamic banana. As it can be summarized that “*consumption culture is based on knowledge, and habits*” (Firat, A., Kutucuoglu, Arikan, 2013).

As stated previously, the literature review reveals two themes that are continuously mentioned: the barriers of perception of the consumer as well as the need of promotion of the product. Promoting the product to the consumer can educate and inform the consumer to make an informed purchasing decision at the time of purchase. Therefore, the best method to promote this plastic free produced biodynamic banana would be to create a marketing communication strategy informing the consumers about this product and what makes this premium assortment different from the others.

However, the literature reviewing process does not only filter out any unnecessary information. The literature review guides the author to reveal what overlaps in the criticism of the literature. Meaning, the barriers of perception and the need of promoting a product indicate that the consumer is not aware of this product. This guides the author to believe that in order to promote the product, it must be explained and understood. Leading to the international marketing mix.

Although a straightforward theory, this model aids the author in grasping what this new product is which will further aid in the development of the conceptual framework. A deeper understanding of the plastic free produced biodynamic banana can be generated from breaking down the elements of the international marketing mix.

### **3.2: Marketing Mix In a General Perspective:**

This subsection of the paper is done in order to capture previous literature in the area of the Marketing Mix in order to fully understand the new product being put into the market and create a common definition. Thus, by fully understanding the International Marketing Mix and applying it to the plastic free produced biodynamic banana, can then be applied in the conceptual framework.

In this process of finding a common definition for the marketing mix, it is discovered by the author that there are many distinct interpretations on this subject. Therefore, creating a definition that encapsulates all of the different aspects of the marketing mix precisely is challenging. During the investigation process, several different definitions are discovered that can be applied. Goi stated that the marketing mix is a “*...a conceptual framework that identifies the principal decision making managers make in configuring offerings to consumers’ need*”. (Goi, 2009). Another perspective on the marketing mix derives from the literature written by Riaz in 2011. Riaz defines the marketing mix as a “*...set of controllable marketing tools that a company uses to create desired response in the targeted marketing*” (2011). Another definition of the marketing mix is written by Singh in 2012. He defined the marketing mix as a “*...combination of different marketing decision variables being used by the firm to market its goods and services*” (Singh, 2012)

As mentioned above, there are different interpretations and perspectives for the marketing mix. Yet, there are common terms used in the definitions stated previously such as tools, offerings, and variables. These words can be used to define the 4Ps of the Marketing Mix. Thus, these terms must be included in the definition. As a result, based on the literature the common

definition of the marketing mix can be summed up to: A framework that is made up of four different variables: Product, Price, Promotion, and Place. The previously mentioned variables are used as tools for marketers as they combine them to derive to the wants and demands of the targeted market to sell their goods and services. This leads the author to dive deeper into the different variables of the International Marketing Mix. Additionally, while diving deeper in the variables, creating common definitions will aid in the investigation as a clear definition is stated and can therefore be used in the breakdown of the plastic free produced biodynamic banana.

### **3.2.1: Marketing Mix Investigation:**

The definition written in the previous section will be used as the definition of the Marketing Mix for the paper. However, there are also multiple perspectives on the different elements of the 4Ps. Due to this, definitions must also be generated for these elements with the purpose of understanding the different elements clearly and to avoid confusion when using the terms throughout the paper. Also, a distinction must be made before generating the definitions between consumers and buyers. A buyer can be an individual, an organization, a retail store, meanwhile a consumer is only the individual purchasing the product (Riaz, 2011).

#### Product:

The element of product has been defined by several authors. One of them being Singh in 2012, who states that a product is “...*a physical product or service to the consumer for which he is willing to pay. It includes half of the material goods, such as furniture, clothing and grocery items and intangible products, such as services, which users buy*” (Singh, 2012). This element has also been depicted as one of the most crucial elements in marketing (Dang, 2015). Another author who has written their perspective on this element is Kotler. According to him a product “... *is what can be offered to the market, to get attention, to be the acquisition of used or used, and can satisfy the wants or needs.*” (Kotler, 2012). However, an author who holds a somewhat opposing view to the aforementioned definitions is Bylthe. Reason being is that he opposes this perception of product as he believes that a product is more than a physical object or service. He



mentions that this element can consist of physical products, ideas, information, people, events, experiences, people, and services.

Therefore, the common definition for this element for the purpose of this paper is: a product or a service that a consumer would willingly pay for. A product not being limited to only physical or a service but also experiences, information, events, people, places, and many more.

#### Price:

While conducting the research for this paper, several perspectives on price were revealed. In 2012, Kotler and Armstrong stated that price is “...*the amount of money to pay for a product or service, or the value of the exchange help customers receive a product or service for a certain amount.*” (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012). Another perspective on this element is how companies perceive the worth and value of the products and services that they offer (Petrevska, Kochishka, Jankulovska and Bojkovska, 2017). However this element can also be more generalized as “...*a monetary expression of value for the consumer agrees to pay*” (Išoraitė, 2016). As done previously, a common definition has to be generated for the purpose of this paper. Therefore, price can be defined as: An expression of monetary value that aids the consumer in understanding what a product or service is worth.

#### Place:

The following element is place. Place can also be referred to as distribution. This element has been defined as “... *the process and methods by which products or services reach customers*” (Martin, 2014). This element has also been defined as the process that involves the moving of goods from producers and suppliers to the consumer (Gronholm, 2012). While investigating and attempting to generate a common definition, distinct actors in the distribution process were mentioned such as: brokers, commissioners, traders, and so on. Therefore, to have a more complete and precise definition for this paper, it is important to involve the different actors. Thusly the definition of place is: the distribution process that involves decisions concerning the moving of goods to the consumers originating from the producer. This distribution process can include service providers, brokers, intermediaries, or traders.

## Promotion:

This is the final element of the marketing mix. Promotion aids in the gaining of awareness for the consumers with the aim being to encourage the consumer to buy the product being promoted. As a result increasing the sales and also having the possibility of building brand loyalty. There are several distinct forms of promotion, these forms include but are not limited to: direct marketing, personal selling, public relations, advertising, and sales promotion. All of the previously stated forms of promotion will be made clear later in the paper. Continuing, different researchers have defined promotion differently but have in common the importance of promotion as a tool of the marketing mix. Kotler stated that promotion is “... *an activity that makes target customers aware of a product or service and their advantages and is convincing to buy the product*”. (Kotler, 2012) While Blythe on the other hand, says that promotion is down to the firms as they are the ones making the decision and taking the actions of informing and encouraging the consumers and potential consumers of buying their product (2004).

The aforementioned definitions are admittedly close to one another. Yet Blythe’s definition takes the firm’s perspective, meanwhile Kotler’s definition is about the action of promotion itself. Having said this, there are common denominators in both of the definitions. As a result, making the generating of the common definition fairly clear-cut. The element of promotion can be defined as: the action of encouraging targeted consumers to buy a certain product or service by making them aware of the product or service via distinct methods like: direct marketing, personal selling, sponsorships, public relations, and sales promotion.

All of the previously mentioned methods of promotion were also included in the research of literature which guided the author towards the Marketing Communication Mix. This is because the methods mentioned previously are also mentioned and discussed in the Marketing Communication Mix. Additionally, components of promotion in the marketing communication mix must also have common definitions generated in order to know what the components mean in this investigation. Creating a clear understanding for the instruments of the mix which will then be applied to the plastic free biodynamic banana.

### **3.3: Marketing Communication Strategy Research:**

The research of literature has led to the Marketing Communication strategy. There were several different definitions written about marketing communication strategy. However, for the purpose of this paper, the way Phillip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller defined the marketing communication strategy will be the definition that is used. They defined it as: “...*the means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade and remind their customers - directly and indirectly - of products and brands they sell.*” (Keller and Kotler, 2012). They also continued by stating that its importance is due to the representation this strategy brings as it can be the voice of a brand or company (Keller and Kotler, 2012). This voice enables the creation of a dialogue between the consumers and the brand or firm thus building relationships with the brand and its consumers. (Keller and Kotler, 2012).

A different perspective of this is, a process of targeted propaganda that strives to influence the aimed audience in order for an organization to be perceived in the manner they want to be perceived (Todorova, 2015). This is done by informing the targeted audience and communicating different messages. As a result of this transmission of information, the targeted consumers may perceive the organization as the organization wishes to be perceived and at the same time have their products be made aware of. Additionally revolving around the message sent, value can be added to the products of the organization in the perception of the consumer. An example of this being done is by focusing on what makes the organization’s product different compared to its rivals (Todorova, 2015).

The ways in which an organization can inform the targeted audience can vary, as there are a number of diverse instruments that are involved in the Marketing Communication Mix (Todorova, 2015). These diverse instruments which were also a part of the promotion variable of the international marketing mix, will also have common definitions be made for the purpose of this paper. The tools of this mix are:

- Advertising
- Personal Selling
- Sales Promotion
- Public Relations
- Direct Marketing

#### Advertising:

Advertising is considered as a non-personal manner of mass marketing communication that achieves the greatest quantity of exposure at the cheapest cost (Keller and Kotler, 2012). With advertising, the organization tries to persuade, inspire, and may even attempt to manipulate the consumers to buy a good or to continue buying a good (Keller and Kotler, 2012). Phillip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller defined advertising as “...*any paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services from the sponsor evident by the print media (newspapers and magazines), telecommunications (radio and television), network communications (telephone, cable, satellite, wireless), electronic media (audiotape, videotape, videodisc, CD-ROM, web page), and display media (billboards, signs, posters)*”. Yet there are also other definitions that are more broad like the one provided by the European Advertising and Media Forecast that defined it as “...*a form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, products or services paid by the apparent source*” (2005).

Advertising as a tool has several functions, however the primary function of this tool is to inform, convince, and generate an extra value to a good in the perspective of the viewers (Keller and Kotler, 2012). Another point that is worth mentioning about this instrument is that this costs less than the other instruments of Marketing Communication such as personal selling (Keller and Kotler, 2012). This being stated, the low costs can build up rapidly, therefore an organization must keep this in mind if this is the instrument they wish to communicate to the consumers with (Keller and Kotler, 2012). This is because a large part of the success using advertising relies on the funding that the organization grants for it (Keller and Kotler, 2012). Meaning that budget planning is vital as well as the strategy of advertising, the frequency of it, and the product itself (Keller and Kotler, 2012).

Thus, as a common definition: advertising is a non-personal form of mass media communication that strives to inspire, convince, and promote products, ideas, and services to make an impression in the perspective of the audience. Advertising includes traditional and online media like: Websites, television, adwords, billboards, videos, magazines, banners, newspapers, and so on.

#### Personal Selling:

Another instrument that can be used in a Marketing Communication strategy is Personal selling which revolves around a personal presentation of the goods and ideas to a particular audience (Keller and Kotler, 2012). The seller and presenter of these goods has the goal of aiding the audience when making a purchasing decision regarding their product. This tool involves not only a one way communication from the organization (or in this case the seller) to the audience, but also a communication from the consumers to the organization which can therefore create a relationship between the parties (Keller and Kotler, 2012). A downside of this tool however is that it is considered the most expensive approach of communication (Keller and Kotler, 2012). This being said, this manner of marketing communication is suggested if the organization or brand is small and has an ambition of building relationships with its consumers (Keller and Kotler, 2012). However, it is also important to note that this instrument is most commonly used to support other instruments in the mix as messages can become adjusted to the individual viewer/consumer (Keller and Kotler, 2012).

Personal selling has been explained as an “...*oral presentation of goods, services, ideas, in a private conversation with one or more potential buyers to stimulate them to buy and assist them in purchasing*” (Todorova, 2015). Another definition of personal selling is “... where businesses use people (the "sales force") to sell the product after meeting **face-to-face** with the customer” (tutor2u, 2020).

Thus, for the purpose of this paper, the definition that will be used for personal selling is: a marketing communication tool that has a personal presentation of goods or ideas to an individual or several individual possible consumers to inspire and convince the purchase of the product

being presented. This tool also has a two way communication that aspires to create a relationship with the individual consumer or group of individual consumers.

#### Sales Promotion:

Another instrument of the marketing communication mix is sales promotion. This tool encourages sales methods with the use of other marketing tools, or other enticements in order to generate a higher amount of sales over the course of a short extent of time (Keller and Kotler, 2012). Other enticements can include offering free goods as in the case of buying one good and getting a second one for free, or guaranteed services after the purchase of the product, coupons, samples, and discounts. (Keller and Kotler, 2012). All with the goal of increasing sales for a limited time.

Sales promotion has a number of definitions such as: “*Sales promotion is a complex of actions with a single or short-term to encourage consumers and commercial firms by offering them additional incentives to increase sales*” (Todorova, 2015). A different definition is that sales promotion “...*aims to stimulate consumers to immediate purchase*”. (Todorova, 2015). Having these definitions in mind, a common definition has been made for this paper: Sales promotion is one of the instruments in the marketing communication mix that concerns itself with increasing sales for a short amount of time with sales techniques like samples, discounts, and services after the purchase has been done

#### Public Relations:

Public relations are in this case the second last tool in the mix. This tool involves how an organization, or an individual manages the distinct relationships and the information given to the different audiences (or publics). This is done in an interactive method where a single tool or different tools of marketing communication are used by an organization (Armstrong and Kotler, 2011). The audiences that are mentioned for this tool are shareholders, the general public, consumers, etc. Public relations have become growingly important as an organization grows. This is because this tool is not solely concentrated on the product but the organization as well.

With having an influence in the opinion of the audience as a primary target (Armstrong and Kotler, 2011).

Public relations also have numerous definitions. It is most known being made by the Foundation and PR Education stating: *“PR is a distinctive management function which helps to establish and maintain a two-tier communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its users. Includes management of problems and results; It helps management to be constantly informed and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the managerial responsibility for serving the public interest; It helps management is always aware of the situation and effectively use change to serve as an early warning system. It is necessary to anticipate trends, to use research and ethical communication techniques as fundamental tools”*. (Onyiego, 2014). Public relations have also been defined as *“... the management function of the company, which contribute to the formation of favorable conditions for communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between the organization and its audience”*. (Todorova, 2015).

With the aforementioned definitions, a common definition can be made. Public relations is an instrument of the marketing communications mix involving the development of an understanding with an organization and its distinct audiences interactively while influencing their opinions on the organization or a product. The purpose being to make a positive image of how the organizations or brands want to be perceived.

Direct Marketing:

Direct Marketing is the last tool in the marketing communication mix involving direct communication to the aimed audience from the organizations to encourage the purchase of their products. (Armstrong and Kotler, 2011). Using this tool removes any intermediary tools as mentioned previously such as advertising. Additionally, this method has become more well-known because of the internet and the opportunities presented there such as: social media, web marketing, mobile phone apps, email marketing, etc. (Lobley, Butler and Winter, 2013) An advantage of direct marketing is that the organization can inform and encourage the consumer

personally. Therefore making a long relationship with the consumer a possibility (Armstrong and Kotler, 2011)

Direct marketing has previously been defined as “...an advertising strategy that relies on the individual distribution of a sales pitch to potential customers”. (Kenton, 2019). McFadden defined direct marketing stating that it “...is a form of communicating an offer, where organizations communicate directly to a preselected customer and supply a method for a direct response” (2019). Finally, for this paper, a common definition must be made: direct marketing is a tool of the marketing communication mix that relies on the handling of pitching sales to an already targeted audience to persuade the potential consumers to purchase the good being promoted.

Now that all of the tools have been mentioned and defined due to the reviewal of literature, it is crucial to note that the literature mentions that successful marketing communication strategies in organizations involve a combination of the tools from the aforementioned mix. This combination of tools has a higher probability of communicating more effectively the positive aspects of a product and how it sets itself apart from its competitors to the targeted consumers rather than using a single tool (Armstrong and Kotler, 2011). That being said, one must not use all the tools at once as applying them inappropriately can be a waste of resources. Therefore, an appropriate combination of the tools must be applied and analyzed. The advantages and drawbacks of each tool must be assessed in order to deem if it would be appropriate for an organization to use. However, the literature also guided the researcher to realizing the key steps must be taken into consideration when creating a marketing communication strategy. These key steps can then be taken into account when creating the conceptual framework.

### **3.3.1: Marketing Communication Strategy: Factors of Creation**

As all the tools in the marketing communication mix now have common definitions, it is also vital to outline the steps that need to be taken to in creating a strategy. As well as determining a conceptual framework in the following section. There are numerous steps in the creation of a



marketing communication strategy considering the literature one researches. Yet, it is common to have eight steps in the process of building this strategy. The steps are: determining a target audience, possessing a one of a kind selling point, selecting the goals, creating a message, choosing the correct channels to send this message, budgeting, choosing a combination of instruments that are deemed as appropriate to achieve the goal, and assessing the results (Blythe, 2014)

The first step in creating a marketing communication strategy is determining the target audience. An organization must identify its target audience and understand it. The market must be analyzed and understood in order to gain an insight of why consumers have chosen to purchase a specific good (Garg, 2014). For this to occur, the purchasing patterns of a market must be analyzed. Analyzing the market can also provide information when it comes to the demographics of the consumers as well as provide observations as to the reasoning behind the purchasing (Blythe, 2014). After the data from this has been recorded and assessed, the potential consumers can be identified. This is important as an organization must know who they should market their goods to.

The following step is to develop a one of a kind selling point. This unique point is what differentiates an organization's good from the competitor's goods (Garg, 2014). This step can be considered crucial as this one of a kind selling point, if communicated properly, increases the chances of an organization's sales of the product (Garg, 2014). Moreover, this selling point is important and requires to compel and encourage the targeted audience enough that they will move into action.

The next step is where the organization selects what are the intended goals for this strategy. Is the goal of this strategy to change the attitude of the consumers? Is it to change the perception the consumers have on the organization? Or is it to promote a product and generate awareness in doing so? (Garg, 2014). An organization can undergo three different processes when selecting their goals. The first method is the Learn-Feel-Do process, this should be done when the level of involvement between the consumer and the organization can be considered as high and the consumer does perceive the difference in the organization's products and the competitor's

(Ragani 2018). The second method is the Do-Feel-Learn, this is suggested to be done when the potential consumers are perceived to be highly involved but unlike the first method, are unable to perceive the differences between the products (Ragani, 2018). The last method is the Learn-Do-Feel, this is recommended when the potential consumers are not involved at the same level as the last two methods and similar to the previous method, do not perceive the difference between the products (Ragani, 2018). Determining what method will be used to approach the consumers once again depends on the goal the organization has settled on.

Following this, is the creation of the message the organization wishes to illustrate to the consumers. The priority of the organization in this step is to convey the correct message, given that this message will affect how the consumers perceive them. If done correctly the consumers will perceive them in the way they wish to be perceived (Blythe, 2014). Additionally, it is also important to note that the organization must also keep in mind that this message has to be communicated frequently so that their targeted audience becomes aware of what they say (Garg, 2014).

The next step is the choosing of the channels that will send the aforementioned message. In this step, the organization has to choose what channel communicates their message most effectively (Blythe, 2014). For this step, an organization must choose between a personal channel of communication or a non-personal channel of communication (Blythe, 2014). In the personal channel, the organization communicates to the consumer directly. There are also a number of ways to achieve this such as face to face meetings, person to audience in a presentation, over the phone, or over email (Blythe, 2014). A personal channel of communication can be considered effective because of their specific presentations to an individual consumer. As well as the feedback that can be received by using this channel (Blythe, 2014). A non-personal channel of communication differs from the previous channel as these are measures of getting the most exposure. This is done via general media, creation of atmospheres where a consumer is reinforced to learn about the product, or events (Blythe, 2014). This is an important step as an organization must choose whether it wants to have mass exposure or build a relationship with consumers via informing them personally.

The following step is budgeting. This is a crucial step where the organization has to calculate and decide how much it is prepared to spend on the promotion of a product (Blythe, 2014). The expenses of its promotion vary due to the industry an organization is situated in. Moreover, there are different ways of budgeting. The first one being the affordable method, where an organization allocates a specific amount into the budgeting of the promotion as it is what it believes to be affordable (Ragani, 2019). The second one being the percentage of sales method, where an organization arranges the budget in accordance to the sales price of the product or the product's percentage of sales (Ragani, 2019). The third method is the competitive parity method, where an organization calculates the budget of promotion in relation to its competition achieving a share of voice parity (Ragani, 2019). And the last method of budgeting is the objective and task method, where the organization arranges the budget by determining what its goals and objectives are. In other words, the organization decides what tasks have to be accomplished to achieve their objective and estimates how much the performing of this task would cost (Ragani, 2019).

The next step revolves around the previously mentioned marketing communications mix. This is because the organization has to select how the budget from the previous step will be distributed or allocated and with what combination of instruments (Blythe, 2014). This combination of selected tools determines how the organization promotes its goods (Nkondo, 2015).

The last step in the creation of the marketing communication strategy is the aftermath of the strategy. Meaning that the impact of this strategy must be evaluated in accordance to the organization reaching its goal developed in step number three (Blythe, 2014). A method in which this can be done is by approaching consumers and asking them or surveying them to see if the message or product is recognizable to them. Also what they feel from the message, what they remember from it, and how they react to it (Blythe, 2014). Another approach is seeing the records of its sales, and the records of its reviews (Blythe, 2014).

Now that all of the steps in creating a marketing communication strategy have been outlined. It has been outlined in the literature that there are key factors or key steps in creating this kind of strategy. The following subsection will explain which steps are more crucial than the others.

### **3.3.2: Key Factors of Implementation:**

This subsection pertains to the key factors of implementing a marketing communication strategy. In the previous subsection, after a step was said, it was also mentioned why it was important to have the said step in the creation process. However, there are steps that stand out more than others. This subsection lists these steps and explains why they are more significant than the others in more depth than the previous subsection.

Firstly, determining the target audience. The reason why this is considered a key factor is because in order to establish a marketing communication strategy, an organization must know who they're aiming at. Making the marketing communication strategy more effective and using their resources more efficiently as well as preventing the waste of the budget. Moreover, by aiming at specific consumers, the chances of influencing a purchasing decision in favor of the organization's products increases rather than aiming at the general public. (Blythe, 2014)

Secondly, is differentiating the organization and its product from its competitors (it's one of a kind selling point). Differentiating one's organization and its products from the competition may add value in the consumer's perception of the good. An example that can be applied for the plastic free produced biodynamic banana is that it is a more sustainable product that does less harm to the environment but also is a higher quality product compared to the competition. This added value of the one of a kind selling point can also make the organization more recognizable or more memorable to consumers which can eventually influence the consumer in a later purchase (Blythe, 2014).

And thirdly, would be the assessment of the results. This can also be considered as a key step as this measures the impact of the strategy itself. In this step, the organization will have enough information to decide if the implemented strategy was a success. Once again, this is defined by the goals they were striving to achieve like change in consumer perception, increase in sales, etc.

If this is not the case, and the strategy is deemed unsuccessful, the firm has the chance of readjusting their strategy for the future. Therefore, not all is wasted.

Thusly, having stated all of the steps needed to create a marketing communication strategy, and the key elements of a strategy. A conceptual framework can now be made in the next section.

### **3.4: The Conceptual Framework:**



Figure 8: The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in the figure above is the process of combining the marketing communication mix and marketing communication strategy. The figure illustrates that the conceptual framework is divided into six distinct phases. Identification of the Parameters, Target and Objectives, Design of Approach, Evaluation of Results, and Readjustment.

The first phase of the conceptual framework relates to the steps in creating and implementing a marketing communication strategy. As stated in the previous section, for an organization to promote their product effectively, a target audience must be identified to communicate. Having this parameter of a targeted audience established increases the chances of having an influence over consumers' purchases. Another parameter that must be established in this phase is the process of creating the message the organization wants to transmit to the targeted audience in order to have their product perceived how the organization wants the product to be perceived. This includes the one of a kind selling point that differentiates their organization's product from the competitor's. Additionally, the channel selection is another parameter that is included in this phase. Meaning that the organization must also decide in what manner they want to transmit their message and ensure that the targeted audience receives it appropriately. By appropriately, meaning that the message transmitted will be done through personal channels to build relationships with individual consumers. Or non-personal to reach mass exposure.

The second phase of the conceptual framework involves the target or goals and the objectives the organization wants to achieve with their marketing communication strategy. This phase also involves the budgeting aspect of the marketing communication strategy creation. By determining the goals, the organization wants to achieve, a budget method can be devised. If the goal is to create long lasting relationships with the consumers, the budget will have to be bigger than if the organization only wants exposure. This is due to the reason that personal selling may be used to achieve this goal compared to the lower costs of advertising to gain mass exposure. This being stated, this can affect the decisions made in the first phase as they may not necessarily align. Which is why the next phase of the framework is called Review. Where the organization reviews if the parameters decided on in the first phase and the decisions made in the second phase are aligned. If not, readjustments can be made to ensure that the parameters and goals, as well as the budget are aligned.

This leads to phase four, the design of approach. This is the phase of the framework that applies the instruments of the marketing communication mix that can be used to transmit a message to the aimed audience. The tools of the marketing communication mix being: direct marketing, advertising, sales promotions, personal selling, and public relations. Moreover, in this phase the organization must decide what combination of the aforementioned tools would be most effective to transmit their message. Additionally, when making this decision, there are factors that have to be considered when designing the approach like: what financial resources are available, the size of the organization, the target the strategy aims to achieve, and how the impact can be measured, understood, and evaluated.

Guiding the organization towards phase five of the conceptual framework: evaluation of results. This is where the recorded feedback from the marketing communication strategy is integral. Considering the designed approach undertaken, the channel of communication selected, and the goals, an organization may have the chance to evaluate and assess the impact of promoting the product. Yet, it is important to note that some objectives are easier to measure than others. An example of this would be: assessing the impact of the implemented marketing communication strategy with the objective of increasing sales is easier to assess than assessing the creation of

awareness. After the feedback has been assessed, the organization will be able to decide if the strategy implemented has to be readjusted or not.

Heading the conceptual framework to its final phase: readjustment. This phase is not always necessary and in fact is optional for an organization however must be stated. If an organization evaluates the feedback received and realizes that there are mostly negative reviews, the organization must readjust the strategy implemented. This is done via changing the selected channels, or the designed approach, or adopting new objectives. If this is the case, then a readjustment in the strategy is deemed necessary. However, if the feedback received was mostly positive, the firm is able to choose if they want to readjust and adapt a new strategy aligned with the minor negative reviews or if they should allocate their promotion budget into another department.

In summary, the conceptual framework proposed in this paper is straightforward. The parameters in the first phase such as identification of the targeted audience, creating the message that the organization wants to be transmitted, and the channels that will be used to transmit the message. Then this is followed up by the second phase, which determines the goals that they want to achieve as well as determining the budget needed to achieve the said goals. The third phase is then done by reviewing the first two phases to ensure that all aspects and decisions taken in the first two phases are aligned. Afterwards phase, where the approach of transmitting this message is designed using a combination of the instruments mentioned in the marketing communications mix (advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, direct marketing, and public relations). Afterwards the fifth phase, where the organization reviews the recorded feedback and assesses whether or not a readjustment is necessary. If it is considered unsuccessful, there may be aspects of the strategy that may need to be changed. If it is seen as successful, it can remain the same, improve on the strategy, or allocate a portion of the budget to another department of the organization.

Now that the theory has been explained, the terms have been defined, and the research has been clarified on how and why it was conducted in the manner in which it was conducted, an analysis

can be done with the data collected from the interviews and see if this conceptual framework could work in the real world.

#### **4: Analysis:**

In this section, the aforementioned theories must be applied to the information gathered from the interviews. To fully get a grasp of the plastic free produced biodynamic product from the perspective of the interviewees, the international marketing mix must be analyzed first. Once this is done, the framework will be used and analyzed to see what the most appropriate method is to promote the plastic free produced biodynamic banana.

#### **4.1: Analysis of the International Marketing Mix:**

Concerning the International Marketing Mix, all of the instruments were subjects of discussion throughout the course of conducting the interviews. All of the interviewees had an interpretation regarding the plastic free produced biodynamic bananas and where it stands in the previously mentioned tools.

When discussing this product with the interviewees, there was a concurrence that this assortment of banana is a premium product. When asking Gerald he stated: *“I think that it is fair to say that this banana is a premium of a premium product. As actually biodynamic bananas are a premium but this pushes the boundaries”*. (Muller, 2020). Moreover, when asking Christoph about this product and its marketing potential, he says: *“Yes of course! One of the main goals of Demeter is to keep improving our quality and as well improving how the banana is produced. To improve sustainability.”* (Christoph, 2020). The reason why this product is being described in such a manner by all of the interviewees is because it can be assumed that they are aware of the process behind the production of this plastic free produced product. The interviewees have knowledge that there are no pesticides or fungicides (organic or conventional) that have been applied to the growth of this fruit. As well as knowing how much it costs to maintain this production. Not only by shifting from plastic to biodegradable paper but also from the costs of upkeeping the biodiversity factor too. These costs lead to the following point of the international marketing mix: Price.



Throughout the interviews, there were questions asked concerning the price of the plastic free produced product. Most of these questions revolved around how the consumers seem to perceive this rise in pricing when comparing this plastic free produced assortment to the other varieties of banana. According to Markus, “...*the price reflects what goes into the production. All of these changes, reducing pollution... But the buyers don’t see it. All they think about is “how much is it going to cost me”?* And when they see this being more expensive than the other Demeter banana they go for the other one.” (Hyndes, 2020). Furthermore, when asking Gerald Muller about the price aspect of the plastic free produced biodynamic banana, he stated: “*This higher price on this banana actually helps to keep the environment because it helps to keep the farmers growing in this same way. But if they do not understand it they actually would never buy it.*” (Gerald, 2020). From the information gathered from the interviews, the views of the different interviewees are similar. They overlap in the area of the consumers purchasing a more expensive product without knowing the details behind it. If the consumer is willing to pay a higher price for a product that is similar to one they already know, the consumer must know why it is more costly and add value to the consumer. However from the interviews, it can be understood that the consumers are not aware of this production process and must be informed.

When asked about the next element of the mix which is Place, there were certain overlaps in the interviewees responses as to where this product should be sold and where it should be promoted. As biodynamic fruit is already in general retail chains such as Edeka and Metro in Germany, the place for selling these products has already been set. That being said, it is evident from the interview with Christoph that this has not gone as Demeter intended. Christoph stated: “*Demeter want to make this (plastic free production) a standard for their certificate but if there are no positive results in selling when you compare to the normal biodynamic, the producers will not agree to have this as a standard*” (Christoph, 2020). What can be taken from this is that plastic free produced bananas are already in the general stores of Germany. However, they have been underwhelming to the expectations that the Demeter organization had on a sales level. This could be deduced due to a lack in the promotion of the product keeping the consumer unaware of the process behind the production. Thus, only seeing it as another biodynamic banana with a higher price. This point leads to the final point of the mix: Promotion.

When discussing promotion in the interviews, there were different ideas suggested and there were also overlaps in what was said. During the interviews, when asked about making the plastic free production aspect an emphasis in the promotion, the interviewees agreed. Christoph said: *“Yes. So, this plastic free banana production actually could be a vehicle to attract interest. So... I have already spoken to different shops, specialized shops in Germany who are very interested...-”* (Christoph, 2020). Meaning that Christoph is also planning to expand the plastic free biodynamic product from the general stores and include them in specialized stores too. With the plastic free production as the emphasis in promotion encouraging the consumers of these stores to purchase this product. Markus stated a similar opinion when he said: *“I would hope so. Otherwise what are we doing? All the extra work being done on the Compras farms goes to waste. If people think there is no difference. Why is it more expensive?”* (Markus, 2020). From this, Markus is adding to his point mentioned in one of the previous elements of the international marketing mix. Without promoting what makes the plastic free produced biodynamic banana different from the regular biodynamic banana, there is no value being added for the consumer. Therefore making them less willing to pay a higher price. Gerald went on to say: *“Absolutely. This is actually a big concern especially to the younger people. Because now actually they can see if a product is good or not for the environment. So this should actually be a big focus for Demeter in the promotion”* (Gerald, 2020). Gerald continued in accordance with Markus and Christoph, stating that it is necessary to have an emphasis on this plastic free aspect and went further by saying *“...younger people”* (Gerald, 2020) which will be analyzed in the following section of the paper.

Furthermore when discussing this promotion aspect with Christoph, he mentioned *“...the possibility to market this separately from the other biodynamic bananas and make a kind-of campaign out of it...”* (Christoph, 2020). Additionally when asked what this marketing campaign would include he stated: *“...we would like to show how much plastic is used and wasted for the production of banana like Louis showed in his presentation. Showing how much pollution this one kind of production makes and that Demeter is working their part to reduce this. Maybe also show before and after pictures of this production process. I think this would attract people.”* (Christoph, 2020). He continued this point with the following statement: *“...with the plastic free*

*you can show this aspect and you attract and then you continue to show the rest of the concept. Kind-of a “but wait there is more”. Not only the one aspect”* (Christoph, 2020). From the aforementioned statements, it is apparent that Demeter wants to use the plastic free production as a point of emphasis. Informing potential biodynamic fruit consumers as well as existing biodynamic fruit consumers by adding value to the product in the perception of the consumer.

When discussing this point of promotion with Markus, it was in his opinion that the Demeter organization should *“... go directly to your generation. Go to the universities, go to the schools. Show them and tell them about demeter. Show them your biodynamic bananas and show them this new way of production”* (Markus, 2020). A similar point was made by Gerald when conversing about how in his opinion, *“You can promote in the stores and actually buyers may be interested yes. But you also have to target the younger people. They are the ones who actually will make a difference....If you can get the younger people to buy you can actually get more out of it because they have a lot more time left.”* (Gerald, 2020). Gathering this information from the interviews, both Markus and Gerald believe that the younger generation that are in the schools and in university should be the audience that is targeted by Demeter. Moreover, by the point made of having more time left, both Markus and Gerald believe that by targeting a younger audience Demeter will be able to achieve more out of their marketing communication strategy. This is because by targeting a younger audience, Demeter will be able to create longer lasting relationships with their younger audience as well as have a stronger impact on the production aspect of the product. In other words, promoting to the younger generation with this plastic free production may encourage them to buy more sustainable products which may influence other farmers and growers to follow in the steps of biodynamic and possibly plastic free production.

Another point that is worth mentioning in the discussion of promotion. Demeter had promoted their regular biodynamic bananas previously. Throughout the interviewing process, Christoph, who worked on this project, was asked what methods they used to promote their product. As well as, if they would use similar ones again but with a focus on plastic free production factor. To this he said, *“When we promoted the Demeter banana before, we made conferences in Germany of biodynamic products, not only banana. We talked to the buyers about the higher quality of the*

*products and how it was made with the concept of Demeter.*” (Christoph, 2020). When following up on his response regarding if the same method would be used for this plastic free variety, Christoph responded: *“Yes and we would add more. We want to go on Facebook and other websites to promote this to get more people to be aware of this...”* (Christoph, 2020). Meaning that Demeter are organizing a similar strategy as before and in fact are wanting to improve on the previously used strategy. Which leads to a brief mentioning of what information was obtained to promote this product which will be written more in depth in the analysis of the conceptual framework.

When asked about how Demeter had planned to promote this plastic free produced assortment of biodynamic bananas, Christoph said several ideas that Demeter had planned. Christoph says: *“Our main plan is still to organize Demeter biodynamic fairs focusing on the product quality and the process of production. Where we invite the public and present what biodynamic production is. This way, we can go directly to the consumer and encourage them to buy biodynamic products...”* (Christoph, 2020). Meaning that Demeter is arranging events and conferences to promote this plastic free produced product. Additionally, he went on to explain the way that Demeter was planning on advertising their biodynamic products which would include the new posters they demonstrated in the conference in February: *“The main goal of these posters is to show the public that buying biodynamic products supports the local farmers. We are also making different posters per region, using the biggest farms and its workers to promote to the locals what their biggest production is and who they are helping.”* (Christoph, 2020). Moreover, when discussing this idea of the posters, it was asked where they would be placed as well if the plastic free produce product would be included in this method, to which he responded: *“...we can also show the posters that Demeter worked on as part of the online marketing. But with the plastic free aspect, we are only planning to sell this in the big super markets that have them in Germany”.* (Christoph, 2020). Meaning that the posters which can be deduced that will be used for online advertising, will not currently include the plastic free produced product yet is worth mentioning as they could be included in the advertising for Demeter in the future.

To summarize this, applying the theory of the International Marketing Mix to the information gathered from the interviews, one can achieve a deeper understanding of the plastic free

produced biodynamic product. This variety of biodynamic banana is explained as a premium because of the process of production behind the product. Using biodegradable paper instead of plastic, making it a more sustainable method of agriculture. As well as improving the quality of the product, maintaining the fertility of the soil, and retaining a healthy plant. This improvement in sustainability does affect the price by increasing it as the method of production is more expensive than its regular biodynamic counterpart and much more expensive than its regular organic and conventional assortments. Highlighting the importance of promoting the method of production to the unaware consumers. To add on, while still on this theory, the places that are currently selling this product are the general supermarkets in Germany such as Edeka and Metro. However it's also important to note that there are more places where this product could be displayed such as schools and universities as stated in the interviews. Therefore communicating and promoting this product to a young audience. Additionally when discussing the promotion of this product. Several ideas were raised such as holding Demeter conferences where the organization can communicate directly to the consumer without any intermediaries. Plus advertising on social media was also mentioned with the creation of posters. Although these posters do not currently include the plastic free produced biodynamic banana, it is important to mention them as they may include this product in their posters in the future. That being said, the aforementioned marketing plans are going to be analyzed with the conceptual framework applied in the next section.

#### **4.2: Analysis of the Conceptual Framework:**

When applying the conceptual framework to the information gathered, one must begin with the first phase that consists of identifying the targets, creating a message, and selecting the channel to transmit this message. When discussing these points in the interviews, ideas were raised about the aimed audience. Christoph mentioned “...to attract the organic public...” (Christoph, 2020). Having mentioned this in the interview, it can be deduced that Demeter have identified their aimed audience being the organic community in Germany. This seems rational as aiming this communication to the public may be costly and optimistic. Not everyone from the public has the same expenditure elasticity as to buy this plastic free produced product or is interested. The

public may want to spend what this product costs on other goods or may be content with the conventional assortment. Therefore aiming at the community who is interested in the organic assortment of products may have more of a positive impact in persuading them to purchase the plastic free produced product. Additionally, when discussing the audience that Demeter should target with their marketing campaign, Markus and Gerald were in agreement concerning the audience. Markus stated: *"I" say go directly to your generation. Go to the universities, go to the schools. Show them and tell them about demeter. Show them your biodynamic bananas and show them this new way of production"*. (Markus, 2020). From Markus' perspective, Demeter should be aiming at a younger generation than his own. In the interview he mentions the generation of the interviewer. Although not specific, when asking Gerald for his specific perspective regarding Markus' comment he says: *"...between 25 - 45 actually would be the age..."*(Gerald, 2020). Thusly, with this response, one can assume that both Markus and Gerald are speaking of the same age range. Furthermore, when following up on why they think that the younger generation or that this range in age should be the group, they both have different responses but are along the same lines. Markus thinks that they should be targeted because of the longer lasting positive impact this would have on the environment. This is evident when he says: *"... in a few years I will not be here anymore but if we can convince the next generation of what we are doing. Of what we believe is important, they will get a better product but also get a better environment"* (Markus, 2020). Meanwhile Gerald's response can be understood from a marketing perspective. When asked about promoting to younger buyers with an emphasis on plastic free production he states: *"This is actually a big concern especially to the younger people. Because now actually they can see if a product is good or not for the environment"* (Gerald, 2020). From this, one can deduce that marketing to the age group previously mentioned would be more effective from his perspective as this age group consciously selects products depending on how they are made. Meaning that from the interviews, the identified audience would be the consumers interested in organic products (or in other words the roganic community) from the age of 25 to 45. This is because the communication of Demeter to this group of consumers would have the most effect. As from the perspectives of the interviewees, they are conscious of how products are made and would have a longer lasting impact on the environment.

After this parameter would be the creation of the message. Meaning what message does Demeter want to communicate to the settled aimed audience. This concerns how Demeter wants to be perceived by the audience about their new product and what this new product says about them as an organization. When conversing about the promotion of this new product to the interviewees, some points were brought up about what would attract the targeted audience. Christoph mentioned: “...we would like to show how much plastic is used and wasted for the production of banana like Louis showed in his presentation. Showing how much pollution this one kind of production makes and that Demeter is working their part to reduce this” (Christoph, 2020). He continued his point by saying: “The door opener is plastic free but biodynamics is more holistic concept. But with the plastic free you can show this aspect and you attract and then you continue to show the rest of the concept. Kind-of a “but wait there is more”.” (Christoph, 2020). From Christoph’s response it can be inferred that Demeter want to promote themselves as an organization that shows interest in the environment and takes action. Moreover, that Demeter is working in sustainable methods of agriculture that do less harm to the environment so that the farming lands can be used for a longer period of time. With this sustainability factor, Demeter intends to attract the consumers and then persuade them to purchase their product while at the same.

Following the creation of the message is the parameter of the selection of channels in which the message will be transmitted. When gathering information on how Demeter wants to transmit their message and promote this product, Christoph voiced a number of ideas that Demeter had. These ideas of the selected channels include personal channels such as: fairs, events, and presentations. Which can be understood from the following response of Christoph when asked about how Demeter would promote this product: “Our main plan is still to organize Demeter biodynamic fairs focusing on the product quality and the process of production. Where we invite the public and present what biodynamic production is” (Christoph, 2020). This can also be seen as the channel selected from the perspectives of Markus and Gerald. As previously written, both of them believe in presenting and demonstrating the product at schools and universities, thus informing the younger generation is the method that Demeter should use to promote this product and transmit their message. Christoph also voiced Demeter’s ideas from non personal channels such as advertising. Which can be understood when Christoph discusses the topic of the posters

that Demeter created recently: “*The main goal of these posters is to show the public that buying biodynamic products supports the local farmers*” (Christoph, 2020). When asked about these posters and where they were going to be displayed, to which he responded “*...we can also show the posters that Demeter worked on as part of the online marketing.*” (Christoph, 2020). With these responses it can be inferred that Demeter is going to use online advertising to also gain mass exposure for their products. Meaning that Demeter is planning to promote this product and communicate their message via both channels: Personal with fairs, presentation, and events. And nonpersonal with online advertising.

Concluding the identification of parameters phase of the conceptual framework, leads to the second phase: the targets and objectives. From the information collected, it can be understood that the goal that Demeter currently has with this product is to generate awareness for it. Informing the consumer about how it is produced without the use of plastic and with the use of biodegradable paper. This can be perceived from the responses given from the interviews: “*One of the main goals of Demeter is to keep improving our quality and as well improving how the banana is produced. To improve sustainability.*” (Christoph, 2020). Meaning that Demeter are promoting not only the product with its sustainability but also that Demeter is attempting to sell products that are less harmful for the environment. Promoting sustainability and having them being perceived as an innovator in agriculture. Moreover, when discussing this point with Markus about the point of promotion of this product he said: “*...there is no marketing from Demeter being done for it at the moment*” (Markus, 2020). Meaning that there has not been an attempt done in informing the consumers about the production of this product. Markus then added to his point of Demeter not promoting the plastic free product by stating: “*... what are we doing? All the extra work being done on the Compras farms goes to waste. If people think there is no difference. Why is it more expensive?*” (Markus, 2020). Again, strengthening the point that the consumer needs to be informed about this product and its production. Saying that in the end if the consumer is not aware of why this biodynamic product is more expensive than another biodynamic product, the consumer would not pay extra for this variety. This was also stated by Gerald: “*This higher price on this banana actually helps to keep the environment because it helps to keep the farmers growing in this same way. But if they do not understand it they actually would never buy it*” (Gerald, 2020). Meaning that all three interviewees agree that creating



awareness for this product should be a goal. Another goal that was hinted at during the interview with Christoph was to increase the sales of the product. This can be assumed when Christoph says: “...*but the plastic free is taking more time than we had hoped*” (Christoph, 2020). This response was then followed up and provided an answer that illustrated a bigger picture: “...*if there are no positive results in selling when you compare to the normal biodynamic, the producers will not agree to have this as a standard*” (Christoph, 2020). Although at this point in the interview Christoph was talking about making plastic free production a standard in the Demeter certificate, he mentioned the results of the plastic free produced banana being sold and not doing as well as the regular produced biodynamic banana. Unfortunately, this was not followed up and when making an inquiry about the statistics of this from Demeter, the information was not provided. Meaning from the data collected, one can derive the targets that Demeter wants to achieve: create awareness for this new product and create a good perception of their organization in the process. As well as, increase the sales in comparison to the regular biodynamic bananas.

The next step of this phase is to select the budgeting method used to reach these goals. When discussing what Demeter had done previously to promote their regular biodynamic products using similar channels as mentioned above, Christoph stated: “...*we plan to make it on a much bigger scale because people in Germany know more now about Demeter. But we are unsure because more booths means more money...*” (Christoph, 2020). From this, it can be understood that the Demeter organization plans ahead on how many stands they are going to use to promote this product to communicate directly to the consumer. Thus, by planning ahead and seeing how much it will cost, it can be assumed that Demeter are using the task and objective method of budgeting.

Now that the first two phases have been completed, phase three can begin. Simply reviewing what has been stated previously, one can see if the parameters, goals, and budgeting align with one another. Beginning the review with the first phase, it was concluded that the audience that would be targeted is the organic community or in other words, the consumers that purchase organic products of the age range of 25-45. It was mentioned previously that this seemed rational as this audience would be the most effective to communicate Demeter’s message to. Consumers

that are already interested in organic products may be intrigued into a more sustainable method of production. Plus the reasoning behind the age also seemed rational. The consumers of this age range are more likely to be conscious on how a product is made from the interviewees perspective. Moreover, having the longevity in creating long lasting relationships with these consumers. Moving to the next parameter of phase one, message creation. If Demeter decides to promote the message that this new product is more sustainable and less harmful to the environment via the reduction of plastic pollution produced from biodynamic banana farming, it would attract the aforementioned audience. As well as promote their organization in a positive light to this audience, granting a positive perception to the audience. Moving onto the last parameter of the first phase, the selection of channels. Both channels, personal and nonpersonal are discussed. Personal channels are being used through presentations, events, and fairs to communicate directly to the consumer. Allowing Demeter to directly persuade the audience that is thought of being most effective to communicate to. Nonpersonal would include online advertising with them promoting biodynamic products with their posters. Once again, it must be stated that this is not currently in the plan however it must not be ruled out as it may be a part of Demeter's advertising in the future. The information collected from the first phase, seems to align with the data collected for the second phase. Concerning the target of creating awareness on this plastic free produced biodynamic product and increasing sales, using the personal channels to communicate personally to the intended audience. With this method, the organization will be able to answer any doubts or inquiries that this audience might have. Plus collecting feedback from the consumers via this method is also important. Moreover, being able to communicate the message of sustainability, and the reduction of harm to the environment directly from the organization, can create a positive perception of Demeter. Additionally, persuading the consumer to purchase the product in the moment, being in relation to their second target of increasing sales in comparison to the regular biodynamic banana assortment. Furthermore, this also aligns with the budgeting method mentioned in the interviews to an extent. Although it was not asked specifically, it was mentioned that "*...more booths means more money...*" (Christoph, 2020). Which implies that Demeter have been estimating costs for the booths and events stated above. Additionally, when reviewing the non personal channels of communication, online advertising seems to grant exposure for Demeter and this new product.

Which could create awareness for the product and Demeter and may intrigue the viewers of the advertisement to purchase the product.

Having reviewed the parameters, targets, and budget in phase three and ensuring their alignment. Phase four can commence. As stated previously, in accordance with the information gathered, Demeter are planning to transmit their message using both personal and non personal channels. Additionally, as seen in the previous phase, both of these channels align with their targets, budgets, and their parameters. This phase is about the possible combinations of marketing communication instruments that Demeter may use as their part of their marketing communication strategy to reach their target audience. However before listing the number of combinations and why they could be used, one must remember that realistically not all combinations will be used. This section of the analysis is to understand and justify why certain combinations could be used. These possible combinations include but are not limited to: Personal selling with sales promotions, personal selling with public relations, personal selling with direct marketing with direct marketing with sales promotions, and advertising with sales promotions.

- Personal selling and sales promotions:

This approach can be considered as a personal channel of communication as personal selling can occur in a fair, event, or conference where the salesman (representing the organization) is able to speak directly to the consumer face to face. This presentation can be tailor made to what the consumer seems most intrigued in. This could be for example the sustainability factor of the product, or the quality of the product. The intention being that the organization persuades the consumer to purchase the product after the presentation is done. Which is why personal selling on this occasion is combined with sales promotion. When persuading the target to make a purchase of the plastic free produced biodynamic product, an offer can be added as an incentive for the target to go through with the purchase. An example of this could be: purchasing this assortment of biodynamic bananas also gives you free samples of other biodynamic products. At the same time, this method has the chance of creating a relationship with the consumer and hopefully ensuring that this consumer is a returning consumer. This combination should be considered as the feedback is immediate due to the face to face aspect of the personal selling

.Additionally, if the product is purchased along with the free sample, the consumer may have created a relationship with the organization.

- Personal Selling and Public Relations

This second combination can also be regarded as a personal channel of communication as personal selling is once again used. Thus, an environment where a face to face encounter can happen is needed (e.g.: fair, conference, event, presentation). However what differs this combination from the previous is the public relations instrument. Meaning that during the presentation the organization's representative is holding with a target is not only individualized for said target in regard to the product, but also in regards to the Demeter organization as a whole. This personal presentation can promote the product and the organization, relating sustainability to the beliefs and goals of Demeter leaving a positive perception of the organization to the target. Meaning that the target can be persuaded to purchase not only the specific product being presented, but other Demeter products as well. Once again, this can create a relationship with the consumer and the organization, as well as possibly creating a brand ambassador for Demeter.

- Personal Selling and Direct Marketing

This combination of instruments is also a combination of both channels of communication: personal and non-personal. The way that this combination would work is that after the individualized presentation to the target was over, the organization could ask the consumer for their contact details such as their email or phone number or ask them to like their Facebook page. With this contact information, if accepted, the organization will be able to have a direct line of communication with the consumer concerning any updates of the organization and their products. Therefore, on top of building a relationship with the consumer, the organization is always keeping the consumer informed and aware of future products that Demeter may certify and sell.

- Direct Marketing and Sales Promotion

This combination of tools is a combination of two non personal channels of communication. Unlike the previous combinations there is no real environment needed to transmit the desired

message to the target as there is no face to face encounter. The element of direct marketing can come in the form of an email, telemarketing, or subscribing to the organization's social media platform such as Facebook. The information of the products including the plastic free produced biodynamic banana can be sent to the targets via these methods. Additionally, including sales promotion such as discount coupons when purchasing the organization's products. Although not personal, it can also be effective as feedback can also be received via this method of communication between the organization and the potential consumer. Once again, with this method of communication, the consumer can be updated to new products being offered by the organization and information about the organization itself. Which can influence the perception that the consumers have on the organization and their products.

#### - Advertising and Sales Promotions

This combination of instruments is also a combination of two non personal channels. Online advertising was discussed by Christoph in his interview. Promoting Demeter, their products, and how they support local farmers and growers. Using social media allows Demeter to advertise themselves and their products at a cheaper price than traditional media (Singh, 2012). Meaning a greater amount of exposure can be accessed and not only being limited to the organic community of the age range from 25-45. Additionally, with the added incentive of sales promotions (e.g.: discounts, free samples, etc.), a consumer outside the targeted audience may become attracted to the product and the organization because of the offers.

#### - Direct Marketing and Advertising

This combination of instruments is once again a combination of two non personal channels of communication. Using this combination, Demeter will advertise the product along with the organization itself, promoting the support of local producers and the maintenance for the environment. If the viewers of these advertisements are interested and click on the advertisement, it can lead them to the organization's social media page or their own website. Supplementing additional information to the consumer about the organization and their products. Therefore informing the consumer about their products which generates awareness, and could persuade the viewer to purchase the promoted products. This includes the plastic free produced biodynamic banana. Additionally, if further interest, the consumer can leave their contact

information such as email, phone number, or their facebook account, to receive updates about the product being offered and the organization on the consumer's newsfeed.

After the design of approach phase, the assessment phase follows. This phase as stated before, involves evaluating the feedback received from the aforementioned approaches in phase four. With the mentioned combinations there is the possibility of receiving feedback in one manner or another. When the approach involves personal selling and public relations, as it is a face to face meeting between the organization and the consumer, it is possible to receive immediate feedback from the consumer. This feedback can be recorded by the consumers responding a few questions after the individual presentation has been done. As well as seeing if the consumer who the organization presented to, bought the product afterwards. When it refers to direct marketing, although it is not a face to face meeting between the parties, feedback from the consumer is still possible if surveys are sent out or are posted on their social media page. In regards to advertising, the organization can use analytic software to assess how many viewers entered their website because of the advertisements they have posted online. Although limited as the organization can not see if the viewer followed through with the purchase of the product unless it was bought through the website. Can still be evaluated as feedback. Finally concerning sales promotion, the organization can see if sales increased or decreased over the period of time the sales promotion was available. Once again, enabling the organization to assess this method of approach in that aspect.

Lastly, phase six: readjustment. After assessing the feedback received from the different methods. The organization can make an informed decision regarding whether or not the marketing communication strategy implemented was successful. If deemed successful by reaching the objectives agreed on in the second phase of the conceptual framework, the organization can decide if it wants to continue with this approach or if it wants to invest in other departments. If deemed unsuccessful and the objectives were not reached, then the organization can design another approach based on the feedback received. Ensuring that the consumer's opinion is heard, and adapting the marketing communication strategy to their opinion. Which can also influence a positive perception to the consumers regarding Demeter.

In the end, the conceptual framework can be used to implement a marketing communication strategy for Demeter. However in the following section there will be a critical discussion concerning the drawbacks and limitations of this framework and the investigation.

## **5: Discussion:**

In the following section of the paper, the drawbacks, and different aspects in which this research could have been conducted are mentioned and evaluated. This enables a critical view of the conceptualized framework used in this paper plus a perspective on how this research could be done differently.

### **5.1: Discussion of the Conceptual Framework**

This section concerns the drawbacks of the combinations of methods mentioned above, as well as the drawbacks from the conceptual framework. This is done to remain critical of the framework and the investigation conducted for this paper. To review, the conceptual framework consists of six different phases: the identification of the parameters, the setting of objectives and budgeting, the reviewal of the proposed parameters and objectives ensuring their alignment, the design of approach, the assessment of the results obtained, and finally the readjustment. When reviewing what has been written in the previous section, a number of several drawbacks were identified, and this section will clarify as to why they are drawbacks and why they should be taken into account.

Firstly, there are several combinations in the fourth phase that use the approach of personal selling and public relations. Throughout the investigation, there was literature suggesting that this approach was appropriate if the organization wanted to create relationships with the consumers (Todorova, 2015) as well as personally communicate to them, and convince them of the product and of the organization (Todorova, 2015). A common drawback that was identified found in common in the literature is the cost and time it takes for an organization to arrange such an environment to conduct such an approach; arranging fairs, conventions, and events in order to communicate directly to the consumer can take an extended period of time to set up, as well as

the cost of creating such environments. This was also mentioned by Christoph in his interview, when asked about the approach of holding these events he stated: “...*we plan to make it on a much bigger scale because people in Germany know more now about Demeter. But we are unsure because more booths mean more money so we might plan to use this money another way*” (Christoph, 2020). The specific amount of the cost of this this approach in setting up booths to present and communicate to the consumer was not directly questioned of Christoph so the amount eludes this discussion. However, from the information collected from the interview, it was deduced that Demeter hesitated at this idea due to the costs and seemed to be also exploring look into alternative methods of utilizing their budget. Additionally, unforeseen circumstances can occur when finally implementing this method, an example of this would be the recent pandemic being an unforeseen force quarantining consumers in their homes. Consequently, had this approach been selected, the time and resources used to organize such events may have been a waste as pandemic regulations in countries prohibit the lingering of customers in their stores due to the risk of spreading the virus.

Secondly, another drawback that was identified while reviewing the conceptual framework, as well as instruments that could have been used, was the noise of competition. Noise is a term used to describe “...*anything that distracts from your message*” (Ericksson, 2019). The conceptual framework and the information collected from the interviews do not include the aspect of noise and distractions preventing an effective communication with the targeted consumer. Noise can be involved in many of the instruments mentioned such as: personal selling, where other organizations may be attempting a similar approach with their products or advertising, where consumers can get distracted with other advertisements online from other organizations in the same field, or even a different field altogether. Additionally, including direct marketing where consumers may receive several telemarketing calls corresponding to promoting an organization’s product and may therefore ignore calls from unfamiliar numbers or sales promotions, an instrument that is also affected by noise because if a competitor has better offers than what Demeter is offering, even if the product is not as sustainable and is only organic, a targeted consumer may want to get more for the value of their money. In other words, the conceptual framework as well as the interviewees’ perspectives can be considered as rigid for not mentioning the competitors’ marketing attempts on the same targeted audience.



Thirdly, would be one of the phases in the framework itself, that being the assessment phase; which when evaluating the feedback received and understanding what it signifies, can illustrate that not all measurements of the data are as concrete as others. Moreover, to provide context on this drawback, the objectives reached from the information gathered is that Demeter wants to promote the plastic free produced biodynamic banana to generate awareness on the product. Therefore, along with this creation of awareness, targeted consumers can be persuaded and influenced into purchasing this product and increasing its sales; this is an extract of the interview with Christoph: “...if there are no positive results in selling when you compare to the normal biodynamic, the producers will not agree to have this as a standard” (Christoph, 2020) meaning that sales of this product must increase if Demeter wants to implement this plastic free production as a standard in their certificate thus differentiating their certificate and their organization from the competition such as Fairtrade or Rainforest Alliance. Subsequently, this raises a discussion on how an organization raises awareness on their product, one can raise awareness and record the feedback in personal communication channels such as personal selling and public relations however in nonpersonal communication channels such as sales promotions, and advertising, how does the organization measure the awareness generated? Surveys, social listening, search volume data, and web traffic can be taken into consideration but this may also be affected by other factors such as generic searches for products (e.g.: simply searching bananas) therefore this may not be as accurate as the feedback received from the personal communication channels. Moreover, even in the personal channels, there may be a response bias where the targeted consumers may not be giving natural responses to the questions when giving feedback as a result of the format that they are questioned in. An example being that a consumer may say what the salesmen wants to hear given the environment he or she is in such as an event or a conference and they are face to face

Fourthly, the open two-way dialogue between the targeted consumers and the organization in the use of certain instruments such as personal selling, public relations and direct marketing on social media platforms where the designed approaches enable the organization to receive feedback and record it immediately. However, there can be a drawback to this, as targeted consumers who are not persuaded by the organization’s communication or misunderstood the message transmitted, can spread negative information concerning the product and the

organization. In a face to face occasion such as in public relations and personal selling, these negative comments and negative feedback can influence other targeted consumers surrounding the presentation therefore discouraging the consumers from purchasing the organization's product or listening to the organization's presentation (Ingram, 2017). Moreover, this differs slightly with direct marketing in a social media platform, as the feedback may not be immediate however, the targeted consumer has the possibility of posting negative comments or negative information on the organization's Facebook page thereby increasing the potential of limited post views rendering negative effects.

Fifthly, the instrument of advertising must also be included in the discussion of the drawbacks. Although this can be considered an appropriate instrument to reach a great amount of exposure, it can be discarded by the viewers due to the reason that the targeted consumers are receiving ads constantly online, so much so that there are apps and programs that block online advertisements (Ingram, 2017) meaning that the marketing communication efforts using this tool can be ineffective and ultimately be considered as a waste of resources if not taking this into consideration. Therefore, this is a factor that Demeter must consider if they are planning to follow through with their online advertising campaign that Christoph mentioned in the interview: *"...we can also show the posters that Demeter worked on as part of the online marketing"*. (Christoph, 2020).

Finally, the last point of discussion pertains to the information collected via the literature review. The reasons why this is pointed out in this section is because as previously stated in the paper, there is a limited amount of literature available concerning the marketing of biodynamic products. Most of the literature found on biodynamic products are about its production and how it affects the soil. Therefore, literature covering organic fruits and its marketing had to be used for the investigation.

Note that the conceptual framework has been reviewed therefore it is important to mention how a change in the research approach of this investigation could have given different result.

## **5.2: Difference In Approach**

This subsection concerns itself with how the investigation for this paper could have been conducted differently, admitting that there are different ways to reach the same result or perhaps reach a different result. At the inception of this paper, it was stated that a subjective approach was taken due to the method of data collection being the interviews with different actors involved in this field. However, another approach that could have been taken would be the objective approach, as stated in a previous section of the paper: objectivism handles the manner of reality and social influences separately from one another (Saunders et. al, 2016).

With objectivism, quantitative data is commonly used as statistics can be considered independent from social influences; with this data, a positivistic epistemology could have been selected. The epistemology aligns with the objective approach and the quantitative data collection. This is because positivism handles the observation making process which can lead to the “*generalization of a concept*” (Saunders et. al, 2016). Thus, when collecting quantitative data, observations can be made based on this data and concepts can be formed, an example would be seeing the records of sales of organic fruits in the German market, observe when they peak, and review why hence leading to the research approach. An approach that could seem appropriate for this investigation that starts from this observation would be inductive. This is because, with an inductive research approach, the researchers begin the investigation from an observation; from this observation the researcher must identify an issue and develop a tentative hypothesis. Meaning that this hypothesis can keep changing to best adapt to the research collected and more knowledge is gained (Burney and Saleem, 2008).

Following this research approach, the investigation would have changed due to the differences in research design between the subjective approach selected in this paper, and the objective approach being discussed. With the subjective approach, the research design revolved around the interviews and how after every interview, more knowledge gained could be added to the questionnaire for the following interview. Meanwhile with an objective research approach, design would heavily revolve around literature and statistics collected. That being stated, by researching more literature, new ideas and concepts may arise aiding in the deepening of the investigation. An example of this would be: questioning the rise of organic fruit market sales in

Germany during a specific season of the year, following up the statistics with literature pertaining to that period which could lead to reveal a certain way that organic fruits were promoted during that period to increase sales. Therefore, using a different research approach can also lead to identifying the same issues however with a different perspective.

Subsequently, another point that must also be discussed in this section are the possible changes in legislation in the near future that will affect the organic market and may have a heavy influence on any future investigations.

### **5.3: Changes in the Near Future: Legislation**

This point bears mention is that in the winter of 2019, Denmark stated that all conventional fruit products using specific pesticides such as chlorpyrifos would be banned due to the physical and bodily damage upon consumption (Dahllof, 2019) and stores would only be allowed to sell organic fruit. (Dallof, 2019) This government law can heavily affect the conventional fruit market as this is a commonly used pesticide (Dallof, 2019) therefore the market will have to focus more keenly on organic products, and with a lack of conventional products, organic fruit may become the new standard.

If this regulation is also followed by different nations in the EU especially Germany, then having organic fruit may very well become the standard and may grant an advantage to the plastic free produced biodynamic banana. Furthermore, it would also influence the consumers to gain an interest in organic fruits, which could also generate an awareness for this product.

Now that the critical points of the analysis have been mentioned and explained in the previous section, as well as a different possible research approach, this leads to the conclusion

### **6: Conclusion:**

In conclusion, the plastic free produced biodynamic banana is a product that Demeter have been selling since 2019. However, in comparison to the regular biodynamic banana, it has not performed to the level that Demeter had expected even though this product is a premium of an already existing premium and the German market is aware of biodynamic products and Demeter.

This product has lacked marketing, and the consumers have not been informed and do not seem to be aware of the difference between the two biodynamic products. For this reason, the investigation was conducted in an attempt to discover what marketing communication strategy could be used to promote this product.

The paper covers the elements of the International Marketing Mix to gain a better understanding of the product. Furthermore, this mix was applied to the data collected from the interviews with the different members of the supply chain of this product, from the responses it is evident that this product is a premium on an already existing premium product. The German market is aware of Demeter and their biodynamic products, but do not seem to be aware of why there is a difference in the prices of biodynamic bananas. Thus, opting to purchase the cheaper option as the consumer's perception is that both products are the same. Additionally, this product is already being sold in general stores in Germany, therefore the place of sales should not be an issue yet, whereas the lack of promotions seemed to be the issue. When conducting the interviews, all the interviewees were in agreement that the plastic free production factor of this product should be a big point in the promotion. Therefore, informing the consumer about the differentiation between the biodynamic banana varieties.

Once that was clear, the instruments of the Marketing Communication Mix had to be analyzed to see what tools are at the disposal of Demeter to promote this product. The tools being: personal selling, direct marketing, sales promotion, advertising, and public relations as well as identifying the key elements in implementing a successful marketing communication strategy. These elements included: the identification of a specific target audience, the unique selling point the product has, and the assessment of the feedback obtained. Afterwards, a conceptual framework was generated based on the literature, which an organization such as Demeter could follow. This conceptual framework involved six phases: parameter identification, objectives and targets, alignment review, design of approach, assessment of feedback, and readjustment. Using this framework and the information collected, the phases were filled in with the available information. When discussing the target audience that Demeter was aiming at for this promotion, it was said that the organic community of the age range 25-45 was mentioned. Moreover, when discussing the message Demeter wished to transmit to the targeted consumer, it resulted in Demeter wanting to promote sustainability in the production of the product; the reduction in the

waste of plastic and informing the consumer about this improved method of agriculture as well as demonstrating that Demeter as an organization cares about the environment and takes action. Subsequently, the channels in which the message was going to be transmitted had to be chosen. From the interview, it is evident that Demeter is planning to promote this product using the personal and non-personal channels of communication therefore with the initial parameters being settled, the goals and budgeting method had to be established. From the interviews, it was gathered that the goals Demeter have set their sights on is creating awareness on the plastic free produced biodynamic banana and increasing the sales of this product. Once that was established, the budgeting method followed, of which the objective and task method of budgeting was suggested. Afterwards, the established parameters, goals, and budgeting method had to be reviewed ensuring that there is an alignment in the strategy thus far; once this was confirmed, it was followed by an analysis on the different combinations of the instruments in the marketing communication mix that Demeter could apply to promote this product. The possible combinations mentioned were personal selling with sales promotion, personal selling with public relations, personal selling with direct marketing, direct marketing with sales promotion, advertisements with sales promotion, and direct marketing with advertising. Once these combinations were explained, the following phase of assessment from feedback was explained, depicting how evaluating the feedback is an important part of the conceptual framework as it explained that if the feedback was negative it would lead to the following phase of readjustment whereby, Demeter could change their combination according to the consumer feedback on the chosen method of promotion.

To conclude, Demeter can use the conceptual framework as a marketing communication strategy following the phases and combinations mentioned in order to attract consumers to the product, informing them about the product, and possibly incrementing the sales of the product. However, there are still a few limitations in the research that must be clarified in the following section.

## **7: Limitations of Research:**

- Categorizing issues, Biodynamic (Demeter) versus Organic fruits

As stated in the previous section, there are issues with the literature research due to the lack of data on biodynamic products and their marketing and as the research went forward, it was learned that biodynamic is often categorized as organic. Therefore, organic fruit information collected for the literature was used instead. This provided an approximation to the biodynamic fruit, yet it is important to reiterate that if actual knowledge concerning biodynamic fruit and its marketing was collected, there could be a slight shift throughout the paper. An example of this could be that as more consumers are aware of organic fruits and products, there could be a difference in the way a marketing communication strategy is designed like the budgeting method, the objectives, and the combination of tools used.

- Marketing Progression has been halted for Demeter

When discussing marketing ideas for Demeter to promote the biodynamic bananas, Christoph had mentioned that Demeter was planning a marketing campaign in the conference. In the conference it had been mentioned that the marketing campaign would start in the spring. However, due to the unexpected circumstance of COVID19, the marketing campaign had to be delayed to ensure that consumers would see the message transmitted consequently limiting the last two phases of the conceptual framework. Therefore, due to the delay, the feedback from this campaign will also be received later thereby delaying the assessment process as well as the readjustment process if needed. This information would have aided in the investigation as real feedback could have been used for the analysis, the reason being, with the feedback from the consumer obtained, a readjustment strategy could have also been included in this paper. Furthering the research as what went wrong with the primary marketing communication strategy.

- Interviews - Feedback:

Throughout the gathering of information, interviews were conducted to gain an insight into the perspective of the interviewees concerning this subject. The development of questions continued as the interviews continued. However, when analyzing the interviews for the specific responses

concerning the assessment of the feedback, they proved to be very limited in content. This was stated in the interview with Christoph however other than mentioning it, the response was not followed up on by the investigator to determine how they were going to be assessed. Additionally, the assessment of the results was not requested directly either therefore affecting the precision of the analysis.

- Subjective Perspective:

As the social constructivist paradigm was selected, the information gathered is subjective from the perspectives of the interviewees. Due to this, the responses given in the process worked as a guide for the investigation. One must take into consideration that there is an element of bias to the responses. As a result, in the investigation conducted afterwards it is also important to note that the information obtained from the interviews are limited to the point of understanding from the interviewees.

- Data on Sales:

While collecting data for this investigation, Demeter was asked if they could provide their statistics concerning the sales of the plastic free banana production however, the organization declined as they were not willing to hand out sensitive information to someone who was not a part of the Demeter organization. This data could have been useful when discussing the gap in sales that Christoph mentioned in his interview as well as providing an insight as to how Demeter promoted previously biodynamic fruit in Germany. This insight provided by statistics could have given a more precise marketing communication strategy using their previous strategy as a framework.

- Literature Collected:

Another limitation that must be pointed out is that during the literature reviewing process, only the AAU online library search engine was used, the reason being to ensure the reliability of the texts collected. However, in hindsight, other search engines like the AAU online library search engine could have been used and could have provided more relevant literature. This relevant



literature could have given way for other theories to be used in this paper, and different questions to be presented in the questionnaire.

## **8: Bibliography:**

Akgüngör, S., Miran, B. and Abay, C. (2010) ‘Consumer Willingness to Pay for Organic Food in Urban Turkey’, *Journal of International Food & Agribusiness Marketing*, 22(3/4), pp. 299–313. doi: 10.1080/08974431003641455.

Blythe, J. and Martin, J. (2014). *Essentials of marketing*

Burney, S.M.A; Saleem, H., (2008). *Inductive and Deductive Research Approach.ü Lecture Delivered on 06/03/2008 at Auditorium of the Faculty of Arts and Science, University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan.*

Colom-Gorgues, A., 2009. *The Challenges of Organic Production and Marketing in Europe and Spain: Innovative Marketing for the Future With Quality and Safe Food Products. Journal of International Food & Agribusiness Marketing*, 21(2-3), pp.166-190.

DAHLLÖF, S., 2019. Denmark plans import ban on pesticide residues – legal expert calls it mission impossible. *Investigative Reporting Denmark*, [online] Available at: <<https://www.ir-d.dk/2019/08/denmark-plans-import-ban-on-pesticide-residues-legal-expert-calls-it-mission-impossible/>> [Accessed 1 May 2020].

Dang, T. (2015). *The success of applying marketing mix 4Ps in Vietnamese dairy industry*. Arcada.

Darmer, P.; Jordansen, B.; Madsen, A. J.; Thomsen, J. (2010). *Paradigmer i praksis*. Handelshøjskolens Forlag, 1. Udgave

Dubois, A. and Gadde, L. (2002). *Systematic combining: an abductive approach to case research*. *Journal of Business Research*

Demeter.net. 2019. *Demeter International*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.demeter.net/>> [Accessed 5 February 2020].

Denver, S. and Christensen, T. (2014) ‘Consumers’ Grouping of Organic and Conventional Food Products—Implications for the Marketing of Organics’, *Journal of Food Products Marketing*, 20(4), pp. 408–428. doi: 10.1080/10454446.2013.807404.

Ericksson, A. 2019. *What Does The Term “Noise” Mean In Marketing?*. (online) Your Business. Available at: <https://yourbusiness.azcentral.com/term-noise-mean-marketing-9152.html> (Accessed 29 April 2020)

Fairtrade International. 2019. *New App To Reduce The Use Of Highly Toxic Pesticides Is Now Available*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.fairtrade.net/news/new-app-to-reduce-the-use-of-highly-toxic-pesticides-is-now-available>> [Accessed 4 March 2020].

FIRAT, A., KUTUCUOĞLU, K., ARIKAN SALTİK, I. and TUNÇEL, Ö., 2013. *CONSUMPTION, CONSUMER CULTURE AND CONSUMER SOCIETY*. 1st ed.

Fruit Logistica 2019. (2019). 1st ed. [ebook] Available at: [https://www.fruitlogistica.de/media/fl/fl\\_dl\\_all/auf\\_einen\\_blick/European\\_Statistics\\_Handbook\\_2019.pdf](https://www.fruitlogistica.de/media/fl/fl_dl_all/auf_einen_blick/European_Statistics_Handbook_2019.pdf) [Accessed 3 Feb. 2020].

Garg, S. (2014). *Designing and Managing Integrated Marketing Communication* . [ebook] Available at: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/ee81/2440259e33f8c62903d133d7d14615ae8691.pdf> [Accessed 2 Mar. 2020].

Goi, C. (2009). A Review of Marketing Mix: 4Ps or More?. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 1(1)

Gronholm, T. Marketing concepts in practice. Lahti university of applied sciences. Degree programme in International Business Bachelor's thesis. 2012.

Gummesson, E. (2006). Qualitative research in management: addressing complexity, context and persona. *Management Decision*. 44 (2), 167-179.

Hesselholt, L., 2020. *Plastic Free Banana Farming*.

Hirsholmen Handelskompagni A/S. 2020. *Hirsholmen Handelskompagni A/S - News*. [online] Available at: <<https://hhk.as/en/category/news/>> [Accessed 20 May 2020].

Hyndes, M. 82020) - Markus Hyndes Interview

Ingram, D. (2017). *The Pros & Cons of Marketing Communication Tools*. [online] Bizfluent. Available at: <https://bizfluent.com/info-7909187-pros-cons-marketing-communication-tools.html> [Accessed 13 Feb. 2020].

Kawulich, B. (2012). Selecting a research approach: Paradigm, methodology and methods.

Kotler, P. and Armstrong, G. (2012). *Principles of Marketing*

Kotler, P.; Keller K. (2012). *Marketing Management*. Pearson Education Limited. New Jersey.

Kuada, J. (2012). *Research Methodology: A Project Guide for University Students*. Samfundslitteratur Press

Lobley, M., Butler, A. and Winter, M., 2013. Local Organic Food for Local People? Organic Marketing Strategies in England and Wales. *Regional Studies*, 47(2), pp.216-228.

Margarita Išoraitė, M. (2016). *MARKETING MIX THEORETICAL ASPECTS*. [ebook] Available at: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/9797/876877e7d32c1bd7f3b8ffc2dee91bca1b2b.pdf>

Muller, G. (2020) - Gerald Muller Interview

Naidoo, V. and Verma, R., 2019. *Green Marketing As A Positive Driver Toward Business Sustainability*. 1st ed.

NKONDO, L. G. (2015) 'Marketing communication strategies-tools to increase the consumption of indigenous plants', *African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation & Dance*, pp. 334–341. Available at:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.zorac.aub.aau.dk/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sph&AN=119260450&site=ehost-live>

Marschan-Piekkari, R. and Reis, C. (2004). *Language and Languages in Cross-cultural Interviewing*. *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods for International Business*.

Onyiengo,S.(2014).

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.685.1354&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

[ebook]

Available

at:

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.685.1354&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

ORAMAN, Y. and UNAKITAN, G. (2010) 'Analysis of Factors Influencing Organic Fruit and Vegetable Purchasing in Istanbul, Turkey', *Ecology of Food & Nutrition*, 49(6), pp. 452–466. doi: 10.1080/03670244.2010.524105.

Petrevska, J., Kochishka, M., Jankulovska, A. and Bojkovska, K., 2017. *Analysis of Marketing Instrumetns Used by Organic Food Producers From Republic of Macedonia*.

Reisch, L., Eberle, U. and Lorek, S. (2013) 'Sustainable food consumption: an overview of contemporary issues and policies', *Sustainability: Science, Practice & Policy*, 9(2), pp. 7–25. doi: 10.1080/15487733.2013.11908111.

Salgado-Beltrán., L., Subira-Lobera, M. E. and Beltrán-Morales, L. F. (2014) 'Relationship between sustainable buying intention and marketing strategies', *International Journal of Management Science & Technology Information*, (12), pp. 18–30. Available at: <http://search.ebscohost.com.zorac.aub.aau.dk/login.aspx?direct=true&db=buh&AN=113484049&site=ehost-live> (Accessed: 16 May 2020).

Simpfendorfer, C. (2020). Christoph Interview

Statista. (2020). Europe: retail sales of organic products, by country | Statista . [online] Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/632751/retail-sales-of-organic-products-europe/> [Accessed 3 Feb. 2020].

Singh, M. (2012). Marketing Mix of 4P'S for Competitive Advantage. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*

Todorova, G. (2015). Marketing communication mix. *Trakia Journal of Science* , 13(Suppl.1), pp.368-374.

tutor2u. (2020). *Personal Selling & Merchandising | Business | tutor2u*. [online] Available at: <https://www.tutor2u.net/business/reference/personal-selling-merchandising> [Accessed 7 Dec. 2019].

Vukasovič, T., 2016. Consumers' Perceptions and Behaviors Regarding Organic Fruits and Vegetables: Marketing Trends for Organic Food in the Twenty-First Century. *Journal of International Food & Agribusiness Marketing*, 28(1), pp.59-73.

