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Final Report

Media Channel Impact on Florida Consumers' Intention to Buy Local Specialty Crops

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

UF IFAS UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Center for Public Issues Education

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For More Information

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Introduction

Buying local food is of increasing interest for U.S. consumers. Many consumers are seeking a direct connection and better understanding of how and where their food is grown. Some consumers are becoming more conscious of where their food is coming from because of food-borne illness crises, while others are becoming more involved out of curiosity or growing concerns about the mechanization of the agricultural industry. Either way, consumers are becoming more actively interested in the growth and production of their food yet little is known regarding the best communication media channel to encourage consumers to purchase food locally.

The purpose of this study was to determine which media channel- print, video or web- was most effective at increasing consumers' declared intent to buy a local specialty crop. This study was interested in understanding how consumers develop their intent to buy local food. Specifically, the study examined the impact of 1) consumers' past experience buying local food, 2) perceptions of types of messages they receive regarding buying local food, 3) their self-identity and feelings of moral obligations toward buying local food, and 4) their past media use and its impact on their intent to purchase local food.

To answer these questions, an online survey instrument was developed and1,122 Floridians completed the survey. Respondents were divided into three groups. Each group received a different advertisement encouraging them to buy local blueberries. After viewing the advertisements, respondents were asked their intention to purchase locally grown blueberries in the future and their attitudes toward the advertisements they viewed. Additional questions included their frequency of purchasing local food, how important it is to them to purchase local food, and their general media use.

Findings

Key findings of this research included:

- The most common media that respondents used was websites and email, with respondents averaging 1-2 hours a day using these media channels.
- Almost half of the respondents indicated buying local food was important to them.
- All three types of advertisements (print, video, and website) received positive assessment from the respondents.
- After viewing a local food advertisement, respondents reported an overall positive attitude toward purchasing local blueberries.
- The group that received the web media channel treatment had a slightly higher intent to buy local blueberries than those respondents who received the print or video media channel treatments.
- The group that received the web media channel treatment had a slightly higher intent to look and see if blueberries were locally grown the next time they bought blueberries than those who received the print or video media channel treatments.

- Respondents' attitude toward buying local food was not impacted by the media channel treatment group they were assigned to (print, video, or web). All three treatments yielded favorable attitudes from the respondents to buy local blueberries.

Recommendations

Key recommendations for agricultural communication practitioners, based on the findings from the study, include:

- Consumers are still engaging with TV and this may still be a viable media channel for connecting with the public.
- Practitioners should work to create webpages that are relevant and timely for consumers to access when engaging consumers about buying local specialty crops.
- Consumers do feel a moral obligation to buy local food and this could be a key way to target consumers in messaging and marketing strategies for specialty crops.
- The web media channel was slightly more effective at increasing respondents' intention to buy local blueberries; therefore, practitioners should utilize web-based marketing strategies when available.

Background

It is commonly accepted among communication and marketing professionals that the best way to market information to consumers is by using multiple media channels to share messages and information (McQuail, 2010). However, little is known about the effectiveness of specific media channels, especially related to marketing and promoting locally grown specialty crops. Advertising is a costly expenditure; therefore, when marketing locally grown specialty crops, agricultural communicators must use the most effective communication channel to reach their intended audience.

When it comes to the context of local specialty crops, little information is known about the best way to educate and inform consumers about buying local specialty crops. The concept of buying local food has been a growing trend among many consumers because they have become interested in how their food is grown, where it is grown, and the individual who grows their food (Giovannucci, Barham, & Pirog, 2010). The rise in consumer interest can be attributed to improvements in communication technology and opportunities, but also to the foodborne illnesses and crises that have occurred (Schnell, 2013; Giovannucci et al., 2010). Another concern consumers have related to the agriculture industry is the modernization of food technology, and the mechanization of processing food (Schnell, 2013). This uncertainty consumers have when it comes to how their food is grown and processed has led to many individuals seeking information and a direct connection with those who are responsible for growing and producing the food they eat; thus, the rise in interest of local food and buying local food.

The disconnect between consumers and those who grow and produce their food is not a new phenomenon (Hamilton, 2004); however, communication technology has changed how consumers search and receive information they use to educate themselves about the issue of agriculture and the food systems; therefore, research is needed to understand which communication media channel is most effective at encouraging consumers to buy local specialty crops. By understanding which communication media channel is most influential when sharing information about buying local specialty crops with consumers, future communication and education campaigns can be created to form a more proactive and beneficial relationship between consumers and those in the agricultural industry.

Methods

To determine which media channel was most effective at encouraging consumers' intent to buy local specialty crops, three media channels were tested: a print advertisement, a video advertisement, and an informative website. Each of the three media channels used the same message developed from previous research (Holt & Rumble, 2014). The content of survey referred to local food in general as the term local specialty crop does not resonate with consumers. Additionally, blueberries were selected as the specialty crop of interest for this study. The message focused on using the face of a farmer to connect consumers with local, Florida blueberries. The same content was presented in each of the three media channels; however, the way in which the information was delivered was dependent upon the capabilities of each of the media channels. The print advertisement utilized a large visual image of the farmer as well as written text at the bottom of the advertisement. The video advertisement highlighted the same farmer; however, it showed the farmer checking and picking blueberries, while the video was narrated with the same content provided in the written text of the print advertisement. The informative website utilized interactive components, such as scrolling pages and moving photos and headlines, to encourage consumers to actively engage with the content. The same content used in the written text of the print advertisement and narration of the video was presented in individual pages of the website. The website also included links to scholarly work providing more information discussed in the content and links to the print advertisement and the video.

The population of interest for this study was Florida consumers. As such, a sample of Florida consumers was recruited to participate in this study. A total of 1,794 respondents started the survey, but only 1,122 completed the survey resulting in a

participation rate of 62.5%. To obtain the proper data, and test each of the media channels independently, an online survey was created in which the participants were assigned to one of the three media channels. An outside marketing firm, which specialized in online survey sampling, was used to recruit respondents to the study. The respondents were asked several questions to ensure quality responses were obtained. Also, if the participants had not purchased blueberries within the last three years, they were removed from the survey.

The data were analyzed to understand respondents' media usage, past experience buying local food, perception of the message tested, and their attitude toward the tested media channels. Indicators that influence planned behavior were also included. These factors were a) respondents' attitude toward purchasing local blueberries, b) respondents' ability to control purchasing local blueberries, and c) the support and influence of others on the respondents' purchases of local blueberries. Finally, respondents' intention to buy local food was asked after they received either a print, video, or web media channel treatment. Descriptive statistics are reported in this report, but inferential statistics and a more in-depth look at the data can be found in the dissertation written by Jessica Holt titled *The Effect of Media Channels on Consumers' Intentions to Buy Local Food an Exploration of the Theory of Planned Behavior and Media Channel Perceptions.*

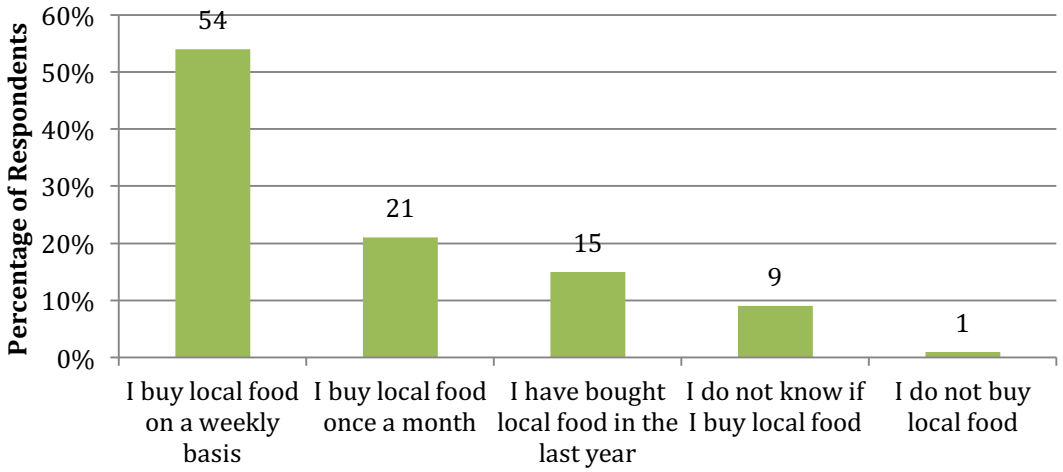
Results

The survey used to collect the data for this study addressed the areas of the respondents' past media use, perception of the message, attitude toward the media channel, past experience buying local food, self-identity/moral obligation toward buying local food, and intent to buy local food. The results for each area are presented below.

Past Experience Buying Local Food

Respondents were asked, prior to receiving a media channel treatment, if they had ever bought local food. Fifty-four percent of respondents (n = 608) purchased local food on a weekly basis, and 21% (n = 234) purchased local food monthly.

Figure 1. Past experience buying local food



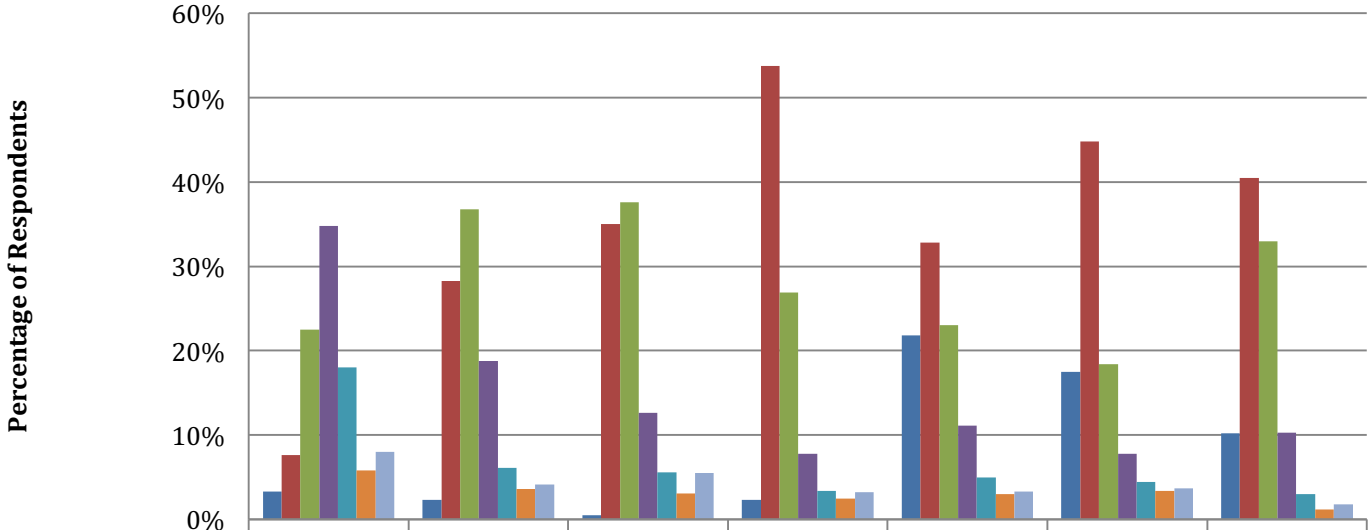
Past Media Use

Respondents were also asked about their media use. The scale used to identify the respondents' past media use was adapted from previous research (Rosen, Whaling, Carrier, & Rokkum, 2013). The respondents were asked to report how often, in a typical day, they used the communication media channels of email, phone calls, text messages, social networking, magazines/books, TV, and websites. The respondents were given the following time categories to indicate

their usage of each of the communication media channels: "*Not at all*", "*Less than one hour*", "*1-2 hours*", "*3-4 hours*", "*5-6 hours*", "*7-8 hours*", or "*More than 8 hours*".

Sixty-seven percent of respondents reported they watch TV more than three hours a day. Thirty-seven percent browse websites for 1-2 hours daily and 38% send or receive emails for this same amount of time daily. Respondents spend less time sending and receiving phone calls (54% spend less than 1 hour) and text messages (45% spend less than 1 hour) a day. Twenty-two percent of respondents do not participate in social media at all, while 41% of respondents spend less than an hour a day reading magazines and books. These results indicated that TV was the most used communication channel for respondents, followed by websites and email. Respondents' spent the least amount of time, in a typical day, reading magazines and books.

Figure 2. Daily media use



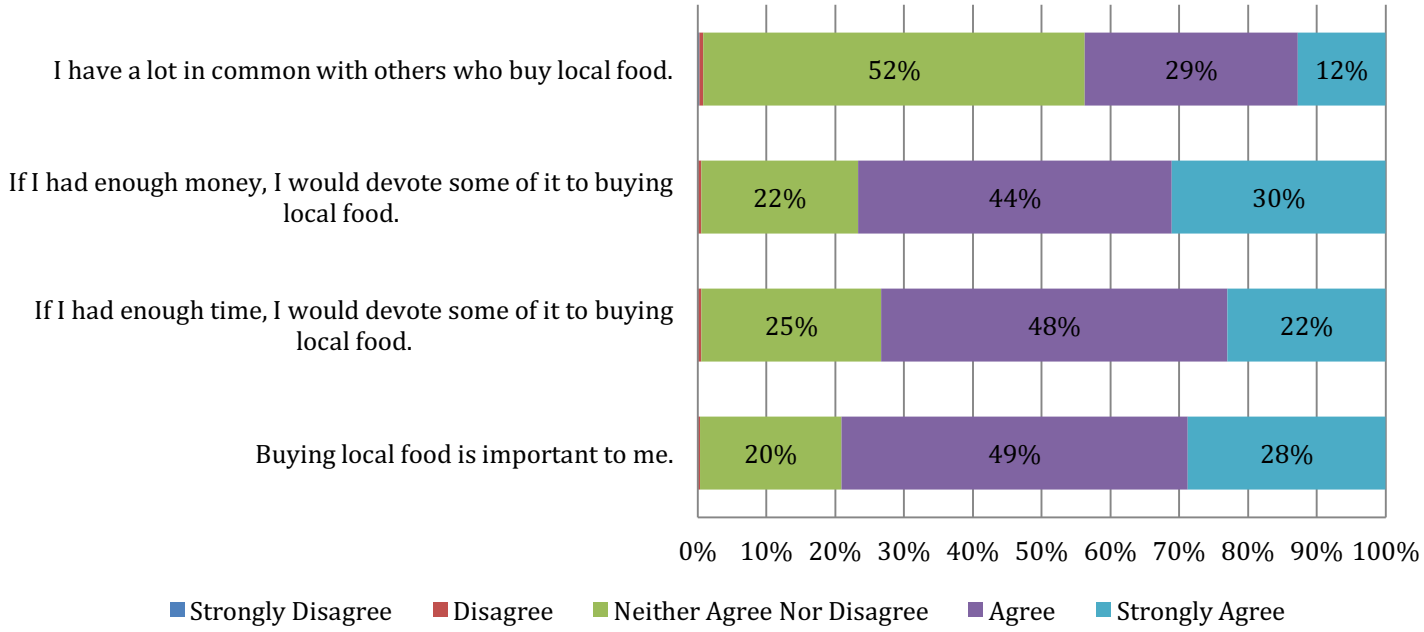
	Watch TV	Browse websites	Send/Receive emails	Send/Receive phone calls	Participate in social networking	Send/Receive text messaging	Read magazines/books
Not at all	3%	2%	1%	2%	22%	18%	10%
Less than one hour	8%	28%	35%	54%	33%	45%	41%
1-2 hours	23%	37%	38%	27%	23%	18%	33%
3-4 hours	35%	19%	13%	8%	11%	8%	10%
5-6 hours	18%	6%	6%	3%	5%	4%	3%
7-8 hours	6%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	1%
More than 8 hours	8%	4%	6%	3%	3%	4%	2%

Self-Identity/Moral Obligation toward Buying Local Food

It has been suggested in previous research that an individual's self-identity/moral obligation toward preforming a certain behavior is indicative of their future intentions toward that behavior (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Therefore, respondents' self-identity/moral obligation toward buying local food was measured in this study. Respondents were given four items to measure how they felt about buying local food. The items were measured using a 5-point, Likert-type scale with 1 =*strongly disagree*, 2= *disagree*, 3=*neither agree nor disagree*, 4 =*agree*, and 5 = *strongly agree*.

Seventy-seven percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that buying local food is important to them. Seventy-four percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed if they had enough money they would spend some of it to buy local food. Seventy-percent agreed or strongly agreed they would devote some of their time to buying local food if they had enough time. Only 41% agreed or strongly agreed they have a lot in common with others who buy local food.

Figure 3. Respondents' Self-Identity/Moral Obligation Toward Buying Local Food by Percentage



Perception of Message

Respondents were randomly assigned to one of three treatment groups as discussed in the methods. To assess respondents' perception of the message, they were given a bi-polar, semantic differential scale to determine their attitude toward the message. Bi-polar, semantic differential scales are used to access individual's attitudes because they utilize a related group of adjectives to allow respondents to identify how they feel about a given issue or topic in a quantifiable manner (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1978). Respondents were asked to indicate on a five-point semantic differential scale which adjective their attitude most closely aligned with when completing the sentence, "The message of the [treatment] for local blueberries was…" The sets of adjectives were then combined to form an index to measure respondents' overall attitude toward the message. The responses were analyzed with 1 being equal to the negative adjective and 5 being equal to the positive adjective.

Overall, respondents had a positive perception of the message, as indicated by the grand mean of the index (M = 4.45) (see Table 2). The message in each of the media channels was kept the same in content; however, the delivery method of the message varied based on the communication media channel's ability. See Appendix I for the message and examples of the communication media channels. The print media channel respondents indicated the print advertisement was "good" with the highest mean, within the adjectives, of 4.63. Based on the grand mean of the index for the print media group (M = 4.40), respondents had a general positive perception of the message. The respondents in the video media channel group

indicated the advertisement was "good" with the highest mean, within the adjectives, of 4.66. Based on the grand mean of the index for the video media group (M = 4.50), respondents had a general positive perception. Finally, the respondents in the web media channel group indicated the web advertisement was "good" with the highest mean, within the adjectives, of 4.63. Based on the grand mean of the index for the video media group (M =4 .45), respondents had a general positive perception.

Table 1. Perception of message by treatment

	M	*SD*
Print Media Treatment (*n* = 410)	4.39	.66
Bad: Good	4.63	.67
Not Honest: Honest	4.41	.79
Not Informative: Informative	4.40	.86
Worthless: Valuable	4.38	.80
Not Meaningful: Meaningful	4.36	.83
Not Reputable: Reputable	4.22	.87
Video Media Treatment (*n* = 392)	4.50	.61
Bad: Good	4.66	.62
Not Honest: Honest	4.51	.74
Not Informative: Informative	4.52	.79
Worthless: Valuable	4.50	.73
Not Meaningful: Meaningful	4.46	.78
Not Reputable: Reputable	4.36	.84
Web Media Treatment (*n* = 320)	4.44	.61
Bad: Good	4.63	.64
Not Honest: Honest	4.41	.77
Not Informative: Informative	4.55	.75
Worthless: Valuable	4.47	.70
Not Meaningful: Meaningful	4.40	.76
Not Reputable: Reputable	4.21	.87

Attitude Toward Media Channel

Respondents' attitude toward the media channel was assessed using a bipolar, semantic differential scale, using pairs of adjectives on a 5-point scale, which allowed them to choose which adjective most closely aligned with their attitude when completing the sentence, "The [treatment] as a whole was..." The responses were analyzed with 1 being equal to the negative adjective and 5 being equal to the positive adjective. Respondents had an overall positive attitude toward the media channel treatment they received, as the index had a grand mean of 4.31. Table 3 (see below) compares each of the adjectives in the index within each of the media channels tested. The print media respondents indicated they had a general positive attitude toward the media with the grand mean of the index being 4.28. The video media respondents indicated they had a general positive attitude towards the media with the grand mean of the index being 4.35. Based on the grand mean of the index, 4.31, the web media respondents also had a general positive attitude towards the media.

Table 2. Attitude toward media channel by treatment

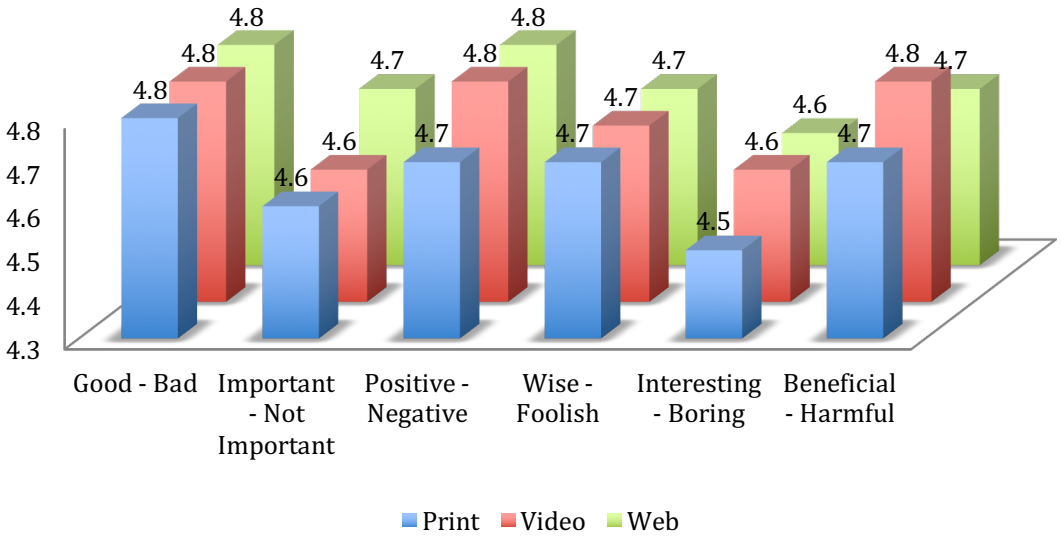
	M	*SD*
Print Media Treatment (*n* = 410)		
Not Meaningful: Meaningful	4.36	.83
Not Useful: Useful	4.33	.85
Not Important: Important	4.27	.89
Boring: Interesting	4.22	.97
Not Reputable: Reputable	4.20	.83
Video Media Treatment (*n* = 392)		
Not Meaningful: Meaningful	4.47	.77
Not Useful: Useful	4.36	.86
Not Important: Important	4.35	.86
Boring: Interesting	4.25	1.04
Not Reputable: Reputable	4.35	.84
Web Media Treatment (*n* = 320)		
Not Meaningful: Meaningful	4.40	.75
Not Useful: Useful	4.38	.78
Not Important: Important	4.26	.83

Boring: Interesting	4.31	.90
Not Reputable: Reputable	4.21	.82

Attitude toward Buying Local Blueberries

Respondents' attitude toward buying local food was assessed with a bi-polar, semantic differential scale. They were asked to indicate which adjective their attitude most closely aligned with when completing the sentence, "To me, buying local blueberries is…" In the scale, one was equal to the negative adjective and five was equal to the positive adjective. The mean for the set of adjectives of *"Good: Bad"* was 4.8 across all three media channel treatment groups. The highest mean for the set of adjectives of *"Important: Not Important"* was in the web media channel treatment group (M = 4.7). The highest mean for the adjectives of *"Positive: Negative"* were in the video and web media channel treatment groups (M = 4.8). The set of adjectives *"Wise: Foolish"* had a mean of 4.7 across all three media channel treatment groups. The highest mean for the adjectives of *"Interesting: Boring"* were in the video and web media channel treatment groups (M = 4.6). Finally, the set of adjectives of *"Beneficial: Harmful"* had the highest mean in the video channel treatment group (M = 4.8) (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Respondents' Attitudes toward Buying Local Blueberries Means by Treatment Group



Subjective Norms toward Buying Local Blueberries

Subjective norms have been shown in research to contribute to an individual's intention to perform a behavior, like buy local blueberries (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Subjective norms are defined as how an individual values or relies upon the influence of others and important peers' thoughts about the behavior, buying local blueberries in this case.

To assess respondents' subjective norms toward buying local blueberries, several questions were given related to how those important individuals in the respondents' lives would react to their purchase of local blueberries. The questions were given in a five-point, Likert-type scale, with one being equal to *Strongly Disagree,* two equal to *Disagree,* three equal to *Neither Agree nor Disagree,* four equal to *Agree,* and five equal to *Strongly Agree.* Overall, respondents' indicated that those individuals in their lives would support and encourage them to buy local blueberries (see Figures 5, 6, and 7). In the print

media channel treatment group, most respondents (86%) either agreed or strongly agreed people important to them would support their decision to buy local blueberries (see Figure 5). Similarly, respondents in the video media channel treatment group indicated that those important to them would support their decision to buy local blueberries, with 86% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement (see Figure 6). Finally, 89% of respondents in the web media channel treatment group agreed or strongly agreed that those important individuals in their lives would support their decision to buy local blueberries (see Figure 7).

Figure 5. Print Media Channel Respondents' Subjective Norms toward Buying Local Blueberries

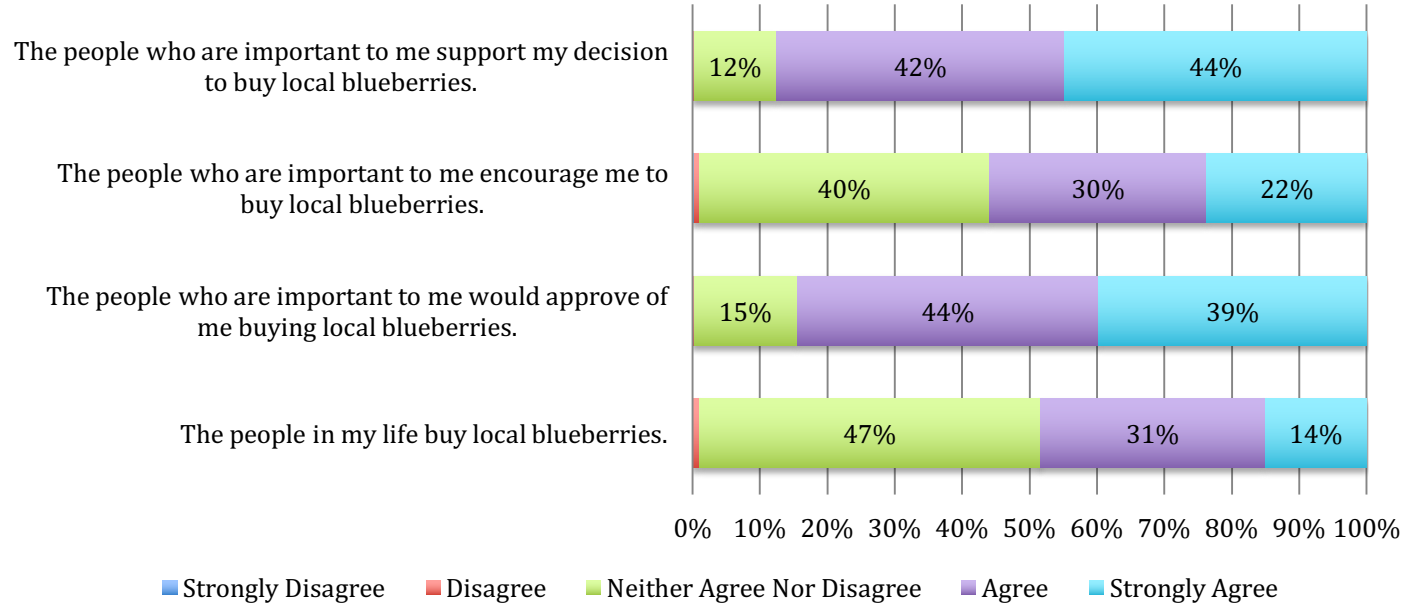


Figure 6. Video Media Channel Respondents' Subjective Norms toward Buying Local Blueberries

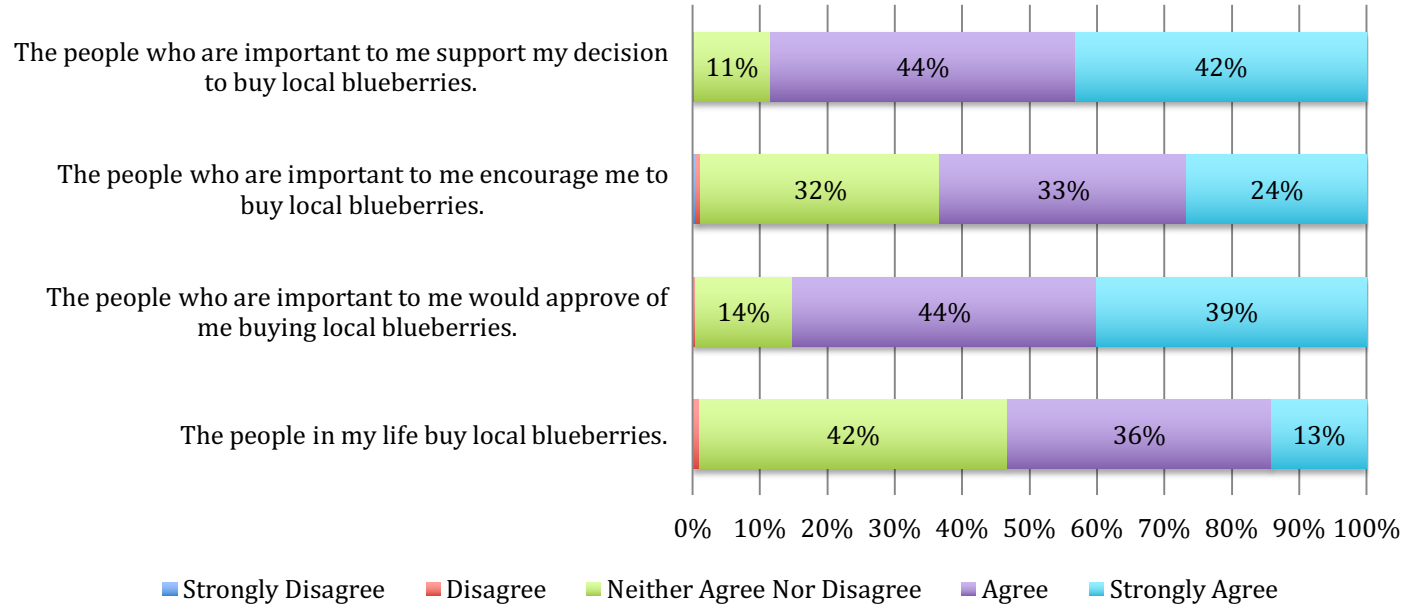
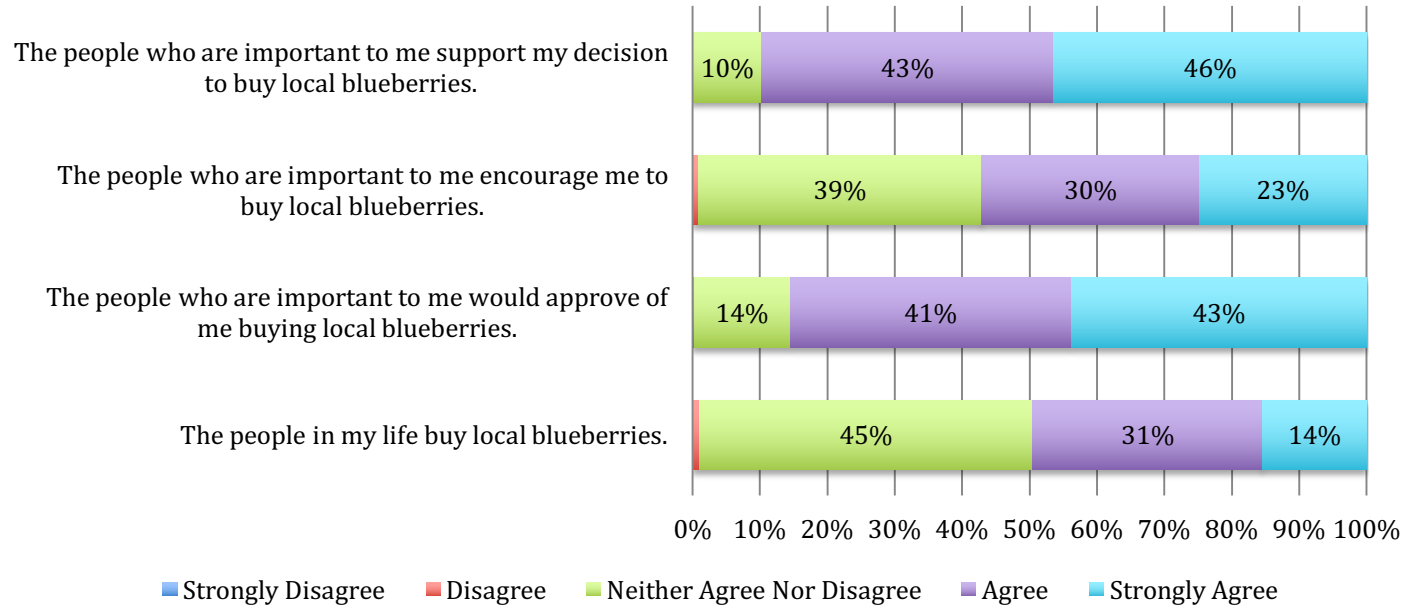


Figure 7. Web Media Channel Respondents' Subjective Norms toward Buying Local Blueberries

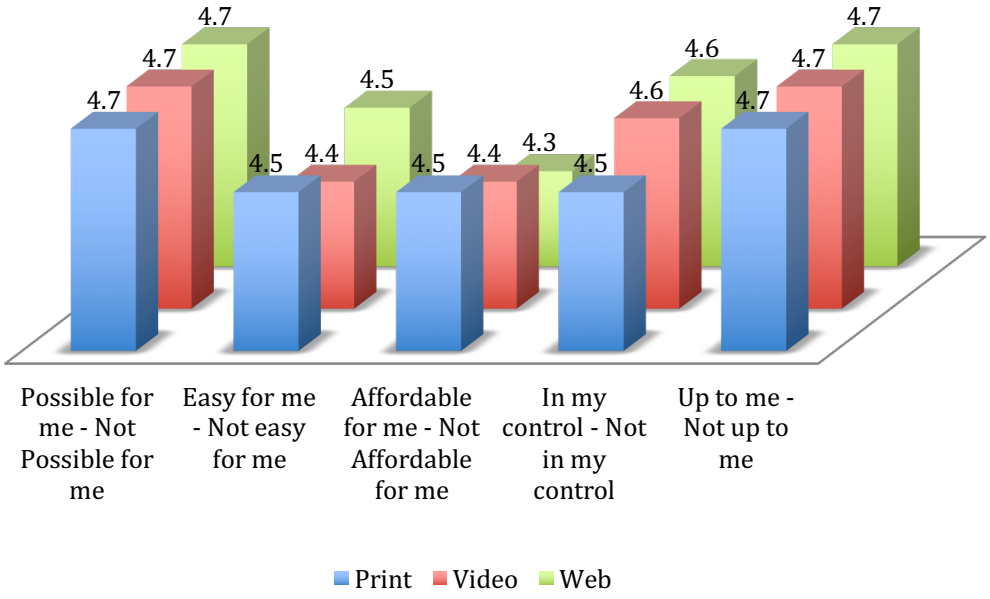


Perceived Behavioral Control toward Buying Local Blueberries

An individual's perceived behavioral control has been shown in previous research to directly impact their intention perform a behavior; in this case, buying local blueberries (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). To assess the respondents' perceived behavioral control toward buying local blueberries, they were given sets of adjectives on a bi-polar, semantic differential scale. They were asked to indicate which adjective their attitude most closely aligned with when completing the sentence, "Buying local blueberries is…" The negative adjective was equal to one and the positive adjective was equal to five.

The respondents, overall, had a positive outlook on their ability to buy local blueberries (see Figure 8). The set of adjectives *"Possible for me: Not possible for me"* had a mean of 4.7 across all three media channel treatment groups. The adjective of *"Easy for me: Not easy for me"* had a mean of 4.5 in the print and web media channel treatment groups and a mean of 4.4 in the video media channel treatment group. The adjectives of *"Affordable to me: Not affordable to me"* had a mean of 4.5 in the print media channel group, a mean of 4.4 in the video channel group, and a mean of 4.3 in the web media channel treatment group. The set of adjectives of *"In my control: Not in my control"* had a mean of 4.5 in the print media channel treatment group and a mean of 4.6 in the video and web media channel treatment groups. Finally, the last set of adjectives of *"Up to me: Not up to me"* had a mean of 4.7 in all three media channel treatment groups (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Respondents' Perceived Behavioral Control toward Buying Local Blueberries by Treatment Group



Intent to Buy Local Food

Respondents' intent to buy local food was determined using a 5-point, Likert-type scale. The items in the scale were measured with 1 indicating "*strongly disagree*," 2 indicating "*disagree*," 3 indicating "*neither agree nor disagree*," 4 indicating "*agree*," and 5 indicating "*strongly agree*." The questions presented to the respondents to measure their intent to buy local food after receiving the communication media channel treatment were: "*I plan to buy local blueberries when available,*" "*When buying blueberries, I will look to see if they are grown locally,*" "*I will go out of my way to buy locally grown blueberries*". With regard to each statement, a majority of the respondents indicated their intention to buy local food after receiving the communication media channel treatment was favorable.

The respondents in all three treatment groups similarly indicated the next time they bought local blueberries they would see if they were grown locally, with 88% in the web treatment group, 86% in the print treatment group, and 84% in the video treatment group agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement (see Figures 9, 10, and 11). Also, in all three treatment groups the respondents, 56% in both the video and web treatment groups and 49% in the print treatment group, indicated they would go out of their way to buy blueberries grown locally by indicating either *"agree"* or *"strongly agree."* Finally, the respondents, 86% in the video treatment group, 84% in the print treatment group, and 83% in the web treatment group, either agreed or strongly agreed that they plan to buy local blueberries when available to them in each of the treatment groups.

Figure 9. Respondents' Intent to Buy Local Blueberries in the Print Treatment Group

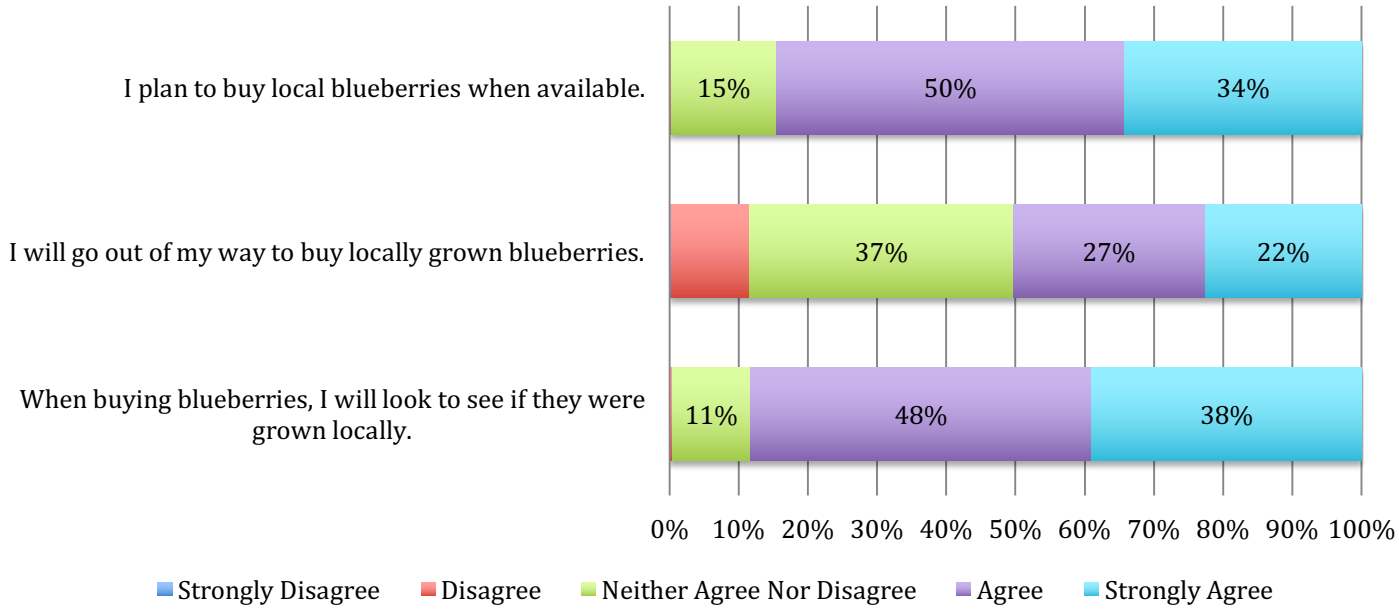


Figure 10. Respondents' Intent to Buy Local Blueberries in the Video Treatment Group

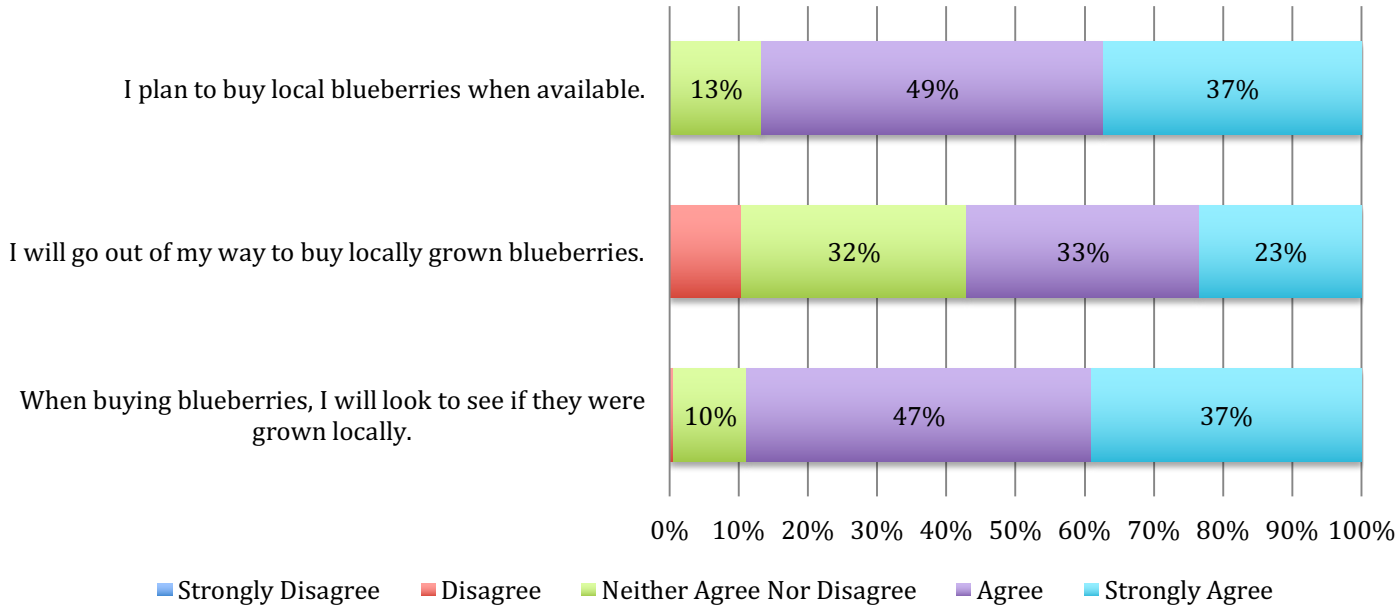
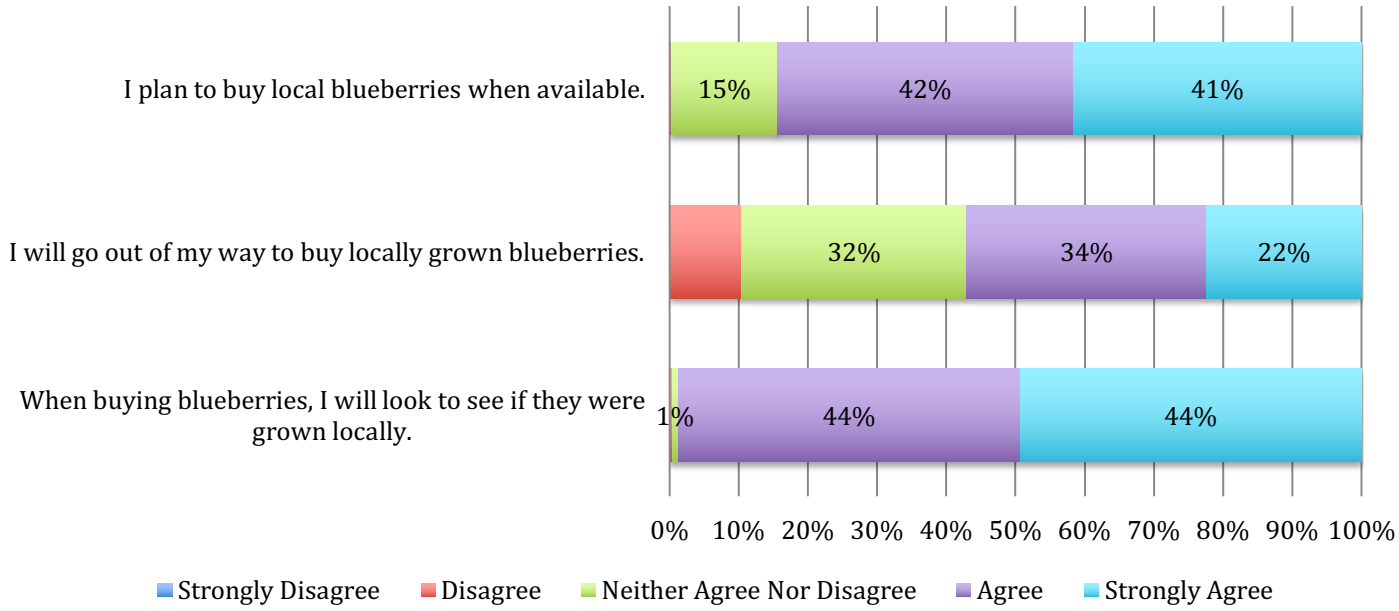
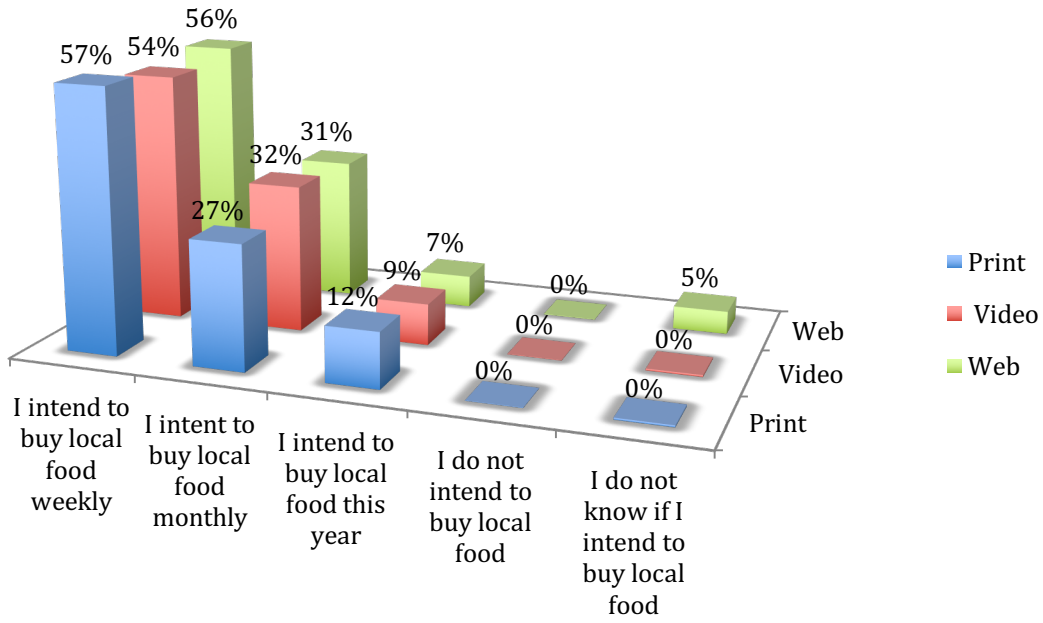


Figure 11. Respondents' Intent to Buy Local Blueberries in the Web Treatment Group



Finally, the respondents' intention to buy locally grown food, after receiving the media channel treatment was assessed. The respondents were asked about their intention to buy local food in general. Respondents in the print media channel treatment group indicated that 56% would buy local food on a weekly basis. Respondents in the video media channel treatment group indicated that 54% of them would buy local food on a weekly basis. And respondents in the web media channel treatment group indicated that 56% of them would buy local food on a weekly basis (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. Respondents' Intent to Buy Local Food Treatment by Media Channel



Demographics

The demographics of the respondents in this study were analyzed and compared to the most up-to-date data available from the U.S. Census for the state of Florida. The data from this study were analyzed and compared to the Florida Census data demographics to establish a proper weighting scale that was used to ensure the data in this study was as representative of the Florida population as possible. The weighting used in this study was established based on the respondents' gender, age, race, ethnicity, and area of residence and compared to the Florida census. Weighting data is a measure of quality to ensure the data in the study is as representative as possible of the population (Baker et al., 2013).

Table 4. Demographics Florida Census and sample comparison

	Florida 2010 Census pop.	*Florida 2010 Census %*	*Sample n*	*Sample %*
Gender				
Female	9,611,955	51.2	592	53.2
Male	9,189,355	48.8	530	46.8
Age				
19 and younger	4,048,641	23.9	16	1.4
20-29	2,407,985	12.8	153	13.6
30-39	2,288,785	12.2	160	14.2
40-49	2,653,989	14.2	160	14.3
50-59	2,542,709	13.5	253	22.5
60-69	2,094,483	11.1	256	22.8
70-79	1,384,221	7.4	114	10.2
80 and over	916,148	4.9	16	1.4
Race				
White	14,109,162	75.0	936	83.4
Black	2,999,862	16.0	137	12.2
Asian	454,821	2.4	46	4.1
American Indian	71,458	.4	18	1.6
Other	12,286	.1	5	.4
Hispanic				
Yes	4,223,806	22.5	53	4.7
No	14,577,504	77.5	1069	95.3
Total	18,801,310	100.00	1122	100.00

Findings

Upon analysis of the data for this research, the following findings were determined for each section of the research:

Media Usage

- In general, respondents spent 3-4 hours, on an average day, watching TV.
- The majority of respondents spent 1-2 hours, on an average day, browsing websites and another 1-2 hours sending and/or receiving emails.
- When reading books or magazines, the majority of respondents spend less than an hour up to two hours.

Local Food

- Almost half of the respondents indicated that buying local food was important to them.
- A negligible number of respondents chose not to buy local food.

Attitude to Message and Media Channel

- All three of the treatments resulted in respondents having a positive perception of the message.
- All three of the media channel treatments were positively perceived by the respondents, as indicated by their attitude toward the media channel.

Factors of Intention to Buy Local Food

- After interacting with a media channel treatment, respondents, overall, had a positive attitude toward the behavior of buying local blueberries.
- Respondents' subjective norms toward buying local food, regardless of the media channel treatment were positive.
- Respondents' perceived behavioral control was positive, regardless of the media channel treatment group they were assigned to.
- The web media channel treatment group's intent to buy local blueberries, when available, was slightly higher (41%) than the print (34%) or video (37%) media channel treatment groups.
- The web media channel treatment group's intent to look to see if blueberries were locally grown the next time they buy blueberries was slightly higher (44%) than the print (38%) or video (37%) media channel treatment groups.
- The media channel did not have much impact in respondents' intention to buy locally grown food.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, several recommendations can be made, with regard to predicting Florida consumers' intent to buy local specialty crops. The following recommendations are given within each section of this research:

Media Usage

- Practitioners should recognize that consumers are still engaging in TV and this may still be a viable media channel for connecting with the public.
- Consumers are spending two or less hours a day engaging in browsing websites; therefore, this form of advertising must be purposeful and relevant to garner consumers' limited time on this media channel.
    - Future research should be focused on understanding how consumers choose websites for information and what characteristics of websites are most appealing to consumers when looking for information about buying local food.
    - Practitioners should work to create webpages that are relevant and timely for consumers to access when engaging consumers about buying local food.
- Future research should be conducted to understand if individuals are reading books and magazines online, rather than in print because this research did not address the difference between print media displayed on electronic media.

Local Food

- Buying local food was shown to be important to consumers; however, whether or not that importance transcends the barriers, identified by previous research, of buying local food is unknown. Future research should focus on understanding the balance of social responsibility consumers feel to buy local food and the barriers associated with buying local food.
- Practitioners should realize that consumers do feel a moral obligation to buying local food; therefore, messaging and marketing strategies should be targeted to appeal to a consumer's moral obligation to buy local food.

Attitude to Message and Media Channel on Intention to Buy

- Respondents' attitudes toward buying local food were not impacted by the media channel treatment group they were assigned to (print, video or web). All three treatments yielded favorable attitudes from the respondents towards buying local blueberries. It should be noted that the message of "Fresh to You from Florida Farmers" was used in this research because it tested well with consumers in previous research (Holt & Rumble, 2014). Also, that research suggested that consumers wanted messages that connected them to those who produced their food; therefore, this study used a farmer sharing blueberries with consumers. The message and the visuals used for testing the message and the media channels may have resonated more so than a specific media channel with respondents in this research.
    - Future research should be conducted using visuals and messages that connect consumers with producers, as well as messages and graphics that do not depict a farmer to see if any differences are seen in respondents' perceptions and attitudes toward the message and the media channels.
    - Practitioners should work to provide a visual and emotional connection between consumers and producers until more research can be conducted in this area. The results of this study indicate that the message is integral to the consumers' perception of the media channel.

- The web media channel was slightly more effective at increasing respondents' intentions to buy local food; therefore, practitioners should utilize web-based marketing strategies when available.
    - More research should be conducted to understand what type of website, static or interactive, is more effective at increasing consumers' intentions to buy local food.

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Appendix I

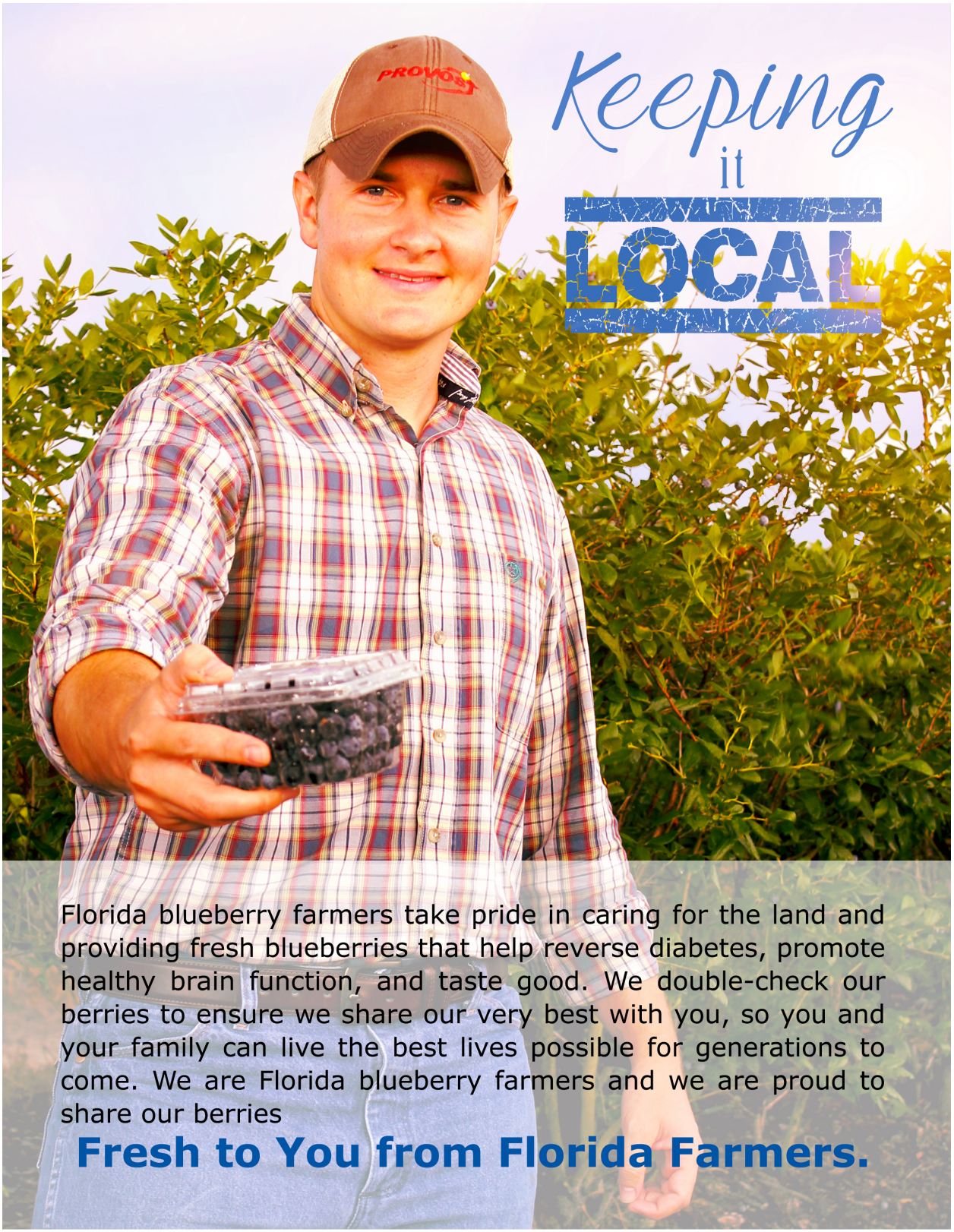

Figure 13. Print Communication Media Channel

Figure 14. A screen capture from one frame of the video media channel treatment

Figure 15. A screen capture of one page of the web media channel treatment