

An exploratory investigation of consumers' responsive behavior to aquaculture products in Italy

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Introduction

Consumer purchasing behavior towards seafood stuffs is capturing the interest of the main stakeholders of the supply chain of fishery and aquaculture, for political and economic reasons. The ever-growing world population and fish per-capita consumption are causing an alarming pressure on natural fish stocks. Therefore, fish from aquaculture is becoming increasingly important for human consumption despite a general perception about their negative impacts on environment and, by some chance, on natural resources as well. This study is aimed at assessing consumers' responsive behavior to aquaculture products in Italy, one of the most important markets in the European and Mediterranean panorama. From November 2017 to March 2018, 7,232 answers, from an on-line survey, have been collected and analyzed. Key themes such awareness between fisheries and aquaculture products, place and frequency of purchase and consumption have been explored as well as perceptions and expectations towards emerging sustainable products from organic aquaculture. Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample have been assessed (geographic distribution, gender, age). Presented results are part of a wider project, **BioBreed-H2O** (financed by the Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies), that aims at comprehending challenges and opportunity of the organic aquaculture sector along the entire supply chain.

Surveys goals

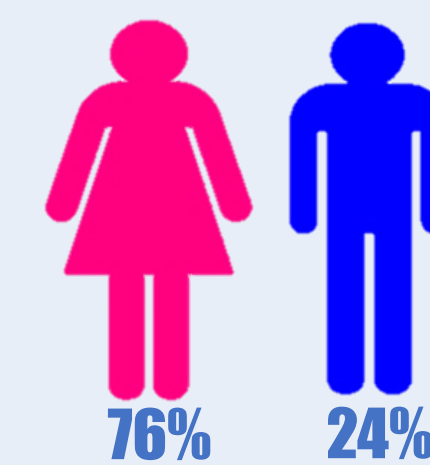
- Outline the Italian consumer of farmed fish
- Investigate Italian consumer's responsive behavior to organic aquaculture products
- Understand the Italian consumer concerns for sustainability
- Guide stakeholders and public administrators towards suitable productive, marketing strategies and aquaculture support strategies

Supply chain approach: Consumers' behavior

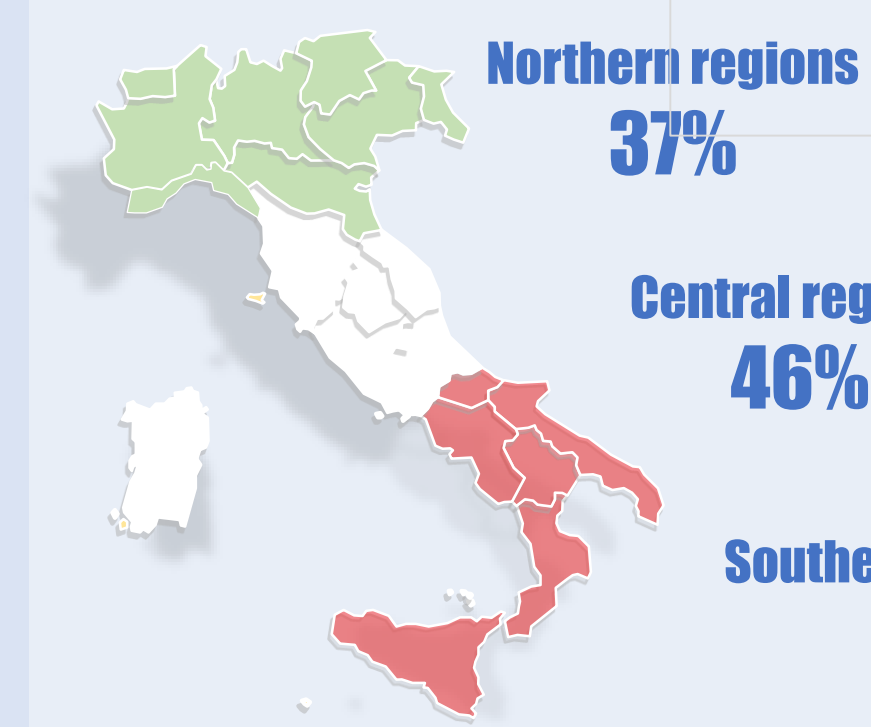
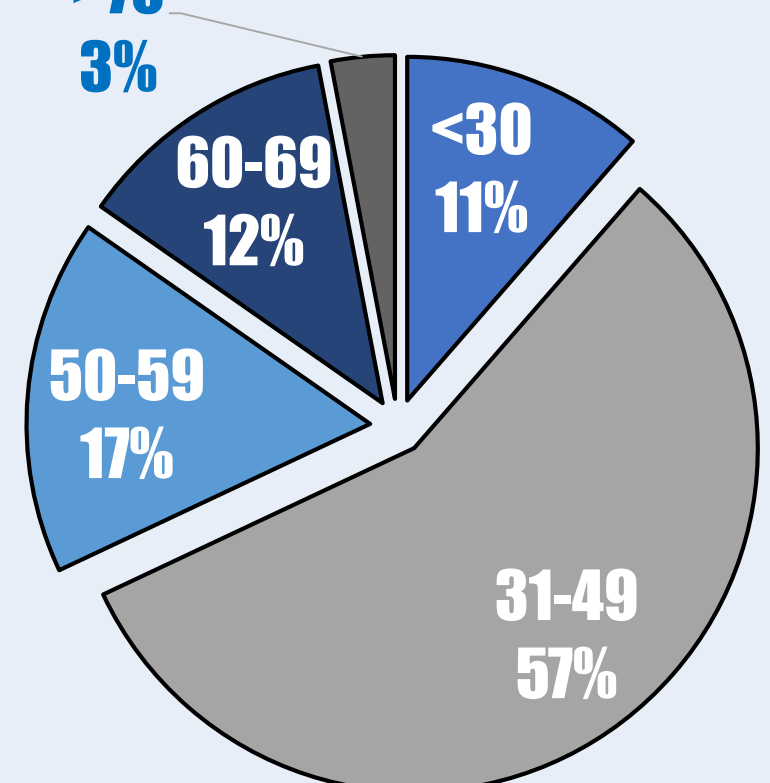


COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE

Sex

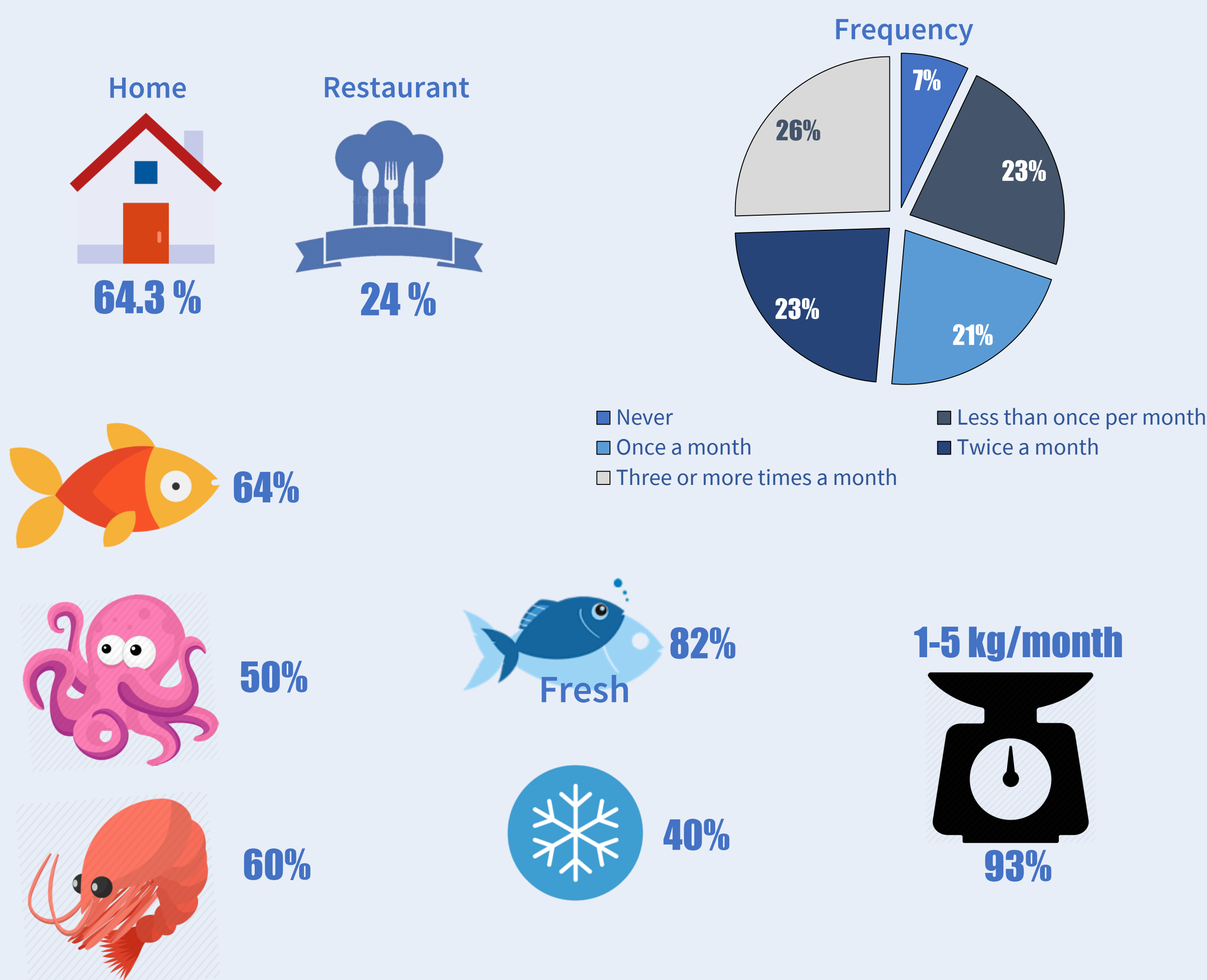


Age

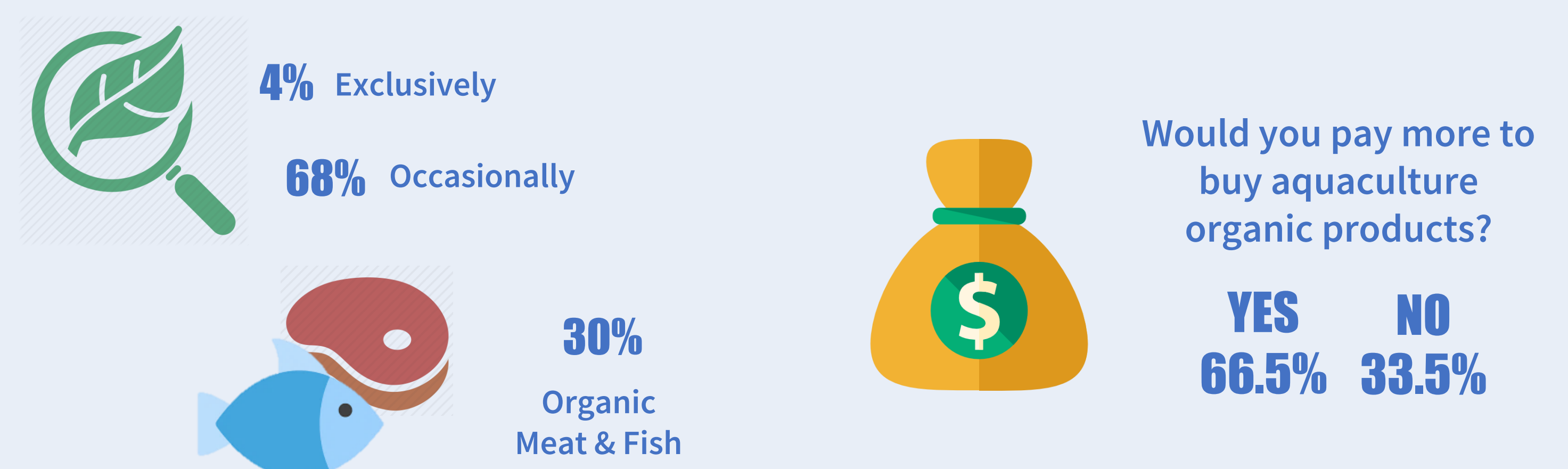


8200 answers collected

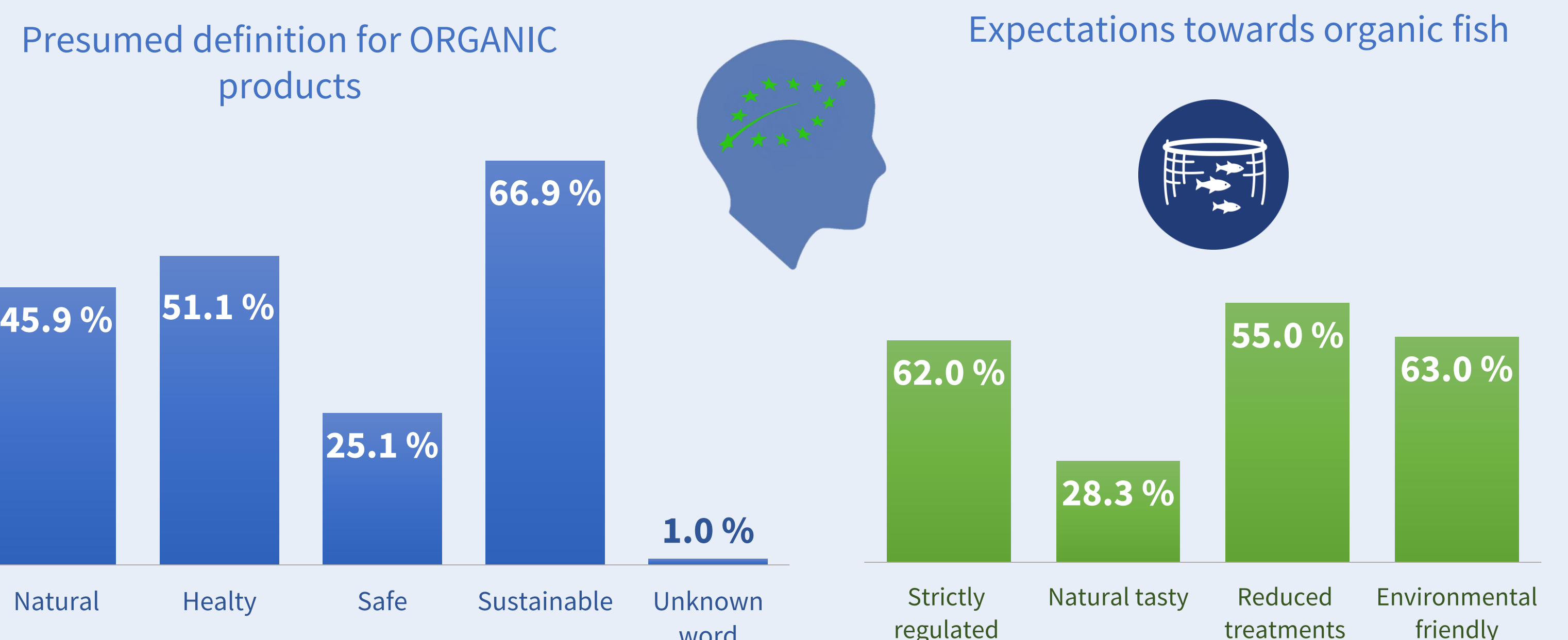
OVERALL FISH CONSUMPTION HABITS



ORGANIC PRODUCTS HABITS FOCUS



ORGANIC SEAFOOD PEOPLE AWARENESS



MONTHLY SPENDING HABITS



Results about consumption habits revealed that Italians mostly consume seafood in the household (64.3%), secondarily in restaurants (24%), while, for about 50% of the sample, purchase frequency is two or more times per month. Concerning attitude towards sustainable aquaculture products, although many consumers stated that they don't know enough about characteristics of organic seafood products, their expectations are well focused (reduced veterinary treatments, 55%; monitoring and transparency, 62%; sustainability, 63%; and natural taste, 28.3%). In conclusion, since most of consumers (66.5%) claimed to be willing to pay more for organic seafood, they seem to be ready to embrace this kind of products, as they confer them an added value of sustainability and transparency.

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mipaaf

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