



Czech Technical University in Prague

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Faculty of Electrical Engineering

Department of Economics, Management and Humanities

**QUALITY MARKS IN THE RUSSIAN MARKET**

MASTER THESIS

Study program: Electrical Engineering, Power Engineering and Management  
Branch of study: Management of Power Engineering and Electrotechnics  
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**DECLARATION:**

I hereby declare that this master's thesis is the product of my own independent work and that I have clearly stated all information sources used in the thesis according to Methodological Instruction No. 1/2009 - "On maintaining ethical principles when working on a university final project, CTU in Prague"

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## **ABSTRACT**

The diploma thesis is dedicated to quality marks that consumers can meet on the Russian market. The diploma thesis covers Russian quality marks, as well as foreign marks, goods with which can be imported into Russia. The main objective of the work is to identify the awareness and level of consumer confidence in the selected quality marks, determine the costs of obtaining and maintaining them, as well as to evaluate the possible benefits that the quality marks can bring to consumers, producers and the state.

In order to identify quality marks and compare them, the term "quality mark" has been defined in the diploma thesis. To identify consumer perception of quality marks, a research was conducted. This research included identification of the target group, development of a questionnaire and analysis of the survey results. The final part deals with the possible benefits of labeling with a quality mark for consumers, manufacturers and the state. This part also examines the costs needed to obtain the quality mark. The conclusion contains conclusions based on the data obtained as well as recommendations related to quality marks.

## **KEYWORDS**

Quality, quality mark, consumer perception, consumer survey, questionnaire, compliance, costs, benefits.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
BDIH	Bund deutscher Industrie und Handelsunternehmen (Federal Association of Industrial and Commercial Companies, Germany)
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
GB	Guobiao standards (China)
GEN	Global Ecolabelling Network
GOST	Government Standard (Russia)
GOSTK	Government Standard of Kazakhstan
ICEA	Istituto per la Certificazione Etica ed Ambientale (Institute for Ethical and Environmental Certification)
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
Roskachestvo	Rossijskaya sistema kachestva (Russian quality system)
STB	State Standard of Belarus
TUV	Technischer Überwachungsverein (Technical Inspection Association)
UkrSEPRO	Ukrainskaya gosudarstvennaya sistema sertifikacii produkcii (Ukrainian product certification system)
UN	United Nations
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organization

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays there are many products with different labels on the shop shelves. Consumers can be guided by the presence of labels that confirm the conformity of the product when buying a particular product. However, often the product packaging does not contain any additional information about the graphical labels other than a graphic image. Given that the perception of quality for each person and manufacturer may be different, the quality guaranteed by the manufacturer may not be related to the quality expected by the consumer. The consumer may not be interested in the fact that this product is produced in accordance with environmental standards and has a natural composition, but it may be important for him, the product is certified e.g. in the system of GOST.

Since each person perceives quality a little differently, it is necessary to define the concepts of quality and the quality mark. The first chapter of my diploma thesis looks at how the perception of quality has changed in history and also examines modern concepts of quality. In chapter one, I also define the quality mark, which is the basis for my entire thesis.

In order for the consumer to make a responsible choice of goods with one or another mark, he must understand what is behind the label on the package. Often the package does not contain any additional information about the quality mark except for the graphical picture, that is why in the second chapter the Russian quality marks which can be found on the goods on the Russian market were considered.

On the shelves of Russian stores can be found not only goods produced in Russia, but also goods imported from abroad. Foreign goods can also be marked with different quality marks. For this reason, in chapter three, I considered the most popular quality marks of countries that import the greatest amount of goods into Russia.

The next part, presented in the fourth chapter, aims to identify the consumer perception of quality marks. In this chapter, a study of consumer attitudes towards quality and quality marks was conducted. The research was carried out by interviewing potential consumers through questionnaires. A representative sample was compiled for the survey, which corresponds to the statistics on buyers in Russian stores.

The fifth part of the diploma thesis is devoted to the analysis of costs and benefits of obtaining of a quality mark. This section examines the possible benefits of obtaining a quality mark from different parties - from the consumer, from the producer and from the state. Also in this section the costs of obtaining a quality mark are considered. The data for this part were obtained in cooperation with Roskachestvo.

The final part of the thesis contains the results and conclusions based on the research done and data analysis. The value of the work done is considered.

## **1. Origin of quality and quality marks**

The origin of the perception of quality goes back to ancient times. Ancient people tried to make their homes, roads, bridges reliable and durable. And they succeeded in doing so, as many ancient buildings have survived to this day. The history of development of quality marks I will consider together with the history of development of the concept of quality and its perception.

### **1.1 History of quality and its perception**

People have been trying to understand what quality is since ancient times. In the beginning, the concept of quality was considered only as a philosophical category. It is known that in the III century BC Aristotle defined the concept of quality as the difference between objects on the basis of "good - bad" [1].

The problems of quality and standardization in the ancient world were relevant in many empires. The Roman Empire achieved significant success. The unified system of measurements for land surveying adopted throughout the Empire; standardization of the size and shape of bricks and pipes; introduction of a semicircular arch as a standard architectural form; standardization of technological processes in construction; introduction of rules limiting the height of houses in Rome - all these are examples of successful development of standardization. The existence of standards for measurements has contributed to the creation, use and improvement of measuring tools such as an angle meter and a variety of length meters, as well as methods for calculating distances on flat but uneven surfaces [2].

In the Middle Ages, efforts to define and control quality continued, but most often it was local, the quality was controlled by the master himself. At the same time, the quality of the product changed depending on the person who produced it. Quality was determined by the talent, skill and ability of the worker, as well as his ability to compare the specific results of his work with a given model. In ancient Russia, the first documents containing a description of production technology were made in the form of birch bark letters. Attempts to standardize the daily life of people in the 15-16 centuries was "Domostroy". This document contained various instructions on how to run a household [1,2].

Until the end of the XIX century in the craft and manufactory production actually existed a system of individual control and quality assurance. The Russian Emperor Peter I achieved significant success. His decree on quality of January 11, 1723 presented the Emperor's requirements both for the quality of guns and for quality control, as well as penalties for the production of defective products. Thus, the decree states, in particular, that it is necessary "...to observe the serviceability of guns day and night... Guns to be checked by inspection and firing... And two guns should be fired every month until they're ruined... "Do not mark the bad guns... Given the high requirements of the European markets, in order to expand the export of Russian goods in them Peter I not only introduced technical specifications for them, but also organized state quality inspections commissions in St. Petersburg and Arkhangelsk. These commissions were required to monitor the quality of raw materials exported from Russia [1].

At the beginning of the 20th century, the transition from piece to batch production began. In 1905. Taylor developed a system of management organization at the enterprise. This system set the

requirements for the quality of products in the form of tolerance fields and introduced certain templates, set to the upper and lower limits of tolerance - pass and fail-safe calibers. The first quality professionals - inspectors - were introduced to ensure the successful operation of the Taylor system [3].

In 1924 in "Bell Telephone Laboratories" was established a group led by R.L. Jones, which established the foundations of statistical quality management. These were the development of control maps by W. Shewhart, the first concepts and tables of sample quality control developed by G. Dodge and G. Roming, which became the beginning of statistical methods of quality management, which later, thanks to E. Deming, became very widespread in Japan and had a very significant impact on the economic revolution in this country [3].

In the 1950s, the concept of Total Quality Control (TQC) was introduced. The concept of TQC consisted in predictive elimination of potential discrepancies in products at the design stage, checking the quality of delivered products, components and materials, as well as production management and supervision over compliance with the specified quality requirements. In the 80s, the transition from Total Quality Control (TQC) to Total Quality Management (TQM) began. While the TQC is quality management for the purpose of meeting the established requirements, the TQM is also management of the objectives and the requirements themselves. The TQM also includes quality assurance, which is interpreted as a system of measures that gives the customer confidence in product quality. At this time, a series of new International Standards for Quality Systems - ISO 9000 (1987) - was introduced, which had a very significant impact on management and quality assurance [3].

In the 90s, the influence of society on enterprises increased, and enterprises began to take into account the interests of society more and more. This led to the emergence of the ISO 14000 series of standards, which set out requirements for management systems in terms of environmental protection and OHSAS 18000 occupational health and safety standard. Integrated quality management systems were introduced [3].

## **1.2 Definition of quality**

Many attempts have been made during the quality development process to define the term quality. Hegel's fundamental definition of quality as a philosophical category can be interpreted as follows: quality is the inherent properties and characteristics that define an object and distinguish it from another. According to GOST 15467-79 "quality is a set of properties of products causing its suitability to satisfy certain needs according to its purpose" [4].

I would like to mention, in my opinion, an important definition for understanding product quality. This definition is given in ISO 8402-86. According to this standard: "Quality is the set of properties and characteristics of a product or service that enable it to meet the conditional or anticipated needs of a consumer". This standard makes it clear that the word quality means different concepts for different people [4]. It is very important for the producer to know what quality is in the opinion of its consumers. This is why the definition plays a significant role in my paper.

Currently the most commonly used definition of quality is that provided by ISO 9000:2015. The standard provides the following definition: "Quality is the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics of an object fulfils the requirements. The requirements in this definition are understood as "need or expectation that is stated, generally implied or obligatory" [5]. This way, quality requirements can be set by the consumer, as well as by the state or a supervisory authority.

Object characteristics can be various parameters, such as service life, manufacturing material, power, performance, etc. In this diploma thesis, I will consider the final output resulting from the process as an object. An organization's output may be a product or service. If a certain quality is achieved, the product or service may be labeled with special markings to confirm compliance. Such labeling can be used on many products and services.

It may be obligatory or voluntary. In order to determine which labels are quality marks and which are not, it is necessary to clearly define the definition of the quality mark.

According to the classification of the Roskachestvo national quality monitoring system, a quality and safe product is a sample corresponding to all mandatory requirements for product properties established by the technical regulations of the Customs Union, as well as the information declared on product labeling [6].

### **1.3 Definition of quality mark**

I define a quality mark as: "A voluntary or obligatory labeling of a product or service that reflects conformity of their characteristics with the requirements, confirmed by regular examinations by a third independent party".

Such a quality mark may provide both a basic quality that guarantees safety and compliance with compulsory quality parameters set by the state. The quality mark may also refer to the exceptional quality of a product or service that further distinguishes it from its competitors.

In order for the consumer to be able to choose a product with the quality mark he is interested in, he must be familiar with this mark. Compulsory quality marks are informative in order to improve the overall quality of products on the market. However, voluntary quality marks may be intended to improve the quality of products in the country (e.g. the Russian quality mark "Znak kachestva" - a state mark free of charge for receipt designed to improve the quality of products in the country) [6], as well as to be a tool to increase profits. In order for a quality mark to fulfill its function, significant resources need to be spent on its promotion. This is necessary so that producers have an incentive to undergo voluntary certification. Since the quality mark can play a role in the consumer's choice of goods. And consumers can confidently give preference to goods with quality marks.

For the consumer to know what is behind the quality marks, it is necessary to describe the quality marks that consumers can find on the Russian market. The next chapter deals in detail with the quality marks of the Russian Federation and their history in the Russian market. The third chapter gives an overview of foreign quality marks that consumers can find on the shelves of Russian stores.

## 2. Quality marks in the Russian Federation

For Russian customers, the most relevant is an explanation of what exactly Russian marks of quality mean. This chapter describes the history of the origin of quality marks in the Russian Federation and also provides a description of the most popular Russian quality marks. When considering Russian and foreign quality marks, the greatest attention was paid to the quality marks that can be used to mark food, household chemicals, and cosmetics. I believe that these are the most popular product categories that the average person in Russia buys. This hypothesis was tested in Chapter Four.

### 2.1 History of quality marks in Russia.

The low quality of products has always been a cause for concern for society. The buyer has always tried to find a quality manufacturer and buy goods from him.

In Russia, the first person who tried to organize the quality of goods was Peter I in the beginning of the XVIII century. During his reign, Demidov's Ural breeders began to brand their products with the "Sable Sign". This sign at once has won authority both domestic, and at foreign buyers.

In 1824 there was an event which became the beginning of struggle for quality. Merchants, who had already established themselves as reliable suppliers of high quality goods for the ruling dynasty, began to call themselves Suppliers of the Court of His Imperial Majesty. Thirty years later, Emperor Alexander II approved the appearance of the quality mark and the procedure for obtaining it. Since 1862, the state emblem of the selected manufacturers could place on their products and signs. And what was very important, it was not a lifelong title, and every two years - this title had to be confirmed. It was a very honorable title, and ordinary buyers were guided by it, knowing that here you can buy only the highest quality goods [7].

Figure 1 shows the chocolate label produced by a supplier who has been awarded the "Supplier of the Court of His Imperial Majesty" label.



Figure 1 - The product marked with the quality mark "Supplier of the Court of His Imperial Majesty" [8].

After the founding of the USSR, all previous quality marks were abolished. Production was aimed at maximizing output to meet batch requirements. Production rates began to decline, and the quantity of products produced did not turn into quality. By the 1960s, Soviet quality could not compete

with European quality, and when it affected the defense industry, the development of radical measures began [8].

In 1962, the Trademark Law appeared. This document sets out the obligations of state cooperative and public enterprises to carry out the marking of products provided for by GOST standards, specifications, contracts and special delivery conditions. There is also an obligation to place trademarks registered with the Committee for Inventions and Discoveries under the Council of Ministers of the USSR on the products manufactured by them or on their packaging [9]. On April 20, 1967, the State Quality Mark of the USSR was put into effect. Its purpose was to stimulate the improvement of the quality and efficiency of public production.



Figure 2 - State quality mark of the USSR [10].

According to the results of the state certification of the quality of goods, the enterprises received the right to mark their products with the State Quality Mark of the USSR for a period from two to three years. The procedure of state quality certification was approved by the Committee of Standards, Measures and Measuring Instruments under the Council of Ministers of the USSR. The first to receive this sign was the electric motor produced at the Lenin plant.

Officially, the use of the Mark ceased with the collapse of the USSR, but some plants applied it to their products until 1993-1994 [10].

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, new systems of standards had to be developed. Later on, attempts were made to introduce new quality marks to improve the quality of products. Such programs were "Narodnaya Marka" and "Vserossiyskaya Marka" [7].

The first contest and awarding of "Narodnaya Marka" prizes took place in 1998. In the nineties, many global corporations came to Russia to offer their own products, which are new to Russians. In order to assess the success of brand building on the Russian market and attract the attention of Russian manufacturers to the process of goods promotion in market conditions, the first national competition of branded goods - "Narodnaya Marka" was held. The competition was based on the following concept: if the brand has a national reputation and has formed an opinion about itself as the best among similar, we can confidently talk about building a successful national brand. Both quality marks exist and are still awarded. These and other quality marks of the Russian Federation will be considered in the next chapter [13].



## 2.2 Quality marks implemented under special programs

To compete in the global market, the state must produce products of sufficient quality. Production of quality products requires high costs for the enterprise. In order to encourage enterprises to produce the highest quality products, the state, with the support of various authorities, has developed several competitions, the winners of which are awarded with quality marks. Special programs designed to improve the quality of products are discussed in this chapter.

### **National quality monitoring system in the Russian Federation "Rossijskaya sistema kachestva".**

In 2015, the Government of the Russian Federation issued a decree on April 30, 2015, establishing the Roskachestvo, an autonomous non-profit organization. The purpose of this organization is to improve the quality of Russian products [11].

Autonomous non-commercial organization "Rossijskaya sistema kachestva" (Roskachestvo) is a national system of quality monitoring, which carries out independent research of the quality of goods presented on the shelves of Russian stores and assigns the best Russian products "Znak kachestva".

The organization was established by the Government of the Russian Federation and is financed from the federal budget. The main task of Roskachestvo is to promote domestically produced products in the domestic and foreign markets and increase their credibility. For this purpose, Roskachestvo conducts fan research of consumer goods and publishes the results on its portal. High-quality goods of Russian manufacture are assigned the Russian "Znak kachestva" by Roskachestvo [12].



Figure 3 - Russian quality mark "Znak kachestva" [12].

Manufacturers of products meeting the increased quality standards are offered to undergo a voluntary certification procedure, during which experts establish the level of localization of production. If a product confirms both its high quality and Russian origin, it is assigned a Russian quality mark. The manufacturer may use it for marking the certified goods, as well as for marketing purposes. The certification procedure is free of charge for manufacturers.

Independent testing of various product groups is carried out by Roskachestvo throughout the country. Each research involves from 15 to 200 brands of one category of goods. Samples are purchased directly from retailers by certified experts. Numbered and impersonally numbered product samples are

sent for testing to independent testing centers, which, in turn, are pre-determined by means of interlaboratory comparative tests. Each product category is studied on 20-100 parameters of safety, quality and consumer characteristics [12].

The goods presented in the study are examined for compliance with technical regulations of the Customs Union, GOSTs and standards of the Roskachestvo. According to the results of the research, goods are divided into three categories:

- Products with violations - goods in which violations of the requirements of the law "On Protection of Consumer Rights", mandatory requirements established by the technical regulations of the Customs Union or national standards have been identified;
- Quality and safe goods - the samples comply with all mandatory requirements to the product properties established by the technical regulations of the Customs Union, as well as information stated on the product labeling;
- Goods of high quality - safe goods of a high level of quality, which meet the standard of GOST R "Rossijskaya sistema kachestva" [12].

#### **Annual award "Narodnaya Marka"**

The "Narodnaya Marka" award is another name - "Marka Nomer 1 v Rossii" is aimed at supporting fair competition and recognizes the need to create a brand compliance with the guaranteed quality of goods and justify the trust of customers. The prize develops and maintains the role and importance of the brand in the public consciousness [13].



Figure 4 - "Marka Nomer 1 v Rossii" quality mark [13].

The organizers of the award distinguish two main criteria that determine the brand leadership:

- Top of mind (the first brand to be remembered);
- Perceived quality (how much customers love a brand, trust it and are ready to recommend it).
- The rating "Narodnaya Marka" is compiled annually. According to the terms of the contest its winners get the right to use the quality mark "Narodnaya Marka" in advertising and packaging for two years [13].

## **All-Russian contest of the Program "100 Best Goods of Russia"**

100 best goods of Russia - All-Russian competition of the Program "100 best goods of Russia", stimulating enterprises and organizations to improve the quality and competitiveness of Russian products and services.

It was founded in 1998 by the State Committee of the Russian Federation on Standardization and Metrology, the Interregional Public Organization Academy of Quality Problems and the editorial board of the Standards and Quality magazine.

The goals of the contest:

1. Contributing to the strategic sustainable development of Russian companies in terms of competitive products and providing high quality services that are in demand in the markets.
2. Promotion of quality, environmental friendliness, safety, energy efficiency and consolidation of scientific, engineering, administrative and production potential to ensure the image of enterprises.
3. Stimulation of the increase in the level of economic competition and competition of domestic producers, encouraging them to constantly improve and modernize production, thus contributing to the solution of key problems of economic development.
4. Promotion of high quality products and services in the markets of Russia and the Common Economic Space of the Customs Union to improve the standard of living and quality of life, taking into account innovative, educational, market and other modern challenges, including the rules and principles of good practice of the WTO, the OECD recommendations, and APEC decisions [14].



Figure 5 - Quality mark of the Program "100 Best Goods of Russia" [15].

The competition is held in six main categories:

- Provisions;
- Manufactured goods;
- Industrial and technology products;
- Craftworks and Artistic Crafts;
- Human services;
- Industrial and technical services.

The competition is held in two stages

Regional phase takes place in February and May. The organization and conduct of the regional stage is carried out by the regional quality commissions, which are based on the Federal Budget Institutions Standardization and Metrology Centers, representatives of regional authorities, mass media and the public. Regional quality commissions have been established and are active in almost all constituent entities of the Russian Federation. Participants of the regional stage who have not passed the federal stage receive the Participant's Certificate.

Federal stage takes place from June to December. The organization and conduct of the federal stage is carried out by the Directorate of the "100 Best Goods of Russia" program together with experts of Rosstandart. The winners of the federal stage are awarded diplomas of Laureates and Diploma winners [14].

The cost of participation is:

For all types of products, except the category Craftworks and Artistic Crafts - 16200 rubles, including VAT (20%) - 2 700 rubles for each item of nominated goods (products or services), put up for the federal stage of the competition in accordance with the final protocol of the Regional Commission on Quality based on the invoice for payment.

For products of the category Craftworks and Artistic Crafts - 9912 rubles, including VAT (20%) - 1652 rubles for each item of nominated goods (products or services), put up for the federal stage of the competition in accordance with the final protocol of the Regional Commission on Quality based on the invoice for payment [16].

### **National contest "All-Russian Mark" . XXI Century quality mark**

Exhibition of the contest "All-Russian Mark" (III millennium). Quality mark of the XXI century is a long-term project aimed at promoting quality goods, services and advanced technologies in the Russian market, solving strategic import substitution tasks.

The program has been in effect since 1999. Within the framework of the program, products, services and advanced technologies are examined according to the quality criteria. The functions of the expert commission are performed by FBU ROSTEST-Moscow. According to the results of the expertise the winners are awarded with the XXI century Quality mark.

Over 14,000 types of products, services and technologies presented by the enterprises of Russia and CIS countries have been awarded the Quality mark during the period of its implementation.

The goals and objectives of the program:

- Assisting Russian manufacturers in promoting high-quality Russian goods, services and technologies in the Russian and foreign markets;
- Assistance in attraction of investments;
- Establishment of the quality mark for Russian goods, services and technologies - "All-Russian Mark" (III millennium). Quality Mark of the XXI century;
- Organization of all-Russian campaign to improve the quality of goods and services by attracting public attention to the quality of products of Russian enterprises [17].



Figure 6 - Golden quality mark awarded to the laureates of the "All-Russian Mark" (III millennium) competition. XXI century quality mark [17].

The trademark is protected by "Trademark Certificate No. 192200" of the Russian Agency for Patents and Trademarks. The right to a trademark is protected by the Law of the Russian Federation No. 35201 "On Trademarks, Service Marks and Appellations of Origin of Goods" dated September 23, 1992 according to Article 2 of this Law.

Gold, silver and bronze quality marks are issued for free use for a period of 2 years exclusively to the winners of the contest "All-Russian Mark" (III millennium). Quality mark of the XXI century.

The platinum mark is issued for free use for a period of 2 years exclusively to the Platinum Laureates of the contest.

The Mark "All-Russian Mark" (III millennium). Quality mark of the XXI century is used by the winner in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of article 4 of the Law of the Russian Federation "On Trademarks, Service Marks and Appellations of Origin of Goods, namely it is prohibited to "unauthorized manufacture, use, import, offer for sale, sale, other introduction into the economic turnover or storage for this purpose of a trademark or goods designated by this mark, or a designation similar to it to the degree of confusion, for homogeneous goods [18,19].

According to article 46 of the Law of the Russian Federation "On Trademarks, Service Marks and Appellations of Origin of Goods", the illegal use of a trademark "contradicting the provisions of paragraph 2 of Article 4 and paragraph 2 of Article 40 of this Law, entails civil and criminal liability in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation" [19].

Legal entities are allowed to participate in the competition: enterprises, firms and organizations that produce their own products, provide services or supply goods and services to the Russian market, regardless of the form of ownership of the enterprise.

Only winners of the "All-Russian Mark" III millennium contest are allowed to participate in the final stage of the contest held once every two years.

The condition of registration for participation in the competition is the submission of an application for participation in the organizing committee of the exhibition.

The set of documents for each type of goods or services to be submitted for the competition according to the approved list and samples of products must be submitted not later than 30 days before the exhibition.

Evaluation of the quality of products shall be made on the basis of the conclusion of expert commissions, the results of tests and expertise. Samples of products shall be provided not later than 30 days prior to the exhibition.

The expert commission is formed on the basis of the Russian center for testing and certification (ROSTEST-Moscow) of Gosstandart of Russia and is approved by the council of the quality mark.

Samples of the products provided for the competition should be submitted to the expert commission of the exhibition in accordance with the requirements of the regulations on the examination of goods and services.

The decision on awarding goods and services shall be made by the XXI century quality mark council on the basis of conclusions and minutes of the expert commission of the exhibition (competition) and shall be formalized by the relevant resolution of the quality mark council.

In case of a negative conclusion of the expert commission on the products or services submitted for the competition, the applicant shall have the right within 30 days to make the necessary adjustments to conduct a second expert examination on a non-repayable basis [20].

### **Quality mark "Russian Mark"**

The "Russian Mark" program, created in 1997, was designed to revive the state quality mark. Non-profit organization "National Fund Russian Mark" has the rank of the government commission on the use of the quality mark. The founders of the National Fund "Russian Mark" are: "The Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs"; the "Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation"; the "Association of Russian Banks"; the "Russian Exchange Union and the All-Russian Center for Public Opinion Research" [21].



Figure 7 - Golden quality mark "Russian Mark" [22].

The quality mark "Russian Mark", which has 3 degrees, is awarded to the winners of national competitions only after having passed the certification of several independent expert commissions and having been approved by the supreme council of "Russian Mark" in the nominations:

- Quality Russian product;

- Quality Russian service;
- Advanced Russian technology;

For foreign enterprises that have been supplying goods to Russia for at least 5 years, the Supplier of products to the Russian market sign has been introduced [22].

Therefore, this chapter has considered special programs designed to improve the quality of products, as well as stimulating enterprises to produce products in accordance with the requirements. This may increase the competitiveness of the enterprise within the country, as well as the competitiveness of the country in the world market.

### **2.3 Other quality marks in the Russian Federation**

In the Russian Federation, there are separate quality marks on the packaging and inform the customer that the products are certified and comply with established quality standards and have a certificate of conformity or declaration of conformity. These quality marks may help the buyer to quickly determine the conformity of the product to certain requirements.

#### **Quality mark RST (GOST R)**

Determination of conformity of products can be carried out in the form of declaration, compulsory certification and voluntary certification. For each form of conformity assessment, quality marks are defined [23].

#### **RST quality mark for compulsory certification in the GOST R system**

If the goods are subject to compulsory certification and a compulsory certificate of conformity has been issued for them, then the products are marked with the compulsory certification quality mark. This mark of conformity reflects the information about the certification body that issued the certificate of conformity. Alphabetic and numeric designations correspond to the number of the certification body. The rules of application of the quality mark are regulated by the document GOST R 50460-92 [23].

The mark of conformity, which is protected against counterfeiting, is a thin, multi-layered, surface-marked label with an inner, circumferential, 12-mm-diameter relief that creates a visually observable image. In the center of the circle, depending on the angle of view, a graphic representation of the quality mark shall be viewed, as shown in Figure 8 [24].



Figure 8 - RST quality mark for compulsory certification [24].

### **RST quality mark for voluntary certification**

After the voluntary certification and the receipt of a certificate of conformity by the applicant or manufacturer, the products are marked with a sign of conformity of voluntary certification. This quality mark of conformity reflects the information that the certification is voluntary. The application of this quality mark is not a mandatory requirement of the law. When goods are marked with the voluntary certification quality mark, the code of the certification body is not reflected [23]. Figure 9 shows the design of the PCT quality mark for voluntary certification.



Figure 9 - RST mark of conformity for voluntary certification [23].

### **Quality mark of products to be declared in the GOST R system**

If the products are subject to declaration of conformity in the GOST R system and the enterprise has registered a declaration of conformity, the products are marked with the PCT quality mark without the information code of the certification body. The affixing of this mark of conformity is a compulsory requirement for the marking of goods, which are reflected in the nomenclature of products subject to confirmation of quality in the form of a declaration of conformity [23].



Figure 10 - Mark of conformity when declaring conformity in the GOST R system [23].

### **PCT quality mark on product compliance with technical regulations**

The mark is used to mark goods that have passed the confirmation of compliance with technical regulations. This symbol was introduced only recently, due to the adoption of technical regulations. The certificate of compliance with the technical regulations is drawn up on a form that also has its own distinctive features [25].



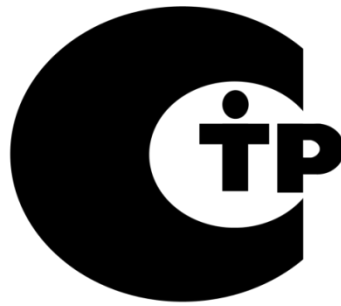


Figure 11 - RST quality mark on product compliance with technical regulations [25].

The main purpose of the labeling is to clearly show important information about the products. You can identify the product by the quality mark. First of all, the presence of this quality mark at once indicates that the product has undergone a quality assurance procedure. Secondly, the PCT quality mark will tell you which system the product was certified in. Third, the marking contains information on which body conducted the procedure. The conformity mark could also be used for promotional purposes. The availability of the quality mark gives consumers greater confidence in the products and can increase demand for the product [25].

#### **The "Environmentally friendly product" quality mark**

This quality mark is applied to the products of manufacturers who have won the "Environmentally Safe Product nomination". Food, agricultural products, industrial and technical goods, perfumes and cosmetics, consumer goods can apply for such a certificate [26].



Figure 12 - The "Environmentally friendly product" quality mark [26].

Products that claim to be labeled this quality mark must not be harmful to the environment. The main goal of the contest is to promote natural and ecologically clean products of perfect quality on the Russian market. In addition, the event stimulates the introduction of new technologies that allow for the production of safe products.

The winning companies in this category have the right to mark their products and packaging within two years. The final verdict on awarding the respective certificate is adopted by a special council, which is guided by the conclusion of the expert commission. Upon completion of two years, the company must confirm compliance with the requirements of the standard [26].

## Eco-Certification "Leaf of Life"

"Leaf of Life" is a Russian ecolabeling program developed by the St. Petersburg Ecological Union. This mark is the only one in Russia that is internationally recognized for its scientific approach to the evaluation of products, projects and services based on comprehensive life cycle analysis. In 2007, the Russian ecolabeling system was recognized by the international community as complying with the principles of ISO 14024 and the world practice of voluntary environmental certification. This organization is also a member of GEN. Saint-Petersburg Ecological Union became the first and the only body for environmental certification of products and services in Russia, which is entitled to issue an environmental certificate of international level [27,28].



Figure 13 - Eco-Certification mark "Leaf of Life" [28].

According to the organization's mission, this program supports responsible consumption and production, which is one of the seventeen UN sustainable development goals [28].

The use of this marking guarantees:

- Legitimate and verifiable use of the term eco-product and other environmental statements in communications at various levels;
- Advantages over competitors who do not have eco-labels;
- Strengthening of image, growth of loyalty on the part of consumers, partners and retailers;
- Market expansion through responsible consumers;
- Participation in private and public tenders with an environmental component.

Involvement in this program implies world-class expertise, as the organization is accredited in the International Program of mutual trust and recognition of 23 leading ecolabels of the world. This certification is voluntary and is carried out for a fee, depending on the type and quantity of products [28].

This chapter provided a brief historical introduction to quality marks in Russia. This chapter also explains what is behind the most popular Russian quality marks. For quality marks presented in this chapter, there was a description, the order of delivery, as well as the requirements for the product marked with these marks and the guarantees that a quality mark gives to the consumer.

### 3. Quality marks on the world market

In the Russian market, not all products are Russian-made. Consequently, the consumer can be offered products with foreign quality marks. In order to recognize the quality products it is necessary to have an idea of the existing quality marks of other countries, whose products can have on the shelves in the Russian store.

#### 3.1 Quality marks in Europe

Today you can find quite a big number of goods from Europe on the shelves of Russian shops. According to [29], a significant part of the total import of products to Russia is accounted for by European countries. The majority of imported products from European countries are from Germany, Italy, France, Poland, England and the Czech Republic.

Table 1 shows the volume of imports of European products into Russia in US dollars and the percentage of total imports of goods into Russia from September 2018 to January 2019.

Table 1 – All import to Russia from European countries (based on [29]).

The Country	Total imports	Percentage of total imports
Germany	\$ 9,81 billions	10,1 %
Italy	\$ 4,24 billions	4,4 %
France	\$ 3,21 billions	3,3 %
Poland	\$ 2,15 billions	2,2 %

Consider the import of food products and household chemicals into Russia. These categories are important for this research because most often an average person buys goods from these categories. Food, tobacco products, and household chemicals for the home are all bought almost every day. These categories of goods are goods of everyday use. The quality of these products can have a significant impact on human health.

Table 2 – Import of foodstuffs, drinks, tobacco products to Russia from European countries. Data for the period from September 2018 to January 2019. (based on [30]).

The Country	Total imports	Percentage of total imports
Germany	\$ 438 millions	9,8 %
Italy	\$ 386 millions	8,7 %
France	\$ 282 millions	6,3 %
Poland	\$ 178 millions	4 %

Table 3 – Import of chemical products to Russia from European countries. Data for the period from September 2018 to January 2019 (based on [31]).

The Country	Total imports	Percentage of total imports
Germany	\$ 1,81 billions	15 %
France	\$ 1,02 billions	8,5 %
Italy	\$ 0,607 billions	5 %
England	\$ 0,401 billions	3,3 %
Poland	\$ 0,28 billions	2,3 %

Therefore, in this subchapter will be considered the quality marks in the Germany, France, Italy, Poland and the all-European quality marks.

#### **All-European quality marks.**

In Europe, there is a quality marking that indicates that products comply with European safety standards for people, property and the environment. This is the CE marking. This is a special marking applied to the product, which shows that the product meets the basic requirements of EU directives and harmonised standards of the European Union, and that the product has passed the conformity assessment procedure. The CE marking indicates that the product does not harm the health of its users and is environmentally friendly [32].



Figure 14 - CE conformity marking [32].

The CE marking is compulsory for products covered by the New and Global Approach Directives, which require the CE marking [33].

At the same time, CE marking of goods cannot be used for advertising or marketing purposes, or applied voluntarily to goods for which this type of certification is not provided [32].

The CE marking is the mark of conformity with agreed standards and regulations and is applied to certain groups of goods for which the marking is mandatory. A product is subject to compulsory certification if the Directive defines its CE marking. If the product meets all necessary requirements, the manufacturer is obliged to issue an EC declaration of conformity. In this case, the CE marking may be affixed to the product itself or to the packaging. The presence of the CE marking means that the product

has passed the conformity assessment procedure and that the manufacturer must have all the necessary technical documentation to prove conformity with the standards and directives [33].

The manufacturer is legally responsible for ensuring that the basic safety requirements for CE marked products are met [33]. The consumer can be sure that the product with the CE marking is safe to use and environmentally friendly. This product does not contain any prohibited substances, dyes or preservatives (other than permitted). The manufacturer must also provide evidence that the product has a declared effect or property. The manufacturer is also obliged to specify all ingredients included in the product in descending order of weight of each ingredient when added to the product. For any contravention of the requirements, the manufacturer is heavily responsible. Therefore, in the context of a diploma thesis, this marking may be considered as a quality mark.

### **Quality marks in Germany.**

Germany is an important economic partner of Russia, ranking first among European countries in importing goods into Russia [34].

According to Table 4, the main goods imported from Germany to Russia are machinery and equipment, chemical products, transport, plastics and food products.

Table 4 – Structure of imports to Russia from Germany. Data for the period from September 2018 to January 2019 (based on [29]).

The product category	Total imports	Percentage of total imports
Machines and equipment	\$ 3,26 billions	33,2 %
Chemical products	\$ 1,81 billions	18,4 %
Transport	\$ 1,47 billions	14,9 %
Plastics	\$ 0,78 billions	7,9 %
Food products	\$ 0,438 billions	4,5 %

#### *"GS " mark (Geprüfte Sicherheit) quality mark*

"GS" quality mark is defined by German law - Gesetz über die Bereitstellung von Produkten auf dem Markt (Produktsicherheitsgesetz - ProdSG) "GS" is a voluntary quality mark. The "GS" quality mark indicates that the equipment meets German and, if possible, European safety requirements and is based on German law. The marking appears only on products that have been verified by an independent third party.

The quality mark also has the badge of international certification authority, which can serve as a marketing tool (TUV). Tests confirm the conformity of all mass-produced products [34, 35].

The right to use this marking is granted by the TUV certification body after the certification tests.



Figure 15 - TUV quality mark with "GS" quality mark [35].

The list of compulsory inspections within the framework of "GS" certification and the right to apply the "GS" quality mark also includes inspections of compliance with numerous European standards defined for each type of products and inspections confirming completeness and correctness of the operating manual as well as compulsory periodic inspection. Inspection inspections are usually carried out once a year. The following product categories are subject to inspection: household appliances, lighting fixtures, personal protective equipment, goods for children, toys, sports equipment, various electronic devices, tools, automotive equipment, and furniture [36].

#### **"BDIH" quality mark**

The "BDIH" standard (Germany) is the first natural standard in cosmetics. "BDIH" (Bund deutscher Industrie - und Handelsunternehmen - Federal Association of Industrial and Commercial Companies) - Federation of German manufacturers and distributors of pharmaceuticals, health products, dietary supplements, personal care products and medical devices. The association was founded in 1951 in Mannheim, Germany, to bring together manufacturing and sales organizations. As of 2011, the association includes more than 500 producers and distributors of natural goods and products (cosmetics, nutritional supplements, natural products, medical devices) [37].



Figure 16 - "BDIH" quality mark [37].

During its work on the basis of these principles, the association has tested more than 2000 products for their naturalness and safety. The main goal of the association is to provide complete and transparent information to the consumer about natural goods and products [37].

To obtain the right to use the "BDIH" mark on its products, the company must be inspected by the controlling organization IONC (International Organic and Natural Cosmetics Corporation) for compliance with the standard criteria.

The requirements of the "BDIH" standard for cosmetic products:

- The use of synthetic fragrances and dyes is prohibited;
- the use of substances of animal origin is prohibited;
- the use of genetically modified products is prohibited;
- The use of petroleum products and paraffin oils is prohibited;
- only natural or permitted, identical to natural preservatives are allowed to be used;
- All vegetable raw materials are controlled by origin (collected in ecologically clean plantations and wild habitats) [37].

### **"Service Qualität Deutschland" quality mark**

Service Quality Germany (SQD) is a nationwide quality community with 16 organizations members that aimed to develop the quality of the travel network.

Using its certification system, SQD addresses small and medium-sized enterprises, the main areas of activity of which are the hotel industry, restaurant business and tourism. Since 2001, the organization has been supporting companies to improve the quality of customer service. The main avenues for improvement are found from communication with clients [38].



Figure 17 - "Service Qualität Deutschland" quality mark [38].

To achieve the goal, SQD has developed a system that is awarded in three phases. In the first stage, a company employee is trained under a special program to become a Q-Coach. Then, using various online tools, the employee introduces the company to various analysis methods. The application is intended for initiating improvement processes in the company [38].

### Quality marks in France.

The main products imported from France are chemical industry products, machinery, equipment and hardware, food, beverages, tobacco, plastics and rubber. Data on the amount of imports of these goods are presented in Table 5 [29].

Table 5 – Structure of imports to Russia from France. Data for the period from September 2018 to January 2019 (based on [29]).

The product category	Total imports	Percentage of total imports
Chemical products	\$ 1,02 billions	31,9 %
Machines and equipment	\$ 0,729 billions	22,7 %
Food products	\$ 0,282 billions	8,8 %
Plastics and rubber	\$ 0,167 billions	5,2 %
Transport	\$ 0,160 billions	5 %

### "COSMEBIO" quality mark

This quality mark has been developed by the French committee ECOCERT together with COSMEBIO, a company of independent manufacturers. COSMEBIO is one of the largest associations bringing together producers, suppliers of organic raw materials and environmental research laboratories throughout France and the world. It was founded in 2002.

Its main activity is to develop standards and specifications for the production of natural cosmetics. The CosmeBio standard is based on two editions of the requirements for organic cosmetics in the journal "Officie" in collaboration with EcoCert and the renowned certification body Qualité France from 2003 to 2004 [39].



Figure 18 – "BIO" and "ECO" COSMEBIO quality marks [39].

The main rule of COSMEBIO is that if an inorganic component has an organic alternative, it should be used. The French quality mark has three levels: "Bio" - organic cosmetics (95% of vegetable ingredients obtained through organic farming; at least 10% of the total mass of the product must be ingredients certified as organic); "Eco" - natural and organic cosmetics (at least 50% organic ingredients on a vegetable basis, at least 5% of the mass - ingredients certified as organic); Nat - natural cosmetics (95% of natural ingredients on a vegetable basis) [40].



Despite the fact that CosmeBio is registered as a trademark that cannot be present on the product of any manufacture, in the context of this diploma thesis can be considered as a quality mark [39]. Since the buyer can recognize the quality and safety of the product by this mark.

### **"ECOCERT" quality mark**

"ECOCERT" is an independent monitoring and certification organization whose rights are authorized by the French Ministry of Agriculture. This mark provides standards for the control of the raw materials used as well as the components that make up it. All of the organic matter contained in the certified product is thoroughly checked, from growing methods and regulations to the production of the product itself, without polluting the environment.

"ECOCERT" standards prohibit the use of different plant growth regulators, all kinds of pesticides, as well as modified organisms that affect the bio-material development cycle [41].



Figure 19 – "ECOCERT" quality mark [41].

The standard for environmentally friendly and organic cosmetics was developed in 2003, it is assigned to products selected according to its criteria, with a logo applied to the product packaging.

"ECOCERT" is an independent structure with official certification authority for the created standard. The mark on the packaging means that the product belongs to real organic cosmetics and guarantees its high quality. However, "ECOCERT" as a certifying authority certifies both individual ingredients and the product as a whole. In other words, it must be distinguished whether products are "ECOCERT" certified as individual ingredients or as a product in general. The "ECOCERT" logo may be used if all ingredients are certified [41].

### **Quality marks in Italy**

The majority of imports from Italy to Russia are made up: Machinery, equipment and hardware, chemical industry products, food, beverages, tobacco, metals and their products, textile [29]. The data describing the volume and share of each category of goods in total imports are presented in Table 6.

Table 6 – Structure of imports to Russia from Italy. Data for the period from September 2018 to January 2019 (based on [29]).

The product category	Total imports	Percentage of total imports
Machines, equipment and hardware	\$ 1,6 billions	37,6 %
Chemical industry products	\$ 0,607 billions	14,3 %
Food, beverages, tobacco	\$ 0,386 billions	9,1 %
Metals and their products	\$ 0,279 billions	6,6 %
Textile	\$ 0,272 billions	6,4 %

### "ICEA" quality mark

"ICEA" is a non-profit consortium in which bodies, associations, businesses and civil society organisations participate. It controls and certifies several thousand companies that carry out their activities in respect of man and the environment, protecting the dignity of workers and consumer rights [43].

Products with "ICEA" quality mark:

- Contain certified natural plant and organic ingredients;
- Does not contain ingredients of plant origin that are considered potentially dangerous (allergic, irritating);
- Contains no environmentally questionable substances;
- Does not contain genetically modified products;
- Radioactively free;
- Petroleum-free;
- Alcohol-free;
- Contains no synthetic perfumes, dyes, prohibited preservatives;
- Are not tested on animals;
- Have environmentally friendly packaging (decomposition packaging).



Figure 20 – "ICEA" quality mark [42].

The main products on which this mark is placed are cosmetics and household chemicals [42].

## "Made in Italy" quality mark

The "Made in Italy" quality mark has been used since 1980 as a brand that distinguishes high quality Italian products. The main areas of this quality mark are: traditional fashion, food industry, furniture and machinery. This mark of quality is the result of a general recognition of Italian products, which has become associated with high quality, great attention to detail and ancient traditions in manufacturing [44].



Figure 21 – "Made in Italy" quality mark [45].

Requirements for products to be certified with system it01 100% Italian quality:

- Designed and manufactured entirely in Italy;
- Made with quality natural materials;
- Made following traditional working methods;
- Made in observance of employees, health and safety standards [45].

Most products with this quality mark are shoes, leather goods, and food.

## Quality marks in Poland

Poland is one of the leaders in the import of food products into Russia, ranking 4th among European countries by this factor. Poland also ranks 5th among European countries in the import of chemical industry goods. The structure of the most imported goods from Poland is presented in Table 7.

Table 7 – Structure of imports to Russia from Poland. Data for the period from September 2018 to January 2019 (based on [29]).

The product category	Total imports	Percentage of total imports
Machines and equipment	\$ 0,669 billions	31,1 %
Chemical products	\$ 0,280 billions	13,0 %
Transport	\$ 0,241 billions	11,2 %
Plastics and Rubber	\$ 0,198 billions	9,2 %
Food products	\$ 0,178 billions	8,3 %

### **"PN" quality mark (Polish Norm)**

Mark of Conformity to the Polish norm (standard) - the "PN" quality mark is a mark of conformity of a third party, the owner of which (on the basis of part 2 of article 7 of the Act of 12 September 2002 on standardization) is the Polish Committee for Standardization [46].

Figure 22 shows an example of a presentation under the "PN" quality mark of additional information about a standard that has been validated with a "PN" quality mark.



Figure 22 – "PN" quality mark with additional information about a standard [46].

The Polish Committee for Standardization grants the organization the right to use the "PN" quality mark if the certification process has been successfully completed and the Polish Committee for Standardization has granted the "PN" certificate.

The presence of a "PN" quality mark confirms that:

- The product, service, system or process complies with all the requirements of the Polish regulations on the declaration of conformity and for which this compliance has been confirmed;
- The product which is marked with the Mark, as well as the process of its manufacture, are subject to inspection and supervision by an independent third party;
- Guarantees quality and safety [46].

This quality mark can be assigned to any product, service or process.

### **The "Q" quality mark**

The blue-red quality mark "Q" is the mark awarded to products that keep their quality indicators constant.

Products marked with this mark are of the highest quality and guarantee safety.

Since 1960s, the "Q" quality mark has won a reputation and wide acceptance among both manufacturers and consumers. The certification process is carried out according to the results of tests carried out in an accredited laboratory, confirming the quality and safety of products. These tests include physical, chemical and microbiological properties of the products [47].



Figure 23 – The "Q" quality mark [47].

During the certification process, the products are assessed by independent experts of the "Technical Committee on Food". The subjects of the evaluation are:

- Technical and production conditions;
- Organoleptic characteristics;
- Physico-chemical and microbiological indicators;
- Product packaging and labeling.

Applying for certification requires documents describing the production process, laboratory research report, finished product test summary, key customer feedback, information on complaints from the previous year and much more. If the product meets the requirements, it is issued a quality certificate "Q", which is issued for 3 years with an option to extend it for 5 years. The trademarks of this mark include almost all types of food [47].

#### **The "Poznaj Dobrą Żywność " (Discover good food) quality mark**

The main objective of the "Discover Good Food" program is to provide information about high quality food. Participation in the program is voluntary. Entrepreneurs from the European Union Member States may participate in the program. Discover good food - a quality mark awarded to high quality food that meets the criteria developed by the College of Science for food quality. The eco-label has been awarded since 2004 under a program of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, which aims to promote agro-food products.

The "Discover Good Food" quality mark helps consumers recognize a quality food product. At the same time, it is aimed at community food policy, which aims to expand the field of high-quality and diverse food products in the global market [48, 49].



Figure 24 – The "Poznaj Dobrą Żywność" ("Discover good food") quality mark [49].

This quality mark is also intended to increase consumer confidence in a given product by providing information about its high and consistent quality.

In order to ensure a constant, very high level of quality of labeled products and the authenticity of the origin of raw materials, the program provides for a maximum duration of 3 years [48, 49].

### 3.2 Quality marks in China

China is one of Russia's largest economic partners. It is the leader in terms of imports to Russia. The total volume of imports from China for the period from September 2018 to January 2019 was 22.6 billion dollars, which is 23.2% of total imports to Russia from all countries for this period [29]. Table 8 shows the structure of goods imported to Russia from China.

Table 8 – Structure of imports to Russia from China. Data for the period from September 2018 to January 2019 (based on [29]).

The product category	Total imports	Percentage of total imports
Machines, equipment and hardware	\$ 11,6 billions	59,5 %
Metals and their products	\$ 1,73 billions	7,7 %
Textile	\$ 1,62 billions	7,2 %
Chemical Industry Products	\$ 1,21 billions	5,4 %
Food, drinks, tobacco	\$ 0,774 billions	3,5 %

Despite the fact that food products occupy only 3.5% of total imports, this amounts to 770 million dollars, which is a significant level.

#### Quality Safety ("QS" Quality mark)

The "QS" quality mark is the Chinese quality mark for food, beverages and other products. This quality mark was introduced in 2003. The "QS" quality mark is managed by the General Administration for Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine. Obtaining the "QS" is necessary for many categories of products manufactured in China. The "QS" quality mark is an abbreviation for "Quality Safety". Under

the "QS" quality mark a certain number is indicated, corresponding to the manufacturer, on whose products this quality mark was applied [50, 51].



Figure 25 – "QS" quality mark with a special number for a tea producer [51].

The presence of this symbol means that the factory fulfils the requirements for food safety (Quality Safety). The "QS" certification system has a rather large list of parameters. "QS" certification is required for most food producers in China.

The "QS" quality mark means only compliance with certain hygiene standards and is not proof of excellent taste and high quality raw materials, but the consumer should understand that a factory that has spent a significant amount of money and effort to get "QS" quality mark certified will not be associated with a product of poor quality [51].

#### **China Compulsory Certification ("CCC" quality mark)**

The "CCC" quality mark is the conformity mark required for importing and selling goods in China. This quality mark is issued by China's National Certification and Accreditation Authority (CNCA) to protect national security, human health or safety, animal and plant life and health, and the environment. The quality mark was put into operation on 1 May 2002 and came into full force on 1 August 2003 [52, 53].



Figure 26 – China Compulsory Certification quality mark [52].

To obtain the "CCC" quality mark, it is necessary to apply for inspection of the equipment on which the product is manufactured; this equipment is inspected in accordance with GB standards. The next step is to inspect the factories involved in the production process. The results of the inspection are

then evaluated and, if positive, the product is marked with the "CCC" quality mark. After receiving the mark, the organization must pass a repeated inspection every 12-18 months.

A significant number of goods are subject to the "CCC" quality mark, including: electronics, information technology equipment, cars and their parts, power tools, household appliances, agricultural machinery and toys for children [52].

### 3.3 Quality marks in CIS countries

The CIS countries are important economic partners of Russia. This is due to their geographical location as well as their membership in the CIS organization. The main objectives of the organization include economic and political cooperation. Currently, the CIS countries are: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Ukraine and Turkmenistan have non-signatory status. However, the objective of this diploma thesis is to research quality marks on the Russian market. Therefore, the Ukraine will be considered as CIS country in this chapter [49]. Table 9 shows the total imports of the 5 CIS countries with the largest imports into Russia.

Table 9 – Total import to Russia from CIS countries. Data for the period from September 2018 to January 2019 (based on [24]).

The Country	Total imports	Percentage of total imports
Belarus	\$ 5,06 billions	5,2 %
Ukraine	\$ 2,2 billions	2,3 %
Kazakhstan	\$ 2,09 billions	2,1 %
Uzbekistan	\$ 0,428 billions	0,44 %
Azerbaijan	\$ 0,348 billions	0,36 %

Following, I will consider the quality marks in Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, as these countries have the greatest influence on imports to Russia from the CIS.

#### "EAC" Mark of conformity

The "EAC" quality mark is a single reference mark as a way of informing consumers about the conformity of products. The "EAC" Mark is applied to products for information purposes. Such marking is a guarantee that these products subject to mandatory certification have been tested for compliance and, based on the results of the procedure, fully meets all the requirements specified in the technical regulations of the Customs Union [55]. Customs Union is a cooperation of Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan to ensure mutual trade with the lowest duties [56].





Figure 27 – Mark of product circulation on the Customs Union market "EAC" [57].

The "EAC" quality mark is a compulsory conformity mark for goods sold under agreements between enterprises of the Customs Union countries. The technical regulations provide different requirements for each product. These regulations regulate the content of different substances in the product, the potential impact (or the lack of impact) on the human body. Using products bearing the "EAC" quality mark is safe for health and the environment [57].

### **Quality marks in Belarus**

Belarus is a leader in the amount of imported goods to Russia for the period from September 2018 to January 2019. The most supplied categories of goods and their cash equivalents are shown in Table 10.

Table 10 – Structure of imports to Russia from Belarus. Data for the period from September 2018 to January 2019 (based on [29]).

The product category	Total imports	Percentage of total imports
Food, drinks, tobacco	\$ 1,726 billions	34,1 %
Machines, equipment and hardware	\$ 0,687 billions	13,6 %
Transport	\$ 0,677 billions	13,4 %
Metals and their products	\$ 0,361 billions	7,1 %
Plastics and rubber	\$ 0,343 billions	6,8 %

The following is a review of the quality marks that can be found on the packages of Belarusian goods.

### **"STB" (BelST) quality mark**

The "STB" quality mark is a conformity mark in the Belarusian certification system. The mark is placed on products that meet the requirements of the Belarusian quality standards. Certification may be voluntary or obligatory [58].



Figure 27 – Belarusian "STB" quality mark [58].

Certification is carried out by independent organizations accredited in the State Standard of Belarus. Since 1994, mandatory certification of goods, services and works that could potentially harm the life and health of consumers and damage the environment has been in force. These include: radio electronic equipment; household electrical appliances; goods for children; kitchen and tableware; food products; and spare car parts [58].

#### **Quality mark of conformity with the technical regulations of the Republic of Belarus**

Manufacturers and suppliers are obliged to mark their products with the mark of conformity with the technical regulations of the Republic of Belarus. Products are marked if they have passed all forms of conformity assessment established by the technical regulations of Belarus [59].



Figure 28 – Quality mark of conformity with the technical regulations [59].

This mark indicates that the goods in the hands of the buyer have successfully confirmed compliance with the necessary technical regulations developed, approved and put into effect in the Republic of Belarus [59].

#### **Ecological quality mark of the Republic of Belarus**

The ecological quality mark is applied to products that have passed the confirmation of conformity to the ecological criteria of all necessary technical normative legal acts of the Republic of Belarus and are safe for the environment. In Belarus, this mark can be found on the marking of synthetic detergents, refrigerators, wallpapers and TV sets [60].

The presence of this quality mark means that the product or package contains at least 95% of environmentally friendly natural components. Besides, ecological certification quality mark indicate that there are no experiments on animals when creating this product. You can also be sure that the product contains no chemical components or genetically modified organisms [61].



Figure 29 – Ecological quality mark of the Republic of Belarus [61].

Only the company that has passed the assessment and proved ecological safety and high quality of its products can get this marking. Compliance can be checked by government agencies or environmental organizations. The decision to issue a certificate is made by the Council of the Ministry of Natural Resources [61].

### **Quality marks in Ukraine**

Despite the political situation, Ukraine remains one of Russia's most significant economic partners from the CIS countries. The most supplied categories of goods and their cash equivalents are represented in Table 11.

Table 11 – Structure of imports to Russia from Ukraine. Data for the period from September 2018 to January 2019 (based on [29]).

The product category	Total imports	Percentage of total imports
Metals and their products	\$ 0,689 billions	31,4 %
Chemical Industry Products	\$ 0,553 billions	25,2 %
Machines, equipment and hardware	\$ 0,358 billions	16,3 %
Mineral products (including oil)	\$ 0,176 billions	8 %
Books, paper, cardboard.	\$ 0,083 billions	3,8 %

### **Ukrainian quality mark "UkrSEPRO"**

The system of certification of Ukraine UkrSEPRO (Ukrainian Product Certification) - non-state system of certification of production in Ukraine. Its purpose - to conduct mandatory and voluntary certification of products or services.

Certification in the system provides third party confirmation of indicators, characteristics and properties of products based on tests, certification of production and quality systems certification. The third party may be: the National body in matters of certification; the central body in matters of certification; territorial body in matters of certification; expert auditors; testing laboratories [62].



Figure 30 – Quality mark "UkrSEPRO" [63].

Compulsory certification is carried out for compliance with the requirements of the effective legislative acts of Ukraine and the mandatory requirements of regulatory documents and international and national standards of other States in force in Ukraine.

The voluntary certification in the UkrSEPRO system is conducted for compliance with requirements that are not included in the list of mandatory requirements. Certification for compliance with all mandatory requirements is mandatory. In addition, provision is made for the certification of products intended for import [62].

The quality mark is applied to a non-removable part of the product, or to the packaging. The place of application of the mark of conformity on the product, packaging, documentation is determined by the company that received the right to use it [63].

### **Quality marks in Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan makes a significant contribution to imports to Russia from neighboring countries. The main goods imported from Kazakhstan are: mineral products, metals and their products, chemical industry products, food products, as well as equipment.

Table 12 – Structure of imports to Russia from Kazakhstan. Data for the period from September 2018 to January 2019 (based on [29]).

The product category	Total imports	Percentage of total imports
Mineral products (including oil)	\$ 0,706 billions	33,8 %
Metals and their products	\$ 0,569 billions	27,3 %
Chemical industry products	\$ 0,388 billions	18,6 %
Food products	\$ 0,148 billions	7,1 %
Machines and equipment	\$ 0,112 billions	5,4 %

### Quality mark "GOSTK"

The "GOSTK" quality mark is the mark of the certification system of Kazakhstan. GOSTK certificate is a certificate of conformity applied in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The certificate is used to export products and goods to Russia and Kazakhstan. The certificate confirms that the products meet all necessary requirements [64].



Figure 31 – Quality mark "GOSTK" [64].

Products and services included in the list adopted by Resolution No. 367 of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Mandatory Confirmation of Conformity of Products in the Republic of Kazakhstan" dated 20.04.2005 are subject to mandatory certification. The "GOSTK" quality mark is also used for the recognition procedure, i.e. the "GOSTK" quality mark can be issued on the basis of an existing foreign certificate. The "GOSTK" quality mark can be issued both for a batch and for a series of products. The maximum validity period of such certificate is 3 years [64].

In this chapter the quality marks of Europe, China and CIS countries were considered. The selected countries are major economic partners of Russia and import a significant amount of goods to the Russian market. The greatest attention was paid to quality marks related to food, cosmetics, household chemistry. This is due to the fact that these product categories can have a significant impact on human health. Knowledge and understanding of quality marks will help customers make the right choice according to their product requirements. Further research in this diploma thesis will be based on this chapter.

## **4. Research on consumer perception of quality marks**

In the previous sections, I considered a large number of quality marks. However, these are not all quality marks that the consumer can meet on the Russian market. It is important for the producer of a product or service to know how the quality marks awarded to his product are perceived by the consumer. It is important for the consumer to be sure that the mark on the package guarantees the quality that the consumer expects. The purpose of this chapter is to clarify the customer's attitude towards the quality marks on the packaging of the goods. I suppose that the way in which the customers perceive the quality marks may determine whether or not the organization decides to put the quality mark on the packaging. The currency used in this chapter is the Russian ruble. As of 13.08.2020, according to the Google, 1 Euro equals 86.15 rubles.

### **4.1 Consumer perception research method**

A sociological poll was chosen as a method to study consumer perception of quality marks. This method is the most popular method of information collection in sociology and marketing [65]. The planned research will be carried out through questionnaires. Questioning is one of the main quantitative methods of conducting sociological surveys. This method is based on the written collection of information, and then fixing it by questionnaire. The questionnaire assumes that the respondent reads and fills questions by himself. For my research, I used questionnaires created in google forms. The type of questionnaire is individual, because each respondent will fill in the questionnaire without interaction with other respondents. This type of survey will allow receiving information from each respondent without problems with anonymity, while maintaining a high level of information reliability, and will exclude interaction with other respondents during the survey [66].

At the time of writing this diploma thesis, I could not find the results of Russian consumer research on the perception of quality marks. Thus, I decided to perform my own research, which consists of two parts. The first part of the research is aimed at identifying what quality is for the consumer and what buyers pay attention to when buying a product. The second part of the research will be a further continuation of the first survey. Its purpose is to identify consumer awareness of the marks of quality, as well as his perception of these marks. Both studies are included in one general survey.

As a starting point, a study conducted in the Czech Republic in 2012 was taken. The research included a survey "Quality marks and their perception by consumers and entrepreneurs". The topic of this survey was to find out the consumer attitude towards quality and quality marks. In my own research I used some questions from the research [67].

In sociology, a quantitative approach is used to study large groups. This approach implies the analysis of data in a statistical form [68]. The sample in this case is random (probabilistic) and should be representative of the general population. Representativeness is the property by which the sample reflects all the important characteristics of the general population, from the point of view of the research. One of the main objectives of a sample study is the transition from an object of study to a sample population,

which is expedient to carry out according to the following scheme of sequential transition to selection units and observation units. This transition shall be carried out in the following order:

1. Subject of study

In my research, the subjects of the study are Russian residents who regularly buy goods in Russian shops or markets.

2. General Population

As a general population, I consider customers of retail goods, i.e. ordinary people who regularly buy goods in Russia.

3. The basis of the sample

According to the research of the target group of the supermarket network "Perekrestok", supermarket customers are mostly middle-aged people. Figure 32 shows the age composition of supermarket customers [69,70].

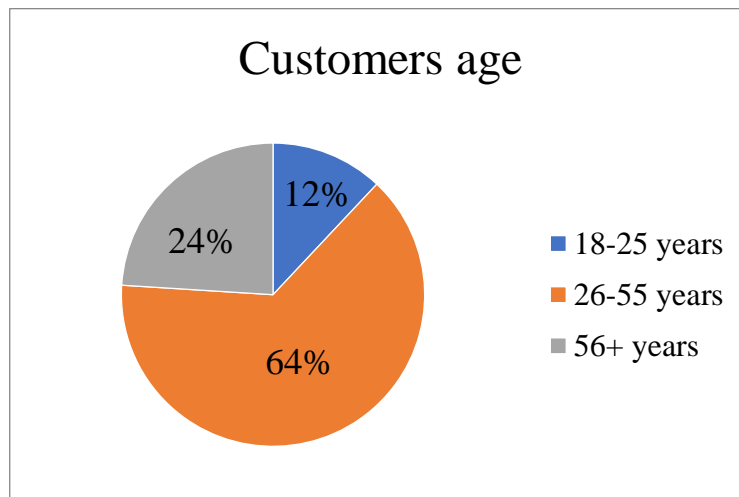


Figure 32 – Age structure of supermarket customers.

As can be seen from Figure 32, the majority of buyers are middle-aged people aged 26 to 55 years. This is due to the fact that this category of population has the highest income, and as a result, the highest purchasing ability.

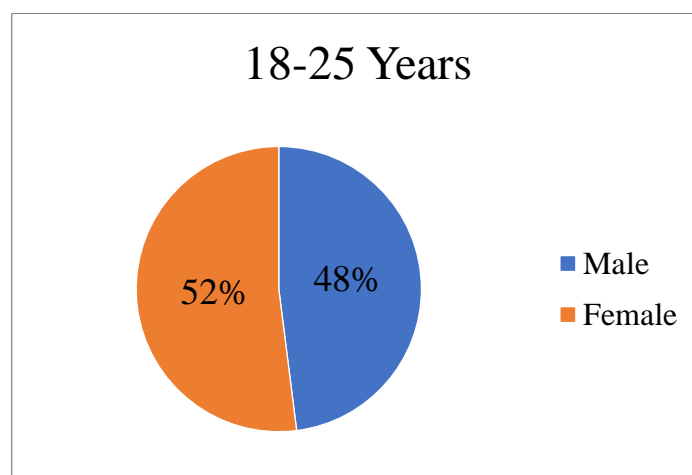


Figure 33 – Ratio of customers in the age group 18-25 years.

Figure 33 shows the percentage of customers in the 18-25 age group. As can be seen from the chart, the number of buyers of men is almost equal to the number of buyers of women.

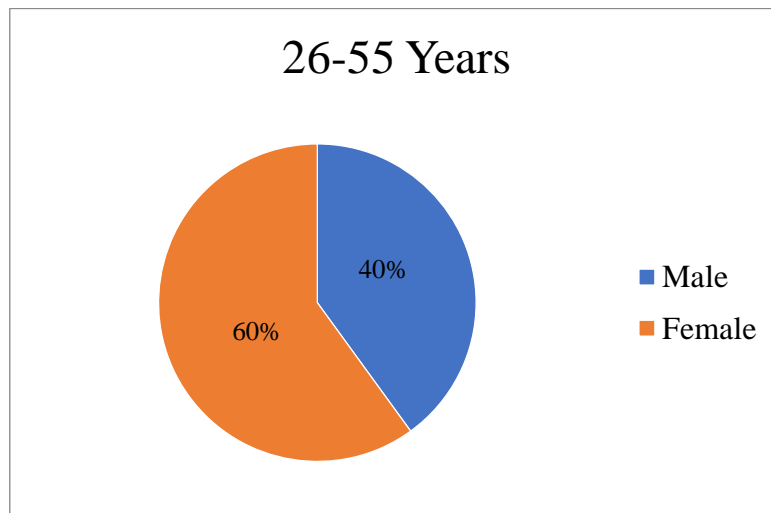


Figure 34 - Ratio of customers in the age group 26-55 years.

The chart in Figure 34 shows that the percentage of women as supermarket shoppers has increased to 60 per cent. This may be due to the fact that at this age, most household activities are undertaken by females.

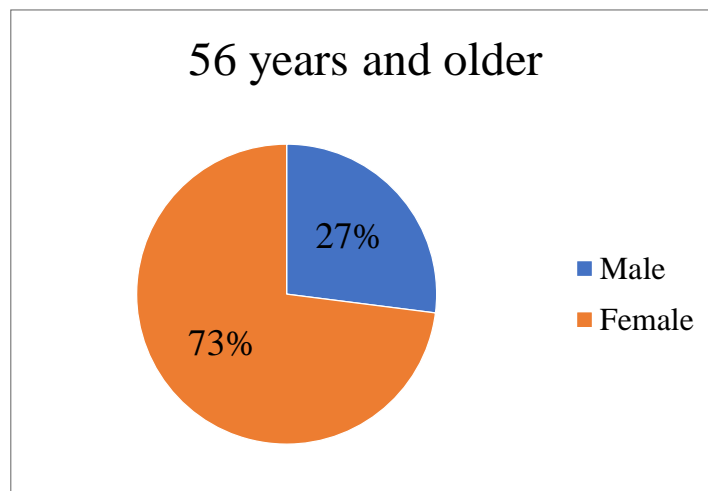


Figure 35 - Ratio of buyers in the age group from 56 years.

The percentage of buyers in this age group is 27% male and 73% female [69].

These data form are the basis of the sample for my research.

#### 4. Selection units and observation units

The units of observation in my case are 100 people:

- 12 people between the ages of 18 and 25, of whom 6 are men and 6 are women;
- 64 people between the ages of 26 and 55, 38 of whom are women and 26 are men;
- 24 people over 56 years of age, of whom 18 are women and 6 are men.

#### Composing a questionnaire for the survey

Since my survey will be a questionnaire for communicating with the respondent, I need to focus most of my attention on its preparation. The questionnaire should consist of three main parts:

The introductory part. This part should contain:



1. Addressing the respondent;
2. Announcement about the person conducting the survey;
3. Message about the research objectives;
4. Instructions to fill in. The main objectives of the Instructions are to:
  - Description of how to fill in the questionnaire correctly
  - Set test duration
  - Pay special attention to the anonymity of the survey
  - Specify that the data are processed in a summarized way and are statistical
  - Acknowledgement for cooperation.

The main part consists of questions and answer options. When constructing the questionnaire, the following requirements should be taken into account:

1. Questions should be placed from simple questions to complex, complex or lengthy questions should be placed in the middle of the questionnaire in sociology this rule is called - funnel rule.
2. The questionnaire should not start with an open-ended question.
3. The survey should not start with a tabular question.
4. A logical sequence of questions must be followed.
5. The impact of one question on another must be considered.
6. The questionnaire should not contain many repetitive questions.
7. Explanatory phrases should be included (number of answer choices, approximate answer volume).

The final part usually contains questions related to socio-demographic characteristics of the respondent: gender, age, education, etc. This is the last part of the questionnaire and its full completion by the respondent is obligatory. However, sometimes such questions are placed at the beginning of the questionnaire to identify the respondent's belonging to the sample [66].

The wording of the questions should be neutral in form so as not to induce respondents to respond to any answer. The questionnaire should be written in a language that the respondent understands, avoiding confusing language and large numbers of foreign words. The questions should have three main functions: indicator, communicative and instrumental.

The indicator function of a question is to ensure that it is the information required, and not any other information.

The question's communication function provides communication between the sociologist and the respondent.

The instrumental function of a question is to measure, i.e., what kind of detail a scale should be if it is a scale question; how many answer choices should be given to a question, taking into account the characteristics of the respondents; what type of question should be asked: open-ended, closed, or semi-closed, etc. [66]. To get the required results, I used the following types of questions:

Status questions - questions about socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (object of study): gender, age, education, etc. These questions determined the respondent's identity as a target group.

Opinion questions identify estimates, opinions, judgments of respondents based on individual perceptions. This type of question was widely used in the questionnaire to identify significant aspects of product quality for each person. It is also used to assess the quality of goods in the country's market.

Questions on knowledge and awareness - are questions that help to identify the respondent's awareness. In the survey, this type of question was used to identify the best known signs of quality.

The filter question divides the entire population into two parts. In my questionnaire, the filter question was about knowing the quality marks and trusting them. People can only trust or not trust the quality mark if they are already familiar with it. This is why they are arranged in this order. First the question on knowledge is then the question on perception.

Close-ended and semi-closed questions were used.

Close-ended questions assume that the respondent is choosing from predetermined options. Semi-closed questions assume there are answer choices and the ability for the respondent to write their own answer.

Intensity questions are questions built in a special way. They allow for quantitative expression of some qualitative factors. For example, in this study, the question "Do you pay attention to the marks of quality when buying food?" implies the division of answers on a scale from "always pay attention" to "never pay attention". It is important that the scale used is uniform and that the answers are easily distinguishable [66].

Thus, a questionnaire was compiled according to the rules of conducting sociological research. To improve the perception of questions about quality marks, the names of these marks were duplicated with images. This allows the respondent to use their visual memory.

The completed questionnaire is presented in appendix A.

## **4.2 Research results**

During the survey of consumer perception of quality marks, 100 people were interviewed. For more accurate results, the sample (target group) is representative in relation to the general population. Thus, 6 men between the ages of 18 and 25, 26 men between the ages of 26 and 55 and 6 men over 56 were interviewed. Six women between the ages of 18 and 25, 38 women between the ages of 26 and 55 and 18 women over the age of 56 were also interviewed.

The survey asked respondents to answer 13 questions. The entire survey was divided into three parts:

The first part was about quality. The purpose of this part was to identify what is quality for the consumer.

The second part - questions about quality marks. The purpose of this part was to determine whether consumers are aware of the quality marks and whether they trust or mistrust a particular mark.

The final part included questions about the status of respondents (age, gender, education, etc.). The survey results are presented below.

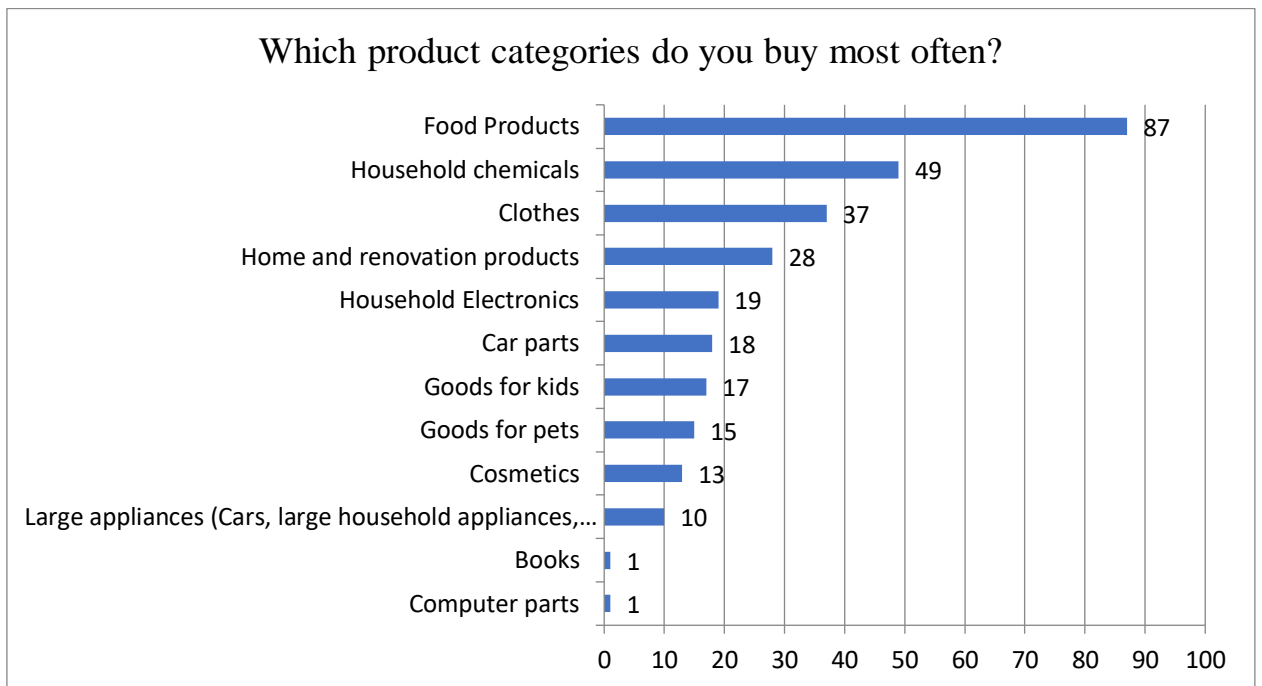


Figure 36 – Results of question which product categories do you buy most often?

As can be seen from Figure 36, the most frequently purchased category of goods is: food - 87% of respondents, household chemicals - 49% and the clothes are 37%. Consumers are least likely to buy large appliances (Cars, large household appliances, etc.), cosmetics and goods for pets.



Figure 37 – Results of question what is the most important thing for you when buying goods in a store?

From Figure 37 we can conclude that the most important thing for people when buying a product is: its price - 72% of respondents, the composition of the product - 58% of respondents, previous

experience of use - 48% and the manufacturer of the product - 46% of respondents. Only 9% of respondents said that the availability of quality marks is the most important thing when buying goods.

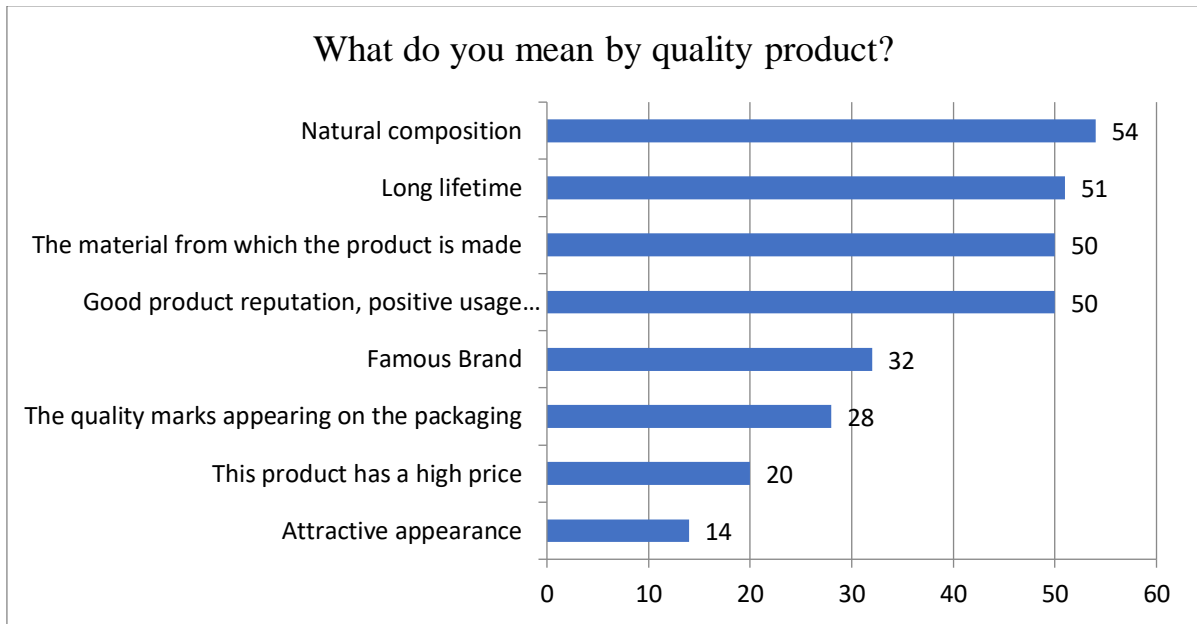


Figure 38 – Results of question what do you mean by quality product?

For the majority of respondents, the quality of the product consists of its natural composition, long service life, the material from which the product is made and good reputation and experience in using the product. 28% of respondents consider the product as high quality product if it is labeled with quality marks.

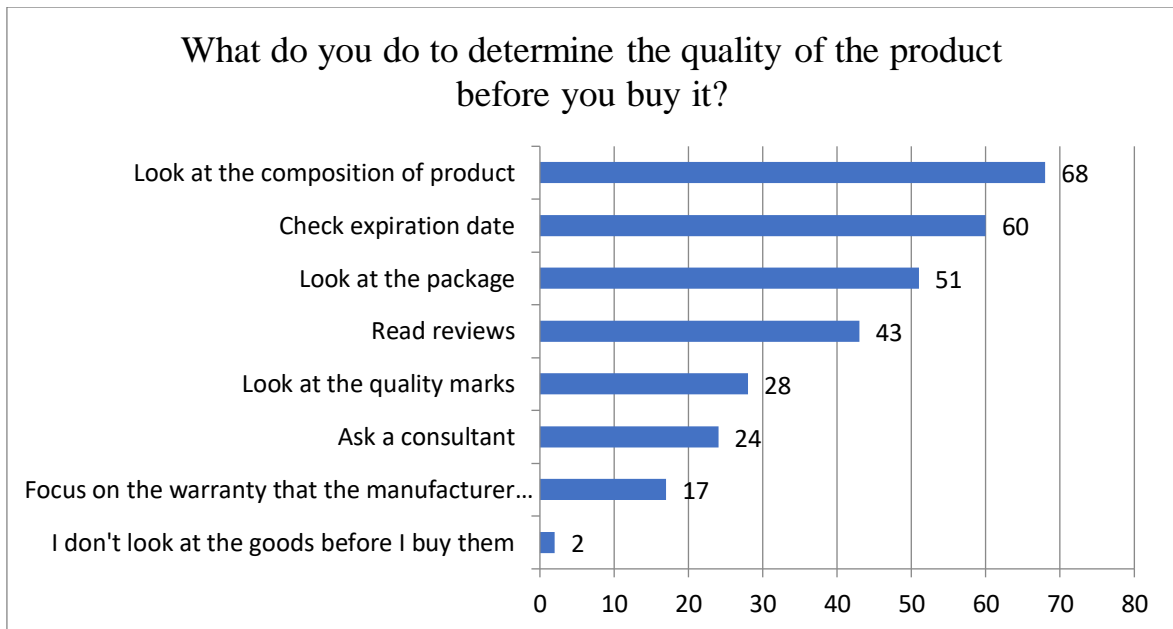


Figure 39 – Results of question what do you do to determine the quality of the product before you buy it?

To determine the quality of the product that the consumer is going to buy, most respondents look at the composition of the product, check its shelf life and examine the packaging. One third of the respondents specifically focus on quality marks.

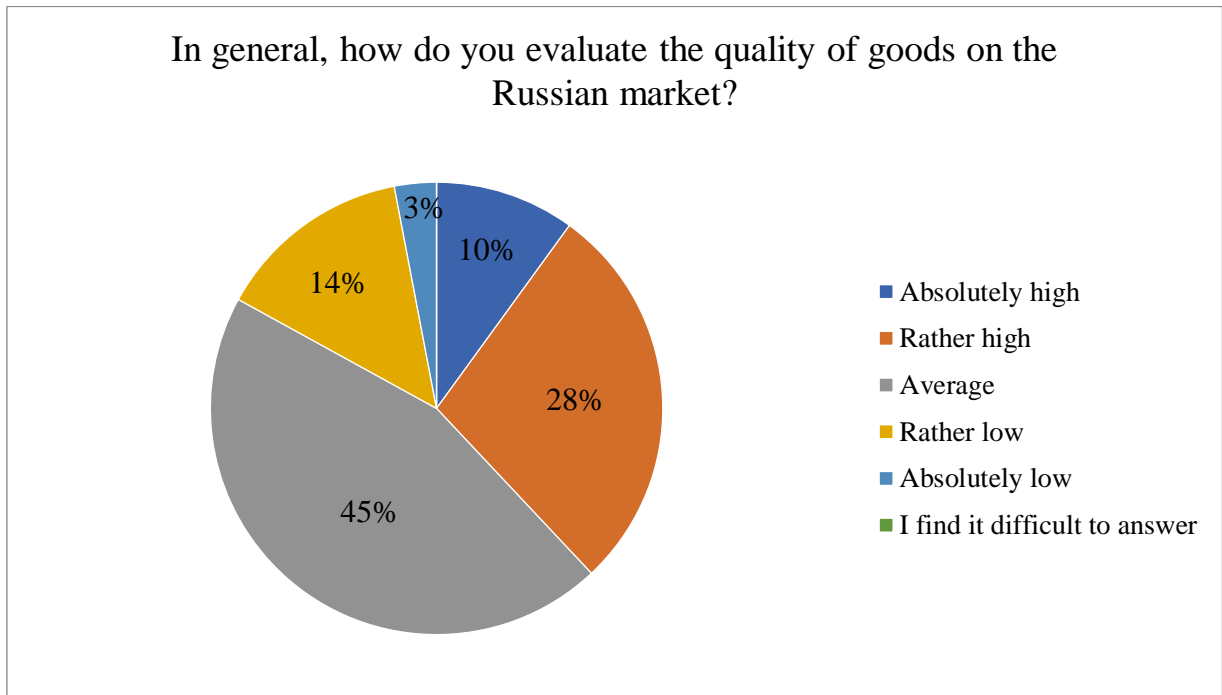


Figure 40 – Results of question how do you evaluate the quality of goods on the Russian market?

The largest number of respondents indicated that they assessed the quality of goods on the Russian market as average. However, the number of those who mentioned absolutely high quality is higher than the number of those who mentioned absolutely low quality, and the number of answers about the quality of goods on the Russian market is higher than the number of those who mentioned absolutely low quality, so it is possible to draw a conclusion that consumers assess the quality on the Russian market as higher than the average.

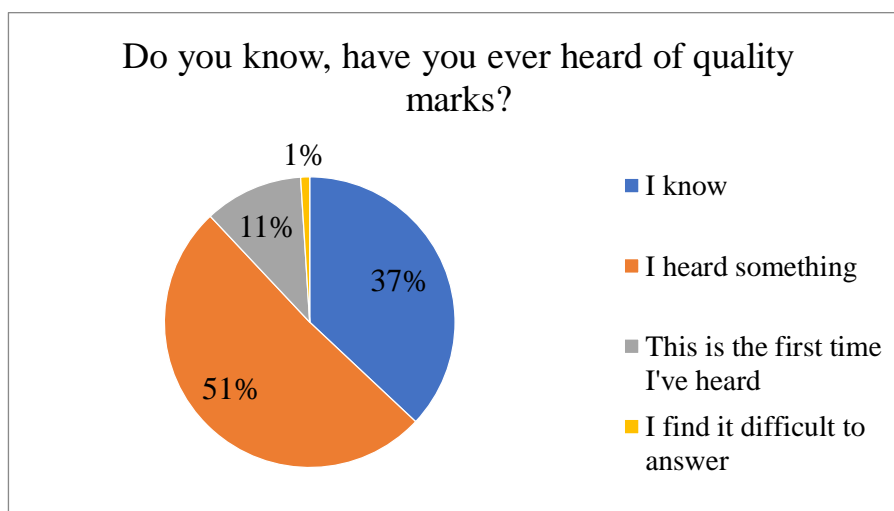


Figure 41 – Results of question do you know, have you ever heard of quality marks?

According to the results, 88% of respondents indicated that they have an awareness of quality marks. Of these, 37% confidently chose option I know.

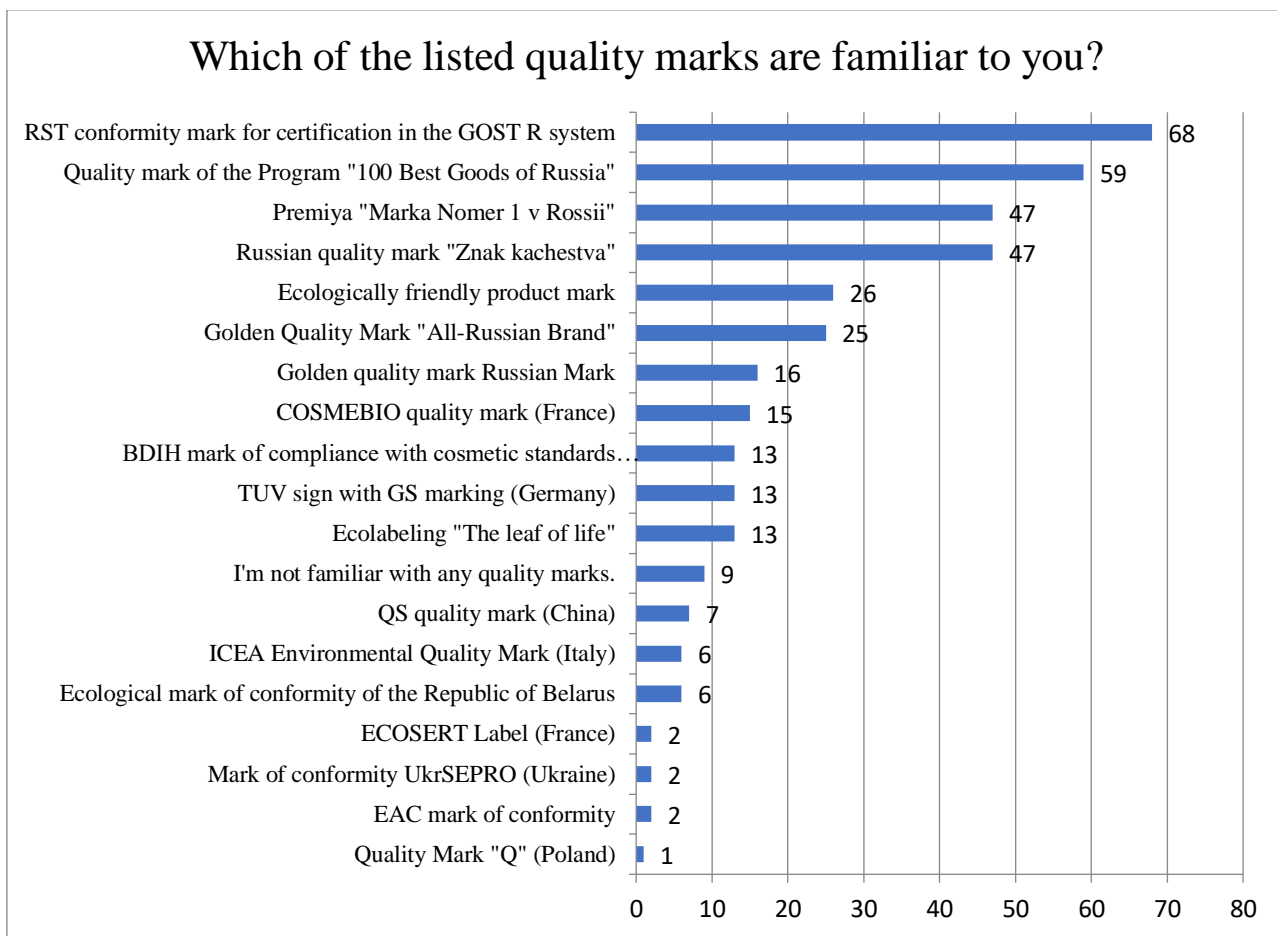


Figure 42 – Results of question which of the listed quality marks are familiar to you?

According to the research results, the most recognizable quality marks are: GOST R certification quality mark, "Russian 100 best goods" quality mark, Russian quality mark "Znak kachestva" and Premiya "Marka Nomer 1 v Rossii". If we look at statistics, Russian quality marks are the most recognizable. It is connected with the most products on Russian market is Russian-made with Russian quality marks on packages. Also now there are advertising of quality marks in Russia, in cities advertising billboards with calls to choose products with the Russian mark of quality. A large number of quality marks received very few votes. This is due to the fact that products with these quality marks are not widespread in Russia. Even if you find a product marked with this quality mark, it is not always easy to recognize and identify it.

This question is semi-closed and respondents can write the name of any quality mark that they know, but which is not on this list on the "other" line. In this question, two respondents indicated that they were familiar with the "EAC" quality mark.

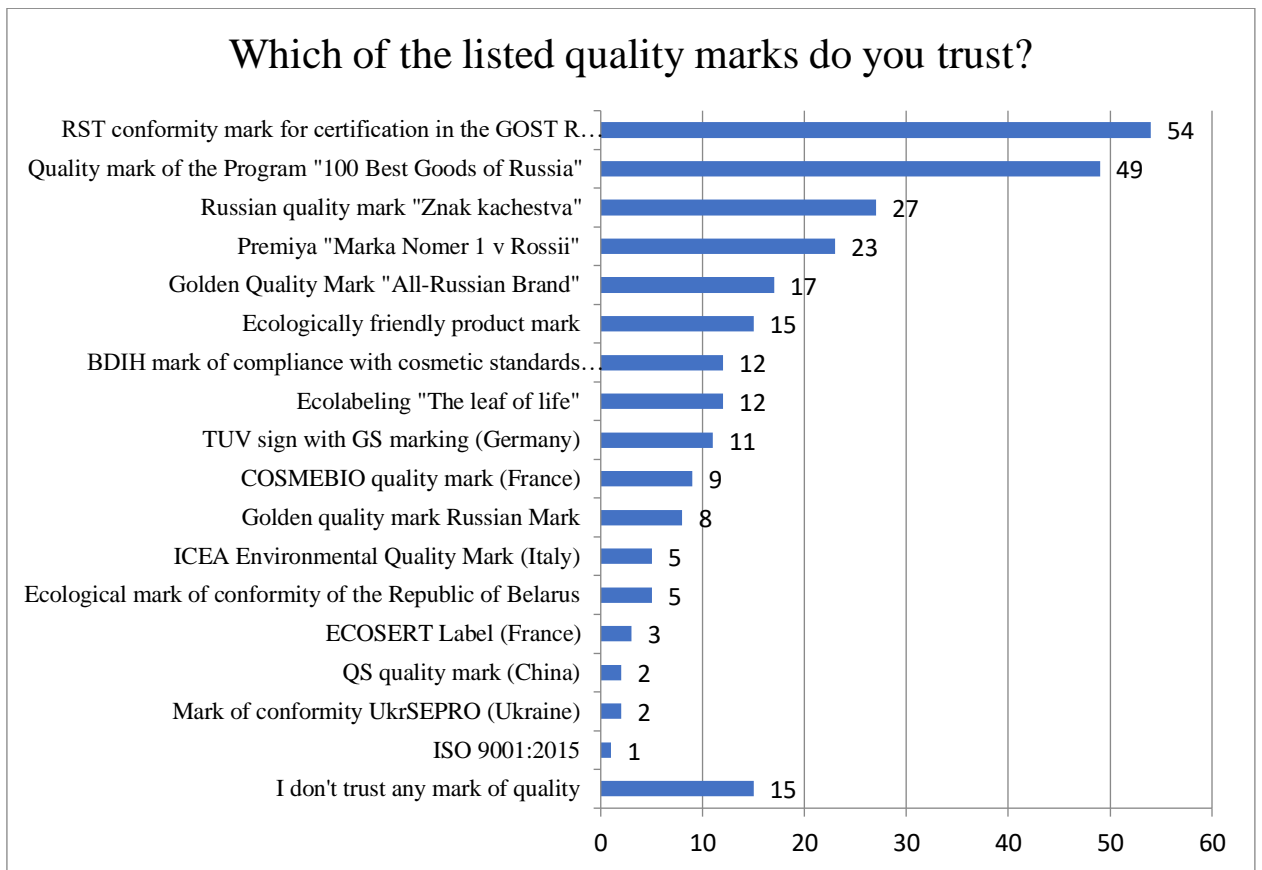


Figure 43 - Results of question which of the listed quality marks do you trust?

This graph shows how many respondents trust the quality marks. You can draw the following conclusions from this chart.

The quality marks that people trust the most are those that they know well. Correspondingly, the most trusted quality marks are the Russian GOST R quality mark, "Russian 100 best goods" quality mark and Russian quality mark "Znak kachestva". It is also possible to assess the level of confidence in a quality mark. In this question, one respondent wrote ISO 9001:2015 on the line "other". This is the standard that defines the requirements for a quality management system. This marking is not a quality mark, because the presence of a quality management system at an enterprise does not guarantee that products meet any standard.

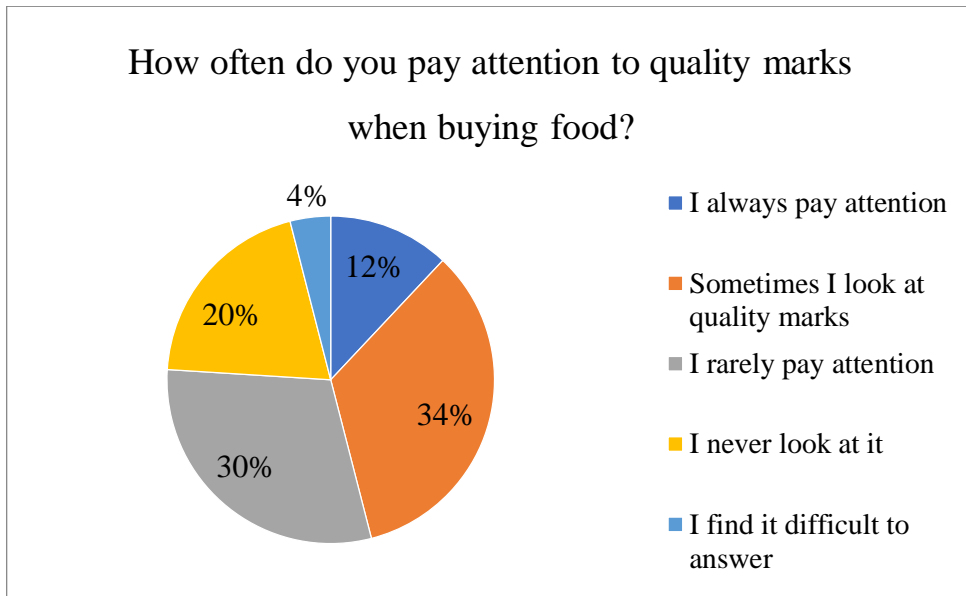


Figure 44 - Results of question how often do you pay attention to quality marks when buying food?

When buying food, 46% of respondents said that at least sometimes they pay attention to quality marks.

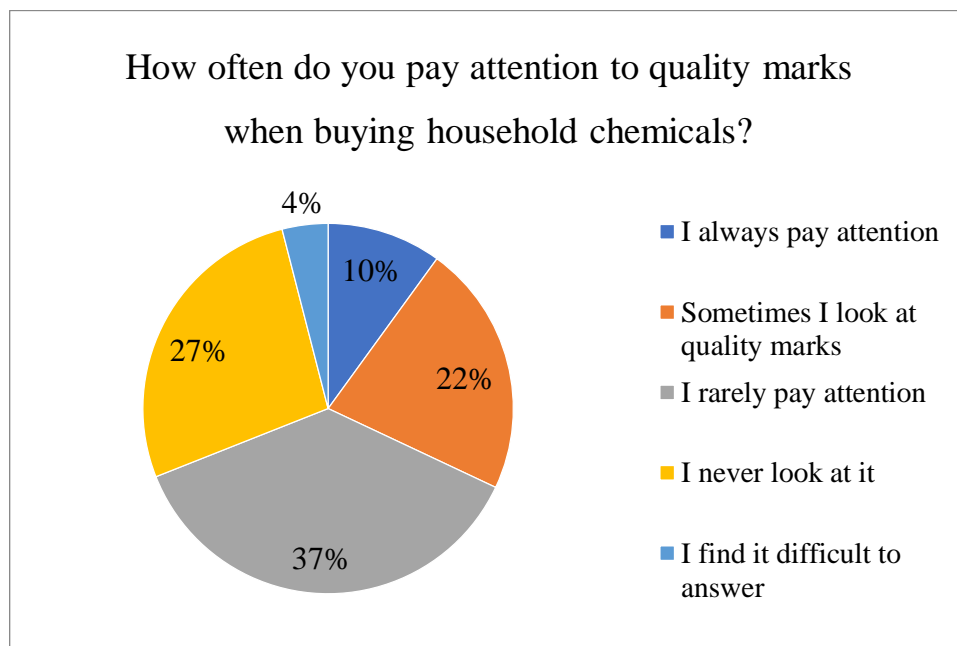


Figure 45 - Results of question how often do you pay attention to quality marks when buying household chemicals?

The situation with household chemicals is slightly different, only a third of respondents at least sometimes look at the quality marks before buying.



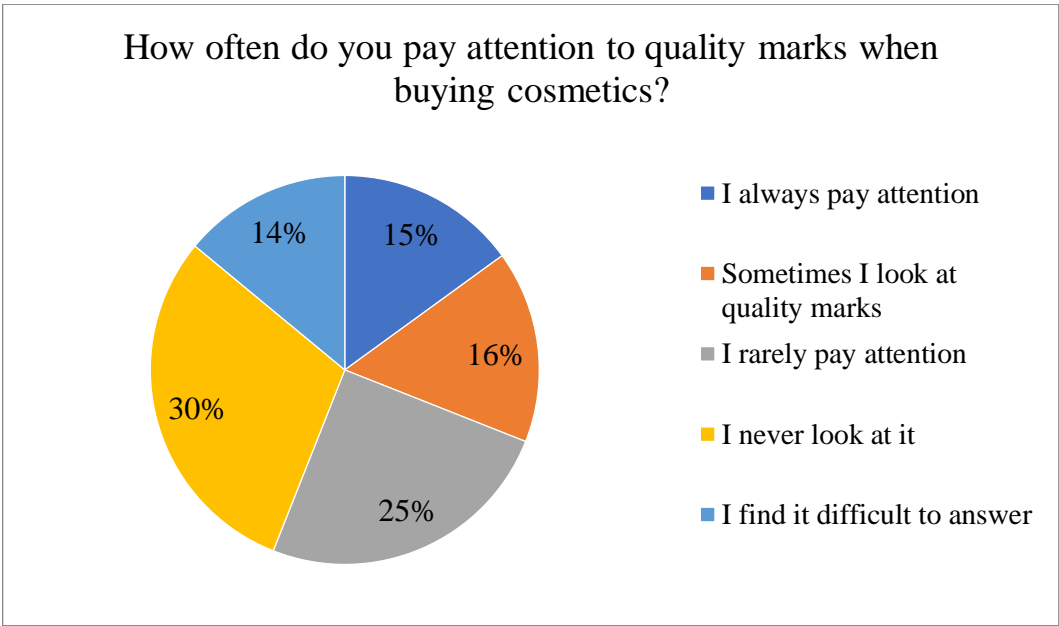


Figure 46 - Results of question how often do you pay attention to quality marks when buying cosmetics?

When choosing cosmetics, 31% of respondents pay attention to the quality marks. However, half of them do so regularly. This may be due to a more selective approach to the choice of cosmetics. The number of people who could not answer that question is also quite large. This may be due to the fact that these people do not buy cosmetics or do it very rarely.

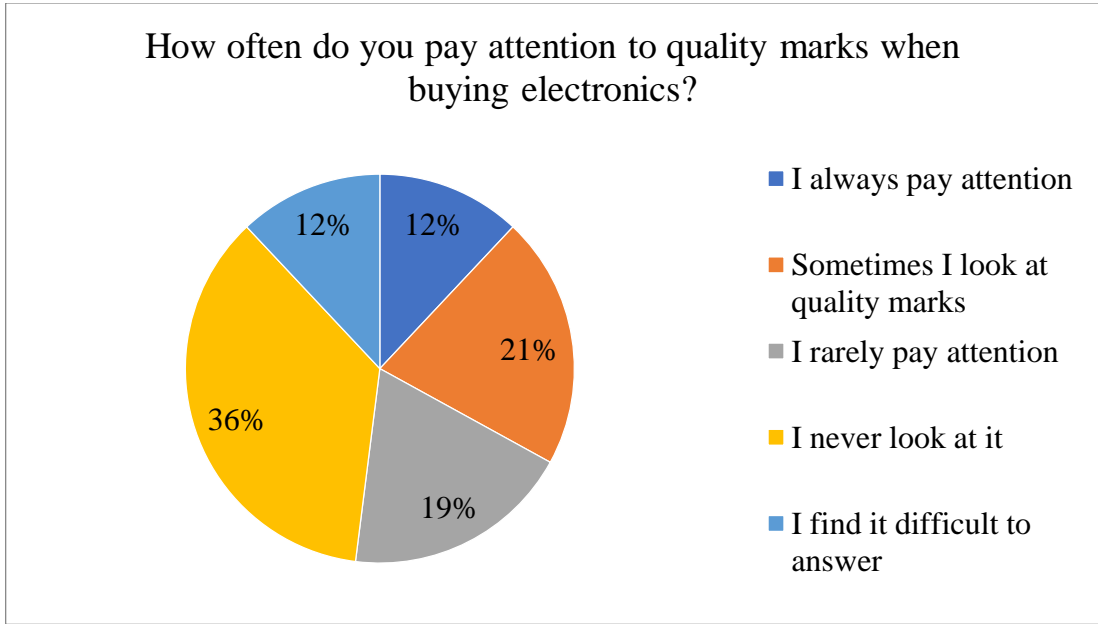


Figure 47 - Results of question how often do you pay attention to quality marks when buying electronics?

People who choose electronics more often than other categories do not pay any attention to the quality marks. This may be due to heavier access to product packaging and other selection criteria.

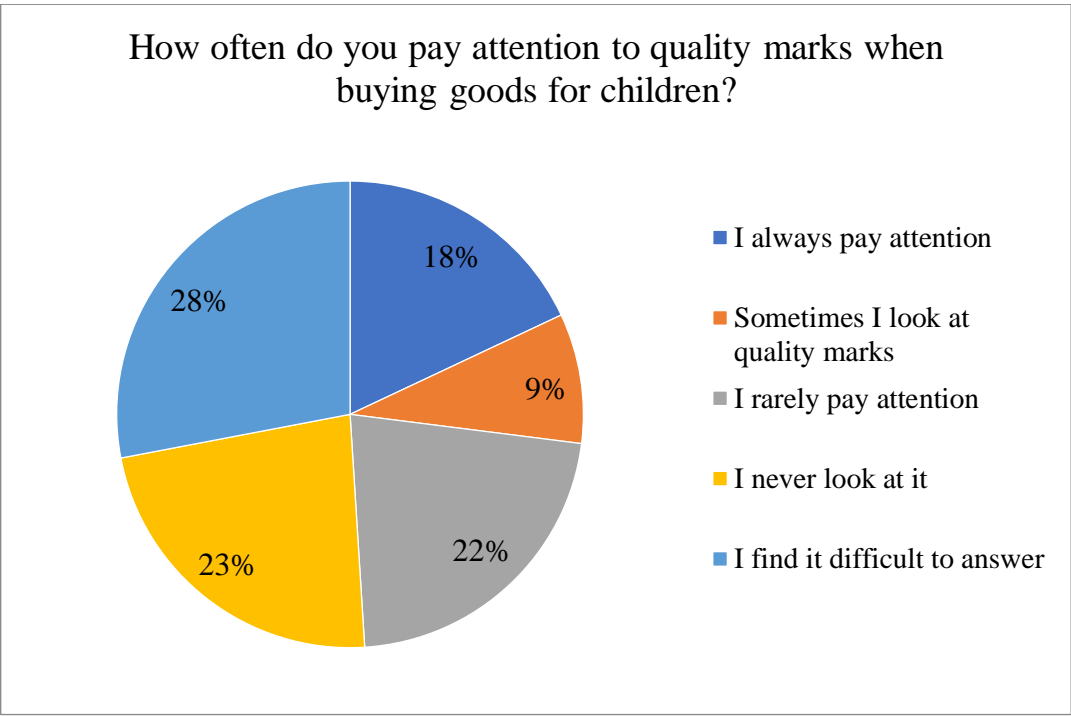


Figure 48 - Results of question how often do you pay attention to quality marks when buying goods for children?

This category of goods is characterized by the most radical answers. 18% of respondents constantly pay attention to quality marks, 23% - never. This question also caused the greatest difficulty in answering: 28% - could not answer the question.

In the previous chapter, the hypothesis was formed that consumers are more likely to buy food and household chemicals. According to the research results, the most frequently purchased categories of products are: food, household chemicals and clothing. At the same time, buyers most often pay attention to quality marks when buying food, household electronics and household chemicals. However, if we do not take into account the results of people who find it difficult to answer, we can make the following conclusion. Consumers pay the most attention to quality marks when buying food and goods for children. This partially confirms the hypothesis.

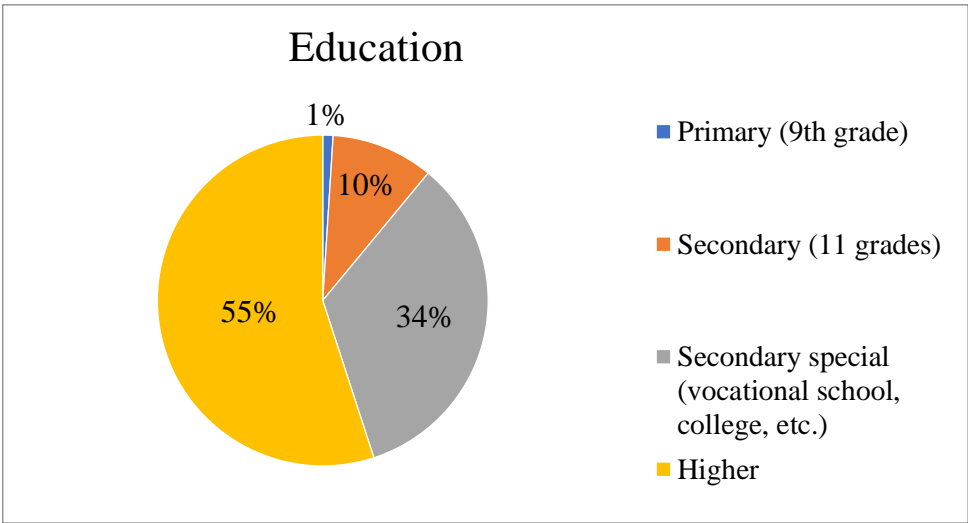


Figure 49 – Education of respondents

According to the survey results, out of 100 respondents, 55% have higher education, 34% have graduated from vocational school and only 11% have school education. These data indicate a high level of education of the target group.

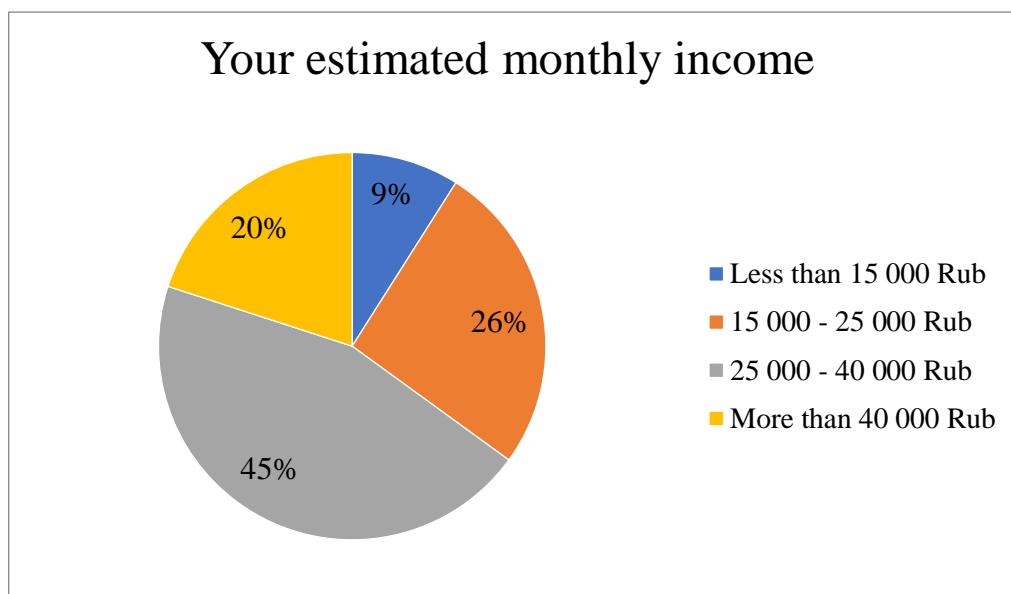


Figure 50 – Estimated monthly income of respondents

This graph shows that most respondents have an average salary of 25 000 – 40 000 Rub. The average salary in Russia (after taxes) is 31 800 Rub.

On the basis of the conducted research, the following conclusions can be drawn:

According to the survey results, the most decisive factors for consumers when they buy a product are: the price of the product - important for 72% of respondents and the composition (material) of the product - 58% of respondents. Also important characteristics of the product in the opinion of consumers are: personal experience in using the product and the manufacturer (brand) of the product.

An interesting fact is that a quality product for the majority of consumers is a product that has a natural composition, long life, made of proper material and has a good reputation in the market. These factors are the most significant influence on the choice of the customer.

To identify quality goods, the majority of respondents look at the composition of the goods (68%), check the expiration date (60%), look at the package of goods (51%) and read comments from other people about the experience of using this product (43%). Thus, the most effective way to highlight the quality of the product is to make an attractive package, place an easy-to-read composition on it, and place signs on the package that confirm the compliance.

Based on the results of the research carried out, The persons who pay attention to the quality marks the most frequently are women (67% of those who pay attention to the quality marks) with higher education (83.3% of those who pay attention to the quality marks). Also it is possible to analyze the customers according to their income: 58.3% of respondents have income over 40 000 Rub and 25% of respondents have income between 25 000 – 40 000 Rub.

If we consider household chemicals, the situation here is similar. 60% of respondents who pay attention to quality marks are women. 90% of respondents who pay attention to the quality marks have

higher education. Therefore, it can be shown that women with higher education and upper secondary income pay the most attention to the quality marks. According to income statistics: 40% of respondents have income over 40 000 Rub, 30% of respondents have income of lower than 15 000 Rub per month and 20% of respondents have income between 25 000 – 40 000 Rub.

This way, the quality marks are most often drawn attention to women with higher education and above-average income. The following section will discuss the benefits and costs related to the quality mark.

## **5. Cost-benefit analysis**

Consumers and producers of goods or services may receive potential benefits from obtaining a quality mark. In the previous chapter, a study was carried out on the basis of which it was found out how consumers feel about quality marks. This research plays an important role, because the possible benefits for the producer depend on how the consumer perceives the quality marks. In this chapter, the potential benefits for the consumer who buys a product bearing a quality mark will be discussed. Also, the potential benefits for the manufacturer who labels his product with a quality mark and the costs needed to obtain the mark.

According to my research results, the most recognizable quality marks on the Russian market are: GOST R quality mark, "Russian 100 best goods" quality mark, Russian quality mark "Znak kachestva" and Premiya "Marka Nomer 1 v Rossii". For further description I chose Russian quality mark "Znak kachestva". My choice is due not only to the fact that this mark is one of the most popular, but also to the fact that the percentage of trust to this mark is very high. 27 respondents out of 47 who recognized this quality mark expressed their trust in the "Znak kachestva" mark. Another advantage to producer of choosing this mark is that it is subsidized by the state. The state covers all costs associated with laboratory examination and certification of products for all categories except the organic product category. This quality mark has been introduced under a special program and is actively promoted by the state at regional and federal levels. I believe that this is the most modern and actively developing quality mark in Russia. The official website of the quality mark provides [6] detailed information on the order of participation in the competition, as well as ratings of participating products. In the section ratings you can see the ratings of all participants who have passed an independent examination. Thus, any consumer can freely view the top of the best products in Russia according to the rating in the selected category. Goods with the best rating will be awarded a quality mark [6]. Therefore, I chose this quality mark because it is valuable for both the consumer and the producer. In this section, the potential benefits to be derived from the labeling of the quality mark were discussed, as well as the possible costs of obtaining the mark.

The currency used in this chapter is the Russian ruble. As of 13.08.2020, according to the Google, 1 Euro equals 86.15 rubles.

### **5.1 Costs related to the quality mark**

Labeling products with a quality mark requires certain costs. This is due to the fact that in order to label your product, it is necessary to prepare documents, send the product for research, conduct research, conduct an assessment of production, as well as conduct regular scheduled and unscheduled inspections. Each of these steps requires the work of certain people, the use of equipment and resources, which implies payment. And all this considering that the product is already of high quality and all the work to ensure the quality of the product, (including training, equipment upgrades, organization of additional control, etc.) has already been completed [6]. I will consider the costs related to obtaining the quality mark and its subsequent confirmation. Considering that the produced product is of already

required quality and no additional actions are required. The "Znak kachestva" mark is subsidised by the state for all categories except organic products. In this section I will consider both possible options.

According to my research, the most frequently purchased category of products in stores are the food products. Sausages from the Tomsk company were considered as an example. Product research is conducted in the Federal Budget Institution "State Regional Center for Standardization, Metrology and Testing", which is located in St. Petersburg.

#### **The costs of obtaining the quality mark for any category of products other than organic**

Assignment of the quality mark occurs by product category. Such categories are: foodstuffs, drinks, electronic equipment, goods for the house, clothes, cosmetics, goods for children and digital products. Also all ratings of qualitative goods are made on these categories [6]. In order to obtain more detailed information about the costs incurred by a manufacturer to obtain a quality mark, an inquiry was sent to Roskachestvo. An official response from the company confirmed that the entire procedure for obtaining a quality mark, including research and certification is absolutely free. All the work of specialists, equipment and materials are paid for by the state. The original letter in Russian from Roskachestvo can be found in Appendix B.

#### **The costs of obtaining the quality mark for organic product**

The organic product category is a separate category for Roskachestvo certification. As opposed to all other product categories, there will be costs associated with obtaining an organic product quality mark, as shown in tables 13 and 14.

According to the order of the Roskachestvo dated April 24, 2020, certification of organic products has the following costs [71]. The values below reflect the certification costs for small and medium-sized businesses. According to the classification of the Federal Law of the Russian Federation, small businesses are enterprises with 16 to 100 employees inclusive, annual revenue from sales of less than 800 million rubles (excluding VAT). Medium business enterprises are organizations with the number of employees from 101 to 250 inclusive, with annual revenue not exceeding 2000 million rubles (excluding VAT) [72].

Table 13 - Costs of compliance for obtaining a quality mark for small business (based on [71])

Activity	Costs of activity
Initial costs	
Verification of documents	200 Rub
Documental inspection	5000 Rub
Sampling	1000 Rub
Tests on 60 substances	15000 Rub
Preparation of a report on the objects of research	10000 Rub
Total	31 200 Rub

Costs for subsequent years	
Annual inspection	20000 Rub
Sampling	1000 Rub
Conduct tests on 60 substances	15000 Rub
Preparation of a report on the objects of research	Free for this type of business
Cost of delivery and accommodation of specialists (2 people for 3 days)	30000 Rub for tickets + 6000 Rub accommodation + 3000 Rub daily allowance for 3 days for 2 people
Total	66 000 Rub

The state subsidizes many points in various areas as part of its support for small businesses. Thus, for example, for small businesses, the preparation of a report on the objects of research is free of charge. Thus, in order to obtain a mark of quality for an organic product for a small business, the costs are 31200 rubles initial costs and 66000 – annual costs for subsequent years. Correspondence costs for medium businesses are shown in Table 14.

Table 14 - Costs of compliance for obtaining a quality mark for medium business (based on [71])

Activity	Costs of activity
Initial costs	
Verification of documents	200 Rub
Documental inspection	5000 Rub
Sampling	1000 Rub
Tests on 60 substances	15000 Rub
Preparation of a report on the objects of research	10000 Rub
Total	31 200 Rub
Costs for subsequent years	
Annual inspection	20000 Rub
Sampling	1000 Rub
Conduct tests on 60 substances	15000 Rub
Preparation of a report on the objects of research	20000 Rub
Cost of delivery and accommodation of specialists (2 people for 3 days)	30000 Rub for tickets + 6000 Rub accommodation + 3000 Rub daily allowance for 3 days for 2 people
Total	86 000 Rub

Table 14 shows that in order to obtain a mark of quality for an organic product for a medium business, the costs are 31200 rubles initial costs and 86000 rubles – annual costs for subsequent years.

Tables 13 and 14 in the row "Cost of delivery and accommodation of specialists (2 people for 3 days)" give approximate costs. The airline ticket price was calculated as the average economy class price. Accommodation in a double room in a hotel. The size of the daily allowance is determined 500 rubles per person.

These tables show the estimated costs of organic certification for small and medium-sized businesses. This information is relevant as of August 2020 and includes changes related to the complex epidemiological situation (Covid-19).

## **5.2 Benefits related to the quality mark**

Labeling with a quality mark may benefit not only the manufacturer of the marked goods, but also the consumer and the market of the country as a whole. This subchapter discussed the possible benefits of labeling products with a quality mark for the producer, consumer and the country's market in general.

### **Benefits of the quality mark for consumers**

Labeling products with the "Znak kachestva" quality mark will allow consumers to easily find products that meet the higher quality requirements. Even more convenient is that the customer does not have to come to the store to look for goods on the shelves with this quality mark. It is not necessary to look in detail and look for signs on each product. Simply go to the website of the organization Roskachestvo, select the category of goods of interest, open the rating of goods and find all products with a quality mark in each category without leaving home. Also, if the rating of a product on a scale from 0 to 5.5 points is not enough for the consumer, he can select each specific product and find its full description, including the components of the assessment, documents of conformity, test reports of the product and the reason why a product did not receive a quality mark. For each category of goods, there are certain requirements and anyone can see the test reports with the permissible values, the indicators of the product in question and the normative document regulating the indicators.

In this way, the consumer can form his basket of quality goods without leaving home.

In my research, the question "How do you determine the quality of a product before buying?" was asked. 43% of respondents answered that they read other people's reviews before buying the product. 68% said that they read the composition. The Roskachestvo website provides detailed information for each product, including the composition. A detailed assessment of product characteristics on a five-point scale, supplied by an independent organization, can be an excellent example of a product review based on facts rather than subjective representation.

Therefore, the presence of this quality mark in the product allows the consumer to be confident in the quality of this product. But it also provides a convenient infrastructure for searching for quality goods and information about them.



### **Benefits of the quality mark for producers**

The benefits that a company can obtain from obtaining a quality mark can be different. This section will discuss the potential benefits for a manufacturer that has been certified by "Znak kachestva" quality mark.

According to the results of research provided by Roskachestvo, the presence of a national quality mark on the packaging of the goods increases the level of confidence in this product among buyers. As a result of increased trust, the level of demand for the goods marked with the "Znak kachestva" quality mark increases by 20-60% [6]. The increase in demand for products will definitely lead to an increase in sales volume and, as a result, an increase in the organization's profit.

According to my research results, for 9% of respondents, the presence of a quality mark on the packaging is important when buying goods. 28% of respondents said that they consider a product marked with a quality mark as a quality product. When asked "Do you pay attention to quality marks when buying food?", 12% of respondents said that they regularly pay attention to quality marks.

Therefore, it is clear that labeling with a national quality mark will attract new consumers who pay significant attention to quality marks.

Roskachestvo promotes products with the quality mark. The organization carries out outdoor advertising (billboards), as well as advertising on TV. In addition, all the goods that have been tested are placed on the company's website in the ranking of goods. Goods with the best rating are marked with special signs and will spread out at the beginning of the rating.

Outdoor (billboards) advertising is one of the most effective methods of offline advertising. It is one of the few tools with which it is possible to transmit advertising information without the active efforts of the consumer. To see a message, a person doesn't need to turn on TV or radio, launch a browser, or read an email. All they need to do is drive on the road, walk down the street, buy something in a store - advertising gets everywhere [73]. Advertising on TV provides recognition of the product and business. Maximum audience coverage. According to TNS Russia, 70% of Russians watch TV regularly, and 99% turn on TV at least once a month. Thus, these types of advertising will allow the rapid spread of recognition of the Russian mark of quality. This will make it possible to distinguish products marked with this mark among competitors [73].

The Roskachestvo organization cooperates with various international organizations, which allows promoting products with the Russian mark of quality in the Russian market and international market.

For example, in 2018 the chain of supermarkets "Billa" began a program to promote high quality products marked with the Russian quality mark "Znak kachestva". According to experts, "Billa" will increase sales of Russian goods of high quality by 35% on average. The joint campaign of the large chain "Billa" and Roskachestvo is designed to attract the attention of buyers to the characteristics of goods, as well as to highlight the range of products with an increased level of quality [6].

### **Benefits of the quality mark for Russian market**

The state spends significant resources on maintaining and developing the national quality mark "Znak kachestva". And it is obvious to assume that the state does it for a reason, and expects something. Promotion and subsidizing of the quality mark makes it more attractive for producers. In its turn, the quality mark imposes higher requirements on goods. Increasing the quality of goods leads to more competition in the market, which in turn makes other producers meet more stringent requirements. In this way, the quality of goods on the market increases [6].

*"We must learn how to produce quality competitive products that are in demand not only in Russia, but also in global markets. In the end, the task is to make full and more efficient use of our internal resources for solving development problems." – Vladimir Putin.*

Higher quality goods in the domestic market, allows competing in the international market [6].

Therefore, it can be concluded that certification and labeling with a quality mark can be useful to the consumer, to the producer and to the state as a whole. The marking with a quality mark allows the consumer to find a quality product easily and quickly. The manufacturer receives additional advertising and can count on attracting new customers and as a result - increase in profits. For the state economy, the high quality of products allows to compete in the international market.

This chapter considered the costs associated with obtaining a quality mark, as well as the potential benefits that a quality mark may bring.

## CONCLUSION

There are many products with different quality marks on store shelves now. Consumers can be guided by the presence of quality marks on packaging of the product when purchasing a particular product. However, the perception of quality may differ from person to person. Therefore, in my work, I defined the concept of a quality mark and used it to choose whether or not to consider a particular quality mark. In the second and third chapters, I described in details the quality marks that can be seen on the Russian market. A detailed consideration of the quality marks is necessary, since often the packaging contains only the image of the quality mark itself, without any additional information about it.

In order to understand how familiar consumers are with the quality marks and how they perceive the quality of a product, the research of consumer perception was carried out, presented in the third chapter. As a starting point, attempts were made to find similar research in the Russian market. The searches have shown that such research is not currently available for public use in the Russian market. Therefore, my research of consumer perception of quality marks is unique for the Russian market.

The research carried out allows answering many questions related to the quality marks. I analyzed which quality marks are the most recognizable ones and which ones are unknown to consumers. The quality marks with the highest consumer confidence in them were identified. According to the results of the study, it was revealed what buyers pay the most attention to when buying this or that product, as well as what are quality goods for them. According to the survey results, the most decisive factors for consumers when they buy a product are: the price of the product - important for 72% of respondents and the composition (material) of the product - 58% of respondents. Other important characteristics of the product in the opinion of consumers are: personal experience in using the product and the manufacturer (brand) of the product.

Quality product in the opinion of consumers is a product that has a natural composition, long life, is made of proper material and has a good reputation in the market. These factors have the most significant influence on the choice of the customer.

To identify quality goods, the majority of respondents look at the composition of the goods (68%), check the expiration date (60%), look at the package of goods (51%) and read comments from other people about the experience of using this product (43%). Thus, the most effective way to highlight the quality of the product is to make an attractive package, place an easy-to-read composition on it, and place quality marks on the package near the composition.

It is interesting to know that according to the research results, the persons who pay attention to the quality marks are most often women (67% of those who pay attention to the quality marks) with higher education (83.3% of those who pay attention to the quality marks). Also it is possible to analyze the customers according to their income: 58.3% of respondents have monthly income over 40 000 Rub and 25% of respondents have monthly income between 25 000 – 40 000 Rub. More detailed explanations of the research and its results can be found in the fourth chapter.

In the final part of the thesis, an analysis of the costs and benefits associated with the obtaining of the quality mark was carried out. This analysis has shown that the manufacturer can expect the potential benefits of obtaining a quality mark. I am also sure that the consumer can expect benefits from the quality mark.

The "Znak kachestva" quality mark was chosen for the cost-benefit analysis. It is one of the most recognizable marks among Russian consumers. This mark has been introduced as a part of the government program. Also the organization Roskachestvo offers convenient services, which can be useful for both consumer and manufacturer. The considered quality mark has a number of advantages, in comparison with other quality marks, both for the consumer and for the manufacturer. It is subsidized and actively promoted by the state, which will reduce the cost of obtaining it, advertising, etc. The consumer will be able to make a whole basket of quality goods without leaving home and go to the store already knowing what he will buy. The state, supporting the quality marks, stimulates the increase in the level of quality products in the country. This increases the competitiveness of goods in the international market.

To obtain a more detailed description of the costs related to obtaining a quality mark, an inquiry was sent to Roskachestvo. The official response confirmed that, for the manufacturer, the entire procedure for obtaining a quality mark is absolutely free for all product categories except organic products. For the organic product category, chapter five gives the initial costs of obtaining a quality mark as well as the annual costs of maintaining it. More detailed information about the potential benefits and costs of obtaining a quality mark can be found in chapter five.

The results of this paper can be very valuable, both for the manufacturer, who is going to label their products with quality marks, and for the consumer, in order to understand what is hidden behind various quality marks. This way quality marks can be very useful for the development of quality of products.

This diploma thesis collects a significant amount of information related to quality marks. And it can be useful to the reader both for information purposes and as a starting point for future research. To the head of the organization, this diploma thesis will be useful, because it contains information about what consumers pay the most attention to and what they consider a quality product.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A - Questionnaire for conducting a sociological research of the customer perception of quality marks.

# Quality and Quality Marks

Hello, my name is Vladislav, and I conduct research on consumer perception of quality and quality marks. The purpose of the research is to evaluate and systematize the awareness of people living and purchasing goods in Russian stores about quality marks. This research is part of my diploma thesis.

There will be 13 questions that you will be asked, and the total duration of the survey will not exceed 10 minutes.

The survey is anonymous and is statistical in nature.

Thank you very much in advance for your participation! Each participant contributes to the development of quality in Russia.

**Section one - quality. In this section you will be asked to answer 5 questions. These questions are related to your understanding and perception of quality.**

1. Which product categories do you buy most often? (Select the three most suitable answers for you). \*

- Household Electronics
- Clothes
- Large appliances (Cars, large household appliances, etc.)
- Goods for kids
- Goods for pets
- Car parts
- Cosmetics
- Food Products
- Household chemicals
- Home and renovation products
- Другое: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the most important thing for you when buying goods in a store?  
(Select the three most suitable answers for you). \*

- Product packaging quality
- Price
- Labeling with quality marks
- Product composition (material)
- Experience of product use
- Manufacturer of goods
- Recommendations from relatives and friends.
- Product or package design (external attraction)
- Country of origin
- Feedback from other people
- Другое: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you mean by quality product? (Select the three most suitable answers for you). \*

- Natural composition
- The material from which the product is made
- Long lifetime
- The quality marks appearing on the packaging
- Good product reputation, positive usage experience
- Attractive appearance
- This product has a high price
- Famous Brand
- Другое: \_\_\_\_\_

4. What do you do to determine the quality of the product before you buy it?  
(Select the three most suitable answers for you) \*

- Look at the composition of product
- Look at the package
- Check expiration date
- Look at the quality marks
- Read reviews
- Ask a consultant
- Focus on the warranty that the manufacturer provides
- I don't look at the goods before I buy them
- Другое: \_\_\_\_\_

5. In general, how do you evaluate the quality of goods on the Russian market? (Select one answer option) \*

- Absolutely high
- Rather high
- Average
- Rather low
- Absolutely low
- I find it difficult to answer

**Section two, quality marks. In this section, you will be asked to answer on 8 questions.**

---

1. Do you know, have you ever heard of quality marks? (Select one answer option) \*

- I know
- I heard something
- This is the first time I've heard
- I find it difficult to answer

2. Please select which of the listed quality marks are familiar to you? (Choose any number of answers. If you know any quality mark that is not on the list, write its name in "Other"). \*



Russian quality mark "Znak kachestva"



Premiya "Marka №1 v Rossii"



Quality mark of the Program "100 Best Goods of Russia"



Golden Quality Mark "All-Russian Brand"



Golden quality mark Russian Mark



RST conformity mark for certification in the GOST R system



Ecologically friendly product mark



Ecolabeling "The leaf of life"



TUV sign with GS marking (Germany)



BDIH mark of compliance with cosmetic standards (Germany)



COSMÉBIO quality mark (France)



ICEA Environmental Quality Mark (Italy)



Quality Mark "Q" (Poland)



QS quality mark (China)



ECOCERT Label (France)

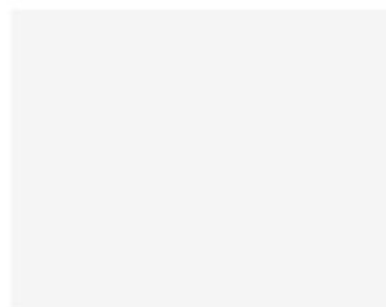


Ecological mark of conformity of the Republic of Belarus



Mark of conformity UkrSEPRO (Ukraine)

Дягрое:



I'm not familiar with any quality marks.



3. Please select which of the listed quality marks do you trust? (Choose any number of answers. If you know any quality mark that is not on the list, write its name in "Other"). \*

4. How often do you pay attention to quality marks when buying food? (Select one answer from the list) \*

- I always pay attention
- Sometimes I look at quality marks
- I rarely pay attention
- I never look at it
- I find it difficult to answer

5. How often do you pay attention to quality marks when buying household chemicals? (Select one answer from the list) \*

- I always pay attention
- Sometimes I look at quality marks
- I rarely pay attention
- I never look at it
- I find it difficult to answer

6. How often do you pay attention to quality marks when buying cosmetics? (Select one answer from the list) \*

- I always pay attention
- Sometimes I look at quality marks
- I rarely pay attention
- I never look at it
- I find it difficult to answer

7. How often do you pay attention to quality marks when buying electronics (including household appliances)? (Select one answer from the list) \*

- I always pay attention
- Sometimes I look at quality marks
- I rarely pay attention
- I never look at it
- I find it difficult to answer

8. How often do you pay attention to quality marks when buying goods for children? (Select one answer from the list) \*

- I always pay attention
- Sometimes I look at quality marks
- I rarely pay attention
- I never look at it
- I find it difficult to answer

Section three. Demographic indicators. Please answer all questions below. The form is anonymous, your data is used only as statistics.

Sex \*

- Male
- Female

Your age \*

- 18-25 years
- 26 - 55 years
- 56 years or more

Your education \*

- Primary (9th grade)
- Secondary (11 grades)
- Secondary special (vocational school, college, etc.)
- Higher education

Your approximate monthly income \*

- less than 15,000 rubles
- 15,000 - 25,000 rubles
- 25,000 - 40,000 rubles
- 40,000 or more rubles
- Другое: \_\_\_\_\_

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Thank you very much for completing my survey. Each of you contributes to my quality research.

Best regards, Vladislav Sholokhov

## Appendix B - Original letter in Russian from company Roskachestvo

Добрый день!

Вся процедура получения Знака качества абсолютно бесплатная.

- Существуют ли хоть какие-то затраты которые несет производитель для получения сертификата? Нет.
- Оплата проживания специалистов, для проведения ежегодного инспекционного контроля? Нет.
- Есть такие затраты есть, не могли бы вы написать примерный их перечень. Нет перечня и затрат.

С уважением,

Панова Евгения Максимовна

Эксперт Отдела по работе с производителями

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