

Visual Elements on Food Substitute Products' Packaging

Do they have an Influence on Flexitarians' Product Choices?



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Abstract

In recent years, concerns about climate change, animal welfare, and healthiness have created new lifestyle trends (Funch, 2017; Hesseldahl, 2016). Some consumers have become more aware of how their consumption choices impacts the society at large (Cherrier, 2009), why they have changed their consumption practices as their diets to include less animal products (Schoon, 2015). The evolution of the flexitarian trend has created a whole new field of interest within marketing of food substitute products for producers, distributors, and marketers. Therefore, the aim of this thesis was to investigate the influence of visual elements on product packaging for flexitarians' product preferences of substitute products.

The problem statement was explored through an explorative, qualitative methodology. Firstly, focus group discussions were conducted, where the target group of young, urban flexitarians from the Copenhagen area, were introduced to specific substitute products. The participants were asked to discuss freely on the basis of semi-structured questions made beforehand, and questions emerging throughout the discussions. Secondly, a qualitative content analysis of the data set was performed, and discussion-points were retrieved from the data.

From the content analysis and the discussion, general tendencies were found. First, the participants had a preference for products they found to have a visually attractive product design. Second, the participants were more willing to purchase a substitute product with a transparent packaging element, as they found these products more attractive. Third, they preferred products that were visually and communicatively similar to their animal product counterpart, as they found these more convenient to substitute into their daily practices. Fourth, a connection between perceived healthiness and visual elements was found. They particularly associated the Danish Ø-label, the Keyhole label, and products with a green packaging colour with healthy product choices. Fifth, the participants connected the flexitarian lifestyle with consuming responsibly, as they see it is a collective responsibility to preserve the environment. Sixth, they showed the importance of ethical marketing by preferring products with an image element, as they found it easier to assess whether there was a dissonance between the product and the marketing. Lastly, group dynamics were found to have an impact on the participants' answers, as the participants were quick to agree with each other and to change their attention and perspective towards a product or topic, if one or more participants focused on these particular elements.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, new trends in consumer goods have changed how consumers shop. Concerns regarding climate change, animal welfare, healthiness, and so forth have risen in popularity (Hesseldal, 2016), and have become more common considerations for consumers when buying consumer goods for their households. New lifestyle trends, such as vegetarianism, veganism and flexitarian diets, have emerged and have become a regular part of people's daily choosing of diet and lifestyle (Funch, 2017; Hesseldal, 2016). The new lifestyles are not only trends but a part of consumers' identity (Rowland, 2018).

In this thesis, the focus will be on the flexitarian trend. Flexitarians can be defined as: consumers who follow “...a primarily but not strictly vegetarian diet” (Funch, 2017; Oxford University Press, 2014). The above-mentioned trends have further resulted in new product developments in the food substitute product category, catering to the needs of the contemporary society with the main goal of decreasing negative consumption patterns.

An expanding amount of research has been conducted on how different product elements, such as packaging shape (e.g. Velasco, Salgado-Montejo, Marmolejo-Ramos, & Spence, 2014), main packaging colour (e.g. Piqueras-Fiszman & Spence, 2014), and textual elements (e.g. Rundh, 2009), can influence product perception and consumer preference. Comparatively, little research in this field of area concerns flexitarians and how they are influenced by visual elements on the packaging design. Hence, this thesis will investigate the following research question:

What is the influence of visual elements on product packaging on flexitarians' preference of substitute products?

Furthermore, this thesis will explore how consumers are influenced by visual and communicative elements on product packaging of vegetarian/vegan food substitute products. It will include explorations within the fields of consumer trends and tendencies, consumer attitudes/perception, and how the packaging stimuli affect purchase decisions. Moreover, the target group for and how it is affected by packaging design and visual aids, when they choose between different products, will be investigated. Lastly, which visual elements and product design elements that have the biggest influence on consumers' product choices, in the product category of substitute products, will be explored in a focus group experiment.

Delimitation

In this thesis, the following definitions of terms will be applied. Firstly, flexitarians are defined as: people who actively choose to leave out animal products as a part of their diet, two or more times a month. Secondly, substitute products will be used to describe convenience food products that work as alternatives to animal food products. There are many types of substitute products available for consumers. For this thesis' experiment, products within the groups of meat, dairy, and cold cuts will be presented to the experiment participants, even though there are several other product groups that have available substitute products.

Due to the scope of this thesis, the target group will be limited to young urban Danish flexitarians situated in the Copenhagen Area. Further, the thesis will only investigate products sold in Denmark. The target group is chosen due to limited access to participants. Moreover, this thesis is explorative, thus, the results are not representative or generalising for all flexitarians.

Furthermore, the literature and theories reviewed are chosen based on the application for this thesis' theoretical point of view, which seeks to explore consumers actions and attitudes towards convenience products. Hence, the assumptions regarding consumers could be entirely different if other aspects of consumer theory were applied, in this thesis.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Consumer Behaviour

According to Lamb, Hair, and McDaniel (2016), "*Consumer behavior describes how consumers make purchase decisions and how they use and dispose of the purchased goods and services*" (Lamb et al., 2016, p. 90). Additionally, they argue that the theoretical field of consumer behaviour also consist of factors that can influence purchase decisions and product use. Furthermore, Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard and Hogg (2013) describe consumer behaviour as the study of how marketers, through their actions, influence the world as a whole.

According to Solomon et al. (2013), consumer behaviour is: the study of buying things, of how owning or not owning a thing can affect a consumer's life, how possessions can influence one's self-image and one's state of being, and how consumers feel about themselves and others. Moreover, they argue that it is the study of how products, services, and consumption as

a whole is a part of a broader social world, and how the marketing system influences every consumption and behavioural activity, a consumer takes part in. Another way to define the field of consumer behaviour is: *“the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires”* (Solomon et al., 2013, p. 5). (Solomon et al., 2013)

There is a growing interest in this field of study from the social sciences in general. This is partly because marketers, researchers, consumers, and so forth have become aware of the increasing importance of consumption in daily life of people, groups of people, societies, organisations, cultures, and moreover because of the ever-changing consumer landscape. Consumption is therefore seen as being a vital part of a consumer's behaviour and is represented throughout different parts of life. Herein consumers social, psychological, economic, political, and cultural life. (Solomon et al., 2013)

In summary, these different points of views of consumer behaviour have that in common, that they all define consumer behaviour as being both the study of consumers and marketers and how these parties influence each other. Therefore, we argue that consumer behaviour is a theoretical field that can be applied by marketers in many ways, including as a segmenting tool, in marketing research, and in marketing communications. Moreover, we define consumer behaviour as: the study of how consumers' buying, owning, possessing, or disposing of items, services, and so forth affect their own and others' sense of self and sense of being.

2.2 Consumer Buying Process

This section will provide an overlook of theory concerning the consumer decision-making process and the consumer purchase process, which both will describe the different stages consumers go through in a purchase situation. Further, the concept of hierarchy of effects will be included to describe how consumers' purchase decision process might be, when it involves low-involvement products, as convenience goods. Lastly, literature concerning the formation of consumer attitudes will be examined.

2.2.1 The Consumer Decision-Making Process

The concept of consumer decision-making process describes how consumers make decisions in a purchase situation. There are five different stages of a consumers' decision-making process, respectively; need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and

post-purchase behaviour. Post-purchase behaviour will not be explained, due to the scope. (Lamb et al., 2016)

2.2.1.1 Need Recognition

The first stage is need recognition, i.e. “...*the result of an imbalance between actual and desired states*” (Lamb et al., 2016, p. 91). This stage activates a desire, i.e. a want and a need, “*i.e. the recognition of an unfulfilled need and a product that will satisfy it*” (Lamb et al., 2016, p. 91). Need recognition is activated “*when a consumer is exposed to either an internal and external stimulus*” (Lamb et al., 2016, p. 92), that helps separate what the consumer sees as a want and what the consumer actually needs. (Lamb et al., 2016)

2.2.1.2 Information Search

The second stage is information search, i.e. where consumers search for information about product alternatives, that are able to satisfy their need or want. Information search can occur internally, externally, or as a combination of the two. The internal information search is when a consumer “*recalls information stored in memory*” (Lamb et al., 2016, p. 93), mostly from previous experiences with a product. The external information search “*is the process of seeking information in the outside environment*” (Lamb et al., 2016, p. 93). The information search process ends with the consumer developing an evoked set of the most preferred alternatives, based on information gathered from inside and outside influences. (Lamb et al., 2016)

2.2.1.3 Evaluation of Alternatives & Purchase

The third and fourth stage is evaluation of alternatives and purchase, which are the stages where the consumers make their final decision, based on previous obtained information and external influences. The decision to purchase, is influenced by the consumers' evaluation of alternatives, which includes assessment of “*the environment, internal information, and external information*” (Lamb et al., 2016, p. 95). (Lamb et al., 2016)

2.2.2 The Consumer Purchase Process

The consumer purchase process explains how consumers might be affected by both internal and external factors before, during, or after a purchase. (Solomon et al., 2013)

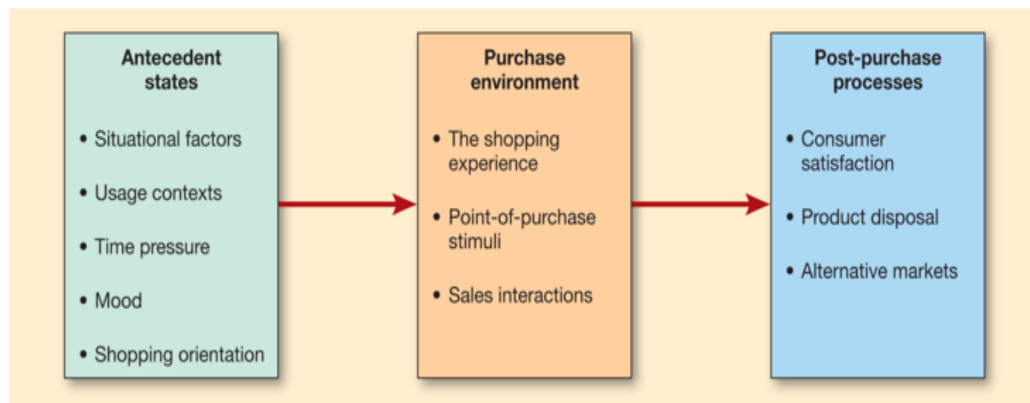


Figure 3.1 Issues related to purchase and post-purchase activities

(Solomon et al., 2013, p. 63, figure 3.1)

The above figure shows the different dimensions of a purchase decision process, and what factors that might influence this. The antecedent states, i.e. the situational effects, describe how the consumer's purchase process can be affected by internal factors. The purchase environment, i.e. the social and physical surroundings, describe the external factors that might influence the purchase process. And lastly, the post-purchase processes describe the customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the purchased product. (Solomon et al., 2013)

In relation to this thesis, the antecedent state will be portrayed through a scenario given to the focus group participants, setting the scene of a shopping trip, as if the experiment was conducted in a physical store. This will provide insight into how the participants might be influenced by internal and external factors, such as situational factors, mood, usage contexts, and so forth. As the focus group experiment is conducted in a closed setting and not in a physical store, the antecedent states are replaced through questions that simulates what the participants would experience. (Solomon et al., 2013)

Critiques

There are several limitations to address with this theory, including the fact that we cannot evaluate the post-purchase process for our focus group participants, as we do not interview the participants afterwards, and further because they do not physically take the products presented

in the focus group home with them. Moreover, the post-purchase evaluation is not a calculating factor for this thesis, as the main focus is on how consumers are affected before and during a shopping experience, and not after. The focus group experiment will however provide insight into the participants' attitudes towards the test products presented to them.

2.2.3 Hierarchy of Effects

The concept hierarchy of effects shows the interrelationships between the three components identified to shape an attitude, i.e. affect, behaviour, and cognition, and their impact in three identified hierarchies. The concept is described as the “...*relative impact of knowing, feeling and doing*” (Solomon et al., 2013, p. 295). The first hierarchy is the standard learning hierarchy, which describes; “*Attitude based on cognitive information processing*”, the second is the low-involvement hierarchy, which describes; “*Attitude based on behavioural learning processes*”, and the third is the experiential hierarchy, which describes; “*Attitude based on hedonic consumption*” (Solomon et al., 2013, p. 295). Due to the scope of the thesis, the standard learning hierarchy will not be included, as it is not relevant for the decision-making involving convenience products. (Solomon et al., 2013)

2.2.3.1 The Low-Involvement Hierarchy

Convenience products can be categorised as a low-involvement product category, i.e. when there is not a strong preference for a brand or product before a purchase situation (Solomon et al., 2013), which means that consumers act out of limited product knowledge before a purchase and first process their experiences afterwards. Hence, the post-purchase stage is where consumer attitudes fully develop, based on product experiences (Solomon et al., 2013). When product involvement is low, the consumers respond more to simple and implicit stimuli, i.e. “*attitudes that are automatically activated upon exposure to the attitude object...*” (Dempsey & Mitchell, 2010, p. 614), which makes complicated stimuli redundant as the consumers have no motivation to engage in complex information processing (Solomon et al., 2013). This can also be described in relation to the involvement paradox, i.e. “*the less important the product is to consumers, the more important are many of the marketing stimuli (e.g. packages, jingles) that must be devised to sell it*” (Solomon et al., 2013, p. 296), as the marketing stimuli must evoke a natural response to the product. Due to the scope of the thesis, it is relevant to investigate how

the level of involvement with the test products affects the consumer decision-making process and the purchase process.

2.2.3.2 The Experiential Hierarchy

The experiential hierarchy is important for this thesis, as it can give an insight to how consumers' emotions in a shopping situation, can affect their purchase decision. Here, the buying process is more based on emotions and thoughts, in comparison to the low-involvement hierarchy (Solomon et al., 2013). The experiential hierarchy suggests that consumers can be highly influenced by *"intangible product attributes such as package design, and by consumers' reactions to accompanying stimuli such as advertising and even the brand name"* (Solomon et al., 2013, p. 297). This hierarchy also focus on the relationship between cognition and affect, and how these individually influence consumers' processing (Solomon et al., 2013), where it is argued that *"affective responses do not always require prior cognitions"* (Solomon et al., 2013, pp. 297-298). Hereby meaning that a consumer might be affected by more holistic attributes and subjective experiences of a product or shopping experience. (Solomon et al., 2013)

2.2.3.3 Summary

The concept of hierarchy of effects is used in this thesis to describe how the consumers experience cognition, and how this creates a process that leads the consumers to affect, and lastly to conation with the products used for the experiment. In low-involvement processing, consumer behaviour and affect are subsequent, and it occurs in the consumers subconsciousness. Low-involvement processing is important for this process as it describes how consumers' minds process information and product attributes on a shopping trip. (Solomon et al., 2013)

2.3 Consumer Attitudes

The above section concerning the hierarchy of effects gives us a deeper understanding of how consumer attitudes takes form, and how these are affected by both internal and external factors.

This section will provide background for the theoretical investigation of consumer identity, as consumer attitudes has previously been investigated as part of the identify formation process (Cherrier, 2006), and hence may provide valuable knowledge to how flexitarians might choose food substitute products choices.

Consumers' attitudes towards product choices are, as mentioned above, influenced subconsciously before a purchase situation (see section: 2.2.1.2). This can be through e.g. product advertising on tv, in papers, and in publicity at social media platforms (Smith, Sørensen, Clement, & Møgelvang-Hansen, 2015; Solomon et al., 2013), which all can be powerful influences in shaping and changing consumer attitudes fast (Rundh, 2009). The consumers are also affected, as mentioned above (see section: 2.2.1.3), by factors during a shopping experience, which can influence their product choices. These factors include product placement in store, store layout, and so forth. (Solomon et al., 2013). Both the pre-purchase influence and during-purchase influence happens before the consumer has seen a product's packaging physically, and thereby before they are exposed to the visual elements on the product packaging (Smith et al., 2015). The attitudes described above are also called implicit attitudes (Dempsey & Mitchell, 2010), and are described to be activated when the consumer is exposed to an object (Dempsey & Mitchell, 2010).

As well as the consumers are affected by internal and external influences individually, they also affect each other by sharing their opinions and product choices with each other (see section: 2.5.1). The groupthink mentality can collectively with the influence, by e.g. the media and other advertisement, play a part in changing the consumers' requirements for product packaging and what this needs to portray to gain the consumers' attention and preference (Rund, 2009).

Previous literature has found that implicit influences have a greater effect on consumers' product choices, when it comes to low-involvement products than external/explicit influences. An explanation to this could be that the consumers are under time constraint during a shopping trip. Thereby, they do not make fully conscious choices but draw on attitudes formed cognitively beforehand. Accordingly, Dempsey and Mitchell (2010) argue that the relationship between implicit and explicit influences' effect on the consumer attitude formation, are strongly linked to their affect towards the products, and their individual cognitive processing of information. (Dempsey & Mitchell, 2010)

In relation to this, it is interesting to see how former literature has created a connection between attitude formation and taste impressions, i.e. if the product looks appealing in the case of convenience goods. As well as attitudes being affected by cognitive associations, product packaging can also influence attitude formation of e.g. perceived taste or product quality (Becker, van Rompay, Schifferstein, & Galetzka, 2011). When consumers try new products,

they might use the package design as an evaluation tool to assess if they would like the product primarily based on its visual appearance (Becker et al., 2011). The lack of knowledge of product content, which consumers usually have when shopping for convenience goods, therefore dictates that they have to make assumptions on product attributes based on other factors, as implicit/explicit influences, and the visual appearance of the product packaging they experience in real time, at the convenience store (Becker et al., 2011; Connolly & Davidson, 1996). Product impressions will be investigated further in the methodological framework, to see if there is a connection between product design and perception of product, including perceived taste and perceived quality.

Another aspect that might have an effect on consumer attitudes in connection with consumer goods, is price. Although previous literature has found that marketers have overestimated price as a competitive factor in the groceries retail industry (Urbany, Dickson, & Kalapurakal, 1996), it is still a relevant factor for this thesis, as the target group might include price in their product selection criteria. Urbany et al. (1996) found that when consumers put their shopping habits into system, they were more likely to continue those patterns than to try new products, as the switching-costs, i.e. in this case the financial difference of switching or continue to use a product (Oxford Reference, 2019), usually were too high. Price as a factor for attitude formation is relevant for this thesis in relation to perceived product quality, as consumers might perceive products with a higher price to be of a higher quality. Hence, price might affect consumers' attitudes to products, as it might create automatic associations for the consumers that these two factors are connected (Becker et al., 2011; Sara, 1990).

Critiques

The primary critique of this section is that much of the literature used to explain consumer attitudes provides a cognitive theoretical perspective, which is not the primary focus of this thesis. Consumer attitudes are individual for each consumer and hence it is only possible to investigate a possible pattern to which product design elements that influence attitude formation. Thus, the literature is not fully comprehensive.

Further, the study used to explain the effect of price, investigates the term "price search", which refers to "*the effort expended in obtaining and comparing the prices of competitive stores*" (Urbany et al., 1996, p. 92). Hence, their study is used to explain how consumers might choose different stores during their daily grocery retail shopping, due to price and promotions,

which is not fully applicable to this thesis. However, the study can still be used to show how price might have an influence on the consumers' decision-making process.

2.4 Identity and the Self

In this section, literature concerning consumer identity will be reviewed. This theoretical field can contribute to the explanation of why consumers makes certain choices in relation to product purchase.

2.4.1 Identity

Identity can be interpreted in many ways, depending on what theoretical field is investigated. According to Jameson (2007), identity can either be objective or subjective. He defines objective identity as a person's connection to physical items such as *"a person's birth certificate, passport, credit report, voter's registration, tax returns, and other official records"* (Jameson, 2007, p. 207). Secondly, he considers subjective identity to be *"a person's sense of who he or she is as a human being"* (Jameson, 2007, p. 207). Belk (1988) argues that how a person defines itself consist of three basic states of existence; having, doing, and being. Contributing to this notion, Lamb et al. (2016) argues, that how a person defines its own identity, provides for a consistent and coherent behaviour. In other words, how consumers interpret their own identity can have a great impact on how and why they consume specific products and services.

2.4.1.1 Cultural Identity

Jameson (2007) recognises another interpretation of identity, cultural identity. Cultural identity focuses on the idea that culture can emerge from an individual's past experiences, and that these experiences can influence one's future. Furthermore, social relations and knowledge sharing through generations is a great part of one's cultural identity, including one's nationality, ethnicity, values, and norms. He further states that an individual has many different identities, for example one that consist of one's nationality, another that consist of one's ethnicity, and one based on one's gender. Conclusively, he sees cultural identity as being a well-rounded description of identity as a whole. (Jameson, 2007)

2.4.1.2 Consumer Identity

From the literature concerning identity another term can be applied when researching consumer habits, consumer identity. Consumer identity has many facets. For example, Belk (1988) investigates how consumer identities can be shaped by one's possessions and consumption patterns. He argues that an individual's possessions help define one as a person. Moreover, he discusses how a person uses possessions to define itself, to the outside world (Belk, 1988). Cherrier (2009) identifies, in her article concerning anti-consumption discourses and consumer resistant identities, the "Hero Identity", i.e. when an individual makes a conscious choice to engage in political or societal processes it wants changed, and therefore submits itself to the belief that the person can help change the world through its individual actions. Additionally, Solomon (2015) discuss consumer identity as a big part of an individual's overall social identity, in a consumption-driven society, where people express their social identities through products and services. In general, Solomon (2015) argues that consumption choices play a main part when defining an individual's main identity (Solomon, 2015).

2.4.2 Social Identity and the Self

According to social identity theory, all consumers have multiple "selves" that all are in some way related to groups. The linkages between the individuals' selves and groups are vital and people therefore tend to see themselves not only as "I" but also as "we". (Solomon, 2015). Recent studies all tend to agree upon the notion that social construction is a vital part of self-identity (see for example Elliott, 2004; Ahuvia, 2005; Lambert, Desmond, & O'Donohoe, 2014). As stated in Elliott (2004), there is a general notion within sociology and cultural studies that *"identity is a social construction and that the development of individual self-identity is inseparable from the parallel development of collective social identity"* (Elliott, 2004, p. 129). According to Jenkins (1996), a person validates its self-identity through social interaction, hence social practices are therefore a vital part of a person's self. Moreover, Solomon (2015) also support this notion. He argues, that social identity is part of the individual's self and it is defined by the social group that the individual is a part of (Solomon, 2015).

Lamb et al. (2016) argue that a big part of consumers' self-identity is their self-concept or self-perception, i.e. how they see themselves. The consumers' individual identity is in this terminology developed from attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, and self-evaluation.

Finally, Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell (1987) propose a self-categorisation theory, which suggests that the self can be sorted into categories at three different levels of abstraction and inclusiveness. Firstly, the superordinate level, which corresponds to individuals being differentiated from non-humans (Turner et al., 1987). Secondly, the intermediate level of categorisation, which look at similarities and differences in social groups (Turner et al., 1987). And thirdly, the subordinate level, which represents the personal self, also seen as one's personal identity or the unique "I" (Turner et al., 1987). Consequently, Turner and Oakes (1986) and Turner et al. (1987) determine that on the intermediate level of self-categorisation, identities can relate to various types of social groups, and further the self on this level "*...is cognitively grouped as identical and interchangeable to other people within the same social group*" (Ding, Wan, & Xu, 2017, p. 232).

2.4.2.1 The Extended Self

Belk (1988) and Ahuvia (2005) both discuss literature about the extended self and how it is connected to a person's identity. Belk (1988) focus on possessions and argues that they are knowingly or unknowingly part of an individual. Ahuvia (2005) takes the connection between the extended self and possessions further, by investigating how consumers construct a coherent identity narrative from the possessions and activities they love, and further how big a part possession actually plays in identity formation.

Belk (1988) states that the extended self does not only consist of external objects and personal possessions. It is seen to also be comprised of persons, places, group possessions, and body parts and vital organs (Belk, 1988).

Belk (1988) categorise the major parts of the extended self as "*Body, internal processes, ideas, and experiences, and those persons, places, and things to which one feels attached*" (Belk, 1988, p. 141), where the last three are considered to be the most clearly extended to one's self. In relation to the abovementioned, he discusses how contemporary consumption has shown that the thought of material objects as being a part of one's feeling of identity can be particularly high (Belk, 1988). This notion is supported by Ahuvia (2005) who states that both the people and things consumers love can have a strong influence on consumers' sense of who they are and their self. Moreover, consumer identity is linked to constructs that relates either directly or

indirectly to love. Hence, Ahuvia (2005) and Belk (1988) both argue that consumers use consumption to maintain their form of identity over time, and further to define themselves in association to other people (Ahuvia, 2005).

Conclusively, both Belk (1988) and Ahuvia (2005) claims that “*consumers use key possessions to extend, expand, and strengthen their sense of self*” (Ahuvia, 2005, p. 172). Belk (1988) separates the core self and the extended self, in which the core self consists of “*the body, internal processes, ideas, and experiences*” (Ahuvia, 2005, p. 182), and the extended self consists of “*persons, places, and things to which one feels attached*” (Ahuvia, 2005, p. 182). Moreover, Belk (1988) and Ahuvia (2005) agree that the self also includes multiple levels of group affiliations, herein; individual, family, community, and group-affiliations. In this thesis, this view of how the self and the extended self is portrayed is recognised and used to define the connection between consumption habits, identity, and how individuals respond to societal consumption trends.

2.4.2.2 Consumer Knowledge

According to Brucks (1985) and Park and Lessig (1981), subjective knowledge is one out of two categories, which fall under the concept of consumer knowledge. Subjective knowledge can be defined as: “*people’s perceptions of what or how much they know about a product class*” (Ding et al., 2017, p. 233). Contrary to subjective knowledge, objective knowledge, i.e. the actual information about a product-class, is information that is stored in consumer’s long-term memory (Ding et al., 2017). Objective knowledge is seen as rather stable and context-independent, whilst subjective knowledge is seen as being able to shift easily based on situational factors (Ding et al., 2017). Accordingly, Schacter (1983) argue that people’s subjective knowledge, i.e. what they think they know, does not always match what they actually know. This argument is supported by Brucks (1985) who further argues that the correlation between a consumer’s objective and subjective knowledge can vary depending on what situation the consumer finds itself in. Moorman (2001) argues that a consumer’s subjective knowledge can have a great impact on their choice confidence, and moreover Hadar, Sood, and Fox (2013) state that consumers will become more risk-seeking in their purchases when their subjective knowledge is high.

2.4.3 Narcissism and Consumers

Another aspect within consumer identity is narcissism. Lacan (1988) identifies narcissism as when a person is missing a centre of self and consequently seeks for continual external affirmation. Lambert et al. (2014) define narcissistic tendencies in broad terms as “...*an unhealthy preoccupation with the self and as such a lack of concern for others*” (Lambert et al., 2014, p. 37).

According to Twenge and Campbell (2009), it is the younger generation, referred to as young consumers further in this thesis, in the midst of adulthood, who can be characterised as particularly preoccupied with their own image and self-expression. They argue that as young consumers have become more self-centred, it has damaged how people build social relationships and invest in community (Twenge & Campbell, 2009).

In relation to consumption, Fromm (1976) identifies narcissism in modern consumers, who may see themselves by the formula; “*I am = what I have and what I consume*” (Fromm, 1976 as cited in Lambert et al., 2014, p. 38). He further discusses how narcissism plays a role in marketing, by associating the narcissistic marketing character with alienated and destructive impulses (Fromm, 1976). However, he claims that consumers create an instrumental relation to others through narcissism and consumption (Fromm, 1976). Lasch (1979) further links marketing to narcissism, when debating that marketing puts the consumers in the centre while promising them immediate gratification. In contrast to the negative effects of narcissism in consumption and its impact on the individual, research by for instance Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) who claims that narcissistic trends in consumption can cultivate a consumer's sense of self, and further help when a consumer wants to connect with other people.

Additionally, Lambert et al. (2014) claims that the narcissistic consumer can be interpreted as a “...*conforming subject engaging in liquid relationships and performance of self*” (Lambert et al., 2014, p. 51). Accordingly, consumers embody traits of marketing character and are in a constant search for social validation (Lambert et al., 2014).

Critiques

In this section, the individual consumer was discussed. However, as this thesis aims to investigate consumers who is part of a reference group (see section below), the individual is discussed from a group perspective. Moreover, it is important to note that we do not measure consumer

choice from the individual's statements. This study is therefore not representative for all flexitarians. Furthermore, the literature reviewed has been chosen based on our problem statement, why not all literature within the field of consumer identity is covered.

2.5 Group Behaviour

In this section, topics such as reference groups, social identity, community practices, sub-cultures, and group-cultures and dynamics will be explored.

2.5.1 Reference Groups

We all belong to many different groups; from formal to informal, from personal worlds to professional worlds, which influence how we behave (Solomon et al., 2013). Accordingly, Solomon et al. (2013) argue that consumers use these groups to seek approval from fellow group members through their consumption choices. Further, individuals want to fit in and please their fellow group members, therefore they look at how others act in public settings to modify their own behaviour (Solomon et al., 2013), so they can fit in with the group they want to belong to (Cohen & Golden, 1972). Moreover, consumers try to avoid being associated with groups they do not want to be a part of (White & Dahl, 2006). Thus, the desire to fit in, can be considered as the primary motivation for most of persons' consumption choices (Solomon et al., 2013).

A reference group can be defined as: *"an actual or imaginary individual or group conceived of having significant relevance upon an individual's evaluations, aspirations, or behaviour"* (Solomon et al., 2013, p. 395). According to Park and Lessig (1977), there are three ways in which a reference group can influence consumers. The first, is informational influence, i.e. when a consumer seeks information about various brands and product experiences from friends, neighbours, relatives, professionals, or when a consumer observes what experts, testing agencies, or professionals is saying/experiencing with the product (Park & Lessig, 1977). The second, is utilitarian influence, i.e. when an individual's purchase of a product is influenced by their wish to satisfy a group-member, e.g. a family member or a colleague (Park & Lessig, 1977). The third, is value-expressive influence, i.e. when a person feels a purchase of a specific brand or product can enhance the opinion others have of them can give them desirable characteristics they see in others or in celebrities, who have purchased the same brand or product, or can help show others who they would like to be as a person (Park & Lessig, 1977).

2.5.2 Social Power

According to Solomon et al. (2013) reference groups' power of persuasion in consumption can be explained by the term social power. Social power can be defined as: "*the capacity to alter the actions of others*" (Gergen & Gergen, 1981, p. 312). There are many types of power that can persuade a person to do something in different ways, however the most relevant for this thesis is referent power. Referent power is when a consumer has admiration for a person or a group's qualities and therefore tries to copy the behaviour they display (Solomon et al., 2013). It could be consumption choices, such as choice of clothing or lifestyle, that a person tries to copy (Solomon et al., 2013). But the consumption inspiration could also come from prominent people, such as actors, influencers, and athletes who endorse specific products, make distinctive statements about fashion, or advocates for causes (Solomon et al., 2013). Accordingly, Solomon et al. (2013) argue, that it is important to consider one's referent power in marketing, as consumers change their consumption habits voluntarily to identify more with one or more referents.

2.5.3 Conformity

Another important aspect to consider when discussing how groups can influence consumer behaviour, is conformity. Conformity is when an individual change its beliefs and/or actions based on real or imagined group pressure. It is widely known that most people and especially younger individuals does not want to stand out in society and therefore conforms to the norms or informal rules, which has been made to make a society function. According to Solomon et al. (2013), everyone conforms knowingly or unknowingly to several norms and rules every day, hence non-written rules may govern many aspects of consumption. (Solomon et al., 2013)

There are many reasons to why someone is conforming to a specific norm or rule (Solomon et al., 2013). It is important to note that conformity is not an automatic process and therefore rely upon external factors, which contribute to the likelihood of conformity with consumers (Solomon et al., 2013). Some of the most important factors are; susceptibility to interpersonal influence, cultural pressures and group unanimity, size, and expertise. Firstly, susceptibility to interpersonal influence is a trait that refer to the individual's need to be admired (Solomon et al., 2013). The wish to have others to think highly of oneself often go with a person's acquisition of products (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1989). The products acquired, are products that a person thinks will impress the others and is further accompanied by the tendency to gain knowledge about products by observing others' interactions with them (Bearden et al., 1989).

Secondly, when cultural pressures play a role in conformity the degree can vary based on which culture is the focal point (Solomon et al., 2013). As this thesis focus on young consumers in Copenhagen, it is the Western culture that should be considered, which according to Solomon et al., (2013) mean that the impact is a combination of individualism and group loyalty. Thirdly, the trait group unanimity, size and expertise can either have a moderately or a significant influence on conformity, depending on the size and knowledge of the group (Solomon et al., 2013). As the group grows and gain more knowledge about for example certain lifestyles, it becomes harder to resist the demands to fall into line and conform (Solomon et al., 2013).

2.5.3.1 Social Comparison

Social comparison theory posits that consumers sometimes look to the behaviour of others to provide a measurement for reality (Solomon et al., 2013). Accordingly, this process takes place for a consumer to increase the stability of its own self-evaluation, especially in the case of a lack of physical evidence (Festinger, 1954). People tend to compare themselves with others, including their judgements and actions (Solomon et al., 2013). Thus, consumers are quite selective when choosing who should be the social benchmark (Solomon et al., 2013). According to Wheeler et al. (1969), it is often someone who a consumer can easily mirror itself in that is used for social comparison to boost the consumer's confidence in its choices and beliefs. Contrary, the consumer will only value dissimilar beliefs from others when it is quite certain in its own opinions and beliefs. In other words, consumers tend to choose someone who is considered an equal or a peer, when performing social comparison (Solomon et al., 2013).

2.5.3.2 Social Exclusion

Chen, Wan, and Levy (2016) argue that it is commonly known that social exclusion is inescapable for consumers throughout life. It is often in consumers relationships with others, including family members, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances they experience being rejected or excluded (Baumeister, Dewart, Ciarocco, & Twenge, 2005; Williams, 2007). As social exclusion can disrupt the human need to belong, it can affect a consumer on a psychological and a behavioural level (Maner, Baumeister, DeWall, & Schaller, 2007; Williams, 2007).

According to Chen et al. (2016), social exclusion can influence an individual's choice of products in situations where they intent to build social connections with desired people or reference groups. Furthermore, Fournier (1998) argue that consumers use products to build relationships with other consumers, and to form interpersonal relationships with products and brands themselves.

In summary, social comparison theory posits that consumers compare themselves to individuals that are much alike themselves, in order to decode the social clues of how to act (Solomon et al., 2013). This is often due to the apparent need to fit in and not to be social excluded (Chen et al., 2016). Therefore, marketers should consider the importance of reference groups and its power when promoting their products or services, as it can have a great impact on whether someone wants to be identified with specific brands and products.

Critiques

The theoretical field of group behaviour was explored with the individual in mind. Hence, this thesis looked at literature concerning group behaviour, which can explain how an individual consumer think, define, and express oneself, in relation to a group. Moreover, the aim is to explore how group dynamics can influence individual consumer's product preferences. Hence, not all literature within this field of literature has been included due to the thesis scope.

2.6 Visual Marketing

Visual marketing is the foundation of our thesis since it consists of theoretical field areas that can help us identify and understand how consumers behave in consumption, based on their basic neurological and unconscious biases. We have limited our discussion of visual marketing to involving visual communication, herein sensory marketing, attention, and the perceptual process.

Consumers worldwide are daily exposed to hundreds of explicit advertisements e.g. on TV, in magazines, on the internet, and moreover they are exposed to even more implicit visual messages in stores and at home on product packaging (Wedel & Pieters, 2008). In recent years, the focus on how firms can utilise these commercial and non-commercial signs and symbols in their marketing, has become widely recognised in the theoretical field of visual marketing (e.g. Wedel & Pieters, 2008; Langton & Campell, 2011).

According to Wedel and Pieters (2008), visual marketing can be defined as: *“The strategic utilization by firms of commercial and non-commercial visual signs and symbols to deliver desirable and/or useful messages and experiences to consumers”* (pp.1-2). One essential aspect is the design of visual communication, such as packaging design, company logo, and colour (see e.g. Wedel & Pieters, 2008; Solomon et al., 2013). Consequently, marketers use of products' colour scheme, size, and styling, to communicate meanings through the visual channel, has increased in the past years (Solomon et al., 2013). Further, Wedel and Pieters (2008) argue that visual aspects are a key component of marketing collateral, which is *“the use of visual aids to make sales effort more effective, after a prospective buyer has been identified”* (p.1).

The background for visual marketing, is visual science, cognitive psychology, and social psychology (Wedel & Pieters, 2008). According to Palmer (1999), visual science is interdisciplinary itself, and is for example situated in psychology, neuroscience, computer science, and aesthetics. Palmer (1999) considers visual science to be the most successful in connection with visual marketing (Palmer, 1999). What to gain from this theoretical field, is the knowledge of what consumers most likely will perceive centrally or consciously, peripherally or subliminally, and what aspects of visual stimuli that will affect this. The field of visual science overlaps with cognitive psychology, which can explain the influence of perceptual characteristics of elemental stimuli on attentional and cognitive processes. According to Wedel and Pieters (2008), the research surrounding cognitive psychology is *“the foundation of the understanding of visual perception of marketing stimuli”* (p. 3). Additionally, the field of visual science overlaps with social psychology, where social psychology contributes with theories and methods to evaluate and understand what role emotion and motivation has in the sense vision (further referred to as the sense of sight). Recently, research in this field of knowledge have focused on the influence of consumers' states and traits on attention and perception. (Wedel & Pieters, 2008)

2.6.1 Sensory Marketing

In this thesis, we want to explore the theoretical field of sensory marketing, including a basic neurological explanation of stimuli, the five senses, and sensory thresholds.

According to Krishna (2012), sensory marketing can be defined as: *“...marketing that engages the consumers' senses and affects their perception, judgment and behaviour”* (p. 333). In recent years, marketers have become aware of what influence visual communication has in the wide

spectrum of the marketing field (Solomon et al., 2013). Further, they have discovered how consumers' product experiences are influenced by sensations, and further how these can affect the perception of product appeal (Solomon et al., 2013). Additionally, Krishna (2012) states that since consumers are exposed to a large amount of advertisements every day for thousands of products; unconscious triggers, such as those appealing to basic senses, can be a more efficient way to reach the consumers. She further argues, that sensory marketing can be used by companies to subconsciously generate these triggers, which can impact consumers perception of a product's concept, e.g. sophistication and quality.

As stated in Cowen-Elstner (2017), marketers can use sensory marketing to improve quality perception in consumers, by optimising quality cues and product attributes. Moreover, she argues that it is a discipline that can be used to understand consumers' sensations and perceptions (Cowen-Elstner, 2017). Consequently, Krishna (2012) claims that the knowledge concerning consumers' sensations and perceptions, can be applied to multiple areas within the field of marketing, including consumer cognition, emotion, learning, preference, choice, and evaluation.

2.6.2 The Five Human Senses

In this thesis, we aim to investigate how consumers react to product packaging through the sense of sight, which will be explored through the thesis experiment.

The five human senses are of great significance to the individual's experiences in different purchase and consumption processes (Hultén, Broweus, & Dijk, 2009). The sensory experience can be defined as: *"the result of the reactions of the senses to different elements or triggers in marketing"* (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 17), also known as stimuli, i.e. *"any unit of input affecting one or more of the five senses"* (Lamb et al., 2016, p. 92).

It is the sense organs on our head (the mouth, ears, eyes, and nose) that directly facilitate impulses to the human brain through cells or receptors. The information that is mediated, stimulates the cells or receptors, which then transform the stimulation into electrical signals that affect emotions and feelings, which then creates a reaction in the consumer. Explained in a simpler way, the sense organs facilitate signals, which consumers use to shape their behaviour and response in the given situation. (Hultén et al., 2009; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982).

The sensory experience is part of the concept “hedonic consumption”, which can be described as: “... *the multi-sensory, fantasy and emotional aspects of consumers' interactions with products*” (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). As stated in Solomon et al. (2013), the sensory experiences that affect consumers have become a priority when choosing between competing offers. Likewise, they argue that consumers' willingness to buy products, which provide hedonic value over functional value, have increased in recent years.

It is only a small part of all stimuli, consumers are exposed to during the day, which enter the consciousness (Solomon et al., 2013). This selection of stimuli is based on consumers' unique biases, needs, and experiences (Solomon et al., 2013). Moreover, consumers interpret or create assumptions regarding stimuli on the basis of a schema, i.e. a mental construct based upon past experiences with an object, which also determine future expectations of the same object (Solomon et al., 2013). Consequently, the individual consumer's unique schema is significant when consumers assign meaning to stimuli, which makes it important to consider, when companies create products with a broad appeal (Jansson-Boyd, 2010).

2.6.2.1 Sense of Sight

According to Hultén et al. (2009), the sense of sight is the most powerful and prominent of all of the five human senses. More than two-thirds of the sense cells of the body are located in the eyes, which is why the eyes are considered to be the most important sense organs in humans. They argue, that most people have complete trust in their sight experiences in combination with the optical system, as it makes it easier for people to notice changes and differences in for example new product designs or different packaging. All people with the sight sense “...*can notice and observe events, colours, forms, material, texture, things or people*” (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 89). Early in life, humans learn to interpret visual impressions, i.e. what we see. Additionally, they argue that it is vision through visual effects, including light and dark, non-visual effects (e.g. dazzling and radiation), and biological effects (e.g. liveliness and alertness) that have the biggest influence on people. (Hultén et al., 2009)

2.6.2.2 Sensory Thresholds

When marketers use sensory marketing to influence consumers, it is important to consider sensory thresholds. (Solomon et al., 2013)

2.6.2.2.1 The Absolute Threshold

The absolute threshold is *“the minimum amount of stimulation that can be detected on a sensory channel”* (Solomon et al., 2013 p. 131). In other words, there is a limit to how low the intensity of a stimulus can be for consumers to register it in their sensory channel. For example, if a company has written a genius marketing text on the packaging of a product but it is too small, or in a colour that is not visible on distance, it will go to waste and hence not influence consumers in the intended way. Therefore, it is vital for marketers to consider the absolute threshold, when designing product packaging. (Solomon et al., 2013)

2.6.2.2.2 The Differential Threshold

The differential threshold describes how consumer's sensory system can detect changes or differences between two separate stimuli. This threshold is important for marketers when they want consumers to notice for example specific colours, e.g. the yellow discount labels, or when they want to downplay the change, e.g. when a product changes size or a price increase. According to Solomon et al. (2013), the ability to detect differences between separate stimuli is relative, as it is the relative difference between the stimuli in connection with their surroundings that determine if the difference is noticeable and will be registered in the consumer's sensory system. (Solomon et al., 2013)

Critiques

In this thesis, the senses of smell, taste, touch, and sound have been excluded due to lack of relevance. It must be noted that we acknowledge the importance of the four excluded senses in relation to consumer preference, and that it could have an impact on the overall product perception. Further, we have chosen not to go into detail with literature concerning the physiological descriptions of the senses, but still include neurological knowledge, as it is considered relevant to the literature concerning stimuli.

2.6.3 Attention

Attention *“refers to the contents of short-term memory, which can be drawn from both internally and externally presented stimuli”* (Jansson-Boyd, 2010, p. 46). Another definition of attention is: *“the degree to which consumers focus on stimuli within their range of exposure”* (Solomon et al., 2013 p. 134). In this thesis, we want to investigate how consumers react to

visual elements on packaging, and therefore it is essential to include theory on how marketers try to win consumers' attention by using marketing tools, such as words, pictures, and so forth. Likewise, the literature explains why some stimuli might not affect a specific consumer, which is critical knowledge for marketers when creating their packaging design.

In modern society, consumers are daily exposed to about 3500 pieces of advertising information on average (Solomon et al., 2013). Because of this, consumers are often situated in a state of sensory overload, i.e. when they are exposed to a much larger amount of information than they can process (Solomon et al., 2013). As the human brain's capacity to process information is limited, consumers only attend to a small portion of those stimuli they are exposed to on a daily basis (Solomon et al., 2013). They do not passively receive this information, they analyse and judge it and disregard the information they consider as worthless (Mullins, 2016). This is also called "the process of perceptual selection" (Solomon et al., 2013). The process can be explained as a form of defence mechanism that helps consumers pick and choose amongst the stimuli they are exposed to, and by that avoiding getting overwhelmed (Solomon et al., 2013). The process of perceptual selection is influenced by personal selection factors and stimulus factors, which will be explored in the following section (Solomon et al., 2013).

2.6.3.1 Personal Selection Factors

Solomon et al. (2013) argue that there are three personal selection factors which can influence what stimuli consumers perceive: perceptual vigilance, perceptual defence, and adaptation. Moreover, consumers are affected by experiences, i.e. "*the result of acquiring and processing stimulation over time*" (Solomon et al., 2013, p. 135), which can influence how much of exposure to a stimulus a person allows. (Solomon et al., 2013)

2.6.3.1.1 Perceptual Vigilance

Perceptual vigilance describes how consumers are more likely to be exposed to stimuli that communicate their current needs. In other words, when consumers are in need of a new product, e.g. when they are shopping for groceries, they become more aware of the stimuli presented to them on packaging of the different products. However, according to Solomon et al. (2013), there are individual variations in perceptual processing that may create differences in how consumers become aware of stimuli. For example, according to a study conducted by Noseworthy,

Cotte, and Lee (2011), women are better at discriminating relational information in competing offers when the incongruent products are promoted among competing products (Solomon et al., 2013).

2.6.3.1.2 Perceptual Defence

The opposite effect of perceptual vigilance is perceptual defence. Perceptual defence is defined as: “...when people see what they want to see – and do not see what they do not want to see” (Solomon et al., 2013, p. 136). In other words, a consumer can distort a stimulus' meaning to make it more acceptable, or block it from being processed completely, if the stimulus is in some way threatening. For example, if a meat-eating person sees an advertisement against eating meat in the form of a slaughtered animal, that person might block out the images, because it is a vivid reminder of the consequences of their lifestyle. (Solomon et al., 2013)

2.6.3.1.3 Adaptation

According to Solomon et al. (2013), adaptation is: “...the degree to which consumers continue to notice a stimulus over time” (p. 136). Adaptation is a process that occurs if a consumer becomes too familiar to a stimulus, and thus does not pay attention to it anymore. Accordingly, the consumer must be exposed to a much higher dose of the stimulus in order to notice it. There are several factors that lead to the process of adaptation including intensity, duration, discrimination, exposure, and relevance.

2.6.3.2 Stimulus Selection Factors

Besides internal factors as described above, external factors such as knowledge, familiarity, or expectations for a given situation or earlier experiences, have an influence on perception (Mullins, 2016). Consumers tend to pay more attention to stimuli that are novel, repeated, bright, and in contrast to their surroundings (Mullins, 2016). Moreover, Solomon et al. (2013) and Mullins (2016) argue that marketers should be aware of how characteristics such as size, colour, and position influence consumers' process of perceptual selection, as it is central in the process of creating packaging design and advertisements, so they stand out amongst competing offers.

2.6.4 Interpretation and Response

According to Solomon et al. (2013), interpretation refer to the process of assigning meaning to sensory stimuli. After consumers are exposed to stimuli, the sensory systems select and process the stimuli that have gained the consumer's attention. Then the consumer assign meaning to the stimuli and ultimately decide how to react to them. How stimuli are interpreted is individual for every consumer. Two people can see the same product but still interpret completely differently. It is the consumer's individual schema i.e. a mental construct, based upon past experiences with an object, that determines how it will interpret a specific stimulus. Additionally, this process is influenced by the principle of priming, i.e. when a consumer's behaviour is altered in a certain way by exposing that person to a specific form of stimuli. (Solomon et al., 2013)

As stated in Solomon et al. (2013), consumers are not only affected by a single isolated stimulus. However, the human brain is influenced by imagery of events, or sensations from one's past experiences it can relate to. This stored information is based on fundamental organisational principles that originate from gestalt psychology (Solomon et al, 2013). This thesis will not go into detail with this school of thought, due to the scope of the thesis. However, the principles that stems from gestalt psychology, concerning how consumers interpret and respond to stimuli, will be touched upon.

The principle idea of gestalt psychology is: *"...that people derive meaning from the totality of a set of stimuli, rather than from any individual stimulus"* (Solomon et al., 2013, p. 138). Solomon et al. (2013) argue with this principle that if each of the component of the stimulus is analysed separately, it will become impossible to capture the total effect of that stimulus. Within gestalt psychology, there are several principles that relates to how stimuli are organised, including the principal of closure, the principle of similarity, and the figure-ground principle. These principles can contribute to the explanation of how people organise, interpret, and respond to specific stimuli. Firstly, the principle of closure explains how consumers perceive an incomplete picture as complete, i.e. consumers use their prior experience (schemas) to fill in the blanks. Secondly, the principle of similarity explains how consumers *"...group together objects that share similar physical characteristics"* (Solomon et al., 2013, p. 138), e.g. when a company wants to keep certain features similar, for example by putting the same stripes on a shampoo bottle and a body cream, to increase the consumers 'brand recognition. Lastly, the figure-ground principle explains how a part of a single stimulus can dominate the other parts, and therefore stand out, while the other parts fade into the background. As stated in Solomon

et al. (2013), the consumer's eyes will go straight to the dominant part of the stimulus and can therefore be used by marketers to create a focal point of the message they want to convey to the consumers. (Solomon et al., 2013)

2.6.5 A Summary of The Perceptual Process

The perceptual process consists of several steps including; stimuli, sensory receptors, attention, interpretation, response, and perception, which are all interconnected. It is important to note that the process is not static, it is rather dynamic, i.e. when a consumer interpret a certain stimulus it can make it aware of new stimuli that firstly did not make it through their perceptual selection, and by that the process can start all over.

in the next section a quick summary of the steps will be outlined in order to define our view on the perceptual process.

Firstly, this thesis defines stimuli as external input that have an effect on one or more of the human senses (Lamb et al., 2016). Stimuli are facilitated through sensory receptors, which influence how and if a consumer notice, interpret, and respond to a product, company or brand, in a specific situation (Hultén et al., 2009; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). Secondly, this thesis defines attention as; the process where the degree to which consumers focus on stimuli that they are exposed to, is measured (Solomon et al., 2013). The stimuli that makes is through consumers' perceptual selection process (see section: 2.6.3) is based upon several factors, including personal selection factors and external factors, all in which helps a consumer to sort the relevance of the stimuli they are exposed to on a daily basis. Thirdly, these relevant stimuli, that the consumer has become aware upon, due to the first steps in the process of perception, now become available for the individual consumer to assign meaning to; a meaning that is completely individual from person to person, which also makes the reaction to these stimuli individual. As the consumer has gone unconsciously and unaware through these steps, it has applied its senses to become aware of what the stimuli was trying to tell, show, or convince it about through remedies, such as visual elements, which apply to the sense of sight.

Overall, the field of visual marketing, including sensory marketing and the perceptual process, explains the neurological, psychological, and physiological reasons behind why consumers react to certain marketing remedies and further how marketers can use this knowledge to their advantage, when designing products, packaging, commercials, and so on. Conclusively, it is highly important to include these theoretical fields when discussing consumers' reactions

to product packaging in focus group discussions, as it is part of understanding the reasons behind their answers.

2.7 Product Design/Visual Elements

Product packaging is by the consumers considered an integral part of the product, at the same level as the product content (Ahmed, Ahmed, & Salman, 2005). Hence, product packaging can be said to be the gateway for consumers' initial response in a purchase situation and must provide positive value for the overall product sale (Ahmed et al., 2005). Packaging elements, e.g. transparent elements, certifications, and brand names can have a large effect on consumers' decision-making process, as they might be affected by preconceived opinions or attitudes towards the different design elements (Sara, 1990). Previous research has found that most product choices concerning food products are made at the point of sale (e.g. Connolly & Davidson, 1996), that most consumers only look at the front of a product, and that they only look at one product before making a decision (Simmonds & Spence, 2017). Hence, literature has begun to focus more on what types of product design and visual elements that might have the greatest influence on consumers' choices of products. Since product design consist mostly of modifiable variables (Rundh, 2009), the need for more research of how the different design elements can help create a successful product, has increased with the product market becoming more saturated.

The studies to date have found various elements that can have an effect, either positive or negative, on consumer choices, and emphasises that one of the most important feature of these elements is to capture the consumers' attention, in one way or another (Venter, de Beer, Van der Merwe, & Kempen, 2011; Underwood & Klein, 2002). However, it has also been found that creating a product design solely to differentiate the product from competitors, might have undesired effects, which underlines the importance of the product design to reflect the product attributes and brand values (Becker et al., 2011).

The following section will examine previous literature on how different packaging attributes can affect consumers' purchase decisions. Product packaging serves two main functions: 1) to protect the merchandise from production to consumption, and 2) to attract customers by differentiating them from other products (Sara, 1990), with the latter being the most important for this thesis. According to Simmonds and Spence (2017), consumers need to make product decisions based on the packaging and branding of the product, because they do not get a chance

to sample the product before a purchase, in most cases. This consequently force them to make judgements and assumptions concerning product features, e.g. quality and taste, at hand (Simmonds & Spence, 2017). Other literature also suggests that product packaging is the gateway for consumers to imagine and access how a product would be in its prepared stage (Harckham, 1989). Hereby amplifying the importance of marketers to differentiate product packaging to gain attention from customers. Thus, consumers make their product decisions based on how well the packaging and branding meet their needs for convenience, how functional it is, and how visually attractive they find the product (Ahmed et al., 2005).

Critiques

Much of the previous literature concerning packaging design is concentrated around the packaging as its whole, thereby including the materials in which the packaging consists of and package shape (Rundh, 2009). Thus, the literature is not completely applicable for the scope of this thesis, which primary focus is on the exterior packaging design and how this can affect the marketing decisions of product packaging design. However, the literature might still be useful to give a wholesome idea of how consumers might be influenced by design elements.

2.7.1 Images

As mentioned above in Simmonds and Spence's (2017) study, almost a third of their test consumers "*...use the image to infer what the product would taste like*" (Simmonds & Spence, 2017, p. 343), in a prepared state. Hereby underlining that the packaging would include an image portraying the product. Other literature has concluded that including a product image on packaging increases consumers' understanding of a brand and product, and hence serves as an informational function, which can shape consumers' attitudes towards a product (Simmonds & Spence, 2017; Underwood & Klein, 2002). Further, previous research has investigated what effect images have on consumer choices, finding that images are more noticeable stimuli than words and hence easier to remember (Underwood & Klein, 2002). Further, it is noted that images on packaging, that both gain the consumers' attention and improve consumer attitude, are important for low-involvement products, as it can provide accidental learning to consumers, who usually use a shorter amount of time to process their product choices (Underwood & Klein, 2002; Venter et al., 2011). It is also noted that images can be more beneficial than text elements for brands that are less-known, as consumers usually have a more extensive knowledge about

product attributes for more popular brands/products, which therefore rely less on the information attribute that an image can have (Underwood & Klein, 2002). Venter et al.'s (2011) study suggests that the product information gained from images on product packaging, as mentioned above, gives a stronger basis for comparison of products, which might benefit the consumers, by shortening the processing and evaluation of product alternatives.

Lastly, another finding from previous literature suggests that products that are less appealing should be in packaging with an image portraying the product as more visually attractive, whereas products that looks appealing should be in packaging including a transparent element (Venter et al., 2011), as those products capture the consumers' attention by itself.

Critiques

When including an image on product packaging, previous literature states that it is important the picture correlates with the overall brand values (Underwood & Klein, 2002). Further, it is important that the image portrays beneficial product information for the consumers; and that it has a functional purpose, e.g. by portraying the product on non-transparent packaging (Underwood & Klein, 2002). Although it is suggested that less-known brands would benefit more from an image on the package design than well-known brands, it has not been proven in previous studies (Underwood & Klein, 2002).

Another critique is the inclusion in previous literature of the variable of attractiveness. Previous literature (Underwood & Klein, 2002; Venter et al., 2011; Simmonds & Spence, 2017) suggest that images on product packaging must be attractive to serve a positive influence on consumer perception, attitude, and choice. Attractiveness can relatively be perceived as an individual opinion and something that varies from each consumer, as everyone somewhat has their own perception of what is attractive. Thereby, the finding that images must be attractive might not be relevant or attainable for all marketers, when developing their product package design strategy.

2.7.2 Text Elements

Text elements can consist of many different things, e.g. ingredients list, allergens information, product name, manufacturer name, brand name, etc. (Venter et al., 2011). Previous literature has found textual elements to serve an informational function for consumers (Venter et al., 2011). In previous literature, text elements were found to be an important factor in consumers'

decision-making process when choosing products, as the elements can lead to the consumers perception of quality (Venter et al., 2011). Further, previous literature also found that text elements can help consumers with product identification and brand recognition (Venter et al., 2011).

Venter et al.'s study (2011) explored which text elements that had the highest importance for consumers. In their study, it was found that it is the ingredients list and allergens information, that have the highest importance. The reasoning behind this was that these sources of information was important for consumers on all product packaging, as they protect consumers from possible health concerns, such as allergic reactions and nutritional values. In relation to the latter, the primary concern was amount of fat and sugar content in the products. (Venter et al., 2011)

Critiques

Venter et al.'s study was based on consumers from South Africa, and hence the information is not completely transferrable to this thesis, which focuses on Danish consumers. Also, previous literature concerning text elements are not fully covered in this section, due to the scope of the thesis. Hence, the section does not provide a full comprehension of the literature, but only covers the relevant perspectives for this thesis.

Furthermore, part of the previous literature considers consumers as being fully rational when making decisions, which in other parts of the literature state the opposite, i.e. that consumers make impulse decisions and hence does not evaluate all consequences or opportunities of a purchase (Dempsey & Mitchell, 2010). In this thesis, we only study the consumer choices from a consumer theory point of view, and hence cannot fully explain the cognitive processes going into the product selection processes, which means that some of the literature used in this section, is not fully applicable.

2.7.3 Certifications

Strongly connected with text elements and images, certifications serve an important function on product packaging. Not much literature has been done about Danish certifications. Therefore, articles will be used to see how broadly certifications are used by Danish consumers, and the Danish food industry.

In Denmark, one of the most known certifications on food product packaging, is the Nordic “Nøglehul” label, i.e. the green keyhole label, i.e. the keyhole label. The certification is an easy guide for consumers to make healthier product choices. The keyhole label started in Sweden in 1989 and is now a common Nordic label used in Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. The label is optional, and food producers have the sole responsibility for their products meeting the regulations for obtaining the certification. (Ministry of Environment & Food of Denmark, 2019)

Another important Danish certification is “Økomærket”, i.e. the Ø-label, which shows that a product is government controlled as being ecological (Ministry of Environment & Food of Denmark, 2018). The Ø-label is voluntary and can be certified for both Danish and foreign products, if the origin is approved by the Danish government as being ecological (Ministry of Environment & Food of Denmark, 2018). In 2018, Danish consumers shopped ecological products for approx. 12.9 billion DKK, which is the highest amount of ecological food products sold in the retail industry, in the world (landbrugsavisen.dk).

Lastly, in relation to the Danish Ø-label, the EU established the EU Ecolabel in 1992, to promote products that provide consumers with more environmentally friendly products, and which has a reduced environmental impact on society at large. The Ecolabel also encourages companies to create products that are more easily recycled and disposed of, as well as promoting CO₂-reduction. The Ecolabel is not exclusive to food products, and it is used in 29 product categories to date. (European Commission: DG Environment, 2019)

2.7.4 Transparent Elements

Transparent packaging elements on food products and its effects on consumers' product choices have been investigated by a growing amount of research as it has become more relevant to study product packaging design. Research, by e.g. Simmonds and Spence (2017), found that adding a transparent element to the product packaging could manipulate the consumers' perception of quality, and increase brand trust, which ultimately could lead to a higher purchase intent (Simmonds & Spence, 2017; Deng & Srinivasan, 2013; Vilnai-Yavetz & Koren, 2013). Further, transparent elements were found to be valuable for less known brands, as consumers who could see the product before a purchase, would be less sceptical towards the product and brand, as the transparent packaging would give the opportunity to assess the product quality beforehand (Simmonds and Spence, 2017). This is also supported by Venter et al.'s (2011) study, which found that consumers find transparent packaging on e.g. glass bottles to be better than closed

packaging, as they have the opportunity to evaluate the product content beforehand (Venter et al., 2011). Another factor, identified from Venter et al.'s study (2011), was that transparent packaging also is considered more visually attractive, and that it provides the necessary product information, without being covered by other visual elements (Venter et al., 2011).

Critiques

The above section shows previous literature concerning product packaging and how it might affect consumers' product selections. However, there is a gap in the literature as it does not include substitute products, which is the focus of this thesis. Moreover, the literature does not cover Danish consumers, which is the target audience for this thesis. Furthermore, the revised literature is mainly from a neurological perspective and not a consumer theory perspective. Hence, it is not completely transferable to how consumers act in a purchase situation. Lastly, the literature is not only based on food products. Thereby, it is not completely comprehensive for the scope of this thesis.

2.8 Ethical Consumption

Ethical consumption has been researched from many angles. In relation to consumer identity, ethical consumption has been investigated in previous literature as being affected by internal and external influences throughout stages of the consumers' lives, which can change their daily practices. Cherrier's study found that ethical consumption can be considered a partly conscious choice for consumers, which are created based on their identity affiliation with the subject at hand, here being product choices that are regarded as more ethical. (Cherrier, 2006)

The concept of ethical consumption has gained more attention in recent years, with the growing focus on the negative impacts of climate changes, and how these can be reduced by our daily practices (UN IPCC, 2019). The consumers' rising focus on ethical consumption has developed growing concerns in the area of water usage in the food industry, animal welfare, and animal cruelty (Euromonitor: Packaged Food Quarterly Brief, 2019), and further in connection to waste of both product and package materials (Westbrook, 2018; Cherrier, 2006). The current consumption patterns in the food industry are both a huge concern for consumers and policymakers. Policymakers has in previous literature been described as a possible factor for consumers to develop more ethical consumption patterns over time, as they have a platform to

reach consumers and set the standards for acceptable behaviour through policymaking (Cherrier, 2006; Synthia & Kabir, 2015). This has been supported by the ICCP (Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change), which states that if policy-makers develop policies aimed at reducing the negative outcomes of food production, e.g. CO₂-emission levels, it will help to promote healthier and more sustainable diets and a reduction in food waste, which ultimately will help both the climate and the health of the world population (UN IPCC, 2019).

2.8.1 Thrift

Thrift has for many years been seen as necessary for people who needed a little extra to get by. However, a change in the global economy, which has resulted in a growing prosperity followed by a growing awareness of social and environmental fragility on a global scale, has shifted the meaning of thrift in advanced economies. This has caused new practices to emerge with a focus on reconfigured modes of ethical, conscientious, and collaborative consumption, and further consumer lifestyles. Thrift, can in combination with the abovementioned section of ethical behaviour, explain why consumers engage in certain types of practices, and how companies can influence this by producing products that reflect consumers' needs and wants. (Podkalicka & Potts, 2013)

Thrift is defined as: *"the careful and wise use of money and other resources"* (Podkalicka & Potts, 2013, p. 227). They argue, that thrift should be seen in connection with altruism, i.e. wanting to give something back to the world. Moreover, they compare thrift with the term of frugality, i.e. when consumers choose to resourcefully use the products and items they already own, instead of buying products for short-term usages (Solomon et al., 2013). As argued in Podkalicka and Potts (2013), frugality should be seen as an *"uni-dimensional consumer lifestyle trait characterised by the degree to which consumers are both restrained in acquiring and in resourcefully using economic goods and services to achieve longer-term goals"* (Podkalicka & Potts, 2013, p. 228).

There are two levels to which the term thrift can be discussed. The first is on a micro-level, where the focus is on financial strategies of individual households (Podkalicka & Potts, 2013). And the other is on a macro-level, where economic processes are relevant and spans across multiple spheres of social life (Podkalicka & Potts, 2013). On a micro-level, thrift relates to how consumers respond; *"to negative externalities of material scarcity"* (Podkalicka & Potts, 2013, p. 229). Moreover, it relates to how consumers have formulated a popular sense of

how to make do, which in practice means that they try to restore or recycle their currently owned possessions and by that avoid consuming more than necessary (Podkalicka & Potts, 2013). On a macro-level, it is argued that thrift is connected to its etymological understanding “thriving”, i.e. where the idea is that prosperity through care and stewardship is a part of a social reform (Podkalicka & Potts, 2013). This is argued to have led to the occurrence of new consumption practices, such as collaborative consumption (Botsman & Rogers, 2011) and the practice of consuming ethically, as described above (see section: 2.8).

These different dimensions of thrift can explain the ethical choices and practical decisions a consumer makes, when deciding to engage in thrift (Podkalicka & Potts, 2013). In this thesis, thrift is mostly relevant on a macro-level, since we discuss the social reform of ethical consumption. Therefore, we see thrift as a trend that has led to the wise use of resources amongst consumers, amplified by social interactions that collaboratively can make the world a better place. It can further explain the underlying reasons to why people might want to buy substitute products, and hence how marketers can influence consumer choices with this trend.

2.9 Consumption Trends

2.9.1 Consumer Trends

This section will provide an overview of the current trends relevant for this thesis, including trends within the packaged food industry, and the trend of ethical consumption. Further, the flexitarian lifestyle will be investigated, as this also is a fairly new trend (see section: 1).

2.9.1.1 Trends in the Packaged Food Industry

if we look at forecasts for the packaged food industry, there has been a rise in the interest for plant-based food, which is also based on the growing interest for a healthy lifestyle (Euromonitor: Packaged Food Quarterly Briefing, 2019, p. 10). This is also supported by previous literature, which states that there is a demand for; “...*healthy and easy-to-prepare packaged food...in staple sectors such as dairy and bakery products*” (Ahmed et al., 2005, p. 1), in Western Europe. Consumers are becoming more aware of the health benefits of introducing vegan and vegetarian products into their daily diets, and therefore seek more information and inspiration of how to do this (Passport, 2019). They primarily consult sources, such as doctors and nutri-

tionists/dieticians, but also friends and family, online browsing, and social media sites (Passport, 2019). The credibility of social media sites is inclining and are increasingly seen and used as valuable sources to gain information and advice (Passport, 2019).

The plant-based alternatives to traditional dairy products have evolved from mainly consisting of soy, to consisting of oats, rice, and almond as well (Euromonitor, Packaged Food Quarterly Briefing, 2019, p. 10). This has created a shift for big dairy industry players, for example Danone SA, to change their product range, or to acquire firms that have a more plant-based product portfolio (Euromonitor, Packaged Food Quarterly Briefing, 2019).

As well as the dairy industry, the meat industry has also seen a rise in the interest for healthier and environmentally friendly alternatives for products consisting of soy or other plant-based ingredients, e.g. peas or chickpeas (Euromonitor, Packaged Food Quarterly Briefing, 2019).

The main target group for substitute products, both meat and dairy, has been found to mainly be consumers interested in healthy lifestyles, and “...*who are willing to spend more for health benefits and is supported by rising concerns over environmental sustainability*” (Euromonitor: Packaged Food Quarterly Briefing, 2019, p. 10). The target consumers are mainly situated in the Western world, and as well as being driven by sustainable motivations, it was found that they are driven by a convenience motivation in form of affordability and availability, for example pre-packed products (Euromonitor: Packaged Food Quarterly Brief, 2019). Furthermore, it was also found that growing population and increasing purchasing power has resulted in the need for meat substitutes, as the food products consumed today, i.e. meat and dairy, might be a scarce resource in the future (Euromonitor: Packaged Food Quarterly Brief, 2019). This therefore correlates with the possible motive of consumers being conscious of their lifestyles' environmental impact, and how sustainable their daily consumption patterns are for the society at large.

Specifically looking at Danish consumers and packaged food, it was found that the market for pre-packaged quality food products is increasingly important, as the Danish consumers seek out easy solutions to cater to the important work-life balance lifestyle Denmark is known for (OECD, 2017). Pre-packaged food also has to meet the high requirements for quality meals and health (Euromonitor: Country Report, Packaged Food in Denmark, 2018), which was found to be of high importance to Danish consumers.

2.9.1.2 The Flexitarian Trend

As written in the introduction, flexitarians can be defined as: consumers who follow “...a *primarily but not strictly vegetarian diet*” (Funch, 2017; Oxford University Press, 2014). Following this definition, a flexitarian diet therefore is highly individual for consumers, where some might eat animal products, i.e. meat, fish, and dairy one or more times a week, while some may eat animal products more rarely or more often (Gallagher, 2017). The flexitarian diet consists primarily of plant-based foods, vegetables, legumes, fruits, and whole grains (Streit, 2018). According to Streit (2018), the diet was created by a dietitian, Dawn Jackson Blatner, and is more a lifestyle than a diet, as there are no definite rules or calorie intake estimate. The lifestyle is based on the dietary products above, and it is further recommended that when following a flexitarian lifestyle, your protein intake must come from plants, you should mainly eat unprocessed foods in their natural form, and you should limit sugar and sweets (Streit, 2018).

There are many reasons to why consumers might choose a flexitarian diet. Firstly, health reasons, where the main concerns have been found to be processed and red meat's impact on the consumers' overall health, i.e. healthy body weight, and balance in bodily fats, sugar, and mineral levels (Schoon, 2015). Secondly, concerns about the consumers' meat consumption and its effects on their surroundings, e.g. animal welfare and the environmental impact it might have (see section: 2.8), have been found increasingly popular (Schoon, 2015). Thirdly, financial reasons have also been found a factor for people choosing a flexitarian diet, as prices on meat and fish are increasing (Gallagher, 2017).

If we look closer at people choosing a flexitarian diet based on health concerns, investigations have found that by reducing your meat and dairy consumption you can halve the risk of becoming obese, you can lower the chances of developing type 2 diabetes, and further reduce the risk of colorectal cancers (Gallagher, 2016; Streit, 2018). However, a critique of the diet is that since it has no clear rules of how much animal products you can consume, the health benefits cannot be completely investigated to see how they differ from a strictly vegetarian or vegan diet (Streit, 2018).

2.10 Consumption Practices

There are many different practices in the world, and consumers participate to some extent in many of them (Warde, 2005). Practices can roughly be defined as a process which involves *“the active integration of materials, meanings and forms of competence”* (Shove & Pantzar, 2005, p. 45). The number of practices that consumers engage in increases in line with *“the multiplication of enthusiasms and interests”* (Warde, 2005, p. 142). Further, it is argued that these new practices contribute to the creation of new types of consumption (Shove & Pantzar, 2005).

According to Warde (2005), most practices require and involve consumers and consumption. Consumption is defined by Warde (2005) as: *“a process whereby agents engage in appropriation and appreciation, whether for utilitarian expressive or contemplative purposes of goods, services, performances, information or ambience, whether purchased or not, over which the agent has some degree of discretion”* (Warde, 2005, p. 137). Hence, consumption cannot be considered a practice itself, but can be seen as a part of almost every practice (Warde, 2005). Additionally, Warde (2005) argues that it is activity that generate wants, or in other words it is the predetermined conventions and standards of practice that steer behaviour. This notion is supported by Shove and Pantzar (2005), who discuss that there exists a material dimension to practice in which many products can be considered directly implicated in people's daily consumption processes. Accordingly, practices are not just acquisition, appropriation, or that to use a product; it is an active and creative process where consumers are practitioners and exist as another dimension to the reproduction of practices (Shove & Pantzar, 2005).

Shove and Pantzar (2005) subsequently argue, that new practices can either be built upon new configurations of already existing elements or be built on new elements in conjunction with already existing elements. It is how constituent elements fit together, and the continuous reproduction of it, that determines how consumers practice (Shove & Pantzar, 2005). Warde (2005) describes this in another way: practices *“contain the seeds of constant change”* (Warde, 2005, p. 141). He argues that practices are dynamic by virtue as consumers adapt, improvise, and experiment with how they act in various situations (Warde, 2005).

2.10.1 Practices in a Consumption- and Marketing Perspective

Warde (2005) states, that practices partly shield consumers from producers and promotional agencies sweet talk, because they consist of their own characteristic, institutionalised, and collectively regulated conventions. In other words, he argues that customers cannot in general be regulated and dictated to by specific goods or services. However, producers and marketers does have a role to play in the formation of practices, which according to Warde (2005) is to try and mould practices so they match their own commercial interests.

As mentioned above, practices and consumption are interlinked and dependent on each other. As argued by Warde (2005), consumption occurs within practices and for the continuous development of new practices. The theoretical field of consumption practices explain how consumers are influenced, and further can influence the practice of consumption. Practices are internally differentiated and vary depending on who the practitioner is and where this person comes from. Conclusively, practices cannot only explain why consumers buy certain products, but also how marketers can use this knowledge to influence consumers buying behaviour, by manipulating with components that encourage consumers to practice consumption. (Warde, 2005)

2.11 Hypotheses

Based on this thesis' problem statement (see section: 1.), the following hypotheses will be explored. All hypotheses are drawn upon the chosen theoretical field of knowledge for this thesis.

H1: Flexitarians choose substitute products, based on how visually attractive a product design is

H2: Flexitarians are more willing to choose a substitute product, if the packaging includes a transparent element

H3: Flexitarians are more willing to choose a substitute product, if the product is perceived as healthier, due to visual elements and product design

H4: Flexitarians are more willing to choose a substitute product, based on the perception that it is beneficial for the society at large

H5: Flexitarians' product preferences can change because of group dynamics and the principle of conformity.

3. Methodology

In the following section, the methodology applied in this thesis will be discussed. Firstly, the target group will be determined and explained. Secondly, the main methodological framework of focus groups, will be explored. Lastly, the field of theory of scientific method relevant for this thesis, will be explored.

This thesis is a qualitative study, which considers “... *the research process as a way of learning and generating knowledge in conjunction with research participants*” (Daymon & Holloway, 2011, p. 7-8). Qualitative studies aim to carry out the research in consumers’ natural environments, in order to gain insight into how they perform routine activities. However, it is possible to simulate a natural setting artificially, for example by confronting the consumers with their habits, in focus groups. Moreover, qualitative research is about gaining insight into a specific group of consumers’ habits, and not with probabilistic sampling, i.e. the research is not meant to be generalised or representative of a larger population (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). Hence, the method of focus groups is used to provide insight into consumers’ thought processes, when choosing convenience products, and to identify possible patterns or tendencies.

Delimitations

Focus groups has been used widely in marketing research to gain consumer insight into e.g. future product developments. However, in some literature the method is considered too widely used and too standardised within the field of qualitative marketing research methods and are hence seen as predictable (Nancarrow, Vir, & Barker, 2005).

Another point of criticism concerns how the participants might affect each other during the focus group experiment. Here, previous literature states that some individuals might be more dominant in a discussion, thereby altering the opinions of the other participants who then might not be fully honest, and hence less applicable (Catterall & Maclaran, 2006).

In relation, it is also criticised that participants who share similar interests might try not to create conflict in a discussion, and hence wont completely discuss the possible problems with a test product, i.e. groupthink mentality (see section: 2.3) (Catterall & Maclaran, 2006).

A critique concerning qualitative content analysis method, is that when it comes to analysis of focus groups, it can be difficult for the facilitators to sustain from their own beliefs and

only take into account the participants' opinions (Kruger, 1998). Hence, the focus group experiment results might show signs of personal biases from the facilitators.

3.1 Target Group

3.1.1 Target Group and Segmentation

Lamb et al. (2016) state that a market consists of people or organisations that have special needs and wants, and moreover who has the willingness and ability to buy. Within a market, segments exist, i.e. a subgroup of people who have similar characteristics, which cause them to have similar needs, when consuming products and services. From a marketing perspective, marketing segmentation is a process where a market is divided into meaningful, similar, and identifiable segments or groups. The purpose of this is to make it easier for marketers to tailor marketing mixes, in order to meet the needs of one or more segments. (Lamb et al., 2016)

Lamb et al. (2016) define market segmentation as an important tool in marketing for organisations for several reasons. Most importantly, it is defined central to segmentation as almost all markets include multiple groups of people with different preferences and product needs. Furthermore, as marketing segments can differ in size and potential, segmentation can help companies to define their marketing objectives and allocate resources, so it better matches the needs of their different segments. They further define three important reasons to why segmentation of markets is vital for companies. Firstly, it can enable them to identify groups of customers that have similar needs, and further enable them to analyse the characteristics and buying behaviour of these groups of customers. Secondly, it provides companies with information, which can help them design their marketing mixes, so they specifically match the characteristics and desires of a segment. Lastly, segmentation is coherent with the concept of satisfying customer needs and wants while still meeting the company's objectives. (Lamb et al., 2016)

According to Hooley, Nigel, Nicolaud, and Rudd (2017), there are three main categories in which the characteristics of consumer markets can be divided into: The first is background customer characteristics, i.e. classificatory information that stays the same in each purchase situation. This includes demographic characteristics such as gender, age, geography, and sub-cultures. Moreover, it covers socio-economic characteristics, e.g. occupation and education. Further, it includes psychographic characteristics such as personality traits and lifestyle characteristics.

The second is customer attitudinal characteristics, which attempts to casually connect customer characteristics and marketing behaviour. This includes benefit segmentation, i.e. what benefits the customers are looking for, when purchasing a product. Moreover, it includes perceptions and preferences, which is when companies identify segments of consumers that view their product offers in a similar way, and further who requires similar features or benefits. Overall, segmenting from premises of customer attitudinal characteristics can give companies a more useful basis for marketing strategy development, as it gets closer to the underlying reasons for how consumer behaves. However, an issue with this segmentation category is that it often requires costly primary research and sophisticated techniques for data analysis.

The third category is customer behavioural characteristics, i.e. segmenting based on the behaviour of the consumers in a market. This segmentation category includes purchase behaviour, consumption behaviour, communication behaviour, response to elements of the marketing mix, and relationship-seeking characteristics. Overall, this segmentation category aims to explain consumers' differences, from their individual behaviour in a market and not simply identifying them. (Hooley et al., 2017)

As this thesis wants to investigate consumer habits of a very specific group of people, we chose to segment out from customer characteristics. This is because customer characteristics can give us the best criteria for finding relevant participants for our focus groups. First, the most obvious segmentation characteristic for this thesis is the lifestyle trait of being a flexitarian, which is also the first trait we required, when searching for participants. This requirement was chosen based on our problem statements aim to investigate flexitarians' opinions and views on products created specifically to fulfil their needs. Hence, it is vital that our participants share this characteristic. Moreover, this is the characteristic that connects all the participants the most and creates a base for successful focus groups. After this requirement was met, the possible candidates for the focus groups was asked to fit our demographic segment, which is young consumers between the age of 20 to 30, living in the Copenhagen area. These requirements were chosen based on the scope of the thesis.

Successful Segmentation

There are four basic criteria segmentation must meet in order to create a successful segmentation scheme; 1) substantiality, i.e. the market must be big enough to justify continuous development and maintenance of a special marketing mix designed for a market, 2) identifiability and measurability, i.e. it must be possible to identify segments and the size must be measurable. 3) accessibility, i.e. it must be possible to reach members of the targeted segments, and 4) responsiveness, i.e. any logical criteria can be used to segment the market. There are two important additions to the above-mentioned criteria; firstly, substantiality is not only about the size, it also has to do with the potential of the market, hence there is not a need for a huge number of possible customers for meeting this criterion. And secondly, identifiability and measurability cover data about population groups within a geographical area, and moreover demographic data, such as different age categories. (Lamb et al., 2016)

In this thesis, all four criteria are met. Since this thesis aims to investigate the market of substitute products, the main target group can be identified as flexitarians. Substitute products is, as argued earlier in this thesis, a market that is growing on a continuous basis (Euromonitor: Packaged Food Quarterly Briefing, 2019, p. 10), and therefore it can be justified that companies should invest in the marketing segment of flexitarians. The criterion of identifiability and measurability is likewise met, as the segment of flexitarians can both be identified and measured to the extent that it is possible to identify a great part of this segment within specific geographical and demographic boundaries. This further leads to the criterion of accessibility, which is also met in this thesis, as flexitarians are easy to get in touch with. They are not hiding the fact that they are flexitarians, as it is a lifestyle choice and a part of their individual identity (see section: 2.9.1.2). The last criterion of responsiveness basically covers the ability to segment the market based on specific criteria that are logical to segment out from, e.g. in this thesis it is logical to segment out from demographic characteristics, also called background customer characteristics, such as age and subcultures.

3.1.2 Segmentation in Focus Groups

When choosing participants for focus groups, segmentation can be used as a strategy to compose each focus group in such way that they become relatively homogeneous throughout the groups, but still potentially will give different answers and points of views. Morgan (1998) argues that segmentation in focus groups emphasises the researchers' role of e.g. investigating

which particular category of participants they need to get involved in the subject, and which similarities and differences in participants they need to understand beforehand. Using segmentation to compose each focus group, is another way of saying that researchers choose categories of participants that will fit their research purpose. Hence, it relates to the considerations regarding group composition, which will be discussed in the section below. (Morgan, 1998)

Morgan (1998) states that there are multiple bases for segmentation that can be useful for focus group discussions. Firstly, if the groups are segmented based on geographic and demographic characteristics, it gives the researchers the opportunity to make comparisons across groups that are separated because of gender, age, location, education, and so on. However, when segmenting is based on demographic characteristics, a key issue could be that the different groups does not have different perspectives on the discussion topic. Another base is different experiences, e.g. users and nonusers of a product or service, or those who occupy different organisational or social roles. This segmentation strategy could also give different perspectives between the groups on a topic. The last base is differences in attitudes, opinions, and preferences. The issue with this segmentation method is that it is difficult to say if the group composition is beneficial for the discussion, as the participants merely have attitudes, opinions, or preferences in common, and can be fundamentally different in other ways and therefore might not be compatible. Moreover, this segmentation raises issues when recruiting participants, as it is difficult to screen for possible candidates' attitudes, opinions, and preferences. Morgan (1998) supports the notion of segmenting based on demographic, socio-economic, and lifestyle characteristics as it is easier to locate potential candidates, and just as relevant to base segmentation on these characteristics. Morgan (1998)

3.2 Focus Groups

3.2.1 Introduction

This section is mainly built on the theories concerning focus group composition by Heiskanen, Järvelä, Pulliainen, and Saastamoinen (2008). According to Heiskanen et al. (2008), a focus group is when a group between 4-12 people are gathered in a physical space to discuss actively about a given topic of interest. The participants are chosen from specific desired characteristics and are often offered an incentive to participate (Lamb et al., 2016). The group discussion is facilitated by trained moderators, who also observe how the subsequent discussion evolves within the group (Heiskanen et al., 2008).

Heiskanen et al. (2008) state in their research that one distinctive feature of focus groups is that they can generate research data by facilitating social interactions. It is argued by Catterall and MacLaran (2006) that all groups will be subject to group processes and/or group dynamics, i.e. the individual participants in the focus group interviews will be influenced by the other participants. The results of group discussions benefit from these group dynamics, as it fosters a supportive and exciting environment that gives a better security and anonymity for the participants, and further encourages them to speak freely amongst others (Catterall & MacLaran, 2006). This notion is supported by Heiskanen et al. (2008), who argue that if focus groups are conducted in such a way that they are organised and focused, it can inspire the participants to articulate the meaning of their experiences and go more thoroughly into their opinions and thoughts in a collective sensemaking process (Heiskanen et al., 2008).

Nancarrow et al. (2005) state that focus groups are a popular method in marketing research, as well as a popular method in other disciplines such as sociology and communications research. According to Catterall and Maclaran (2006), it was in the end of 1960s that focus groups gained its popularity and replaced in-depth interviews as the most popular method of use. They argue, that the method became popular in marketing research because it is time and cost-efficient. Accordingly, focus groups are also considered to be an easy way to gather a great amount of perspectives on a relatively unexplored topic. Moreover, they argue that when the facilitators of the discussion observe, record, and analyse the participants interactions, it can give them an understanding of how the group participants individually interpret the topic, how they respond to it, and what kind of language they use to explain their opinions about it. Furthermore, group interaction also gives the participants the opportunity to ask questions and to re-evaluate their own views throughout the progression of the discussion. (Catterall & Maclaran, 2006)

3.2.2 Literature Review

In previous literature, the function of focus groups and how the term should be referred to, has been discussed widely. Heiskanen et al. (2008) presented the point of view that the term focus group interviews do not show the participatory role of the focus group participants, and hence suggest that the method should be referred to as focus group discussions. Their study notes that by calling it focus group discussions, the term emphasise the participants' role as knowledge producers, and thus the importance of the effect of collective groups' interactions on creating

new knowledge through the discussions occurring, during an experiment. In relation to how the participants are chosen, they further argue the difference between marketing researchers and action researchers. Marketing researchers usually choose the participants independently from the experiment subject, whereas action researchers choose participants based on an interest in the experiment subject. The focus groups executed by action researchers therefore might be more affected by the participants' previous knowledge concerning the experiment subject, and thereby have more well-thought and all-covering results. (Heiskanen et al., 2008)

For this thesis, we will act as action researchers and choose focus group participants who are interested in the subject, as this will ensure opinions that are both based on pre-existing knowledge and new knowledge accumulated through group discussion with like-minded consumers.

Furthermore, the literature stress that consumers are the most important driver of innovation and hence must be used as an active asset in the early stages of product development, to ensure the future product will meet consumer demands and thereby increase the possibility of product success. Participants in focus group discussions have therefore in previous literature been focused on as a tool for marketers to gain insight into how their product developments would be received by the end-consumers, by seeing how participants in the focus groups would make sense of and describe their interactions with a product. (Heiskanen et al., 2008)

Hence, the participants for the thesis experiment, will be used to produce valuable insights into the product development of substitute products and product design, which can be used by companies to develop their product selections further.

As mentioned in the introduction to this section, group dynamics' influence on focus group experiments' outcome have also been investigated as part of justification of the focus group method (Catterall & Maclaran, 2006). Group Dynamics have been said to be the biggest outcome, both positive and negative, of the focus group method (Bristol & Fern, 1993). Group dynamics can both mean positive discussion outcomes, where the participants help each other understand and form opinions collectively, without too much influence on each other (Catterall & Maclaran, 2006). It can however also mean that some participants might influence the general discussion to the point that other participants are not truthful with their responses (Catterall & Maclaran, 2006).

3.2.3 Relevance of the Focus Group Methodology

The method of focus groups is relevant specifically for this thesis, as it is hypothesised that group dynamics are a great part of the consumers' forming of product preferences. Hence, it is important to situate the individual consumer in a group setting.

For this thesis, we will use the term focus group discussion rather than focus group interviews, as described in the above section, as we use participants that mostly have some form of relationship with each other and follow the same lifestyle tendency, i.e. the flexitarian lifestyle. Hence, it they can be said to share a community, which in theory means that they will relate to each other on a deeper plan and share some points of views. Further, the participants used in this thesis experiment are all chosen based on their segmentation characteristics (see section: 3.1.2). Thus, their answers will be based on their shared cultural meaning systems, which belongs to their common target group. (Catterall & Maclaran, 2006)

There are many advantages in choosing focus groups discussions as the main methodology for investigating this thesis' problem statement. Barbour and Kitzinger (1999) argue that it is a method of data collection, which gives the participants more room to breathe than other similar methods, such as in-depth interviews and surveys. Furthermore, Catterall and Maclaran (2006) also stress the impact of group dynamics in focus group discussions and how this can provide more nuanced insights than other methods, e.g. in-depth interviews, as the participants' preconceived feelings and attitudes are shared with all the participants, worked on, and developed further collectively in the group (Catterall & Maclaran, 2006).

This relates well with the scope of this thesis, as we see how consumers choose substitute products and investigate how they respond to different product packaging attributes. The methodological framework will thereby help the investigation, by seeing how end-consumers might choose products when faced with a product selection in their everyday life.

3.2.4 Focus Group Discussion Design

According to Morgan (1998), a smaller focus group project contains a smaller investigation, involving two to four groups of between four to six participants, easily accessible sources for

recruitment of focus group participants, and can be conducted in-house by the researchers themselves. Moreover, he states that it does not require complex analysis or full transcription data (Morgan, 1998).

In the next section, the focus group structure and the considerations behind will be discussed and outlined. Firstly, the structure of the focus group discussions will be discussed. Secondly, considerations concerning the setting, the number of participants, and the characteristics of the participants will be argued. Lastly, the style of the questions will be discussed. The following sections are mainly based on the principles of how to conduct focus group discussions by Morgan (1998).

3.2.4.1 Structure

Morgan (1998) argues the difference between a structured and a semi-structured focus group discussion. If the goal of the investigation is to get specific answers to match pre-determined opinions, the focus group discussions should be highly structured, whereas if the goal is to take the participants' interests into account and form a discussion based on their opinions, the focus group discussion should have a less structured approach. In this thesis, we aim to explore the participants' opinions and viewpoints on our main topic. Hence, a semi-structured approach is applied. Morgan (1998) argues that a semi-structured focus group discussion reveals the participants true perspective on a topic. It is important that the interview guide and the moderator emphasise learning about the participants' opinions, and which is most important to them. The goal of semi-structured focus group discussions is to discover new ideas and insights along the way. The shortcomings of this strategy are that it is more difficult to control the productivity of the focus groups, and that there is no way of knowing if a participant speaking is leading to an important point or not. (Morgan 1998)

The structure of the focus group discussions decides how the questions in the interview guide should be written, how the moderator should lead the group, and how the analysis is to be conducted. These decisions are discussed further in the following sections. (Morgan 1998)

3.2.4.2 Setting

When deciding on the setting for the focus group experiment, three main factors must be considered: 1) the ambient factor, 2) the human factor, and 3) the material factor. The ambient

factor covers how the room attributes may influence the participants. This may include distractions as noise and visual effects, which might distract the participants. The distractions may cause the participants to be less observant, less participatory, and more intolerant towards others' views and thus less open for discussion. The human factor covers how the participants are placed in the room physically; "*It includes the number of people, how close they are to each other, and how they are arranged*" (Fern, 2001, p. 11). If there are too many participants, they might feel a loss of personal space and thereby increase the participants' stress levels, as with the room ambiance (Fern, 2001). Lastly, the material factor covers how materials, e.g. "*the room, tables and chairs, mirrors, and recording equipment*" (Fern, 2001: p. 11), may affect the participants. If the materials in the focus group setting e.g. seems too big for the space, it might reduce the participants' personal space, as with the ambient factor and the human factor. The size of the material space must also be considered in relation to the relationship between participants, as previous research has found that the more formal the setting is, the more space the participants need to be comfortable with sharing their opinions. (Fern, 2001)

For this thesis, the focus group discussions will take place at Copenhagen Business School in a closed-off group room with neutral colours, to reduce the risk of distractions and increased stress levels. The participants will be physically placed around a table, to increase their visibility of each other, the test products, and the moderators with the purpose to encourage discussion and foster a safe environment. Further, the filming equipment will be placed in a corner of the room to ensure it does not distract the participants.

3.2.4.3 Participants

Morgan (1998) discuss the difference between random and purposive sampling, as qualitative methods. He states that most qualitative methods, including focus group discussions, rely on purposive sampling, i.e. when the focus group participants are chosen to match the goals of the project. The reason to why a purposive sampling strategy is the best match for focus group discussions, is that the purpose of focus group discussions is to use in-depth research to gain insight and understanding about a specific topic. Other reasons to why purposive sampling is the right method when choosing the participants for the focus group discussions, is that the projects are often too small to generate data from an accurate representation of a population,

which is a method known as random sampling, and further because a random sampling of participants would might not be very relevant for the topic of a project. Hence, it is important to choose the participants based on their relevance for a project. (Morgan, 1998)

Furthermore, Morgan (1998) argues that there are two considerations that must be taken into account when creating the composition of focus groups; 1) the comfort of the participants to talk freely amongst others, and 2) the goal of producing productive discussions about the topic. The composition of each focus group has a great impact on whether the participants can maintain a conversation that keep going. Hence, the compatibility of the participants is vital for a successful discussion. One way of securing compatibility is to create homogeneous groups, i.e. groups containing of participants who are fundamentally similar. (Morgan, 1998)

Another way to create compatibility in groups is to create friendship groups. This practice refers to assembling groups consisting of pair of friends, or whole groups of friends, to minimise any shyness. According to Catterall and Maclaran (2006), friendship groups are frequently associated with young consumers and youth marketers, which is relevant in this thesis, as flexitarians are often associated with young adults and youth culture, as argued before. They further argue that friendship groups also can offer a supporting setting where each participant is surrounded by peers, which encourages self-disclosure. (Catterall & Maclaran, 2006)

Therefore, every participant for the thesis experiment was chosen from socioeconomic and demographic factors such as age, gender, living area, and lifestyle (see section: 3.1). Firstly, all the participants in the focus group discussions are young consumers between the age of 18-25. Secondly, this thesis aims to include both female and male participants, therefore the focus group discussions consisted of mixed groups, which will be further explained below. Thirdly, the participants were all chosen because they live in the urban area, Copenhagen, because, as argued before, flexitarians are mostly connected to young consumers, living in urban and modern areas (see section: 2.4). Lastly, a common and vital criterion for all participants in this thesis is that they have to be flexitarians, i.e. consumers that follow “...a *primarily but not strictly vegetarian diet*” (Funch, 2017; Oxford University Press, 2014, see section: 1, in this thesis).

3.2.4.4 Focus Group Composition

The composition of the focus groups is, as explained above, based on the relevant target group, segmentation, and group dynamics. As homogeneity is discussed to be important for group

composition, it is also relevant to discuss the participants' gender, and if this has an influence on group dynamics. Morgan (1998) states that the goal of focus group composition is to create a comfortable setting for the participants to discuss the subject at matter, and to gain valuable discussions about this. The hazards that might come with mixing genders includes differences in group dynamics, and differences in experiences and responses to different topics. However, Morgan (1998) also states that demographic segmentation characteristics, such as gender, does not apply to all topics and may be outweighed by shared beliefs and interest in the subject at hand. (Morgan, 1998)

For this thesis, we used mixed gender focus groups and full-gender groups. First of all, we use a biological approach to genders, and hence use the terminology of females/women and males/men to describe the participants' genders. We use mixed gender focus groups, as we believe there are no differences in how the genders will experience or respond to the product selections, as they all share the same lifestyle choice of a flexitarian diet, and that they all share many other socio-economic and demographic segmentation criteria (see section: 3.1). Further, we chose to conduct a male only and a female only focus group, to test our premise that the genders will not have different experiences or responses to the product choices. We further used the three different focus group compositions to test group dynamics and our premise that the participants' shared lifestyle and interest in this would minimise possible negative group dynamic outcomes.

3.2.4.5 Group Size

According to Morgan (1998), the number of participants in focus groups can make or break the discussions. Either the groups are too large, and people can feel like they do not get heard, otherwise the groups can be too small, and people can feel obligated to contribute with something. This can have a great effect on the focus group discussions results. He further argues that the benefits of smaller groups are that each participant have a greater opportunity to contribute to the discussions. However, the disadvantages of smaller groups are that the burden to talk is also greater on each person. (Morgan, 1998)

There are seven reasons that can justify the use of smaller focus groups for discussions; 1) when there is a high involvement in the topic amongst the participants, 2) when the participants are emotionally connected to the topic, 3) when participants are experts in the topic, 4)

when it is a controversial topic up for discussion, 5) when it is a complex topic, 6) when detailed stories and personal accounts are important for the research, and 7) when the recruitment process is limit other options. (Morgan, 1998)

Therefore, we chose to compose the groups of three to four participants each. We argue, that the participants chosen for the focus groups are both emotionally connected to the topic and thus highly involved, as they are all flexitarians and identify with this lifestyle.

3.2.4.6 Number of Groups

Morgan (1998) argues that the typical number of groups is between three to five. However, he further argues that the number of groups cannot be decided fully beforehand, as it is the matter of diversity in the opinions presented by the different participants in the groups, which determine how many groups are necessary to conduct. If the participants in the first groups have very diverse opinions toward a topic, it would be beneficial to conduct more focus groups in order to discover all facets. However, if the participants share similar thoughts, it is better to conduct fewer groups, as multiple groups would not contribute to the research. Accordingly, three groups seem appropriate when the topic is considered to be semi-complex and when the participants are only moderately diverse, which is the case in this thesis. In other words, when the above-mentioned criteria are validated it can be argued that there are diminishing return for each group added to the research. (Morgan, 1998)

Henceforth, we have chosen to conduct three focus groups in order to discover the participants' individual opinions regarding flexitarian products and how the packaging of these are designed.

3.2.4.7 Facilitating the Discussion

Bovée and Thill (2016) argue, that the role of the moderator in focus group discussions is to guide the participants through a series of questions that encourage discussion between the participants. Furthermore, an important task for the moderator is to observe how the individual participants reacts throughout the discussion session. (Bovée & Thill, 2016)

Krueger (1998) describes the steps of moderating focus group discussions. Firstly, he defines that the most important task the moderator must take care of, before conducting the focus group discussions, is to prepare mentally, i.e. the moderator must be mentally ready and

free from anxiety, distractions, and external and internal pressure. Further, the moderator should know the questioning route by heart, so the person is ready to listen and think simultaneously in order to explore topics, the participants dive in to while discussing. When the moderator is mentally ready and further have checked the equipment and set up the room, the discussions can begin. (Krueger, 1998)

Secondly, during the discussions the moderators have many tasks to complete, including registering the participants, introduce the focus groups, i.e. set the tone and rules for the discussions, asking questions, probe and pausing, listen, and close down. Moreover, the moderator's role during the focus group discussions is to anticipate the flow of the discussions and ask questions appropriately, whilst controlling one's reactions to what the participants are saying. (Krueger, 1998)

Thirdly, when closing the discussions, the moderator has several options to choose from. It can be a classic closing option where the moderator simply thanks the group members for their participation, it can be by closing of with a question, and finally it can be by summarising the most important points of the discussion. (Krueger, 1998)

In this thesis, all the above has been considered when setting up and conducting the focus group discussions. We chose to close the discussions by thanking the participants for coming and by letting them talk amongst each other, until they were ready to leave.

When selecting a moderator to conduct the focus group discussions, Krueger (1998) argues that choosing a person who is already invested in the research is beneficial, as the person is quite familiar with the topic and the goal of the discussions. Moreover, he argues that this familiarity can be very valuable when analysing the results. However, the familiarity can also be a disadvantage, as the moderator can unconsciously be limited by pre-existing assumptions regarding the topic being discussed and hence unconsciously bias the participants. (Krueger, 1998)

In this project, we will take on the role of moderators and observers ourselves. This decision is based on the fact that the focus group discussions are not considered to be difficult or expensive to manage (Morgan, 1998). Moreover, the discussions are not considered to be challenging to initiate and control, hence there is no need for an experienced or professional moderator (Morgan, 1998). Additionally, as argued by Krueger (1998) familiarity with the topic

is considered to be beneficial for the discussions and the analysing process afterwards. Consequently, we are the right match for moderating the focus group discussions, as we are the people who are most familiar with the topic at hand.

When conducting focus groups, Krueger (1998) states that there are three issues a moderator can experience; distractions, too few or too many participants, and issues with the equipment or the room. It is therefore central that the moderators prepare for problems that might occur during the focus group discussions beforehand. Firstly, distractions refer to everything from background noise in the room to the moderator's habits and attire. Krueger (1998) argues that it is important for the moderator to minimise all visual distractions before the focus group discussions, and further to dress appropriately for the occasion. Secondly, the number of participants showing up for the focus groups can be an issue either when too little people show up, and hence there are not enough people to produce productive discussions, or if too many people show up, in the form of spouses, children, or because of recruitment of too many participants. Thirdly, problems with the equipment may arise. According to Krueger (1998), it is often human mistakes that result in equipment issues; thus, these can be avoided by creating a thorough checklist for the equipment, and also by getting familiar with it before the focus group discussions begins.

3.2.4.8 Questions

A different kind of project starts by not even knowing what the right questions are; focus groups reveal what needs to be known. If the goal is exploratory, it would call for a less structured approach which can discover the range of issues that needs to be understood. The interview guide in a less structured project will typically include open-ended questions that spark the group's curiosity about the overall topic. (Bovée & Thill, 2016)

It is argued by Bovée and Thill (2016), that the answers you get from the participants are influenced by which type of question you ask, how you ask them, and by the participants' cultural background and nationality. There are two types of questions that are relevant for focus group discussions. The first is closed questions, i.e. a question that only gives the participants' the opportunity to answer yes and no. While closed questions can give you a specific answer, it is important not to include too many of them as it then would be seen as a simple survey and

not an open and interactive discussion between individuals. The second type is open-ended questions, i.e. questions that seek and facilitate opinions, insights, and information. (Bovée & Thill, 2016)

In this thesis experiment, the focus group questions consisted of closed and open-ended questions. At first, the closed questions were used to establish familiarity with the products used in the experiment, e.g. "Are you familiar with this product or brand?". Thereafter, the open-ended questions were used to begin the discussions, and to steer the discussion in specific directions, e.g. "What do you think about this product?". Moreover, additional questions arose during the discussions from the participants' statements and reactions to the products presented.

3.2.4.9 Outline of the Focus Group Discussions

In the following section the semi-structured course of the focus group discussions will be outlined, based on the above considerations about how to plan for and conduct focus group discussions. Firstly, the discussions began with a short introduction and a rundown of the rules. Thereafter, a warm-up exercise took place followed by an explanation of the content and main ideas behind the discussions. Then, the products were presented for the participants one by one, whilst general questions were offered to start of the discussions between the participants. This was followed by more focused questions, either questions prepared beforehand, or questions derived from the discussions. The focus group discussions ended with a standard thanking of the participants for coming and by letting them talk amongst each other, until they were ready to leave.

3.3 Theory of Scientific Method

In this section, paradigms relevant for this thesis within the field of scientific method will be discussed, and its applicability reviewed. This section's view on the theory of scientific method is mainly build on Thomas Kuhn's theory of scientific evolution through shifts in paradigms, i.e. "*A conceptual or methodological model underlying the theories and practices of a science or discipline at a particular time; (hence) a generally accepted world view*" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2005; Presskorn-Thygesen, 2013). From the beforementioned definition, it can be deduced that the paradigms show different methodological approaches to social science, which each have a specific purpose in the research of a given topic and provides different results.

Within the field of scientific method, it is important to note the two basic branches of philosophical studies, i.e. ontology and epistemology which shape how we interpret things the way we do. Ontology is the study of the being as being. Epistemology is the study of knowledge. Everyone have an epistemology and ontology, which means that in research of a given topic the researcher has specific assumptions of the worlds being and an acknowledgement of it. (Nygaard, 2013)

For this thesis, the paradigms of social constructivism and hermeneutics will be explored, with the main goal to enlighten how these methodological approaches to social science are used to answer the problem statement and underlying hypotheses.

3.3.1 Social Constructivism

Social constructivism focus on how reality is seen and are experienced through different eyes. The paradigm has been argued to consist of four different paradigm directions, based on two different worldviews; 1) an epistemological worldview, i.e. identifying the knowledge of the reality as a construction, and 2) an ontological worldview, i.e. identifying that the reality in itself is a construction. The four paradigm directions are; 1) an epistemological constructivist paradigm of the physical reality, 2) an epistemological constructivist paradigm of the social reality, 3) an ontological constructivist paradigm of the physical reality, and 4) an ontological constructivist paradigm of the social reality. (Larsen, 2013)

For this thesis, our worldview is based in the epistemological constructivist paradigm, as we believe the reality would exist despite our knowledge of it. We will not describe the other paradigm directions, due to the scope of the thesis. Moreover, we argue that our knowledge about the world and reality is constructed from cognitive learning processes, or the intentionality process, which gives our experiences meaning, and in that way create our worldview, and others' worldviews. (Larsen, 2013)

The paradigm is used in this thesis as a basis for the construction of our hypotheses and assumptions about the thesis subject, as we believe knowledge is socially constructed and that we create our knowledge of the social reality through exploration and research. Furthermore, the focus group discussion participants each have a worldview that influences how they see the products evaluated in the thesis experiment. Our further methodological analysis will be based

on the participants' answers, which provides us with a basic understanding of their worldviews but will be analysed from our worldview and intentionality process.

3.3.2 Hermeneutics

The classic approach to hermeneutics explains the basic concept that humans cannot be explained as scientific objects, as they act with free will and that our understanding of them are subjective. The hermeneutic paradigm's purpose is argued to answer two questions; firstly, the question of what a human or a social actor is, and secondly, how scientists can study humans and societies in a hermeneutic responsible way. The first question is in hermeneutics explained by people having a distinctive preconceived knowledge of the world, which shapes how we think and act. The second question is in hermeneutics explained by how the scientist itself is a human, and hence its understanding of the world consists of its preconceived knowledge. To overcome this preconceived bias, the scientist must reflect over its own starting point and try to put itself in others' shoes to see the world from their horizon of understanding. This concept is also referred to as the hermeneutic circle. (Presskorn-Thygesen, 2013)

For this thesis, this paradigm is relevant as it shows that the meaning we encode into our writing may not be the same that the receiver decode. The focus group discussions give us the opportunity to observe the participants reactions and actions, with the purpose to explore their horizons of understanding and including this into our further research. Their answers and reactions to the different product selections will help us reflect upon our own preconceived knowledge and create shared meaning from different perspectives.

3.4 Method for Analysis

Stewart, Shamdasani, and Rook (2011) state that the method for analysing one's focus group data should be based on the research question and the purpose for which the data is produced and collected for. They further state that the most common purpose of focus group discussions is to give an in-depth exploration of a less known topic, or a topic that is yet to be explored. If that is the case, Stewart et al. (2011) argue that a simple descriptive narrative is appropriate as an analysing method. They argue that more detailed analyses are often not efficient or a productive use of time for an explorative study. (Stewart et al., 2011)

Qualitative Content Analysis

Content analysis can generally be defined as: “...any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages” (Holsti, 1969, p. 14). Druckman (2011) describes content analysis as a flexible approach to analysis that gives analysts the opportunity to compare the content of communication, in a variety of settings. Within the method of content analysis is qualitative content analysis, which is defined by Hsie and Shannon (2005) as: a “research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (p. 1278). Qualitative content analysis aims to classify the results into an effective number of categories with similar opinions and meanings (Moretti et al., 2011). Moreover, the method puts emphasis on language as communication where the content or contextual meaning of the text is in the centre (Hsie & Shannon, 2005). Text data can come from many different sources including verbal, print, or electronic sources and can be obtained from different methods, such as open-ended surveys, interviews, focus groups, or print media (Kondracki & Wellman, 2002). Moreover, Weber (1990) argues that qualitative content analysis is not only a method that counts words, in order to examine language intensely, the purpose of the method is to classify large amounts of text into a number of categories that each represent different related meanings and opinions.

Hsie and Shannon (2005) argue that there are three distinct approaches to qualitative content analysis: 1) conventional, 2) directed, or 3) summative. The similarity of these approaches is that they are all used to interpret meaning from the context of text data. However, the major differences between the three approaches are based on coding schemes, origins of codes, and threats to trustworthiness. Firstly, with conventional content analysis the focus is on coding categories, which are derived directly from the data. Secondly, with the direct approach the focus is on relevant theory, or research findings which guides the initial codes. Thirdly, with the summative approach the focus is on counting and comparisons of keywords, or the content of focus group discussions, and thereafter an interpretation of the underlying content. (Hsie & Shannon, 2005)

For this thesis, we have chosen the direct approach to content analysis in which we see the already existing literature and research about visual elements on substitute products' packaging and its effect on flexitarians' product choices as incomplete, which therefore will benefit

from further research. According to Hsie and Shannon (2005), the goal when using the direct approach is *“to validate or extend conceptually a theoretical framework or theory”* (p.1283). They argue, that existing theory can be applied to focus the research question and moreover by being a contributing factor, when creating the initial coding scheme or relationships between codes or categories. The two other approaches to content analysis will not be explained further in this thesis, due to lack of relevance to the scope. (Hsie & Shannon, 2005)

The main strength of this approach is the notion that existing literature and research can be supported and extended by the study findings. Contrary, the main weakness of this approach is that using pre-existing literature concerning the topic at hand, can limit the researchers approach to the data, as they have an informed but also strong biased knowledge about the topic beforehand. This can cause them to “select” evidence that supports their hypotheses, rather than evidence that contradicts their hypotheses. (Hsie & Shannon, 2005)

4. Analysis

In this section, the analysis of the focus group discussions will be conducted. The analysis will be formed after the above methodological description of qualitative content analysis. Firstly, predetermined categories will be listed. Secondly, excerpts from the focus group discussions will be sorted into the different categories. Excerpts that do not fit into the predetermined categories, will be placed in either subcategories or new categories that emerged from the focus group discussion participants' answers. The participants' brand knowledge will be illustrated below in table 1.

It is important to note that the quotes from the participants might have been altered slightly in translation for meaning purposes, i.e. if the participants' have not been clear about which product they are speaking about during the discussions, the product or brand name have been added. Thus, they still portray the participants true answers.

Brand	The Participants' Brand Knowledge
Arla	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11
Slagterens	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11
Alpro	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,11
Oatly	2,3,4,5,6,7,9,10
VegIn	5,9
Den Grønne Slagter	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,10,11
Stryhns	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11
Minimum	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11
Naturli'	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11

Table 1: Brand Knowledge

4.1 Categorising the Data

The coding and categorising of the focus group discussions pivoted around six main categories; images, text elements, transparent or closed packaging, certifications, shopping habits, and ethical consumption, which will be illustrated in Table 2. From ethical consumption, three sub-categories emerged during the discussions; healthy consumption, sustainable lifestyle, and healthy products/product attractiveness, also portrayed in Table 2. In addition to new sub-categories, new categories also became interesting due to the participants' opinions, herein; substitution, price, packaging colour, packaging materials, and product placement in-shop. These categories will be illustrated in Table 3.

In general, the participants expressed that visual elements have an influence on their overall perception of products. Furthermore, the participants in general agreed that they consider ethical implications when shopping.

Examples	Sub-categories	Predetermined categories
<i>“(ed. Naturli’) I like the images they are using; they make me happy. It is easy to understand that you are doing something good” (Participant 11)</i>		Images
<i>“(ed. Naturli’ substitute milk products) They are trying to tell you that you are doing something good for the planet on the carton” (Participant 11)</i>		Text Elements
<i>“(ed. VegIn) I would never buy this, because I can’t see what’s inside; I think it is really unpleasant” (Participant 8)</i>		Transparent and Closed Packaging
<i>“With the Ø-label, I support the local farmer, which is good for the environment and groundwater; it supports the earth/climate” (Participant 1)</i>		Certifications
<i>“I look at several different products when shopping. There are some products where I know that I like a certain one because of taste” (Participant 8)</i>		Shopping Habits
<i>“Eat in moderation, you don’t have to cut something a 100 percent out of your diet...” (Participant 10)</i> <i>“... I know there will be a time where we all have to be vegans, so why not start early, or change your lifestyle early” (Participant 1)</i> <i>“I look at fat content, and therefore substitute meat products was an easy thing for me to substitute to as it has less fat...” (Participant 1)</i>	Healthy Life-style Sustainable Lifestyle Healthy Products/Product Attractiveness	Ethical Consumption

Table 2: Predetermined Categories and emerged sub-categories from the data collection

4.1.1 Images

The participants viewed several products with and without images, which they discussed during the focus groups. There were split opinions on how the images influenced their perception of the products; *“I know images are taken by photographers, so I usually don’t trust images (ed.*

on products)" (Participant 1), compared to *"the image is more important on this packaging as we can't see it, so the image is what makes us expect what we can get from it (ed. about VegIn)"* (Participant 5). Many of the participants thought there were a mismatch between the images on the packaging and the product they could see through transparent packaging element or their expectation to the product; *"(ed. Naturli cold cuts) The images don't completely show the truth; there is a mismatch that makes it seem like a McDonalds product, where they don't look like their images"* (Participant 6), and *"(ed. VegIn) You know it's worse what is in it than on the picture"* (Participant 8).

In relation to the different products, the participants seemed to have various opinions concerning whether the picture influenced their products preferences, in a positive or a negative way. The participants mainly had a positive reaction to the products from Naturli' and Stryhn's; *"(ed. Naturli' Pipfri) The image shows a delicious looking dish that you can get on a restaurant"* (Participant 6), *"(ed. Naturli' A La Bresaola) I like that they give some inspiration with the product on rye bread..."* (Participant 10), and *"(ed. Stryhn's Veggie Pate) I kind of like it, with the pate you know what is in it, but with this you don't know, but then there are the vegetables so you don't need to read what is in it you can just look on the packaging"* (Participant 10). In contrast, The Mushroom Burger from VegIn was a more controversial talking point in all three focus group discussions, where the image was considered to have a negative influence on some the participants' perception of the product; *"(ed. VegIn) The image looks fake; the mushrooms just look like something you wouldn't buy today, like really delicious mushrooms"* (Participant 10), but with other participants it was a positive element, as they could not see how the product looked inside the packaging; *"If the image wasn't there (ed. On VegIn), I would have no idea what it would look like"* (Participant 6).

Overall, images had a positive influence on how the participants' viewed the different substitute products. They argued that many of the companies use images as a guide or an inspiration to how their products can be used; *"(ed. Naturli' A La Bresaola) I like that they give some inspiration, with the product on rye bread, it does not look as fake as the one from Den Grønne Slagter, if I saw the product on distance I would think that I would like to take a closer look, because of the image on the front"* (Participant 10).

4.1.2 Text Elements

Within the text elements on the products, three categories stood out; brand name, product name, and messages.

Firstly, with some of the more known products, the participants stated that because they knew and trusted the brands, they thought the products were better and would taste good; *“I trust the product (ed. Stryhn’s Veggie Pate), I know Stryhn’s... I know it is a different kind of product than (ed. the regular) pate, but I know it will still be good, and I won’t be surprised over the taste”* (Participant 9), and *“Den Grønne Slagter (ed. Brand) makes me think it’s a better product than others”* (Participant 6).

Secondly, the participants focused a great deal on Naturli’s product names, including the chicken substitute product “Pipfri”, and the cold cut product “A La Bresaola”. Overall, the participants discussed that the names on Naturli’s products gives an insight into what the products are; *“The names are more saying, I need to see what it is, I think it gives you a good insight in what you can replace them with”* (Participant 10). With “Pipfri”, there were different views on the name; *“It’s a very funny name, they have played on the words instead of calling it chicken, but it is not at all chicken so... I am a little ambivalent with it, it is the same when they say chili con carne but without the carne; call it something else”* (Participant 11), and *“Personally, I struggle with the Pipfri name, because it reminds me of chicken; Pipfri, I don’t want to eat “pip”, so maybe it is a good thing, because maybe I would buy it then”* (Participant 9). In relation to the cold cut product “A La Bresaola”, the majority found the name confusing and misleading; *“The product name makes it almost an apology from Naturli’ that it isn’t a meat product, I don’t like the brand name it’s not that appealing...It’s trying to be something it isn’t”* (Participant 7). However, some of the participants identified a wordplay within the name, and hence liked it better; *“I really like the name; Naturli’ in general has some really cute names for their products, “A la Bresaola” it is something a la this product but it still isn’t...”* (Participant 11).

Thirdly, the participants discussed the different messages written on some of the substitute products. They identified both positive and negative messages on both Naturli’, Oatly, and Stryhn’s’ products. Some of the positive messages they identified were; *“(ed. Naturli’ A La Bresaola) “a slice with plants” it is so simple; I want a slice of plants with some pesto, you know more what you can use the products for, here it would help me in relation to what I should use the product for, it is kind of a guide, it gives me an idea”* (Participant 9), and further *“(ed.*

Naturli' substitute milk products) I like the small catchphrases, "more nature because we love plants" I want that, I want to support that. There is just the right amount of text" (Participant 9). Some of the negative messages they identified, were; "(ed. Oatly) The text elements are really in your face; on one page it says, "you are one of us now", it's too much" (Participant 3), and "(ed. Stryhn's Veggie Pate) "new and improved taste", think the oversell the product a little bit maybe" (Participant 11).

4.1.3 Transparent and Closed Packaging

The participants were exposed to both transparent and closed packaging during the focus group discussions. There were several topics that emerged from their discussions, including trustworthiness of the product, if a substitute product looks like a meat product, and perceived tastiness. In connection to trustworthiness, all participants agreed upon that it is vital for them to see the products inside of the packaging, e.g. *"I wouldn't buy closed packaging products; I would like to see the product" (Participant 3), "I wouldn't choose closed packaging, as I would be in doubt of its freshness" (Participant 1), and "Seeing the product does it all for me, I turn the product to see how much fat there is in it, I want to choose myself what my meat looks like, it means everything to me" (Participant 8). Some of the participants stated, that if a substitute product looks like real products, they would be more likely to buy them, hence they find it important to be able to view the substitute products inside the packaging; "(ed. Naturli') I like it; I could see myself buying it, because it looks like chicken that has been fried, therefore I think it looks very appealing. It looks like chicken and it makes it easier for me to choose" (Participant 9), and "When it's a substitute product, it is important for me to see it" (Participant 4). Moreover, the participants discussed perceived tastiness and appeal, in relation to seeing the products, e.g. "(ed. Minimum cold cuts) Despite the fluids I think it looks kind of good, I like the thickness on the slice" (Participant 11), "(ed. Stryhn's Veggie Pate) You can see that it is kind of orange, so maybe it tastes like carrots or beets" (Participant 11), and "(ed. Stryhn's Veggie Pate) The colour of the pate is interesting because it reminds me a little about carrots; that makes it appealing to me, maybe because that is what stands out and what I can see of the product" (Participant 9).*

4.1.4 Certifications

The participants were exposed to different certifications on packaging of the test products. They were asked of their knowledge of respectively the Danish Ø-label and the Keyhole label. The result was to 7 participants responding to having a knowledge of the Ø-label, and 4 participants responding to having a knowledge of the Keyhole label.

The participants had an overall positive perception of the Ø-label, with several of them associating it with a positive impact on the environment; *"With the Ø-label, I support the local farmer, which is good for the environment and groundwater; it supports the earth/climate"* (Participant 1). Further, the participants said that they trust the Ø-label more than the Ecolabel; *"I know it (ed. The Ecolabel), but I trust the Danish Ø-label more"* (Participant 4), and *"Danish consumers would trust the Ø-label more than the Ecolabel, as it has been around longer, and the European certification is still new"* (Participant 4). Moreover, the participants agreed upon that the Ø-label is important, but that if it says ecological or eco on the product packaging, it also makes an impact on product choices; *"The Ø-label makes a difference...I'm used to look after the label, but I also like when it says eco. I like when I open my fridge and see eco-brands"* (Participant 9), and *"I think people go after a product because of this (ed. The Ø-label) as they have already made a choice to buy ecological..."* (Participant 11). In fact, several participants associated the ecological label or text with trust; *"I think you can count on products being ecological when it says so"* (Participant 8, and 11), and *"I have not switched completely to substitute milk, so the certification makes a difference, but I just assume that the substitute products are ecological in the first place"* (Participant 9).

In relation to the Keyhole label, the participants associated the label with making healthy product choices; *"It shows a healthier choice, low content of fat and so on"* (Participant 5), and *"It makes it easier for e.g. busy families to make the right choices"* (Participant 5). Further, they stated that it helps to portray a product as healthy; *"The chicken cold cut package looks healthy and easy to use, and that it has the Keyhole label helps the overall idea of this"* (Participant 4). The participants that knew the label agreed upon that they look for the label when trying new products; *"With Pate, I know that there are cream and stuff in it, so I know upfront that it is not that healthy, but when I look at new products the keyhole can tell me if it is a healthier choice"* (Participant 10), and *"I only think about it if it is products where I do not know, like chicken is healthy, but if it is products like rye bread or buns then some of them have*

the keyhole and then you know they are a little healthier than the others, but normally I don't think about it" (Participant 11).

The participants also identified the Vegan certification, which they overall associated with trust, in relation to the ingredients not containing animal products; *"When you know it's there it makes a difference, because it gives an insurance for what you buy have nothing to do with chicken (ed. talking about Pipfri)"* (Participant 8), *"You make an active choice, that okay I don't want to buy meat today, so it is good it is there..."* (Participant 11), and *"For me, when I am trying something new, I would think "okay, then it is also vegan" because then I would know it was a better product, and hence a fun alternative"* (Participant 9).

Overall, the participants agreed upon that well-known certifications might make a difference in their product choices; *"I trust products more if they are certified"* (Participant 5), *"If the certifications are big ones, it is more likely to be a factor in my choosing of products"* (Participant 6), and *"Certifications don't play a part for me when they are less known; it is not what I look at first"* (Participant 7). They however also agreed on the fact that the many different certifications make it difficult to compare products and to know which ones are trustworthy; *"if Naturli' had the same certifications as Arla's, it would make it easier to compare"* (Participant 5), *"The bigger the certification is, the more the company tries to sell the product based on that certification, like the Keyhole on Minimum, the quality might be worse, but like on Naturli's products, where the certifications are small, it is like a bonus thing"* (Participant 8), and *"All of a sudden there has come certifications for everything, one for without colouring agent, without this and that, you can't always trust them"* (Participant 11).

4.1.5 Shopping Habits

4.1.5.1 Weekly Shopping Days

The participants were asked about their shopping habits during the focus group discussions. Within this category, they explored topics such as planning and choosing products. Participant 1 and 2 stated that they shop about two to three days a week, respectively between 20-30 minutes and about 20 minutes in total. Participant 3 estimated that he/she shops five times a week about 10-15 minutes each time. Both Participant 5 and 6 stated that it takes time for them to shop, and Participant 6 further stated that it depends on whether the person has a shopping list or not. Participant 8 and 11 use about half an hour; for Participant 11 it is further based on

how much energy the person has on a specific day. The Participant spend more time if he/she has more energy, or; “...if it's Føtex or something” (Participant 11). Participant 9 use more time, about 45 minutes, because the participant is not always aware of what to get and want to explore which discounts there is in the shop the participant goes to. And lastly, Participant 10 shops for groceries once a week for about two hours.

4.1.5.2 Planning

Most of the participants stated that they are good at planning before they go grocery-shopping. For example, Participant 1 stated; “(ed. I) try to do one big shopping trip and then shop when I need something”, and Participant 5 stated; “I am usually good at planning my shopping trips and I usually make a list”. Moreover, Participant 4 explained that it depends on whether it is a weekday or the weekend; “Either I shop relatively fast in Netto or Lidl, mostly at weekdays and otherwise I spend more time in the weekends and try to look at more products and maybe try something new”. Only Participant 3 stated that the person does not write lists and only do routine shopping.

4.1.5.3 Choosing Products

The participants all had slightly different habits when shopping for products. A few of the participants stated that they do not often buy new products but stick to their regular one's, e.g. “With products it doesn't take too long for me to make a decision, it is usually the same items, not so many different items” (Participant 6), and Participant 7 who only diverge from his/her habits, when there is a bigger selection of products available; “I usually buy the same products I have always used, but sometimes I like a bigger selection so I can really look at the products to see which one I want”. Moreover, Participant 5 argues that the person can be convinced to differ from its list if he/she gets inspired: “Usually there is a display that catches my eye and inspires me to try new things, and then I differ from my list”.

However, most of the participants stated that they like to try new products, e.g. Participant 1 who states; “I want to try new things, but I want to look at them first” and Participant 9 who states; “I like to try new things, so I like to look at the different products”. For Participant 11, trying new products also lead to looking at the ingredient label on the back of a product; “When I am trying new products, I always look at the back on the ingredients. It is not something I

have done before in my life; it is just now when I have gained a greater knowledge about products and the ingredients”.

Some of the participants stated that they like to look at more products at a time, and they are willing to go to other stores in order to get the right product. For example, Participant 2 states; *“I look at more products at a time”* and; *“My convenience depends on whether I have to shop for myself or for other people; if it is for other people I would go to different supermarkets to find the right product, if it is for myself I would choose something else or not buy the product at all, if the store I was in didn't have it”.*

Additionally, Participant 3 agrees with this description of convenience shopping; *“I can go to different supermarkets if I want to buy something in particular or if they have a better offer another place; so not convenient for me”.*

4.1.6 Ethical Consumption

In accordance to ethical consumption, the participants focused a great deal on a single product presented to them, i.e. “Alpro Coconut Dream”. In general with ethical consumption, most of the participants stated that they would not buy a product if they did not tell the truth or mislead the participants on the packaging; *“If it says something on the packaging that are not true, I would always not pick the product (Participant 1).*

The participants discussed unethical marketing and misleading information in connection to the rice milk with coconut flavour from Alpro. There was a general consensus that the product was misleading; *“It is misleading that it is rice and not coconut; It is not really misleading because they write it on the carton, but maybe there should also be some rice, maybe there is, right there”* (Participant 11), and *“It is difficult to see that it is made of rice; I thought it was unhealthy because they kind of hides what it is made of; It makes me think what else they are hiding”* (Participant 1), however some took it as far to arguing that the product is misleading and that Alpro is performing unethical marketing; *“There is a big coconut there, it is misleading”* (Participant 10), and *“It's unethical marketing to show a coconut when it is not coconut milk”* (Participants 1,2, 3). Furthermore, a few of the participants also mentioned the product “VegIn Mushroom Burger” when discussing unethical consumption, e.g. *“I feel cheated, they say it is something, it's a mushroom when it is not a mushroom, there are 10% mushroom in this, then it's not a mushroom beef; I am very surprised, it does not give me what it shows or what it should be”* (Participant 9).

Opposite to the participants' opinions concerning unethical consumption, some of the participants also discussed ethical marketing in connection to the product "*Arla Mini milk eco*", which essentially appeal in a positive way to their product choices; "*I noticed it on the side said that they had reduced CO2 emission by 35% since 2014 by introducing the new carton; this is something you could use as an argument for buying the product*" (Participant 6).

4.1.6.1 Healthy Lifestyle

The participants were asked to define a healthy lifestyle. Overall, they agreed upon that a healthy lifestyle includes psychological wellbeing, exercising, and keeping a balanced and varied diet. The psychological wellbeing was defined as; "*...being happy with your life, work, and friends*" (Participant 6), and "*...to look after yourself in the sense that you don't have too much stuff, for example stress and so on...*" (Participant 9). They also stressed the importance of being happy with yourself; "*Be happy with yourself and what you eat; go for healthier choices, not always animal products*" (Participant 4), and to focus on dietary needs; "*...balanced diet...a good balance of fat, carbs, and vegetables*" (Participant 5), "*...proteins*" (Participant 6), and "*a lot of water, not too much butter*" (Participant 9). The participants generally associated a healthy lifestyle with eating habits, and that there needs to be variation in their diet; "*...you need to let yourself eat pizza once in a while*" (Participant 8), and "*Eat in moderation, you don't have to cut something a 100 percent out of your diet, I believe it's just a variation, maybe you can cut down on something, but it doesn't mean you can't eat it*" (Participant 10). Lastly, several participants mentioned ecological products; "*I stay away from vegetables with pesticides; choose ecological products*" (Participant 4), and "*keep away from additives*"; "*choose ecological products*" (Participant 5).

4.1.6.2 Sustainable Lifestyle

The participants were also asked to define a sustainable lifestyle. Here, they found several different associations, including product packaging materials, local over global products, food waste, and product sourcing.

Several of the participants identified sustainability with buying local, Danish products over global products; "*I choose products from Denmark because of CO2 of transportation of products from country to country*" (Participant 1), "*Products from China is bad for the CO2*;

So, I choose local products from Denmark” (Participant 2), and “I buy Danish products when it is conventional ones, like cucumbers; if there is a Danish one, it’s better than a Spanish one” (Participant 9). In relation to product packaging materials, the participants mentioned that “product packaging materials needs to be sustainable” (Participant 1), but that it is difficult to be “...environmental-friendly, when there then is a plastic lid (ed. Arla’s mini milk Eco); it’s made for us to make it easier, but what is the difference of opening it on the old-fashioned way, I think that is sad” (Participant 11). Moreover, Participant 9 said that packaging material affects its product choices; “I have come across real chicken where it says that this used to be a plastic bottle; therefore, I bought it, I chose that”. Furthermore, the participants discussed that; “Food waste and responsible food production is important” (Participant 1). Participant 2 said; “I buy products that are nearly expired for a reduced price, both because of the price and for the environment”. And, Participant 8 said; “I look at what I have at home and think what I can make out from that and what I need to make a dish, and then only buy that; I think about not just buying and then throw half of it away. In relation to food waste, responsible sourcing also came up in more than one discussion. Here the participants said; “I think about choosing food brands that don’t use resources faster than the world can keep up; I choose products from brands that don’t overfish and that don’t exploit the resources” (Participant 5), and “I think a lot about sustainability when buying groceries, there are of course some things that are very hard to avoid, palm oil for example” (Participant 11). Participant 1 made the comment; “If you had asked me 6 months ago... I would primarily go for vegetarian products, whereas now, I know there will be a time where we all have to be vegans, so why not start early, or change your lifestyle early”, and Participant 3 said; “If I should buy a substitute product, I would rather have it be vegan than vegetarian as I would want to go all out to be more sustainable. if the choice is easy to replace, I would choose vegan products”. Many general comments about a sustainable lifestyle, concerned the climate and consumption; “I think about it because I have more knowledge; before I thought that when I buy ecological then I’m good, but now I am aware of that we should not drink milk from cows because it is better for the world” (Participant 9), and “We are all a part of the solution to climate change” (Participant 1), “(ed. sustainability is) less mass-consumption, clothes; sustainability for me is clothes, not to buy too much... (Participant 11).

4.1.6.3 Healthy Products/Product Attractiveness

Lastly, the participants identified some attributes relating to their perception of what healthy products are, and what attractive products are. In relation to their perception of healthy products, their main responses related to product content; *"I look at fat content, and therefore substitute meat products was an easy thing for me to substitute to as it has less fat; My food can contain fat, but I prefer lower volumes"* (Participant 1), *"Normal Pate has a lot of fat pr. 100 gram, where the vegetable pate has significantly less, it looks great, it looks healthier"* (Participant 4), and *"The protein is also important, that Hakkedrenge has the same amount of protein as the regular hamburgers/beef, makes it a real substitute option for me"* (Participant 1). Furthermore, they discussed how the products looked; *"I think the colour on Hakkedrenge, even though it's not green, it looks healthier; maybe I'm influenced by the packaging that looks healthy to me"* (Participant 1), *"I don't know why but I think minimums chicken looks healthier, there are way less ingredients in this product, that feels like veggie tries too hard"* (Participant 9), *"It looks healthier (ed. About VegIn), like there is no unhealthy additives in it"* (Participant 10), and *"I think the product from minimum looks healthier, I don't know why; veggie (ed. Den Grønne Slagter, Veggie cold cuts) tries too hard, it is not vegan, there is protein from eggs in it, so it is only vegetarian"* (Participant 11), however one participant did not *"like the clumps in this product (ed. Den Grønne Slagter, Veggie cold cuts), it looks pale, maybe it is on purpose"* (Participant 10). Moreover, they discussed the attractiveness of the products; *"I think it (ed. Naturli', Pipfri) would look nice if you fried it on the pan; it would look like real chicken"* (Participant 4), and *"The burgers (ed. Naturli', Hakkedrenge) look kind of processed, they don't look as appetizing as the regular hamburgers"* (Participant 4).

4.2 New Categories

In the following sections, the new categories that emerged from the focus group discussions will be analysed. The categories are illustrated with examples in table 3.

Examples	New Categories
<i>"I think the vegetable pate is easy to use as a substitute to pate"</i> (Participant 1)	Substitution
<i>"I will shop ecological products if the price isn't that different; I think it is everyone's responsibility to support the climate"</i> (Participant 1)	Price
<i>"they have colour schemes according to the ingredients it is made from; the soymilk is made with green colours, the almond a little red..."</i> (Participant 5).	Packaging Colour
<i>"(ed. Naturli' Pipfri compared to Slagterens chicken) I often think about that the amount of product that is in the box should match the size of the box, and with this one (ed. chicken) I feel a little bit like I do with chips bags, that half of the bag is just air, and it is the same here, the box is way bigger than it needs to be, they could have saved room in it"</i> (Participant 8)	Packaging Materials
<i>"In Sweden, they have whole sections with vegetarian options, which I really like because it is easier to see the selection"</i> (Participant 2)	Product Placement in-shop

Table 3: Emerged Categories from the data collection

4.2.1 Substitution

Throughout the focus group discussions, the individual participants discussed their associations with substitute products. In general, the participants agreed that in some way substitute products that look like real products, has an influence on product preferences. For example, Participant 1 who stated; *"If I have to substitute a product, it has to make it easier for me; I have some recipes I go for, so substitute products that looks like the real product makes it easy"*. Moreover, the participants agreed that specific products, such as Stryhn's Veggie Pate looks easier to substitute because it is similar to Stryhn's Pate, e.g. *"I think the vegetable pate is easy to use as a substitute to pate"* (Participant 1)", and *"It is easier to choose a vegetable pate over a regular pate because it is like some other products already made, like vegetable meatballs"* (Participant 3). Moreover, Participant 8 argued the same for Naturli's products; *"Naturli' makes it easy to surrender to their products, they make it as something you know, so it is easier to relate to, in comparison to Den Grønne Slagter, you do not really know what it is"*. Both Participant 9 and Participant 11 acknowledged the fact, that how substitute products are similar to regular products has an effect, but was a little ambivalent with the thought; *"I want to say that it does not*

mean anything that it looks like real products, but I think it does” (Participant 9), and “For me, it doesn’t necessarily need to look like real products, but unconsciously it maybe does something; I would at any time choose Naturli’s products because it looks like something else than Den Grønne Slagter, which doesn’t look like something I know” (Participant 11).

4.2.2 Price

Another category identified by the participants’ discussions was product price and how it affects their product choices. Several participants discussed whether they would substitute regular milk; *“Real milk is the cheapest to buy, but when you do something good, then there are many benefits of the substitute products, and therefore you might want to give maybe 20 DKK for that” (Participant 11), “I will shop ecological products if the price isn’t that different; I think it is everyone’s responsibility to support the climate” (Participant 1), and “I don’t mind using more money on milk as I don’t use it that often; if it’s a product I use multiple times a day, then the price would be a greater factor than what is good for the environment” (Participant 8).*

The participants also discussed what types of products they would choose based on price; *“I look at price when shopping and are more likely to choose a substitute product if it is lower price than the regular price” (Participant 2), “I am driven by special offers, and meat is usually on sale, which substitute products are not, so I would choose regular meat instead” (Participant 3), “I look at different products when shopping, the price is a defining factor. Definitely when it’s basic groceries like flour” (Participant 8), and “(ed. with) Basic stuff when the taste doesn’t matter; price is most important, like a cucumber” (Participant 10).* Overall, the participants were more affected by price when it relates to basic products, and they would be more likely buy a substitute product if it was on sale at a lower price than the regular product or if the price was the same.

4.2.3 Packaging Colour

Another category identified from the focus group discussions were packaging colour and how this affects the participants’ product choices.

In relation to Naturli’s products, the participants had some assumptions about healthiness; *“Pipfri and Hakkedrenge’s colour of green portrays more healthiness than the regular chicken filet package” (Participant 1), and content based on their colour schemes; “the colours match the name, it is natural colours, they have not chosen a loud colour like pink” (Participant 8),*

"The colours make really good sense, it matches what they are produced on, it is very simple and it makes sense. I understand it. It is very calming colours; It makes my fridge look good" (Participant 9), *"The colours are very simple, just by looking at the colours you know what you get"* (Participant 10), and *"they have colour schemes according to the ingredients it is made from; the soymilk is made with green colours, the almond a little red..."* (Participant 5).

When discussing Oatly's oat drink, the participants found the colours both confusing and nice; *"The colours can make me want to buy the product; if the carton was pink I probably wouldn't buy it"* (Participant 6), *"I am a little confused over the colour, was is it I'm about to open? The other products have a milk carton vibe, but this just makes me confused"* (Participant 8), and *"I'm confused over the colour, what is it?"* (Participant 11).

With the two pates from Stryhn's, the participants identified that it is important that the Veggie Pate looks like the other pates from Stryhn's; *"the Veggie Pate has a green label; it looks like the other products from Stryhn's; I know what I get when it looks like the regular pates"* (Participant 3). They also focused on the green label that they found interesting; *"The green colour is interesting; I don't think they have other products with the green colours"* (Participant 10), or not green enough; *"The Veggie one is not green enough, if I saw it in the supermarket I wouldn't see it as a substitute product"* (Participant 2). However, one participant thought the packaging of the vegetable pate looked like a Christmas product; *"It reminds me of Christmas, I don't know why"* (Participant 10).

Overall, the participants identified the importance of colour and its connection with product perception with one participant highlighting that it chose products based on colour; *"colour makes a huge difference; e.g. most shampoos for men are black...and razors are usually black with some orange. It makes me want to buy the products"* (Participant 6). Other participants also stressed their perception of the colour green as meaning something is healthy and natural; *"green is healthy"* (Participant 1), and *"green makes the packaging more natural"* (Participant 5).

4.2.4 Packaging Materials

Several topics emerged from the participants' discussions regarding packaging materials, including plastic use, sustainability, and specific details with some of the products.

Firstly, most of the participants thought that reducing plastic materials or using reusable plastic materials instead would be better, for example Participant 7 who discussed the product

Naturli' Pipfri; *"It says 50 percent more reusable plastic usage; that is positive", "Packaging material makes a difference; green plastic is more recyclable than black plastic"* (Participant 1), and *"I would rather not have plastic on products if we can do without it"* (Participant 3).

Secondly, the participants discussed sustainability in relation to packaging materials, e.g. *"(ed. Naturli' Pipfri) I think this look way more environmental-friendly than the other products, it is not certain that it is, but I think it is because it looks more simple"* (Participant 10), and *"I don't always look at the packaging material or if it is sustainable, but I notice it more on Arla products"* (Participant 5). Some of the participants focused especially on Arla Mini milk eco, e.g. *"It looks like the carton is environmental-friendly"* (Participant 11), and *"I did not have a preference for milk before, but after Arla made this environmental-friendly carton I began just to buy from them, not because of Arla, but because of this packaging; that is good for something; they had a lot of text that told that this is a new environmental-friendly packaging, that had a big influence on my shopping choice, and now it is just a habit"* (Participant 9). Moreover, the participants stated that there should be done more for the environment; *"I notice if the packaging material is sustainable when I walk through the vegetables and fruits section at the supermarket; if the products are covered in plastic, they could do better with the packaging; let us do something for the environment with plastic reduction"* (Participant 4).

Thirdly, the participants focused a great deal on the Mushroom Burger from VegIn. They had different opinions regarding the packaging. Some of the participants thought it was more environmentally friendly, e.g. *"It is more sustainable, since it can be reused, which plastic packaging usually cannot"* (Participant 7). Nevertheless, most of the participants thought the product packaging was a little off, e.g. *"It looks like a powder sauce, if there were plastic on the inside, I would feel cheated I think, what is it, it is gross"* (Participant 8), *"It's a little funny packaging, it kind of looks like a pair of stockings"* (Participant 11), and *"VegIn: The packaging is a little misplaced, it can just fit in your pocket, that is not normal"* (Participant 11). Moreover, some of the participants were a little confused over the packaging; *"Food safety is important; with VegIn, it is Vacuum packaged, but if it wasn't, then I wouldn't feel safe with it being in a small cardboard container that easily opens up"* (Participant 4), and *"Is the packaging more environmental-friendly on the inside, I just think why have they made it like this?"* (Participant 10).

4.2.5 Product Placement In-Shop

From the focus group discussions, a category about the products' placement in the supermarkets and how this affects products choice, emerged. Their main focus-points concerned whether or not they would buy more substitute products, if it was placed in the same section or next to their animal counterpart. Most of the participants thought it was a good idea to place it next to or in the same section, as it makes it easier; *"The products should be located next to their regular counterparts; I would not visit a special department to choose substitute products"* (Participant 1), *"Supermarkets are designed systematically, so it would be easier for me to find the substitute products if they are placed next to the regular ones"* (Participant 1), *"If I have the regular product in my hand, and the substitute product was placed next to it, I think it would be easier for me to choose the substitute product; you place it to present the substitute product; I'm reminded that there are substitutes"* (Participant 3), *"when I usually make a list, if I had to choose products for my lunch, it would make it easier for me if it was placed in the respective sections with the rest of the cold cuts"* (Participant 4), *"It has to be easy to find, and it would be easier if it was in the same section as the other products"* (Participant 6), *"I would not necessarily go to a vegetarian or vegan section to buy products as I do not use that many substitute products"* (Participant 3), and *"It would make it more natural for me if the products were placed together with the animal products than they have their own section; it makes it more of an active choice that I have to go somewhere special"* (Participant 7). Only Participant 1 and 2 said that they would prefer that substitute products had their own section in the supermarkets; *"For me, it would make more sense to have a section for vegetarian products because I don't eat that much meat"* (Participant 1), *"I would choose more vegetarian products if they were in the same section; I don't buy meat unless it is served for me so I would go to a section with vegetarian products to shop"* (Participant 2), and *"In Sweden, they have whole sections with vegetarian options, which I really like because it is easier to see the selection"* (Participant 2).

4.3 Group Dynamics

In the focus group discussions, we as moderators and observers noticed group dynamics and how these played out. Some of the observations we made about the different groups, will be outlined in the following section.

4.3.1 Group 1

Group 1 consisted of three participants, two women and one man. All the participants knew each other in advance and were all friends. During the focus group, the participants in Group 1 often agreed upon several points of discussions. For example, when discussing packaging colour, they all expressed opinions about the colour green; *"Green is healthy"* (Participant 1), *"(ed. Stryhn's Veggie Pate) The Veggie one is not green enough, if I saw it in the supermarket, I wouldn't see it as a substitute product"* (Participant 2), *"(ed. Stryhn's Veggie Pate) The vegetable pate has a green label; it looks like the other products from Stryhns, I know what I get when it looks like the regular pates"* (Participant 3), and *"(ed. Naturli's) Pipfri and Hakkedrenge's colour of green portrays more healthiness than the regular chicken filet package"* (Participant 1).

4.3.2 Group 2

Group 2 consisted of four participants, all men. All the participants knew each other in advance and were acquaintances. During the discussions, Group 2 often focused on the same aspects of a topic. For instance, when they discussed packaging materials, the participants focused a great deal on the negative effects of plastic; *"I notice if the packaging material is sustainable when I walk through the vegetables and fruits section at the supermarket; if the products are covered in plastic, they could do better with the packaging; let us do something for the environment with plastic reduction"* (Participant 4), *"I notice when e.g. an aubergine is wrapped in plastic, like why?"* (Participant 6), and *"(ed. VegIn) It's more sustainable, since it can be reused, which plastic packaging usually can't"* (Participant 7).

4.3.3 Group 3

Group 3 consisted of four participants, all women. The participants were two pair of friends brought together who did not know each other upfront. The participants in Group 3 often inspired each other to talk about specific things. For example, when they discussed images and text elements on the different products, one person's opinion often led to another person elaborating that opinion. An example of this is with the brand Oatly, where Participant 8 stated; *"The vibe is kind of a 'Copenhagen drink'",* and Participant 9 stated; *"it is kind of hipster..."*. Also, Participant 11 stated about the textual elements on the product; *"There is definitely a target group for this product. 'No milk, no soy, eh whatever' it is kind of youthful. It is a little*

“Nørrebrox” ...”. Moreover, they also agreed with each other when seeing VegIn’s Mushroom Burger; *“(ed. VegIn) You know it’s worse what is in it than on the picture”* (Participant 8), *“The picture looks a little fake, like you know it doesn’t look like this, but even though it looks fake, I still think that it looks delicious; I just don’t think it look like this, also because the mushrooms don’t look real”* (Participant 9), and *“(ed. VegIn) The image looks fake; the mushrooms just look like something you wouldn’t buy today, like really delicious mushrooms”* (Participant 10).

5. Discussion

The aim of this thesis is to investigate how visual elements on substitute products’ packaging influence flexitarians product choices. Hence, the following sections will discuss data from the analysis, in relation to the theoretical framework. To clarify, as this thesis is built on a qualitative methodology, the following discussion will only show general tendencies formed from the focus group discussion participants’ answers.

5.1 Shopping Habits and Consumer Product Choices

5.1.1 The Consumer Decision-Making Process

If we look at the literature concerning the decision-making process model, the second stage describes how consumers engage in information search about product alternatives, both internally and externally, to make the consumers fully understand their selection and preferences of products (Lamb et al., 2016). To investigate the internal processing of alternatives, the focus group participants were asked about their level of planning before a shopping trip. Here, the participants generally thought they were good at planning, for example Participant 1 who stated; *“(ed. I) try to do one big shopping trip and then shop when I need something”*, and Participant 5, who stated; *“I am usually good at planning my shopping trips and I usually make a list”*. Participant 3 was the only one who stated that it did not write lists and only do routine shopping. This might show that consumers generally have some level of involvement when shopping for convenience products, if only the planning stage is taken into account. To investigate the external processing of alternatives, the focus group participants were asked about their shopping habits and whether or not they for example looked at one or more products, before making a purchase. Here, Participant 2 said; *“I look at more products at a time”* and Participant 9 said;

"I like to try new things, so I like to look at the different products". This shows, that the participants would look at more products before making a final product selection, which occurs in stage four of the decision-making process model.

When looking at the third and fourth stage of the consumer buying process, i.e. evaluation of alternatives and purchase, the participants for example discussed whether or not they would try new products, or if they would stick to their usual ones. Here, the consensus were that they usually would stick to their usual products unless they were being inspired by the shopping environment, for example; *"With products it doesn't take too long for me to make a decision, it is usually the same items, not so many different items"* (Participant 6), *"I usually buy the same products I have always used, but sometimes I like a bigger selection so I can really look at the products to see which one I want"* (Participant 7), and *"Usually there is a display that catches my eye and inspires me to try new things, and then I differ from my list"* (Participant 5). This relates well to the revised literature, as it states that people usually will select products based on previous experiences or based on other external influences, such as in-store advertisement and store displays (Solomon et al., 2013).

This is also supported by several of the participants' willingness to go to another store if the store they were in did not have their preferred product; *"...if it is for other people I would go to different supermarkets to find the right product, if it is for myself I would choose something else or not buy the product at all, if the store I was in didn't have it"* (Participant 2), and *"I can go to different supermarkets if I want to buy something in particular or if they have a better offer another place; so not convenient for me"* (Participant 3). This means, that the consumers are affected by previous patterns and product choices to such an extent that their convenience is not at the most importance, which the revised literature suggests is the case when it comes to convenience products, such as groceries.

5.1.2 The Consumer Purchase Process

Based on the revised literature concerning the consumer purchase process, product selection is influenced by both internal and external factors before, during, and after a purchase situation (Solomon et al., 2013). During the focus group discussions, the participants were asked about the situational effects, i.e. internal influences and the purchase environment, i.e. the social and physical surroundings of a shopping trip, and how these factors might influence their product selections. The main discussion points that emerged were about product placement of substitute

products in supermarkets and whether or not this would have an influence on their purchases of products. Here, the general opinion was that substitute products should be located next to its animal product counterpart, as it would be more convenient to find; *"Supermarkets are designed systematically, so it would be easier for me to find the substitute products if they are placed next to the regular ones"* (Participant 1), and more convenient to choose between the products; *"If I have the regular product in my hand, and the substitute product was placed next to it, I think it would be easier for me to choose the substitute product; you place it to present the substitute product; I'm reminded that there are substitutes"* (Participant 3). Thereby, it can be argued that consumers are highly affected by the purchasing environment, when making their final product selection decisions.

According to the revised theory, consumers evaluate and choose convenience products based on previous experiences with a product or a brand (Solomon et al., 2013). Furthermore, they also use emotions and thoughts about *"intangible product attributes such as package design, and... reactions to accompanying stimuli such as advertising and even the brand name"* (Solomon et al., 2013, p. 297), as tools for processing. In the focus group discussions, several of the participants showed that the brand name was really important when it came to their product choices, as it foster trust with them; *"Den Grønne Slagter (ed. Brand) makes me think it's a better product than others"* (Participant 6), and *"I trust the product (ed. Stryhn's Veggie Pate; I know Stryhns... I know it is a different kind of product than (ed. the regular) pate, but I know it will still be good, and I won't be surprised over the taste"* (Participant 9). Hence, product choices might be interrelated with which intangible product attributes the participants prefer, and hence what they might find attractive in a product design.

5.2 Text Elements' Influence on Product Choices

This leads to the first hypothesis: **H1: Flexitarians choose substitute products based on how visually attractive a product design is.** Besides brand name, other product design elements such as product name and messages, were also discussed in the various focus groups. With the brand names, the participants underlined the importance of these on product packaging as they associate these with products they trust. When it comes to product names, the participants also discussed whether or not different names had an effect on their product preferences. Participant 11 said, for example of Pipfri from Naturli; *"It's a very funny name, they have played on the words instead of calling it chicken, ...but it is not at all chicken so... I am a little ambivalent*

with it, it is the same when they say *chili con carne* but without the *carne*; call it something else”, and Participant 9 said of Pipfri from Naturli; “*Personally, I struggle with the Pipfri name, because it reminds me of chicken; Pipfri, I don't want to eat “pip”, so maybe it is a good thing, because maybe I would buy it then*”. Participant 9 argues that the name makes the product less appealing, as it reminds it of chickens but would however still buy the product; “(ed. Naturli) *I like it; I could see myself buying it, because it looks like chicken that has been fried, therefore I think it looks very appealing. It looks like chicken and it makes it easier for me to choose*”, which shows a dissonance between the participant's perception of the product and the product name, where the appealing nature of the product seems more important than the product name. Some of the participants said they generally had a positive view of Naturli's product names, for example; “*Naturli' in general has some really cute names for their products, “A la Bresaola” it is something a la this product but it isn't*” (Participant 11), but still criticised both the names Pipfri, as demonstrated above, and A la Bresaola; “*The product name makes it almost an apology from Naturli' that it isn't a meat product, I don't like the brand name it's not that appealing...It's trying to be something it isn't*” (Participant 7). This shows, that even though the participants find Naturli's product names informational and easy to compare to animal products, they might be more positive towards products that did not sound like its animal product counterpart.

It is interesting that Participant 9 associates the product name Pipfri with its animal counterpart, and hence decode that the product is a possible replacement from its name. This is something several other participants also have a tendency to do; they use the product name to decode what they can use the product for as a substitute for its animal counterpart, for example; “*The names are more saying, I need to see what it is, I think it gives you a good insight in what you can replace them with*” (Participant 10). This rise a new interesting thought concerning whether the food industry chooses these products names, like Pipfri and A la Bresaola, because it makes it more convenient for participants to evaluate alternatives to animal products, instead of creating something entirely new or naming them something completely new. Based on the design feature of product names, it can be said that there is a tendency to the participants are willing to buy products with names they do not necessarily like, if they perceive them as visually attractive.

Relating to product names, and how they affect consumers' product perception, the text element messages was also discussed in the focus groups. Here, the focus groups discussed how

they perceived the various messages found on the product packaging of some of the test products. Some messages were perceived positively by the participants, for example; “(ed. Naturli’ substitute milk products) *I like the small catchphrases, “more nature because we love plants” I want that, I want to support that. There is just the right amount of text*” (Participant 9), and some were perceived negatively; “(ed. Oatly) *The text elements are really in your face; on one page it says, “you are one of us now”, it’s too much*” (Participant 3). As with the product names, the messages quoted above, as well as how the participants discussed them, show that they use the messages as informational tools to assess the overall product and brand behind it. According to what the participants’ said in the focus group discussions, they would further prefer messages to be an integral part of the brand and not being too excessive. The right amount of text and the right wording of the messages however is quite subjective and can therefore not stand alone when marketers are developing a product packaging design.

A discussion point that developed throughout the focus groups, were the element of packaging colour. The participants discussed the various products from Naturli’, where they described that they perceive Naturli’s products’ packaging colours to match the content the participants expect from the products, for example; “*The colours are very simple, just by looking at the colours you know what you get*” (Participant 10), and “*they have colour schemes according to the ingredients it is made from; the soymilk is made with green colours, the almond a little red...*” (Participant 5) (see Appendix 2). The participants hence connect certain colours with certain ingredients and use the colours as reference points to assess the products as a whole. Moreover, several of the participants associated the colour green with healthiness, for example; “*Pipfri and Hakkedrenge’s colour of green portrays more healthiness than the regular chicken filet package*” (Participant 1), “*green is healthy*” (Participant 1), and “*green makes the packaging more natural*” (Participant 5) (see Appendix 2). This is interesting when looking at the revised literature which states that people learn early in life how to interpret visual impressions (Hultén et al., 2009), such as colours. This can be a possible explanation to why the participants interpret the colour green as something natural or healthy (Hultén et al., 2009), as it can be argued that they associate these colours with the Danish nature, for example the Danish forests. Colours are thereby identified as an important design feature, which is also seen in this quote from Participant 6; “*colour makes a huge difference; e.g. most shampoos for men are black...and razors are usually black with some orange. It makes me want to buy the products*”,

which clearly highlight that the participants' connotations, which came with the different colours, made them create assumptions about what the colours represent of product features, and thereby plays a role in their product selection.

Another design feature, which the participants focused on when discussing attractive product designs was which materials the product packaging were made of. The participants discussed different packaging materials, including plastic, the level of reusability in the materials, and food packaging safety and how these affected their perception of the different test products. Some of the participants focused a lot on plastic and if it was reusable, for example about Naturli' Pipfri; *"It says 50 percent more reusable plastic usage; that is positive"* (Participant 7), *"Packaging material makes a difference; green plastic is more recyclable than black plastic"* (Participant 1), and *"I would rather not have plastic on products if we can do without it"* (Participant 3) (see Appendix 2). One participant also identified the use of plastic packaging as something that was bad for the environment, which changed its perception of the products if they were covered in the material; *"I notice if the packaging material is sustainable when I walk through the vegetables and fruits section at the supermarket; if the products are covered in plastic, they could do better with the packaging; let us do something for the environment with plastic reduction"* (Participant 4). Moreover, the participants focussed especially on the milk carton from Arla, where they for example said;

"I did not have a preference for milk before, but after Arla made this environmental-friendly carton I began just to buy from them, not because of Arla, but because of this packaging; that is good for something; they had a lot of text that told that this is a new environmental-friendly packaging, that had a big influence on my shopping choice, and now it is just a habit" (Participant 9) (see Appendix 2).

And lastly, there was a little confusion of the food safety and sustainability of the packaging of VegIn's Mushroom Burger; *"Food safety is important; with VegIn, it is Vacuum packaged, but if it wasn't, then I wouldn't feel safe with it being in a small cardboard container that easily opens up"* (Participant 4), and *"Is the packaging more environmental-friendly on the inside, I just think why have they made it like this?"* (Participant 10), since they could not completely see how the product was packed inside (see Appendix 2). As keeping the product safe is identified as one of the key features of product packaging in the revised literature, it is interesting

that this also have an effect on the participants' perception of the product. Consumers have to make product decisions based mainly on visual appearance when trying new products (Becker et al., 2011). Hence the associations they create with for example the packaging materials and the other visual product design elements, will have an influence on their product choices and perception of those products. From the above section, tendencies of what the participants, and hence possibly other flexitarians, sees as visually attractive product design elements can be used as a general guideline, as to what to include on product packaging of substitute products in the future. This will be further elaborated below, as it also includes what features they see as attractive in products.

5.3 Product Attractiveness

From the participants' answers, the second hypothesis: **H2: Flexitarians are more willing to choose a substitute product, if the packaging includes a transparent element**, can be confirmed, as all the participants to some extent agreed that they would only buy a product they did not know in advance, if they could see through the packaging. This correlates with the revised literature, which argues that for less known brands or products a transparent packaging element can promote trust and intent to purchase, as consumers are less sceptical towards products they can see before a purchase (Simmonds & Spence, 2017; Venter et al., 2011). In the focus group discussions, the participants showed their agreement with this theoretical view through the following statements; *"I wouldn't buy closed packaging products; I would like to see the product"* (Participant 3), *"When it's a substitute product, it is important for me to see it"* (Participant 4), and *"Seeing the products does it all for me, I turn the product to see how much fat there is in it, I want to choose myself what my meat looks like, it means everything to me"* (Participant 8). The participants further discussed whether the transparent packaging elements changed their view on the products inside in relation to perceived quality and/or taste, where they for example stated that; *"(ed. Stryhn's Veggie Pate) The colour of the pate is interesting because it reminds me a little about carrots; that makes it appealing to me, maybe because that is what stands out and what I can see of the product"* (Participant 9), and *"(ed. Stryhn's Veggie Pate) You can see that it is kind of orange, so maybe it tastes like carrots or beets"* (Participant 11). This correlates with the findings by Simmonds and Spence (2017), who found that by adding a transparent element to product packaging it might influence the consumers' perception of quality as well as brand trust. The above quotes from the participants further

opens the discussion of whether product attractiveness makes a difference for product choice, and whether the transparent elements increase or decrease the perceived attractiveness of a product.

The revised literature concerning transparent packaging elements also relates to the consumers' perceptions of product attractiveness. Venter et al. (2011) found that consumers found products with a transparent packaging element more visually attractive than products with closed packaging, as the transparent elements helped them to assess the product attributes, and hereby eliminated the need for other visual packaging elements. This is both proved and disproved by the participants' answers, in the different focus group discussions. Several of the participants agreed on the fact that transparent elements increases product attractiveness but only if the product inside portray what is expected; *“(ed. Naturli’) I like it; I could see myself buying it, because it looks like chicken that has been fried, therefore I think it looks very appealing. It looks like chicken and it makes it easier for me to choose”* (Participant 9), *“(ed. Minimum cold cuts) Despite the fluids I think it looks kind of good, I like the thickness on the slice”* (Participant 11), *“The burgers (ed. Naturli’, Hakkedrenge” look kind of processed, they don’t look as appetizing as the regular hamburgers”* (Participant 4), and *“(ed. Naturli cold cuts) The images don’t completely show the truth; there is a mismatch that makes it seem like a McDonalds product, where they don’t look like their images”* (Participant 6) (see Appendix 2). Hence, the fact that the participants can see the product through a transparent element on the product packaging, can both be a risky and a beneficial design feature. Though, the above statements argue for confirmation of the revised literature it should also be noted that visual attractiveness is subjective and therefore might not be a relevant factor to take into consideration, when developing a product design.

In relation to product attractiveness and consumer perception of products, the participants also discussed how images on the different products' packaging correlated with their expectations of e.g. quality and taste. The participants had different opinions on how images affected their perception of expected taste, where most of the participants agreed that the image on the product packaging of the product from VegIn did not correlate with what they expected, as the expectation of the product actually was lower than what the image portrayed; *“(ed. VegIn) You know it’s worse what is in it than on the picture”* (Participant 8) (see Appendix 2). Moreover, the participants discussed the expected quality of the products where some of the participants compared the image to what they expected to get in real life positively; *“(ed. Pipfri) The image*

shows a delicious looking dish that you can get on a restaurant" (Participant 6), and negatively; *"(ed. Naturli cold cuts) The images don't completely show the truth; there is a mismatch that makes it seem like a McDonalds product, where they don't look like their images"* (Participant 6). The participants thereby showed that images are important in the sense that they should portray the product correctly, in form of what the consumers expect of the products quality and taste. The participants also showed that if the packaging included both an image and a transparent element they were more observant of the dissonance between what the image portrayed and their expectations of the product, which is anticipated since they would not be able to assess the product beforehand with the closed packaging.

According to the revised literature, images must both correlate with the overall brand values of the producers and serve a functional purpose by showing the product, if it for example does not contain a transparent element (Underwood & Klein, 2002). The participants discussed the functionality of an image on product packaging in different ways, for example by underlining the importance of an image on the product packaging on some of the products with a closed packaging, as the case with the mushroom burger from VegIn; *"the image is more important on this packaging as we can't see it, so the image is what makes us expect what we can get from it (ed. about VegIn)"* (Participant 5), and *"If the image wasn't there (ed. On VegIn), I would have no idea what it would look like"* (Participant 6) (see Appendix 2). They also discussed functionality with for instance Naturli's products and how the images helped them understand what the product can be used for; *"(ed. Naturli' A La Bresaola) I like that they give some inspiration with the product on rye bread..."* (Participant 10), and functionality in case of determining what the product content actually is; *"(ed. Stryhn's Veggie Pate) I kind of like it, with the pate you know what is in it, but with this you don't know, but then there are the vegetables so you don't need to read what is in it you can just look on the packaging"* (Participant 10). With the above statements, the participants show that product images thereby are an important tool, which might make it easier to understand the products and to assess whether the product attributes would be better than those in another product. This is also described by Venter et al. (2011), who state that images can make the decision-making process shorter for consumers as it will make it easier to compare and evaluate the different alternatives. This might also show how images are important for low-involvement products, as consumers usually use less time to decide on a product and thereby can learn about product attributes accidentally through an image (Underwood & Klein, 2002; Venter et al., 2011). The revised literature moreover found

that including an image on the product packaging will increase the consumers' memories of that product more than text elements would (Underwood & Klein, 2002). This means, that for a new product group an image element on the product packaging might help increase consumer awareness and create more positive attitudes toward the product group. This is due to the fact that sales of products usually go hand in hand with consumers' involvement in assessing the product attributes at hand. The fact that convenience products are considered low-involvement products could result in the consumers might just stick with their usual shopping patterns, if they did not gain enough information from their assessment of the product packaging in the stores, as images create higher attention and remembering (Underwood & Klein, 2002; Wedel & Pieters, 2008).

The discussion of images on product packaging and transparent or closed packaging, can also be used further in the discussion about packaging attractiveness, and hence add to the answer of hypothesis 1, i.e. **H1: Flexitarians choose substitute products based on how visually attractive a product design is.** As well as with colours on product packaging, images are also a part of our visual impressions which people learn to give meaning and understanding from a young age (Hultén et al., 2009). And from the above section, a general tendency of the use of images on product packaging on substitute products can be seen to be positive, as the consumers gets more information to what the product is and what it can be used for. This also applies to the use of transparent elements which by the participants were generally positive, as they could assess the product content and how it related to its animal product counterpart, which made it more convenient for them to substitute in their daily practices. Henceforth, both images and transparent elements can be used to make product packaging more attractive for consumers, who according to the above sections and the focus group participants' answers will use the features as positive tools for product assessment.

Moreover, the transparent packaging was also found by the focus group participants, to have a positive effect on their evaluation of product attractiveness, when it comes to looks and colour of the products, excluding colour of the packaging and packaging material as discussed previously. Like some of the quotes demonstrated in the above section about transparent elements, the participants looked at the products' look and colours, and used them to assess the quality and perceived tastiness; "(ed. Stryhn's Veggie Pate) You can see that it is kind of orange, so maybe it tastes like carrots or beets" (Participant 11), but also; "The burgers (ed. Naturli',

Hakkedrenge” look kind of processed, they don’t look as appetizing as the regular hamburgers” (Participant 4) (see Appendix 2). The participants also discussed product colour and looks, in relation to healthiness and quality positively, for example; “*I think the colour on Hakkedrenge, even though it’s not green, it looks healthier; maybe I’m influenced by the packaging that looks healthy to me*”(Participant 1), “*I think the product from minimum looks healthier, I don’t know why; veggie (ed. Den Grønne Slagter, Veggie cold cuts) tries too hard, it is not vegan, there is protein from eggs in it, so it is only vegetarian*” (Participant 11), and negatively; “*like the clumps in this product (ed. Den Grønne Slagter, Veggie cold cuts), it looks pale, maybe it is on purpose*” (Participant 10) (see Appendix 2). This also emphasise how the participants use visual elements, including transparent elements to assess product attractiveness, and that they are more willing to choose products with a transparent element, if they perceive that product as visually attractive, both in form of product design and the physical product.

5.4 Being Flexitarian: To be Healthy and Consume Ethically

As argued by Solomon et al. (2013), consumer behaviour is the study of how owning certain possessions or not can influence one’s self-image and state of being, and further of how consumers feel about themselves as persons, and how they feel about others. This is connected to the evolution of new consumption trends (see section: 2.9.1), including the flexitarian trend, i.e. when consumers choose to follow a diet that is mostly vegetarian but not restricted to it, which is discussed further in the sections below. As presented in the theoretical framework, there are many reasons to why consumers choose to engage in a flexitarian lifestyle, including health reasons, environmental reasons, and the costs of buying meat (Schoon, 2015). In the focus group discussions, the participants touched upon several reasons to why they engage in a flexitarian lifestyle. As argued in the theoretical framework, the participants stated that both health reasons and environmental reasons play a role in their consumption choices. Moreover, the participants touched upon how price affects their consumption choices and shopping habits.

5.4.1 Healthy Lifestyle

This leads to the discussion of hypothesis three: **H3: Flexitarians are more willing to choose a substitute product if the product is perceived as healthier, due to visual elements and product design.** In relation to a healthy lifestyle, one of the participants expressed that it connected being healthy with eating less meat; “(ed. *Being healthy is to) be happy with yourself*

and what you eat; go for healthier choices, not always animal products” (Participant 4). Furthermore, a lot of the participants argued that being healthy was mostly about eating habits, e.g. Participant 10 who focused on moderation; *“Eat in moderation, you don’t have to cut something a 100 percent out of your diet, I believe it’s just a variation, maybe you can cut down on something, but it doesn’t mean you can’t eat it”*, Participant 8 who believed in variation; *“Variation, you need to let yourself eat pizza once in a while”*, and Participant 5 who talked about balance; *“Balanced diet, exercise, good balance of fat, carbs and vegetables”*. These examples from the data collection could also be discussed in relation to identity and narcissism. Belk (1988) argues that consumers interpret their own identity from the states of having, doing, and being, which can have a great impact on why they consume as they do, i.e. the states of having and doing. Furthermore, as argued by Twenge and Campbell (2009), young consumers are particularly preoccupied with their own image and self-expression, thus they are more obsessed with their own health, i.e. the stage of being. As stated above, the participants are generally aware of their own health and makes product choices from it (see Appendix 4).

Some of the visual elements that contribute to the interpretation of healthy products are certifications, herein the Danish Ø-label and the Keyhole label. For instance, Participant 5 stated that; *“It shows a healthier choice, low content of fat and so on”*, Participant 10 stated; *“With Pate, I know that there are cream and stuff in it, so I know upfront that it is not that healthy, but when I look at new products the keyhole can tell me if it is a healthier choice”*, and Participant 2 stated; *“The Ø-label makes me think I get less chemicals”* (see Appendix 2, for a view of the visual elements). Another visual element the participants associated with health, was the colour green. Here, Participant 1 for instance stated; *“Green is healthy”*, and further; *“I think the colour on Hakkedrenge, even though it’s not green, it looks healthier – maybe I’m influenced by the packaging that looks healthy to me”* (the packaging design is green, see Appendix 2 for product). Based on these observations, it can be argued that hypothesis H3 can be confirmed to an extent. The participants focused a lot on health in relation to responsible consumption during the discussions, however they only focused on health in relation to visual elements to an extent, why it is difficult to confirm the hypothesis without reservations. Nonetheless, it is interesting to investigate this observation further, as it can provide relevant and important information to marketers of how to promote the health aspect of substitute products to flexitarians.

5.4.2 Consume Ethically; Considering the Environment

As argued by Schoon (2015), flexitarians also take the environment and how meat consumption effects their surroundings into account when choosing their lifestyle. During the focus group discussions, the participants confirmed this notion by connecting their consumption choices to several relevant topics, such as sustainability, CO₂-reduction, veganism, and food waste. This leads to the discussion of hypothesis four **H4: Flexitarians are more willing to choose a substitute product, based on the perception that it is beneficial for the society at large.**

Firstly, the participants discussed the environmental impacts of consumption in relation to product packaging, e.g. *“Product packaging materials needs to be sustainable”* (Participant 1), *“I have come across real chicken where it says that this used to be a plastic bottle; therefore I bought it, I chose that”* (Participant 9), and;

“I try to think about environmental-friendly packaging, and I am also the type who sorts my trash, but it is hard to be environmental-friendly when there then is a plastic lid (Arla); it's made for us to make it easier, but what is the difference of opening it on the old-fashioned way, I think that is sad” (Participant 11).

Additionally, the participants also explored sustainability in connection with their lifestyle, e.g. *“(ed. Sustainability is) less mass-consumption, clothes; sustainability for me is clothes, not to buy too much, what do you need what can you live without”* (Participant 11), and moreover when choosing which products to buy; *“I think a lot about sustainability when buying groceries, there are of course some things that are very hard to avoid, palm oil for example”* (Participant 11). The examples above, can further be described in connection to narcissism (see section: 2.4.3). Here, the participants highlight behaviour they see as socially acceptable, e.g. Participant 1 who stated that it made a choice of buying chicken based on its reusable packaging material, and Participant 11 who stated that it recycles when responding to how it sees responsible consumption as a practice. The participants focused a great deal on themselves and how they looked in front of their reference group, i.e. *“an actual or imaginary individual or group conceived of having significant relevance upon an individual's evaluations, aspirations, or behaviour”* (Solomon et al., 2013, p. 395), during the discussions. Also, the participants generally stated that they practice responsible consumption, i.e. they engage in the consumption trend

called thrift (2.8.1), e.g. Participant 11 who focused on sustainability in relation to reducing an excessive consumption of clothes, and Participant 9 who wanted to give back to the environment, and hence bought packaging that was recycled.

Secondly, the participants expressed their opinions about CO₂ emissions; *"I choose products from Denmark because of CO₂ of transportation of products from country to country"* (Participant 1), *"Maybe don't use regular milk too much, because of the CO₂ emission from cows"* (Participant 6), and *"I think about it when I take a shower... okay now I should not use too much time, and also in regard to electricity; remember to turn off the lights"* (Participant 10). These extracts from the data collection can be discussed in relation to consumer identity, and what Cherrier (2009) describes as the "Hero Identity", i.e. *"when an individual makes a conscious choice to engage in political or societal processes it wants to be changed, and therefore submits itself to the belief that the person can help change the world through its individual actions"* (Cherrier, 2009, quote from page: 13). When the participants above share their own personal experiences about consciously limiting their CO₂ emissions, choosing to buy products with reused plastic, sorting their garbage, and so forth, while stating that it is society's responsibility to do the same, they engage in this hero identity, and truly believes that they can contribute to changing the climate situation through their individual actions. To strengthen this argument, the participants further stated that it is a societal responsibility to engage in these practices, e.g. Participant 1; *"We are all a part of the solution to climate change"*, and Participant 5 who stated *"I think about choosing food brands that don't use resources faster than the world can keep up; I choose products from brands that don't overfish and that don't exploit the resources"*.

Thirdly, the participants expressed opinions concerning veganism, where Participant 1 for example linked itself and its actions to the collective "we" (Solomon, 2015); *"If you had asked me 6 months ago I would primarily go for vegetarian products, whereas now, I know there will be a time where we all have to be vegans, so why not start early or change your lifestyle early"*. Moreover, Participant 2 and 3 discussed the difficulties of living a completely vegan lifestyle, based on their subjective knowledge of it being inconvenient; *"I don't think I would be vegan; it's too much work"* (Participant 2), and; *"I think about avocado consumption, meat usage; If I should buy a substitute product, I would rather have it be vegan than vegetarian as I would want to go all out to be more sustainable". if the choice is easy to replace, I would choose vegan products"* (Participant 3). Hence, the participants assume that it is difficult to live

a vegan lifestyle and are therefore more apprehensive to switch completely to this, even though they also acknowledge that it is the future of food consumption.

Lastly, the participants discussed food waste and how it impacts the environment. As argued by Cherrier (2006), consuming ethically can be considered a partially conscious choice, e.g. when Participant 2 stated that; *"Products from China is bad for the CO2; So, I choose local products from Denmark"*, the participant still consumes but makes a conscious choice of consuming more ethically from its subjective knowledge of buying locally. Moreover, the participants stated the importance of reducing food waste and producing responsibly; *"Food waste and responsible food production is important"* (Participant 1), *"I think about it in regards to food waste, I look at what I have at home and what I can make out from that and then what I need to make a dish and only buy that then, (ed. instead of) just buying and then throw half of it away"* (Participant 8), and *"I also buy products that are nearly expired for a reduced price because of both the price and for the environment"* (Participant 2). As mentioned above, in connection to the participants discussions concerning product packaging, the participants stated that they engage in the consumption trend of thrift. In this case, the participants both engage in the classic sense of thrift from a micro-level perspective, which is about saving money, e.g. Participant 2 who buys products that are nearly expired for a reduced price; and the modern interpretation of thrift from a macro-level perspective, i.e. *"that prosperity through care and stewardship is a part of a social reform"* (Podkalicka & Potts, 2013, quote from page: 36), e.g. also Participant 2 who consumes locally because of the CO2 emissions imprint of buying overseas.

The practices and levels of engagement, described by the participants above, show how important the self-imagery of this might impact other consumers to change their daily practices, with the notion that they will be included in a society. This will further help them make sense of their own needs for portraying themselves as "heroes", that hence can help saving the society at large.

5.4.3 Price and Thrift

In addition to the discussion concerning thrift and consuming responsibly, thrift can also be discussed from a classic price perspective. As mentioned above, thrift on a micro-level is focused on financial strategies of individual households (Podkalicka & Potts, 2013), and thrift therefore can be seen as *"The careful and wise use of money and other resources"* (Podkalicka

& Potts, 2013, p. 227). Moreover, as the participants were selected from the criteria that they were young consumers living in the Copenhagen area, price were considered to be a relevant factor when they evaluated products. In the focus group discussions, Group 1 and Group 3 both focused on price when discussing their selection criteria for the products (Urbany et al., 1996). For instance, a couple of the participants in the two groups discussed price as a factor in combination with responsible consumption, e.g. *"I will shop ecological products if the price isn't that different; I think it is everyone's responsibility to support the climate"* (Participant 1), *"I also buy products that are nearly expired for a reduced price because of both the price and for the environment"* (Participant 2), *"Real milk is the cheapest to buy, but when you do something good, then there are many benefits of the substitute products, and therefore you might want to give maybe 20 DKK for that"* (Participant 11), and *"I think people go after a product because of this because they have already made a choice to buy ecological, but I am used to not having so much money, so I just go for what is cheap"* (Participant 11). Further, as the revised literature states consumers are more likely to continue their shopping patterns than trying new products, if the switching-costs are too high, which is a discussion topic as well for the participants; *"I am driven by special offers, and meat is usually on sale, which substitute products are not, so I would choose regular meat instead"* (Participant 3), and *"I look at price when shopping and are more likely to choose a substitute product if it is lower price than the regular price"* (Participant 2). For some of the participants, price is the determining factor when buying basic products, e.g. *"I look at different products when shopping, the price is a defining factor. Definitely when it's basic groceries like flour"* (Participant 8), or when buying products that are being used in their diet regularly; *"I don't mind using more money on milk because I don't use it that often, but if it is a product I use multiple times a day, then the price would be a greater factor than good for the environment"*. However, one of the participants also stated that taste is a factor; *"(ed. with) Basic stuff when the taste doesn't matter; price is most important, like a cucumber"* (Participant 10). These observations of price are interesting to consider when introducing substitute products to consumers, as it can be argued that price is a defining factor for the participants' product choices and shopping habits.

5.4.4 Ethical and Unethical Marketing

Besides consumers' ethical choices, the participants moreover discussed ethical and unethical marketing in relation to the specific products they were introduced to, during the focus group

discussions. As stated by Ahmed et al. (2005), product packaging is considered to be as equally a part of a product as the content; hence how the product packaging is designed can affect how the consumers perceive a product or a brand.

Overall, the participants feel cheated by the product design of Alpro Coconut Rice Milk (see Appendix 2), and therefore associate the brand with something unethical; *"It is difficult to see that it is made of rice; I thought it was unhealthy because they kind of hides what it is made of; It makes me think what else they are hiding"*(Participant 1), and *"It's unethical marketing to show a coconut when it is not coconut milk"* (Participants 1, 2, and 3). Also, the participants said in general that they would not choose products where the packaging does not tell the truth about its content; *"If it says something on the packaging that are not true, I would always not pick the product (ed. in relation to where the product is from, and what it says on the packaging (e.g. if the package said Danish chicken, when it was actually chicken from another country but manufactured in Denmark))"* (Participant 1). Additionally, when the participants discussed the Coconut Rice Milk from Alpro, it was not all of them who noticed that the product was made from rice and not coconut, e.g. *"Now I noticed there are 5.3 % coconut milk in it; I hadn't noticed it was made of rice, so I feel a bit fooled, but it probably tastes a lot more of coconut than rice"* (Participant 6), and *"There is a big coconut there, it is misleading"*(Participant 10). It can be argued that they were individually affected by the process of perceptual selection (see section: 2.6.5), which means that their sensory system did not process the stimuli on the product packaging, which gives the information of what it is made of. One explanation for this can be a result of the different sizes of the stimuli presented. Another explanation can be that as the participants are looking at convenience products, they do not spend a lot of time on investigating the problems, as the products are considered low-involvement products, which the revised literature concerning the hierarchy of effects explains (Solomon, 2013). Another participant became aware of the visual elements, or stimuli, when it was brought to its attention; *"It's misleading that it is rice and not coconut; It is not really misleading because they write it on the carton, but maybe there should also be some rice, maybe there is, right there (ed. pointing at the image of rice flakes)"* (Participant 11), hence the participant process the stimuli as it becomes aware of it, which again connects to low-involvement processing of product stimuli (Solomon et al., 2013). Moreover, Participant 6 acknowledged that it was not the first thing that drew the attention on the packaging design, and hence did not find it misleading; *"I noticed it was made from rice, but it wasn't the first thing I noticed, the image and colour were the first*

things I focused on; It can trick us a little; They could have showed it more clearly it is made of rice; I don't think it's misleading". Therefore, it can be argued that the visual elements on product packaging are important in relation to the consumers' trust of a specific product and to their overall product choices, which was also the case with the discussion about brand names (see section: 5.2).

Participant 9 also discussed how it expected the Mushroom Burger from VegIn (see Appendix 2) to be like; *"I feel cheated, they say it is something, it is a mushroom when it is not a mushroom, there are 10% mushroom in this, then it is not a mushroom beef, I am very surprised, it does not give me what it shows or what it should be"*. In this case, the company does not take into consideration, that because it is a closed packaging design, it is more likely that the consumer imagines what the product would be like in its prepared stage from the packaging design (Harekham, 1989), which was also discussed in section: 5.3, about transparent and closed packaging.

Generally, the participants argue that they consume responsibly; including the choice of being Flexitarians, because of societal, environmental, and health-related reasons. Moreover, they agree that product packaging design is vital for determining if the product or the company is ethical or unethical. The images play a determining factor when choosing products, and if the images and the other visual elements does not portray the real intentions of the product, the participants would be more likely to pick competing offers.

5.5 Certifications

5.5.1 Consumption Practices and Certifications

According to Warde (2005), most practices require and involve consumers and consumption. Moreover, Shove and Pantzar (2005) argue that;

"new practices can either be built upon new configurations of already existing elements or be built on new elements in conjunction with already existing elements. It is how constituent elements fit together and the continuous reproduction of it that determines how consumers practice" (Shove & Pantzar, 2005, quote from page: 39).

The practice of consuming ecological products, and further products with new certifications, such as the Vegan label, The Keyhole label, and the Vegetarian label, can be seen as a practice build upon the practice of buying groceries, and the practice of consuming responsibly. As the revised literature states, the Danish consumers are the consumers who buy the highest number of ecological products in the world (Landbrugsavisen.dk), why it is relevant to explore the topic of certifications.

The participants identified several certifications on the products during the focus group discussions, including the Ø-label, the Ecolabel, Økologisk (written text), the Keyhole label, the Vegan label, and the Vegetarian (Heart). The participants were asked about their knowledge concerning the Danish and the Nordic certification, the Ø-label, which 7 of the participants had prior knowledge of, and the Keyhole label, which 4 participants had prior knowledge of. All 7 of the participants who knew the Danish Ø-label, spoke about it in a positive tone; for example, Group 1 all connected the Ø-label with something being better for the environment; *"The Ø-label is good for the environment"* (Participant 3), as being supportive of the local farmers; *"With the Ø-label, I support the local farmer, which is good for the environment and groundwater; it supports the earth/climate"* (Participant 1), and containing less chemicals; *The Ø-label makes me think I get less chemicals"* (Participant 2). Moreover, there were different opinions and focus-points between the participants who knew about the Keyhole label; some of the participants connected it to health, e.g. *"It shows a healthier choice, low content of fat and so on"* (Participant 5), and *"The chicken cold cut package looks healthy and easy to use, and that it has the Keyhole label helps the overall idea of this"* (Participant 4), where some of the participants instead discussed whether or not they found it relevant or connected it to certain types of products, e.g. *"I only think about it if it is products where I do not know, like chicken is healthy, but if it is products like rye bread or buns then some of them have the keyhole and then you know they are a little healthier than the others, but normally I don't think about it"* (Participant 11), and *"I don't connect the keyhole with meat products"* (Participant 1). How the participants connected their previous knowledge concerning both the Ø-label and the Keyhole label, can be explained from existing consumption practices, which the participants have participated in, since the labels became available in Denmark. As stated above, Danes are those who buy the most ecological groceries in the world, hence consuming ecologically is a consumption practice that the participants might be considered to take part in. Therefore, it is central for food product producers to consider if they should produce ecologically, and for marketers if they should

include the Ø-label and also the Keyhole label in their packaging design, as it is both voluntary to produce ecologically (Ministry of Environment & Food of Denmark, 2019; Ministry of Environment & Food of Denmark, 2018) and include the certifications (Ministry of Environment & Food of Denmark, 2019; Ministry of Environment & Food of Denmark, 2018).

5.5.2 Sense of Sight and Sensory Thresholds when Discussing Certifications

As the revised literature states textual elements including certifications serves as informational functions for consumers, which are considered to be important for the consumers' decision-making processes (Venter et al., 2011). When consumers are exploring several products in-store, they are exposed to many stimuli that all are designed to draw attention, including text elements, i.e. sensory marketing (see section: 2.6.1). Further, as it is only a few of these stimuli that actually enters consciousness, it is essential that the product packaging include stimuli that the consumers are receptive to (Solomon et al., 2013). As the sense of sight is the most powerful of all senses, the visual design on product packaging can have a great influence on consumers' product preferences (Hultén et al., 2009). In this thesis, the participants show interest in buying products, mainly because the packaging contain specific certifications, hence visual elements, e.g. Participant 9, who stated that it would consider buying substitute products if it was ecological; *"I have not switched completely to substitute milk, so the certification makes a difference, but I just assume that the substitute products are ecological in the first place"*, and Participant 4 who compared the cold cut products with and without certifications; *"The vegetable pate is the only product that is keyhole labelled when it's counterpart, the normal pate is not; that could make me buy it"*. Furthermore, a few of the participants took this further and argued why they want to buy products that are certified, for example when discussing the Vegan label; *"For me, when I am trying something new, I would think "okay, then it is also vegan" because then I would know it was a better product, and hence a fun alternative"* (Participant 9), and *"When you know it's there it makes a difference, because it gives an insurance for what you buy have nothing to do with chicken (ed. talking about Pipfri)"* (Participant 8). The last two participants thus argue that the Vegan label contribute to the product's hedonic value, i.e. when the consumers experience an emotional connection when interacting with products, which means that they are more willing to buy the products (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982).

The participants also showed that they were influenced by several sensory processes, during their interactions with the products in the focus group discussions. Firstly, Participant 8

showed signs of being influenced by the absolute threshold (see section: 2.6.2.2.1), which describes how low the intensity of a stimulus can be, in order for the consumers to register it in their sensory channels; *“The bigger the certification is, the more the company tries to sell the product based on that certification, like the Keyhole on Minimum, the quality might be worse, but like on Naturli’s products, where the certifications are small, it is like a bonus thing”* (Participant 8). Secondly, a few of the participants showed signs of the differential threshold, i.e. when a consumer’s sensory system detects changes or differences between two separate stimuli (see section: 2.6.2.2.2), e.g. Participant 5 who argued; *“If Naturli’ had the same certifications as Arla’s, it would make it easier to compare”*, Participant 4 who stated; *“The vegetable pate is the only product that is keyhole labelled when it’s counterpart, the normal pate is not; that could make me buy it”* and Participant 10 who argued; *“With Pate, I know that there are cream and stuff in it, so I know upfront that it is not that healthy, but when I look at new products the keyhole can tell me if it is a healthier choice”*. As sensory thresholds, according to the revised literature plays a role when consumers are looking and choosing between products, it is vital for marketers to consider both intensity, size, differences, or changes in original product design, when deciding how to create product packaging, as it can make the difference of the product being bought or not. However, it is not irrelevant which certifications the product packaging is showcasing, which will be discussed below.

5.5.3 Attention and Certifications

As argued in the revised literature, consumers posit a form of defence mechanism that sort the important stimuli from the insignificant, i.e. the process of perceptual selection (Solomon et al., 2013; Mullins, 2016). The process is dependent on different selection factors, including stimulus selection factors (see an in-depth explanation of the different selection factors in sections: 2.6.3.1 and 2.6.3.2). This entails, that the process of perceptual selection is impacted by external factors, such as knowledge, familiarity, or expectations (Mullins, 2016), which is visible in this thesis, as 7 of the participants for instance stated that they know the Danish Ø-label. This further lead to them having certain expectations and associations with the certification; *“The Ø-label is good for the environment”* (Participant 3), and; *“I think more Danish consumers would trust the Ø-label than the Ecolabel, as it has been around longer, and the European certification is still new”* (Participant 4).

Moreover, the revised literature also state that there is a tendency for consumers to pay more attention to stimuli that are novel, repeated, or bright, in contrast to their surroundings (Mullins, 2016). This is relevant to this thesis when discussing certifications, as a few of the participants noticed some of the newer certifications, such as the Vegan label; *"For me, when I am trying something new, I would think "okay, then it is also vegan" because then I would know it was a better product, and hence a fun alternative"* (Participant 9), and the Vegetarian (Heart); *"On the pates, the vegetable pate has the Vegetarian label, I noticed that, and the Keyhole label"*(Participant 2). However, as the revised literature states that while novelty might play a role for consumers when choosing products, it can also have a negative effect on their perception of certifications. For instance as argued by Participant 7; *"Certifications don't play a part for me when they are less known; it is not what I look at first"*, and further by Participant 11; *"All of a sudden there has come certifications for everything, one for without colouring agent, without this and that, you can't always trust them"*.

The revised literature further states that other stimulus selection factors, such as size, colour, and position may also impact the consumers' perceptual selection processes (Solomon et al., 2013). In this thesis, a few of the participants mention how both size and colour play a role when looking at visual elements, including Participant 4 who stated; *"I have more trust in the red Ø-label than the EU-label, it is more eye dropping"*, and Participant 8 who stated; *"The bigger the certification is, the more the company tries to sell the product based on that certification, like the Keyhole on Minimum, the quality might be worse, but like on Naturli's products, where the certifications are small, it is like a bonus thing"*, hence it can be argued that because Participant 4 is familiar with the red Ø-label, the colour specifically makes a difference. Furthermore, Participant 8 argued that the size of the certification can define whether the product is being marketed, based on the trust consumers put in certifications or based on the product and the products' content alone.

Overall, it is interesting to discuss how stimuli and the perceptual process influence consumers, when looking at substitute products and choosing which products they prefer, as it is a relative unexplored research area that can give marketers important information about how they should design their product packaging. In this section, we have limited the discussion to certifications, because the analysis provided a data set concerning certifications that gives great examples of how visual marketing can be interpreted and applied by marketers. Nevertheless, it is challenging to explore how big an influence the perceptual process has in this particular

study, as the individuals' initial response to the products are not explored through the method of eye-tracking. Thus, this point can be explored further in section: 7, concerning further research.

5.6 Group Dynamics

5.6.1 Reference Groups

As argued by Solomon et al. (2013), all consumers belong to a reference group, in which they seek approval from fellow group members through their consumption choices. Further, they argue that consumers want to fit in and hence respond to how their fellow group members act and adjust their behaviour accordingly (Solomon et al., 2013). As the participants for the focus group discussions in this thesis were chosen based on their flexitarian lifestyle, and moreover on the criteria of being young urban consumers situated in the Copenhagen area, it is interesting to discuss how they interacted and thus adjusted their behaviour during the discussions.

All three groups showed signs of being influenced by each other when discussing certain topics. For example, when Group 3 discussed the visual elements on the packaging of the oat milk by Oatly (see Appendix 2), they encouraged each other to use specific terminology to describe the product, e.g. when Participant 9 stated; *"It is kind of hipster..."*, which Participant 8 picked up on and stated; *"...the vibe is kind of a Copenhagen type of drink"*, which Participant 11 also agreed with; *"There is definitely a target group for this product. "No milk, no soy, eh whatever" it is kind of youthful. It is a little "nørrebrox". It is kind of funny, if someone read on the product, they would probably buy it, especially if they thought about buying it; this could convince them. There are more calories in it"*. Furthermore, Group 2 were the only group that focused a great deal on the nutritional value when looking at product design; *"Products containing the amount of fat, proteins and other ingredients on the front of the product makes it easier for me to choose"* (Participant 4), in connection to dietary needs; *"I look a lot on content according to fat, protein, carbs; when you have a primary plant-based diet, you might not get that balance – you need to get protein through different sources such as chickpeas, beans, etc."* (Participant 6), and when placing trust in products; *"I predominantly look at the ingredients; does the content give me trust in the product or not; e.g. the soy drink has few ingredients, that seems trusting to me, whereas if another soy drink had 27 different ingredients, I wouldn't trust it as much"* (Participant 5). And lastly, when Group 1 discussed packaging design they ended

up focusing on the same visual trait, the colour green, e.g. Participant 1; *"Green is healthy"*, when discussing colours in general, and further; *"Pipfri and Hakkedrenge's colour of green portrays more healthiness than the regular chicken filet package"* (Participant 1), Participant 3 when discussing the Veggie Pate from Stryhn's; *The vegetable pate has a green label; it looks like the other products from Stryhns, I know what I get when it looks like the regular pates"*, and Participant 2, who in contrast to Participant 3 were more negative towards Stryhn's Veggie Pate; *"The vegetable one is not green enough, if I saw it in the supermarket, I wouldn't see it as a substitute product"*. It is interesting to discuss if these observations are representative of the individual participants' true opinions, concerning the different topics and products, as it is clear that the participants in the different groups had an influence on each other and affected each other in such a way that they focused on the same stimuli. Furthermore, the individual participant has been impacted by the fellow participants in such a way that it might agree with them in order to fit in. This will be discussed further in the next section about conformity and group dynamics.

5.6.2 Conformity

According to Solomon et al. (2013), consumer behaviour is to an extent influenced by the principle of conformity, i.e. *"when an individual change its beliefs and/or actions based on real or imagined group pressures"* (quote from page: 18). Accordingly, Solomon et al. (2013) further argues that there are many reasons to why people conform to certain actions (see section: 2.5.2). Firstly, they can conform based on susceptibility to interpersonal influence, which for example showed in the discussions when Participant 9 stated; *"I have come across real chicken where it says that this used to be a plastic bottle; therefore I bought it, I chose that"*, and moreover when the participants discussed their preferences for ecological products, e.g. *"With the Ø-label, I support the local farmer, which is good for the environment and ground water; it supports the earth/climate"* (Participant 1), *"If the certifications are big ones, it is more likely to be a factor in my choosing of products"* (Participant 6), and *"If I had to buy products to others, the certifications would be important; but when I only buy products for myself, I wouldn't think as much about it"* (Participant 1). Consequently, the participants want to be admired by their fellow flexitarians, based on their product choices and consumption habits. Moreover, as stated by Participant 1 they want to portray themselves in a certain way to others with their product

choices, which might not be the products they would buy on a regular basis (Solomon et al., 2013).

Secondly, consumers can conform to cultural influences, e.g. when all the participants, despite which group they participated in during the focus group discussions, referred to “hipster vibe” (Participants 1, 6, 9), a “Copenhagen type” (Participant 8), “...anti-establishment” (Participant 7), and being “a little Nørrebro” (Participant 11), when describing Oatly’s Oat Drink and packaging design. These wordings about cultural influences can in broad terms be considered to describe the target group the participants belong to themselves; urban young consumers, they hereby adapt their opinions to match their reference group, but still with a hint of individualism (Solomon et al., 2013).

Lastly, the participants can conform out from the principle of group unanimity, size, and expertise. A way to explain this, is that the flexitarian trend has evolved over time (see section: 2.9.1.2), the “group” of flexitarians has gained more knowledge of the reasons behind joining the lifestyle, hence the participants, which all takes active part in this lifestyle, have become more knowledgeable of the benefits. Thus, it has become harder for them not to create some form of agreement when discussing their choices. Therefore, they portray the flexitarian lifestyle as being positive, ethically correct, and healthy, as can be seen throughout the analysis (see section: 4).

5.6.3 Social Identity and Social Comparison

The theory of social comparison (see section: 2.5.3.1) posits that consumers often compare themselves to likeminded individuals to decode clues of how to act in order to avoid being socially excluded (Solomon et al., 2013). Hence, consumers might not depict their true meanings and beliefs in front of their peers in fear of being socially excluded. In the focus group discussions, it is difficult to determine whether or not the participants expressed their own true opinions from how the other participants answered, or if they expressed themselves based on which statements, they expected would go over well with the others. However, as argued above in the section about reference groups, the participants in all three groups showed signs of agreeing with each other, which might indicate that social comparison played a role in the focus group discussions.

Elliott (2004) argues that; *“identity is a social construction and that the development of individual self-identity is inseparable from the parallel development of collective social identity”* (p. 129). Hence, the individual is interconnected with its social group, or as mentioned above, reference group, and thus acts in conformity with the other members. For this thesis, this notion is important to include, as it questions the individuality of the participants answers during the focus group discussions. It can be argued that because the participants are considered to be a part of the same reference group, they are subjects to conformity and social comparison, i.e. their individual observations and opinions of the products and topics, presented to them during the focus group discussions, might not reflect their true individual opinions but rather opinions they unknowingly or knowingly believes will match their reference groups opinions.

However, as shown above, there are both examples of the participants changing their product preferences, based on how their peers think about them, and examples of them disagreeing and going with their own preferences, why it is difficult to determine whether conformity, referent power, and social comparison plays a role. And if so, how big a role it plays when flexitarians are to determine their product preferences. Consequently: **H5: Flexitarians’ product preferences can change because of group dynamics and the principle of conformity,** cannot conclusively be confirmed or affirmed by this thesis experiment.

6. Conclusion

In this thesis, we intended to investigate what influence visual elements on product packaging have on flexitarians’ preference for substitute products. Throughout the thesis, general tendencies were found that might have an impact on flexitarians’ product preferences. To explore this, the methodology of focus group discussions was conducted on the basis of the revised literature. The findings from the focus group discussions provided us with possible answers to the hypotheses, which were developed throughout the theoretical framework.

Firstly, different product design features were discussed, in order to examine visual attractiveness. Here, a general tendency amongst the participants were found of choosing substitute products, based on how visually attractive they perceived its product design to be. The participants were willing to overlook certain dissatisfactory features including product name, if they found several other design elements attractive.

Secondly, it was found that the participants were more willing to purchase substitute products, if the packaging design included a transparent element as this gave the participants the possibility to assess the product beforehand. Moreover, a general tendency was found of how product designs are developed to use transparent elements and images to make the packaging design more attractive for consumers, who use these visual elements to assess and compare products. This furthermore resulted in the participants making assumptions about the perceived quality and taste of the substitute products, which generally increased the visual attractiveness of the substitute products.

Furthermore, the participants considered other factors in their product selection process, which were incremental for their evaluation and assessment of their product options. The situational factors, which the participants were asked about in the focus group discussions, also had an influence on how they perceived the products. Both the visual appearance of the substitute products and the product placement of the products in-shop were found to have an influence on the participants' choices. It was found that the participants preferred substitute products that both had a visual and communicative similarity to their animal product counterpart, as they found it more convenient to substitute these in their daily practices. Additionally, it was discovered that the participants found it more convenient, and were more likely to purchase substitute products, if they were located next to their animal product counterpart.

Thirdly, a general preference amongst the participants for products which they perceived as being healthy, was discovered. The participants associated several visual elements and product design elements with healthiness including certifications, colours, and messages. The participants especially associated the Danish Ø-label and the Keyhole label with healthy product choices, and showed interest in buying substitute products, if they were certified with these certifications. Moreover, they further associated product design elements, such as packaging material and packaging colour with healthiness. They specifically focused on products with a green packaging colour, as they interpreted this colour with looking more healthy or natural. However, the participants focused a great deal on health in relation to the flexitarian lifestyle, which they mainly associated with following a healthy diet and further with including the practice of consuming responsibly in relation to mass-consumption and sustainable sourcing of resources. Thereby, it was difficult to find a connection between visual elements and product

design and perceived healthiness. Therefore, it could be an interesting point for further exploration of how marketers can promote the health aspect of substitute products to flexitarians, as well as to other consumers.

Fourthly, the participants showed a general interest in choosing substitute products which they perceived as being beneficial for the society at large. Generally, the participants argued that they as flexitarians consume responsibly, and further that they chose this lifestyle out from societal, environmental, and health-related reasons. They see it as a collective responsibility to preserve the environment. Additionally, the participants generally agreed that product packaging design is vital for deciding whether a product or company act unethically or ethically, in their marketing to consumers. Here, images play a determining factor when choosing between substitute products. If the images and other visual elements on the product packaging does not portray the real purposes of the product, the participants would be more likely to pick competing offers, because the information would seem misleading. Overall, the participants generally agreed that it is important that companies and products are ethically correct, and that it has a great influence on the participants' product preferences.

Lastly, in the focus group discussions we discovered a tendency amongst the participants of them altering their behaviour and thus their responses, due to group dynamics. The individual participants notably changed their perspective and attention to specific elements on the different products' packaging throughout the discussions, as one or more of the participants emphasised these specific elements. Moreover, the participants had a tendency to agree with each other during the discussions concerning certain topics, hence it can be argued that the participants were influenced by group dynamics. Because of their shared reference group, of being flexitarians and young urban consumers, we discovered that their statements might not reflect their true individual opinions about the products and topics presented to them. Despite of these observations, it is important to note that we also found disagreements between the participants, during the discussions. Hence, it is difficult to determine how big a role conformity, referent power, and social comparison played amongst the participants and thereby the groups' influence on the individual's product preferences.

Overall, this thesis provided us with relevant insights to how different visual elements and packaging design elements could possibly affect consumers' choices of substitute products. Moreover, the insights provided relevant information to the food industry of how to develop

effective product packaging designs for this new product category, and to attract more buyers in the future. It also provided us with valuable knowledge about the relatively new lifestyle of being flexitarian, and why more Danish consumers choose to engage in this practice. We found, that flexitarians can be considered a relevant target group for substitute products, as they need more information and inspiration on how to substitute animal products in their daily diets.

7. Further Implications

7.1 Managerial and Theoretical Implications

This thesis provided information that could be relevant for producers, distributors, and marketers in the food product industry.

First of all, insights to how product names might be used as a tool for consumers to evaluate substitute products and how they can be integrated into their diets were discovered. However, two points of discussion emerged throughout the thesis discussion. Firstly, the question of why food product companies name substitute products after their animal product counterpart instead of creating new names emerged. Secondly, the question of why food product companies develop substitute products that are similar to their animal product counterpart instead of creating new products emerged. Hence, it could be relevant for the food product industry to investigate these questions further, to see if their substitute product developments could be optimised to fit or attract a broader target group by designing new products or names, which are not similar to their animal product counterparts.

In this thesis, it was discovered that the participants considered substitute products as equally a part of the private necessity product category as their animal counterpart. Hence, they assess the whole product offering in their product decision-making process, including price. Therefore, it could be relevant for the food product industry to take the price aspect into account, as it is a defining factor for flexitarians when considering buying substitute products over their animal counterparts. Thus, the food product industry should keep costs down on the product category, as consumers would be far more willing to purchase substitute products for a lower or the same price as their animal product counterparts, according to this research.

From this thesis, it was furthermore found that if a product was visually attractive, the participants had a perception of a higher product taste. Thus, it would be interesting to include

a post-purchase experiment, to investigate if the perception of visually attractive products being tastier than visually unattractive products is accurate. Hence, it could be relevant to conduct a follow-up interview with the focus group participants to ask about their product perceptions after use.

7.2 Further Research

The methodological framework in this thesis provided insights into consumers' opinions and perceptions of visual elements and product design elements.

However, it was not possible to assess the consumers' initial responses to stimuli and the perceptual process as a whole. Hence, it could be interesting to investigate this problem with the methodology of eye-tracking. Although an eye-tracking experiment would be relevant to gain information about the consumers' initial responses to stimuli and the perceptual process as a whole, it would not be able to gain insight into the consumers' attitudes towards product choices and interpretation of stimuli, during a shopping experience. Thus, it would be relevant to combine an eye-tracking experiment with in-depth interviews, as this would give researchers the opportunity to gain conclusive evidence into consumers product preferences.

Additionally, it could be interesting to conduct a deeper study concerning consumers' shopping habits of substitute products. This thesis only aimed at investigating consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards substitute products, including how these products should be placed in convenience stores for their accessibility. Consequently, it could be interesting to conduct ethnographic research in form of an in-store shopping experiment to monitor consumers' shopping habits. Further, it would be relevant to combine the in-store experiment with semi-structured interviews during their shopping trip, to observe any dissonance between the consumers' actions and their attitudes and thoughts.

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Appendix 1

Interview Guide

introduktion

Hej og velkommen.

Den følgende fokusgruppediskussion, kommer til at foregå således:

- I bliver præsenteret for en produktkategori og ét produkt ad gangen, hvortil i bliver stillet nogle basisspørgsmål, der skal besvares før en diskussion, kan tage sted.
- Diskussionen må gerne være flydende, hvortil i markerer med en løftet hånd hvis i har noget at tilføje.

Produktkategorier:

Mælkeprodukter og Substitutter:

- Naturli' Soyadrik
- Oatly Havredrik
- Alpro Coconut Risdrik
- Naturli' Mandeldrik
- Arla Minimælk Økologisk

Kyllingeprodukter og Substitutter:

- Naturli' Pipfri
- Slagterens Kyllingeinderfilet

Kødprodukter og Substitutter:

- Slagterens Hakkebøffer
- Naturli' Hakkedrenge
- VegIn Vegansk Champignonburger

Pålægsprodukter og Substitutter:

- Naturli' A La Bresaola
- Minimum Roastbeef
- Den Grønne Slagter Veggie Pålæg
- Minimum Kyllingepålæg
- Stryhn's Leverpostej
- Stryhn's Grøntsagspostej

Appendix 2

Product Categories

Milk Products

Naturli' Soy Drink



Oatly Oat Drink



Alpro Coconut Rice Drink



Naturli' Almond Drink



Arla Mini milk Ecological



Chicken Products

Naturli' Pipfri



Slagterens Chicken Filets



Meat Products

Slagterens Burgers



Naturli' Hakkedrenge



Vegin Vegan Mushroom Burger



Cold Cuts

Naturli' A La Bresaola



Den Grønne Slagter Veggie Cold Cuts



Stryhn's Veggie Pate



Minimum Roastbeef



Minimum Chicken Cold Cuts



Stryhn's Pate



Appendix 3

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Visual elements on food substitute products, do they have an influence?

Name of Students: Katrine Kromann Hellesen & Marianne Kromann Hellesen

Contact Information: Kahe14af@student.cbs.dk & Mahe14ap@student.cbs.dk

I agree that I voluntary take part in the above study.

I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.

I agree that the interview may be audio recorded.

I agree that the interview may be videotaped.

I agree that any quotes used in the research paper from this interview
will be anonymous.

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
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Name of Researcher	Date	Signature
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Appendix 4

Excerpts from Analysis

Transparent or Closed Packaging

- *"I wouldn't choose closed packaging, as I would be in doubt of its freshness"* (Participant 1)
- *"I wouldn't buy closed packaging products; I would like to see the product"* (Participant 3)
- *"When it's a substitute product, it is important for me to see it"* (Participant 4)
- *"I think, when you are transitioning to a flexitarian diet, it is easier to choose a product like Hakkedrenge over VegIn, because you can see it; you can see what it is used for"* (Participant 7)
- *"If it (ed. Pipfri) looks like the product I usually buy, I would rather buy it"* (Participant 3)
- *"If it (ed. Pipfri) looks like the product I usually buy, I won't like it"* (Participant 2)
- *"(ed. Naturli' Pipfri) At first I think this looks more appealing than the real chicken, but real chicken just isn't especially nice to look at; you just buy it because you know what it is, or at least that is what I do. It is not so far from looking like chicken"* (Participant 8)
- *"Seeing the products does it all for me, I turn the product to see how much fat there is in it, I want to choose myself what my meat looks like, it means everything to me"* (Participant 8)
- *"(ed. VegIn) I would never buy this, because I can't see what there is inside; I think it's really unpleasant"* (Participant 8)
- *"(ed. Naturli') I like it; I could see myself buying it, because it looks like chicken that has been fried, therefore I think it looks very appealing; it looks like chicken and it makes it easier for me to choose"* (Participant 9)
- *"ed. Naturli' Pipfri) I don't think it looks that tempting. I think it looks like mud that you have just formed into some clumps. It doesn't really look like chicken; it has a weird shape"* (Participant 10)
- *"I don't think I would buy a product if it was completely covered, I would like to see it"* (Participant 10)
- *"(ed. VegIn) It's annoying that I can't see what's inside"* (Participant 10)

- “(ed. Stryhn’s Veggie Pate) You can see that it is kind of orange, so maybe it tastes like carrots or beets” (Participant 11)
- “(ed. Minimum cold cuts) Despite the fluids I think it looks kind of good, I like the thickness on the slice” (Participant 11)

Images

- “I know images are taken by photographers, so I usually don’t trust images (ed. on products)” (Participant 1)
- “The image makes me want to try the product; the image helps me because I can see how I can use it (ed. Pipfri); I don’t have to think about what the product can be used for” (Participant 1)
- “The image makes it easier to see the product in its finished form” (Participant 3)
- “I would rather like an image (ed. on the packaging) as it looks better than a drawing, e.g. the one on Hakkedrenge” (Participant 3)
- “Their (ed. Naturli’s) illustrations work quite nicely on all their products” (Participant 4)
- The image (ed. on VegIn) looks appetising, with champignons; you don’t have that classic image of the hamburger; it is more in focus that it is made of mushrooms. The image is more important on this packaging as we can’t see it, so the image is what makes us expect what we can get from it” (Participant 5)
- “If the image wasn’t there (ed. On VegIn), I would have no idea what it would look like” (Participant 6)
- “(ed. VegIn) The image is a bit boring” (Participant 6)
- “(ed. Naturli’ Pipfri) The image shows a delicious looking dish that you can get on a restaurant” (Participant 6)
- “(ed. Naturli cold cuts) The images don’t completely show the truth; there is a mismatch that makes it seem like a McDonalds product, where they don’t look like their images” (Participant 6)
- “I notice that their (ed. Naturli’s) illustrations directly show that you skip one step; that you go directly from the plants to the product and skips the animal part; it’s appealing” (Participant 7)
- “(ed. Oatly oat milk) The vibe is kind of a “Copenhagen drink” (Participant 8)

- *“(ed. VegIn) You know it’s worse what is in it than on the picture” (Participant 8)*
- *“(ed. Naturli’ Hakkedrenge) You get to see the process, in Hakkedrenge; you go directly from the plants to you get a burger, you get a better conscience when buying this” (Participant 8)*
- *“(ed. Oatly) It is kind of hipster. Fat percentage is something that plays a role when buying products, it makes a difference that they say it on the carton” (Participant 9)*
- *“(ed. VegIn Mushroom Burger) The picture looks a little fake, like you know it doesn’t look like this, but even though it looks fake, I still think that it looks delicious; I just don’t think it look like this, also because the mushrooms don’t look real” (Participant 9)*
- *“(ed. Hakkedrenge) The picture makes me not want to buy it; why would I do that” (Participant 9)*
- *“I trust the product (ed. Stryhn’s Veggie Pate); I know Stryhn’s and then there are all of these logos and images, which makes it quite good (the Keyhole Label) I know it is a different kind of product than (ed. the regular) pate, but I know it will still be good, and I won’t be surprised over the taste” (Participant 9)*
- *“(ed. Naturli’) All the small figures and CO2 explanation, I like it” (Participant 10)*
- *“(ed. VegIn) The image looks fake; the mushrooms just look like something you wouldn’t buy today, like really delicious mushrooms” (Participant 10)*
- *“(ed. Stryhn’s Veggie Pate) I kind of like it, with the pate you know what is in it, but with this you don’t know, but then there are the vegetables so you don’t need to read what is in it you can just look on the packaging” (Participant 10)*
- *“(ed. Naturli’ A La Bresaola) I like that they give some inspiration, with the product on rye bread, it does not look as fake as the one from Den Grønne Slagter, if I saw the product on distance I would think that I would like to take a closer look, because of the image on the front” (Participant 10)*
- *“(ed. Naturli’) I like the images they are using; they make me happy. It is easy to understand that you are doing something good” (Participant 11)*
- *“(ed. Alpro) It’s coconut, it’s delicious. I know Alpro, so this is the factor giving it the last push, just the front side; if I just saw it like that without seeing the sides, I would think that that looks delicious. I want it” (Participant 11)*

- “(ed. VegIn) That image or flower looks like something on a lady shaver, it looks like a flower” (Participant 11)
- “(ed. Naturli’ A La Bresaola) They use images in a good way, there are not too many, it’s simple” (Participant 11)
- “It (ed. VegIn) looks exciting because it says mushroom on the packaging, so I know it’s made of mushrooms” (Participant 2)
- “(ed. Slagterens Chicken Filets) It would be nice with some pictures to show what the product could be used for, like on Pipfri” (Participant 4)
- “(ed. Alpro) The packaging design looks fresh with the coconut; it looks like it’s from a warm place” (Participant 6)
- “(ed. Naturli’) Nice packaging illustrations with a happy little earth and a small tree” (Participant 7)

Text Elements

Brand Name

- “Stryhn’s is best in test” (Participant 3)
- “Stryhn’s is associated with high quality” (Participant 1)
- “Den Grønne Slagter (ed. Brand) makes me think it’s a better product than others” (Participant 6)
- “(ed. Den Grønne Slagter) You know the brand and you want to buy it” (Participant 4)
- “(ed. VegIn) I think it would make a difference if it was Naturli’, like if it was Naturli’, I would like to try it if it was on sale” (Participant 10)

Product Name

- “It’s charming (ed. Pipfri)” (Participant 2 + 3)
- “The name (ed. Hakkedrenge) makes me associate it with the regular dish” (Participant 3)
- “The product name makes it almost an apology from Naturli’ that it isn’t a meat product, I don’t like the brand name it’s not that appealing...It’s trying to be something it isn’t” (Participant 7)
- “(ed. Naturli’ A La Bresaola) I’m kind of ambivalent with them using names, you know from something else, for example if it didn’t say Bresaola then I wouldn’t know what I

should use it for, but at the same time it creates an expectation for that it should taste similar as the meat product and therefore you might get disappointed; so maybe they should just have gone in a completely different direction, I think it's a little difficult" (Participant 8)

- *"Personally, I struggle with the Pipfri name, because it reminds me of chicken; Pipfri, I don't want to eat "pip", so maybe it is a good thing, because maybe I would buy it then"* (Participant 9)
- *"(ed. Naturli') The names are more saying, I need to see what it is, I think it gives you a good insight in what you can replace them with"* (Participant 10)
- *"It's a very funny name, they have played on the words instead of calling it chicken, or I don't know, but it is not at all chicken so... I am a little ambivalent with it, it is the same when they say chili con carne but without the carne; call it something else"* (Participant 11)
- *"I really like the name; Naturli' in general has some really cute names for their products, "A la Bresaola" it is something a la this product but it still isn't; it is the same with the chicken (Pipfri), I like that, they have made kind of fun of it or not fun, but they play on the idea that it is a substitute product, Naturli' needs to find something else, because people don't know what the products are"* (Participant 11)
- *If I should make a vegan or vegetarian substitute, I don't want a product that is called Hakkedrenge (or Hakket), because it makes it seem something it isn't; Pipfri is a better name because it portrays that it is without chicken, it's a substitute (Participant 5)*

Messages

- *"(ed. Oatly) The text, makes me think Hipster"* (Participant 1)
- *"(ed. Naturli') Really clear messages, e.g. please help us recycle the package...the messages are more tasteful"* (Participant 3)
- *"(ed. Oatly) The text elements are really in your face; on one page it says, "you are one of us now", it's too much"* (Participant 3)
- *"(ed. Oatly) It's (ed. the text elements) promoting a lifestyle; Hipster"* (Participant 1)
- *"It annoys me that it says, "A slice with plants" (ed. Naturli' A la Bresaola), it's more fake"* (Participant 5)

- “(ed. Oatly) *“the boring side” they use slang. It’s funny they include fat percentage; normally when you look at for example soymilk, you don’t think really think about that (ed. fat percentage) because it is nuts it is fatter*” (Participant 10)
- “(ed. Naturli’ substitute milk products) *They are trying to tell you that you are doing something good for the planet on the carton*” (Participant 11)
- “(ed. Stryhn’s Veggie Pate) *“new and improved taste”, think the oversell the product a little bit maybe*” (Participant 11)
- “(ed. Naturli’ substitute milk products) *I like the small catchphrases, “more nature because we love plants” I want that, I want to support that. There is just the right amount of text*” (Participant 9)
- “(ed. Naturli’ Hakkedrenge) *I know what the product should be used for, 100 percent plant based; it looks good*” (Participant 9)
- “(ed. Naturli’ A La Bresaola: *“a slice with plants” it is so simple; I want a slice of plants with some pesto, you know more what you can use the products for, here it would help me in relation to what I should use the product for, it is kind of a guide, it gives me an idea*” (Participant 9)
- “(ed. Oatly) *There is definitely a target group for this product. “No milk, no soy, eh whatever” it is kind of youthful. It is a little “Nørrebrox”. It is kind of funny, if someone read on the product, they would probably buy it, especially if they thought about buying it; this could convince them. There are more calories in it*” (Participant 11)
- “(ed. Naturli’ Soy Drink) *It’s a more Danish way to advertise; the soy drink*” (Participant 4)
- “(ed. Oatly) *The front looks nice, but when you turn it around there are a lot of writing, some slogans, both sides are very textual; I wouldn’t go for it in the supermarket because of too much writing*” (Participant 4)
- “(ed. Slagterens Chicken Filets) *On the packaging it says, “suitable for wok dishes” – I only noticed that now*” (Participant 6)
- “(ed. Oatly Oat Milk) *Is it just me, or did they go for the young Østerbro segment with low calories, a little hipster; it would be a typical thing on a café. It says on the sides: “It’s hip, young, and cool” and “you are one of us know”. The marketing could make me want to buy it because of the young, cool, hip thing*” (Participant 6)

- *“(ed. Oatly) It’s really segmented to that young social media thing, anti-establishment”*
(Participant 7)

Brand logo

- *“(ed. VegIn) I think their logo looks like something on lady shaver, or something like Venus”* (Participant 8)

Ingredient lists

- *“(ed. Den Grønne Slagter) I could probably buy it, because it says with bell peppers, so I get an explanation of what the lumps in the product is; bell peppers are delicious so it must good, but if it does not say that it was with bell peppers then I would think that it is sick that product. I know what is in it”* (Participant 8)
- *“I look at the ingredients lists; I look after protein levels because I know that if you don’t get enough protein in your diet you can be iron deficient, which I have had some issues with, in the past”* (Participant 1)
- *“I look after protein levels as it is healthy and keeps you full longer”* (Participant 2)
- *“I look at ingredients when choosing a product; I go after proteins in my diet”* (Participant 3)
- *“Products containing the amount of fat, proteins and other ingredients on the front of the product makes it easier for me to choose”* (Participant 4)
- *“I predominantly look at the ingredients; does the content give me trust in the product or not; e.g. the soy drink has few ingredients, that seems trusting to me, whereas if another soy drink had 27 different ingredients, I wouldn’t trust it as much”* (Participant 5)
- *“I look at a lot of content according to fat, protein, carbs; when you have a primary plant-based diet, you might not get that balance; you need to get protein through different sources such as chickpeas, beans, etc.”* (Participant 6)
- *“(ed. Arla) I noticed it on the side said that they had reduced CO2 emission by 35% since 2014 by introducing the new carton; this is something you could use as an argument for buying the product”* (Participant 6)
- *“(ed. VegIn) Flour, then it is not a mushroom, what is it? It is not a mushroom ham-burger”* (Participant 9)

- *“(ed. VegIn) I know what is in it, it’s not that bad; there are 10% mushroom in it”*
(Participant 11)

Certifications

Ø-label

- *“With the Ø-label, I support the local farmer, which is good for the environment and groundwater; it supports the earth/climate”* (Participant 1)
- *“The Ø-label is good for the environment”* (Participant 3)
- *The Ø-label makes me think I get less chemicals”* (Participant 2)
- *“I have more trust in the red Ø-label than the EU-label, it is more eye dropping”* (Participant 4)
- *“I think more Danish consumers would trust the Ø-label than the Ecolabel, as it has been around longer, and the European certification is still new”* (Participant 4)
- *“I just like the how the Ø-label looks, I do not really know why. I think it looks good”*
(Participant 9)
- *“The Ø-label makes a difference a bit. I’m used to look after the label, but I also like when it says eco. I like when I open my fridge and see eco-brands”* (Participant 9)
- *“It is obvious that they put an emphasis on this (ed. Arla)”* (Participant 11)
- *“I think people go after a product because of this because they have already made a choice to buy ecological, but I am used to not having so much money, so I just go for what is cheap”* (Participant 11)
- *“The only certification it has is the Vegan label; it might not be as “green” as the soya milk that are both ecological and made in Europe”* (Participant 4)

The Ecolabel

- *“I know it (ed. The Ecolabel), but I trust the Danish Ø-label more”* (Participant 4)

Økologisk (written text)

- *I think you can count on products being ecological when it says so”* (Participant 8)
- *“I have not switched completely to substitute milk, so the certification makes a difference, but I just assume that the substitute products are ecological in the first place”*
(Participant 9)

- *"You can count on the products being ecological when it says so"* (Participant 11)

The Keyhole Label

- *"I don't connect the keyhole with meat products"* (Participant 1)
- *"The chicken cold cut package looks healthy and easy to use, and that it has the Keyhole label helps the overall idea of this"* (Participant 4)
- *"The vegetable pate is the only product that is keyhole labelled when it's counterpart, the normal pate is not; that could make me buy it"* (Participant 4)
- *"It shows a healthier choice, low content of fat and so on"* (Participant 5)
- *"It makes it easier for e.g. busy families to make the right choices"* (Participant 5)
- *"With Pate, I know that there are cream and stuff in it, so I know upfront that it is not that healthy, but when I look at new products the keyhole can tell me if it is a healthier choice"* (Participant 10)
- *"I only think about it if it is products where I do not know, like chicken is healthy, but if it is products like rye bread or buns then some of them have the keyhole and then you know they are a little healthier than the others, but normally I don't think about it"* (Participant 11)

Vegansk

- *"When you know it's there it makes a difference, because it gives an insurance for what you buy have nothing to do with chicken (ed. talking about Pipfri)"* (Participant 8)
- *"For me, if I had seen the certification first it would do that I would not read on the back of the product, which would be a little stupid because you do not know what is in it, just that it is not meat"* (Participant 8)
- *"For me, when I am trying something new, I would think "okay, then it is also vegan" because then I would know it was a better product, and hence a fun alternative"* (Participant 9)
- *"You take an active choice, that okay I do not want to buy meat today, so it is good it is there, however if you are not vegan I do not think you look at it in other aspects than it is nice with a confirmation that it is there"* (Participant 11)

Vegetarian (Heart)

- *“On the pates, the Veggie Pate has the Vegetarian label (heart) I noticed that, and the Keyhole Label”* (Participant 2)

In general

- *“If I had to buy products to others, the certifications would be important; but when I only buy products for myself, I wouldn't think as much about it”* (Participant 1)
- *“If Naturli' had the same certifications as Arla's, it would make it easier to compare”* (Participant 5)
- *“I trust products more if they are certified”* (Participant 5)
- *“If the certifications are big ones, it is more likely to be a factor in my choosing of products”* (Participants 6)
- *“Certifications don't play a part for me when they are less known; it is not what I look at first”* (Participant 7)
- *“The bigger the certification is, the more the company tries to sell the product based on that certification, like the Keyhole on Minimum, the quality might be worse, but like on Naturli's products, where the certifications are small, it is like a bonus thing”* (Participant 8)
- *“All of a sudden there has come certifications for everything, one for without colouring agent, without this and that, you can't always trust them”* (Participant 11)
- *“(ed. Naturli' A La Bresaola) The certifications and such doesn't mean that much because I know the brand and I just expect more from them”* (Participant 10)

Ethical Consumption

- *“It's unethical marketing to show a coconut when it is not coconut milk”* (Participants 1, 2, and 3)
- *“(ed. Alpro) It is difficult to see that it is made of rice; I thought it was unhealthy because they kind of hides what it is made of; It makes me think what else they are hiding”* (Participant 1)
- *“If it says something on the packaging that are not true, I would always not pick the product (in relation to where the product is from, and what it says on the packaging*

(e.g. if the package said Danish chicken, when it was actually chicken from another country but manufactured in Denmark)” (Participant 1)

- *“(ed. Alpro) I noticed it was made from rice, but it wasn’t the first thing I noticed, the image and colour were the first things I focused on; It can trick us a little; They could have showed it more clearly it is made of rice; I don’t think it’s misleading” (Participant 6)*
- *“(ed. Alpro) Now I noticed there are 5.3 % coconut milk in it; I hadn’t noticed it was made of rice, so I feel a bit fooled, but it probably tastes a lot more of coconut than rice” (Participant 6)*
- *“(ed. Arla) I noticed it on the side said that they had reduced CO2 emission by 35% since 2014 by introducing the new carton; this is something you could use as an argument for buying the product” (Participant 6)*
- *“(ed. VegIn Mushroom Burger) I feel cheated, they say it is something, it is a mushroom when it is not a mushroom, there are 10% mushroom in this, then it is not a mushroom beef, I am very surprised, it does not give me what it shows or what it should be” (Participant 9)*
- *“(ed. Alpro) There is a big coconut there, it is misleading” (Participant 10)*
- *“(ed. Alpro) It’s misguiding that it is rice and not coconut; It is not really misleading because they write it on the carton, but maybe there should also be some rice, maybe there is, right there (ed. pointing at the image of rice flakes)” (Participant 11)*

Subcategories to Ethical Consumption

Healthy Lifestyle

- *“(ed. Being healthy is to) be happy with yourself and what you eat; go for healthier choices, not always animal products” (Participant 4)*
- *“I stay away from vegetables with pesticides; choose ecological products” (Participant 4)*
- *“Balanced diet, exercise, good balance of fat, carbs and vegetables” (Participant 5)*
- *“Keep away from additives” (Participant 5)*
- *“Choose ecological products” (Participant 5)*
- *Lots of exercise, healthy diet, less carbs, more protein and vegetables (Participant 6)*

- *“(ed. Psychological wellbeing) being happy with your life, work, and friends”* (Participant 6)
- *“Variation, you need to let yourself eat pizza once in a while”* (Participant 8)
- *“Vegetables and a lot of water, and you know not too much butter; It’s really about eating habits for me”* (Participant 9)
- *“But a healthy lifestyle can also be to look after yourself in the sense that you don’t do too much stuff, for example stress and so on, that is also a healthy lifestyle for me”* (Participant 9)
- *“Eat in moderation, you don’t have to cut something a 100 percent out of your diet, I believe it’s just a variation, maybe you can cut down on something, but it doesn’t mean you can’t eat it”* (Participant 10)

Sustainable Lifestyle

- *“Product packaging materials needs to be sustainable”* (Participant 1)
- *“I choose products from Denmark because of CO2 of transportation of products from country to country”* (Participant 1)
- *“Food waste and responsible food production is important”* (Participant 1)
- *“We are all a part of the solution to climate change”* (Participant 1)
- *“If you had asked me 6 months ago... I would primarily go for vegetarian products, whereas now, I know there will be a time where we all have to be vegans, so why not start early, or change your lifestyle early”* (Participant 1)
- *“I keep away from processed foods”* (Participant 2)
- *“Products from China is bad for the CO2; So, I choose local products from Denmark”* (Participant 2)
- *“I also buy products that are nearly expired for a reduced price because of both the price and for the environment”* (Participant 2)
- *“I don’t think I would be vegan; it’s too much work”* (Participant 2)
- *“I think about avocado consumption, meat usage; If I should buy a substitute product, I would rather have it be vegan than vegetarian as I would want to go all out to be more sustainable”* (Participant 3)

- *"I choose local products to reduce CO2 emission; Danish products produce less CO2 in relation to transportation"* (Participant 4)
- *"I think about choosing food brands that don't use resources faster than the world can keep up; I choose products from brands that don't overfish and that don't exploit the resources"* (Participant 5)
- *"Maybe don't use regular milk too much, because of the CO2 emission from cows"* (Participant 6)
- *"I think about it in regards to food waste, I look at what I have at home and what I can make out from that and then what I need to make a dish and only buy that then, (ed. instead of) just buying and then throw half of it away"* (Participant 8)
- *"I think about it because I have more knowledge; before I thought that when I buy ecological then I'm good, but now I am aware of that we should not drink milk from cows because it is better for the world"* (Participant 9)
- *"I have come across real chicken where it says that this used to be a plastic bottle; therefore I bought it, I chose that"* (Participant 9)
- *"I buy Danish products when it is conventional ones, like cucumbers; if there is a Danish one, it's better than a Spanish one"* (Participant 9)
- *"I primarily buy ecological products"* (Participant 9)
- *"I think about it when I take a shower... okay now I should not use too much time, and also in regard to electricity; remember to turn off the lights"* (Participant 10)
- *"I try to think about environmental-friendly packaging, and I am also the type who sorts my trash, but it is hard to be environmental-friendly when there then is a plastic lid (Arla); it's made for us to make it easier, but what is the difference of opening it on the old-fashioned way, I think that is sad"* (Participant 11)
- *"(ed. Sustainability is) less mass-consumption, clothes; sustainability for me is clothes, not to buy too much, what do you need what can you live without"* (Participant 11)
- *I think a lot about sustainability when buying groceries, there are of course some things that are very hard to avoid, palm oil for example"* (Participant 11)

- *“Generally, food packaging is on everything, and I just think it would be difficult to go down with your own bag and get some chicken, but I like the thought of it”* (Participant 11)
- *“I sort my trash, but I have to go down with my trash (carton) once a week because there is so much”* (Participant 11)

Healthy products/Product attractiveness

- *“I look at fat content, and therefore substitute meat products was an easy thing for me to substitute to as it has less fat; My food can contain fat, but I prefer lower volumes”* (Participant 1)
- *The protein is also important, that Hakkedrenge has the same amount of protein as the regular hamburgers/beef, makes it a real substitute option for me”* (Participant 1)
- *“I think the colour on Hakkedrenge, even though it's not green, it looks healthier; maybe I'm influenced by the packaging that looks healthy to me”* (Participant 1)
- *“I think it (ed. Naturli', Pipfri) would look nice if you fried it on the pan; it would look like real chicken”* (Participant 4)
- *The burgers (ed. Naturli', Hakkedrenge) look kind of processed, they don't look as appetizing as the regular hamburgers”* (Participant 4)
- *“Normal Pate has a lot of fat pr. 100 gram, where the vegetable pate has significantly less, it looks great, it looks healthier”* (Participant 4)
- *“Green symbolises something more natural for me”* (Participant 5)
- *“(ed. The regular hamburgers) The packaging is spacy, and it looks nice, the products look as they are of a higher quality; they are thicker, and shaped better”* (Participant 5)
- *“(ed. Naturli' Hakkedrenge) The packaging makes me doubt how many burgers there are in the package”* (Participant 5)
- *“I only look at the front when buying products; I think it is too overwhelming that I should relate to three more sides of a product, there is so much information that it makes you crazy”* (Participant 8)
- *“(ed. Den Grønne Slagter and Minimum cold cuts) I don't know why but I think Minimum's Chicken cold cut looks healthier, there are way less ingredients in this product, that feels like the (ed. Den Grønne Slagter's) Veggie tries too hard”* (Participant 9)

- *"If It's a special product, I look at the back. Not like soya milk where you know it is made of soy"* (Participant 10)
- *"It looks healthier (ed. About VegIn), like there is no unhealthy additives in it"* (Participant 10)
- *"(ed. Den Grønne Slagter Veggie Cold Cut) I do not like the clumps in this product, it looks pale, maybe it is on purpose"* (Participant 10)
- *"If it's a product I know or have heard of, I don't look at the back, however if something looks interesting, I look at the back or other sides"* (Participant 11)
- *"I think the product from minimum looks healthier, I don't know why; veggie (ed. Den Grønne Slagter, Veggie cold cuts) tries too hard, it is not vegan, there is protein from eggs in it, so it is only vegetarian"* (Participant 11)
- *"With VegIn it might not look as appealing when I make it at home; I think it would be a bit grey and not shaped as nicely as on the image"* (Participant 4)

Shopping Habits

Weekly shopping days

- *"Shops 2-3 times a week, max 20 minutes"* (Participant 1)
- *"Shops 2-3 times a week, max 20-30 minutes, 1 big and small ones when needing something"* (Participant 2)
- *"Shops 5 times a week, max 10-15 minutes"* (Participant 3)
- *"It takes time for me to shop usually"* (Participant 5)
- *"It is very different for me, sometimes I do not have a plan; and then it takes time"* (Participant 6)
- *"I use about half an hour"* (Participant 8)
- *"About 45 minutes, often because I do not really know what to get, so then I have to start by finding the discounts where I am"* (Participant 9)
- *"One time a week, I use about 2 hours"* (Participant 10)
- *I love to shop, so when I have the energy, I spend more time, but in average about 25-30 min., if it's Føtex or something* (Participant 11)

Planning

- *“(ed. I) try to do one big shopping trip and then shop when I need something”* (Participant 1)
- *“I write lists sometimes”* (Participant 2)
- *“Routine shopping, I do not write lists”* (Participant 3)
- *“Either I shop relatively fast in Netto or Lidl, mostly at weekdays and otherwise I spend more time in the weekends and try to look at more products and maybe try something new”* (Participant 4)
- *“I am usually good at planning my shopping trips and I usually make a list”* (Participant 5)
- *“I go to different shops depending on where the discounts are”* (Participant 10)
- *“It’s very different; it depends on how much energy I have. When it is something I am not used to, it usually takes more planning”* (Participant 11)

Choosing Products

- *“I want to try new things, but I want to look at them first”* (Participant 1)
- *“I look at more products at a time”* (Participant 2)
- *“My convenience depends on whether I have to shop for myself or for other people; if it is for other people I would go to different supermarkets to find the right product, if it is for myself I would choose something else or not buy the product at all, if the store I was in didn’t have it”* (Participant 2)
- *“I can go to different supermarkets if I want to buy something in particular or if they have a better offer another place; so not convenient for me”* (Participant 3)
- *“Usually there is a display that catches my eye and inspires me to try new things, and then I differ from my list”* (Participant 5)
- *“With products it doesn’t take too long for me to make a decision, it is usually the same items, not so many different items”* (Participant 6)
- *“I usually buy the same products I have always used, but sometimes I like a bigger selection so I can really look at the products to see which one I want”* (Participant 7)
- *“I look at several different products when shopping. There are some products where I know that I like a certain one because of taste”* (Participant 8)
- *“I like to try new things, so I like to look at the different products”* (Participant 9)

- *“When I am trying new products, I always look at the back on the ingredients. It is not something I have done before in my life; it is just now when I have gained a greater knowledge about products and the ingredients”* (Participant 11)

Substitution

- *“If I have to substitute a product, it has to make it easier for me; I have some recipes I go for, so substitute products that looks like the real product makes it easy”* (Participant 1)
- *“I think the vegetable pate is easy to use as a substitute to pate (Participant 1)*
- *“It is easier to choose a vegetable pate over a regular pate because it is like some other products already made, like vegetable meatballs”* (Participant 3)
- *“Naturli’ makes it easy to surrender to their products, they make it as something you know, so it is easier to relate to, in comparison to Den Grønne Slagter, you do not really know what it is”* (Participant 8)
- *“I want to say that it does not mean anything that it looks like real products, but I think it does”* (Participant 9)
- *“For me, it doesn’t necessarily need to look like real products, but unconsciously it maybe does something; I would at any time choose Naturli’s products because it looks like something else than Den Grønne Slagter, which doesn’t look like something I know”* (Participant 11)
- *“Hakkedrenge would not make me miss regular hamburgers; usually when I think vegan, I think Halloumi or other than a substitute to beef”* (Participant 4)
- *(ed. Naturli’ Hakkedrenge versus Slagterens burgers and VegIn Mushroom Burger) I think the names are good; it makes it easier to substitute beef”* (Participant 4)
- *“With Hakkedrenge it seems more like real beef, and that’s the point, to find something recognisable”* (Participant 6)
- *“I think it’s important to recognise substitute products in regular products, because it would be easier to substitute”* (Participant 6)

Price

- *"I will shop ecological products if the price isn't that different; I think it is everyone's responsibility to support the climate"* (Participant 1)
- *"I look at price when shopping and are more likely to choose a substitute product if it is lower price than the regular price"* (Participant 2)
- *"I am driven by special offers, and meat is usually on sale, which substitute products are not, so I would choose regular meat instead"* (Participant 3)
- *"I look at different products when shopping, the price is a defining factor. Definitely when it's basic groceries like flour"* (Participant 8)
- *"I don't mind using more money on milk because I don't use it that often, but if it is a product I use multiple times a day, then the price would be a greater factor than good for the environment"* (Participant 8)
- *"(ed. with) Basic stuff when the taste doesn't matter; price is most important, like a cucumber"* (Participant 10)
- *"Real milk is the cheapest to buy, but when you do something good, then there are many benefits of the substitute products, and therefore you might want to give maybe 20 DKK for that"* (Participant 11)

Packaging Colour

Naturli'

- *"Pipfri and Hakkedrenge's colour of green portrays more healthiness than the regular chicken filet package"* (Participant 1)
- *"They have colour schemes according to the ingredients it is made from; the soymilk is made with green colours, the almond a little red..."* (Participant 5)
- *"The colours match the name, it is natural colours, they have not chosen a loud colour like pink"* (Participant 8)
- *"The colours make really good sense, it matches what they are produced on, it is very simple and it makes sense. I understand it. It is very calming colours; It makes my fridge look good"* (Participant 9)
- *"The colours are very simple, just by looking at the colours you know what you get"* (Participant 10)

Oatly

- *“The colours can make me want to buy the product; if the carton was pink I probably wouldn't buy it”* (Participant 6)
- *“I am a little confused over the colour, was is it I'm about to open? The other products have a milk carton vibe, but this just makes me confused”* (Participant 8)
- *“I'm confused over the colour, what is it?”* (Participant 11)

Stryhn's

- *“(ed. Stryhn's Veggie Pate) The colour of the pate is interesting because it reminds me a little about carrots; that makes it appealing to me, maybe because that is what stands out and what I can see of the product”* (Participant 9)
- *“The green colour is interesting; I don't think they have other products with the green colours”* (Participant 10)
- *“(ed. Stryhn's Veggie Pate) It reminds me of Christmas, I don't know why”* (Participant 10)
- *Regular: They usually use strong colours* (Participant 11)
- *“(ed. Stryhn's Veggie Pate) The vegetable one is not green enough, if I saw it in the supermarket, I wouldn't see it as a substitute product”.* (participant 2)
- *“(ed. Stryhn's Veggie Pate) The vegetable pate has a green label; it looks like the other products from Stryhn's, I know what I get when it looks like the regular pates”* (Participant 3)

Den Grønne Slagter

- *“The colours do something for the product; it is a little fresh, there would be some good colours in your refrigerator”* (Participant 9)

Colours in General

- *“Green is healthy”* (Participant 1)
- *“green makes the packaging more natural”* (Participant 5)
- *“colour makes a huge difference; e.g. most shampoos for men are black and with “power” written, and razors are usually black with some orange. It makes me want to buy the products”* (Participant 6)

Arla

- *"The carton colour makes it look more natural, as they don't put food colourings in the carton"* (Participant 6)

Alpro

- *"They have used a lot of colour on the packaging"* (participant 4)

Packaging Materials

- *"Packaging material makes a difference; green plastic is more recyclable than black plastic"* (Participant 1)
- *"Reusable plastic materials would be better"* (Participant 1)
- *"I would rather not have plastic on products if we can do without it"* (Participant 3)
- *"I notice if the packaging material is sustainable when I walk through the vegetables and fruits section at the supermarket; if the products are covered in plastic, they could do better with the packaging; let us do something for the environment with plastic reduction"* (Participant 4)
- *"I don't always look at the packaging material or if it is sustainable, but I notice it more on Arla products"* (Participant 5)
- *"I notice when e.g. an aubergine is wrapped in plastic, like why?"* (Participant 6)
- *"That the packaging is made from plastic is not the deciding factor for me when choosing products"* (Participant 6)
- *"(ed. VegIn) Food safety is important; with VegIn, it is Vacuum packaged, but if it wasn't, then I wouldn't feel safe with it being in a small cardboard container that easily opens up"* (Participant 4)
- *"(ed. VegIn) It is more sustainable, since it can be reused, which plastic packaging usually cannot"* (Participant 7)
- *"(ed. VegIn) It looks like a powder sauce, if there were plastic on the inside, I would feel cheated I think, what is it, it is gross"* (Participant 8)
- *"(ed. VegIn) It looks like a Knorr Lasagne"* (Participant 10)
- *"(ed. VegIn) Is the packaging more environmental-friendly on the inside, I just think why have they made it like this?"* (Participant 10)
- *"(ed. VegIn) It's a little funny packaging, it kind of looks like a pair of stockings"* (Participant 11)

- “(ed. VegIn) The packaging is a little misplaced, it can just fit in your pocket, that is not normal” (Participant 11)
- “(ed. Naturli’ Pipfri) It says 50 percent more reusable plastic usage; that is positive” (Participant 7)
- “(ed. Oatly) It makes me confused. I think it looks like a carton with water” (Participant 8)
- “(ed. Naturli’ Pipfri compared to Slagterens chicken) I often think about that the amount of product that is in the box should match the size of the box, and with this one (ed. chicken) I feel a little bit like I do with chips bags, that half of the bag is just air, and it is the same here, the box is way bigger than it needs to be, they could have saved room in it” (Participant 8)
- “(ed. Naturli’ Pipfri) I think this look way more environmental-friendly than the other products, it is not certain that it is, but I think it is because it looks more simple” (Participant 10)
- “(ed. Stryhn’s) It is childhood memories, but you might not need to put a plastic bag around the product” (Participant 8)
- “(ed. Stryhn’s) It looks cute because it is so small” (Participant 10)
- “(ed. Arla) I did not have a preference for milk before, but after Arla made this environmental-friendly carton I began just to buy from them, not because of Arla, but because of this packaging; that is good for something; they had a lot of text that told that this is a new environmental-friendly packaging, that had a big influence on my shopping choice, and now it is just a habit” (Participant 9)
- “(ed. Arla) It looks like the carton is environmental-friendly” (Participant 11)
- “(ed. Slagterens Chicken) This Chicken did not need to be in a real protected case, it could be, I don’t know, in a vacuum pack instead” (Participant 11)
- “(ed. Stryhn’s Veggie pate) The vegetable pate has a nice label; the packaging should maybe have been greener” (Participant 4)
- “(ed. Arla) It looks more natural; the old carton looked like it could keep the product fresh for 10 years, whereas the new looks more natural” (Participant 4)
- “Very simple packaging, their product designs are nice (ed. Soya and Almond Drink); they highlight the important things, the reason you buy their products is because they are plant-based; it is my favourite brand in the milk category” (Participant 11)

Product Placement in Shops

- *“The products should be located next to their regular counterparts; I would not visit a special department to choose substitute products” (Participant 1)*
- *“Supermarkets are designed systematically, so it would be easier for me to find the substitute products if they are placed next to the regular ones” (Participant 1)*
- *“For me, it would make more sense to have a section for vegetarian products because I don't eat that much meat” (Participant 1)*
- *“In Sweden, they have whole sections with vegetarian options, which I really like because it is easier to see the selection” (Participant 2)*
- *“I would choose more vegetarian products if they were in the same section; I don't buy meat unless it is served for me so I would go to a section with vegetarian products to shop” (Participant 2)*
- *“If I have the regular product in my hand, and the substitute product was placed next to it, I think it would be easier for me to choose the substitute product; you place it to present the substitute product; I'm reminded that there are substitutes” (Participant 3)*
- *“I would not necessarily go to a vegetarian or vegan section to buy products as I do not use that many substitute products” (Participant 3)*
- *“When I usually make a list, if I had to choose products for my lunch, it would make it easier for me if it was placed in the respective sections with the rest of the cold cuts” (Participant 4)*
- *“It has to be easy to find, and it would be easier if it was in the same section as the other” (Participant 6)*
- *“It would make it more natural for me if the products were placed together with the animal products than they have their own section; it makes it more of an active choice that I have to go somewhere special” (Participant 7)*