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"I eat organic and local, when I want to."

A comparison of Danish consumers' attitudes and behaviours towards organic and local food in a grocery shopping versus a restaurant context

Master's Thesis

MSc in Economics and Business Administration
Brand and Communications Management

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Abstract

Organic and locally produced food consumption has been growing in popularity in the last decade, as consumers are becoming more conscious of what they eat, while being increasingly aware of their own environmental footprint. However, existing research yielded mixed findings on individuals' rationales for consuming organic and local food, and little space is given to the comparison of their attitudes towards these kinds of food between a grocery shopping and a restaurant setting.

The aim of this study is to delve deep into consumers' attitudes and rationales for choosing organic and locally produced food. The goal is to determine which factors drive organic and local food choice, and which ones act as barriers and hinder it. Moreover, a comparison is made between grocery shopping and restaurant food choices, both at a general level and in the specific case of organic and local food.

Research is based on interpretivist philosophy, using qualitative methods and combining both deductive and inductive elements. Data is collected utilising semi-structured interviews on a sample of 17 Danish consumers, evenly distributed across age and gender groups. Gathered data is then analysed through a thematic analysis.

The key findings suggest that the factors driving consumers' choices towards (or against) organic and local food consumption are indeed quite diverse and change between a restaurant and a grocery shopping context, as well as across different product categories and even across age groups.

The overall conclusion is that in such diversity lies the key to effective communication and marketing efforts. Managerial implications for food manufacturers, retailers, hospitality entrepreneurs and public institutions are given based on such findings. The bottom line is that communication campaigns with the purpose of encouraging organic and local food choice should leverage specific values and benefits according to the target of such message and the underlying food consumption context.

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1. Introduction

In the light of the current climate crisis, consumers are becoming increasingly conscious about their purchasing and consumption practices, in an attempt to act more sustainably and lessen their environmental footprint. This responsible approach to consumption has been particularly influent in individuals' eating habits, which are shifting towards more conscious food choices (Buder, Feldmann & Hamm, 2012). Organic and locally produced foods are growing in popularity in mainstream consumption as they are often associated with a lower environmental impact and a more sustainable lifestyle (Bianchi & Mortimer, 2015). However, academic literature seems to have different explanations as for why individuals engage in organic and local food consumption. Hence, this study will investigate what factors drive organic and locally produced food purchases in the Danish market.

The market for organic food in Denmark has been growing steadily for many years. In 2019, a total of 17,5 billion DKK worth of organic food products was sold in the country. In fact, data proves Denmark to be the country with the highest share of organic food consumption in the world (Økologisk Landsforening, 2020). In this market, organic food consumption is rather common, with less than 9% of Danes claiming to never purchase organic food (Kjærnes & Holm, 2007). Compared to other countries, Denmark introduced an organic state-certified logo relatively early and quickly gained popularity, helping consumers gain confidence towards organic products (Hjelmar, 2011). Nowadays, the label is known by 98% of Danish consumers, and 90% of them trust that labelled products are indeed organic (Danish Ministry of Food, Culture and Fisheries, 2009). However, extant research found mistrust in organic labelling authorities to be an important barrier to organic consumption (Aarset et al., 2004). Hence, the attitudes and behaviours of Danish consumers towards organic labels will be explored.

Moreover, in 2009 Denmark introduced the Organic Cuisine Label (Det Økologiske Spisemærke), an organic certification system for restaurants, cafes, hotels and public kitchens that indicates the amount of organic ingredients used by foodservice enterprises. However, most of the emphasis placed on organic dining is attributed to public kitchens, while in private eateries the organic concept has not taken off to mainstream consumption yet (Organic Denmark, 2020). Therefore, this study will seek possible explanations to such a difference in popularity between organic groceries and organic dining. Specifically, consumers' rationales for purchasing organic groceries and dining organically will be explored and compared. The same will be done for locally produced food, to better understand the differences between consumers' attitudes in a grocery shopping versus a restaurant setting, as well as

to explore local food trends. In addition, other factors that could potentially affect organic and local food choice among Danish consumers will be explored. These factors include age, gender and social factors.

The aim of this research is to delve deep into Danish consumers' rationales for organic and locally produced food consumption. Moreover, a comparison will be made between grocery shopping and restaurant food choices, both at a general level and in the specific case of organic and local food. The results are expected to provide meaningful practical implications for both food manufacturers, retailers, hospitality entrepreneurs and public institutions, allowing for the proliferation of organic and local food consumption in the Danish market, both in the retail and foodservice sectors.

To our best knowledge, no previous research has analysed the abovementioned cross differences, particularly in the case of Danish consumers. Hence, this study will investigate the following research question and sub-questions:

How do Danish consumers' food consumption choices and rationales differ when dining out versus when grocery shopping, and to what extent does the value of 'organic' and 'local' food differ between these two food consumption context?

What are the most influential factors and rationales for consumers when it comes to food choice at restaurants?

What are the most influential factors and rationales for consumers when it comes to food choice when grocery shopping?

How does the value of the food attributes 'organic' and 'local' change for consumers between a grocery shopping and a restaurant setting?

1.1 Market outlook and definitions

This section will provide an overview of the organic market in Denmark. First, data on this consumption phenomenon will be analysed. Second, the different organic labels utilised in Denmark will be presented.

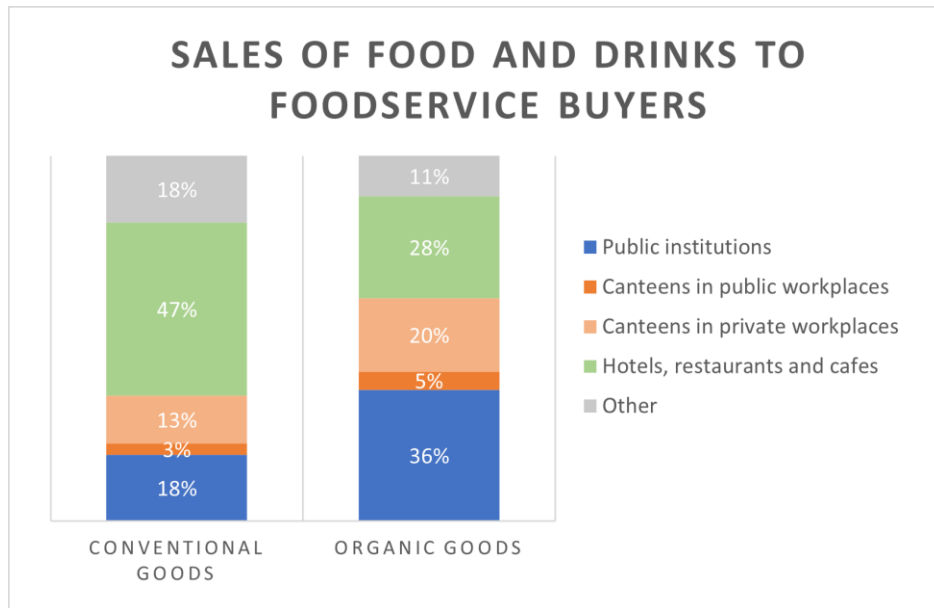
1.1.1 The organic market in Denmark

The market for organic food is on a constant rise in Denmark. The retail sales for organic food products have been growing steadily in the last years, reaching 15,9 billion DKK in 2020, more than triple compared to the numbers in 2010 (Danmarks Statistik, 2020). In fact, Denmark is the country in the world with the highest level of organic food consumption per capita (FiBL & IFOAM, 2021).

Among Danish consumers, the most commonly purchased organic food products are vegetables and dairy products, with a share of 34% and 21% respectively, while other products account for minor amounts (Økologisk Landsforening, 2020). Hence, more than half of the organic market is taken up by those two product categories. Survey data found that the main reasons for Danish consumers to purchase organic food is related to the absence of pesticides and respect for nature and groundwater, while high prices seem to be the main deterrent (Økologisk Landsforening, 2020).

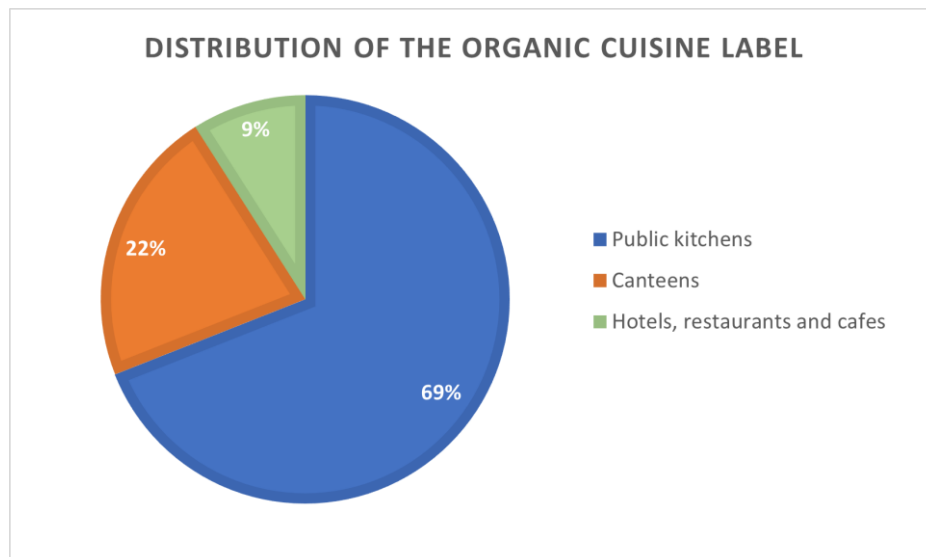
The sales value of organic food products for hotels, restaurants and cafes has been growing steadily, meaning that these players in the industry are shifting towards an increased level of organic food usage (Statistics Denmark, 2020). However, while hotel, restaurants and cafes are responsible for purchasing a great share of conventional goods (i.e., food and drinks), their purchases are proportionally much smaller when it comes to organic goods (Figure 1). On the other hand, it seems like public institutions are responsible for purchasing a considerable amount of organic goods (Statistics Denmark, 2020).

Figure 1 - Sales of food and drinks to foodservice buyers. Adapted from: Statistics Denmark (2020)



Such difference can also be seen in the context of the Organic Cuisine Label, which has experienced much quicker diffusion among public kitchens than in hotels, restaurants and cafes. In fact, the former category accounts for 69% of the total number of Organic Cuisine Labels granted to kitchens in Denmark, while the latter only accounts for 9% of those (Figure 2) (Økologisk Landsforening, 2020).

Figure 2 - Distribution of the Organic Cuisine Label. Adapted from: Økologisk Landsforening (2020).



1.1.2 Organic labels

Denmark was among the first countries worldwide to introduce laws and regulations on organic production. The first act dates back to 1987, and soon after that, the red ‘Ø logo’ (Ø Mærke) (Figure 3) was introduced (Fødevarestyrelsen, 2006). The Ø logo is a state inspection label proving that the latest stages of the production process took place in a Danish company controlled by Danish public authorities. Hence, this label can be attributed to both foods originating from Danish organic farms and imported foods being processed, packed or labelled in Denmark (Fødevarestyrelsen, 2015).

Another organic label utilised in Denmark is the EU organic label (Figure 3). This logo is used on organic products certified by authorised control bodies and agencies. Such certification has strict requirements on the production, processing, transportation and storage of products. This label can be used when at least 95% of the ingredients are organic, but strict conditions still apply to the remaining 5% (European Commission, 2021). The EU organic label proves that a product is produced and controlled according to the European legislation standards. While the use of the Ø logo is voluntary, using the EU logo is mandatory (Fødevarestyrelsen, 2015).

Figure 3 - The Danish organic logo (left) and EU organic logo (right)



In addition, an organic label has been designed for Danish kitchens by the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (Fødevarestyrelsen). The Organic Cuisine Label is “a state-guaranteed label indicating that a kitchen is serious about organics” (Fødevarestyrelsen, 2020). The label can be obtained free of charge and indicates what percentage of organic raw ingredients and beverages is used within the entire menu. The labelling system was introduced in 2009 and comes in three different colours: bronze, silver and gold (Figure 4). Bronze is achieved when 30% to 60% of the kitchen’s purchases of food and beverages are organic. The next step is silver, with a percentage between 60% and 90%. Lastly, the golden label is granted to those purchasing between 90% and 100% organic food and beverages. In addition, it requires documentation of the organic raw material purchases as well as the preparation of a raw material policy. The golden label also demands an emergency plan, which describes what to do if the food and beverages used in the kitchen cannot be sourced organically. The raw material policy must be visible to the guests at the restaurant. Restaurants can calculate the organic share of their food and beverages in either kroner or kilos (Fødevarestyrelsen, 2020).

Figure 4 - The Organic Cuisine Label in three colours



The Organic Cuisine Label is controlled by the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (Fødevarestyrelsen), which also administers the regulations in this area. The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration and Organic Denmark (Økologisk Landsforening) are collaborating to disseminate and inform about the Organic Food Label.

1.2 Delimitation

Some delimitations are deemed necessary in order to define the scope of the present study and set clear boundaries. Firstly, as mentioned above, research will be conducted on the Danish market, hence collecting data from Danish consumers about their food consumption habits.

Second, although the initial catalyst of this study was the will to research sustainable food consumption, the focus area will be limited to organic and locally produced food. Other kinds of sustainable foods such as fair trade, animal welfare and vegan/vegetarian will not be the focus of this study.

Thirdly, the scope of the terms ‘organic’ and ‘local’ should be clearly defined in order to avoid misunderstandings. The term ‘organic’ will always be used in relation to food, hence ‘organic’, ‘organic food’, ‘organic products’, ‘organic foodstuff’ and the like will be used interchangeably. Similarly, the term ‘local’ will be used in relation to food to indicate locally produced food. However, no exact definition of locally produced food will be given at this point, as it will be part of the study to explore what consumers perceive as local or locally produced.

Fourth, individuals’ restaurant food habits will be researched at a general level. No distinction will be made between fast food, casual dining and fine dining. However, only dine-in experiences will be taken into consideration, while take-away dining will be excluded from the scope of the research.

Lastly, this study will analyse age and gender as possible determinants of organic and local food consumption, both in grocery stores and restaurants. In order to keep a clear focus, other demographic factors such as income, education level and household size will not be taken into consideration.

1.3 Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured in six chapters. As presented above, the first chapter serves as an introduction to the study, clarifying its purpose and relevance, and presenting the research question. The second chapter summarises the body of literature pertinent to the scope of the study, delving into the concepts of organic and local food consumption, restaurant consumption, as well as theoretical concepts in the field of consumer behaviour. The third chapter presents the methodological argumentation on which this study is built. The findings based on the qualitative research conducted are presented in chapter four. Thereafter, chapter five discusses the key findings of the study in relation to previous research, provides managerial implications, and establishes its limitations and future research perspectives. Lastly, chapter six will draw the overall conclusion emerging from the study considering the research question.

2. Literature Review

This literature review will summarise and discuss the body of research pertinent to consumer behaviour in relation to organic and local food consumption across two different purchasing settings: grocery shopping and dining at restaurants. First, research on consumers' relationship with organic and locally produced food will be analysed, looking into their rationales for choosing such products. Secondly, the same themes will be explored in a restaurant setting, investigating customers' preferences and reasons for choosing organic and locally sourced menu items. Then, the effect of age and gender on food consumption habits will be inspected. Subsequently, literature concerning the food consumption patterns of Danish consumers will be reviewed, with a focus on organic and local products.

The second part of the literature review will inspect theoretical concepts in the field of consumer behaviour that will help acquire a more holistic perspective within the scope of this study. Firstly, two of the perspectives on consumer behaviour described by Østergaard & Jantzen (2000) will be reviewed, to be able to study consumers from multiple points of view. Secondly, the concept of attitude-behaviour gap will be discussed as a tool to better understand the asymmetry between consumers' beliefs and actions. Lastly, the categories of hedonic and utilitarian factors, as well as egoistic and altruistic motives, will be reviewed to portray an exhaustive picture of consumers' rationales to engage in organic and local food consumption.

2.1 Organic and local food consumption

In this section, research on consumers' relationship with organic and locally produced food will be analysed, looking into their perceptions and rationales for engaging in the consumption of such products.

Organic food is defined as “*food produced using environmentally sound practices instead of using conventional pesticides or fertilisers made with synthetic ingredients and not processed using industrial solvents, irradiation, chemical food additives, or genetic engineering*” (USDA NOP, 2016). In other words, organic is a representative of sustainable food, as it refers to restricted uses of antibiotics, hormones or pesticides, implying environmentally sustainable production methods (Jang, Kim & Bonn, 2011).

Consumers perceive organic foodstuff to be healthier, safer and easier on the environment than conventional products given the absence of pesticides in its production (Lea & Worsley, 2005). Despite uncertainties on whether organic food is healthier than the conventional counterpart, research showed

that indeed organic foods can improve one's health and are more nutritious (Benbrook & Baker, 2014; Średnicka-Tober, Kazimierczak, & Hallmann, 2016). In Swedish consumers, the level of health concern was found to be an accurate predictor of their attitudes towards organic food (Magnusson et al., 2003). A study carried out in Australia found health to be the primary reason for consumers to purchase organic foods (Pearson, 2002). Similarly, Hughner et al. (2007) found that consumers' main rationales for purchasing organic food products are health and taste, while animal welfare, environmental footprint and farmworkers' conditions are secondary driving factors. However, Honkanen, Verplanken and Olsen (2006) found ethical values to have a strong influence on consumers' attitudes toward organic foods. Particularly, concerns about environmental issues and animal rights were strong drivers of positive attitudes. Some individuals prefer organic produce because they believe it to have reduced environmental footprint and to support local rural communities (Williams & Hammitt, 2000). Overall, individuals are willing to buy organic foods because of the benefits it implies for themselves as well as for others (Hwang, 2016). Nonetheless, egoistic motives such as health concern have been found to have a greater influence on purchasing behaviour for organic food items compared to altruistic motives (Magnusson et al., 2003). Previous research also demonstrated how some consumers perceive organic foodstuff to be fresher and taste better (Bhatta & Doppler, 2009). Still, the way consumers perceive the benefits of organic foods varies across different socio-demographic categories and consumer segments, depending on factors such as age, gender, or level of health concern (Jeong & Jang, 2019).

On the other hand, there are multiple reasons for not purchasing organic foods. The main barrier identified in extant literature is price, but other influencing factors can be insufficient availability, inadequate marketing, scepticism about organic labels, satisfaction with conventional products, low visibility in shops, and aesthetic imperfections of organic produce (Bryła, 2016; Hughner et al., 2007). Even organic food buyers confirmed that the main reasons for them to not choose organic are related to price, availability, taste and appearance (Buder et al., 2014). Yet, the relevance of such reasons changes considerably across product groups and shop types (Buder et al., 2014). Particularly, studies have found the level of price premium for organic food varies depending on the specific food product. Overall, the average willingness to pay a price premium is around 30%; however, the ranges vary from 0% up to 105% depending on consumer segment and food product category (Aschemann-Witzel & Zielke, 2017). Similarly, Krystallis and Chrysosoidis (2005) concluded that willingness to pay for organic foods varies according to the products considered. Padel and Foster (2005) also identified higher prices as a major barrier for purchasing organic foodstuff in the United Kingdom. In fact,

individuals are becoming increasingly frugal, and “*though the ‘heart’ may be ‘green,’ the pocket says otherwise*” (Gonzalez 2012, p. 16). In general, the smaller the quantity purchased of a given product, the higher the price premium consumers are willing to pay for a high-quality alternative (Tempesta & Vecchiato, 2013).

Consumers are often unaware of the production costs, processes, storage and benefits of organic produce (Lea & Worsley, 2005). They usually search for cues and credentials to validate their choices before making purchasing decisions, such as direct or indirect communications, or labels they perceive as trustworthy (Janssen & Hamm, 2012). Organic foods are credence goods, meaning that trust in certifying institutions and production processes may increase perceived benefits and lower perceived risks (Zhang et al., 2018). Organic claims can have a ‘label effect’, altering consumers’ expectations and impressions of a product. Organic certifications were found to be heuristic cues that lead consumers to believe the food item in question will improve their well-being (Apaolaza, Hartmann, D’Souza & López, 2017). In fact, trust in organic food production, packaging and labelling proved to have an influence on purchasing behaviour (Sultan, Tarafder, Pearson & Henryks, 2020).

Research by Luomala, Paasovaara and Lehtola (2006) suggests that some consumers perceive healthy consumption as the fulfillment of a balance, harmony with nature, and distance from pollution and engineered foods. In other words, organic consumption presupposes a particular lifestyle. Individuals who take part in this lifestyle seem to share a set of characteristics such as values, food-related attitudes, health concern, and socio-demographic factors like gender and education.

However, while organic food has a clear definition, the criteria for what is considered to be ‘local’ are not defined (Denver, Jensen, Olsen & Christensen, 2019). There is no single definition for **local food**. In the U.S., it is defined as grown within the geographical area of a specific state or county, while in Finland it is associated with artisans and craftsmanship, with the most authentic local produce being produced, gathered, hunted and processed by real experts (Wilkins, 2002). Regardless of its definition, local food has been growing in popularity in the last decades. Moving into the 21st century, consumers gradually lost their confidence in conventional and industrial food producers due to several international and regional food scandals (Marsden, Sonnino & Morgan, 2008). Moreover, consumers in wealthy countries are increasingly disconnected from the ‘knowing’ and ‘growing’ of the food they purchase. Consumers are now seeking to re-connect with what they eat, driven by desire for fresh and healthy food, anxiety about origin and production of food, as well as care for the environment and local economies (Kneafsey, 2010). Individuals are becoming particularly concerned

about the origin of the food they consume and the transparency of supply chains given the growing awareness of health and ecological issues. (Arsil, Li, Bruwer & Lyons, 2014). In general, *“local food is food produced and consumed by exploiting the raw material and production inputs within the region, promoting the economic development and employment of this particular area. This particular area may be a municipality, province, or economic area”* (Forsman & Paananen, 2003: 14).

Previous research found that consumers associate local food with greater quality, safety, freshness, short transportation, reduced greenhouse emissions and improved animal welfare. Moreover, it is considered to support local economies, build social capital and contribute to the vitality of rural areas (Roininen, Arvola Lähteenmäki, 2006). Some consumers believe it to have no difference from conventional food in terms of energy or nutrients, but can give them a sense of trust, experience and place (Edwards-Jones et al., 2008). A study by Feldmann and Hamm (2015) found that the main drivers of local food purchases are related to quality (such as taste and freshness), food safety, consumers’ health, environmental care, and animal welfare. The study also found consumers to have greater trust in local food as they perceive it to be safe and easy to trace back. Bianchi and Mortimer (2015) found ethnocentric values to be a key player when choosing local produce. Consumers are motivated by the thought of supporting farmers and local businesses while improving their working conditions. Another factor influencing consumers’ attitudes towards local food is ‘perceived authenticity’, which symbolises a value added for individuals who engage in the act of consuming such products (Hu, Batte, Wood & Ernst, 2012).

A recent study on German consumers showed that local produce is often preferred over organic produce (Hempel, 2019). Similarly, Wier, Jensen, Andersen and Millock (2005) found that the origin of foodstuff is more important to consumers compared to whether it is organic or not. In comparison, individuals are willing to pay more for regionally produced food products than for their organic counterparts (Meas, Hu, Battle, Woods & Ernst, 2015). In fact, organic food products are perceived to be expensive, while local ones are not, hence consumers are willing to pay a price premium for the latter (Feldmann & Hamm, 2015). Nonetheless, these characteristics may vary across different product categories. Grebitus, Lusk and Nayga (2013) found that willingness-to-pay and preferences for local food varied for different products. For instance, local production is considered more important for unprocessed food than for processed products (Meyerding, Trajer & Lehberger, 2019). The perception of local food is also influenced by the seasonality of products, as variety and choice change throughout the year (Bingen, Sage & Sirieix, 2011). As far as local food consumption is concerned, a major purchase barrier is the lack of availability, which keeps consumers from buying such products

(Zepeda & Leviten-Reid, 2004). Problems identifying local food can also hinder individuals from purchasing local foodstuff (Conner, Colasanti, Ross & Smalley, 2010).

2.1.1 Restaurant experience

In this section literature on the restaurant experience from the consumer perspective will be reviewed. Including a deep dive into customers' preferences and reasons for choosing organic and locally sourced menu items.

According to extant research, there are multiple factors determining customers' choices in restaurants. Among those, price is a major driver to be considered. However, its relevance has recently faded and the notion of perceived value for money has started to catch on (Iglesias & Guillen, 2004). Filimonau and Krivcova (2017) found price to be the most significant factor in determining consumers' restaurant choices, after perceived food quality. In fact, perceived food quality is deemed as the most critical factor in this matter (Jung, Sydnor, Lee & Almanza, 2015).

When it comes to selecting a place to dine in, consumers are willing to compromise some attributes in return for a higher quality meal (Parsa, Self, Gregory & Dutta, 2012). For instance, customers would accept to pay a price premium for healthier ingredients (Lu & Gursoy, 2017). Generally, those who dine out frequently tend to make healthier and more environment friendly choices. Nonetheless, they prioritise nutritional attributes over sustainability (Lo, King & Mackenzie, 2017). Previous studies found patronage intention to be influenced by customers' knowledge of a restaurant's eco-friendly and sustainable practices (Hu, Parsa & Self, 2010; Schubert, Kandampully, Solnet & Kralj, 2010). However, green initiatives often take place in the back-of-the-house of restaurants and customers do not get to know about them. Unlike food-related attributes, sustainable attributes tend to stay hidden and patrons tend to be poorly informed about those (Namkung & Jang, 2013). While some customers might make sustainable dining choices, the general public seems to complement and sometimes even drive inefficiencies in the restaurant industry, harming the sustainability directed efforts in the sector (Pirani & Arafat, 2014). Despite strong public concern on the harmful outcomes in this industry, consumers are still the ones to blame for making irresponsible and mindless food choices, as enterprises are simply responding to their demands (Lusk & Ellison, 2013). When eating out, consumers are found to value hedonic values and experience much more than utilitarian values (Hwang & Ok, 2013). They expect to experience feelings of comfort, familiarity, and pleasure. They believe they are paying for an experience, not just a meal, which means that their hunger is both material and symbolic (Warde & Martens, 2000).

2.1.1.1 Organic food in restaurants

In recent years, the use of organic produce in the restaurant industry has been growing in popularity, becoming a leading food trend worldwide (Lu & Chi, 2018). Communicating the use of organic produce by restaurants was proved to positively influence consumers' choices. Such messages increase corporate social responsibility perceptions, implying greater trust in the restaurant and hence triggering positive behaviours on the customer side (Loose, Remaud & Hingley, 2013). With organic food production being focused on pesticide reduction, animal welfare, soil preservation, and biodiversity protection, it results that restaurants offering organic options are perceived as responsible entities, conscious about the impact of their practices (Hanks & Mattila, 2016). In addition, consumers associate the use of organic ingredients with greater quality, hence developing more positive attitudes toward restaurants that make use of those instead of conventional ones (Lu & Gursoy, 2017).

When it comes to 'green' restaurant characteristics, diners are particularly concerned about environment, food and administration related attributes. Offering organic or local options has been found to boost patrons' willingness to pay more, travel farther and wait longer to dine at a restaurant (Kwok, Huang & Hu, 2016). A study by Shinh, Im, Jung and Severt (2019) indicates that environmental consciousness is the strongest predictor of willingness to pay, followed by social values and health concern. However, health concern is found to be the most accurate indicator of customers' intention to visit a restaurant, followed by social values and environmental consciousness.

Indeed, public self-awareness is a crucial influencing factor when it comes to choosing green restaurants (Hwang & Lee, 2019). Dining organically is not a mere rational transaction where customers buy a tangible product, but a social experience, in which organic ingredients are just a part of it (Lu & Chi, 2018). In this context, customers' preferences and intentions are influenced by both hedonic and utilitarian values (Teng & Wu, 2019).

Previous research indicated that the presence of organic food items in menus increases diners' willingness to pay and intent to purchase (Namkung & Jang, 2014). Individuals' level of health concern was also found to be a strong influencing factor of purchase intention and price premiums for organic food. Due to their enhanced perception of health benefits, individuals showing higher levels of health concern had greater purchase intent. Particularly, they found a price premium of 19% to be acceptable, while less health concerned consumers' threshold was about 10% lower (Jeong & Jang, 2019). Another study revealed that in a store setting, consumers' willingness to pay was on average 30%, while in restaurants they were only willing to pay a premium of approximately 10% for food prepared with

organic ingredients (Aschemann-Witzel and Zielke, 2017). As a matter of fact, price premiums are a major barrier when it comes to customers' intentions and behaviours towards organic menu items (Lu & Gursoy, 2017). Charging a large price premium for dishes made with organic ingredients makes diners' preference for a restaurant drop significantly, making them more prone to choose another restaurant (Lu & Gursoy, 2017).

2.1.1.2 Locally produced food in restaurants

In the restaurant sector, using locally sourced food is perceived as a sustainable practice as it acts upon all three facets of sustainability: environmental, social, and economic responsibility (Remar, 2015). Firstly, utilizing local produce can limit negative environmental impacts, as small-scale farmers make reduced use of water, fertilisers, and pesticides compared to bigger farms (Martinez et al., 2010). Locally sourced food also implies reduced CO₂ emissions because of the shorter distance it has to travel, and hence using less fuel (Remar, 2015). Secondly, using this type of produce helps connecting producers to consumers, benefitting the local community, and ultimately promoting local culture and traditions while involving various actors in the development process (Starr et al., 2003). Thirdly, the use of local food products helps strengthen local economies by supporting farmers in selling their products without the help of intermediaries (Benepe et al., 2002).

Customers who value locally sourced food are seen as particularly involved individuals, who care about the issues of food systems concerning product origin, environmental and social welfare, and local farmers (Martinez et al., 2010). Consumers create a strong connection with the product and such product attribute, perceiving local food to be of premium quality due to its freshness and perceived lower amount of chemicals (Zepeda & Li, 2006). In fact, customers associate 'fresh' with 'local', as if shorter travel distance from farms would make for fresher and tastier food (Spiller, 2012). Similarly, Campbell, DiPietro and Remar (2014) found customers to prefer this type of produce also given its better taste, healthiness, and safety, as well as the support of local producers, and the belief of making a difference towards environmental and social problems with their personal efforts. Recent research indicated community attachment and health consciousness to be strong motivators to visit restaurants using local ingredients, ultimately stimulating customers' willingness to pay (Shin, Im, Jung & Severt, 2018). Similarly, Frash, DiPietro and Smith (2015) found sense of community to be the strongest motivator of patrons' willingness to pay, followed by freshness and taste. Environment and nutrition were also influential factors, but to a smaller extent. Overall, diners were willing to pay between 4% and 5% more for locally sourced food. Lillywhite and Simonsen (2014) found that one

fifth of restaurant customers perceive the practice of using locally sourced ingredients as a crucial restaurant attribute, while restaurant type and average meal price proved to be secondary.

Restaurant patrons are increasingly concerned about the origin of the food they are served (Goggins & Rau, 2016), therefore, business owners emphasise food attributes such as local provenance and seasonality of their ingredients (Sims, 2010). When seeing information about the use of local ingredients and producers on restaurant menus, diners will perceive the enterprise to be socially responsible. Customers will have the impression that the restaurant does not only care about revenues, but also the environment and the local community. In addition, providing diners information on the producers is perceived as an act of transparency to help consumers make well-informed and conscious food choices. As a consequence, their trust towards the restaurant will increase, and their choice intentions towards that specific place will be positively influenced (Shafieizadeh & Tao, 2020). In fact, local food signage plays a crucial role in communicating health, quality and sustainable factors to customers. Sharing information on this matter with diners was found to positively influence their level of involvement, perceived quality, pleasure in the dining experience and revisit intentions (Campbell & DiPietro, 2014).

2.1.2 The influence of age and gender on food consumption

Age is a demographic variable that has great influence on consumers' purchasing behaviour and rationales. Older consumers tend to have greater disposable income, which makes them more prone to adopt ethical consumption practices, as those tend to be relatively expensive. Nonetheless, they only undertake such behaviour if they can benefit from it at an egoistic level (Carrigan, Szmigin & Wright, 2004). Hwang (2016) found that, as long as organic food products are concerned, older consumers are mainly drawn to buy those by self-presentation and food safety concerns, while ethical values and environmental concerns have no influence on their purchase intentions.

On the other hand, despite their lower income level and social status, younger consumers appear to be extremely interested in ethical consumption practices, such as the purchase of organic food products (Carrigan et al., 2004). Previous research found that younger individuals have more positive attitudes towards environmental issues compared to their older counterparts (Diamantopoulos, Schlegelmilch, Sinkovics & Bohlen, 2003). Consumers belonging to this group are well informed and educated about sustainability-related issues, which causes them to have highly positive attitudes towards environment-friendly and green products (Kanchanapibul, Lacka, Wang & Chan, 2014). They pay great attention to the way society acts, and believe to be active players having the power to

influence the ecology. Moreover, they are found to have a strong personal affective response to these matters, which is expected to influence their future purchasing decisions (Kanchanapibul et al., 2014). These individuals tend to be particularly future-oriented, hence being more inclined to purchase organic foods (Benard et al., 2018). Magnusson et al. (2001) found that younger consumers have more positive attitudes towards buying organic food. A more recent study indicated that around half of young adults give moderate to high importance to organic food options (Pelletier, Laska, Neumark-Sztainer & Story, 2013).

Conversely, others found older consumers (over the age of 51) to have more positive attitudes towards organic food, while the younger (between 18 and 30) do not value organic food products and are unlikely to pay a price premium for those (Tsakiridou, Boutsouki, Zotos & Mattas, 2008). Magnusson et al. (2003) argue that while the younger may have more positive attitudes, the older are more likely to actually purchase organic food products. That could be due to greater health concern (Chambers et al., 2008) or higher financial resources (Hughner et al., 2007). In fact, Govindasamy and Italia (1999) found age to have great influence on consumers' willingness to pay for organics.

As far as restaurant consumption is concerned, younger consumers (under 35) were shown to be more likely to consider green practices such as the use of organic ingredients and reduction of environmental impact by restaurants to be more important (Schubert, Kandampully, Solnet & Kralj, 2010). In addition, the same study also found younger consumers to believe that dining at a green restaurant is healthier than dining at a conventional one. However, a study by Moon (2021) indicated that older consumers were more prone to visit green restaurants compared to the youth. Jeong and Jang (2019) found older consumers to have greater purchase intentions and willingness to pay price premiums for organic food items.

Numerous studies have found **gender** to be a determinant of individuals' values and beliefs about the environment. Some indicated women to be more concerned about environmental matters (Mostafa, 2007) and to make more ecologically and socially responsible decisions than men (Zelezny, Chua & Aldrich, 2000) due to their greater concern for others and society (Roberts, 1993). In fact, women were showed to be willing to pay more for environment-friendly products (Laroche, Bergeron & Barbaro-Forleo, 2001) and purchase those more often than men (Diamantopoulos, Schlegelmilch, Sinkovics & Bohlen, 2003). Shin and Mattila (2019) found gender to be associated with healthier eating habits and indicating the choice of organic food as a symbol of femininity. However, while

women are more concerned about environmental issues, they are much less likely to partake in activism for this cause compared to men (Mohai, 1992).

Environmental consciousness is becoming an extremely important driver of organic food consumption (Padel & Foster, 2005), implying a strong link between organic food purchases and femininity (Brough, Wilkie, Ma, Isaac & Gal, 2016). In fact, Davies, Titterington and Cochrane (1995) concluded that women are more prone to purchase organic food products. Similarly, Lockie, Lyons, Lawrence and Mummary (2002) indicated that more female participants said to have consumed organic food and had more positive attitudes towards it compared to male participants. More recent studies found women to have higher willingness to pay for organic food products compared to men (Ureña, Bernabéu & Olmeda, 2008). Gender was also identified to influence the likelihood to buy locally produced food, with women being more likely to purchase such goods than men (Cholette, Ozluk, Ozsen, & Ungson, 2013). Nonetheless, men showed greater willingness to pay for these products (Bellows, Alcaraz, & Hallman, 2010).

In a restaurant setting, gender was found to affect willingness to pay price premiums for organic menu items. However, in this scenario, female customers showed greater purchase intentions across different levels of price premium than males (Jeong & Jang, 2019). In fact, Lillywhite and Simonsen (2014) indicated that female patrons are more concerned about restaurant's sourcing practices, while other participants found attributes such as restaurant type or price to be more relevant. Nonetheless, other studies did not find any difference across gender groups concerning the need for sustainable food initiatives in the service industry (Kim, Yoon & Shin, 2015). Similarly, Hu et al. (2010) did not spot any gender-related difference on consumers' intentions to visit green restaurants.

2.1.3 An outlook on Danish consumers

In this section, literature concerning the food consumption preferences and patterns of Danish consumers will be reviewed, with a focus on organic and local food products.

The market for organic food in Denmark has experienced a steady growth for many years. In fact, Denmark is the country with the highest share of organic food consumption in the world (Økologisk Landsforening, 2020). In this market, organic food consumption has been normalised, as the percentage of Danes who claim to never purchase organic food is between 8% and 9% (Kjærnes & Holm, 2007). Compared to other countries, an organic logo certified by the state was introduced quite early in Denmark. The red Ø-label was introduced in 1989 and quickly gained popularity, helping consumers gain confidence towards organic products (Hjelmar, 2011).

However, organic consumption is unevenly distributed across consumer segments (Denver, Jensen, Olsen & Christensen, 2019). A recent study found that 25% of Danish households account for 75% of the overall turnover of organic food products (Denver, Nordström & Christensen, 2017). Nonetheless, the same study also indicated that just 3% of Danish households have never purchased such products. Similarly, further research showed that 55% of participants were willing to pay a modest price premium for an organic meal, while merely 13% would pay a substantial price premium (Christensen, Denver & Olsen, 2020). Uneven consumption patterns are also found across product categories. Market data shows that, despite the high level of organic purchases in the country, only 2.9% of cold meat cuts and sausages sold were organic (Denver et al., 2019).

Hjelmar (2011) makes a distinction between two types of Danish organic consumers: one type is driven by political and ethical values, while a more pragmatic kind is driven by utilitarian values. The former are also particularly concerned about purchasing food that is produced within the country. Overall, the study showed that the main reasons for consumers to purchase organic food are perceived quality, price, availability, political and ethical concerns, family considerations, and health concerns. On the other hand, local food was associated with freshness, seasonality, better taste (compared to imported products) and reduced environmental impact due to the shorter transportation distance. In fact, localness of food has been found to be a crucial attribute for food. A study by Denver et al. (2019) indicated that geographical proximity of the place where cattle was raised was considered the most important factor by most participants when purchasing salami.

However, there is little agreement among Danish consumers on what can be defined as local. Research showed that individuals tend to define local referring to the distance between producers and consumers, or to the fact that a product is either domestic or foreign. Others associated local food with farm shops and non-uniform or uneven produce, which was perceived as a positive trait that recalled smaller scale production rather than mass production. (Jensen et al., 2018). When looking specifically at meat products, localness was a matter of where the animal lived for some, while for others it was related to the slaughtering or processing locations. To some others, it was fundamental that the food product had a distinct local character or underlying values related to passion within the production process (Jensen et al., 2018).

Previous research assessed the effect of product knowledge on Danish consumers' attitudes toward local apple juice. The study found that individuals perceived locally produced apple juice to be much more exclusive once they were provided information about the origin of the product (Stolzenbach,

Bredie, Christensen & Bryne, 2013). Another study analysed consumers' preferences for local and organic apples, suggesting that those two attributes may attract different consumer segments. Some cross effects between such attributes were also found. Particularly, those who perceived organic food to yield multiple benefits were also willing to pay a higher price for local apples, while those perceiving local food to have multiple benefits would not pay a price premium for organic apples (Denver & Jensen, 2014).

There are some factors that act as a barrier for organic food consumption among Danish citizens. Millock, Wier and Andersen (2004) found supply shortages to hinder organic food consumption for regular buyers. In addition, lack of interest and lack of trust towards organic food certifications, along with high price premiums, were also found to be a barrier. Price has been proved to be by other studies to be an obstacle to organic consumption. Marian, Chrysochou, Krystallis and Thøgersen (2014) found that the higher price for organic foodstuff keeps consumers from undergoing repeated purchases, along with secondary factors such as lack of availability, lack of education on the matter and scepticism about producers. Further research found young Danish consumers to be particularly affected by price as a barrier. However, such a barrier is temporary, as youth argue that organic consumption is simply postponed to a later life stage when they will be in an improved and more stable financial situation (Aschemann-Witzel & Niebuhr Aagaard, 2014).

2.2 Consumer behaviour

The purpose of this study is to investigate consumption patterns and rationales of organic and locally produced food consumers, and how 'organic' and 'local' attributes affect their purchasing outcomes. Studying such behaviour and the decision-making process that lies behind it will provide meaningful insights on what is relevant to consumers when making purchasing decisions.

There are many ways of studying and making sense of consumers' behaviour. Through the lens of classical economics, the optimal solution for individuals is to maximise profit. Conversely, more recent research suggests that consumption choices are influenced by more than mere economic rationales (Levy, 1959). For instance, individuals who choose fair trade products have been proven to follow irrational behavioural patterns as such products have higher prices than average (Nicholls & Opal, 2005). Hence, it is deemed relevant to study consumers from multiple perspectives.

This section will first take into consideration Østergaard and Jantzen's (2000) framework of Perspectives on Consumer Behaviour, particularly focusing on the perspectives of **Consumer Research** and **Consumption Studies**. Then, the concept of **Attitude-Behaviour Gap** will be explored in order to

have a clearer picture of the mismatch between consumers' intentions and actual behaviours when it comes to organic and local food. Lastly, a section on **hedonic** and **utilitarian factors**, as well as **egoistic** and **altruistic** ones, will dig into consumers' rationales and food choice drivers, providing a deeper understanding of why consumers purchase certain food products.

2.2.1 Perspectives on consumer behaviour

To understand which approach is most relevant for the purpose of this study, we will look into Østergaard & Jantzen's (2000) perspectives on consumer behaviour. After having analysed research in this field over a time span of 40 years, the authors outlined a framework consisting of four different perspectives through which scholars can look at the consuming individual. The first perspective, Buyer Behaviour, views consumers as instinct driven decision makers, while the second, Consumer Behaviour, studies them as cold and rational calculators. As these perspectives do not match the behaviour of organic and local food consumers, they are deemed as not relevant to the scope of this study and hence will not be discussed further.

The last two perspectives, namely Consumer Research and Consumption Studies, became particularly prominent after the so-called Interpretive Turn in the 1980's, when researchers started viewing consumers as emotional, social and narcissistic beings rather than rational and utilitarian.

Through the lens of Consumer Research, individuals are metaphorically referred to as 'tourists', who make decisions based on emotional factors and seek new experiences through consumption. According to the last perspective, namely Consumption Studies, consumers are portrayed as members of a tribe, whose pillars are built upon consumer culture and product symbolism. In this context, researchers focus on the relationship between individuals and assess their behaviour as they search for the symbols that will grant them recognition from other tribe members.

For the purpose of this study, these two perspectives will be adopted as they are particularly relevant to understand consumers' perception of organic and local certifications, and in line with the consumption patterns of organic and local food consumers.

2.2.1.1 *Consumer Research – consumers as experiential beings*

Under this perspective, consumers are seen as irrational beings whose choices are driven by feelings and emotions (Østergaard & Jantzen, 2000). Unlike previous research paradigms in the study of consumers, this perspective is no longer assuming consumers to be rational beings. Instead, they are seen as emotional and narcissistic. The traditional view of the economic man making purchasing decisions

based on functional factors and focusing on practicalities such as price and quality is replaced by the metaphorical image of a tourist, seeking novel experiences through consumption (Østergaard & Jantzen, 2000). This paradigm views the consumption experience as a means for pursuing feelings, fun and fantasies, hence making a sharp distinction between ‘buying’ and ‘consuming’, with the latter implying a sensory experience that goes beyond the rational spectrum (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982).

Consumption is seen as an act that individuals engage in with the purpose of giving their life meaning (Arnould & Price, 1993). Consumers are motivated and fuelled by a continuous desire to engage in consumption, going through an endless cycle of desire → consumptions → re-adjustment of desire, in an attempt to satiate their experiential cravings (Belk, Ger & Askegaard, 2003). In addition to that, consumption is also helping them make sense of their lives by creating a self-image through symbols (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998; Levy, 1959) and possessions (Belk, 1988). The first ground-breaking idea in this context is attributed to Levy (1959) who mentions that “people buy things not only for what they can do, but also for what they mean” (Levy, 1959: 118). The purchasing choices of individuals are also driven by packaging design, marketing initiatives, social influences, personal reasons, and many other factors. Hence, consumer goods are endowed with symbolic meanings which are functional to people’s values and aspirations, helping them in their attempt to distinguish themselves and to shape their identities (Levy, 1959). Similarly, Elliott and Wattanasuwan (1998) also find the symbolic meaning of goods to contribute to the creation of consumers’ identities and self-symbolism. In fact, the authors describe consumption to play a crucial role in the creation of both meaning and value.

On a similar note, Belk (1988) believes that consumers define themselves by what they possess. In his research, he found a connection between individuals’ constructed self and their brand choices. Consumers learn, define and remind themselves of who they are through their possessions. Essentially, symbolic meanings are embedded in consumer goods, and consumers attain social recognition and sense of belonging by purchasing or possessing such goods (Belk, 1988). This concept is also known as the ‘extended self’ and is central to the explanation of numerous theories in consumer behaviour, in which individuals create and maintain their identities through consumption. This perspective has been adopted in some studies on ethical consumption. Newholm and Shaw (2007) suggested that the approach of consumers to ethical issues is directed towards moral self-realization, and those engaging in green shopping behaviour build their identity through consumption. The experien-

tial focus of the Consumer Research perspective can also prove useful to analyse consumers' behaviour in a restaurant context, as they are found to be mainly focused on hedonic and experiential factors in this consumption setting (Hwang & Ok, 2013).

2.6.1.2 Consumption Studies – consumers as social beings

Such symbolism is taken one step further in the Consumption Studies perspective. Through this lens, consumers are metaphorically represented as tribe members that exist beyond the concept of individual-self, collecting experiences and living by emotional and narcissistic values. In fact, consumers are now making use of product symbolism in a collectivist context where such symbols help them relate to others and determine their social position (Østergaard & Jantzen, 2000). Consumption is both a social act and a cultural event, unrelated to personal needs and desires.

McCracken (1986) identifies tangible goods as means for the materialization of cultural values. He indicates that symbolic value resides in the culturally constituted world, and is then transferred from culture to consumer goods, and eventually from goods to consumers. The author names this process 'movement of meaning', as meaning moves from culture to products to individuals. Hence, consumers may obtain cultural meaning through consumption of certain goods. People engage in consumption in order to communicate values to others in their social circle as well as to those in external circles (Østergaard & Jantzen, 2000). Arnould, Price and Zinkhan (2005) refer to those circles as 'reference groups', which they define as groups "whose presumed perspectives, attitudes, or behaviours, are used by an individual as the basis for his or her perspective, attitudes or behaviour" (Arnould, Price & Zinkhan, 2005: 609). Such groups may have different degrees of influence on individuals' consumption choices depending on whether people are internal or external to a group, and whether they want to be associated to or dissociated from the values expressed by a given group. Holt (1995) classifies consumption into four streams: consuming as experience, consuming as integration, consuming as play and consuming as classification. The latter is particularly relevant in this context as it describes how individuals use goods to classify themselves in relation to others. Classification may take place through objects or actions: in the first one, consumers classify themselves through meanings associated with certain goods, while in the second case, classification happens through the experience of consuming such a good (Holt, 1995). On a similar note, Solomon (1983) also pointed out consumers' reliance on social meanings in their purchasing decisions. Specifically, these individuals make use of the social meanings embedded in goods as a guiding tool helping them perform particular social roles.

Patterns reminiscent of the Consumption Studies perspective are found in many studies related to food consumption. Petrescu and Petrescu-Mag (2015) indicate that consumers' food choices are tightly related to the image they care to portray in a social setting. Similarly, Hwang (2016) found individuals to engage in organic food consumption due to the positive self-image that these products imply. In other words, they employ the shared meaning of organic food consumption as a tool to build a positive image of the self in social settings. Indeed, food products are symbols and their consumption is functional to the construction of one's identity. Such symbols carry different meanings across cultures and often imply consumers' social status within society (Guptill, Copelton & Lucal, 2017).

The two abovementioned perspectives have different approaches to the study of consumers. The first one views individuals as experiential creatures in search of meaning, while the second one identifies them as social beings that engage in consumption as an act of self-identity assertion towards others. Chekima, Wafa, Igau and Chekima (2015) investigated the behaviour of green consumers under both perspectives. They found that individuals stick to their cultural values and beliefs to both preserve their self-consistency and to curate their social relationships. These findings highlight the relevance of looking into consumers' behaviour from both an individualistic and emotional perspective, as well as a collective socio-cultural point of view. Therefore, this study will adopt both perspectives to analyse consumers' behaviour towards organic and locally produced food across different consumption settings, with the ultimate goal of achieving a more holistic understanding of these individuals.

2.2.2 Attitude-behaviour gap

In this section, the concept of attitude-behaviour gap will be discussed as a tool to better understand the asymmetry between consumers' beliefs and actions, with a focus on the 'organic' and 'local' food attributes.

Numerous theoretical frameworks have been developed in an attempt to explain the gap between individuals' attitudes and behaviour within a certain context. This asymmetry, also known as 'attitude-behaviour gap' or 'value-action gap' has been widely discussed in literature and studied in different fields (Godin, Conner & Sheeran, 2005; McDonald, Oates, Young & Hwang, 2006). Particularly, this concept has often been used to analyse people's knowledge and awareness about environmental issues and how those differ from their actual engagement in pro-environmental behaviour (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Previous research found evidence that individuals do not always live according to their values and purchasing intentions do not necessarily translate into purchasing outcomes (Morwitz, Steckel, & Gupta, 2007). Specifically, environmental attitudes were shown to have

little impact on pro-environmental behaviour, as people only engage in eco-friendly behaviour that requires the least effort (Diekmann & Preisendoerfer (1992) in Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). For instance, Park and Lin (2018) found that, despite their high level of awareness about ethical fashion, younger consumers tend to purchase less ethical products if those goods entail lower utilitarian value or higher functional risk. Mazar and Zhong (2010) indicate moral licensing effect as another possible cause for the attitude-behaviour gap. According to this phenomenon, consumers feel entitled to make unethical consumption choices after engaging in pro-environmental consumption.

The attitude-behaviour gap framework has been applied on studies related to sustainable food consumption. Vermeir and Verbeke (2006) concluded that, despite consumers' positive attitudes towards sustainable food products, barriers such as low perceived availability may negatively affect their purchase intentions. Similar patterns were also indicated in the context of organic food, where consumers' purchasing behaviour did not reflect their positive attitudes towards organic food products (Iweala, Spiller, & Meyerding, 2019). In fact, one may intend to purchase a given product but then encounter psychological (trust, knowledge and satisfaction), economic (price levels), or physical (availability and distance) barriers that ultimately influence the buying decision (Sultan, Tarafder, Pearson & Henryks, 2020). Padel and Foster (2005) identified the main purchasing barriers for organic food to be limited information, lack of availability, poor presentation, low trust of organic supermarkets, and limited cooking skills. Moreover, they made a distinction between regular and occasional buyers of organic food: the former would only choose conventional alternatives when no organic option is available, while the latter would make the same choice due to their lower food budget. Lastly, they also indicated a variety of barriers against organic choices that differed across products categories. Even in the case of local food, a gap between attitudes and behaviour has been spotted. Extant research indicated that, although consumers had great interest in local food, the amount of local food they actually purchased was rather low (Chambers, Lobb, Butler, Harvey & Traill, 2007). Similarly, Zepeda and Leviten-Reid (2004) found consumers to be enthusiastic about the concept of locally produced food, but then eventually admitted not to be willing to search for those products when shopping for groceries.

2.2.3 Hedonic versus utilitarian factors

In the next two sections, the categories of hedonic and utilitarian factors, as well as egoistic and altruistic motives, will be reviewed in order to portray an exhaustive picture of consumers' rationales to engage in organic and local food consumption.

Consumers' purchasing decisions are often driven by hedonic or utilitarian factors, or a combination of the two. Babin, Darden and Griffin (1994) describe utilitarian value as the result of the conscious pursuit of an intended outcome. It is rational and task-oriented in nature, and traditionally perceived as instrumental and cognitive. Utilitarian evaluation involves the fulfilment of functional needs related to a certain product. In this context, consumers seek to buy goods efficiently and timely, achieving goals with minimum hassle (Babin et al., 1994). On the other hand, hedonic consumption is experiential, exciting, fun evoking, enjoyable and pleasurable. In this case, individuals seek sensory gratification through the consumption of goods and services (Alba & Williams, 2013).

In the context of food consumption, both utilitarian and hedonic considerations are drivers of purchasing decisions (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000). Consumption may take place for both utilitarian reasons and hedonic gratification matters (Batra & Ahtola, 1990). Utilitarian values most often include considerations about hunger, nutrition, health preservation and convenience, while hedonic values are entirely focused on sensory attributes related to taste and pleasure (Lusk & Briggeman, 2009).

Organic food is often perceived as healthier and, therefore, may be considered to provide more utilitarian than hedonic benefits (Nystrand & Olsen, 2020). In fact, recent research suggests that the formation of attitudes towards organic food is more influenced by utilitarian values than hedonic ones, arguing that organic food performs utilitarian functions rather than hedonic ones (Sadiq, Rajeswari, Ansari & Kirmani, 2021). A study by Bénard et al. (2018) showed that future oriented individuals are greater consumers of organic food compared to those who were less concerned about future consequences. Conversely, other studies have found consumers to associate organic food consumption with pleasure and happiness (Vega-Zamora, Torres-Ruiz, Murgado-Armenteros & Parras-Rosa, 2014). Vega-Zamora et al. (2014) found that engaging in the consumption of organic food products elicits experiences and sensations in which feelings and emotions are more relevant than product-related information. On a similar note, Apaolaza, Hartmann, D'Souza and López (2018) showed organic food consumption to enhance individuals' emotional well-being. Further research found the most crucial attributes in the development of attitudes towards organic food share both utilitarian and hedonic characteristics. According to Lee and Yun (2015), these attributes are nutritional content, sensory appeal, ecological welfare and price. Zanolini and Naspetti (2002) indicated that the most important motives of organic food consumption are individuals' mental associations with pleasure, health and well-being.

In the context of restaurant dining, the perceived value of organic food might differ from that of a grocery shopping context due to the experiential and intangible nature of dining out (Lu & Chi, 2018). In fact, extant research indicated that hedonic experience is valued more than utilitarian experience when dining at restaurants (Hwang & Ok, 2013). However, Ryu, Han and Jang (2008) argue that, while some customers might prioritise hedonic aspects such as taste and atmosphere, others may value utilitarian aspects of a restaurant experience to a greater extent, for instance seeking healthier menu items. Babin et al. (1994) previously mentioned that both values may influence restaurant food choices, with hedonic ones reflecting the emotional and entertaining worth associated with a dining experience, and utilitarian ones characterizing functional and cognitive benefits associated with economic assessment and task orientation.

2.2.4 Egoistic versus altruistic factors

A similar duality that is relevant in the context of organic food is that of egoistic and altruistic motives. Literature supports the notion that both egoistic and altruistic factors may shape consumers' attitudes towards organic food (Honkanen, Verplanken & Olsen, 2006; Magnusson et al., 2003). Moreover, intentions to buy organic were also found to be influenced by both categories of factors (Thøgersen, 2011; Yadav & Pathak, 2016).

The most salient egoistic drivers of food consumption were found to be health concern and price. Magnusson et al. (2003) suggest that consumers may be drawn to purchase organic food as they perceive it to be healthier. Aertsens, Verbeke, Mondelaers and Van Huylenbroeck (2009), found individuals to attach greater importance to health-related attributes than to sustainability-related ones, suggesting egoistic motives to be more dominant than altruistic ones. Similarly, a study by Hansen, Sørensen and Eriksen (2018) showed that consumers' organic food identity is positively influenced by health concern but unrelated to environmental consciousness. In addition to health factors, price was also found to affect consumers' purchase intentions towards organic food, as the great price premium applied to these products may discourage individuals from choosing them (Lastovicka, Bettencourt, Hughner & Kuntze, 1999).

On the other hand, some argue in favour of altruistic values as main drivers of organic food choice. Ahmad and Juhdi (2010) provided evidence of the impact of environmental concerns on consumers' attitudes towards organic food products. Individuals seem to primarily choose organic goods for pro-environmental and pro-social reasons, expressing concern for the common good (Thøgersen, 2011). Thøgersen (2011) concluded that purchasing organic food products is strongly related to altruistic

values, but not egoistic ones. Nonetheless, the author spots a particular pattern, in which consumers start purchasing organic food for unselfish reasons, but then bolster their opinion about selfish benefits to appear rational and competent and preserve their self-image. In addition to that, consumers were found to be drawn towards organic food purchases because of animal welfare concerns, as they associate organic production with more ethical treatment of animals (Harper & Makatouni, 2002).

Kareklas, Carlson and Muehling (2014) concluded that both egoistic and altruistic factors can predict consumers' attitude and purchase intentions towards organic food products. Particularly, they found nutritional aspects, perception of food as natural and environmental concerns as the most salient factors in shaping consumers' attitudes towards organic food.

2.3 Summary of Literature Review

According to existing research, organic food choice is often driven by health concerns, perception of better taste and environmental concerns, hence driven by both altruistic and egoistic motives. Price and insufficient availability are the main barriers to organic food choice. Local food choice is mostly driven by environmental concern, a perception of greater freshness and safety, and support of local producers, while lack of availability is the main barrier. However, there is no clear definition of what consumers define as local. The abovementioned drivers and barriers have varying influences across different product categories. In the context of restaurants, food choices are mainly driven by hedonic factors. Nonetheless, in the context of organic and local dining, utilitarian factors are also involved. There are mixed findings about the influence of age and gender on organic and local food choices. However, women are usually found to be more environmentally conscious, as well as more prone to engage in organic and ethical food consumption.

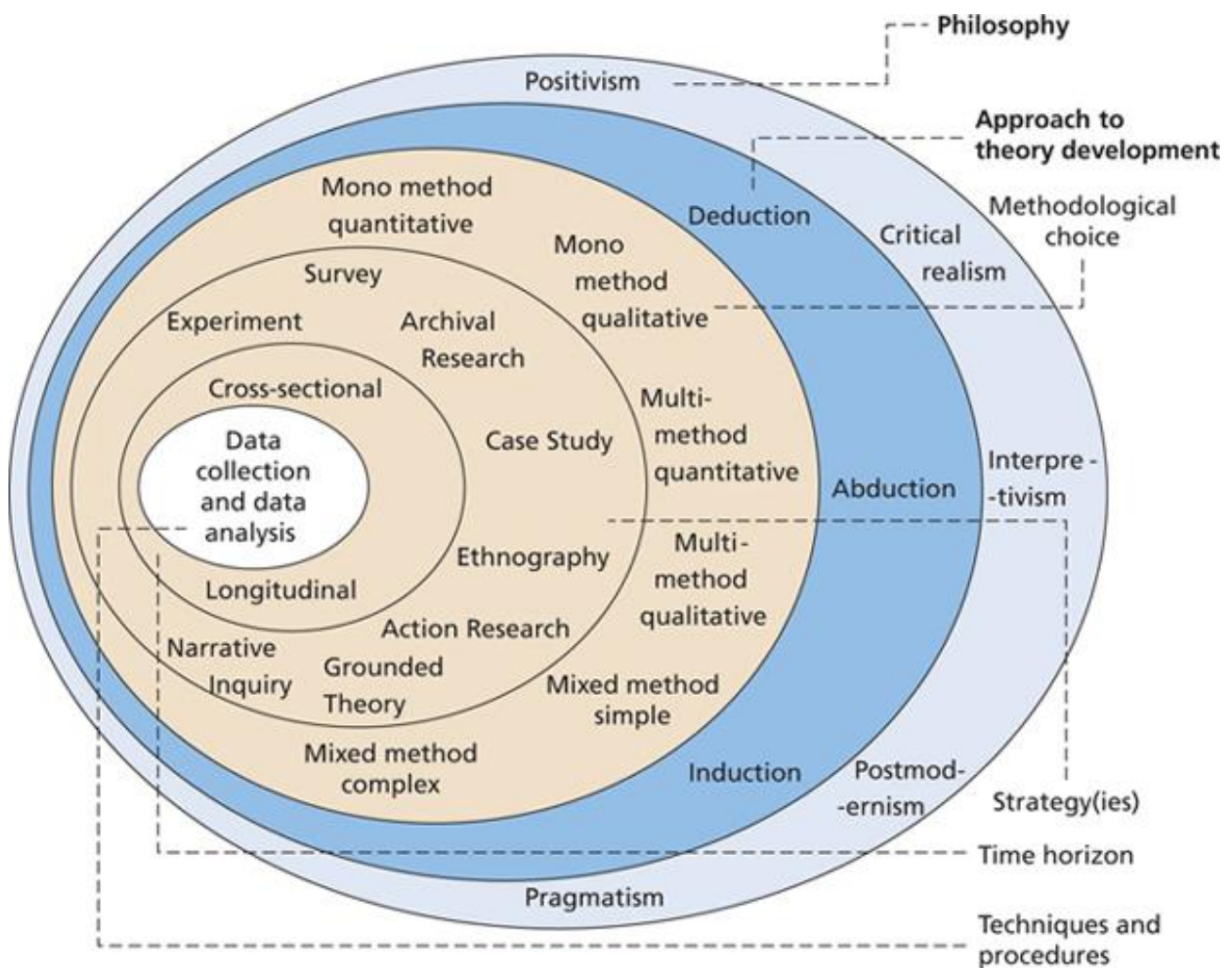
The perspectives of Consumer Research and Consumption Studies outlined by Østergaard & Jantzen (2000) are an optimal framework in the context of this study as they depict consumers as experiential and social beings respectively. The concept of attitude-behaviour gap will also be used as a tool for the analysis of consumers' food choices in relation to organic and locally produced food. Lastly, the purchasing of such food products will be placed in the hedonic-utilitarian and egoistic-altruistic spectra in order to identify the nature of the factors that drive consumers' food choices.

3. Methodology

In order to explain and argue for the methodological choices this study is based on the research onion (Figure 5), as presented by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), will be used as a framework. This will provide an explanation as to how the previously presented research question (Chapter 1) will be answered. The different layers of the onion will be explored starting from the outermost layer, the research philosophy, and then moving inwards, ending at the centre and explaining the data collection and data analysis processes. To conclude, research quality and ethical considerations will be assessed.

Figure 5

The Research Onion. As presented by: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019)



3.1 Research Philosophy

The outermost layer, oval 6, delves into philosophy of science. This entails what researchers define as ontology, epistemology, and axiology beliefs, creating the foundation for how research is conducted and new knowledge is created (Saunders et al., 2019).

The present study lies within the **interpretivist paradigm**, which is developed as a subjectivist critique of positivism (Saunders et al., 2019). This paradigm fits with our ontological beliefs of seeing humans as creators of meaning and therefore different from physical phenomena. Physical phenomena and the natural sciences in general are commonly studied within the positivistic paradigm, which tries to: “*discover definite, universal ‘laws’ that apply to everybody*” (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 148). On the contrary, interpretivism tries to “*create new, richer understandings and interpretations of social worlds and contexts*” (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 148). Because it is believed the creation and experience of our social reality differs based on place in time, different people from different cultural backgrounds, and under different circumstances, the level of detail of variations among people and their individual circumstances will be lost if researched with a focus on what is the common experience for all at all times (Saunders et al., 2019). Therefore, to attempt to take this complexity into account, interpretivists will collect what is meaningful to their research participants (Saunders et al., 2019), which is how it is intended to fulfil the purpose of exploring food consumption choices and rationales.

To refine from an epistemological viewpoint, interpretivists have a focus on interpretations, perceptions, stories, and narratives and with this they wish to create and communicate new worldviews and understandings as they find concepts and theories too simplistic (Saunders et al., 2019)

In relation to axiology from an interpretivist standpoint, researchers acknowledge to have an influence on the world that is being researched, and that the interpretations deriving from primary and secondary data will inevitably be influenced by researchers’ own values and beliefs, which will play an important role in the research process (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.2 Research Approach

Moving on to the next oval (oval 5), this section will present the approach to theory development. The research conducted is a hybrid of the deductive and inductive approaches, which according to Saunders et al.'s (2019) experience is often an advantage.

Research conducted in a deductive manner usually tests a specific theory already presented in literature, whereas the inductive research approach collects data and develops theory from data (Saunders et al., 2019).

Research on food consumption choices in the different settings of grocery shopping and dining at a restaurant have been done before but to the researchers' best knowledge not with a comparison element and focus on possible value shifts for 'organic' and 'locally produced' as attributes. The current research has been explored in the previously presented literature review, which is found to be a deductive element. However, as the purpose of the literature review was not to find a theory to test data against, but rather create an initial understanding of the different elements being investigated in the study, one cannot define the study as purely deductive.

The exploration and comparison of food consumption choices in the two different settings, along with the value and influence of the 'organic' and 'locally produced' attributes, is seen as an inductive element of the research. This fits well with the interpretivist philosophy that is followed, to which inductive reasoning is usually linked, due to its connection to humanities and emphasis on subjective interpretations (Saunders et al., 2019).

To answer the research question and sub-questions, it is necessary to conclude in both a deductive and inductive manner. Firstly, discussing in a deductive manner if the results gathered match or contradict previous research, and secondly explore the differences between food consumption choices in a grocery shopping setting versus dining at restaurants as an inductive element.

One might argue that a combination of deductive and inductive reasoning would result in an abductive approach. However, an abductive approach moves back and forth between theory and data development, subsequently testing the results found (Saunders et al., 2019), which is incompatible with the time and resource constraints of this study. Hence, there is an impossibility to test the findings of the present study and it is rather something that future research might want to consider.

3.3 Research Design

The next three layers of the onion, oval 4, 3, and 2, are what makes up the research design. Research design is affected by the previously described research philosophy and approach. This section will therefore present the choice of qualitative methods, the research strategy, and lastly the influence of the research time horizon.

3.3.1 Qualitative research

First oval 4, revolves around the **methodological choice**, which comes down to the choice of using quantitative or qualitative methods, or a mix of the two in some form. The choice of methods is greatly related to what purpose the research intends to fulfil. Purpose of research is mostly categorised

as either: descriptive, exploratory, explanatory, evaluative, or a combination of these. Exploratory research is found to be useful when aiming to clarify one's understanding of a phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2019) which, as presented in Chapter 1, aligns with how *“the aim of this research is to delve deep into Danish consumers' rationales for organic and locally produced food consumption”* and explore how this might differ between the settings of grocery shopping and restaurant dining. As the purpose of this study is exploratory, a qualitative research design has been found to be the most appropriate choice.

This also aligns with the interpretivist philosophy that the research draws on as a base, as the research is trying to make sense of the socially constructed and subjective meanings revealed about the phenomenon being studied (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 179), in this case, food consumption. Furthermore, this is found to be a fitting choice as qualitative research is designed to study participants' attributed meanings and associated relationships, expressed through words and images (Saunders et al., 2019). In this case, only spoken words, which will be collected through interviews. The choice of data collection methods will be further elaborated in section 3.4.

Oval 3 concerns the choice of **research strategy**. We have found that the best way to answer our research question was not to follow a particular fixed strategy. This aligns with Saunders et al.'s (2019) recommendation of not choosing a label of a specific strategy for their own sake, as the most important is to create coherence throughout the research, so that in the end one will be able to meet one's objectives and answer the research question.

Given the influence of the interpretivist philosophy and the mixed deductive and inductive approach, it is deemed appropriate to answer the research question through the initial literature review and a further exploration via semi-structured interviews analysed via a thematic coding analysis.

Oval 2 considers the **time horizon** of the research. It can either be longitudinal, as studies change and develop over time, or cross sectional, studying phenomena at a particular time (Saunders et al., 2019). The present research in the context of a Master Thesis is limited by a time constraint and studies the phenomenon of food consumption as of now, hence the study is defined as a **cross sectional study**.

3.4 Data Collection

The centre of the onion, oval 1, consist of the techniques and procedures completing the research. This includes both the **data collection** method and the **data analysis**. As the two deserve an explicit

and rich description, the data analysis will be described in its own individual section after the current section.

In this section, the choice of data collection methods will be explained. It has been found appropriate to use semi-structured interviews for the data collection process. First, this method of data collection will be explored, then, the modalities of finding participants for interviews will be explained, and lastly, the interview guide will be outlined and argued for.

3.4.1. Semi-structured interviews

As described earlier, the study follows an exploratory approach, therefore **semi-structured interviews** are deemed to be advantageous (Saunders et al., 2019)

The interviews conducted were **one-to-one interviews**, interviewing a single participant at a time (Saunders et al., 2019). To be more time efficient, the interviews were conducted by both researchers, who happen to have different ethnic backgrounds: Danish and Italian. As the study investigates consumers living in Denmark, interviews were conducted both in English and in Danish. Therefore, both cross-cultural and intra-cultural variations between the researchers and the interview participants may arise. Kvale & Brinkmann (2009, pp. 144–145) specify that these variations, i.e. disparities, can happen within language use, gestures, and cultural norms. Especially for the interviews conducted in English, where neither the researcher nor participants were native speakers, meaning could get lost in translation and create bias in the results. To reduce this kind of disparity, an effort has been made to make sure participants were comfortable with speaking English before conducting interviews.

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, most interviews were **internet mediated interviews**, with a few exceptions. So called **synchronous electronic interviews** were done via the web conferencing service Microsoft Teams. This type of interview can be considered equivalent to a telephone interview including video telephony service. Synchronous electronic interviews have both advantages and disadvantages. Firstly, they allow to interview participants in the comfort of one's own home, regardless of the distance (Hanna, 2012 as cited in Saunders et al., 2019), which then eases interview planning and possibly creates convenience for both researcher and participant. However, Saunders et al. (2019) stress that establishing personal contact is fundamental for semi-structured interviews, which may be an issue for nonphysical face-to-face interviews. Such interviews can be perceived as impersonal and somewhat anonymous, which may result in difficulties in establishing trust and rapport (Saunders et al., 2019).

Visual cues and paralinguistic signals that one would normally interpret while having a face-to-face conversation (Saunders et al., 2019) might be lost during an internet mediated interview, even when having an online call with video, as the quality of the connection may compromise or interrupt the call. The researchers ensured the quality of their own internet connection but could obviously not ensure the quality of participants' connection.

Even though many participants, due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, might have gained more experience and competence with these kinds of services (such as Microsoft Teams and the like) the level of comfort they may have with the form of the interview and the technology used for it can negatively influence the experience (Saunders et al., 2019).

Besides considerations specifically related to non-physical interviews, some arguments in relation to interviews in general are still important. When conducting interviews, Saunders et al. (2019) list four possible errors and biases affecting interviewer and participant which may impact the quality of the data collected. Therefore, researchers should be aware of these biases and take them into account when engaging in interviews.

Interviewer bias (or researcher bias) relates to how the comments, nonverbal behaviour or tone of the interviewer may create bias and influence the way a participant might respond to the questions asked. This bias can also refer to the way the interviewer interprets responses and if the interviewee's trust is not acquired. Overall, any factor that leads to bias in the researcher's recording of responses.

Interviewee or participant bias is described as any factor which induces a false response. This can be related to simply taking part in an interview as it may feel like an intrusive process. This can cause the interviewee to only provide a partial picture of the situation so that they put themselves in a socially desirable role. Therefore, how the interviewee sees the interviewer also has an influence. This correlates to the notion of **power asymmetry**, which according to Brinkmann & Kvale (2018), does not necessarily have to exist due to an intentional exertion of power by the interviewer, but rather to the structural position within the interview that could drive participants to say what they believe the interviewer as an authority would like to hear.

Researcher and participant error refers to any factor that alters the way both parties perform e.g., being tired, hungry, or insufficiently prepared. To avoid such errors on the participants' side, the time of the interviews were all planned after the wishes of participants rather than researchers, who then planned accordingly to avoid errors on their own side.

Lastly, it is important to note that an interview is an interpersonal situation where knowledge is constructed in the interaction between participant and researcher, which means that a combination of other researchers and participants may create slightly different results (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). Nonetheless, this notion was already accounted for given the interpretivist nature of the present study.

3.4.2 Participants

In this section the method of finding and selecting participants to be interviewed for the study through a voluntary non-probability sampling method will be delineated.

Using a sample instead of census gives more time to design and manage the data collection modalities, as well as collecting more detailed information (Saunders et al., 2019). The sample selected should be related to the population highlighted in the objectives and research question (Saunders et al., 2019), which for this study is the Danish population. This relates to the most crucial point: *“when selecting a sample: it must enable you to answer your research question!”* (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 295)

To be able to answer the research question and, in particular, how food consumption choices are influenced by ‘organic’ and ‘local’ food attributes, a target group for respondents was defined. First ‘Danish Consumers’ are defined as anyone living in Denmark on a permanent basis, excluding for example exchange students, who live in Denmark temporarily for a short period of time. Individuals within the target group had been living in Denmark for a period of at least three years. Secondly, participants were selected based on whether they consumed organic and/or locally produced food, in order to make sure that they found value in these categories of food.

As the aim is to collect as pure data as possible, the purpose of the study and the characteristics of the target group were hidden from participants until after participation, in order not to influence their answers.

Participants were found through a non-probability sample and via the method of volunteer snowball sampling. First, people were selected if fitting the target group based on the researchers’ assumptions. After the interview, the target group was disclosed to the first participants, and they were then asked to refer any people they knew who could have been relevant within the target group and would be available for an interview; preferably, people who were not known to the researchers. This was done to avoid biasing the participants before the interview; however, the method is not bullet proof as participants’ fit in the target group was based solely on assumptions people had about each other. Another biasing factor is found in people’s tendency to refer to other possible participants who are

similar to themselves, which may result in a homogeneous sample (Lee, 2000 as cited in Saunders et al., 2019).

In order to achieve as much of a heterogeneous sample as possible, an attempt was made to gather participants evenly spread across ages and genders. The outcome was fairly successful as the participants consisted of 9 women and 8 men, fairly spread in the age range between 23 and 60 years. In total, 17 interviews were conducted and all of them provided valid and meaningful insights within the research scope. On top of those, two preliminary test interviews were conducted in order to test the interview guide but were subsequently discarded as changes were made to the interview guide afterwards.

3.4.3 Interview guide

In this section, the interview guide will be explained and reviewed following the order in which questions were asked. The interview guide was first created in English and then translated to Danish. Both final versions of the interview guide can be found in Appendix 8.1. The interview guide was created based on the literature review presented in Chapter 2.

It should be noted that, when working in a team, issues can arise when different researchers use the same interview guide. Varying levels of sensitivity towards and knowledge about the interview topic may produce different results on the same themes (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). In order to test the interview guide, reduce the impact of the biases mentioned in the above section 3.4.1, align the two researchers, and make sure that the questions could be understood correctly by participants, two test interviews were conducted. One in English, with the second researchers present as an observer, and one in Danish, testing the translation of the interview guide. After these interviews had been conducted, the interview guide was refined and corrected. The final interview guide is described below.

The order of themes in the interview guide followed a specific order, going from general to more specific. First, participants were asked about what is most important when choosing a restaurant and then how a specific dish at a restaurant is chosen. Afterwards, they were asked what is important for them when shopping for food in a grocery setting. To ease the development of their train of thought, they were asked about their last shopping trip and what they bought then. This part of the interview guide was inspired by Hjelmars (2011). Based on this information it was then explored what is important to respondents when choosing *where* to shop. To thoroughly explore what participants prioritise when choosing food products, they were first asked in general terms about their preferences and

secondly about what is important to them for different categories of food. Five food categories were explored: (1) vegetables, (2) milk and dairy products, (3) meat, (4) bread, and (5) chocolate.

The last two categories, bread and chocolate, were chosen specifically with the purpose of analysing respondents' preferences when purchasing processed food. Chocolate was also chosen because organic options can be easily found in most supermarkets.

After gathering insights on the initial most important factors, the organic and locally produced food aspect was mentioned. This was done in order not to bring the topics of organic and locally produced food to the mind of participants, in an attempt to reduce the influence of power asymmetry.

The two characteristics were explored separately, but through questions worded alike. Respondents were asked how much organic and locally produced food they buy compared to their overall shopping. Then, they were asked what makes them buy these products and, afterwards, what makes them choose something which is not organic or locally produced. Respondents were also asked how easy or hard they find it to recognise products with these characteristics when grocery shopping. Due to a language-related ambiguity, all the interviews conducted in Danish investigated how easy or difficult the participants thought it was to *find* organic and locally produced food instead. Nonetheless, this contributed with valuable insights on another level. If the research were to be conducted again, all participants would ideally be asked both questions. For the organic aspect, interviewees were also asked to what extent they trusted organic labels.

In order to analyse the social factors influencing organic and local food consumption, participants were asked whether they talk about these food characteristics with others and with whom. The purpose of this question is to point out any social influences deriving from reference groups and impacting their food choices.

Interviewees were then asked about their experience at restaurants related to organic and locally produced food, to explore how these characteristics influence their choices in this setting. As for the grocery setting, the two food attributes were explored separately, but with similar questions. Participants were asked whether they had had organic or locally produced food at restaurants and if it was something they would like restaurants to offer. Participants were then asked if they knew about the Organic Cuisine Label and if they would like to visit a certified organic restaurant.

At the very end, people were asked to reflect on whether (and how) the importance of organic and local food changes for them between the two settings: supermarket versus restaurant. In other words,

how ‘organic’ and ‘local’ as food attributes may gain or lose importance across the two settings analysed.

3.5 Data analysis

This section dives into how the data has been processed after collection and how a thematic analysis has been developed.

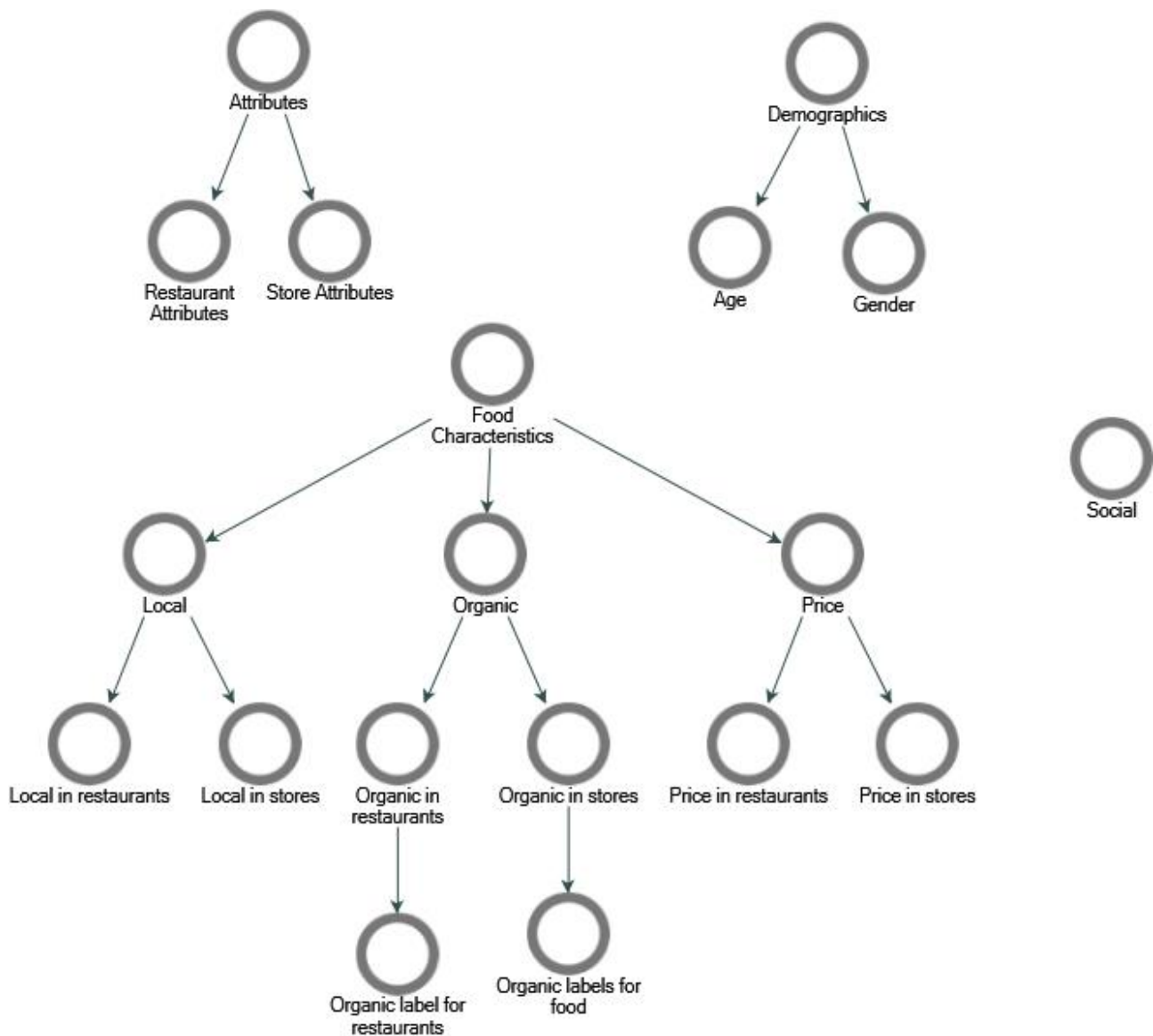
First, the interviews were transcribed with the help of the software Konch and then manually controlled to make sure there were no mistakes. Once the transcription process was completed, data analysis and coding were carried out with the help of the qualitative analysis software NVivo.

The following section describes in detail the modalities of the coding process. As Skjott Linneberg & Korsgaard (2019) describe it, the aim of coding is to create a data inventory in order to (1) acquire deep, comprehensive and thorough insights, (2) make data easily accessible and retrievable, (3) sort and structure data, (4)(5) ensuring transparency, validity and credibility, and (6) give a voice to participants

3.5.1 Stages in the thematic analysis

Thematic analysis provides flexibility (Saunders et al., 2019), which is needed when combining deductive and inductive methods. Coding of the interviews was done following a concept driven coding approach as opposed to data driven (open) coding. This is due to the deductive connotations of semi-structured interviews. When engaging in concept driven coding, one first decides on a set of concepts or themes to analyse when coding, while still being aware that new insights, and hence themes, can emerge throughout the coding process (Gibbs, 2018). The themes defined before the coding process were derived from the different themes in the interview guide, which, as described before, originated from the initial literature review. The structure of the framework originated from the research question, aiming to explore how consumers’ behaviour differs when purchasing food in different settings. This means that the food attributes and characteristics coded are always seen in the context of either a restaurant setting or a grocery shopping setting. As described in section 3.4.3 about the interview guide, people were asked whether they discussed matters of organic and locally produced food with anyone in order to investigate social factors influencing food choices. Hence, a standalone code named ‘Social’ was created for this theme. The initial coding theme framework is presented in the *Coding Map 1* below.

Coding Map 1

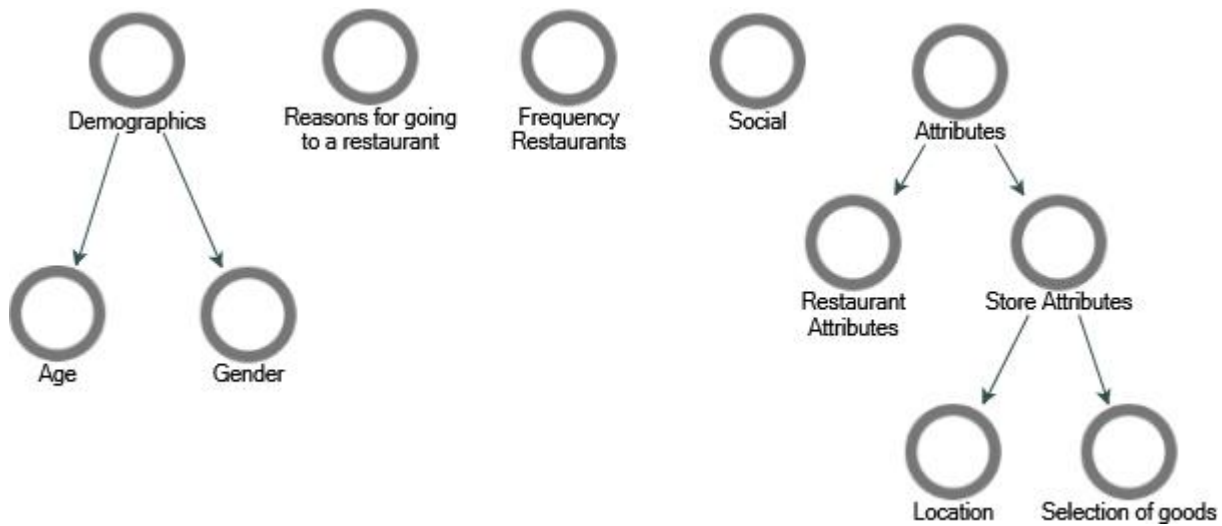


In order for the two authors to align on the coding process, two of the interview transcripts were coded by both of them, engaging in so-called double coding, or code cross checking. The coding results were then compared and discussed to make sure the rest of the interviews were coded following the same common ground. Code cross checking is used as a tool to measure the reliability of coding and to minimise researcher bias (Gibbs, 2018).

After cross checking the code, new coding themes were found, initiated from the data, and added to the coding framework. The updated framework is presented below divided in fractions for greater clarity.

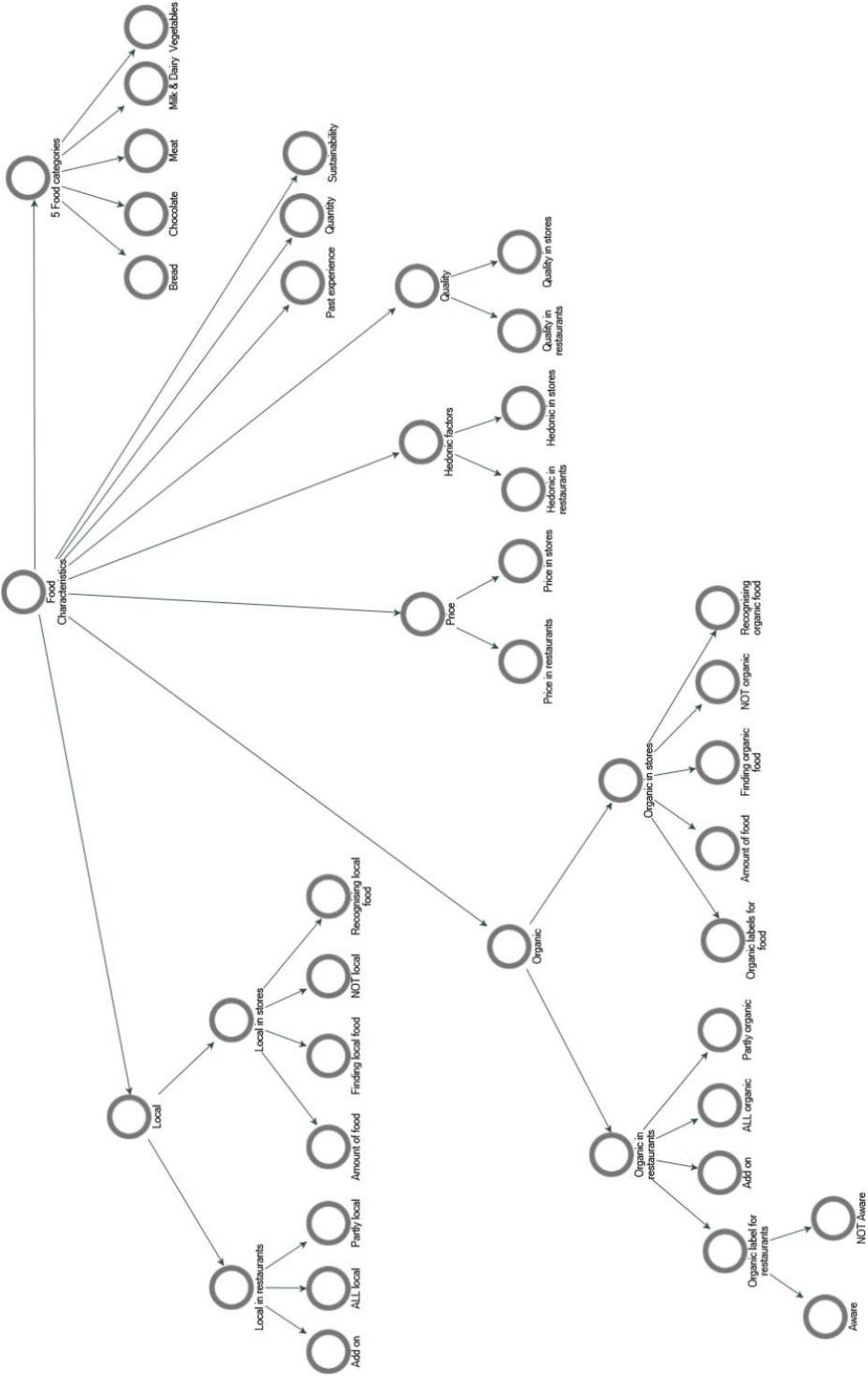
As presented below, for Store Attributes, Location and Selection of Goods were added. Besides the standalone code of Social, two other standalone codes were added to identify the reasons for participants to visit restaurants and the frequency with which they did. The code for Demographics stayed the same.

Coding Map 2.0 a



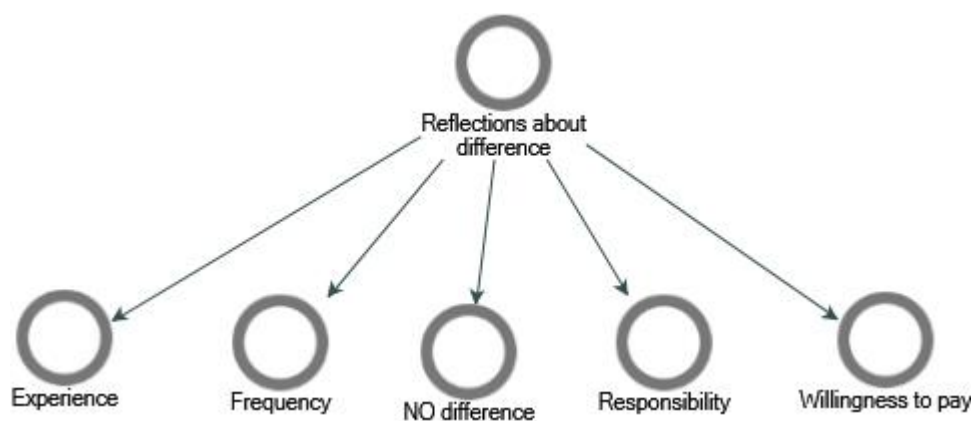
Food characteristics had numerous new codes added, the main ones being the five food categories (earlier described in 3.4.3 Interview guide), quality, sustainability, past experience, and quantity. Furthermore, subcodes were added to local and organic. See overview in Coding Map 2.0 b below.

Coding Map 2.0 b



Lastly, a new coding set was added to gather participants' reflections about how the value of organic and local might differ between the grocery shopping and dining setting. See below illustration, Coding Map 2.0 c.

Coding Map 2.0 c



Gibbs (2018) refers to three levels of coding: descriptive, categorising, and analytic. To make sure that coding did not only happen at a descriptive level, retrieval of thematically related sections was done. This implied going through text which had been coded the same way, inspecting it, and possibly finding a deeper, more analytical connection (Gibbs, 2018). The results of the coding and analysis will be presented in detail in Chapter 4. All codes and their specific definitions can be found in the Appendix 8.3.

3.6 Research quality

The following section will discuss how the quality of research has been assured.

Research quality is often evaluated on the basis of validity and reliability. However, these criteria have their origin in positivism, natural sciences, and quantitative studies, and are therefore considered inappropriate for measuring the quality of qualitative research, given the ontological interpretivist assumptions of a socially constructed and multifaceted world (Saunders et al., 2019).

Guba and Lincoln (1989), Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Lincoln et al. (2011), as cited in Saunders et al. (2019), have perfected over several occasions alternative quality criteria taking into account the nature of qualitative research. The further development of these criteria by Saunders et al. (2019) will be used to assess the quality of this research. These are respectively (1) Dependability, as a parallel criterion to Reliability, (2) Credibility, as a parallel criterion to Validity, and (3) Transferability, as a parallel criterion to Generalisability.

3.6.1 Reliability/Dependability

Reliability refers to consistency throughout the research process and the ability of a piece of research to be replicated by other researchers. However, this clashes with the flexibility of semi structured interviews (Saunders et al., 2019) which have been used in this study. Therefore, dependability refers to ensuring quality by profound explanation of the research design, data collection and analysis, together with reporting all changes that might happen in the research process (Saunders et al., 2019). To ensure dependability, a thorough description of these elements has therefore been outlined in the previous sections, so that they can be easily understood and evaluated by the reader.

3.6.2 Validity/Credibility

In this context, validity refers to the internal validity of a study. This is determined by the extent to which one's results can be applied to the relation between the variables studied, rather than by flaws in one's research design. Nonetheless, this cannot be applied in the case of an exploratory study (Saunders et al., 2019). Instead, credibility is ensured by asking exploratory questions from a variety of angles and perspectives (Saunders et al., 2019) e.g. asking participants both why they buy organic and why they do not buy organic. Further credibility is achieved using clarifying questions during the interview and making sure to report any opposing results which seem to contradict other cases (Saunders et al., 2019). All the above were attempted to be fulfilled since it is fundamental in this context that: *“Emphasis is placed on ensuring that the representations of the research participants’ socially constructed realities actually match what the participants intended.”* (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 216)

3.6.3 Generalisability/Transferability

Generalisability or external validity refers to the possibility of generalising the findings of a study. However, the data collection from a small non-probability sample, as in this study, can never be used to make a statistical generalisation about an entire population (Saunders et al., 2019). Instead, a full description of this study has been provided, including the context and research question in Chapter 1, the research design in the previous sections, the findings and interpretations as presented in Chapter 4, along with all transcripts provided in Appendix 8.2. All this information is presented to ensure transferability, hence the possibility for another researcher to construct a similar research project in another setting (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The four fields traditionally discussed as ethical guidelines for researchers are: informed consent, confidentiality, consequences and the role of the researcher (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). These four aspects form the base of this section.

First, Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) indicate that **informed consent** entails obtaining voluntary participation of the interviewees and informing them of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, as well as the overall purpose of the research, the main features of the research design and any possible risks or benefits from participating. As this study adopted a funnel shaped questioning technique, some of this information had to be withheld from participants until after the interview. However, videotaping consent for transcription purposes was received verbally from all participants before the interview. After the interview, all participants were given the chance to ask any questions they might have had about the study. Lastly, written consent on processing the interview data and any personal data possibly given was retrieved from all participants, based on the standards depicted by Copenhagen Business School.

The processing of personal data leads to the field of **confidentiality**. Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) stress out that participants' private data which can possibly identify them should not be disclosed. All participants' data has been anonymised in both in-text citations and descriptions, as well as in the transcripts enclosed in Appendix 8.2.

Furthermore, researchers have the responsibility to reflect on the possible **consequences** that could affect people taking part in the study and the larger group that these people represent (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 73). It is deemed that the perspective adopted on the subject of food consumption investigated in this research, as well as revealing information in this matter, are not particularly problematic from an ethical perspective. All participants seemed comfortable sharing their thoughts and the researchers did not notice any form of unwillingness to answer any of the questions during the interview. Had this study touched upon the subject of religion or eating disorders in relation to food consumption, the ethical aspect would have played a more prominent role.

The last ethical field actively considered is **the role of the researcher**. The integrity of the researcher (their knowledge, experience, honesty and fairness) is crucial to the quality of research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The researchers involved therefore recognise the importance of reflection throughout the research process, and have held each other accountable for any ethical concerns, while trying to achieve maximum transparency and scientific quality.

3.8 Summary of Methodology

To sum up, this research is conducted from an interpretivist viewpoint, using both a deductive and inductive research approach. The research is based on qualitative mono-methods design, using semi-structured interviews as a data collection method. In total, 17 of those were conducted. The 17 participants were found via a voluntarily snowball sampling, a so-called non-probability sample. The interview guide used to structure the interviews has been inspired by the literature review presented in Chapter 2 and investigated from general to specific. The data has been transcribed with the help of the software Konch and thematically coded via the qualitative analysis tool NVivo. Research quality has been assessed via the criteria of reliability/dependability, validity/credibility and generalisability/transferability. At last, ethical considerations made throughout the research process have been delineated.

4. Findings

This chapter will present the empirical findings emerged from an analysis of the data collected. The primary data gathered through interviews will be summarised in order to present a comprehensive but concise overview. This chapter is divided into sections for better consistency with the research question and the themes analysed in the literature review. Section 4.1 will delve into the attributes driving participants' restaurant choices and food choices when dining out, while section 4.2 will outline the attributes influencing the choice of grocery stores and food choice while shopping for food. Sections 4.3 and 4.4 will dig into interviewees' rationales for purchasing (or not purchasing) organic and locally produced food respectively. Section 4.5 will focus particularly on participants' perception of organic food labels, both in a grocery shopping and restaurant setting. Section 4.6 will be looking at how social factors may influence individuals' food choices, while 4.7 will assess how age and gender may determine people's food preferences. Lastly, section 4.8 will delve into interviewees' reflection on the different importance acquired by organic and locally produced food in the two food consumption scenarios analysed.

4.1 Dining at Restaurants

In this section, participants' restaurant consumption habits, rationales and decision drivers will be analysed. Firstly, frequency and reasons for interviewees to dine out will be investigated. Secondly, the salient attributes determining their restaurant choices will be pointed out. Thirdly, food characteristics driving their food choices when dining out will be analysed.

Dining frequency varies widely across participants, with some of them visiting restaurants quite seldom, while others tend to do it often and regularly. Most of them reported to visit restaurants on average on a monthly basis, not necessarily following a regular pattern. However, that also depends on the type of restaurant, as interviewees differentiated between a 'good' restaurant, which they would visit once a month, and an 'everyday' restaurant, where they would dine approximately twice a month: *"I would say that I eat at a good restaurant once a month. Also at everyday restaurants a couple of times per month."* (P10, 00:02:23).

There seem to be three main reasons for participants to dine out. The first is because of the hedonic nature of restaurant experiences. In this scenario, people visit restaurants with the intention of having a pleasing experience, enjoying quality food and spending time with others. Usually it is done in order

to try out particular cuisines or new restaurants, and food is the main focus of the experience. The aim is to *“sit down somewhere for a longer period of time and have an experience with it. Not just to eat some food.”* (P9, 00:01:17).

In this case, it tends to be a planned experience, and people take into account that it will be a long-lasting process overall. Moreover, this is usually the case for visiting high-end, more pricey restaurants: *“that was one of those special experiences, a special, more expensive restaurant where it’s not this impulsive act but something that you plan. So an experience.”* (P13, 00:02:56).

Another main reason for visiting restaurants is related to other activities. Some interviewees indicated theatre and cinema as some examples of activities that imply a dining experience either before or afterwards. In this case, the type of restaurants and food are secondary, as the focus is shifted towards price and convenience.

“Yes, if I’m meeting someone or I’m going to the theatre or something like that. [...] Then it is not supposed to be expensive food, then it must be quick food which taste good.” (P16, 00:03:41)

A convenience scenario was also mentioned multiple times. Some participants would visit restaurants to get quick food on-the-go, perhaps because they are *“not able to go back home and get dinner”*. (P2, 00:03:27). Others do that when they feel like spontaneously having some fast food, meeting quickly with someone or satisfying their appetite. In this case, it will most likely be a fast food or casual restaurant, purely focused on convenience and price.

4.1.1 Attributes driving restaurant choice

This section describes the multitude of factors motivating diners to choose a specific restaurant. The most relevant drivers are found to be food selection, recommendations, atmosphere, particular cuisines, price and perceived quality, dietary preferences, convenience, and opinions from the rest of the company that one dines with. The relationships between factors will also be explored.

4.1.1.1 Food selection

The food offering of a restaurant seems to be an important driver of participants’ restaurant choices. Some mentioned that they would only go to places serving food they like.

“It's also the choice of food that they have [...] I eat almost everything, but then for example I would never pick like a typical Danish restaurant where they have all the potatoes and the meat and the brown sauce. I would rather go international, I think.” (P8, 00:03:36)

The variety of food offerings is also a cue for some interviewees to assess the quality of a restaurant. If there is a wide range of choices on the menu some may feel overwhelmed, hence discouraging them from dining there. A restricted number of choices gives them the impression that the food is well-thought and tested. Too large of a selection is rather unappealing, giving a feeling of missing out, hence preferring restaurants that offer a limited number of options, and give them the impression of trying many different dishes.

Participants seem particularly intrigued by the possibility of trying many different things, being enthusiastic about tasting menus and special food. Some of them would rather choose to dine somewhere where they have the possibility to try a number of different dishes and wines.

“[I] usually go for restaurants where you get a lot of dishes, that means more than three, and where they either have a wine menu or a wine selection, which allows you to get around a bit in some different things.” (P9, 00:01:17).

4.1.1.2 Price and quality

To some interviewees, food quality seems to be a prime concern when choosing a restaurant. However, the exact definition of quality remains somehow ambiguous. For someone it relates to the freshness of the ingredients, for some it means *“better food and having a special experience”* (P13, 00:01:28), while others attribute it to food that is ‘properly’ made and prepared from scratch.

The quality attribute is often tightly related to price. In multiple cases there is a trade-off between these two factors, having participants pursuing an optimised price/quality ratio. Some interviewees stressed out how they would look for restaurants serving quality food at a reasonable price, for instance *“something that has a student discount but [...] still has good food”* (P1, 00:02:39) or *“restaurants where it's like good quality, but it's not overly priced, so I could go there quite often without destroying my wallet”* (P3, 00:01:59). One stated a clear preference for restaurants *“that have succeeded really well delivering a concept where there are both exciting wines and good dishes at af-*

fordable prices” (P9, 00:04:27). Others are purely focused on price, indicating that as a crucial decision factor. One mentioned that their restaurant choices usually depend on *“the wallet in that given month”* (P10, 00:01:26). Another one said that a luxury food experience is not something they would personally spend money on, unless invited by someone else (P16).

4.1.1.3 Specific cuisines

Most interviewees seem to be mainly driven in their restaurant choices by the type of food they feel like eating in a specific situation. One said that they choose a restaurant *“because you like the type of food they make.”* (P15, 00:01:55)

Some said they enjoy exploring different cuisines, mostly referring to Italian, French and various Asian ones. In general, they appreciate trying something different from what they usually eat.

“I also enjoy [...] to go and have a nice dish in any kind of restaurant, go and eat some Thai food, Italian, French, whatever that is different from what I cook on a daily basis.” (P14, 00:45:36).

Similarly, one stresses out that they choose restaurants where they can order food they wouldn't be able to make themselves:

“That it's something I cannot do myself. That it's something that is characteristic of the country I am in. If the restaurant has an ethnicity or it's a concept the restaurant has, so that you get a feeling that it is something they do well, and not something that I just can go home and make as well” (P17, 00:05:56)

Others referred to specific dishes, claiming that they like going out for food such as burgers, pizza or sushi.

4.1.1.4 Recommendations and reviews

Another set of crucial drivers of restaurant choice for participants is composed by recommendations and reviews. The intention to try a certain restaurant depends on how interviewees got to know about that specific place. Recommendations are usually provided by friends, family or acquaintances; in general, people belonging to a closer circle. If a person close to them has dined at a restaurant and had a positive experience, then they are likely to visit that restaurant upon that person's suggestion.

“What makes me choose the restaurant is mostly [...] when someone else is talking about it. Other people have tried the restaurant.” (P5, 00:02:02). Some refer to a broader circle of individuals. Instead of recommendations from friends and family, they gather feedback from people living in the same area. Collecting such information is facilitated by social media such as Facebook. One interviewee mentioned a Facebook group of their local community as a source of inspiration:

“What makes me choose? It’s of course [...] as a part of it, the requirement of it being in the local area ... and how do I get knowledge about the area? It’s often what is on social media... in our neighbourhood we have a very active Facebook group, where people share all sorts of stuff. There, there is good inspiration” (P13, 00:02:56)

Another participant seems to be influenced by social media. However, instead of the influence of a community, they seem to be convinced by advertisements and posts from individual restaurants.

“Sometimes even, of course, when you see something popping up on social media and then you check it out and then you’re like, ‘oh, maybe I should go try this’.” (P8, 00:03:36).

Reviews are another important factor guiding interviewees in their choices. Specifically, Google reviews seem to be a trustworthy indicator of restaurant quality to multiple interviewees.

“And also for me, it’s important the Google reviews [...] I usually search and choose something that has good reviews. If there are appealing pictures and makes me hungry, then I will probably choose that place” (P7, 00:03:27). In particular, one of the participants seemed to have strict standards when it comes to the ratings of restaurants on digital platforms. He mentions that he would quite unlikely dine at a restaurant if its review score is under a certain threshold.

“I’m a bit critical when it comes to restaurants, especially according to what other people say and have written about them. It’s just like IMDB, I don’t like watching movies that have a rating under 7-ish. But depending on the genre, I could be prone to even watch a movie that’s under 7 on IMDB. So I wouldn’t go to a restaurant that has bad ratings, bad reviews in general”. (P11, 00:05:06)

However, there was no unanimous agreement over the accuracy of these reviews. One of the participants specified being against the use of Google when choosing a place to dine and seemed sceptical

about its trustworthiness as an indicator of restaurant quality. Another one mentioned that restaurants praised on newspapers or awarded with a Michelin star are particularly attractive to him, indicating a more traditional and professional kind of review as a cue for restaurant choice (P14).

4.1.1.5 Atmosphere

The way a place looks and feels is another fundamental factor for many of the participants. Most referred to it as atmosphere, mood, vibe or ambience. To some, a place that has great atmosphere would be opposite to *“these pizza take away places that have all the neon signs and all the stuff that blinks”* (P8, 00:03:36). This requirement is also subject to the individual’s mood, and may change for different people and in different situations.

“Also depends on the mood. If I'm in the mood for something cosy or down earth, then I will go and check out the pictures from inside, the interior. It's a lot about the atmosphere when you're inside, I don't really like being at those places where it's just white and IKEA furniture”. (P2, 00:08:46)

Some other prefer more rustic-looking places, while others feel more comfortable in *“low key places, like, for example, cafes that also serve food”* (P8, 00:02:01). One of the interviewees was extremely specific and came up with a long list of seemingly small things that altogether make a difference in the dining experience:

“the ambience, the atmosphere, the hygge thing, the lighting, the toilets, everything about the seating, how close people are next to you and the service. Then the noise level, I'm sensitive, so if I go out, I would like it to be nice. Nothing dirty, like cutlery is perfect, the food is perfect, the wine is perfect because otherwise it's a waste of time for me” (P12, 00:03:18).

In general, *“it's not only the food that is an experience, but also just being inside the restaurant is an experience.”* (P2, 00:08:46).

4.1.1.6 Dietary preferences

For those who follow particular diets, food preferences are a key driver when choosing where to dine. Most of those who had specific preferences excluded meat from their diets, hence seeking restaurants

that offer pescatarian, vegetarian or vegan options. *“Sometimes I may choose restaurants based on whether it is vegetarian, vegan and whether it is organic. So things like that could make me select a specific restaurant”* (P13, 00:06:07). To them, it is important that some places offer food options that are in line with their preferences and not in opposition with their ideals. This is a crucial factor as it shows that the restaurant in question cares about the environment. However, in one instance it seems that hedonic factors may hinder the influence of dietary preferences on the final choice.

“Mainly I’m usually choosing something either vegetarian or vegan. It’s important for me that the restaurants can show that they care about the environment, but also the taste. So I think sometimes there could be a place that is vegan, but maybe it’s not so appealing so I might not choose that.” (P7, 00:01:36)

Diet-specific food offerings are also a driver in similar contexts. One of the interviewees prefers having gluten- and lactose-free food and claimed to be interested in those restaurants that can offer such options: *“those are my food preferences, I do not like too much lactose and I do not like too much gluten, so I would like them to make special food for me. And if they can do it, I’m really happy”* (P12, 00:05:34).

4.1.1.7 Convenience and location

Some participants also chose a restaurant based on its location, particularly the area where they live. Especially when going for a spontaneous restaurant visit, convenience is of prime importance when choosing where to dine. Multiple interviewees mentioned that there are some good restaurants in the area where they live, and those are their go-to choices for everyday dining. *“I care a lot for those we have in our local area, here in Brønshøj, where we by now have a lot of good ones. [...] small restaurants and small eateries where you can get excellent delicious everyday food.”* (P13, 00:01:28).

4.1.1.8 Company and occasions

Lastly, the company and the occasion for dining out seem to influence the choice of restaurants. Different people might have different preferences and different priorities, hence determining the final decision on where to dine. *“Not everyone has the same interest for food. Not everyone feel like spending 2.000 kroner on a meal. Some would rather spend it on wine and some would not spend it at all. People just have different standpoints.”* (P10, 00:05:40). The occasion for eating out is also a driver

of choice, as certain celebrations and occasion might call for specific kinds of food, cuisines and atmosphere.

4.1.2 Food attributes driving restaurant food choice

In this section, various food attributes driving food choice in restaurants will be analysed. First, given the focus of this study, the influence of ‘organic’ and ‘locally produced’ as food attributes will be assessed. Then, other salient characteristics will be analysed. Taste and experiential factors, price, quality, sustainability and past experience are indicated as especially important cues for food choice in restaurants. Overall, it emerges that food being organic and locally sourced is not a priority to participants, while greater focus is placed on taste and experiential factors.

4.1.2.1 Organic

Choosing organic rather than conventional food did not seem to be a concern to participants when dining out. Most of the people interviewed do not focus on this food attribute. They admitted that it is not something they pay attention to, and believe it is not displayed nor advertised by restaurant owners either (P15). When making their choice over a menu, most participants prioritise other food characteristics, such as the cuisine and the type of dish (P16) or whether they received recommendations (P7). Hence, for many of them this particular food attribute goes unnoticed.

That is actually something that I really don't pay attention to, so I have no idea. [...] Sometimes it might be stated somewhere, but I really don't pay attention to that. [...] It's not something that I'm really concerned about when I pick a restaurant. (P2, 00:38:02)

Despite very few interviewees being driven by this factor, some of them seem to notice and recall organic menu offerings. Particularly, some remember restaurants stating that part of their ingredients was organic. Some have even dined in one of those restaurants but are unsure whether they have ever visited one offering a fully organic menu: *“I know I've visited some restaurants where they, as I mentioned, have a menu that would say 'all the meat is organically sourced' or something like that. But I don't think I've gone to any restaurants that are all organic.” (P1, 00:37:33).*

Many stated they would order organic options, but only under certain conditions. In fact, there is an interplay between ‘organic’ and other food attributes. For instance, taste and experiential factors seem

to have greater priority than organic choices. These relationships and trade-offs will be analysed in depth in section 5.3.4, when discussing the rationales for and against choosing organic menu items in a dining context.

4.1.2.2 Locally produced

In general, participants seem to have favourable attitudes towards menu items made with locally produced ingredients. Many said they would be willing to try some, taking advantage of seasonal vegetables and local produce. Some believe it could make for an interesting experience to see what chefs can create out of what can be found in the local area.

“I would buy it if it's stated that it's local, I probably would go for that because it's a bit more like, oh, what can you actually do with the local products, especially for restaurants that are a bit better because they can come up with something really crazy with just normal products that myself I would just boil them and serve them really simply.” (P2, 00:41:18).

Local produce can be a driver of food choice, as one of the interviewees finds it special when restaurants *“have some ingredients that are not just down from Netto.”* (P17, 00:23:35). Some believe local ingredients to be a sign of greater quality: *“if they had like something with some local meat, local vegetables, I would assume that it'd be good quality and I'd be inclined to spend a bit more money”.* (P1, 00:41:07).

Some interviewees seem to pay attention to this food characteristic, and often notice if restaurants offer food made with locally sourced ingredients: *“they actually produced almost everything themselves. [...] they have their own farmland where they produce everything and most of it is organic.”* (P6, 00:15:22). Similarly to the organic scenario, local is also perceived as something that is not advertised by restaurants: *“I think I remember being at a restaurant where the Karl Johan mushrooms were local. [...] But it's not something I remember being strongly advertised at any of the restaurants I've been to.”* (P10, 00:19:34). However, interviewees seemed to notice local produce more than organic: *“I have noticed that, I think I have noticed that more than if it was organic.”* (P16, 00:23:33).

Furthermore, just like in the case of organic options, locally sourced menu items are also subject to the influence of other food attributes. Factors such as taste and experiential value may have a higher

priority for consumers and hence hinder their local choices. Such relationships between food attributes will be further analysed in section 4.4.5, where the rationales for and against choosing locally sourced menu items in restaurants will be discussed. Nonetheless, there were also participants who are simply not concerned about the origin of the ingredients when dining out: *"I would choose the dish I want. It would not make much difference if, what do I know, the apples were from Denmark in one dish and something else was from another country in another dish."* (P4, 00:19:34).

4.1.2.3 Taste and experiential factors

A recurring topic across all interviews is the experiential nature of dining out. In this context, individuals are particularly focused on hedonic factors, seeking something new and different when eating at a restaurant. Some specified that, when dining out, they would prioritise food that looks appealing and overlook other factors such as health. A similarly hedonic factor frequently brought up by participants is taste. Most of them choose food or ingredients they enjoy eating. *"I kind of know what I like and there are specific ingredients I'm more inclined to order. I think there are some specific ingredients, my favourite ingredients, then I would be ordering those dishes that contain that."* (P7, 00:06:24). For others it's a matter of what they *"want to eat here and now"* (P15, 00:20:46). It seems like multiple interviewees base their choice on what they feel like eating in a specific moment. Some others seem to use food appearance as a cue for dish choices. The way food looks seems to be an important factor to some participants: *"I don't like to go to a restaurant and just choose something that looks too normal, so to say, because I like to get an experience."* (P3, 00:09:00).

Another experiential pattern that was brought up by multiple interviewees is to choose food for the sake of trying out new things. For some it is a matter of trying something different, *"something that you wouldn't get like every day"* (P8, 00:07:42). This exploratory mindset appears to be quite common across individuals.

"For example, to restaurant that has good vegan or vegetarian dishes, I like to explore because I'm not the best vegetarian chef myself yet. [...] Maybe there's four dishes that look nice, and then I choose the one that the company doesn't choose. So I will go for a different thing than my partner or my family member or my friends just to try something new." (P3, 00:05:56 & 00:07:47).

Some others want to experiment with unusual food they never heard about and broaden their gastronomical horizons. One person referred to it as ‘extraordinary’, seeking a restaurant experience that they cannot have anywhere else, (P2). Many participants showed great curiosity towards the unknown, picking dishes that sound interesting and could give them a pleasant surprise. One of them pointed out that they would choose something novel, pursuing new tastes, in order to *"get to know new food, to be inspired to be able to do something else at home"* (P16, 00:05:25).

Another recurring topic mentioned by numerous interviewees is the choice of food that is different from what they are able to make themselves. *"If I can cook the food myself as well as the restaurant, I don't bother going."* (P14, 00:03:02). Many believe that *"if you are out to eat, then it's nice if it is something a little different than what you do at home."* (P15, 00:02:06). It appears to be quite common to seek dishes that are far from what one would be able to prepare, preferring more complex kinds of food.

Also in this scenario, the experiential value of dining out and choosing food is rather prominent, with interviewees expecting a pleasurable outcome from their time in the restaurant: *"I would like it to be an experience because if it's just like 'what do I like to eat?' I can easily buy it and make it at home. But I would like a cook to make something I haven't tasted before and make it into an experience."* (P12, 00:06:52).

For some, an influential factor of hedonic nature is the story behind the dish. Describing food in an interesting way and telling a story about it seem to drive their food selection process.

"Both the description of the food that sounds funny, but also the good story I think can also be if it is locally produced ingredients, or you know there is some fun story tied to it. Once I sit there. [...] Then I think it is very much the desire that drives what excites my interest." (P13, 00:06:07).

In general, taste and experiential factors seem to be a strong driver of food choice. It seems quite rare that participants give up hedonic factors in favour of utilitarian ones.

4.1.2.4 Price

For some participants, price often serves as a cue or predictor of food quality: *"I think if it's a really cheap restaurant I go to, I would imagine that it's not organic."* (P2, 00:38:02). When paying higher

prices, they assume that the restaurant can make good choices for them in terms of menu and dish composition.

“When you go and pay more than let’s say 1,000 kroner per person, then you must assume that there is a reason behind the way they arrange things. And then acknowledge that they know what they are doing and accept what they have to offer” (P9, 00:05:44)

Interviewees’ willingness to pay varies according to the type of restaurant. In a convenience scenario where they would simply go for a fast food restaurant, price sensitivity would be higher when choosing what to eat. Conversely, a high end restaurant experience will be subject to price sensitivity to a smaller extent. In general, most subjects are willing to pay more in return of better-quality food: *“of course, the prices are an issue, but on the other hand, you also like to pay more if you know that it’s good quality that you get.” (P8, 00:29:52).*

Some interviewees are willing to pay more for organic or local dishes. Given the experiential nature of restaurant experiences, they claimed to be willing to spend more in order to treat themselves and have a more pleasurable experience. However, contrasting opinions arise from other individuals. In some cases, price was found to be a critical barrier to organic food choice. When asked if they would be willing to choose organic options when dining out, many stated that *“it depends on how expensive it is.” (P8, 00:29:52).* For some interviewees, dining is already a costly experience in itself, and having to pay extra for organic products would make it financially unsustainable.

4.1.2.5 Perceived quality

Quality is a priority to many when dining out in order to get a pleasurable experience. Some stated that they enjoy visiting high quality restaurants to eat ‘good’ food. However, ‘quality’ is a subjective term that might have different meanings across participants. Someone believes it is about *“having the impression that I really have a great meal.” (P14, 00:06:52).* Many believe organic and locally produced foods naturally imply good quality. Some see it as a way of giving them comfort about the product being healthy and of high quality, as they believe that organic food equals better food. Nonetheless, some other think that organic does not necessarily mean greater quality, and would prefer being served good food rather than something of lower quality just for the sake of it being organic: *“if that day when they [restaurant owners] buy something it’s not organic, then I’d rather have a*

good potato than a bad potato just because it needs to be organic.” (P12, 00:30:28). Hence, organic produce is perceived positively as long as it is paired up with quality, so organic *“should not be an excuse for them to go down in quality.”* (P5, 00:20:30). The relationship between organic and perceived quality will be further discussed in section 4.3.

However, there are other attributes that could be associated with quality. One of those is the freshness and seasonality of the produce. Someone seemed particularly convinced *“that if you pick something directly off the plant or off the ground, it has more taste and it's just so much nicer and it's fresh.”* (P14, 00:39:49). Someone else perceives quality as passion of the chef, appreciating restaurants where the staff, supposedly loving food, will be concerned and attentive to the way food is sourced and cooked, as well as the taste.

4.1.2.6 Sustainability-related

In a restaurant context, sustainability-related factors were found to be a driver of food choice for just a few participants. Some are mainly concerned about environmental sustainability, placing a great deal of attention on whether *“restaurants can show that they care about the environment.”* (P7, 00:01:36). Some interviewees seem to focus on achieving a lower CO₂ footprint, that being one of the main rationales for preferring locally sourced ingredients when dining out.

However, similarly to other food attributes, sustainability is also subject to trade-offs with other factors. For instance, one reported that they might choose a restaurant based on sustainability aspects, but once they sit down the choice of food is based on what they like.

“In the selection phase I might say: ‘Okay, I would like to support someone who actually works with some environmental aspects. So have considerations about that they would like to run a business based on something like vegetarian, vegan - environmental in some way. Just as I, in the remainder of my consumer spending would like to support it. But when I then sit there, then it is not crucial to me [...] because there is it more you know, the very experience of being there and getting delicious food, it will not be a benchmark for me.” (P13, 00:34:48)

4.1.2.7 Past experience

Sometimes, interviewees' food choices seemed to be also driven by their past experience. Many of them mentioned that they tend to pick options they already know, or kinds of food they know they would like. One participant would always order the same dish when visiting a certain restaurant, that being their favourite dish from that place. Others pick dishes focusing on the ingredients, selecting food that is prepared with ingredients they particularly like: *"I automatically look for mushrooms or other things that, when I went to Italy, I really enjoyed. [...] I look for the things that I remember being good in Japan and trying to get an authentic experience out of it."* (P1, 00:04:38). Others make their food choices depending on cuisines and kinds of food that they specially enjoyed in the past: *"I have never had a bad experience ordering seafood. So that's typically a home safe experience."* (P14, 00:11:43). When considering a slightly different scenario, participants still referred to their past experience. In this case, when aiming for convenience and dining, for instance, at a fast food restaurant, this person would always choose the same kind of dish: *"for shawarma houses, I would just go for the usual, for what I know. I know what it is. That's something where I know what to expect."* (P2, 00:12:31).

4.2 Grocery Shopping

This section focuses on participants' food consumption at home. When they go out and purchase the food they consume at home, all reported that they did their regular shopping in supermarkets. First it will be looked into what kind of attributes are important to them when choosing a specific store to do their shopping. Afterwards, the food characteristics they deem as most important when choosing particular food items are investigated.

4.2.1 Attributes driving store choice

Compared to the many different attributes driving the choice of restaurants, remarkably fewer attributes were found to drive the choice of where to buy groceries, with location, food selection and price being the primary choice drivers.

4.2.1.1 Location

The primary determinant of supermarket choice was for the vast majority of participants store location. The closer to home, the more frequently the store was visited, while at other times, stores located

on the route between home and the workplace were chosen. *“It is also just very logistically, where you pass by either on the way home from work or here in the local area.”* (P13, 00:08:09)

However, interviewees are sometimes willing to compromise on distance in favour of other attributes, such as prices and food selection: *“I lived right next door to a Netto, and basically that's where I did all my shopping. Unless I had to get some good meat or good beef or something, then I would drive, go the extra mile to buy that.”* (P11, 00:12:28).

4.2.1.2 Food selection

The selection of food available in the specific store was also mentioned frequently by participants as an important decision factor. This would often be in combination with the price point and some of the interviewees referred specifically to the selection of organic food as a driver of supermarket choice. *“Because it is a cheaper supermarket, which is located closer, but still has a good quality and organic. If I could afford it, then I would forever go shopping in Irma and Meny. But I can't”* (P4, 00:04:45).

4.2.1.3 Price

Similarly to Participant 4, other participants also experience price as a barrier and would shop elsewhere if they had sufficient financial resources: *“I think Irma is my favourite store in Copenhagen, but it is pricey so I cannot afford to shop there every day or every time”* (P7, 00:08:50).

Some others, who also stated that food and cooking is something they care about, said that they had specific stores they would go to depending on what specific foods they needed to buy. *“Netto is for the more plain everyday groceries, fundamentally. Meny is for a little nicer specialty groceries, if I'm going to buy something there is a little harder to find elsewhere. I use Rema 1000 for things like fresh herbs”* (P9, 00:09:08).

4.2.1.4 Other attributes

A few participants also mentioned the looks and tidiness of stores as an important attribute for where they return to shop. *“I think also the fact that it is a nice place to visit. [...] We like to go out and shop, so it is important that things look properly. That there is not just cardboard boxes laying around everywhere and stuff like that.”* (P15, 00:05:35).

For one interviewee it was also important to support local businesses, and they therefore chose the local supermarket to help keep the shop open: *“The Brugsen I chose because it's close by and I want to support the local Brugsen so they will be open still.”* (P12, 00:08:49).

4.2.2 Food attributes driving food choice in grocery stores

Once participants have chosen a specific supermarket to shop in, the next thing to do is to choose the particular items to purchase. This section explores what factors make participants choose specific food products. As the aim of the study is to compare the two settings of choosing food at a restaurant and in a grocery setting, the same structure as when exploring choices at restaurants will be followed. This means first looking into the influence of ‘organic’ and ‘locally produced’. Then, other salient characteristics will be explored, such as taste and experiential factors, price, quality, sustainability and past experience. Lastly salient characteristics for different food categories will be explored.

4.2.2.1 Organic

All participants said that they usually buy organic products to some extent and the amount in comparison to all food items purchased ranged from two saying as low as 25% to someone saying *“I want to get everything organic, if I can. [...] So as close to 100 percent as possible.”* (P6, 00:10:08).

Among interviewees, unanimous positive attitudes towards organic food were found. Some even perceive it as having better taste compared to conventional products, while others cannot taste any difference and buy organic for other reasons: *“I think it's kind of a combination of the two [having less chemicals and being healthier], not because I feel that it tastes so different, actually.”* (P8, 00:19:58).

For some interviewees, purchasing organic food seems to be an automated task, as they do it without putting too much thought into it.

“If you go back 10 years when the selection was much less, you actually had to search to find organic food. I think for us, it's just become natural. [...] It's not something that I share with people that they remember to buy organic or I always buy organic or whatever. It's just the way it is, I think.” (P14, 00:45:36).

In general, the priority of the organic characteristic seems to change across different types of food items. This is often related to how influential the price of the product is on the food choice. If price

has less influence, the organic choice becomes more automated. At other times, price differences between organic and conventional seem very large, and therefore very influential on the final choice. *“If you need a pork tenderloin, then you can get one for 30 kr. and if you want an organic one then it costs 200 kr. So that’s a little too excessively.”* (P9, 00:11:32).

One of the participants was particularly sceptical about organic and had a clear preference for local instead. *“If I have one that is grown in Denmark and it's not organic and I have one that is grown in Denmark and is organic, then I would go for one that is not organic.”* (P2, 00:25:37). Cross-category product differences will be further discussed in section 4.2.2.9. and the reasons and rationales for choosing organic or not will be analysed in section 4.3.

4.2.2.2 Locally produced

Contrary to organic food, not all participants said that they would buy locally produced food. Those who did claim to buy locally produced food also purchase lower quantities of it compared to the organic counterpart. However, this is greatly influenced by consumers’ definition of what they find to be locally produced. These definitions will be further investigated in section 4.4.1.

The ones that do buy local mostly claim that it is only around 10 % of their shopping which is locally produced – only two participants state that it is more than half of their shopping which is locally produced.

Some others do not seem to be particularly concerned about purchasing local produce and do not really pay attention to where the food comes from. *“I must say that I don't look for that. I like to get something that's produced in Denmark, but it's not my biggest concern.”* (P6, 00:12:00).

Even though interviewees do not seem to buy much locally produced food, they do have a positive attitude towards it and considerable willingness to purchase.

“I would love to if it's possible, to buy Danish vegetables, seasonal. [...] I'll buy it whenever I can. Well, you can always do it, but if I go to the supermarket and I see them, then I will predominantly choose local ingredients if it's possible, and also when I look for recipes I'm going to go for the local stuff. [...] If I know that ingredient can be made in Denmark, I'll look for a Danish farmer.” (P3, 00:37:14)

Some participants believe local food products to be of higher quality, one of the reasons being its greater freshness compared to produce which has travelled a longer distance. *“I think that the fact that they've been produced here must increase the quality, at least from a personal perspective, that it hasn't been traveling across Europe. So it's more fresh and I think that's basically it.”* (P14, 00:29:44)

The choice of local products is widely subject to availability constraints:

I think in the season of summer I try to get, for example, berries from Danish fields and maybe some fruits as well, like apples, but there are some specific fruits or vegetables that you cannot get here. (P7, 00:16:36).

4.2.2.3 Taste and experiential factors

When grocery shopping, taste and experiential factors were found to have a rather weak influence on participants' food choices. Only one interviewee mentioned this as something that would drive their purchases of groceries. *“I think I just buy what I feel is tasting the best”* (P9, 00:11:32). While another was more specific and only bought certain products driven by taste: *“I would prefer a bottled milk, I don't like the taste of the cardboard. So once they had them in plastic, I like that because the milk takes a bit of taste of the material.”* (P12, 00:11:18).

However, taste can sometimes prevail over other attributes which are less important to participants, such as groceries being organic.

“It is more important that [chocolate] tastes good, than it is organic. I have found some chocolate in Netto, which is organic, but it is just, what can I say, the neutral kind of chocolate, there isn't any with other flavours. So in that case, I would also buy something which isn't organic” (P16, 00:11:56)

Only one of the interviewees stated that buying groceries can be a sensory experience, where multiple senses are involved. This is the case for Participant 7, when they go purchasing bread: *“I think it's bakeries actually, so it's not in the store, but in special shops and bakeries that we get bread, and then it's important that it's a place I know or just looks appealing, maybe the smell.”* (P7, 00:11:58).

4.2.2.4 Price

Price is something most participants mentioned as a decision factor for what they choose to buy. For some it is the main decision factor and for others it is the combination of price and other attributes that decides the matter: *“Then [the choice] is based on the organic label or what is the cheapest. It is a combination of that.”* (P5, 00:06:39).

Others showed less price sensitivity, and saw price as a secondary decision factor, compared to other attributes. *“That would have to be the quality of the items that I buy, and then price would be secondary to that.”* (P11, 00:14:52).

For certain products, the price point seems to prevail over the fact that those are organic.

“Sometimes we buy organic chicken. But that is super expensive. So that is not something we always do. Then you also look a bit on the price.” (P15, 00:07:43).

Even for price, the importance of this attribute varies across different product categories. For instance, one claimed that they would not purchase standard products in a more expensive supermarket if they can find a cheaper alternative in a more affordable store (P16). One participant in particular had specific price expectations that would influence his purchasing choices:

“I went and needed some new balsamic vinegar, and I thought, yeah, I'd probably give like 20 kroner for a bottle of the cheap balsamic vinegar. It'll be in that area. And then I went and [...] they had one for eight kroner. And I thought that was maybe too cheap, then it's probably not that good quality. So I went up and bought the one that was a step more expensive, but probably better quality.” (P1, 00:08:32).

4.2.2.5 Perceived quality

Quality is a rather subjective attribute; it does not have a specific definition and what it implies may change from person to person. Still, it is something which is frequently mentioned as a decision factor by participants. When mentioned it is often in tight correlation with price: *“I love to go for the value for money segments. Just because something is expensive doesn't make it great. I want quality, but also at a good price.”* (P11, 00:14:52).

For some, other attributes such as organic or local imply good quality. Especially for local products, a participant had the impression that these often were specialties i.e. good products (P13)

In some cases, quality may overcome other attributes: *“I would like to buy Danish brands. “So if it's Danish, I like it, it's a good thing. But if it's bad quality I go for quality. Quality goes above local.”* (P12, 00:22:02).

For certain products, like meat, quality seems to be a particularly pressing attribute, suggesting that this characteristic is also prioritised differently across different product categories.

Some participants seem to be especially knowledgeable and critical about what they find to be the best products. For example, Participant 12 makes sure to inform themselves about the specific products they buy: *“I would never just put something in my basket that I didn't know or hadn't read about. study where it's from, what it's made of, how many chemicals or E-products are in the food.”* (P12, 00:24:33).

4.2.2.6 Sustainability-related

Many interviewees say that they buy organic or locally produced as a matter of making a sustainable choice. The reasons for choosing organic and local will be explored more in depth in sections 4.3 and 4.4. Here, other decision factors related to sustainability will be explored.

Some participants mention that animal welfare is important to them, as this makes them choose specific products and avoid others. For one participant the importance of animal welfare would even make them buy a price premium product, to make sure that calves are not removed from their mothers straight after birth, which they believed to be standard procedure for both organic and conventional dairy farms (P13).

The Fairtrade label is another way to navigate when interviewees want to make sustainable consumption choices. This is especially related to buying chocolate. *“But I definitely try to go for chocolate with the Fairtrade brand and so on to at least try to do my part to not select some chocolates that have been grown by child labour or whatever.”* (P11, 00:19:58).

Preventing food waste is another factor that makes participants choose specific products and packaging sizes, and it is also mentioned as a way to save money. *“For bread, they also usually have something that's maybe set down in price because it's two days off. [...] So that's a pretty good way of both reducing food waste and saving a bit of money at the same time.”* (P1, 00:16:16).

Several interviewees mentioned the packaging of products as a decisions factor, as they would like to reduce waste and especially the use of plastic: *“If I already got a lot of organic, usually it's wrapped in plastic and then I feel a bit guilty to get more plastic, so then I will just choose conventional.”* (P7, 00:15:05).

4.2.2.7 Past experience

For a few participants choosing food is based on their past experience and particularly on what they know they would like. Some make specific choices related to specific brands they like, which then in some cases ends up becoming an automated act.

“Sometimes I might choose something else, but it's Oatly and I'm just choosing that. So I actually never think what should I get? It's always that, and if it's on sale, it's good, but it almost never happens. (P7, 00:11:17) [...] I think with bread I also have one specific brand I like. (P7, 00:11:58) [...] I think brand is important.” (P7, 00:13:09).

4.2.2.8 Health

Many interviewees choose food based on what they think is the healthiest choice: *“I try to also buy the one with less fat. Not because I'm on a diet, but I feel that it's maybe healthier.”* (P8, 00:15:06). Besides the choice of lower fat content, chemicals and additives are believed to be unhealthy and therefore an attempt to reduce these is made. In addition, *“it can depend on the product, if there's additives in it, [...] I don't want too much chemicals and processed stuff”* (P3, 00:12:42). Health is also frequently mentioned in relation to organic food, this will be delved further into in section 4.3.

4.2.2.9 Salient attributes for different food categories

As mentioned in the description of the interview guide, in section 3.4.3, participants were asked to address what was important to them when shopping food groceries, based on different categories of

food to ease their train of thought. In this section it will be explored if patterns can be found for each of the categories.

When it comes to **vegetables**, the main characteristic that interviewees prioritise is those being organic. As a primary attribute, most believe this to be a crucial factor towards the quality of the produce. Second comes freshness, which also seems to be an important factor when purchasing vegetables. In addition, produce being local drives food choice for some of the participants. On the other hand, price was barely mentioned as a driver. *“If they are not organic, I am hesitant to get the non organic alternative, except I really needed them. So, again, they being organic is the most important thing to me with vegetables, and being fresh.”* (P6, 00:08:01). A few people also mentioned that buying vegetables in season is important to them. *“[I] try as much as possible to stay within what produce is in season, so that’s just whatever is available.”* (P9, 00:12:35).

For **milk and dairy products**, there is a uniform pattern towards choosing organic options, particularly for milk. This choice seems to be justified by the fact that organic milk is sold at a small price premium compared to other product categories. *“I just go for the organic. I don't really mind the price, it's almost the same anyway, I just go for the organic one.”* (P2, 00:20:45). The only attribute that seems to overcome organic a few times is related to health/dietary reason. Few participants mentioned to be lactose intolerant, hence prioritizing a lactose free milk over an organic one. *“For or me it has to be without lactose. So that's my preference. And then organic.”* (P12, 00:11:18). However, the importance of attributes changes within different dairy products. For instance, cheese choice appears to be more driven by hedonic factors.

“I just pick them from the cooler, so I think that's not so important to me. I just pick the first and the best, except from cheese, because both my wife and I are very fond of cheese. [...] If I want to have sort of the cheese for tapas or dessert or stuff like that, I go to a dedicated cheese store.” (P14, 00:17:11)

Meat is the product category that is most affected by price sensitivity. Most participants believe organic meat to be much more expensive than the conventional alternative, and hence are not willing to pay such a price premium. Nonetheless, such sensitivity may vary across different types of meat. *“When I buy mincemeat, I normally always buy the organic version. I try to also buy the one with less fat. [...] But chicken not because it's too expensive.”* (P8, 00:11:08). Among the most crucial

attributes for meat choices is quality. Some interviewees might not be willing to pay high price premiums for organic meat but would still care about the quality of the product.

“When it comes to meat, I’m not as prone to go for the organic choice because I think actually the organic part of meat is just way too expensive at current prices compared to, for instance, organic milk and organic vegetables. I do generally try to go for quality meat, but it doesn’t have to be organic at all.” (P11, 00:17:47)

Quite a few people would rather purchase less meat but of better quality. Some find organic meat to not always be available. Under these circumstances, for some the animal welfare heart rating system from Animal Protection Denmark (Dyrenes Beskyttelse), may work as a substitute for organic: *“I try to get them organic as well, but that can be a bit hard, so I just look for these you know, they have these hearts. So I’ll not buy some that doesn’t have any hearts on them.” (P6, 00:08:49).*

When purchasing **bread**, hedonic factors seem to be the main driver of participants’ choices. Taste and freshness are an absolute priority, where even those who mostly buy organic would not buy organic for this reason. *“So with bread, I actually don’t think I’m that good at buying organic. Because I don’t think that I have found something, where the taste is better or similar to the non-organic bread.” (P16, 00:11:06).* Many participants also specified that they would purchase bread from bakeries or a dedicated bakery section in a larger supermarket in order to have a higher quality product.

“I would like it from a baker. Rye bread, I like it from Emmery’s or from Lagkagehuset. I don’t like factory made food, I don’t like that it tastes too much of vinegar, for instance. I like good bread, and good bread takes time to make.” (P12, 00:13:21)

Secondary drivers of bread choices are price, with few interviewees picking the cheapest option, and health concerns, with people being particularly attentive to the fibre content, the presence of wholegrain flour, or the amount of seeds in the bread.

For **chocolate**, the main driver of purchase decisions is taste. Participants seem especially concerned with choosing particular flavours or products with a certain percentage of cocoa content. Some of them even referred to specific brands that they prefer over others. In general, price sensitivity is rather low for chocolate. In fact, many interviewees mentioned that they would be willing to pay a price

premium for better chocolate that is produced in a sustainable and socially responsible way. Some of them referred specifically to the Fairtrade logo, confirming that they look for that when purchasing chocolate products.

“I'd probably of course look at the cocoa content. I like something around 70 percent or 80 percent, something that's not too dark, that isn't very bitter, but something that's a bit like in between a milk chocolate and a really dark chocolate. And if I were to buy a plate of chocolate just to eat, I'd probably not feel bad about using a bit more money to get something good quality and maybe also something with the Fairtrade brand.” (P1, 00:17:35)

Some participants mention that they try to stay true to buying organic and Fairtrade, but as taste is a greater priority, this is not always the case. *“If I'm buying chocolate, then I feel a bit like, it would be nice also to buy organic or Fairtrade or something like that. And I also do that most of the time. But there is this tendency that organic chocolate [...] doesn't taste so nice [...] so it happens that I will buy something like Marabou milk chocolate, with nuts.”* (P17, 00:10:18). Moreover, some interviewees made a distinction between the products they purchase depending on the way they intend to use it. It has been mentioned multiple times that better quality chocolate (such as Fairtrade certified and with higher cocoa content) is eaten as it is and savoured, while if they need to bake something that requires chocolate as an ingredient, they would simply choose the least expensive option.

4.3 Organic Food Consumption

In the following section the reasons and rationales for purchasing (or not purchasing) organic food will be investigated, both in the context of grocery shopping and restaurant dining. Organic groceries choice seems to be mainly driven by environmental concerns, higher perceived quality and health concerns, while higher price and lower availability are important barriers. Moreover, interviewees believe it is rather easy to find and recognise organic products when shopping. In a restaurant setting, taste and experiential values seem to have higher priority over menu items being organic, hence being barriers to organic food choice.

4.3.1 Rationales for buying organic groceries

A few different reasons for choosing organic products when grocery shopping were reported by participants, the main reason being perceived higher **quality** and better taste of food. *“If I, for example, had to choose between the [organic] cucumbers and the imported cucumbers, I'd usually assume that the [organic] has more flavour”* (P1, 00:10:16) For one interviewee in particular, choosing organic is not necessarily equal to getting a better-quality product, but has more to do with supporting animal welfare. *“There is also this obvious thing, that especially with stuff like eggs and meat, [organic] is not equal to quality, but it is equal to guaranteed animal welfare, compared to barn eggs for example”* (P9, 00:18:51)

Sometimes quality and **health-related** factors blend: *“I'd say it's mostly a matter of getting a good a good quality product, getting vegetables that aren't sprayed with toxics.”* (P1, 00:21:05).

Organic is chosen because of beliefs about these products which are perceived as more natural and hence as better for one's health. This has mainly to do with the belief that consumption of pesticides is unhealthy and a way to avoid them is to eat organic food.

“I think it's because I'm thinking about all the unhealthy things that are in the nonorganic products are mainly because I know they put a lot of fertilizers, artificial stuff to make them grow faster, and I just kind of have the feeling that it is weird to eat that kind of food where there is something not natural in it.” (P8, 00:19:58)

This rationale seems to be enhanced even more in the circumstances pregnancy. *“I'll buy organic, even if it's way more expensive also because my girlfriend is pregnant right now, so it has become even more important to me.”* (P6, 00:10:08). The most important reason for buying organic is found to vary across interviewees. For one it is the environment that comes first, and they do not believe that organic is healthier for them or their children. Whereas another said almost the opposite and deemed the health-related factors more important than environmental ones. *“Mainly because of health. Also depends on what kind of product, but then it's also the way we treat the environment, so we don't spray pesticides on crops too much, and also for animal feeding. So first comes health and then second the environment.”* (P3, 00:19:43)

A few participants claimed to choose organic because of **environmental** factors. Some believe that the way organic products are produced are better for the environment. Especially the aquatic environment is believed to be less stressed by organic production compared to conventional. Participants therefore buy organic to support this production form, to take care of the environment. *“I believe it's better for the environment and I want to support that kind of production of food with my money, for everyday purchases.”* (P7, 00:14:36)

4.3.2 Barriers to choosing organic groceries

None of the participants bought all their food products in an organic form. There were several reasons for that, the main one being **availability** and, in relation to that, convenience. If what they needed did not exist as an organic option, some interviewees would still purchase the product. Some also mentioned they would rather do all their shopping in one place, than going several places to purchase something organic.

“[The main reason for not choosing organic is] Basically the selection that you have. Let's say tomatoes organic and non organic, I would pick the organic ones, but once in a while if the same vegetable is not present when I go shopping, if there's not any organic tomatoes or whatever, then I don't go elsewhere. I do all my shopping at once. [...]. So that's about convenience.” (P14, 00:23:12)

Secondly the **price-point** would also make interviewees choose a non-organic option. If the benefits and value of an organic product do not exceed the price premium, participants will choose something else. It is especially meat which is deemed to be too expensive in an organic form. *“With some products it's the price, because there is still some organic products which are very expensive. [...] that could be the problem with organic meat for example”* (P17, 00:12:19).

While some select organic food because perceived to have better **taste and quality**, others avoid it when conventional products seem to be superior concerning the same factors. *“Sometimes you do have the conventional just looking a lot better, they grow larger and sometimes the organic sourced vegetables look a bit wilted and a bit a bit weak. So it is also sometimes a matter of quality.”* (P1, 00:22:41).

Paradoxically, organic options might be discarded because they are deemed to be **less environmentally friendly** than the conventional counterpart, for example because of their production methods or

their packaging: *“If I already got a lot of organic, usually it's wrapped in plastic and then I feel a bit guilty to get more plastic, so then I will just choose conventional.”* (P7, 00:15:05).

4.3.3 Finding and recognising organic food

Generally, finding and recognising organic food does not seem to be a hindrance to get hold of the organic products that interviewees would like to buy. They seem to be quite skilled in **recognising** organic food and can easily find it during their shopping trips. *“I think it's generally pretty easy because they have even on the price tags, it says øko, and on the product itself as well. I would say it's pretty easy to recognize what is øko and what not.”* (P8, 00:22:08).

Some also mention that organic products are easy to **find** within the point of purchase. Particularly, this task is simplified by the layout of some supermarkets which reserve certain aisles or sections to organic food products. *“Even some supermarkets now, I think they have like a whole shelf area where it's just organic products [...] or even you have an aisle specifically for organic food.”* (P7, 00:15:41).

4.3.4 Rationales for choosing organic food in restaurants

In the context of restaurants, the rationales for choosing or wanting to choose organic options seem to be more focused on quality of the food, than other aspects. *“I think even though it's not related to me, I think that that's also a way to give me comfort that the product that they use is healthy, high quality and stuff like that. And I think that would be nice.”* (P14, 00:34:31).

Secondly, some interviewees mentioned that they would like to bring the aspect of eating organic in their everyday life, both when they cook themselves and when they go out at restaurants: *“I would like to continue my lifestyle at restaurants as well. Because it would be natural.”* (P12, 00:28:10).

However, other food attributes may hinder the influence of the organic factor, making it less relevant to individuals. Many said they would order organic if they had the chance, but under certain conditions. Mainly, type of dish and price seem to trade off with the attribute in question. *“It depends on the dish, right? But if it's a good dish and it's organic, then it's even better. [...] depends on how expensive it is.”* (P8, 00:28:28). Another factor is the cuisine in question: *“I guess I could actually see myself go to a restaurant that specifically has an organic menu. But I think that would depend a lot on the kitchen, what the style of the kitchen is and so on.”* (P11, 00:35:27). Hence, it is fundamental that, before food being organic, it should be food that the participants want to eat. Individuals seem

likely to weigh it as a positive effect, assuming that they would get a better-quality product, *“but not necessarily order it only based on the fact that it's all organic”* (P1, 00:36:15). Overall, organic seems to be a nice-to-have food attribute for many, but still subject to other factors that have higher priority over it.

4.4 Local Food Consumption

In the following section the reasons and rationales for purchasing (or not purchasing) locally produced food will be investigated, both in the context of grocery shopping and restaurant dining. Participants' definitions of 'local food' are also analysed, and there is no clear definition as both 'Danish' and 'within a certain radius from one's home' were mentioned equally often. The choice of locally sourced groceries seems to be mainly driven by environmental concerns, while lower availability and higher prices are important barriers. Moreover, interviewees believe it can be quite difficult to find and recognise local products when shopping. In a restaurant setting, interviewees seem enthusiastic about local food as it is perceived to be of higher quality, but taste and experiential values seem to have higher priority and act as barriers to local choices.

4.4.1 Defining locally produced

A condition important to have in mind when investigating the reasons and rationales for consumption of locally produced food, is what consumers define as locally produced. Interviewees in this study can be divided into two groups. A little less than half perceived everything produced within Denmark as local, but one in particular reasoned that this was only because he lived in the city and therefore not in a place where food is produced and grown. *“On the face of things then local products are for me the ones just around [your neighbourhood]. But I think in my instance, because I live in the city, then [local] must be Denmark”* (P9, 00:27:59). The other half of interviewees defined locally produced as something a lot closer to them geographically. Locally produced is something within the area where they live, and the less transportation needed, the better. The ones being most specific narrow it down to an area within a 20 km radius of where they are.

“I think local products in my mind is defined as products that have been grown locally within a reasonable area of where you live. I don't know if there's like a set amount of kilometres to it, but I would assume like, let's say a diameter around where I live of maybe 10 to maximum 20 kilometres. I would probably define that as local.” (P11, 00:26:15)

One of the participants perceives, to some extent, produce having a direct link between producers and consumers as local, regardless of the geographic scope. *“I actually buy some stuff from my mother when she gets it from Fresh Land. She buys from Fresh Land, and they get their fruits and vegetables directly from farmers in southern Europe. I consider that also kind of local because there's a direct link.”* (P3, 00:27:36)

4.4.2 Rationales for buying locally produced groceries

Local food choices seem to be mainly driven by **environmental concern** and attempting to limit CO₂ emissions. This is primarily linked to the transportation of products, and the belief that the shorter the distance a product has travelled, the less impact it has on the environment. Therefore, interviewees choose a product that is locally produced: *“because it's not being transported. That's maybe the main reason. Like, this has only been transported from maybe Jutland to Sealand, but not all the way from Chile, for example. [...] I think transportation is one of the key elements in why I buy products from Denmark.”* (P2, 00:33:24).

A more elaborated answer also mentioned **food waste prevention** as a reason for buying locally produced over products that come from far away, as *“during transport you have things that go bad”* (P1, 00:21:05). Many interviewees also mentioned that they would buy locally produced food to **support the local producers** and by that provide them with a better working environment.

“To support not just the locals because they are local, but also the fact that [...] the shrimps are not sent to a country where people for very little money need to unpeel them and then they're sent back to our country. I don't like the thought of that concept.” (P8, 00:31:55)

In this context a participant mentioned that as a consumer, there is a better opportunity to keep the small local producers responsible for how they run their business, compared to big producers far away. A shorter link between consumer and producer is preferred (P13).

4.4.3 Barriers to choosing locally produced groceries

The reasons for buying something that is not locally produced are very similar to the reasons given for not buying organic. Many interviewees mentioned how locally produced food choices are impacted by **availability**, if the desired product is not grown locally, they might just choose an imported

alternative. *“There is just a lot of things, fruits, vegetables and such that we can't grow in Denmark. There's no chance if I want a banana, it's not going to be grown in southern Jutland. It's going to come from somewhere, Spain or more southern.”* (P1, 00:30:47).

Convenience is preferred over having to go the extra mile and shop in several places to be able to find locally produced groceries. It is also preferred over having to think too much about what to cook, based on what is available and in season from local producers.

“So it's just convenience because I really don't look into what is in season right now, what products are being grown in Denmark at the moment and then try to come up with ways to use those products. I'm more like, OK, I want this tonight, what do I need for this? And then just go and get those ingredients.” (P2, 00:34:46).

For some, buying locally produced is even described as adding an additional layer of complexity to their shopping experience and therefore is left out of consideration. *“I think it may add another layer of complexity when I shop, because I do look for price, for organic or non organic, how good it looks. And then if I have to look if it's produced locally, then it's becoming a harder task.”* (P7, 00:17:59).

Another decision factor hindering buying locally produced groceries is **price**, although it was not mentioned to be a barrier as frequently as it was for organic food. Locally produced groceries are also deselected if other options available are considered to be of better **quality**. Lastly, one participant in particular seemed to value sustainability aspects in the form of food waste prevention over purchasing local products: *“[I will not go for local] if the option is to choose a massive packet of Danish apples and I only need one or something like that”* (P4, 00:14:05).

4.4.4 Finding and recognising locally produced food

Most participants seem to have a hard time recognising locally produced food when grocery shopping. Sometimes a Danish flag is used as a cue, but that does not apply to all Danish products. *“That's actually quite difficult. Some products they put Danish flags on, but I haven't really noticed any certificate or any labelling that would label this as a Danish product. There might be some, but maybe they are just not as well known. At least I don't know them.”* (P2, 00:35:52). As a consequence, interviewees find themselves having to search for information about product origin in a more active way,

often on the back of the packaging, and requiring greater effort on their side. Overall, participants find locally produced food harder to both find and recognise compared to the organic equivalent.

4.4.5 Rationales for choosing locally produced food in restaurants

Similarly, to organic food, when it comes to restaurant choices, local food items are subject to being favoured due to taste or experiential values. *“I think that taste-wise it could be different. It’s more the taste I think about then, to try something new.”* (P16, 00:23:51). Another participant also mentioned that when restaurants serve locally produced food it adds another layer of enhancement to the experience, but not necessarily anything specifically tied to the taste of the food (P10).

Some mentioned that locally produced at restaurants can be better or equivalent to choosing organic, because they trust that the local producers make products of good quality and are caring about the environment, even though they might not be able to be certified organic. *“So if they get it from a local responsible farmer, that does it in a way that is healthy for the environment but he doesn't have the certificate for an organic farmer, I'll still trust it.”* (P3, 00:30:12). Others mentioned that they would like to choose locally produced at restaurants, because they believe it is exciting what the restaurants can do with local produce compared to what they can do themselves.

“During lockdown, the fish restaurant had a week where they sort of joined together with the local food producers and made locally produced takeaway food. [...] Unfortunately, I didn't pick up the news early enough, but I would have loved to try that because I think that's also interesting to see what they can, what we can do locally.” (P14, 00:38:12)

Some other said to be willing to choose locally sourced menu items given their lower environmental impact. When asked if he would like restaurants to offer more local options, one says: *“I think it's great to source locally and take advantage of the specific vegetables on the specific season. So you don't, let's say, fly an avocado from South America and some other exotic fruit during wintertime in Denmark, when it's not normally available here.”* (P11).

Others seem to be motivated by economic and social sustainability, being eager to choose food that is sourced from local farmers, with the ultimate goal of supporting the local community. One in particular showed great trust in local producers, preferring food sourced from such producers and at the same time praising its reduced impact on the environment (P3).

However, willingness to choose local options is dependent on certain conditions, with interviewees often indicating some trade-offs that make up their food choices: *“but then it also depends on what it is we are talking about. [...] If a restaurant would advertise more for local food, then I would definitely also make that choice, if the dish is something that I feel like having.”* (P8, 00:34:22). Locally sourced food may have a positive effect when choosing a dish, but participants are mostly concerned about the nature of the dish in itself before caring about where the ingredients come from, meaning that hedonic factors may prevail over locality.

“Definitely. I would also like that [the ingredients are local]. But again, if I go out and spend a lot of money at places to get a taste experience, then it's again how they combine their food and their menu. So if they can use local ingredients on top of that and at the same time put together a great menu, then I would like to pay for it.” (P5, 00:22:00).

4.5 Organic Labels and Trust

For both groceries and restaurants there are labels indicating that products or restaurants are certified organic. In this section, participants’ awareness and trust towards these labels will be explored. Interviewees were asked to what extent they trust organic food labels. Most of them do but with a hint of scepticism, with some cases of highly critical individuals. Then, they were asked if they were aware of the Organic Cuisine Label (Det Økologiske Spisemærke) for restaurants, and the vast majority was not familiar with it.

4.5.1 Labels on food groceries

First, the impact and trustworthiness of the organic label on groceries is explored. For some, this label is seen as a cue for making the ‘right’ purchase decision. When asked how trustworthy they believe the organic labels to be, many interviewees stated that they *“might be naive, but actually I trust that the stuff that's marked as being organic is organic.”* (P14, 00:25:43).

However, it is also a matter of choice and convenience, as consumers don't have the time to monitor the producers, and make sure they are living up to the standards. Many participants mentioned to be aware of the possibility that some producers might cheat with the labelling and not be compliant with all the regulations, but they choose to trust the label anyway.

"I think that the concept is right. And if you can't trust the label, then the entire concept will die, and the concept will also die if we stop buying organic. So if you want to support the idea of organic products, then you will have to buy them. Even though there might be someone who doesn't really comply with labels standards, which they have gotten." (P17, 00:13:54)

Some showed more scepticism towards the organic label, saying that they trust it as much as they trust the Danish government and other public authorities. In other words, there is a possibility for pitfalls. One participant was more specific, mentioning that they trusted the organic label for some aspects more than others:

"For health reasons, I find it fairly trustworthy, but environmental reasons, I'm not so sure because it doesn't mean that they always use the right practices. That's hard to see if they're regenerating nature and they're doing it in a responsible way, or if they're just using a lot of land to produce stuff or they have a bad supply chain, you know, then in that way you don't see it as very trustworthy. But I believe that if they say organic then I believe they don't put a lot of pesticides into it." (P3, 00:22:59)

Others even made a distinction between different organic logos, differentiating their preferences between the EU organic logo and the Danish organic logo. *"If it's the red one, the Danish one, I find it highly trustable, if it's the green EU one, I find it somewhat trustable. And if it just states organic or økologisk, then I'm a bit more sceptical."* (P6, 00:11:28). Similarly, another interviewee claimed to trust the Danish regulation and label more than the ones in other countries.

4.5.2 Label in restaurants

Almost the totality of participants was not aware of the existence of the Organic Cuisine Label in restaurants. Few of them noticed it when dining out but were unsure what that meant, while others recall seeing it in their workplace canteen. Only one had used the label as a criterion to choose a restaurant.

“When I choose a restaurant, I may go for [pause] There are these labelling schemes, where they communicate, that they use organic produce or this scheme with gold, silver or bronze. I can’t exactly remember the percentage rates, but that is something I sometimes use as a criterion for choosing a restaurant.” (P13, 00:34:48).

In addition, this person wondered if it was difficult for restaurants to receive the certification and thought that they were not particularly good at promoting the Organic Cuisine Label, which could be an explanation for why so many people do not know of its existence. Some recognise that restaurants might still offer organic food options regardless of having the certification or not.

“I think Noma, I went there a couple of times and I think most of what you get at Noma is organic, if not all. And they don't say that they are organic, they don't say that everything you eat is organic, but I really believe that. I think actually everything is homegrown. Everything is grown and sourced locally of what you eat at Noma.” (P11, 00:33:04)

When it comes to the organic logo in a restaurant setting, interviewees might overlook it and still trust the quality of the ingredients, regardless of any certification. In fact, a certification is not a particularly pressing issue in this scenario. *“I would love for them to be transparent. More transparent on how they source all the ingredients more than just putting a organic logo on the menu.” (P3, 00:32:13).* Participants don’t seem to proactively search for organic labels when visiting a restaurant, meaning that it is not a priority to them. One mentioned that the use of this logo has great potential as a restaurant choice cue if it will become more popular in the future.

“Maybe if the selection of organic restaurants in the future or if, let's say we get this branding you mentioned that has three categories. If that increases, becomes more visible maybe, that could be a parameter for us when doing our selection of where we want to go to eat.” (P14, 00:42:10).

When asked if they would like to visit a certified organic restaurant, now that they are aware of the existence of the Organic Cuisine Label, some interviewees said without a doubt that they would be willing to visit such a restaurant. That is both because they would like to continue the lifestyle they

have at home, but also because such a certificate could indicate other things about the restaurant than just the use of organic produce, such as the owners' will to run a business in a sustainable way.

"Because I think that if you have been certified then you will also care about earth and where stuff is sourced and the environment in general. So then it will hopefully also be mirrored in what else is going on around us. [I'll] expect that you get your stuff locally and so on" (P4, 00:18:25)

No one indicated that a certified organic restaurant was something that they did not wish to visit. However, numerous participants mentioned that choosing a certified organic restaurant would be secondary to other attributes. Many claimed that they would only do so if the restaurant satisfied the wish of an exciting menu or offer the kind of food they desire to eat, confirming once again the prevalence of hedonic factors in dining experiences.

4.6 Social Factors Influencing Food Choices

In order to analyse the social value of organic and local food consumption for interviewees, they have been asked whether they discuss these food characteristics with others and with whom. The purpose of this question is to point out any social influences deriving from reference groups and impacting their food choices. In the previous sections, it has already been presented how food choices might be driven by social factors. For instance, many appear to be drawn towards certain restaurants because of recommendations and other people's opinions.

Overall, it appears to be quite common for participants to talk about their food consumption habits with others. Most of them claim organic and locally produced food to be a conversation topic with family, friends and colleagues, as this is perceived to be *"often a part of the public debate nowadays."* (P5, 00:16:15). However, it is not a topic they would discuss with anyone. Most often, interviewees talk about it with specific friends, who also have an interest in the matter, rather than with anyone in their circle. Some examples from various interviewees include a friend working at the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (Fødevarestyrelsen), a friend working at a farm shop, and a colleague living in the countryside who has access to a wide variety of local produce. Another reports that *"those with whom I cook are the ones I discuss these issues most often with."* (P9, 00:33:41). One of the participants showed particular excitement for the food consumption habits of the people she practices sports with, who appear to be an influential reference group.

“I love Acroyoga people's way of living because it's so organic and it's so local. I feel very good conscience when I'm with the yoga people at camps where I'm eating for a whole week good conscience food, I like that, I like that food a lot.” (P12, 00:25:47).

This positive feeling built around one of her circles suggests that there may be social factors influencing her way of eating. Similarly, one of the interviewees seems to have received inspiration from a friend regarding the importance of consuming organic food.

“We have discussed this, the thing about organic food, especially because he became a father a few years ago, so then the organic food part of eating and cooking started meaning a lot to him because he wanted his girlfriend, who was pregnant, to not be exposed to any pesticides and so on from normal vegetables. [...] That's also where I see a true benefit to go organic, especially when you're pregnant, I think there's a lot to win as a woman to go at least organic for the vegetables, to avoid any pesticides or anything in that category.” (P11, 00:29:48).

On the other hand, other individuals may not be particularly influenced by the opinion of others. One of the participants identified some sort of social pressure concerning local food consumption, however, she does not seem to be affected by it. *“That's what is on the shelves [non-local food]. I mean, people sometimes say you should never buy something from some country because it has [travelled] such a long distance. I think so too, but I still buy it.” (P8, 00:25:37).*

One interviewee seemed to be extremely engaged in alternative food consumption, showing great passion and knowledge in the field, while often connecting with others about it. This person mentions specific topics such as regenerative practices and responsible local food consumption. It seems like this great interest has a social element to it, as many of their food choices are inspired by family members or friends. When talking about purchasing local produce, Participant 3 mentions: *“I have one friend that's really good at it, so I'm trying and buy stuff through him, or at least when he buys stuff, I'm going to follow along”*(P3, 00:24:19) and also: *“I actually buy some stuff from my mother when she gets it from Fresh Land.”* (P3, 00:27:36). He claims to talk about these topics with others quite often, trying to acquire more knowledge and engage in critical discussion with peers: *“so I love to talk daily with family and friends about organic and just generally food production.”* (P3, 00:29:02).

Sometimes, organic and local produce are a discussion topic because of the many factors and issues involved in the consumption of such foods.

“There is a lot of focus on us putting stress on the climate, that we have to be healthier, we have to live the right way. There is no definitive right or wrong answer as to whether choose between the climate over yourself. There are many ways to shed light on it.” (P9, 00:33:41)

Many seems to engage in critical conversations with others, as individuals have different opinions on the relevance of organic and local food consumption and the rationales for partaking in such a behaviour. Another participant mentions that she often talks to her husband because they *“do not 100 per cent agree on how important it is to buy organic”* (P17, 00:17:17), meaning that it can be object of arguments as individuals may have contrasting opinions about it. Some were found to disagree with their peers on matters related to organic purchases. In this context, it seems like people seek meaning to their consumption choices from each other, comparing their opinions and motives on engaging in alternative food choices.

Organic food is perceived by some as socially valuable, with individuals stating explicitly that the food they serve are made out of organic ingredients. *“For example when I am at home, my parents also try to buy organic and for example, also with meat, if they buy and serve chicken that is organic, then they would mention, OK, this one is actually organic.”* (P2, 00:36:56). Conversely, one of the interviewees does not consider it to be something worth sharing. *“It's not something that I share with people that they remember to buy organic or I always buy organic or whatever. It's just the way it is, I think”* (P14).

One of the participants showed particular concern about food matters, mentioning that she is raising her own animal stock. She claims: *“I may occasionally also speak out on social media, and I have sometimes shown my pigs from the exaggerated. But it's more than just because it's funny when [...], my youngest son, tries to ride on one, it's not so much the food it just as much just that it's a part of our lives”* (P13, 00:33:15). This behaviour indicates that she might be sharing this information with her network to make a statement, perhaps seeking recognition from peers regarding her lifestyle and peculiar food consumption habits.

4.7 Age and Gender Influencing Food Choices

This section will analyse the data collected throughout the interviews in relation to participants' demographic characteristics. Particularly, age and gender will be assessed as possible influencing factors on individuals' consumption choices concerning organic and locally produced food. It results that, while age may influence individuals' attitudes and willingness to pay for organic and local food products, gender was not a predictor of one's preferences in this context.

As far as **age** is concerned, younger interviewees seem to be more aware and have more positive attitudes towards environmental issues, compared to older ones. Participant 14, who is 56 years old, mentions CO₂ emissions and points out: *"it's not something that I'm religious about"* (P14, 00:29:44). Older interviewees seem to be more driven by egoistic factors such as health concern, while most of the younger ones are led by altruistic motives, often related to environmental sustainability. *"I think transportation is one of the key elements in why I buy products from Denmark"* (P2, 00:33:24) says Participant 2, aged 24, referring to the CO₂ produced in this stage of the supply chain. Many of the younger interviewees seem to have great interest in ethical consumption, but sometime seem to be limited by budget constraints. On the other hand, older individuals are more likely to engage in this kind of consumption due to their higher disposable income.

Differences between age groups are found in terms of organic consumption motives. For younger individuals it is rather a matter of environmental concern and ethical self-identity, while for the older it is more often a question of self-presentation and food safety concern. However, some inconsistencies can be found regarding attitudes and behaviours towards organic food. While younger consumers seem to have more positive attitudes towards organic food, the older are more likely to purchase those. Again, youth seems to be more constrained by their budget: *"I like to think that when I at some point get some more money in hand, that I'd like to switch over and buy as much organic as I can."* (P1, 00:19:20).

Some differences can be noticed also in the context of locally produced food. Older interviewees seem to purchase local produce for a matter of freshness, while most of the younger ones make such a choice to reduce CO₂ emissions and avoid getting foodstuff transported from far away. In this case, attitudes also seem to vary across age groups, with younger participants being more attentive to the

origin of food products, and older ones being more concerned about hedonic factors instead. Participant 12, aged 40, claims to be willing to give up locally produced food *“if the quality is better on the product that is from abroad.”* (P12, 00:23:57).

The intention to visit restaurants that offer organic or local food options seems to be uniform across age groups. Interviewees seem to be uniformly convinced about the benefits of such product offerings when dining out. However, younger interviewees may be less inclined to do so given their higher price sensitivity.

When looking at **gender**, no particular patterns can be found. Both female and male interviewees seem equally concerned about environmental issues, and in both gender groups there are attitudes of social and ecological responsibility. No particular differences were found in willingness to pay and purchase frequency for organic and locally produced food.

The intention to visit restaurants offering organic and local options is also uniform across gender groups. Both groups also seemed equally willing to pay a price premium for organic and local menu items.

4.8 Comparing Organic and Local Food Choices Between Store and Restaurant Settings

Towards the end of the interview, participants were asked whether they perceive a difference in the importance of organic and local food when buying groceries versus when ordering at a restaurant. All of them answered affirmatively, providing different reasons for such a difference. The main explanations were related to the low frequency with which one dines out, the experiential nature of restaurant consumption versus the rational process of grocery shopping, and a weaker perceived sense of responsibility when dining out versus higher accountability for grocery shopping choices.

One of the main reasons for such difference appears to be the frequency with which these two scenarios occur. Participants indicate that going grocery shopping is almost a daily task that takes place quite regularly, while visiting restaurants happens much more seldom. Hence, individuals are more likely to give into hedonic drivers when dining out and follow egoistic motives. *“Maybe because it happens so rarely that you are out eating, so what you value most is simply that it should be an experience. You should [have] something that you really want to eat.”* (P15, 00:21:53).

In this consumption context, food attributes such as local and organic lose value and are not seen as crucial.

“There may be other factors that play into what I choose. For instance, I might think that I would like to try the Japanese cuisine, and then it is limited how many Japanese [restaurants] there are in Copenhagen. Then it will be the experience of the Japanese cuisine that is decisive, and neither local ingredients nor organic, so it will be secondary or completely out of the picture.” (P13, 00:40:15)

On the other hand, utilitarian and altruistic motives are much more influent when making everyday consumption choices, driving participants towards more responsible decisions, such as purchasing organic and local products. Organic is perceived as more important when buying food for oneself, because that makes for the largest amount of money spent and of food consumed. Therefore, the impact of buying organic groceries is greater compared to organic dining.

“It means a lot more to me in everyday life that I can buy organic than it does when I'm at a restaurant. It's most of all because restaurants are not something you do every day. Maybe only once a week. Whereas, what you get in your own home is every day.” (P5, 00:23:44)

Interviewees follow a similar reasoning process for locally produced food. The positive environmental impact when purchasing local food is perceived as greater in the context of grocery shopping, as food bought in a supermarket is consumed on a daily basis, while dining out is a rare case.

“You could say it's more important for groceries, because if it is a matter of trying to prevent CO2 emissions from having things transported it's of course better to do it every week and get some locally sourced every week than once a year, twice a year that I go to a restaurant.” (P1, 00:43:19)

However, the higher frequency of grocery purchases versus dining out may be a deterrent for local food consumption, given the price premium that these products require. For some, local produce is perceived as very expensive, and therefore believe it would be too costly to buy it for everyday use. *“When I go to a restaurant where it's just a one-off event, whereas if I had to buy locally produced in my daily life, then it would also cost a lot more than if I just had to buy organic conventionally.*

And I don't think I want to prioritise that. " (P16, 00:25:21). A similar concept also applies to organic food products for some others. Participant 1 would be more inclined to pay a price premium for a one-off purchase in a restaurant than to do that when buying groceries for everyday use.

"If I go to a restaurant, I'd probably be inclined to spend more money to get some organic food, I'd say. You go grocery shopping every week, and it's a matter of having an income, an economy that rolls around, but going to a restaurant is a pretty rare occasion and I'd be inclined to spend more money to get some organic ingredients compared to when I would buy organic groceries at home." (P1, 00:42:09).

Difference across the two consumption settings analysed may also arise because of the nature of such settings. While grocery shopping is mostly a rational task driven by utilitarian factors, restaurant consumption is rather experiential and relying on hedonic elements. For instance, health concern is much more likely to drive consumer choices in a store rather than in a restaurant.

"When you buy the groceries for your everyday life, that's something that you eat most of the days and you want to eat healthy most of the days. And maybe if you go to a restaurant, you do that once per week. [...] It's more like a treat for me at least, and then I don't care that much about if it's a healthy treat or not, because I just want to eat what I feel like." (P8, 00:32:58).

As already mentioned, interviewees dine out for the experience of it, and food attributes such as organic may easily lose their priority in favour of other attributes.

"When I buy myself, it's organic, nearly all the time. When I go to restaurants, I go for the experience, I go for the taste and I trust the cook. I hope that they choose organic. [...] So I hope that the cooks at the restaurant when they are shopping also have the heart and the brain and the taste in mind." (P12, 00:32:58).

Hence, purchasing organic food is not as important in a dining scenario, as their focus is *"more the experience and the food, the creation of that specific dish. That is why I go to that specific restaurant to get that."* (P11, 00:39:01).

A similar pattern can be seen also in the case of locally sourced food. The hedonic and experiential nature of the restaurant setting makes this food attribute less relevant compared to, for instance, taste. This creates a behavioural inconsistency between the two consumption settings as far as local food sourcing is concerned.

“Most of the products that I buy are Danish, [...] but when I go to a restaurant I don't care if they have the products from Italy and so on. As long as the food is good, the dish in general is good and obviously the food is up to standards, I don't think actively about if the food is from Denmark or it's from another country.”
(P11, 00:40:52).

For some participants, there is a difference between these two consumption settings in terms of responsibility. Specifically, they perceive the choices they make when buying groceries as their own responsibility, while the items they can choose on a menu card are dependent on the restaurant, hence the chef's responsibility.

“I think maybe there is some kind of perception that if I go grocery shopping, it's kind of one hundred percent up to me and I'm choosing, I make this decision. And when I go to a restaurant, they have specific dishes that they make, and I feel a bit less responsible for my choice because I'm choosing from what is already pre-made for me to choose from.” (P7, 00:23:17)

This form of reasoning is followed by interviewees for both organic and local food, as they can choose to buy organic or locally sourced ingredients for their daily cooking, but they cannot expect restaurants to use this kind of ingredients.

“When I go to a supermarket, again it's my responsibility. I can choose the products myself. So if I have the option to choose between a Danish product and a foreign product, then I could choose the Danish product. If I go to a restaurant, if they don't already have the local products, then I cannot really tell them to get those products. So I would need to only go to a restaurant that has local products, and that would probably be something that I wouldn't do.” (P2, 00:44:19)

Some participants trust the restaurant owners to use organic and local produce, again, putting the responsibility into the other party. Some others refer to it as a matter of control, meaning that they

have a much higher degree of control over their ingredient choices in a supermarket compared to a restaurant. For instance, if one would want to dine with organic or locally sourced food, then one should choose a specific restaurant concept where such food is served, else it would be out of their control what ingredients will be used for their dish.

Another reason why organic and local acquire different levels of relevance in the two consumption contexts analysed is because of availability. Participants stress out that organic restaurants are not easily found, and that makes the use of organic produce an irrelevant requirement when choosing where to dine. Hence, in order for them to be able to choose from a larger pool of restaurants to dine at, interviewees will let go of organic food as a driver of dining choice.

“Considering the selection of restaurants, I would guess that when I go out for dinner, so I would have the same challenge as when I have to say choose organic as opposed to non organic groceries, that if the selection is not there, that won't keep me from going out dining. So if I cannot find the organic restaurant, I will find somewhere else.” (P14, 00:42:10)

In some cases, participants showed an asymmetry in their attitudes in the two consumption contexts because of attributes gaining different meanings. One interviewee thought that the reasons for buying local differed when buying food for herself, as the rationale was for environmental factors such as shorter transportation distance, while in restaurants it was also a matter of local ingredients providing a more special experience.

4.9 Summary of Findings

Participants were found to have quite diverse restaurant consumption patterns, showing different frequencies and reasons for dining out. The choice of a particular restaurant is driven by a multitude of factors, such as its menu offerings, the wish for a specific cuisine, dietary preferences, recommendations and reviews, atmosphere, price and perceived quality. Food choices in the restaurant context were found to be mostly driven by taste and experiential factors, followed by perceived quality and price. For most people, the hedonic values related to restaurant experiences overcome the utilitarian ones. Indeed, sustainability-related factors seem to matter to very few participants when dining out. Whether the food items on the menu were made with organic or locally sourced ingredients was not a particularly pressing matter to interviewees, who mostly focused on the other abovementioned characteristics.

As far as grocery shopping is concerned, the attributes driving consumers' choice are quite far from those in a restaurant scenario. Store choice is mainly determined by matters of convenience such as location, selection of goods offered and price levels. Food choices in a grocery context seem to be mostly driven by utilitarian factors such as perceived quality, sustainability concern, price and health concern. Nonetheless, it was found that individuals prioritise different food attributes across product categories. In the grocery shopping context, it is much more important to participants that food be organic or locally produced, compared to the restaurant context previously analysed. However, individuals show quite diverse rationales for preferring this kind of food products.

The main reasons for participants to purchase organic groceries are perceived higher quality, health benefits and environmental factors, while the main points against such products are low availability, higher prices and, also in this case, environmental factors. This last point resulted to have both positive and negative implications on participants' purchase intentions as there is no uniform agreement on whether organic food has a positive or negative environmental impact compared to conventional food. In a restaurant setting, the factors that seems to encourage interviewees to choose organic menu items are the perception of higher quality and better taste.

Data from the interviews indicates that there is no unanimous agreement among consumers on what is to be considered local food, as some believe it to be produced in a certain radius within their homes, while others perceive any national product to be local. The consumption of local food among participants seems to be mainly driven by environmental concern, given the reduced transportation distance and hence implying lower CO₂ emissions. However, many seem to also prefer local food for its freshness and to support local producers. Lack of availability and higher prices were found to be strong barriers to local food choice. In a restaurant setting, interviewees claim they would choose locally sourced food because they believe it tastes better and adds to the experiential value of dining out.

From interview data it emerges that, in a grocery shopping setting, organic food is much easier to find and recognise compared to locally produced food. This difference can be attributed to the organic certifications and logos that make product spotting much easier, while there seems to be no similar concept for local products. Overall, participants claim to trust organic food labels, but with a clear preference for the red Danish organic label (Ø-label) over the EU organic label. While the vast majority showed great awareness of the Danish organic label in groceries, most did not know about its

existence and applicability in the restaurant industry (The Organic Cuisine Label). Hence, the label system serves as a cue for better shopping decisions but is overlooked when dining out.

Organic and local food consumption were found to have a social component across interviewees. Most of them reported to talk about food consumption, organic and local produce with others. Some of them seemed to be even inspired by others in their food choices, trusting their reference groups as sources of information. Moreover, organic and local consumption seems to be object of debates, with individuals arguing on which food products are best and why. It can be noticed that for some, consuming these types of food seems to have social value.

From the data collected, it emerges that in some cases demographics can influence food choices. Age was found to affect such choices, with younger participants being mostly driven by utilitarian and altruistic values, and older ones being drawn towards more hedonic and egoistic choices. Particularly, younger individuals showed greater environmental concern, while older ones were more focused on taste and food quality. Nevertheless, despite younger participants' positive attitudes towards organic and locally produced food, older participants were more likely to purchase those due to their greater financial resources. On the other hand, gender was not found to particularly influence food consumption patterns, as men and women seemed equally concerned about environmental issues and willing to pay more for organic and local foods to the same extent.

Most interviewees believed that the importance of organic and locally sourced food changed between a grocery shop setting and a restaurant setting. Overall, organic and local were considered fundamental food attributes when shopping, but in a dining context they would not be as valuable. The reasons for such a difference have multiple explanations. Some believe that, given the insignificant frequency with which they would dine out compared to their everyday food consumption, it would not make a difference if they chose organic or local menu items. For others, it is a matter of responsibility, meaning that they feel in control of grocery shopping decisions, but what they find on a menu card once they sit down at a restaurant is not perceived as their responsibility. Some others find organic and local to be less relevant in a dining context, as the focus is on the experiential factors that make up restaurant consumption

5 Discussion

This chapter will present the key findings of this study in relation to the research question. First, the main findings will be discussed and related to previous research. Second, managerial implications will be presented for both food manufacturers, retailers and public institutions. Lastly, the limitations of the present study and recommendations for future research will be discussed.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

5.1.1 Comparing the grocery shopping and restaurant contexts

The findings of this study indicate that consumers' attitudes and behaviour change drastically when grocery shopping compared to when dining out. Firstly, it was found that store attributes driving grocery shop choice were more rational (e.g., convenience, food selection, price levels) while restaurant attributes determining restaurant choice were rather irrational and hedonic (e.g., specific cravings, atmosphere, specific cuisines, word of mouth). Secondly, food attributes driving food choices were rather different between the two purchasing settings. When shopping for groceries, participants seem more attentive to utilitarian attributes, such as price, quality, environmental friendliness, and food being organic. On the other hand, restaurant food choices are mainly driven by hedonic factors such as taste, personal cravings, and experiential values. This confirms findings from Warde and Martens (2000) who indicated restaurant consumption to be emotional and irrational in nature, as customers expect to experience feelings of comfort, familiarity and pleasure. They believe they are paying for an experience, not just a meal, implying that their hunger is both material and symbolic.

A particular focus on 'organic' and 'local' as food attributes is functional to answering the research question of this study. Such factors are crucial to many consumers in a grocery shopping scenario, while they lose relevance in a dining context. When purchasing food in a supermarket, consumers are extremely attentive to food being organic, but not as much attentive to it being locally produced. Regarding the reasons why consumers purchase organic food, Hwang (2016) demonstrated that both selfish and unselfish motives were shaping such choice. However, this study found selfish motives to prevail among participants. Interviewees' rationales for choosing organic food are rather egoistic, with a focus on health, quality, taste, and perception of organic food as natural. This behaviour is consistent with findings from Magnusson et al. (2003), who also indicated a prevalence of selfish motives driving organic food choice. The main barriers to organic food choice are found to be high prices and low availability, as mentioned by Hughner et al. (2007). However, this changes across different product categories. Conversely, local food choice rationales when grocery shopping are far

more altruistic, with participants choosing those products as they are perceived to have lower environmental impact and positive social impact by supporting local producers. These findings are in opposition with research by Feldmann and Hamm (2015), who found that the main drivers of local food purchases are related to taste, freshness, food safety and consumers' health. However, findings from Bianchi and Mortimer (2015) are confirmed, as those indicated ethnocentric values, such as supporting local producers, to be key drivers of local food consumption. The main deterrent of local food choice among participants seems to be low availability, as only a limited amount of produce is locally grown. This finding is consistent with Zepeda and Leviten-Reid's (2004), who also identified lack of availability as the main barrier to local food consumption.

It should be mentioned that the term 'local' implied different meanings across interviewees, suggesting that about half of Danish consumers may perceive food produced within the country as local, while for the other half the term 'local' implies a much shorter distance between their homes and the production site.

As previously mentioned, the importance of food being organic or local changes across different product categories, in line with findings from Buder et al. (2014). In fact, each product is chosen according to a different set of food attributes. This is consistent with research by Meyerding et al. (2019), who found respondents to be more concerned about local production for unprocessed food as compared to processed products. Willingness to pay also fluctuates across different food categories, as indicated by Aschemann-Witzel and Zielke (2017) and Krystallis and Chrysosoidis (2005). Overall, participants seem to prefer organic food products over locally produced ones, in opposition with Hempel (2019) who found individuals to prefer local food over organic.

In a restaurant context, consumers are far less attentive to food being organic or locally sourced. They believe it to add value to the experience as a nice-to-have, but it is not a priority when choosing where to dine or which menu item to pick. Such findings contradict Kwok, Huang and Hu (2016), who found that offering organic and local options boosts patrons' positive attitudes and intentions towards a restaurant. While these food attributes may positively influence consumers' level of involvement, perceived quality, and pleasure in the dining experience, as also mentioned by Campbell and DiPietro (2014), they do not influence their choice intentions towards a particular restaurant, as opposed to Shafieizadeh and Tao (2020), who found locally sourced foods as a positive cue for restaurant choice. While Teng and Wu (2019) showed customers' preferences and intentions towards organic dishes to

be influenced by both hedonic and utilitarian values, this study found restaurant consumption to revolve around hedonic attributes for the greatest part. In fact, menu item choices are mostly based on one's personal cravings. Taste and experiential values are found to be the main barrier to organic and local consumption in restaurants. Price was rarely mentioned by participants as a barrier to choosing organic or local menu items, contradicting Lu and Gursoy's (2017) claims about customers' strong price sensitivity towards such menu items. Customers are mostly concerned about what they feel like eating in that moment, regardless of ingredients being organic and locally produced. This contradicts Lillywhite and Simonsen (2014), who indicated a considerable share of restaurant patrons to perceive the use of locally sourced ingredients as more important than the type of restaurant or meal prices.

From the above findings it can be argued that there is, in fact, a gap between interviewees' attitudes and actual behaviours. This applies to both the grocery shopping and the restaurant contexts. In principle, participants may be motivated to purchase organic or locally produced food, but then their motives do not necessarily translate into behaviourally relevant outcomes. If other motives are more salient than those favouring organic and local choices (such as price when shopping or taste when dining out), then their choice might be diverted towards other products. This argument is consistent with findings from Grunert, Hieke and Wills (2014), who indicated that sustainability considerations in a purchasing decision process may be traded off for other attributes such as price, taste and health concern.

There are various reasons why participants prioritise organic and locally produced food differently when shopping and when dining out. Frequency is one of the main causes of such asymmetry. As interviewees visit restaurants relatively seldom, they feel less inclined to make healthier or more conscious food choices. Conversely, in everyday food consumption they believe their choices to have a greater impact and are hence more reasoned. These findings share some similarities with the concept of moral licensing effect discussed by Mazar and Zhong (2010), who found that those making ethical or sustainable choices may feel more authorised to make less ethical ones afterwards. This difference is also explained by the experiential nature of dining out, as opposed to the rational nature of grocery shopping experiences, consistently with findings from Lu and Chi (2018), who indicated restaurant dining to be of intangible and experiential nature, compared to the generic shopping scenario. Lastly, this asymmetry is also explained by a sense of responsibility and control. When shopping for groceries, participants feel responsible for their food choices, hence engaging in more responsible and conscious consumption. Conversely, they perceive restaurants to be accountable for the food offering when dining out, with customers only being able to choose from a few items and hence food choice

being out of their control. However, as argued by Pirani and Arafat (2014), consumer choice is what drives markets, and restaurants are simply catering to their needs. If consumers make irresponsible food choices, enterprises will just respond to their demands and keep fuelling operational inefficiencies in the industry, as concluded by Lusk and Ellison (2013).

5.1.2 Organic and local food labels

Consumers were found to have diverse perceptions of the organic food label. For most participants it acts as a cue for more responsible food choices and is generally trusted, although some showed a vein of scepticism, and some others were extremely critical about it. In general, consumers are not particularly knowledgeable about the agricultural practices behind organic food production, as also argued by Hoefkens, Verbeke, Aertsens, Mondelaers and van Camp (2009). Indeed, their perception of organic food labels seems to be subjective in nature rather than based on objective knowledge, in line with similar findings from Janssen and Hamm (2012). Overall, organic labels were found to act as heuristic cues suggesting greater product quality and health benefits. This confirms the ‘label effect’ previously attributed to organic logos, as they alter consumers’ beliefs and expectations about the product (Apaolaza et al., 2018). It can be argued that organic certified food products are credence goods, meaning that trust in certificating institutions and production processes may increase perceived benefits and lower perceived risks.

Nonetheless, organic labels are an effective tool for orientation, as they help individuals recognise organic food when shopping. Many mentioned that the presence of these symbols on the packaging makes product choice quite intuitive. Moreover, supermarkets reserving entire aisles and sections to organic food products seem to facilitate participants’ shopping experience even more. On the other hand, a way different treatment is reserved to locally produced food. For these items there are no particularly salient labels, nor special aisles at the point of purchase. The vast majority of interviewees admitted that finding and recognizing local food is quite a difficult task.

The attitudes of participants towards the Organic Cuisine Label in a restaurant context were quite different from the grocery shopping scenario. When dining out, consumers are not attentive to the Organic Cuisine Label, and the main reasons for that can be argued to be two. One is the limited importance of organic food in the restaurant context to consumers. In fact, interviewees were found to be concerned about other food attributes when making food choices in restaurants. The other one is the low level of awareness participants had about the use of the label in the restaurant industry.

Indeed, the vast majority of interviewees was not aware of the fact that restaurants could receive such a certification.

5.1.3 Age, gender and social factors

Participant's beliefs, attitudes and behaviours towards organic and local food were analysed across the demographic parameters of age and gender. While the former was found to be a predictor of interviewees' perceptions and actions towards these food products, the latter did not reveal any distinctive pattern between genders. These findings are partially in line with a study from Jeon and Jang (2019) who found that the way consumers perceive the benefits of organic foods varies across different socio-demographic categories, depending on factors such as age, gender or level of health concern. In addition, no recurring characteristics or sociodemographic factors were identified for an 'ideal' or 'average' consumer of organic and locally produced food. In other words, it was not possible to create a specific persona in this context. Such outcome is in contrast with Luomala et al. (2006), who indicated that there is a joint set of characteristics that can be attributed to a typical organic food consumer, such as specific socio-demographic factors, lifestyles and values revolving around naturalness and sustainability. As a matter of fact, organic food consumption is not a niche practice in the Danish market, and great part of the population engages in it. As mentioned by Kjærnes and Holm (2007), organic consumption in Denmark has become normalised.

Among participants, **age** was found to be a predictor of attitudes towards organic and local food. Younger individuals show greater concern and awareness of environmental issues, and their food consumption choices are strongly influenced by sustainability-related factors and ethical values. Conversely, older consumers are mainly driven by egoistic values, with a focus on health benefits and taste. These findings are consistent with results by Carrigan et al. (2004), which showed older consumers to engage in ethical consumption only if they can benefit from it personally, while Diamantopoulos et al. (2003) indicated younger consumers to have more positive attitudes towards environmental issues compared to their older counterparts. In fact, younger participants showed greater knowledge and concern about sustainability-related matters. These insights are also in line with research from Kanchanapibul et al. (2014), who identified younger generations and their green consumption intentions to be mostly influenced by affective responses, characterised by a feeling of involvement in environmental issues. However, older individuals showed greater willingness to pay and purchase intentions compared to the younger counterpart, who seems to be constrained by high price barriers in organic and local food consumption, consistently with what Magnusson et al. (2003) found. Nonetheless, it should be noted that this price barrier is temporary. Younger participants

seemed determined to boost their organic consumption once they will have greater financial resources.

No particular patterns were found with regards to **gender**. Both environmental concern and ecological behaviour appeared uniform across gender groups. Women and men had equally positive attitudes towards organic and local food, as well as similar willingness to pay and intention to visit organic restaurants. Such findings contradict a considerable amount of extant research, which mentioned women to be more likely to engage in ecological consumption (Zelezny et al., 2000), have more positive attitudes towards organic food (Lockie et al., 2002), and be willing to pay higher price premiums for organic groceries (Ureña et al., 2008).

The remaining part of this section analyses the **social components** of organic and local food choice in participants. Organic and local food consumption, as well as sustainable food habits, are a popular discussion topic among interviewees, and some seem to have diverging perspectives on these matters. Participants seem to have diverse perspectives and opinions on the importance (or irrelevance) of purchasing organic or local food, as well as different rationales behind it. However, values and attitudes revolving around the consumption of these food products has an intrinsic social value and may be a catalyst of human interaction. People claimed to discuss about their food consumption habits within their social circle, and even be inspired by others. It seems that, as far as organic and local food consumption are concerned, reference groups influence consumers' perspectives attitudes and behaviours, in line with what Arnould, Price and Zinkhan (2005) concluded.

To some extent, interviewees seem to express certain values through organic and local food consumption, making use of the cultural and social meanings associated with these products. This is in line with the thinking of Solomon (1983) and McCracken (1986), who believed consumers to seek meaning and express themselves through consumption. Although some may share their food habits with a broader audience for social recognition, for instance on their online social networks, it is still unclear whether social prestige is a driver of food decisions. What emerged from this study is that individuals are aware of social pressures to behave sustainably but do not necessarily surrender to them.

Overall, there is clearly a social component in the consumption of organic and locally produced food. Interviewees are influenced by the values and attitudes of others, but they do not seem to engage in conspicuous consumption to express their values in an explicit manner. Hence, these findings are not in line with studies by Petrescu and Petrescu-Mag (2015) and Hwang (2016), who found individuals to engage in organic food consumption due to the positive self-image that they wish to portray. In

fact, in a social setting such as restaurant dining, Danish consumers do not seem to engage or be particularly concerned about organic and local consumption. These results contradict Hwang and Lee (2019) who found public self-awareness to be a strong influencing factor in green restaurant choice. A possible explanation to such low interest towards organic and locally sourced menu items could be found in the immaterial symbolic value related to a dining experience. Indeed, Yang and Mattila (2016) found consumers to prefer highly visible goods for the communication of symbolic and social value, as opposed to hospitality services where the symbolic value of organic food is immaterial and hence does not influence consumers' behaviour.

5.1.4 Criticism towards organic food

From the findings yielded by interviews it can be observed that some Danish consumers are becoming more and more critical about the organic concept, especially younger generations. While there seems to be a generally positive attitude towards organic food, some showed seemingly hostile beliefs towards it. In particular, organic is seen as a cue for pursuing a healthier diet, but not necessarily implying more environmentally sustainable eating. While some participants may perceive organic food as eco-friendly, some other see drawbacks in organic agricultural practices and tend to be especially critical about this kind of produce. These findings are in opposition with other studies such as those by Lea and Worsley (2005) who observed consumers to perceive organic food as easier on the environment, and Williams and Hammitt (2000) who indicated some individuals to prefer organic foods because they believe it to have a reduced environmental footprint compared to the conventional counterpart. However, these results are consistent with claims by Honkanen et al., (2006), who pinpointed ethical values to have a strong influence on consumers' attitudes towards organic food. For some, environmental concern seems to be transitioning from being a motive for organic food consumption to being a deterrent for it.

Two participants in particular seemed to be committed ambassadors of this novel way of thinking about food consumption. The focus of these people is to eat sustainably and ethically, following altruistic values rather than egoistic ones as many others do. They seem to prefer locally produced food to organic food because of its reduced transportation distance, implying the perception of a lower environmental impact. In addition, they prioritise local produce as it supports local farmers and contributes to the local economy. Hence, the consumption of local food seems to be driven by both environmental, social and economic sustainability rationales.

5.2 Managerial implications

The findings of this study have several practical implications for marketers, restaurants and public institutions. The following section will present implications and recommendations for the issues emerged from the above discussion. Overall, it can be observed that organic and local food consumption is multifaceted and uneven across the two consumption settings analysed, across product categories, as well as in terms of rationales.

In this framework, advertising messages for organic and local food may prove more successful if they emphasise different benefits for different consumption contexts. For instance, marketers of food brands may want to emphasise utilitarian benefits of organic and local food items, such as better quality, health benefits and lower environmental impact. On the other hand, restaurant owners may want to place emphasis on the greater taste of organic and locally sourced ingredients, focusing on the experiential and hedonic nature of dining out. Communications may also prove successful if differentiated across consumer groups. For instance, marketers may want to emphasise health- and nutrition-related attributes when promoting organic food products to older consumers, while they could leverage sustainability-related factors when advertising locally produced foods to younger consumers.

In the particular case of young consumers postponing organic consumption to a later life stage, some measures could be deployed. In order to increase their likelihood to choose organic options, the image of these foods having high price premiums should be lessened, and their differentiation from conventional food products should be improved and further highlighted. Moreover, an appropriate communication campaign may trigger these individuals to act upon their ethical values right away, rather than postponing. Advertisements targeting younger consumers should be friend or family based, as those are the groups that have greatest influence on them, while celebrities and politicians may raise awareness but do not influence their perceptions (Beaudreault, 2009).

As it emerged from the findings of this study, price sensitivity is a strong barrier to organic food consumption. Hence, it is advisable for food brands and grocery retailers to understand when consumers are willing to purchase organic products regardless of the price premium. In fact, this study found price sensitivity to vary across different consumer groups and different product categories. It is recommendable that food brands point out the benefits related to organic food, especially for those who have greater willingness to pay. Perhaps, the communication of such benefits could be differentiated as suggested above, in order to cater to different consumers' needs and preferences.

For what concerns locally produced food, no salient label was identified by participants. It is clear that local foods are lacking a framework for better communication of their benefits. On one hand, the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (Fødevarestyrelsen) or possibly the trade organisation, The Danish Agriculture & Food Council (Landbrug og Fødevarer) could deploy a certification system for locally produced food (perhaps both strictly local and within the Danish borders) and make it easier for consumers to make responsible food choices that support the local economy and are easier on the environment. In fact, Conner et al. (2010) found that consumers' intentions to purchase local food products may be hindered if they encounter difficulties in identifying such products. On the other hand, supermarkets could adopt similar measures to those adopted for organic products, perhaps reserving an aisle or section in the point of purchase to locally produced foods and using special signs for greater visibility and to elicit curiosity and positive attitudes in consumers. This is supported by previous research, as Clement (2007) found that in a grocery shopping setting, visually salient products are more likely to be purchased.

Another issue emerging from the findings of this study is the low level of awareness of the Organic Cuisine Label in restaurants among consumers. It is advisable that the The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (Fødevarestyrelsen) and its collaborator Organic Denmark (Økologisk Landsforening) invest resources in an appropriate campaign to communicate the use of the label in hospitality and inform citizens about its benefits. This could increase consumers' awareness and form positive attitudes towards the certification scheme. However, according to the findings of this study, such a campaign should leverage the hedonic benefits of organic dining, as those appeared to be the main drivers of food choice when dining out.

Lastly, the increasing scepticism of consumers towards organic food as a sustainable option should be addressed. This emerging critical thinking could turn out to be an obstacle for organic food producers and retailers. Such scepticism calls for a redefinition of the marketing approach to organic food products. Food brands should not just advertise the fact that their products are organic but should also make a greater effort communicating to what extent their products are sustainable, in order to address even the most sceptical consumers. For instance, food brands could display the positive effects of purchasing a particular product in order to make consumers aware of the consequences of their purchase (e.g., "by purchasing this product you will save $X \text{ m}^2$ of soil from the pollution of pesticides and chemical fertilisers"). Alternatively, food retailers and producers could help consumers develop positive attitudes towards organic food by providing them with access to clear, objective and

useful information on the food production process and nutritional content of organic products. This will contribute to reducing consumers' uncertainty about the credence attributes of organics.

5.3 Limitations

This section will point out the limitations of the present study, which may influence the validity of the research. These points are further expected to help future researchers avoid similar shortcomings.

Due to limitations of time and scope, the literature review in Chapter 2 has been limited in its form. This section could have been more in depth, and by that strengthened the research. In addition, the literature review was based on general findings, not all specifically related to research on Danish consumers, which has been the focus of this study. In fact, most of the literature reviewed consists of studies conducted on consumers of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Regarding the methodological choices, only one data collection method has been adopted, that being semi-structured interviews. This was mainly due to time constraints, but also restrictions on social interaction due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Such a shortage of data is believed to compromise the validity of the study. In an ideal scenario, an appropriate triangulation would have been implemented to further strengthen the research. For instance, field studies on consumers' behaviour in relation to food choice could have improved the quality of the research, as the present results are only based on stated behaviour. Furthermore, field studies are deemed to be the most appropriate when it comes to understanding consumers as seen from the Consumption Studies perspective (Østergaard & Jantzen, 2000), which this research uses as one of the keys for data interpretation.

The sample involved in this study also limited the generalisability of the results for Danish consumers, as participants of this study were not evenly spread geographically across Denmark. In fact, most participants live in Copenhagen or the area of Greater Copenhagen, with only a few exceptions of participants living further away from the capital.

Moreover, the sample consisted of habitual consumers of organic produce. In order to paint a more realistic picture of Danish consumers' attitudes towards this characteristic, occasional consumers could have been included in the study. Therefore, results may be biased by a not-so-comprehensive sample and thereby not provide a realistic picture of Danish society as a whole. Nonetheless, as explained earlier in Chapter 3, the target group had to be limited to frequent consumers to make sure that participants had an opinion on the matter and did not feel indifferent.

The data collection process took place in a time where consumers were not able to dine at restaurants because of the restrictions in place to prevent the spread of Covid-19. This had an impact on the results as participants had to answer questions in relation to restaurant preferences based on experiences further in the past.

Due to the abovementioned time constraints of this research, the data interpretation has not gone through a feedback process with the participants i.e. participant validation, and one must therefore trust researchers' interpretations.

5.4 Further research

This section will outline perspectives on future research which should be conducted in order to expand on this research.

To further investigate the object of this study, additional research should be conducted on organic and local food consumption in a grocery shopping and restaurant dining setting. It is advisable that future research investigate this matter with a quantitative approach to statistically validate the findings of this study. In addition, future studies could use other qualitative methods to investigate the same object from a different perspective. For instance, a field study could prove useful to better understand the attitude-behaviour gap, as this would assess consumers' actual behaviour rather than stated behaviour.

Moreover, future research could make use of an existing theoretical framework that has been successfully employed in the context of food consumption, such as a stimulus-organism-response model (Lee & Yun, 2015) or a values-beliefs-attitude model (Zhang, Grunert & Zhou, 2020) or perhaps create a new model that would facilitate the exploration of these themes.

The delimitations (section 1.2) pointed out that the scope of the research would be limited to investigating the influence of age and gender as demographic factors. However, previous research found that other factors may affect food choices (Hjelmar, 2011). Hence, future studies may want to investigate how organic and local food consumption in the two settings explored may be influenced by demographic factors such as household income, level of education, employment status, location, household composition, and living situation.

As previously mentioned in the delimitations, no distinction was made between different types of restaurants in this study. Future research should investigate how consumers' attitudes and behaviours

towards organic and local food items change across different restaurant settings, such as fast food, casual dining, and fine dining.

Given the low awareness of the Organic Cuisine Label among Danish consumers, future studies might want to further explore how to better market and brand this label. This could be done by carrying out research that is purely focused on this aspect, thoroughly analysing motivations and preferences of those who visit such restaurants, as well as deterrents and barriers for those who do not.

6 Conclusion

The overarching goal of this study was to delve into Danish consumers' decision drivers and rationales within the scope of organic and locally produced food, both in a grocery shopping and a dining setting. By answering the research question and sub-questions, relevant insights into consumers' preferences, attitudes and behaviours were gathered.

It can be concluded that Danish consumers are driven by different factors when making food choices in a grocery shopping versus a restaurant setting. In the first scenario, they often prioritise utilitarian attributes such as price, quality, environmental friendliness, while in the second they are mostly driven by hedonic factors such as taste, personal cravings and experiential values.

When looking at 'organic' and 'local' as food attributes, these acquire different priorities across the two consumption contexts analysed. Such attributes are crucial to many consumers in a grocery shopping scenario, while they lose relevance in a dining context. Among the main reasons for such an asymmetry there are the frequency of restaurant visits versus that of grocery shopping, the experiential and indulging nature of dining out, and a sense of responsibility and control shifting between the two consumption scenarios.

When purchasing food in a supermarket, consumers are extremely attentive to food being organic, but not as much attentive to it being locally produced. Individuals' rationales for choosing organic food are rather egoistic, with a focus on health, quality and taste, while the main barriers are high prices and low availability. Conversely, local food choice rationales are more altruistic, as those foods are perceived to reduce environmental impact and support local producers, while the main deterrent of local food choice is its limited availability. The abovementioned barriers to organic and local food consumption confirm the presence of an attitude-behaviour gap, as consumers seem to have a positive perception of organic and locally produced foods, but eventually do not necessarily end up purchasing them if there are other factors weighing in, such as price and food preferences. It is also concluded that the importance of food being organic or local changes across different product categories. Overall, Danish consumers seem to prefer organic food products over locally produced ones in a grocery shopping setting.

In a restaurant context, consumers are far less attentive to food being organic or locally sourced. They believe it to add value to the experience, but it is not a priority in the choice process. In fact, restaurant consumption revolves around hedonic attributes for the greatest part. Menu item choices are mostly

based on one's personal cravings, taste and experiential values, which are the main barrier to organic and local consumption in restaurants.

Organic labels are found to be a cue for better food choices, but not always perceived as trustworthy. Consumers' attitudes towards them seem based on rather subjective knowledge, endowing these logos with a label effect. However, consumers were extremely unaware about the use of the Danish Organic Cuisine Label in a restaurant context, which calls for greater communication efforts from the public authorities behind this label. In addition, locally produced food is lacking a similar framework, which has great potential for boosting the diffusion of such food products.

Additionally, it can be concluded that, while gender is not a predictor of consumers' food choices, age may determine certain behavioural outcomes. Younger consumers seem more attentive to environmental issues and are mainly driven by altruistic values, while older ones are motivated by egoistic factors and engage in organic and local food consumption if they see it as a way to gain personal benefits. Moreover, some individuals seem to engage in such consumption because of its social valence, in an attempt to express certain values and seek meaning. Some appear to be influenced by their respective reference groups, highlighting the social component of organic and local food choices.

Lastly, it can be concluded that organic food is starting to stir controversy among younger generations. Young consumers are becoming increasingly critical about organic food and its effects on the environment. While some may perceive organic food as eco-friendly, some other see drawbacks in organic agricultural practices and tend to be especially critical about this kind of produce. Perceptions of such food may continue to change as this consumption trend keeps growing. Time will tell if organic food will be a long-lasting trend growing in popularity throughout the next decades, or if the sense of criticism of future generations will turn it into a fad in the history of food consumption.

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