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Consumers' motives in ethical food consumption

Study on Finnish consumers

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ABSTRACT:

Ethical food consumption refers to the purchasing of food products that promote or enable ethical sustainability. Despite consumers' positive attitudes towards ethical food consumption, the sales of ethically sustainable food products remain relatively low. The justification of this study is this attitude-behaviour gap in ethical food consumption. The aim of this study is to deepen the understanding on what motivates consumers to buy ethically sustainable food products. The food products that are considered in this study are vegan/vegetarian food products, organic food products and fair trade food products. The propositions of this study were formed based on existing research. The propositions are the three main motive categories for ethical food consumption: ethical motives, social/external motives, and practical motives.

This study was conducted as a qualitative study and the research method was interviews. A total of 7 interviews were conducted amongst Finnish consumers who buy ethically sustainable food products. The data from the interviews was compared to the proposed motives to deepen the understanding of the known motives and to find out new ones.

The findings indicate that relieving guilt and supporting a cause, which are defined as ethical motives, are found to motivate the purchasing in all food product categories. Especially relieving environmental guilt is found to be a strong ethical motive. Society's expectations and worry of own public image as social motives are not found to be prominent motivation for ethical food consumption. Health and taste are found to be practical motives for ethical consumption in organic and vegetarian/vegan food product categories, but not remarkably in fair trade products. An additional finding that is not found in the existing research is domesticity as an ethical attribute. Domesticity is seen as an ethical attribute and ethical motives for purchasing domestic products are supporting a cause and trustworthiness, and practical motive is the benefit for the environment that comes from short transportation distances.

This study contributes to the research of ethical consumption by providing deeper understanding of consumers' motives in ethical food consumption and on Finnish consumer's motivation in food consumption that can be used in cultural studies.

KEYWORDS: Ethical sustainability; Consumer motivation; Food consumption; Finnish consumer

VAASAN YLIOPISTO**Markkinoinnin ja viestinnän yksikkö, Johtamisen yksikkö**

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TIIVISTELMÄ:

Eettinen ruoan kuluttaminen tarkoittaa sellaisten ruokatuotteiden ostamista, jotka edistävät eettistä kestävyyttä. Huolimatta kuluttajien positiivisista asenteista eettistä ruoan kulutusta kohtaan eettisesti, kestävien ruokatuotteiden myyntiosuus on pysynyt suhteellisen matalana. Perustelu tälle tutkimukselle on tämä asenteiden ja käyttäytymisen välinen kuilu eettisessä ruoankulutuksessa. Tämän tutkimuksen tavoite on syventää ymmärrystä siitä mikä kuluttajia motivoi ostamaan eettisesti kestäviä ruokatuotteita. Ruokatuotteet, joita tässä tutkimuksessa on käsitelty ovat vegaaniset/vegetaariset ruokatuotteet, luomuruokatuotteet ja reilun kaupan ruokatuotteet. Tämän tutkimuksen väitteet on koostettu olemassa olevien tutkimusten pohjalta. Väitteinä toimii kolme päämotiivikategoriaa eettiselle ruoankulutukselle: eettiset motiivit, sosiaaliset/ulkoiset motiivit ja käytännön motiivit.

Tutkimus toteutettiin laadullisena tutkimuksena ja tutkimustapa oli haastattelututkimus. Tutkimuksessa toteutettiin yhteensä 7 haastattelua, ja haastateltavat olivat suomalaisia kuluttajia, jotka ostavat eettisesti kestäviä ruokatuotteita. Aineistoa analysoitiin vertaamalla ehdotettuihin motiiveihin, jotta voitiin syventää ymmärrystä jo tunnetuista motiiveista ja löytää tietoa uusista.

Tutkimuksen tulokset viittaavat siihen, että syllisyyden helpottaminen ja aatteen tukeminen, jotka määritellään eettisiksi motiiveiksi, motivoivat ostamaan kaikkia ruokakategorioiden tuotteita. Erityisesti ilmastosyllisyyden helpottaminen on vahva eettinen motiivi. Yhteiskunnan odotukset ja huoli omasta imagosta, jotka määritellään sosiaalisiksi motiiveiksi, eivät ole vahvoja motiiveja eettisessä ruoan kulutuksessa. Terveellisyys ja maku ovat vahvoja käytännöllisiä motiiveja eettiselle kulutukselle luomu- ja kasvis/vegaanituotteissa, mutta ei juuri reilun kaupan tuotteissa. Ylimääräisenä tuloksena, jota ei ole juurikaan tutkittu aiemmissä tutkimuksissa, on kotimaisuus eettisenä määritteenä. Eettisinä motiiveina kotimaisten tuotteiden ostamiselle toimii halu tukea aatetta ja kotimaisuuden luotettavuus, ja käytännöllisenä motiivina toimii ympäristölliset hyödyt, jotka syntyvät lyhyistä kuljetusmatkoista.

Tämän tutkimuksen tulokset edistävät eettisen kulutuksen tutkimusta syventämällä ymmärrystä kuluttajien motiiveista eettisessä ruoan kulutuksessa. Tuloksia suomalaisten kuluttajien motivaatiosta eettisessä ruoan kulutuksessa voidaan hyödyntää kulttuurisissa tutkimuksissa.

AVAINSANAT: eettinen kestävyys; kuluttajien motivaatio; ruoan kuluttaminen; suomalainen kuluttaja

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1 INTRODUCTION

Global warming, human rights and lifestyle choices are phenomena that affect all the decisions a modern consumer makes. Sustainability is a term that connects all of these phenomena and is a key concept in modern production and therefore marketing. Ethical sustainability is a major part of the sustainability trend, since it impacts not just the environment, but it also influences the social and consumption habits of consumers. This study examines the motives that consumers have towards consuming ethically sustainable food products. Studying more closely the consumer point of view in this ever-growing phenomenon provides relevant information for companies to help them to understand the characteristics that consumers consider and value in their purchases, and therefore it helps companies further target their marketing to answer the consumers' needs and interests. The first chapter is the introduction of the study. It explains the justification of the study from the sustainability angle, and introduces the research gap, research questions and objectives and the delimitations of the study.

1.1 Justification for the study

Sustainability is the practice of using our common resources in a way that they are able to be renewed. It is a topic that every modern company and every consumer is familiar with. It is most often associated with the environment, but for consistent sustainable living it is to be observed from a wider angle. Distinguishing a difference between ethically and environmentally responsible consumption is not particularly necessary since the idea of ethical consumption is widely accepted to be generated from the environmental sustainability movement (Janssen et al. 2016). Global warming, and the myriad of problems that it causes to both environment and people, ties ethically and environmentally responsible consumption together.

Companies have already noticed and reacted to the consumers' growing interest in sustainable products. It is seen in the stores for example as bigger and wider vegan food selection, in the advertisement that promote favouring organic and natural ingredients,

or in the companies' code of conducts where they commit to fair treatment of their workers across the globe. However, consumers still feel that there are crucial barriers for them to consume sustainably. These barriers include for example too high of a price, lack of availability of sustainable products in stores, lack of trust towards the information given of the products and lack of education of the impacts of sustainable choices (Burke et al., 2014; Gleim et al., 2013; Papaoikonomou et al., 2011; Uusitalo & Oksanen, 2004). These are the main obstacles for companies to tackle in order to answer to the consumers' needs, and it is a well-researched area. Therefore, this study approaches the problem from another point of view. Rather than solely focusing on what prevents consumers from buying ethically sustainable products, the emphasis of this study is on what does motivate consumers to buy ethically sustainable products. However, the barriers are acknowledged in the study, but the focus remains on the motives that gets consumers past those barriers. The information this study provides helps companies to focus on appealing to consumers motives and encourage those, rather than trying to remove the barriers of sustainable consumption.

1.1.1 Importance of sustainability

To understand consumers' motives, it is important to understand the importance of sustainability. The actions of an individual affect not just the environment around them, but also other people around them. One farmer's use of certain kinds of pesticides and fertilizers also affects the neighbouring farms and their production. It is important to understand that no company or person exists in this world alone, and the consequences of one's actions affect all the stakeholders and beyond. Therefore, social responsibility and sustainable actions drive people from "us versus them"- thinking towards realising the "common interest" through which sustainability can be achieved (WCED 1987).

Even though the need for sustainable consumption is widely acknowledged, many individuals experience that there are not enough actions taken towards integrated policy of sustainable food production (Reisch et al., 2013). One problem is that there is no concerted definition of what sustainable food consumption entails. Differences and

contradictions in sustainability policies between countries create difficulties for companies who operate on international markets to maintain consistent sustainability policies, and that hinders the achievement of the sustainability targets on the global market.

1.1.2 Ethically conscious consumers

Issues that affect the whole globe, such as global warming and uneven wealth distribution are a growing concern for individuals, companies, and governments. From an individual point of view, the concern for societal and environmental problems is seen as growing interest towards ethical consumption (Andersch et al., 2019). Ethically sustainable consumption is a growing market where consumers' behaviour differs from common theories. Instead of behaving strictly in a rational manner, focusing simply on price and good quality, consumers' focus shifts towards ethicalness of the products and their production. Consumers appreciate more the intangible attributes, such as justice or relieving the guilt of the impact of their purchasing decisions, and they make their purchasing decision more from the emotional bases rather than rational bases (Bezencon & Blili, 2010). Therefore, it is important for companies to increase their knowledge of what product characteristics consumers value and consider in their purchasing.

1.1.3 Context of food consumption

The context of this study is the consumption of food. The focus on the food consumption was chosen to narrow down the research area in order to provide specific and relevant information. Grocery shopping is something that every consumer deal with regularly, so it was chosen as the context in order to ensure the finding of interviewees from the general public. There are other areas of consumption where sustainability issues are discussed a lot, for example the consumption of clothes and energy, but the sustainability of food products is an easier subject for consumers to approach, since food

shopping is something they deal with daily, and where preferences can be easily applied to the purchasing choices. Therefore, it can be assumed that all individuals have experience and opinions to share of their food consumption habits.

Another reason to focus on food consumption is the mere size of the food industry. In Finland, the food industry is the fourth largest area of industry with revenue of 11,2 billion euros (Elintarviketeollisuusliitto, 2019). To compare, the revenue of textile industry in Finland is 4,4 billion euros (Suomen tekstiili ja muoti, 2019). The size of the food industry indicates that the sustainability choices made within that industry, by companies and consumers, can truly have an impact on the society and environment, and therefore the sustainability in the food consumption is relevant to examine.

1.2 Research gap

The main challenge for companies in ethical consumption market can be found in the consumer behaviour. Consumers express their concerns about sustainability issues strongly. As much as 83 % of individuals say they are concerned about the environment (Nielson, 2011), but these concerns do not translate correspondingly to purchasing of ethically sustainable products (Grunert et al., 2014). There is a gap between attitude and action. In order to diminish this gap, the focus of the study needs to be on what happens in consumers' behaviour between the realisation of the need and the purchase. The current literature points towards studying the motivation of consumers. The concrete drivers that eventually guide consumer to the ethically sustainable choice are important to identify, so that this behaviour can then be enhanced to increase the ethically sustainable product sales. Therefore, this study aims to help identify and otherwise deepen the understanding of those drivers in consumer behaviour that work as motives, and that is the justification of this study.

The findings on the factors that drive consumers to pay more for ethically sustainable products are still rather scattered in current research (Tully & Winer, 2014). Many studies show that consumers are willing to pay relatively premium price for ethically

sustainable products, but there are also studies that show that willingness to be closer to zero (Tully & Winer, 2014). The consumers' willingness and interest in ethical consumption is noteworthy, and there are consumers that take ethicalness as a most important characteristic in their consumption behaviour. But it is to be noted that even amongst the most educated and ethically aware consumers, buying ethically every single time is not always possible. The key in enabling ethical consumption is that there are options provided for the less ethical consumption choices. For example, flying is regarded as the most polluting way of travel, but when traveling across the globe it is for many the only possible solution, since the alternative ways of travel take significantly more time. Therefore, the ethical option would only be to not fly at all. But as the selection of ethical options increase, the more possibilities there is in ethical consumption for consumers to choose from.

The selection of ethically sustainable products has indeed increased significantly over the last century, but ethical products are still a very small part of overall food sales. For example, according to a poll conducted in 58 countries by Nielsen in 2013, over 50 % of consumers said that they are willing to pay more for products from socially responsible companies (Burke et al., 2014). However, even the highest market share of organic foods, which in Europe is in Denmark, covers only 6 % of the total food sales (Willer & Kilcher, 2012). The corresponding number in the USA is only 4 % (OTA, 2011). So even though the selection of ethically sustainable foods is wider than ever, the consumers are still not conducting their behaviour according to the increase in positive attitudes.

Another reason for the attitude-behaviour gap can be found by applying the theory by Chatzidakis, Hibbert and Smith (2007). They explain the gap between attitude and behaviour with neutralisation theory. According to this theory, an individual can act against their personal values and attitudes, because they have learnt a societal norm that through rationalization neutralizes their motivation to act according to their own motives (Sykes & Matza, 1957). A consumer can have positive attitude towards e.g. fair-trade products, but when the purchasing decision is made consumers purchase the less ethical alternative by justifying their decision with the societal norm.

1.3 Research question and objectives

The existing research of ethical consumption has been criticized for its scatteredness. Ethical consumption has not been very well defined, since it has been studied under various definitions, such as green consumption, anti-consumption and consumer ethics (Wooliscroft et al., 2014). This study focuses on consumer motivation in ethical food consumption, and the focus is on consumer behaviour in ethical consumption.

This study is conducted from the consumer's point of view, specifically to gain an understanding of the behaviour of consumers when there are ethical choices to make. The focus of the study and the literature review is on the ethical sustainability. However, it is acknowledged that ethical sustainability motives are not separated from environmentally sustainable motives, as those two definitions are overlapping. In this study the purpose is to gain a deeper understanding of the motives in ethical food consumption beyond and in addition to the environmental motives.

The key concept of this thesis is to find out what attributes of ethically sustainable products, perceptions of those products and their impacts drive consumers to make an ethically sustainable purchasing decision.

Research question for the thesis is:

RQ1. What motivates a consumer to purchase ethically sustainable food products?

Research objectives are additional questions that are determined to help answer the research question. Research objectives are:

- 1. What attributes of ethically sustainable food products consumers find ethical and why?*
- 2. What are the different types of motives that guide consumers' purchasing decisions in different types of ethically sustainable food products?*

The aim of the first research objective is to help further define ethical consumption, and what consumers consider to be the ethical attributes in ethically sustainable products and are they making their purchasing decisions based on the ethical attributes, or some other practical attributes, that just happen to be ethically sustainable. The second research objective aims to deepen the understanding of ethical consumption motives by categorizing them and linking certain kind of motives to certain kind of ethically sustainable food product. With this categorization the aim is to organize the findings for further, more detailed understanding of consumers' motivation in ethical consumption context.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of seven chapters and appendices. The first chapter is the introduction that presents the importance of the subject and justification for the study. This chapter also presents why the context of food consumption was chosen. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 are the theoretical part of the thesis that present the theories used in the study based on existing literature. Chapter 2 forms an understanding of sustainable consumption from the ethical point of view and presents the barriers consumers experience for ethical food consumption. Chapter 3 focuses on consumer's motivation in the decision-making process alongside the effects of values on motivation. In chapter 4, these concepts are combined to explain and categorize the motives for ethical consumption behaviour based on existing research. From this base the theoretical framework of the thesis is formed and the propositions for the study presented based on the categorization of the motives.

Chapter 5 covers the methodology of the study. It presents the research approach and method used. Further, in the chapter the practicalities of data collection are explained, and the collected data analysed. In addition, the reliability and the validity of the study are explained. Chapter 6 presents the findings from the data with quotes of the interviews as evidence, categorized according to the propositions made in chapter 4, along with additional findings. Chapter 7 discusses the conclusions of the study in the

light of the theory along with the limitations of the study, managerial contributions, and implications for future research. The references and appendixes, such as the questionnaire of the interviews are listed at the end of the study.

Chapter 1	Introduction Justification of the study Research question
Chapter 2	Literature review Ethical consumption
Chapter 3	Literature review Consumer motivation
Chapter 4	Forming theoretical framework Consumer's motives in ethical consumption
Chapter 5	Methodology Methods of the study and data-analysis
Chapter 6	Findings
Chapter 7	Conclusions

Table 1. Structure of the thesis

2 ETHICAL CONSUMPTION

This chapter presents sustainability from its ethical point of view and how it affects modern consumption. In addition, the characteristics of ethical food products are presented and categorized. Further, to understand what motivates consumer to ethical consumption, it is helpful to understand what currently and, in the past, has prevented consumers' ethical consumption. Therefore, the main barriers for ethical consumption from the consumer's point of view are also presented in this chapter.

2.1 Sustainability and ethics

Ethics and morality are to do with everything in human behaviour: rules, principles, behaviour norms and the sense of justice and freedom et cetera. Ethical questions are key concepts in the meaning of culture and society's influence on individuals. Ethics are the basic understanding humans have of right and wrong. Ethics are typically observed in four key parts: evaluation of intention and character, evaluation of natural properties of an action, evaluation of the consequences (cause-effect) and evaluation of the context of the action (Jennings, 2010). All four aspects are relevant to sustainability, but the most direct one to understand in a consumption point of view is the cause-effect relationship. When an action is made, it has certain consequences. Sustainability essentially means limiting the negative consequences of actions to maintain a certain level or rate of something. So, the ethics are a basis of the concept of sustainability.

The concept of sustainability is a many-sided topic, and it applies to any development that takes place in the modern world, and therefore also in business. A report by United Nation's World Commission on Environment and Development addresses the meaning of interdependence of nations when it comes to sustainable development. Often referred to as the Brundtland report, this report is a cornerstone to the sustainability discussion. In the report, sustainability is defined by dividing it to three equal parts: environment, economy, and equity. As seen in Figure 1., these three elements do not exist separately, but are overlapping and all equally essential. It argues the main idea of

sustainable development: it can be achieved only by simultaneously protecting the environment, preserving economic growth and development, and promoting equity (WCED 1987). Ethical sustainability is linked to all three of these issues since ethics and morals are the basis of the idea behind sustainability. Preserving something requires that a right thing needs to be done, and moral is what separates the right from wrong in people's mind.

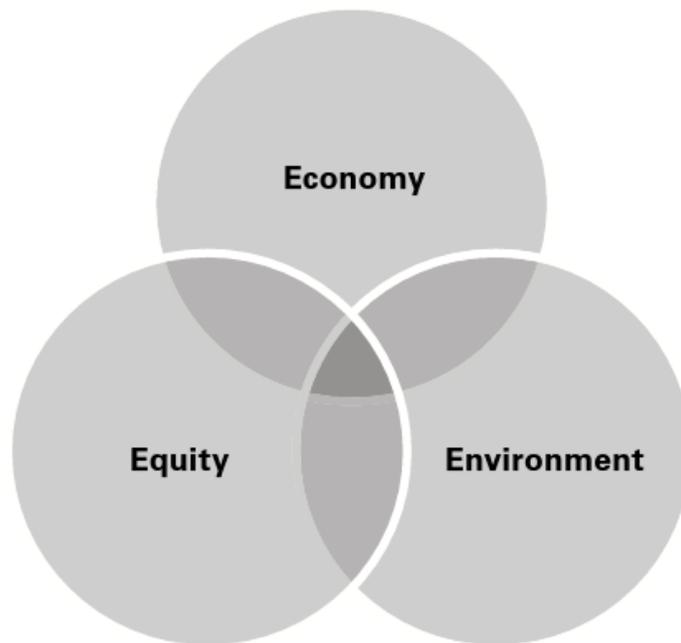


Figure 1. The three E's of sustainable development

2.2 Ethical consumption

From a consumer's point of view, ethics are both consciously and unconsciously involved in their everyday decisions. Ethical consumption can mean different things to every consumer, but essentially it is a way for consumers to consume in a way that is right for them and for the world. The ethicalness of one's consumption choices is not necessarily always actively on consumer's minds when they go shopping but considering one's purchasing habits is a way to take responsibility of how one's actions affect the society and the world. An official definition for social responsibility, according to the ISO 26000 standard that companies can implement, is "*responsibility of an organization for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment, through transparent and ethical behaviour*" (Tully & Winer, 2014).

Considering the ethical side of consumption has not always been self-explanatory. Even though essentially consumers consume products to fulfil a need, the selection of the ways to fulfil a need is so wide, that consumers are forced to look beyond practical factors in their decision making. Positive attitudes towards ethical consumption have increased significantly in recent decades. This change can partly be linked to the value shift that developed countries have experienced due to the general rise in the income levels (Bartley et al., 2015.). More secure living conditions for people have changed their values from materialistic to post-materialistic, and people are more concerned about the intangible issues, such as environmental protection, creative expression, and human rights, when they do not have to fight for daily survival. People who follow more post-materialistic values, defined as understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature, are more likely to practice conscientious consumption (Bartley et al., 2015).

A defining characteristic of ethical consumption is that it is most often *intentional* purchase of a product that does not harm humans, animals, and environment (Burke et al., 2014). The intentional nature of this type of purchasing behaviour can make the consumption choice also a political act. Accordingly, Bartley et al. (2015) presented two forms of meticulous consumption: *boycotting* and *buycotting*. Boycotting is a clear

choice to implement one's values in one's purchasing decision by simply not buying products that do not support one's political views or ethical values. The second form of conscientious consumption is boycotting, which is more what ethical consumption is about. Boycotting means "*intentionally purchasing a product for political or ethical reasons*" (Bartley et al., 2015). So instead of avoiding buying a product that does not fit on one's view of sustainable production, consumers focus on favouring products that they do consider to be ethical.

2.3 Ethical food consumption

Shopping groceries is a series of conscious and unconscious decisions that the consumer makes in the supermarket. Things that consumers pay attention to while shopping for food include for example sensory appeal (taste, flavour, smell etc.), freshness, price, nutrition, convenience and where it comes from and how it is produced, to name a few (Chang & Zepeda 2005). Many of these characteristics affect the purchasing decision simply on a preference level, but when considering the ethicalness of the product, the focus shifts to the productions and conditions behind it. As presented above, virtue, rightness, consequence, and context are ethically important in sustainability (Jennings 2010). So, a product is ethically sustainable if by buying it consumer implements these ethical characteristics in the action of purchasing them. Therefore, in practice, ethical sustainability is linked to the production of goods that consider living organisms, such as animals, people, or the environment, and where the consequences of the production are taken into consideration. According to this idea, in this study there are three food product groups defined as the ethically sustainable food products to study the motives that lead consumers to buy these products. These food product groups are presented in the next chapter.

2.3.1 Ethically sustainable food product groups

Even though a product cannot be ethical in itself, the product can be considered from ethical point of view to find positive perceptions in its characteristics (Crane, 2001). The ethical nature of each characteristic can be defined through who or what benefits from it, humans, animals, or the environment. According to this, in this thesis ethical food products are divided in to three groups:

Vegan and vegetarian foods

Vegan foods are products that are produced without any animal-based food ingredients (Vegan Society, 2016). Vegetarian and vegan diets have been a growing trend for several years. In addition to the ideals of animal welfare, increasing worry of global warming has brought attention to the problems of the meat industry. Meat and dairy production are highly energy-consuming practices, and the amount of land, water and raw materials needed for producing meat in comparison to growing plants for food is manifold (de Bakker & Dagevos, 2012).

Consumers following a vegan diet include people who refuse to consume products where the animal has been killed or harmed (meats, dairy products, eggs, and other animal-based food ingredients) (Vegan Society, 2016). Consumer's reasons to switch from meat to a vegetarian diet vary. Traditionally the reason consuming vegetarian or vegan food is considered to be to save the lives of animals, but in the light of the magnitude of the pollution resulted from the meat industry, the reasoning of many consumers has turned to the well-fare of the environment. According to a study conducted by Janssen et al. (2016), most people choose vegan diet because of animal-related motives (89,7%). Environment-related motives were a driver of 46,8% of the respondents. In addition, 69,3% of the respondents answered that their motivation for vegan diet is based on own health or well-being. And in some cases, reasoning for preferring vegan and vegetarian diet is simply disliking the taste of meat.

Organic foods

Organic foods are produced with natural processes in which use of chemicals is avoided. The processes are powered by renewable energy sources, and welfare of the soil and the animals on the production areas is protected (European Commission 2017). With these practices, organic food production aims to have a small environmental impact. Low environmental impact that also sustains animal welfare is a characteristic that consumers value in organic food (Chang & Zepeda 2005). Another important characteristic in organic food is the cleanness of it. Use of chemicals and genetic modification in food production is perceived negatively by the consumers, and they put a lot of value to the cleanness of organic food (Chang & Zepeda 2005).

Consumers' interest in the environmental conditions in which their food is produced creates a market for organically produced foods. In 2010, the organic food market in Europe was worth 19,6 billion euros, Germany being the largest country with 6 billion euro share of the market (Willer & Kilcher 2012).

Fair trade foods

A widely accepted definition for fair trade is *"a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, which seeks greater equity in international trade."* (FINE, 2001). By the definition, the aim of fair trade is to build better market conditions in order to secure the rights of marginalised producers and workers especially in developing countries. Improving their conditions includes securing their right for proper compensation of their work and safe working environment. Fair trade products are now distributed through mainstream channels which is the reason for the fair trade movement's growth in the past few decades. Fair trade products are often priced to be more expensive than substitute products that do not carry the fair trade mark. This is because the fair-trade premium and floor price. If the price of the commodity on the market is higher than the regulated minimum price (fair trade price), the buyer must pay the market price, but if the market price falls below the fair trade price, the buyer must still pay the fair trade price amount (Fairtrade International, 2020).

Consumers' growing interest in the ethical part of the production of their food has increased the international fair-trade market by 20% between the years 2000 and 2015 (Rios et al., 2015). Information about the unjust treatment of workers interests consumers. Consumers perceive purchasing fair trade products as a way to influence the social problems on the markets, such as low-wage payments, unsafe working environments, and environmentally toxic production practices.

2.4 Cultural framework in ethical consumption: Finland

Generally, moral and ethical values are universally quite similar, and caring is seen as a virtue in many cultures. However, when ethics are applied to consumption, the priorities and values can differ remarkably. For example, Gifford & Nilsson (2014) determine that culture and ethnic variations affect pro-environmental behaviour in consumers. They also prove that factors like childhood experiences, values and religion affect pro-environmental behaviour (Gifford & Nilsson, 2014). The same findings can be applied to ethical consumption behaviour, which includes pro-environmental attitudes.

According to Hofstede's cultural dimensions, Finnish culture is considered as more feminine than masculine (Hofstede Insights, 2020), meaning that dominant values in the culture are caring for others and quality of life. And since the main idea of sustainability is to leave resources for future generations so they can live similar or even better lives than people currently do, it can be argued that in a feminine culture such as Finland, ethical consumption is seen as something desirable and relevant.

This study is conducted in the context of Finnish consumers who buy ethically sustainable products. When studying the meaning of culture in consumption, it is important to have a good insight on a certain culture and the motivation and behaviour of individuals in that culture. By focusing on Finnish consumers only, the influence of culture can be observed in consumers' motives and behaviour more effectively, since the cultural context is the same, and conclusions can be drawn from the patterns in the data.

There is a significant amount of research on ethical consumption, but there is still a lack of consensus in the findings, especially when it comes to demographic factors. There are results found that ethical consciousness is higher within older consumers (Hines & Ames, 2000), and within female consumers (Parker, 2002), and within people with lower level of education (Dickson, 2005), but there are also studies that debunk these conclusions, suggesting that orientation to ethical behaviour cannot well be determined through demographic factors (Johns & Kilburn, 2011). Since the theories are so dispersed, this study focuses on the ethical motives of individuals in a cultural context and does observe the finding in the light of age, sex, or race.

2.5 Barriers for ethical consumption

Many studies in ethical consumption focus on the barriers that consumers experience concerning ethical consumption. Consumers who regularly discard ethical product options apply negative reasoning excessively to the ethical alternatives to make the decision of choosing regular product simpler (Burke et al., 2014), and make them feel more justified to choose the regular option.

Johns & Kilburn (2011) present that in consumer's decision making there are impending factors that threaten the ethically sustainable purchasing decision, regardless the demographic division. This is pictured in Figure 2. They argue that the emotion of guilt has an important role when consumer is choosing between ethically different options. The anticipated guilt that the consumer would feel after a purchase can guide consumers decision-making towards the ethical option. However, they recognized many factors that prevent ethical attitudes from turning to ethical consumption.

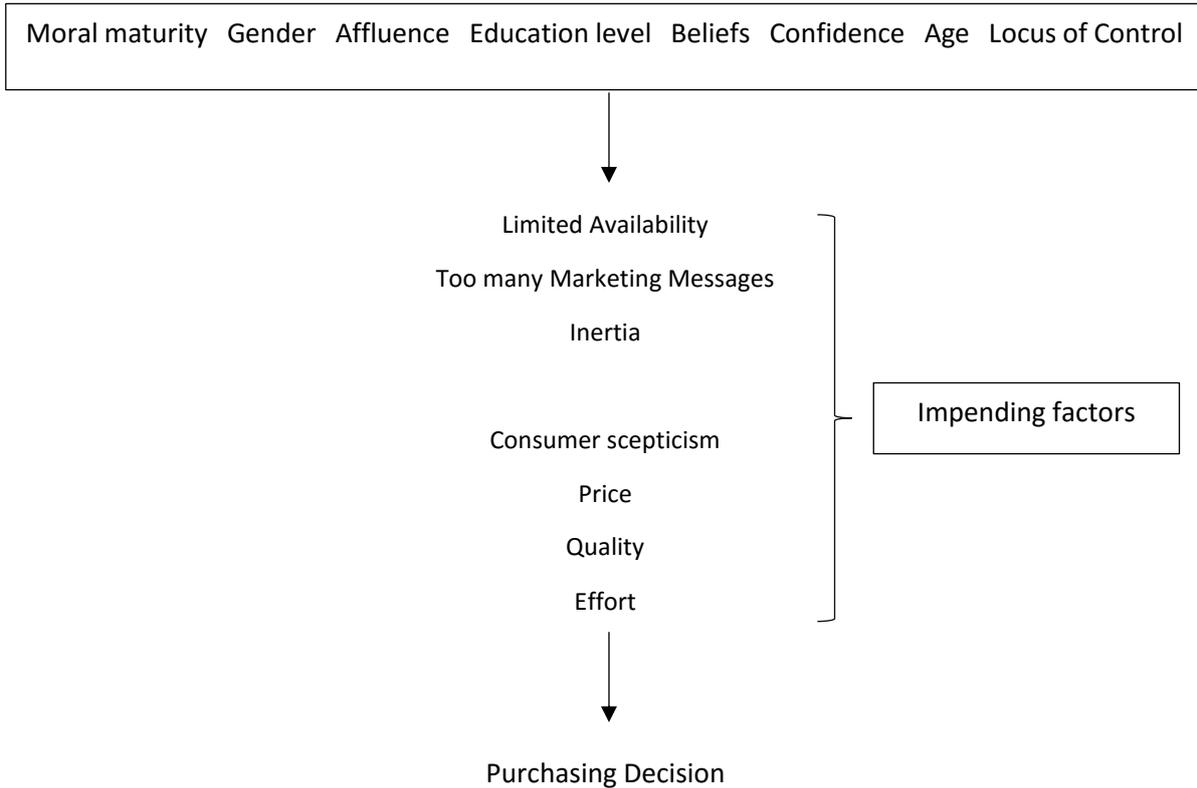


Figure 2. Conceptual framework of factors potentially impeding ethical consumption (Johns & Kilburn 2011).

Papaoikonomou, Ryan and Ginieis (2011) studied the reasons why ethically conscious consumers do not behave according to their ethical concerns, and they divided their findings into two categories: perceived external and internal limitations. External limitations are the factors consumers experienced that prevent them from acting in a desirable way, such as lack of availability. Internal limitations are individual barriers consumers have, such as wanting to make an easy choice.

In this chapter the barriers that consumers experience, are constructed into four main barriers according to several studies (Burke et al., 2014; Gleim et al., 2013; Papaoikonomou et al., 2011; Uusitalo & Oksanen, 2004): high price, lack of availability, lack of trust and lack of proper education.

2.5.1 High price

Fundamentally, the most influential factor in consumer's decision-making process is price. It forces consumer to calculate is the benefit they will get from the product worth the cost. Purely economically speaking, the best choice is the one with lowest cost. But in reality, the consumer's purchasing decision is affected by various different influencers. One of the most common reasons given by consumers for why they do not choose the ethical alternative is that those products are too expensive for their limited budget (Papaoikonomou et al., 2011). Furthermore, Tully & Winer (2014) concluded that consumers are willing to pay more for ethically sustainable products that benefit humans (fair trade) than for those products where the benefactors are animals or the environment.

In ethically sustainable production, there are more things that are taken in consideration than in "regular" production of goods. For example, reducing carbon footprint by changing into more environmentally friendly transportation, or paying reasonable pay for workers when competitors do not, is not always the cheapest choice for the company, and it naturally reflects in prices of the ethically produced products. To encourage sustainable actions, governments sometimes offer economic incentives for companies to act as an additional motivation for them to offer these kinds of products for consumers, besides the benefit they create to society (Karnani, 2012). It is crucial for companies to understand how much more consumers are willing to pay for ethically sustainable product.

But even though consumers say that they are willing to pay more for ethical products, the sales of ethical products have increased slower than the positive attitude towards ethically sustainable products (Burke et al., 2014). In a study by Chang & Zepeda (2005) they found that organic food consumers are more tolerant to high prices, since they have a lot of knowledge of organic foods and understand the extra efforts taken in organic food production. But still, willingness to pay does not automatically translate to actual purchasing behaviour.

Interestingly, high price of an ethically sustainable product can also work as an opposite of a barrier. People have a fundamental need to be respected by their peers, (Kenrick et al., 2010) and this reflects in their purchasing behaviour. Puska (2019) suggests that this need for respect motivates consumers to choose an organic product instead a regular product, and that organic food can be seen having similar perceptions as brands that are perceived as “luxury”. The same logic can be applied to fair trade products. Due to the price regulation on fair trade products, they are often more expensive than competitor products, and therefore buying fair trade products can also be a display of status.

2.5.2 Lack of availability

Even though the selection of ethical choices has increased and is increasing all the time, consumers name lack of availability as one of the main barriers to ethical consumption (Papaoikonomou et al., 2011). Consumers experience that the purchasing of ethical products is not convenient enough, due to the lack of visibility in common stores or lack of the ethical stores itself (Gleim et al., 2013). In addition to availability, consumers also find it problematic that companies offer both ethical and unethical products in their selection (Uusitalo et al., 2004). This is deemed as confusing and undermining the ethicalness of the ethically sustainable choice. Presenting ethical products visibly and providing reliable information about them in visible way (e.g. labels on packaging) can lower the barrier in the eyes of the consumer.

2.5.3 Lack of trust

One of the most influential barriers for ethical consumption is scepticism towards the information of the actual impact of the ethical purchase (Burke et al., 2014). Barriers linked to trust originate from the common impression that companies are willing to create profit “any means necessary” and ignore ethical aspects in doing business. This in the mind of the consumers create lack of trust towards the information companies provide of their products. After all, an average consumer’s main source of information

about the products is the facts provided by the company. But the more consumers consider ethics in their purchasing, the more pressure there is for companies to actually set a clear code of conduct to address the ethical issues in their everyday practices and production (Bezençon & Blili, 2010).

Companies can attempt to lower the barrier of trust by providing information from an impartial source that validates the ethicalness of the product. Grunert, Hieke & Wills (2014) concluded that consumers knowledge and understanding of the concept of sustainability is limited, but the knowledge of the labels linked to sustainability (Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance, Carbon Footprint, and Animal Welfare) is relatively good. These initiatives handling these types of labels aim to increase transparency in the food production chain and educate consumers about sustainable consumption in order to ease the decision-making process (Grunert et al., 2014).

Transparency from the companies' side helps consumers to trust the products' ethicality and further make the purchasing decision. Furthermore, even though consumers are interested and want information of the social impact of the products they buy, they are often willing to leave the examination part of it to the companies themselves (Haynes & Podobsky, 2016). This creates a huge responsibility for companies to act in an ethical manner in order to provide consumers with trustworthy products.

2.5.4 Lack of proper education

Consumer's need information in order to make a purchasing decision. As stated before, the positive attitudes towards ethical consumption are not turning in to sales in an according way. Consumers are willing to try new things, but the information search needs to be as easy as possible. Even one good experience can be enough to lower the barrier of being uninformed. In a survey about trialability (Thomas, 2004), 84 per cent of the respondents would consider switching products after trying a sample they liked, and 92 per cent had even decided to buy a food product after trying a sample. This shows that the barrier of education exists, but it can be overcome by simple efforts.

Especially in ethical consumption, the ethical purchase is made based on the product attributes in addition to the need. However, consumers say that making an ethical choice is difficult, because there is not an easy enough way for the to access information about the production of products (Papaoikonomou et al., 2011). Relevant information, such as country of origin is vital in consumer's decision-making process. One way this concern can be addressed in by taking it into account in the legislation in order to ensure companies' transparency. For example, in Finland, the country of origin of the meat products must be reported to the consumer in writing, even in restaurants (Ruokavirasto 2019).

Many consumers are passive in their search for information, and their purchasing decisions are based on the information on the labels rather than a result of an active search of the ethicalness of the product (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). Therefore, there is a role for governments and companies to provide consumers enough reliable, easily accessible information in the media so that they can make informed judgements and purchasing decisions (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001).

In conclusion, consumers perceive ethical consumption as positive and necessary in order to influence global issues, but the barriers that hinder their ethical purchasing behaviour are still significant. The motivation of consumers to buy ethically sustainable products is further discussed in chapter 4.

3 CONSUMER MOTIVATION

Consumers' motivations are the drivers for their decision-making process. In this chapter is presented consumer's decision-making process and how motivation relates to it. In addition, in this chapter is discussed values and moral and their effect on consumer's motivation decision making.

3.1 Decision-making process and motivation

Consumer's decision making starts with recognizing a need, that can be a problem that needs to be fixed, or a desire that needs to be fulfilled (Blackwell et al., 2006). Motivation is a driver that occurs when consumer recognizes this need, and eventually guides them to behave in a certain way (Solomon et al., 1999). Motivations affect consumer's decision making throughout the process, but they come especially crucial when consumer starts to evaluate alternatives in order to make a purchase. In this stage of decision making, consumer compares different attributes of different products and prioritizes them in their mind to find the most suitable solution for their need. Since motivation is based on values (Freestone & McGoldrick, 2008), consumers can come to the same decision for multiple reasons because of their different values. Personal values, norms, and social identity influence person's motives more than self-interest and peer pressure. However, group mentality can enhance individual's awareness of moral issues and guide towards ethical consumption (e.g. religious groups and friendship groups) (Burke et al., 2014).

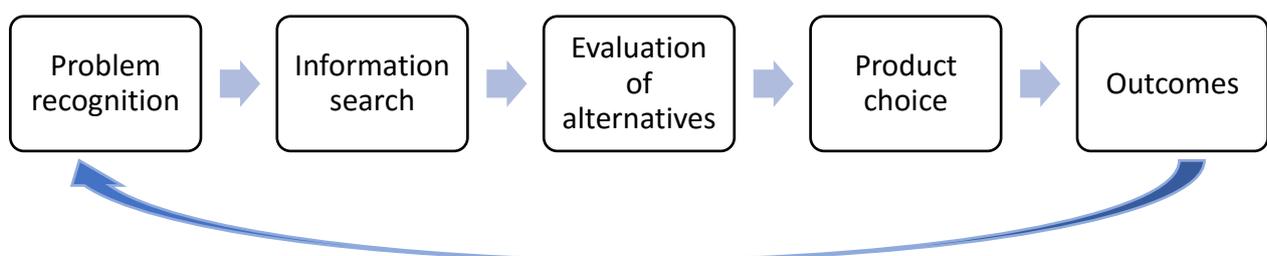


Figure 3. Steps in consumer decision making (Solomon, Hogg & Askegaard, 2019)

Consumers decision making can be divided in to three vast types: cognitive, habitual, and affective. Each of these types relate to a different mentality that dominates the decision-making process in consumer's mind, whether it is emotion driven or more rational. *Cognitive* decision-making is traditionally the way consumer decision making is perceived. Once consumer recognises a problem, they then follow to search information about the alternative ways to solve that problem, and after evaluating the alternatives they choose a product best suited for them and live with the outcomes of their choice (Figure 3)(Solomon, Hogg, Askegaard & Bamossy 2019). This type of rational decision making that is based on an information search that can include external search from media or word-of-mouth or internal search through personal experiences and memories, is an ideal way from both consumers and manager's point of view to reach a decision. Managers can provide information as much as possible for consumer to help make a well-informed decision.

However, most of the time consumer's decision-making is not rational or information based. Many times, consumer's decision making is *habitual*, and it happens very unconsciously and rapidly (Solomon, Hogg, Askegaard & Bamossy, 2019). Especially grocery shopping is often very routine like for consumer's, and purchasing decisions made happen automatically and out-of-habit. Perhaps there has been a more detailed decision making in the past that has led to the habit of buying the same product each time. These habits are very hard to break, since they require for consumer to stop and go back a step to evaluating alternatives and even information search to make a different choice, but still expecting as satisfying or better outcome. In ethical consumption, the ethical product choices are not often the easiest choices to make, since making an ethically conscious choice requires information search, and guiding consumer to change from "regular" choice to the more ethical alternative is not a simple process.

The third type of decision making that consumer exercises is *affective* decision making, which refers to the human nature of making decisions based on emotions (Solomon, Hogg, Askegaard & Bamossy, 2019). Emotions are an important determinant in consumer behaviour. For example, buying a product on a specific brand can make a

person feel good, even though the brand is more expensive and fulfils the same need as competitors' product would. Consumer is willing to pay more on a product that has the same functionality than the less expensive alternative, simply because of the good feeling it brings (Solomon, Hogg, Askegaard & Bamossy, 2019). And on the other hand, people who experience a negative emotion become harsher in their judgement, and the whole process of their decision making starts from negative basis. Emotions, both positive and negative, play a significant role in consumer's motivation. Especially self-conscious emotions – pride, guilt, embarrassment, and shame, are important in the context of ethical consumption, because these emotions have been deemed as motivational (Gregory-Smith, Smith & Winklhofer 2013). Considering the attitude-behaviour gap in ethical consumption, this can partly be explained by the motivational feeling of guilt and how compensate their unethical consumption by comparing it to their ethical choice in the past or planned ethical choice in the future. By making these inconsistent ethical choices, the attitude-behaviour gap becomes fleeting, while ethical choices diminish the gap and unethical choices reciprocally broaden the gap (Gregory-Smith, Smith & Winklhofer 2013).

From companies' point of view, decisions based on more measurable reasons, such as price are easier to influence, but when the decision making exceeds the practical characteristics, it becomes more difficult to measure and influence on. Therefore, studying consumers' motives is important.

3.2 Values and motivation

People make decisions in their life and act according to their morals, and therefore, it is widely acknowledged that moral issues are tightly linked to food consumption as well (Wilk, 2001). Food consumption and eating habits are essential part of people's everyday life, so its relation to moral issues is shown in for example choosing healthy lifestyle choices and caring for family. Consumers who are strictly committed to follow ethical consumption behaviour can often have inner struggles about following the ethical consumption style in which they are dedicated to, since they feel obligated to

the be consistent to receive social recognition (Grauel, 2016). This indicates that the consumers personal morals are driver of their motivation.

Motivation is the force that drives consumer toward a certain action (Solomon et al., 2006). Motivation is tightly linked to values, since values influence how attractive a certain goal is for a person, and then values guide the motivation to achieve these goals (Freestone & McGoldrick, 2008). Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) define values as set of beliefs that guide individual's behaviour, choices, and evaluations by organizing the according to importance. Values play an especially important role in ethical consumption, since the selection of products is done with value-related goals in mind (Freestone & McGoldrick, 2008). Individual's values indicate the reason for why people feel personal obligation to support actions that protect valued objects rather than simply thinking about their own self-interest. Therefore, when consumer chooses an ethical product, they are guided by their own morality and values in addition to society's norms (Burke et al., 2014).

A certain social factor that affects consumers' values and through that consumption choices is religion. Religion can be a normative influence in consumers actions and enhance awareness about moral issues in food consumption (Burke et al., 2014). For example, in Hinduism, vegetarian diet is not required, but it is practised because Hindus believe that a plant-based diet minimizes hurting other life-forms (Rosen, 2006).

4 CONSUMER'S MOTIVES IN ETHICAL CONSUMPTION

In chapter 2 was discussed consumer's food consumption from ethically sustainable point of view. In chapter 3 was discussed consumer's decision-making process, values, and motivation. In this chapter those concepts are combined to explain what motivates consumer to consume ethically and thus the theoretical framework for the study is formed. Also, the propositions of the study are formed.

4.1 Ethical consumption behaviour

As discussed in previous chapters, many consumers communicate that they are interested in consuming more ethically, but they see a lot of obstacles that become barriers for ethical consumption. Many consumers simply find it too difficult to trade convenience or cheaper price to ethical influence. But Uusitalo and Oksanen (2004) argue, that if neglecting ethics and social responsibility would become unacceptable behaviour in the society, the positive attitudes people have towards ethical consumption might actualize into purchasing decisions. So, the positive attitude is seen in consumers, but the level of attitude turning into a motive and motive turning into action is still very low. Lowering the barriers of ethical consumption is the only way that consumers' motivations become relevant and eventually turn into a purchasing decision (Bartley et al, 2015).

4.2 Perceived impacts of ethical consumption

In ethical consumption, the consequences of the choices are of interest to the consumers. It is argued that ethical consumption is not about product selection, whereas about consequence-conscious choosing (Kantanen, 2002). Consumer recognizes specific consumption consequences, that originate from several factors, e.g. from personal money or health situation, and bases their choice on the consequences that the choice has on those factors. In addition, consumer can associate certain

consequences to a certain product group (Kantanen, 2002). For example, for fair trade products higher price is tolerated due to the associated consequence of positive impact for workers.

The impacts of ethical consumption choices can also be investigated from the beneficiary point of view. In general, choosing ethically sustainable product can be seen to benefit three types of beneficiaries: people, animals, or the environment. Tully and Winer (2014) studied the consumers' willingness to pay (WTP) in ethically sustainable product context and found out that willingness to pay is greater in products that benefit other humans, (e.g. responsible labour practices in fair trade products) instead of products that benefit the environment. In fact, ethically sustainable products benefiting the environment seem to have lower WTP than products benefitting all other beneficiaries (Tully & Winer, 2014).

The result of the study by Tully and Winer (2014) seems to be in contradiction with current atmosphere in the society, where actions taken to benefit the environment are more present than the actions to benefit humans and animals. Also, it can be argued that the products that benefit environment benefit the people as well, yet indirectly, and therefore all the ethically sustainable purchase decisions benefit people. Arguably the indirect nature of the connection affects consumer's decision making to prefer products that benefit people directly (fair trade products), since it is easier to understand the effects of the choice.

4.3 Categorizing the motives and forming theoretical framework

As stated in the previous chapter, consumers' motivation is driven highly by their values. Consumers take steps towards ethical consumerism by assessing their personal values and make decisions according to them (Freestone & McGoldrick, 2008). However, society plays an important role in the decision-making process. After all, consumer's choices are limited to the selection they have on hand, which again is affected by

society's rules, in addition to other consumers' behaviour. Individuals can be persuaded to behave in the common interest through education, institutional development, and law enforcement (WCED 1987). Consumer's reasoning for consuming ethically can be internal or external. Internal reasons are linked to wanting to impact one's self and they are influenced by values, and external reasons are linked to wanting to see the impact one's choices have on the surrounding world, and they are influenced by society (Burke et al., 2014)

In order to identify and make sense of the reasons motivating consumers for ethical consumption, in the following chapter are categorized the motives found in existing research. These categories are further used to form the framework and propositions of the study. The categories are ethical motives, social motives, and practical motives.

4.4 Theoretical framework and propositions

Above has been explained the characteristics of ethical consumption and how motivation drives consumer's behaviour. The purpose of this study is to find out what motivates consumer to buy ethically sustainable food products. This justification of study is based on the existing theory of the attitude-behaviour gap, which means that consumers perceive ethical consumption as desirable, but this does not translate to sales. In the Table 2 below is presented the three categories of consumers motivation for ethical food consumption based on the literature review above. The three categories, which are ethical motives, social/external motives and practical motives are used as the propositions of the study. The aim in the study is to explain the phenomena of buying ethically sustainable goods to deepen the understanding of consumers motives by comparing the proposed motives to the findings of the study.

4.4.1 Proposition 1: Ethical motives

Companies have recognized customers' growing interest in sustainability and ethicalness of products by appealing to the emotion of guilt in their marketing, meaning that they promote characteristics of their products that make consumers feel less guilty when buying them (Haynes & Podobsky, 2016). Many studies conclude that in fact this kind of appeal to emotions is more effective than appealing to consumer's values (Albers-Miller & Stafford, 1999; Gobe, 2001). However, Haynes and Podobsky (2016) found that the effectiveness of guilt-free marketing, in contrary to the common belief, is not mainly because of the consumers' self-accountability, but because of other factors. The diversity of different guilt narratives, such as existential and reactive guilt, implies that defining the impact of ethical and environmental consumption is more complicated than current marketing literature states. Therefore, further study is essential.

Under ethical motives for ethical food consumption are also categorized the consumers' desire to promote or show solidarity to a cause that the product furthers. According to this definition, ethical consumption based on environmental reasons also fall under this category. When a consumer chooses for example the vegetarian option over the meat option because of the environmental impacts of the meat-industry, they make a conscious choice to diminish the negative impact their consumption has on the environment. This is their way of showing solidarity to a cause that they find important. Wanting to show solidarity to a cause can be linked to the need to relieve guilt, especially in the food industry, due to the variety of issues on the food markets (Haynes & Podobsky, 2016).

When it comes to value driven motivation, religion can shape individuals' behaviour. People who experience religion as an important part of their life can be more inclined to ethical consumption, especially with fair trade products, because the core values of many religions are altruistic and encourage to focus on others rather than yourself (Rios et al., 2015). Also, acts of altruism and being considerate towards others are seen as

universal values regardless of religion, and thus different religions were not viewed separately in this study.

4.4.2 Proposition 2: Social/ external motives

Social motivation to a certain type of behaviour comes from the culture in which the individual lives. The culture can be seen as the common understanding of the goals and ambitions to be achieved in the society, and a common understanding on how those goals should be achieved (Puusa et al., 2014). As an individual, in order to survive in the culture, they recognize as their own, they must commit to the goals and methods the culture values. The culture that the individual recognizes as their own can be e.g. the culture of a country, religious organization or even just their own friend group.

The society and its culture create certain expectations for individuals as consumers. Consumers experience these expectations differently, but they are communicated constantly in the world around, in channels like the media, displays in the supermarkets and opinions of friend groups. Ethical consumption is a subject that is regularly present in the media and therefore, the motivations of consumers can be affected by the ongoing conversation and opinions of others in their society. But this influence is not absolute. In a study conducted by Haynes and Podobsky (2016), only 9,6 % of the respondents answered that one of their main motives for buying guilt-free (ethical) products is that they feel like they are expected to do so. These feelings of expectations can come from e.g. religious groups, learned family values or other learned social habits.

People's initial need to be respected by their peers can drive them to purchase goods that they believe enhance their public image, such as premium priced organic goods (Puska, 2019). In contrary to being motivated by religious altruistic values, a need for prestige can work as a motivation for ethical consumption, where purchasing organic foods is used as a status symbol (Puska, 2019). This theory can also be applied to other forms of ethical consumption, such purchasing fair-trade and vegetarian foods.

4.4.3 Proposition 3: Practical motives

In various studies (Haynes & Podobsky, 2016; Freestone & McGoldrick, 2008; Reisch et al., 2013) consumers have expressed that the reason they buy ethically sustainable food is because it is healthier and/or it tastes better. This is presented as one of the most important reasons especially with organic foods, and according to Willer and Kilcher (2012), for European consumers the most important reason for buying organic food is the belief that it is healthier.

Even though health-related motives to choose sustainable products are driven mostly by self-interest (Janssen et al., 2016), as well as taste related motives, rather than for ethical or environmental reasons, the positive impact on ethical sustainability the product has still exists. From a marketer point of view, promoting health or taste reasons to engage consumers in ethical consumption can be a suitable way to market for a target group that is not that interested in the political or ethical aspects of the product.

The motives for ethical consumption based on existing literature are used as propositions in this research to study the motives in ethical food consumption. The propositions are presented in Table 2 below.

<p>ETHICAL MOTIVES (PROPOSITION 1)</p>	<p>relieving guilt promoting the cause of the product showing solidarity to a cause religious values</p>
<p>SOCIAL/ EXTERNAL MOTIVES (PROPOSITION 2)</p>	<p>society's expectations prestige/public image</p>
<p>PRACTICAL MOTIVES (PROPOSITION 3)</p>	<p>health taste</p>

Table 2. Consumers motives for ethical food consumption (Propositions of the study)

5 METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the research methodology, including the research approach and chosen methods for data collection. Also, in this chapter is presented the sample from where the data is collected, and further the analysis of data is presented.

5.1 Research philosophy and approach

The philosophy of research means the systems of beliefs and assumptions of how the knowledge is developed (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 124). The aim of any research is to develop knowledge of a certain area of science, and the research philosophy determines how the development of knowledge is framed. There are five major philosophies the research on business field: in *positivism* knowledge is based on natural phenomena and collected through observations of social reality (Saunders et al., 2016). *Critical realism* explains experiences that affect the events that are being observed on the bases of reality. *Interpretivism* focuses on the meanings behind phenomena and explaining those meanings. *Postmodernism* emphasises power relations and the role of language and bringing up alternative views. Finally, in *pragmatism* the relevance of concepts, words and thoughts, matter only when they are used to support action.

The main purpose of this study is to deepen the understanding of the motivations of consumers to actually buy ethically sustainable food products. Since this study focuses on finding meaning for social behaviour behind a phenomenon that is ethical consumption, the philosophy of the research is interpretive. Also, in interpretive approach it is importance to understand that each person acts differently in society and social situations (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 140), and therefore it is suitable for this study of motives behind consumer's behaviour. Interpretive research philosophy is usually enabled by qualitative research and with a small sample, since the aim is to find an access to meanings and in-depth understanding of the studied phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 168), and that is why this study is conducted as qualitative study.

The approach to the study is chosen on the base of the determined research philosophy. There are three approaches that can be applied to theory development (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 145). In *deductive approach*, first a theory is formed, normally based on existing academic literature, and then that theory is tested with research. The aim is to verify a theory or to prove it wrong. In *inductive approach*, the theory is formed on the basis of data collected, and the aim is to generate and build a new theory. In an *abductive approach*, the aim is to find themes and patterns from collected data to generate a new or to modify an existing theory what is the tested through additional data collection.

5.1.1 Combining approaches

The idea of this study is to research consumer's motives in ethical food consumption based on existing research, but also to deepen the understanding of the existing research, not only repeating results. Therefore, it is relevant in this study to combine deductive and inductive research approaches, since it is found to be advantageous (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 119). The interviewees for this study were chose based on their consumption habits. This means that all the interviewees in the study were known to already be consuming ethically sustainable food products. This is the inductive approach. However, in order to deepen the understanding on the already researched area of ethical sustainability in consumption, there were proposition formed based on the existing research, that were used when determining the interview questions. This is a deductive approach. But since the aim of the research was not to completely repeat the results from existing studies, but to also expand the findings, the approach for this research was a combination of both inductive and deductive approaches. What also supported the choice of combining the deductive approach to the inductive was the limited time schedule, as the data was to be collected within one round of interviews.

5.2 Data collection

In qualitative study, data can be collected through various methods, but perhaps the most common data collection method is interviews. In an interview the purpose is to ask respondent purposeful questions to get data that can be used to the research questions or to shape an idea for the research questions. Interviews can be approached objectively or subjectively, and the distinction between the two is dependent on how the answers are being viewed (Saunders et al., 2016). In an objective approach, the answers of the respondents are treated as facts, which provides data for the study, but not too in-depth view of the culture of the interviewees. A subjective approach takes into account that the interviewees are part of the society that shapes their answers. These different approaches distinct a difference in the purpose of the interview.

5.2.1 Types of interviews

There are three types of interviews that can be conducted (Saunders et al., 2016). *Structured interviews* are conducted with questionnaires, where in each interview respondents are asked same, predetermined questions. In the social interactions of the interviews it is important to try to conduct the interviews the same way to avoid any bias. Structured interviews are also referred as quantitative research interviews since they provide structured answers and data.

A second type of interviews is *semi-structured interviews* (Saunders et al., 2016). In these types of interview, the interviewer has list of themes or some key questions to guide the interview, but these may vary from interview to interview. Also, the order of the questions may vary from interview to interview, leaving out more flexibility to the interview to discuss the themes within the rhythm of the interviewee, and enabling more in-depth answers.

The third type of interviews is *unstructured interviews* (Saunders et al., 2016). These are conducted as informal, in-depth discussions about the general topic or area of research. There are no precise questions to be asked, but the purpose of the interview should be

clear. In unstructured interviews, the respondents are let freely discuss their experiences, behaviours and beliefs about the topic chosen for the interview, but the guiding of the respondents' answers is left to the minimum. The purpose of the unstructured interviews is to get an in-depth perspective of the beliefs and values that guide respondents' behaviour. Informal interviews are also purposefully more personal, which would make respondent feel more relaxed and therefore make their answers more personal and in-depth.

The downside of semi-structured and in-depth interviews is the issues with data quality. The more there is space left in the interviews for social interaction, the more are the answers affected by the cultural differences of the interviewees, and this needs to be taken into consideration when analysing the data. When the interview is not structured, the interviewer's own beliefs guide the interview more than in structured interview, and this is a base for the interviewer bias (Saunders et al., 2016), which means that the interviewers interpretations can show during the interview and therefore affect the respondents answers. This then leads to response bias, which is caused by the perception that the interviewee forms of the interviewer and of the interview (Saunders et al., 2016). Therefore, in a study it is important to explain the method of how the data is collected, so that the implications of the study for future research purposes can be critically applied to future research without compromising the reliability of the study.

5.2.2 Chosen data collection method of the study

The data collection method chosen for this thesis study is semi-structured interview. The purpose of this study is to find what motivates consumer to buy ethically sustainable food products. Since the topic of the research is related to the beliefs and values behind the consumers' behaviour, establishing personal contact in the interviews is important to enable that the respondents are willing to answer questions about their beliefs and values truthfully. Therefore, structured interview would not provide enough flexibility for the interviewer to get to the values and motives behind consumers' habits during the interview. However, an unstructured interview was not chosen as a data collection

method due to the fact that the purpose was to find answers to a specific topic and a specific area of research. The gap between consumer's attitudes and action is a highly researched topic, and therefore the interview is constructed to provide data for a specific topic in order to deepen the understanding of the research topic. An informal interview would have provided to vague answers, and it would have been more difficult to get suitable data for this study.

The interviews of this study are divided into three themes and on each of these themes there are question prepared based on the existing theory of the research topic. The three themes are consumer's consumption habits in ethical food shopping, values and motives behind those habits and barriers for ethical consumption. The questions prepared were open questions, except one question was specific about the self-evaluation of consumer's own ethicalness on a scale from 1-5. The order of the questions was changed and reformed to fit the rhythm of the discussions, but still guiding the conversation within the chosen topic and theme on hand.

5.2.3 Sample

The interviews were conducted in March and April 2020 as face-to-face discussions both in person and over video chat and on the phone. Having interviews face-to-face allowed the interviewer to read respondents' reactions to the questions to see if they understood the questions and if not, interviewer could rephrase the question so that the respondent would feel confident to give an answer. However, the preferred method of in person face-to-face conversation needed to be changed to video chats and phone interview due to the prevalent situation in the society where personal contacts were to be avoided because of the Corona-virus pandemic during the interview period of the study.

Interviewees were selected based on their consumption habits. The criteria were that chosen respondents buy and consume ethically sustainable food products, so that they would be able to provide insight on what motivates them to buy those products. The

aim was to find otherwise regular consumers who would be ready to answer questions based on their personal consumption habits. Some of the interviewees were personally asked to take part in the interview and some answered a general invitation to take part. Further criteria were to get respondents of different genders and different age groups to provide validity for the data. The nationality of all interviewees is Finnish to get a in focused look on ethical consumption within one culture, and the interviews were held in Finnish.

The interview lasted 17 to 31 minutes, and all interviewees were asked the same 14 questions. However, the wording of some questions was formatted a little after first few interviews to simplify the question and to avoid misinterpretations. In the Table 3 below is presented details of the interviewees and interviews.

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Interview method	Interview duration (min)
1	23	female	Video chat	:29
2	24	female	Video chat	:26
3	28	male	Video chat	:27
4	58	female	In person	:17
5	24	male	Video chat	:29
6	25	male	Video chat	:31
7	37	female	Phone call	:25

Table 3. Details of the interviewees and interviews

5.3 Data analysis

As the interpretive philosophy of this research implicates, the qualitative data of this study is used to deepen the understanding of the phenomena being studied (Saunders et al., 2016), which in this case is the attitude-behaviour gap in ethical consumption. Qualitative data tends to be more varied and open to interpretation than quantitative data because of the social interaction, so therefore the analysis of the data needs to be conducted with these characteristics in mind (Saunders et al., 2016).

The approach chosen for this study is a combination of deductive and inductive, and there already is a lot of existing research about this topic. And, since this existing research is used to formulate the research question and objectives, the theoretical implications can also be used to form the framework for analysing data (Yin, 2014).

There are several deductive approaches to be taken in qualitative data analysis, and the one used in this study is explanation building, which can be applied to deductive and inductive approach. In deductive explanation building, there is literally the explanation of the phenomenon built using the predetermined theories. The data of the study is compared to the theoretic propositions, which are then amended in light of the findings to draw conclusions and deepen the explanation of the phenomena (Yin, 2014).

The analysis of the data was started by listening to the recordings of the interviews and the answers were summarized and categorized according to the three themes of the interview: ethical consumption habits, values and motives behind those habits and barriers for ethical consumption. The results were then compared to the motives found on the existing research and categorized further under existing motives of ethical consumption.

5.4 Reliability and validity of the study

In scientific research, the base of the research is often comprised from previous studies of the same research area, or at least referencing previous studies. Therefore, it is crucial that all studies are conducted in a way that the conclusions of the study are reliable for others to base their theories on them.

Reliability of the study refers to the consistency of the findings made, meaning that the research should be able to be repeated and similar results should be achieved. (Weathington et al., 2012, p. 57). The reliability of this study was ensured by constructing the interview questions beforehand and using the same questionnaire in every interview. Because of the qualitative nature of the study conducted through interviews, the interactions with every interviewee could not be repeated exactly the same way, but by asking the same questions in every interview ensures that the data collected is reliable. Additionally, asking the same questions in every interview enables the comparison of the results within each other in order to draw valid conclusions.

Validity of the study refers to the proper way of drawing conclusions and making interpretations of the data collected. A study is valid, when the researcher has been able to make accurate conclusions of the data collected (Weathington et al., 2012, p. 59). In other words, the conclusions should accurately describe the relationships between the concepts of the study and the findings. In this study, the validity is ensured by asking the questions in a way that the interviewees understood them as they were supposed to, in order to get a relevant answer. The language of the interviews was Finnish, because it was the mother language of all interviewees and the interviewer. However, the findings and conclusions of the study are presented in English, which might create interpretations errors when comparing data to existing theory and researches, which are mostly in English. Therefore, the accuracy of terminology was considered when analysing the data.

The interviewees were told that they were being interviewed because of their tendency to buy ethically sustainable products. The interviewees were asked to think about their own personal experiences in daily food shopping in the beginning of the interview to

help them to consider their answers in the right context. The interview questions were not sent to the interviewees beforehand, but they were given enough time to consider their answers on the spot and they were given an opportunity to elaborate on their answers any time during the interview. This was made to ensure that the interviewees answers would be about the researched topic, but still be comprehensive and valid.

In a qualitative study, where the results are not measurable in the same way a quantitative study, there is no way to measure or calculate the reliability or the validity of the study. As stated before, an interview is a human interaction, and therefore the result is never 100% repeatable, due to the nature of human behaviour. A common method to improve reliability of the data is to increase the number of observations, (Weathington et al., 2012, 58), in this study, the interviews. The total number of the interviewees conducted for this study was 7. Even though this is a reasonable number of interviews to offer enough data for the analysis, more interviews would have offered more reliable data. However, due to the limited time and resources of this Master's thesis, more interviews were not conducted.

6 FINDINGS

The purpose of this study is to find out what motivates consumers to buy ethically sustainable products. The justification for this study is the attitude-behaviour gap, which means that even though consumers consider ethical consumption as something desirable, those attitudes do not translate into sales of ethically sustainable products.

In this chapter are presented the findings of the qualitative study on why consumers buy ethically sustainable food products, so that in the future the ethically sustainable food products can be marketed for consumers in a way that their attitudes will reflect on sales. In addition, the definition of ethical in food products is discussed in the light of the findings. The findings of the study are compared to the propositions, which are the motives that have been found in existing research. By comparing propositions to findings, the aim is to deepen the understanding of the motivational factors that drive consumers towards consuming ethically sustainable food products.

6.1 Definition of ethical food products: domesticity as an ethical characteristic

Determining what consumers consider to be ethical helps to understand what motivates people to buy ethically sustainable food products. In the literature review, the definition of ethically sustainable food products were roughly defined in to three categories according to the benefactor: organic foods benefit the environment, fair trade foods benefit the people working to produce the foods and vegan and vegetarian food benefit the welfare of animals (Tully & Winer, 2014). This categorization of the benefactors of ethically sustainable food production is not the only way to define the ethicality of food products, and the benefactor categories are not restricted to only one food product characteristic. But the three benefactors, environment, people, and animals are the benefactors and viewpoints that mostly appear in the literature.

One characteristic that was not discussed remarkably in existing literature was domesticity. Even though there is no explicit evidence on how much socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, education etc.) affect consumers' willingness to trust the information given about the food products' safety, it is acknowledged that the country factor affects how the information is processed (Mazzocchi, Lobb, Traill & Cavicchi, 2008). This study was implemented in the context of Finnish food market, and the interviewees were Finns who do their grocery shopping in Finland. When conducting the interviews, most of the respondents listed domesticity as one of the defining characteristics of what makes a food product ethical. The reason why interviewees considered domesticity as an ethical attribute was responsible and trustworthy production, the transparency of the production chain and short transportation distances.

. . . the welfare of workers is important, one cannot know if the workers are treated like slaves, I do not want to support that. . . In domestic products the production chain is easier to track.”
(Interviewee 4)

To me, ethical consumption means that transportation distances are not terribly long. . . (Interviewee 7)

Ethical consumption to me is knowing how the animals are treated, how producers are treated and how the production is regulated. . . . I always ask more questions if the country of origin is something else than Finland.
(Interviewee 5)

Generally, the interviewees trust that domestic products are produced in a clean production plants, and that the procedures in those production plants are monitored by unbiased governmental organisations. These findings reflect accordingly with the existing literature, since one of the most influential barriers of ethical consumption was deemed to be the scepticism toward the information of the product's impacts (Burke et

al., 2014). The transparency of the production chain and the legally required monitoring of the production consumers know domestic products have lower the barrier and work as a motive for the purchase.

However, even though domesticity was listed mostly as a positive ethical attribute, some untrustworthiness was expressed towards large food production corporations that are seen to dominate certain market segments.

“A smaller meat selling company pays better for the producers, they are nicer and more flexible [than equivalent larger meat selling companies]. That is why I prefer to buy from companies that I know about [smaller meat sellers].” (Interviewee 5)

When buying vegan milks, I favour the smaller companies rather than e.g. Valio [a large Finnish milk producer company] . . . because I know what kind of a business Valio is and how much they make a profit with the animal-based products . . . so I try to support ethical choices within the ethical choices. (Interviewee 2)

So, in the light of the discovered data from the interviews, domesticity was added to the list of ethical characteristics that motivate consumers to buy ethically sustainable food products. In the Table 4 below are listed the ethical characteristics, the reasons why consumers buy food products with these characteristics and why they work as motives for their ethically sustainable consumption based on the study conducted. In addition to the three characteristics presented in the theoretical framework of this study (organic, fair trade and vegetarian), domesticity is added to the list of ethical characteristics. In the next chapters, the findings of the study are compared to the three research propositions and demonstrated with quotes from the interviews.

Ethical characteristic	Reason for buying	Motive	Mentioned by the interviewee
Organic	better for environment taste healthiness	relieving guilt/ worry of future preference taking care of self and family	1,3,4,5
Fair trade	better rights for workers human rights	relieving guilt supporting cause	1,2,4,5,6
Vegetarian/ vegan	better for environment animal rights taste healthiness	relieving guilt relieving guilt/supporting cause preference taking care of self and family	1,2,3,4,6,7
Domesticity	responsibility transparency shorter transportation distances	supporting cause trustworthiness environment benefits	1,2,3,4,5,6,7

Table 4. Motives for ethical consumption found in the study categorized by ethical characteristics

6.2 Proposition 1: Ethical motives

ETHICAL MOTIVES	relieving guilt promoting the cause of the product showing solidarity to a cause religious values
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First research proposition formed on the basis of existing research was ethical motives, in which were included revealing guilt, promoting the cause of the product, showing solidarity to a cause, and acting upon religious values. Haynes and Podobsky (2016) concluded that relieving guilt is a defining factor in consumers purchasing decisions. In ethical consumption, ethical sustainability is defined as something that benefits the common good, and that is why buying ethically responsible products instead of “regular” products can be seen as a chance to relieve guilt. In this study, when asked about if they feel guilty about their own food consumption habits, all respondents said that they feel a little bit guilty when they do not buy ethical food products even though they would have the choice available. These findings reflect similarly to the existing research, where it is found that appealing to guilt and other emotion is effective, even more so than appealing to consumers’ values (Albers-Miller & Stafford, 1999; Gobe, 2001; Haynes & Podobsky, 2016).

The emotion of guilt was especially mentioned in buying meat products. Many respondents mentioned that the burden on environment in meat production is on their minds when shopping for food products.

“I bought two packages of meat substitutes because I was feeling climate anxiety [because of global warming]” (Interviewee 7)

“[I buy ethically sustainable food products because] if I would by things that include animal-based ingredients, I would directly . . . pay for someone to capture, raise in captivity and slaughter some [animals] and also through that destroys our climate.” (Interviewee 3)

However, buying meat products was not considered absolutely unethical by many respondents, who did consume meat products but still considered their consumption habits ethical. This is evidence for the dissonance in ethical consumption. Dissonant behaviour in ethical consumption means the action of consumers compensating unethical choices by deciding to make ethical choices next time, or vice versa, make an unethical choice now because they made an ethical choice before (Gregory-Smith et al., 2013).

“I eat so much vegetarian food that I do not feel guilty if I sometimes buy meat. . . Reasonable consumption of meat is ethically okay”. (Interviewee 1)

“I do not buy that much organic or fair trade, but I try to buy as much vegan food as possible [so my consumption habits are ethical].” (Interviewee 2)

Ethical motive of promoting a good cause and showing solidarity to a cause that an ethical product furthers was mentioned when talking about organic, fair trade, and domestic products. Both in fair trade and organic products the higher price is perceived as justified to promote better working conditions, although it was seen not as a barrier within limits. This reflects accordingly to the existing research of consumers of organic foods being more tolerant to high prices due to the high level of knowledge about organic production (Chang & Zepeda, 2005).

“I want to support that type of production [organic], I think the higher price is justified.” (Interviewee 4)

“My own family is farmers, so I think that with my own actions I can help Finnish farmers, and I am ready to pay more for that.” (Interviewee 5)

“In fair trade and organic products, if the price does not differ too much from the price of the regular products [I buy them]. For example, I always buy fair trade or organic bananas because the price difference is minimalistic.” (Interviewee 6)

Also, animal welfare and pain-free production, both for animals and people was seen as an important motive towards ethical food consumption.

“[Food product is ethical] when it is not animal-based, because meat production is not ethical. . . [Production is ethical] when it is pain-free, no forced labour.” (Interviewee 2)

“I always think about the ethicalness of food product through the suffering that the production causes, for environment but also for those who produce the product, and for that reason I have eliminated animal-based products from my consumption.” (Interviewee 3)

In conclusion, based on this study, consumers consumption behaviour is motivated by promoting or supporting a cause that they believe in more than relieving guilt about their consumption habits, because consumers who buy some ethically sustainable products feel that they are doing something to further ethical behaviour, so even though they sometimes do feel guilty, it is not the most important motivation for ethical food consumption. Supporting the cause of animal and environmentally friendly production, and production that is fair to workers is a strong ethical motive for ethical production. Religious values were not mentioned in the interviews, so it cannot be concluded whether they motivate consumers in a noteworthy way. However, it is possible that consumers did not recognize their motivations to be driven by religious values, and therefore did not bring them forth in the interviews.

6.3 Proposition 2: Social/external motives

SOCIAL/ EXTERNAL MOTIVES	society's expectations prestige/public image
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The second research proposition formed on the basis of existing research was the social and/or external motives. These include the expectations consumers experience from the society and the motivation to better one's public image or gain prestige through their consumption choices. Social motives are relevant, because a consumer is an individual who operates in a society and is constantly affected by the social constructions of that society, culture, and other consumers around them. Regular and social media and advertisements provide tons of information about global issues, ethicalness of products and impacts of certain behaviours. According to existing research, consumers feel like they are expected to consume in certain way (Haynes & Podobsky, 2016), or they feel that buying ethical goods can be better for their public image (Puska, 2019).

In the interviews, when asked about opinions of friends, family and media having an influence on consumption habits, the answers of the interviewees were dispersed. Some respondents said that they are confident in making their own decisions and that people around them do not affect their choices, at least not consciously.

"[Opinions of friends and family and media] do not affect my consumption. I make my own decisions. . . I do not feel social pressure." (Interviewee 4)

In the existing research, group mentality is found to have effects on pushing consumers towards ethical consumption in the form of religious groups and friend circles (Burke et al., 2014). Whereas the influence of friends and family was acknowledged amongst some of the respondents, but not in a significant way, the answers relating to the influence of religion were non-existent.

In existing research, it is suggested that prestige and pursuing a better public image by buying ethical products with premium price work as a motive for ethical consumption (Puska, 2019). This did not occur in interviews; respondents did not express a need to show off with their ethical consumption habits, and they perceived paying a premium price of an ethically sustainable product as a regular thing. However, many of the respondents did feel like their actions have impacts on other people's consumption habits, especially within family, which can be seen as a motive to better one's public image, although not with a higher price, but with a heightened moral sense.

"I got my mother to try cooking vegetarian food, even though she said that as an 80-year old she does not have to learn new things, but she has tried a few things, and I think that's great"
(Interviewee 4)

"I feel like, especially within my family, I am the one who tries to encourage them and bring things to their attention." (Interviewee 1)

Some respondents did feel like society's expectations that come across as opinions of friends and family and the influence of media have an impact on their consumption choices. However, the opinions of other people were not experienced as pressure, but more as an encouragement or as an example to consume more ethically.

"When you have people around you that make similar choices, it makes it more normal [to consume ethically]. I do not feel social pressure because of other people." (Interviewee 3)

"Because of friends I started to change to vegetarian diet. I had vegan friends and because of them it was easier [to stop eating meat]. Now that I am vegetarian, I do not feel that opinions of others affect that much anymore." (Interviewee 2)

The influence of media was also seen as an inspiration and encouragement rather than pressure. The influence of the information that comes from media was acknowledged to have some impact on behaviour due to increased knowledge of impacts certain products have on e.g. environment.

“Social media advertisements about meat substitutes inspire me to try new recipes. I talk with my friends about these things, but I do not think it influences that much.” (Interviewee 1)

“I have come across news about impacts of palm oil production and what damage it does to the rain forest, so I always check [the usage of palm oil] in packages” (Interviewee 6)

In conclusion, consumers feel some expectations of society to consume in a certain way, but they experience it more as a positive encouragement and as an example rather than social pressure. This finding is contradicting to the existing research, where it is established that consumers may struggle to follow the ethical consumption behaviour because they feel obligated to the manner that they have to be consistent to the behaviour they have established to receive social recognition (Grauel, 2016). Consumers feel confident about making their own decisions with the encouragement of their social relationships instead of being pressured by them. Actually, consumers feel like their actions have more influence on other people than vice versa, especially within people close to them. The influence of society appears as news on media about the impacts of products and production methods, that make consumers aware of ethical issues. But enhancing one's own public image cannot be seen as a key motive for ethical consumption.

6.4 Proposition 3: Practical motives

PRACTICAL MOTIVES	health
	taste

The third research proposition was the practical motives for ethically sustainable consumption, which include the preference of taste and favouring ethically sustainable foods as a healthier option. Especially with organic and vegetarian foods, health is one of the key motives that respondents mentioned as a motive to buy ethically sustainable foods. Cleanliness of the production, meaning avoiding pesticides etc., was perceived to be a contribution to the healthiness of the food products especially in organic, vegetarian, and locally produced foods. This reflects accordingly to the findings in the existing research, where healthiness was deemed as one of the strongest motives to buy organic foods (Willer & Kilcher, 2012). According to these findings, the same theory applies to vegetarian and domestic food products.

Healthy eating is the most directly internal motive that consumers associate with self-care. But the healthiness of organic or even vegetarian food was not perceived as an absolute fact.

“When I buy ethically sustainable foods, I get a good feeling because I know it is good for the environment, and the food is cleaner for me to eat, especially if it is organic” (Interviewee 1)

“I do not think vegetarian food is healthier per se, maybe the ingredients are, but one can also make it unhealthy.” (Interviewee 7)

Taste of a product was prioritized more than what previous researches made to believe. Taste and the quality of the ethically sustainable foods was perceived as a defining motive for in food consumption, resulting it sometimes being more of a barrier to ethical

consumption than motive. Taste was prioritized so much that some respondents say that in many cases the reason they had discarded the more ethical choice was because of the taste or quality of the food.

“Taste is an important criterion, even though something would be as ethically produced as possible, but the quality is bad and it tastes bad, I do not buy it” (Interviewee 4)

On the other hand, other respondents perceived taste as a strong motive to change their consumption habits towards more ethically sustainable.

“I buy ethically sustainable products because they taste better, for example oat milk tastes better to me than regular milk” (Interviewee 5)

All in all, many respondents rank taste and preference very high, even so high that they are ready to prioritize it over the ethical reasoning.

“My husband only drinks a certain brand of coffee, so I buy that, because he thinks other brands taste bad, I am not sure if the brand we buy is Fair trade, but probably not.” (Interviewee 7)

In conclusion, health is an influencing motive towards ethical consumption, and a reason that many consumers deem most important. Taste is prioritized more than perceived in existing research. It is perceived as a barrier for ethical consumption, when preference trumps people ethical motives, but also as a motive for choosing ethical food product.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of this study was to deepen the understanding of what motivates consumers to buy ethically sustainable food products. In this chapter are presented the conclusions from the findings and further the theoretical and managerial contributions of this study. In addition, the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are presented in this chapter.

7.1 Main findings of the study

To establish the aim of this research and a way to achieve an understanding of the studied phenomenon, following research question was established:

RQ1 What motivates a consumer to purchase ethically sustainable food products?

In order to help allocate the answers for the research question, following research objectives were determined:

- 1. What attributes of ethically sustainable food products consumers find ethical and why?*
- 2. What are the different types of motives that guide consumers' purchasing decisions in different types of ethically sustainable food products?*

Research questions and objectives were formed in order to guide the study. According to the chosen research strategy, first the propositions of the study were formed on the basis of existing research literature. Second, the study was conducted as a qualitative study, using interviews as research method. In total of seven interviews were held, and the answers of these interviews were further gathered as data and that data was analysed as findings of the study.

The main findings of the study were related to the different types of motives that guide the behaviour of consumers in the direction of buying ethically sustainable food

products. As ethically sustainable food products were defined organic foods, fair trade foods and vegetarian and vegan foods.

The main findings of this study are the motives behind the reasons for consumer behaviour. To answer the research question and to find out what motivates the consumer to purchase ethically sustainable food products the motives were examined from three different viewpoints: ethical, social, and practical.

Ethical motives relate to consumers moral and how they want to perceive their own actions. Buying behaviour is about making choices and supporting the causes those choices. It can be concluded that supporting a cause or wanting to promote the cause through purchasing decision is an effective motive for consumer when buying food products. This was concluded to be more effective motive than the need to relieve guilt about consumption choices. However, relieving guilt was not considered as effective motivation to change buying behaviour to more ethically sustainable direction as supporting an ethically sustainable cause. Nevertheless, consumers admitted that they do not always act upon their guilty consciousness and ignore more ethical choices. From this can be concluded that when consumer feels that they are acting ethically through supporting an ethical choice, it is more effective than when they are just relieving their guilt. In addition, the guilt of one's consumption choices was often linked to the environmental issues. But even when the ethical choice is the one that benefits the environment, the motivation was stronger in wanting to support the environmentally friendly choice rather than relieving one's guilt and choosing the choice better for the environment. Supporting a cause perceived to be more positive point of view to consumption than relieving guilt.

Consumer's decision making happens in an interactive environment, where they are constantly under the influence on other people and their opinions. And since ethicalness cannot be strictly measured, all people perceive it differently and therefore there is not always consensus on ethical behaviour. Other people and their opinions were found to somewhat motivate consumers to buy ethically sustainable food products, but again the influence was experienced more as a positive encouragement than negative social

pressure. Discussing own consumption habits with others was experienced to be inspiring and even lowering the barriers for ethical consumption. But again, with environmental issues there were experienced to be more pressure, but that pressure was perceived more as an internal pressure rather than external. Gaining prestige was not perceived as a very influential motive for consuming ethically. Consumer's experienced that they make their decisions based on their own opinions and put more emphasis on ethical and practical motives than social motives.

The practical motives were the characteristics that the respondents in the interviews brought up most prominently. Health and taste were mentioned in most of the interviews when talked about organic and vegetarian foods. However, preferring health and taste was not mentioned in fair trade foods, which indicates that it is one of the characteristics that is not prioritized when it comes to health and taste. Also, taste as a characteristic was prioritized in most situations, meaning that consumers would first compromise ethical attributes in their purchasing choices before they would compromise taste.

Since ethicalness is something that cannot be strictly measured, different people can understand ethicalness differently. One of the main findings in this study was the strong perception of domesticity as an ethical attribute. Determining domesticity as an ethical attribute was not taken into consideration when forming this study, because the research propositions are based on existing literature, and domesticity does not appear notably enough in existing literature for it to be considered relevant enough for the matter of the study. However, when the respondents in the study were asked what makes a food product ethical, domesticity was mentioned consistently. The literature that was reviewed when the theoretical framework of this study was formed was multinational, but the context of the study was Finnish food market. The lack of mentions of domesticity in the literature and the multiple mentions in the interviews indicate that Finnish consumers trust the food industry in their home country to be sustainable and responsible to the level that they automatically link domesticity with ethicality. The country's significance in recognizing domesticity as ethical attribute in food consumption can be partly explained by favouring short transportations distances

and further by favouring less environment burdening practices, but the amount of trust that was linked to the domestic food products was a significant factor. Therefore, studying further the meaning of culture in perceiving domesticity as an ethical attribute could provide more relevant information for future research.

7.2 Theoretical contribution of the study

As mentioned before, the subject of this study has been well researched before, and the main contribution of this study is to deepen the understanding of consumer's behaviour in the ethical food consumption context. Limiting the study to consumption of food gives future researches information on what are the consumer's motivations specifically in food consumption and thus offering a baseline for possible comparison of motives in different type of ethical consumption, for example consumption of textile. In addition, this study was conducted with Finnish consumers, so the results of this study can also be used in cultural researches.

7.3 Managerial implications of the study

Information about consumers' behaviour is vital when companies plan their marketing. The key reason for this study was to help understand why positive attitudes towards sustainable food consumption do not correlate accordingly with sustainable food sales. The way to deepen the understanding on this attitude-behaviour gap is to deepen the understanding of what truly does motivate consumers. Understanding the actual motives that drive consumers to their purchasing decisions help marketing managers to target their marketing to answer the actual needs of consumers. Interest in sustainable foods grows within consumers but making extinguishing differences between different kinds of sustainable food characteristics helps managers to determine what motives are crucial in what characteristics, since there are differences between these different characteristics.

According to the findings of this study concern of the environment is a common motive for purchasing all kinds of sustainable foods addressed in this study, which are vegetarian foods, organic foods, and fair-trade foods. Therefore, communicating how the company has taken in to account the environment in the production of their products and more importantly how the production is organized in a way that it strains the environment as little as possible. These are things that the consumers of sustainable foods products expect from the company, and by offering data and proof that these steps to sustainable production are actually been taken, builds trust for the consumer and motivates them to buy the product. As a proof of sustainability can be e.g. logos and certificates of sustainable production by third-party organizations. However, the key in using these kinds of logos from independent organizations require that the consumer is familiar with the meaning behind the logos and certificates, which is important to take into consideration in marketing plans.

Health and taste as the practical motives were mentioned frequently both in the existing research and the interviews in the context of organic and vegetarian foods. But when it comes to the fair-trade foods, health and taste as motives were not mentioned. Buying fair-trade is motivated largely by the need to show solidarity to a cause, the cause being the fair treatment of production workers. In some cases, taste was even seen as a barrier for buying fair-trade, as it was not ranked as well tasting as its substitutes. Therefore, managers ought to take into considerations that the greatest motive to buy fair trade goods is not health and taste nor the environment, but the very idea of fair trade in the first place: ethical motive of showing solidarity to a cause. Also, the meaning of a fair-trade logo in a product is relatively well known amongst consumers of sustainable goods, which furthers the motivation of buying products with fair trade logos.

7.4 Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

There are some limitations that occur in this study. This study was conducted through interviews, which in itself creates some limitations that need to be addressed. The answers of the respondents are based on their own experienced and opinions, and therefore their answers cannot be taken as absolute truths, since ethicalness as a concept is prone to interpretation. Also, the answers to the interview questions and conclusions drawn from those findings are always interpretations of the interviewer, so the answers cannot be taken at face value.

Further limiting the correct interpretations of the interviews was the interview method, which were mostly done via video and phone, and not face to face. This was due to the Corona-virus pandemic and the suggested restriction of personal contacts that was happening in the society at the time of the interview period. The influence of the prevalent pandemic might have also influenced the interviewees mind-set during the interviews, since it was a very unusual situation that affected the whole globe.

Due to limited time and resources, the interviews were all conducted within one interview round, which meant that some of the questions were refined after the first few interviews to increase clarity and focus on the subject. Also, the sample of the study was relatively small due to the same limited time and resources. This was noted when analysing the findings. With more data it would be possible to have more findings and to draw more accurate conclusions, which then would further the accurate generalizing of the theories.

The impact of culture on consumer's behaviour is always noteworthy. This study was conducted in the context of Finnish consumer who have experience in shopping in Finnish food shops. Therefore, this study can be used as an overview of a Finnish consumers motives for ethical consumption. In future research, this study can be used to provide some deeper information of ethical consumption behaviour in cultures with similar cultural dimensions. Studying and comparing the motives of consumers in different cultures would provide relevant insights of the importance of culture in ethical consumption, and on what is considered to be ethical consumption by the consumers.

Also, further from culture, the meaning of religion in the understanding of what is considered as ethical consumption would be interesting to study, since many religions have restrictions regarding food (e.g. Muslims not eating pork), which can shape the idea of ethicalness in food consumption.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1.

Interview questions in English

Aim: to find out what makes people buy ethically sustainable food products

Research objectives:

What characteristics of ethically sustainable products consumer takes into consideration?

Why do they value those characteristics?

How do those characteristics guide their decision making?

Ethical food consumption habits

1. What things do you take into consideration when shopping food?
2. What do you understand as ethical consumption (general level/in your own consumption)
3. What makes a food product ethical?
4. How often do you buy ethically sustainable food products? What products you buy? (fair trade/vegan/organic)
5. Would you consider your food consumption habits sustainable? (scale 1-5)? Why?

Values and motives

6. Why do you buy ethically sustainable food products in general?
7. What characteristic would you say in ethically sustainable food affects your decision making most and why?
8. Do you ever feel guilty about your consumption habits? Why?
9. Do you think that your consumption choices have an impact on ethical issues? What kind of an impact? Do you think about the benefactor?

10. Do you feel the opinions of your friends/family/society affect your consumption choices? Social pressure?

Barriers

11. What kind of information do you find out about products or impacts before making a decision?

12. Are you willing to pay more for the ethically sustainable product than the “regular product?” How much more? Why?

13. What is a reason for not buying ethical product even though that would be an option? (e.g. organic)

14. How reliable do you think is the information that firms give about their products/impacts?

Appendix 2.

Interview questions in Finnish (the language used in the interviews)

Haastattelukysymykset

Tavoite: selvittää mikä saa ihmiset ostamaan eettisesti kestäviä ruokatuotteita

Apukysymykset:

Mitä eettisesti kestäviä tuotteen ominaisuuksia kuluttaja ottaa huomioon ostaessaan ruokatuotteita?

Miksi he arvostavat noita ominaisuuksia?

Kuinka nuo ominaisuudet ohjaavat heidän päätöksentekoaan?

Eettiset kulutustavat ruoka-asioissa

- 1. Mihin asioihin kiinnität huomiota ostaessasi ruokatuotteita (yleisesti)**
- 2. Mikä on sinun mielestäsi eettistä kuluttamista?**
- 3. Mikä tekee tuotteesta eettisesti kestävä (ruokatuotteissa)?**
- 4. Mitkä ominaisuudet eettisissä ruokatuotteissa on mielestäsi tärkeimpiä?
Miksi?**
- 5. Kuinka usein ostat eettisesti kestäviä tuotteita ja mitä tuotteita? (reilu kauppa/kasvisvaihtoehto/luomu)**
- 6. Asteikolla yhdestä viiteen (1-5), kuinka eettisenä pidät ruoankulutustottumuksiasi kokonaisuudessaan?**

Arvot ja motiivit

- 7. Miksi ostat eettisiä ruokavaihtoehtoja ylipäänsä?**
- 8. Tunnetko ikinä syyllisyyttä omista ruoankulutustavoistasi? Miksi/miksi ei?**

9. Tuntuuko sinusta, että valinnoillasi on merkitystä/vaikutusta? Millaista vaikutusta? Ajatteletko ikinä kuka tai mikä tuotteesta hyötty?
10. Vaikuttaako ystäviesi/perheesi/yleinen keskusteluilmapiiiri/mielipide ruoankulutusvalintoihisi? Tunnetko sosiaalista painetta kuluttaa tietyllä tavalla?

Esteet eettiselle kulutukselle

11. Etsitkö jotain tietoa tuotteista/niiden vaikutuksista ennen päätöksentekoa?
Mitä tietoa?
12. Oletko valmis maksamaan enemmän eettisesti kestävästä vaihtoehdosta kuin "normaalista" vaihtoehdosta? Kuinka paljon enemmän? Miksi?
13. Mikä on yleisin syy sille, että jätät eettisemmän vaihtoehdon ostamatta vaikka vaihtoehto olisi? (esim. luomu)
14. Pidätkö yritysten tuotteistaan antamia tietoja (ja tietoja niiden vaikutuksista) luotettavina?