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**FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMERS' BUYING DECISION IN  
PURCHASING OAT DRINKS**

Bachelor's thesis

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I hereby declare that I have compiled the thesis independently and all works, important standpoints and data by other authors have been properly referenced and the same paper has not been previously presented for grading.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse and understand deeply which factor out of personal, social, and psychological ones, have the strongest influence when consumers purchase oat drinks in Estonia, as it is not clear and there is a lack of knowledge about it which formulates the problem of this thesis. In order to obtain the right information, get a clear understanding, and arrive to the right results, the author set an aim for the thesis, which is to dive deep and create a better knowledge about the decision-making process of the consumers as everything goes hand in hand. To collect the necessary data needed, the author has conducted a quantitative method through making an online survey.

When consumers purchase oat drinks or think about consuming oat drink, the main reason for doing that is for health reasons. In addition, consumers find the taste and flavour of oat drinks are an extremely important factor when choosing oat drinks' brands. Moreover, people choose oat drinks to protect the animals and preserve their lives, and because it is tastier than regular milk. Many consumers don't focus on the price to be the main factor when buying oat drinks, because it is healthy and therefore consumers are willing to pay more to support their health and maintain a healthy, balanced life. The ingredients are extremely important as well, so they think that price is unlikely factor to be important.

The author strongly believes that after analysing the results and taking recommendations given by the participants into consideration will have a significant change for marketers and the points to pay attention to when consumers want to purchase oat drinks.

Key words: Oat drinks, decision-making process, factors

## **INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, you can find numerous advice, tips, and ways on how to build a healthy life, how to follow a diet, what to eat, what to not eat, how to maintain healthy habits, and the list is endless here. People's priorities in life are changing drastically towards their health. They aim to be healthier, live longer through changing their eating habits, their choices of different products and making them into a habit in their life. The possible reasons behind that could be because of health problem, so people have to cut off some food from their life, or substitute with healthier products. Some merely follow trends, experiment different diets, different products, for aiming a more stable, healthier life. In this graduation thesis, the author will be examining and studying the decision-making process, and factors affecting the consumer's buying decision when purchasing oat drinks in Estonia. It is known that the market size of oat drinks is growing, and it is expected to grow by 6.8 billion by 2026, and this would happen by the rising of the market growth at 13.4% according to the global oat milk market report. The problem of this thesis is the lack of knowledge of the factors that affect consumers when they are purchasing oat drinks. To support studying the problem, the author's aim is to gain a deeper knowledge of the consumers' decision-making process, and why they choose to consume oat milk. The author has chosen to speak about social, personal, and psychological factors. This specific topic was chosen because the author has a deep interest in healthy lifestyle, nutrition, and understanding the behaviour of consumers when it comes to purchase products, and it's not extremely clear on which factor has the strongest effect on buying behaviour, which is this is the problem, and what the author wants to find out. Not to forget that that author has as well engaged in adapting a healthier routine, change of food consumption, and followed a lot of blogs and tips on how do people make drastic shifts in their nutrition habits, how they decide when buying a product, and where they take the information

of the product. In order to support this research, the author has conducted a quantitative research method. The data for this study is gathered by a survey, which was created with Google Forms. The survey has accumulated 105 respondents. At the end of this study, results are presented, and conclusions drawn. The author will present three research questions to support this study:

- Is there a positive relationship between family affect and the consumer's decision-making?
- Do Individuals have the time to read the ingredients of a product?
- Are Consumers indifferent between oat milk brands?

This thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter will focus on consumer behaviour, factors affecting consumer's purchasing decision, and decision-making process. The second chapter will give an overview of non-dairy milk alternatives, reasons of buying non-dairy milk alternatives, and different types of them. The third and last chapter will focus on the quantitative research of the factors influencing the consumption of oat milk, followed by study method, results, and discussion.

# **1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF CONSUMERS'S BUYING BEHAVIOUR**

This chapter focuses on the nature of consumers behaviour, factors affecting consumers' purchasing decision, and decision-making process.

## **1.1. Factors affecting consumer's purchasing decision**

The author has searched and noticed that there are studies that came into conclusion that the most chosen reasons for consuming non-dairy to milk alternatives is for health reasons and due to habit (McCarthy, K, et al., 2017), (Sethi, S, et al., 2016). Also, the study that was conducted by (Sethi, S, et al., 2016) stated in the conclusion that plant-based to milk alternatives still needs a lot of research, which this led the author to the chance to gain more knowledge about the factors that drive consumers in Estonia to purchase oat drink. Two studies that have stated that despite the health benefits that are in non-dairy to milk alternatives, one should not fully depend on them as it is not a replacement for the lost nutrients that are in milk. (Chalupa-Krebzdak, S, et al., 2018), (Astolfi, M, et al., 2020) which lead the author to find out more if consumers in Estonia don't consume oat drinks or any non-dairy drinks for that reason.

Consumer behaviour is an extremely broad study, that observes groups and individuals. The purpose of consumer behaviour, is to analyse and to examine how do the consumers choose, use, and dispose of products, and services that fulfil their needs, and how this process has an effect on the society and consumers. (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010, 6). There is not one person that doesn't relate or belong to this study, no matter the occupation, profession and location. Consumer behaviour circles around not only on buying necessary products in daily life, but also the behaviour of last-minute shopping, organizing an event such as big dinner, birthday party, and other endless celebrations. In addition, little do people know that when someone talks about consumer behaviour, they only think it's about the act of buying, but it's not merely about that. It goes beyond that, it focuses on the effect of whether we have this product or not, and how the things that we own and possess can influence our life and how we feel about ourselves. (Solomon 2004, 14.).

A consumer is always highly influenced by the surroundings, such as family, friends, culture, personality, psychological factors, cultural trends, social and societal environment. By identifying the factors that influence consumers on a daily basis, marketers will have the full opportunity to create and maintain a marketing strategy and run successful campaigns, in order to meet the needs of the customer and be able to recognize more the consumers' decision-making process. (Mohamed Ali 2016, 76).

Studying and understanding consumer buying behaviour is never a simple task, or a one-way method approach, however, it is an essential tool for marketing management. All the diverse consumers somehow relate to each other and with other factors of the world and their surroundings affect their choices when buying products. (Kotler and Amstrong 2018, 158).

Consumer buying behaviour is affected by four main things: cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. The author will leave cultural factors intentionally in order to have a manageable topic and will study the other three factors closely.

### **1.1.1. Personal factors**

A consumer's decisions are also highly impacted by different personal traits and characteristics such as lifestyle, personality, self-observation, economic situation, occupation, age and stage.

When speaking of age and life stage, there are certain aspects that relate to age, such as taste of food, clothes, decoration, and furniture. It is extremely important to not forget that the fact that the process of buying is hugely impacted by the stage of the family life cycle. These stages could be passed as they mature over time, and they change resulting from life-changing events, having children, marriage, divorcing, children leaving and entering adulthood, changes in personal income, retirement, and moving out of the house or purchasing a home. (Kotler and Amstrong 2018, 167).

Moreover, people who tend to maintain the same social class, and occupation, may have different lifestyles. Lifestyle is an individual's pattern and way of living, and it is measured by AIO dimensions, which are activities that include hobbies, sports, shopping, social events work), interests that include (fashion, family, food, recreation), and opinions that include (opinions about themselves, business, products, social issues). Marketers remarkably care about the lifestyle concept, because they can understand the consumer's values and how they affect buyer behaviour. (Kotler and Amstrong 2018, 168).

Looking at an individual's occupation, it plays a huge role when studying the purchasing behaviour.

Depending on the occupation, different goods and services are purchased throughout the buyer's lifetime. (Kotler and Armstrong 2018, 167).

People who more or less are in the same occupation circle, tend to have similar tastes in clothing, music. Also, they are more likely to socialize together, and share many ideas and values. This aspect is also important to marketers, as it represents the buying power and market potential of groups. (Solomon, 2004, 38).

Moving on, a very important element of consumer buying behaviour is personality. Personality presents the special, and unique psychological characteristics and traits in a person or group. These characteristics are such as self-confidence, dominance, autonomy, sociability, defensiveness, adaptability, and aggressiveness. Personality is always taken into consideration in marketing, because it allows marketers to analyse consumer behaviour for a specific product or brand. (Kotler and Armstrong 2018, 169).

An aspect that is connected to personality, is self-concept. Now self-concept, is something that is a very complicated structure. It includes of many attributes, such as facial attractiveness, mental aptitude, self-esteem, intensity, stability and accuracy (the degree of distinguishing reality from fantasy). (Solomon, 2004, 236).



Figure 1. A brand personality scale

Source: Aaker 1997

Coming back to personality, brands also have personalities. When combining consumer's and brands' personality, a buyer is most likely to choose a brand that matched their personality. As shown in Figure

1. Firstly, sincerity that represents and brings a sense of down-to-earth, honest, wholesome, and cheerful values. Secondly, excitement, it delivers daring, spirited, imaginative, and up-to-date values, such as Apple products. Thirdly, competence, that represents reliable, intelligent, and successful values. Fourthly, sophistication, that offers glamorous, upper-class, and charming values, such as Gucci. Last but not least, ruggedness, which offers outdoorsy and tough values, such as Ford F150. (Kotler and Armstrong 2018, 169).

### **1.1.2. Social Factors**

Social factors are another crucial element when it comes to observing consumers behaviour. The main social factors are groups, social networks, family, and social roles and status. (Kotler and Amstrong 2018, 162). Reference groups immensely impact and influence consumer behaviour and the decision-making process. (Jin, Miao 2018, 1068).

Groups can either have a direct influence or non-direct. The ones that have a direct influence are called membership groups, as the buyer would belong to the group. Meanwhile, reference groups (to which buyers do not belong to) act as direct or indirect points in references in forming an individual's attitudes. For instance, aspirational group is when the person desires, have the wish to belong, as when a young painter hopes to someday emulate Bob Ross and have a huge influence on people just as Bob Ross had. (Kotler and Amstrong 2018, 162).

Family is considered to be the most important consumer buying organization in society. It's important for the marketers to study this aspect, because of the influence of the husband, wife, and children of the buyer's decisions when purchasing a product or a service. The involvement of either husband or wife, depends on the product category and at what stage the buying process is at. To give more details, in the United States, the wife traditionally was considered to be the main role when purchasing products such as food, household appliances, and clothing. However, a recent survey indicates that 41 percent of men are now the main agent for grocery shopping, 39 percent take care of their household's laundry and cooking. Meanwhile, women outspend men three to two on technology purchases and impact more than 80 percent of all new car purchases. This shows how much buying roles change and evolve throughout a buyer's lifestyle. (Kotler and Amstrong 2018, 164). That's why it's very important for marketers to keep an eye out for role shifting when buying products or services.

As for roles and status, it means that where does this person belong. A person can belong to many groups, such as family, clubs, organizations, and online communities. A role defines and represents the types of activities and acts people are expected to do or perform according to the people who surround them. For example, a woman can play various of roles depending on which group she is at the moment. If she's at work, she plays the role of CEO or brand manager; in her family, she plays the role of wife and a mother or one of them. As a brand manager or CEO, the woman will purchase a certain type of clothing that will suit this group, and it will reflect her role in the company. (Kotler and Armstrong 2018, 166).

### **1.1.3 Psychological factors**

One aspect, that is the psychological side, that contains and holds every other factor that was mentioned above, it connects all the other factors together. The main points that are related to psychological factors are: motivation, perception, learning and attitudes. (Kotler and Armstrong 2018, 169).

Motivation. A person in general, not just in buying, has many needs throughout their life. Biological ones, they are born from the states of tension, such as hunger, thirst, or discomfort. Others are psychological, they are created from the need and desire to be recognized, or the craving to belong to something or someone. These needs they become a motive or drive. A drive is a need that leads the person to search and seek for satisfaction. There are two theories developed by two psychologists, Sigmund Freud and Abraham Maslow.

Sigmund Freud came into the conclusion that people are most of the time unconscious about the psychological factors that build up and shape a person's behaviour, and they are rather not aware of the subconscious motives that lead to their buying decisions, nor understand them. For example, when an old individual decides to buy a BMW car, the motives of that purchase are shown on different levels. One reason could be that he merely wishes to feel the wind in his thinning hair. A deeper reason could be that he is trying to catch others' attention and impress people with his car. An even deep reason could be that he is merely searching to feel young and independent again. He also assumed

that consumers don't know the exact reason behind why they act as they do. Hence, marketers always seek to identify these subconscious motivations by carrying out motivation research. (Ibid.)

On the other hand, Abraham Maslow tried to explain the connection between specific needs that occur at specific times. Some people try to spend their energy on achieving personal safety and other people spend their energy on gaining the esteem of others, but what are the reasons behind that? Maslow created a hierarchy of needs that consists of physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs, as shown in Figure 2. A person will always try to satisfy and obtain the most important needs first. When that need is successfully satisfied, it no longer falls under the category of being a motive or drive. The person will start searching for another need, and the circle goes on.

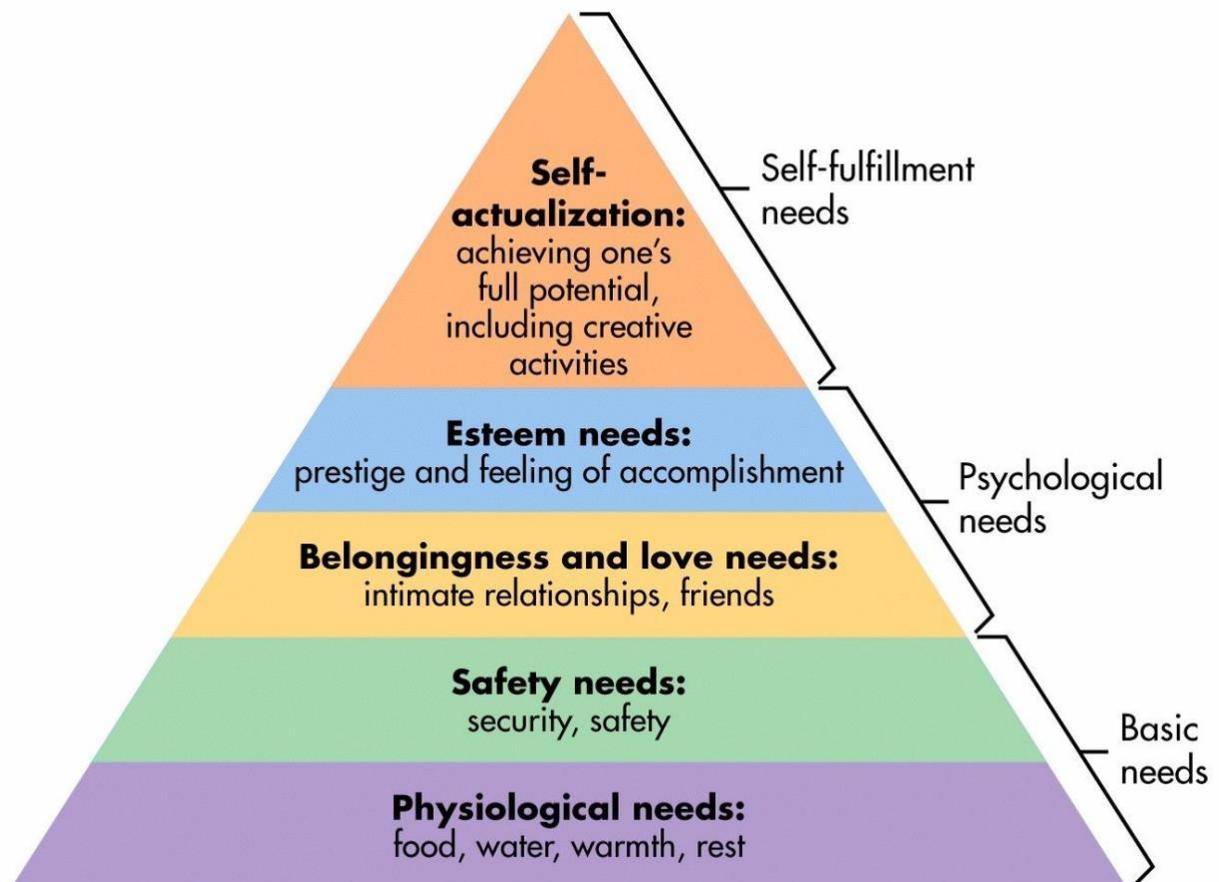


Figure 2: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Source: McLeod, Saul. (2018) Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Simplypsychology.

Perception. When the person decides to act on something, this act is influenced by his or her own perception of the situation. Every individual receives information through the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. Nevertheless, all of us, perceive and understand this sensory information differently, uniquely. Which comes to the definition of perception, and it is the process how people select, choose, organize, and interpret information to create meaning to life. (Kotler and Armstrong 2018, 172).

People can create and have different perceptions of the same incentive because of three reasons: selective attention, selective distortion, and selective retention.

Selective attention means how often do people analyse and screen out the maximum amount of information that is surrounding them. Hence, this gives a hard task for the marketers to work on, in order to catch the attention of consumers. Whilst a selective distortion describes how often people interpret information in a way that will fit their beliefs and mindset. The last process is selective retention, which means that consumers are likely to associate good points and memories made about a specific brand they favour and tend to forget the ones that are related to competing brands. Which makes it even more difficult for marketers to get the exact message to the individual's mind. (Ibid.)

Learning. It represents changes in a person's behaviour due to a certain experience they went through. Learning comes from drives, stimuli, cues, responses, and reinforcement. A drive is a strong internal incentive that calls for action. A drive converts into a motive when it is related to a particular stimulus object. For example, when a person's drive for self-fulfillment, they might decide to buy a car, and his or her response is ruled by the surrounding cues. Cues are minor stimuli that decides and represents when, where, and how the person responds. The car buyer might see different car brands in a shop window, discuss cars with a friend, witness an ad that shows a sale price of this car. All these cues determine and influence of that person's choice and decision to buy a car. If this person buys a car,

and the result is rewarding and positive, they might end up buying another car in the future, which means his response will be reinforced. (Ibid,173)

Beliefs and Attitudes. After the person undergoes the learning process, beliefs and attitudes follow along. They influence the buyer's buying behaviour. A belief is a thought, or a statement about something or someone, that a person carries with them in their life. Beliefs can be based on facts, knowledge, opinions, but it is not necessarily that it has to carry an emotional feeling or feelings. Marketers are interested in this aspect, as it will help them make products that will fit the beliefs of that individual. (Ibid.)

On the other hand, attitudes speak about a person's certain conclusions, evaluations, and feelings that related towards an object or an idea. (Ibid.) Comprehending the main centrality of an attitude that belong to an individual or to groups who have the same characteristics can be beneficial for marketers who are trying to implement different strategies that will attract and catch the attention of different customer segments. (Solomons 2004, 167)

Individuals have different attitudes regarding their religion, clothes, politics, music, food, or literally anything else. (Kotler and Amstrong 2018, 173). For marketers, it's a huge and not a simple task to do to fit the products into existing attitude patterns rather to make a change to them, not to forget that attitudes change frequently, and products should be adapted to them. (Ibid.)

Another thing the author wanted to shed the light on is the Gestalt Theory and how it's related to consumer buying behaviour. The author will not dive deep into the theory for the sake of simplicity, as this topic is very broad and requires whole separate research. Gestalt psychology emphasizes that the human mind and people's behaviours perceive objects as a big picture and a greater whole, the mind sees elements as more of a complex systems and ways, in which Gestalt means 'whole'. The founders of the Gestalt theory were Max Wertheimer, Fritz Perls, Wolfgang Köhler, and Kurt Koffka. However, Wertheimer was the first founder of this theory. (Cherry, 2021). Gestalt psychology is a very deep and broad study. Marketers can use this theory in order to influence the consumers when making ads. Gestalt theory can be related to the consumer buying behaviour. For instance, if there is a product at the store, and next to this product there is a photo of a celebrity, the mind of the consumer

will see the celebrity and the product as a one thing and not separate. This kind of thinking influences the buyer to buy the product, because the mind has associated the celebrity with the product. (Consumer behaviour, 2017).



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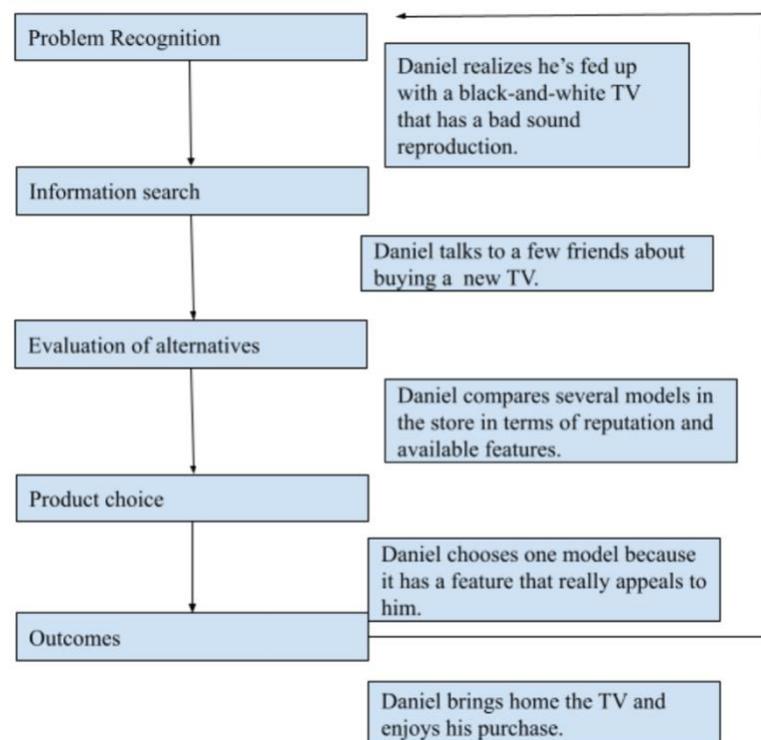


Figure 3, (TBWA, 2017)

The ad above is an example of the Gestalt psychology. If a buyer sees the add, the mind will associate buying a Big Mac from McDonald's, late at night, as the restaurant is 24/7 open. That leads to the buyer purchasing the product when he/she is hungry at night, and their mind will connect the feeling of hunger to McDonald's. Gestalt psychology can lead to successful marketing ads to increase the sales of a product. (Ads of the World, 2021).

## 1.2 Decision-making process

When a customer is buying a product or a service, the act of purchasing is a response to a problem or a need. There are several steps for the decision-making process, which they are: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, and product choice. After making the final decision, it's important to check the quality of that decision, because it will affect the final step in the process. It will influence whether the buyer will make the same decision next time or not. Figure 3 shows the stages in consumer decision-making with an example to deliver the information clearly. (Solomons 2004, 286)



#### Figure 4. Stages in consumer decision-making

Source: (Solomon 2004)

Researchers' point of view about decision-making process comes from a rational perspective. Which means people will spend more time calmly and carefully gather as much information as possible about a product, writing down the pluses and minuses of each alternative, and then making the final decision. This step is crucial for marketers in order for them to understand the process of the consumer's way of obtaining information, how their beliefs are used during this stage, and what product choice criteria specified by consumers. (Ibid.)

Nevertheless, this stage isn't always done and implied by a buyer every time he or she decides to buy something. Because if consumers do that, they will not have any time to enjoy other things in life. Not all the consumption are always made with a rational decision. Also, some purchases are done without planning at all. For example, it's summertime, and an individual impulsively grabbing that tasty, and tempting ice cream right before the checkout in the supermarket. Such purchases are called purchase momentum, and they occur when buyers increase their impulsive buying rather than just satisfying the need. However, researchers now see decision-making process as a repertoire of strategies. It goes this way: an individual will make an overview of how much time and effort needed to make the choice, based on that required effort, the buyer will evaluate which strategy suits the best to make that decision. This process is called constructive processing. (Ibid.)

In addition, researchers are noticing that the more the buyers have control over the flow of information, the more their performance is increased. As it influences the quality of buyers' decision, memory, knowledge and confidence. (Ibid.) A consumer isn't always going to search for information, it depends on how strong the drive or the need is. If the product seems to be available and near at hand, the person is most likely to buy it right away. But if not, then the consumer may start searching for the information needed until he or she makes a decision. Information can be taken and obtained through many sources. Such as personal sources (friends, family, neighbours, colleagues), commercial sources (websites, advertising, salesperson, packaging, displays, and dealer or manufacturer), public sources (organizations, social media, mass media, online searches and peer review), and experiential

sources (trying, examining, and using the product). These information sources will vary depending on the buyer and the product. (Kotler and Amstrong 2018, 176)

After the buyer gathers all the information needed to make a decision about a specific brand choice, marketers need to identify alternative evaluation. Alternative evaluation means how buyers process all the information collected in order to come to a final decision and choose among the alternative. Unfortunately, this is not an easy task for marketers, because individuals don't have a one-way evaluation process all the time. It goes differently for each consumer, some consumers take their full time to make all the necessary calculations, and think carefully about the alternatives, whereas some consumers spend little time or not at all on evaluation, and instead of that they rely on their gut feeling and intuition. It also depends on to whom the consumer turn to when making a purchasing decision; sometimes they depend on their own opinion, or they turn to friends and family, online reviews, or to a salesperson for advice about a certain product or service. This is all important for marketers to study, so they would develop certain strategies, on how to influence the buyer's decision. (Ibid. 177)

Moving on, the decision-making process doesn't end when the buyer finally makes his or her decision and buys the product. After that, comes the post purchase behaviour, and the buyer will feel either satisfied with the decision, or unsatisfied. To know the answer, it depends on the relationship between the consumer's expectations when he or she bought the product, and the product's perceived performance. How satisfied the consumer is, will be based on how much did the product's performance meet the consumer's expectations. If the product failed to meet the buyer's expectations, he or she will be dissatisfied, and vice versa. That is why it is crucial for marketers to only promise exactly what they can deliver, otherwise, they will more likely have more negative feedback from consumers. It is a major key for marketers to have less dissatisfied customers, because that will lead to a bad word of mouth, and we all know how much a negative experience, travels faster than sharing a positive experience or having a good word of mouth. (Ibid. 178)

## **2. AN OVERVIEW OF THE NON-DAIRY TO MILK ALTERNATIVES**

In this chapter, the author will give a short overview of the plant-based to milk alternatives, talk about different kinds of plant-based drinks, and reasons for choosing plant-based alternatives to milk.

### **2.1. Reasons for choosing plant-based alternatives to dairy.**

Nowadays, the majority of people are concerned about their lifestyle, health, and about what they eat, in other words, how healthy is their diet. Most people's health behaviour is going to the right path, they're consuming food that prevent or slow down the spread of different diseases, and ensure a longer, healthier life. These types of food that people consume for the health purpose are called *functional food*. (Szakály et al 2012, 406)

It is not new news for us that many people are lactose intolerant, it's a digestive problem which the person is unable to digest lactose as lack of producing lactase. Instead, lactose will stay in the digestive system, and be fermented by bacteria. This problem can cause a lot of discomfort for the person, as it produces various gases which can lead to other serious symptoms like bloating, diarrhea, cramps, and feeling sick. For this problem, they substitute milk with non-dairy alternatives to milk. In addition, some people can have the allergy towards the protein that is found in a cow's milk. (Lactose 2019)

As we all know, there are a lot of types of plant-based dairy alternatives. Due to this fact, people can choose from different tastes, textures and other sensory attributes of non-dairy drinks, and most importantly, to compare their nutritional qualities to the cow's milk k (Parrish 2018, 20-21).

Another extremely common and crucial reason for switching to plant-based milk alternatives is to not participate in the reason for animal suffering. Cows are considered to be intelligent, sensitive animals. They tend to live not a long life surrounded with stressful conditions. As we all know milk comes for mammals, cows have to get pregnant, in order to produce breast milk. During the constant need to be pregnant, which is not always achieved naturally but through forced insemination, which causes a great deal of discomfort from both physical and psychological aspect to the animal (Tallinnas... 2018).

Moving on, as mentioned above people tend to forget about dairy milk and switch to plant-based alternatives due to health reasons. Not only for being lactose intolerant, but people drink non-dairy alternatives to milk to prevent or slow down deadly diseases, such as heart problems caused by the high amount of fat and cholesterol that is found in a cow's milk (Vegan life....2018).

The author came across a study that was done by Xiufeng Li and Yazhi Xin, and one their research questions was 'What are the main factors that can influence organic food purchase behaviours among young Chinese consumers?'. (Li, Xin 2015, 4). To support this study, the authors conducted a survey with a sample size of 309 Chinese people. The results showed that Chinese people' reasons to switch to functional foods, because they hold more nutrition, have a better flavour and taste, safer to health, environmentally friendly, and caring about animal welfare. (Ibid. 19)

Kimberly Valgemäe carried out research about consumer behaviour when purchasing plant-based milk alternatives. Kimberly Valgemäe conducted a survey with a sample size of 343 Estonians. The results showed that 60.2% of the respondents choose plant-based milk alternatives to milk influenced by their own opinion. Other reasons were because of the influence of a family, friend, or by an influencer on social media. The most chosen reasons were being advised by nutritionists and doctors to switch to plant-based alternatives to milk due to having an allergy towards the protein that exists in a cow's milk or being lactose intolerant. (Valgemäe 2019, 22)

Nevertheless, there are other reasons that make people stop buying dairy products. As mentioned before, a person's diet plays a huge role in this decision. For example, being vegan, which means avoiding absolutely all products that come from animals, and instead, they consume products that are only generated from plants. Other type of diets is lacto-ovo vegetarians, these people consume dairy and eggs. Whereas semi-vegetarians don't eat red meat, fish, and poultry. (Forestell 2018, 1)

## 2.2. Types of non-dairy alternatives to milk

The most common and well-known categories of plant-based alternatives to milk are Cereal-based; that includes oat drink, and rice drink. Legume-based; includes soy drink, and pea drink. Vegetable-based; includes potato drink. Seed-based; includes flax drink, and hemp drink. Last but not least, nut-based; which includes almond drink, cashew drink, and coconut drink. (Parrish 2018, 21). For simplicity, the author will cover oat drink, soya drink, almond drink, and cashew drink, and coconut drink.

**Oat drink:** Nowadays, it is considered to be the new hit for non-dairy alternative to cow's milk. It is made from oats, water and sometimes extra ingredients that are subjective. We can see it today in every coffee shop and in almost in every grocery store's shelves. It's considered to be barista's and consumers' favourite non-dairy drink to make coffee with. The reason behind that, is its creamy texture, and its nutritional value and benefits. Oat drinks can be the perfect choice for people who have dietary restrictions or specific food allergies, as oat drinks are free of dairy, lactose, soy, and nuts. In addition, it is also free of gluten. When comparing oat drinks to rice and almost, oat contains more protein and fiber. However, oat drinks tend to have a higher amount of carbohydrates and calories than any other plant-based drinks, about 100 calories per serving, it also depends on the brand. Not to forget that it contains calcium, riboflavin and different vitamins such as vitamin D, and vitamin A. (Edinger, 2019)

**Soy drink:** It is the most popular and most recognized plant-based drink. It is the first replacement for cow's milk. Soy drink is made by soaking, crushing, cooking and straining soybeans. Surprisingly, it is the only plant-based drink that contains the same amount of protein as a cup of cow's milk. It also has calcium, and different vitamins such as vitamin D, vitamin A, and vitamin B12. Mostly people consume soy drink as a good source of manganese and magnesium. (Parrish 2018, 22)

**Almond drink:** Almond drink is produced and made from ground almonds and water. People drink it to avoid soy allergy or for other health reasons. Almond drink is famous for its low calories, it can reach between 30 and 50 per 1 cup. However, sweetened almond drink can reach up to 90 calories per cup. It also contains little minimal nutrition values, and the protein is considered to be low due to

being extracted and strained straight out of the milk along with the pulp, thought it includes a high portion of vitamin E. (Parrish 2018, 22)

Cashew drink: Cashew milk contains only 60 calories per cup and there is no cholesterol or any fat. People usually consume it for its creamy texture. It is made by mixing water-soaked cashews with water. Also, cashew milk shares something in common with almond drink, that is the vitamins and minerals ends up being lost in cashew drink due to the pulp being strained. Nevertheless, it contains a high amount of vitamin D, and 50% per cup of vitamin E. (Parrish 2018, 26)

Coconut drink: Coconut drink comes from the inside of the fruit's white flesh. There are two types of coconut drink, thick and thin. The thicker it is, the more fat it contains. One of the reasons people consume coconut drink is for weight loss, as coconut drink contains medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs). MCTs are linked with reducing body weight and waist size. Unsweetened coconut drink contains about 445 calories per one cup, and it is also rich with iron and vitamin C. What makes it interesting, is that it can be used with cooking and for various recipes. (Butler, 2018)

Other reasons for people consuming it, is for digesting problems, and skin care Having allergic reaction towards coconut drink is very rarely. However, the proportion of consuming it is limited due to the high amount of saturated fats. (Sethi 2016, 3414)

### **3. RESEARCH OF THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CONSUMPTION OF OAT DRINKS**

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part talk about the method of the research. The second part talks about the results of the survey. The third part will give a short overview of discussions and recommendations.

#### **3.1. Study method**

As mentioned before, the author's goal was to study which factor out of social, personal, and psychological has he the strongest effect on consumer buying behaviour. And to observe on how the decision-making process were implemented by individual buyers. The questions in the survey mainly focused on the theory that spoke about factors affecting consumer buying behaviour and their decision-making process. All the questions were multiple choices, no open-ended questions. Most of the questions followed a Likert scale. This way it makes the questions measurable, makes it easier to analyse the respondent's answers, and makes it easier and clearer for the participants to answer the questions clearly and in an understandable way. The survey consisted of 19 questions, 6 of these questions, were demographical. The survey's language was in English. Also, due to the fact of the legislation about using milk for plant-based products, the author has intentionally mentioned milk in the survey and in the results' analysis, to avoid any confusion to the participants, and because it is widely used among people now, and it is easier for people to understand the concept, and to make it clear for the reader.

The author has used Google Forms to create the survey, and has published it on Facebook's different groups, Instagram, to the author's team member in work. The survey was published on the 16th of April until the 19th of April, the respondents were 105 who answered the questions.

To begin with, the author made an analysis of the socioeconomic status (SES) of the individuals that answered the author's survey (Figure 4). Out of the 104 respondents, 74.3% (78) are females, and 25.7% (27) are males. After analysing the age of the participants, the author has noticed that the

majority of the people who answered this survey were young. 59 of the participants (56.5%) were in the age group between 17-30, 27 of the participants (25.9%) were in the age group between 31-41, 12 of the respondents (11.6%) were in the age group between 42-52, and only 7 of the respondents (6.9%) were in the age group between 55-71. The author thinks that there were so few of the people who belonged to the age group of 50 and 70 because they might not be interested in the topic, or don't know how to complete a survey. Moving on, the majority of the respondents were employed 64 (61%), the second portion is being a student, which includes 19 (18.1%), 8 of the participants (7.6%) were currently studying and working, 6 (5.7%) were working as a freelancer, 3 of the respondents (2.9%) were unemployed. Also, the author has noticed that people who answered this survey, 1 person was on mother leave, 1 person was retired, and 1 person was self-employed, which this can be belonged to being a freelancer.

As it is crucial to have information about the respondents' income, to know more about how they decide when they're buying products, the author also asked this question and made a summary about it. The highest percentage of the sample 105, are 47 (44.8%) who had over €1500. There was no one whose income is €300 or below. Only 6 people (5.7%) had an income ranging from €301-600. Also, only 13 (12.4%) had no regular income, which can lead to a realization these people are the ones who are self-employed/freelancers.

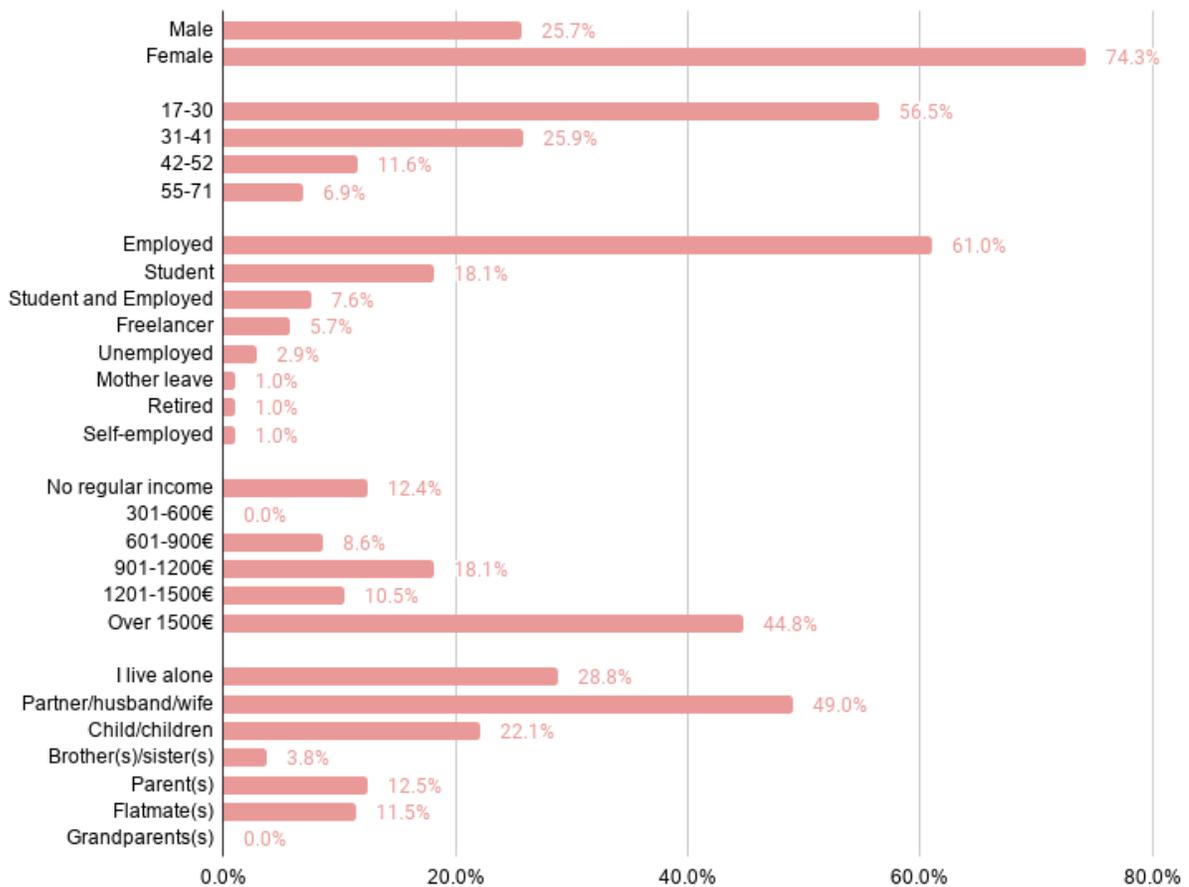


Figure 5. The Socioeconomic status of the sample (n =105)

Source: Author's calculations

Moving on, the author wanted to know who the participants are living with, because this could also give insights on how consumers formulate their decision-making process based on whom they're living with. And the author has realized that the majority of the respondents lived with a partner/husband/wife, they were 51 (49%), the second majority has chosen the option 'I live alone, they were 30 (28.8%), then comes the participants who live with a child or children, and they were 23 (22.1%). 13 (12.5 %) of the participants living with their parent/s, and 12 (11.5%) living with their flatmate/s. None of the respondents has chosen the option of living with grandparents. And the least majority of the people who answered this survey were only 4 (2.8%) lived with their brother(s)/sister(s). However, the author made this question options, in order not to make the

participants feel invaded or less comfortable, although the author has stated in the beginning of the survey that the answers are anonymous.

Nevertheless, the author wanted to know more about the respondents, so there was a question about marital status because it can also have an effect when they're making the buying decision (Figure 5). The majority of the respondents were single, and they were 42 (40.4%), then comes being married, which they're 38 (36.5%). Also, there were 21 (20.2%) people who are in a relationship, but not married. Only 1 respondent was engaged, and 2 (1.9%) respondents were divorced.

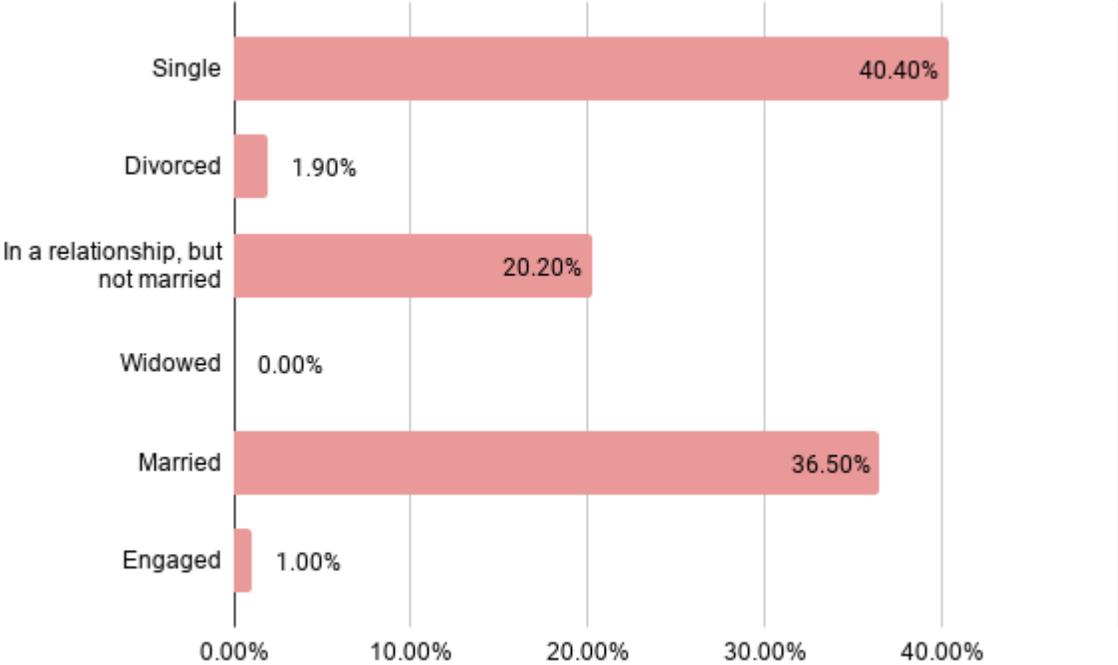


Figure 6. Marital status of the sample (n=105)

Source: Author's calculations

### 3.2 Results

In this chapter, the author will give an overview of the results of the survey. The first question that was in the survey, whether the respondents have tried oat milk or not (Figure 6). The results showed

that a very high proportion of respondents have tried oat milk, and they are 85 (81%), and only 20 (19%) have not tried oat milk.

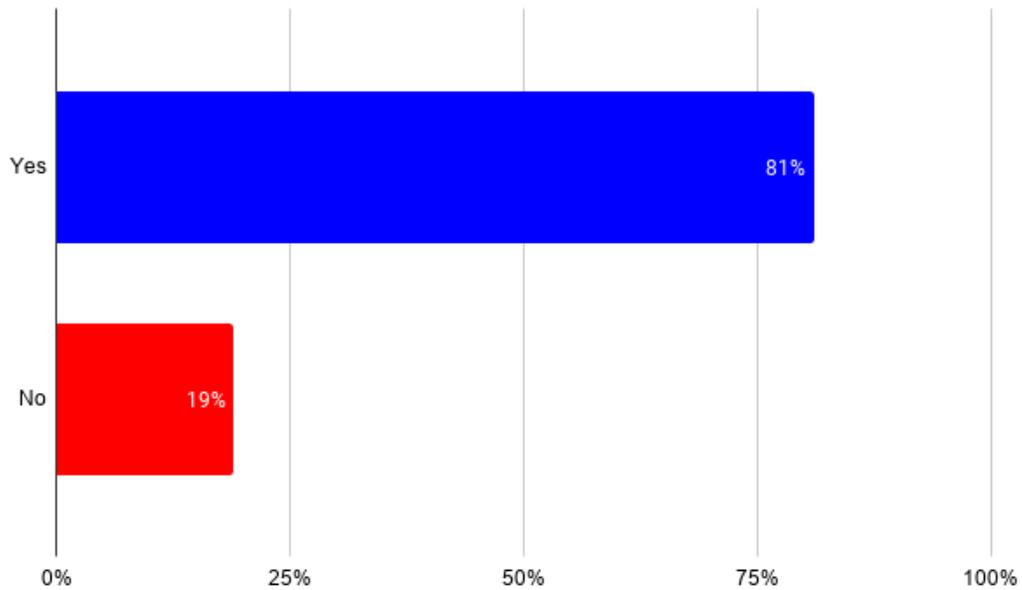


Figure 7. Participants' answers if they have tried oat milk (n=105). Source: Author's calculations

Next, the author wanted to know what are the reasons people consuming oat milk Figure 7. And the main reason the respondents have consumed or want to consume oat milk is for health reasons, they were 74 (70.5%). The next two main reasons are for environment purposes, and diet reasons. Each of these two reasons got 36 respondents (34.3%). The third main reasons are for animal cruelty reasons, and because oat milk is tasty. Each of these two reasons got 31 respondents (29.5%). The last reason, and the least option that got chosen, was 'I don't want to try oat milk, which they were 16 (15.2%).

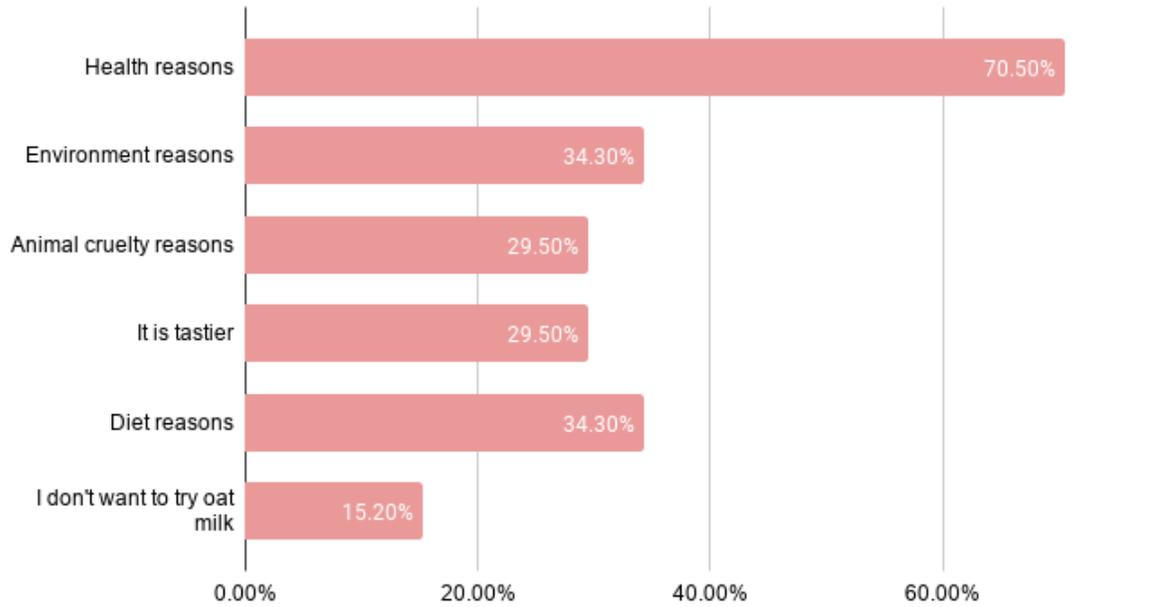


Figure 8. Overview of the participants' reasons for consuming oat milk (n=89). Source: Author's calculations.

Moving on, the author is also interested in knowing the reasons of participants who chose that they don't want to consumer oat milk Figure 8. The main reasons why the respondents don't want to try oat milk, is that it is expensive, which they were 19 (18.3%). The next main reason is that they are not interested in trying it, which they were 18 (17.3%). The author has noticed that there was one respondent who chose the option neophobia, which is the fear of trying new things. The author has decided to list this option, because the author has neophobia when it comes to some food, so it was interesting for the author to know if there was someone who would have the same thing. Other reasons are, it is not tasty, which got 17 (16.3%). And only few who thinks that it is less healthy, and it doesn't deliver the nutrition values needed for our body, they were 6 (5.7%).

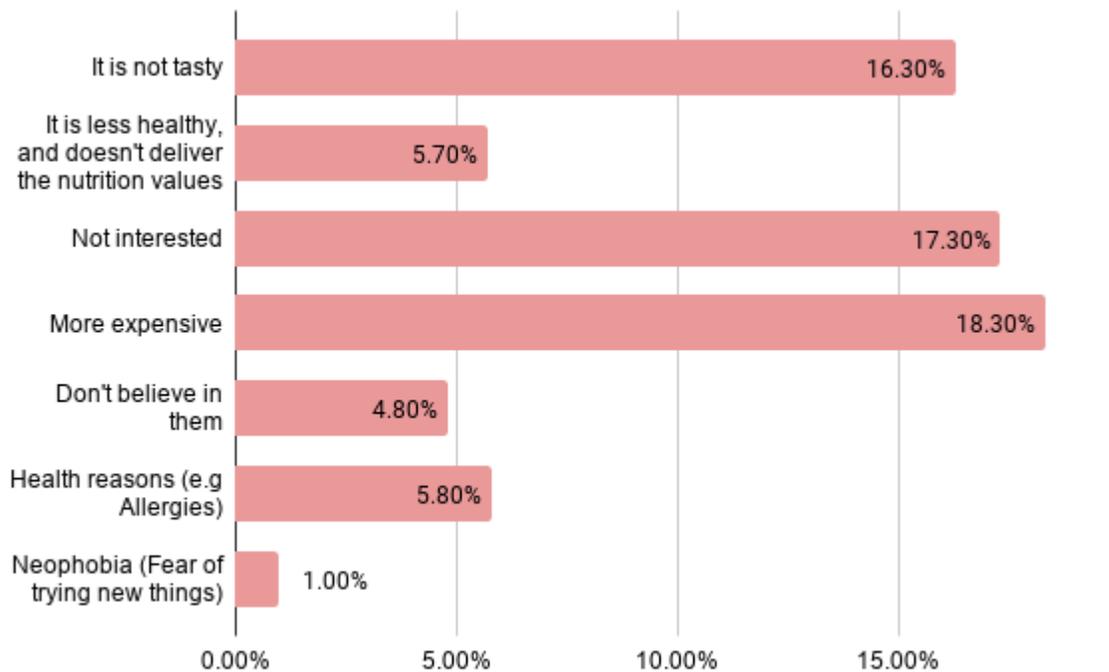


Figure 9. An overview of the reasons why the respondents don't want to consume oat milk (n=104).  
Source: Author's calculations

To get a deeper understanding of the factors that influenced people who consumed or want to consume oat milk Figure 9. The author asked a question of who influenced the participants to try oat milk. The question included options 1 till 5, where 5 represented to be the strongest influence, and 1 represented the weakest influence. The main influence was their decision, they chose the option 'It was my decision', 43 of the respondents chose this reason. The weakest influence was an influencer on social media, 53 persons chose this reason to be the weakest influencer. After that family comes the weakest influencer, which was surprising to the author, because as mentioned above, the majority of people lived with their partner/husband/wife and also with their child/children, and it could have a strong reason that family would be the strongest influence but turns out it is not. 49 people chose that family was the weakest influence when deciding to consume oat milk, and only 8 people chose that family was the strongest influencer. Another surprising thing for the author during analysing this question, the third-weakest influencer was ads, which leads to a question, are marketers doing a poor job with promoting oat milk? Of course, this question is general and the author can't reply on this sample as it

doesn't generalize the whole population. 43 people chose Ads to be the weakest influencer when purchasing oat milk. And only 5 people couldn't recall the reason.

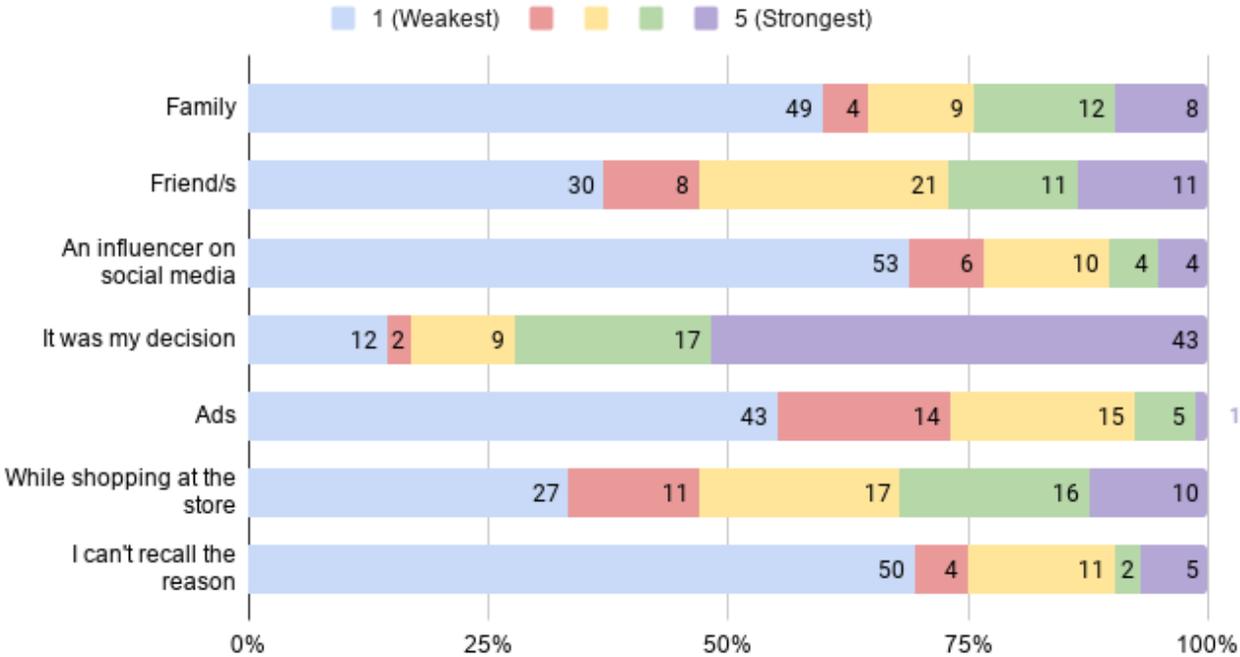


Figure 10. An overview of the respondents' influence on trying oat milk. Source: Author's calculation.

The author wanted to know the participants' view of how indifferent they are with different oat milk brands, whether they care a lot of different brands or not Figure 10. The question form was a liker-type scale from 1 to 5. 1 represented weakly indifferent, and 5 represented extremely indifferent. The author has noticed that the respondents are most likely to lean on being indifferent rather than caring about specific brands of oat milk. 17 people are extremely indifferent between oat milk brands, and only 15 people care about oat milk brands and stick to their specific ones that they are buying. However, the author has noticed that the majority of the respondents have chosen number 3, which can be considered in the middle, and 30 people chose this, which can be closely to being indifferent. Referring to the author's research question 'Are Consumers indifferent between oat milk brands?' Based on the participants' answers, consumers are more likely to be indifferent about oat milk brands.

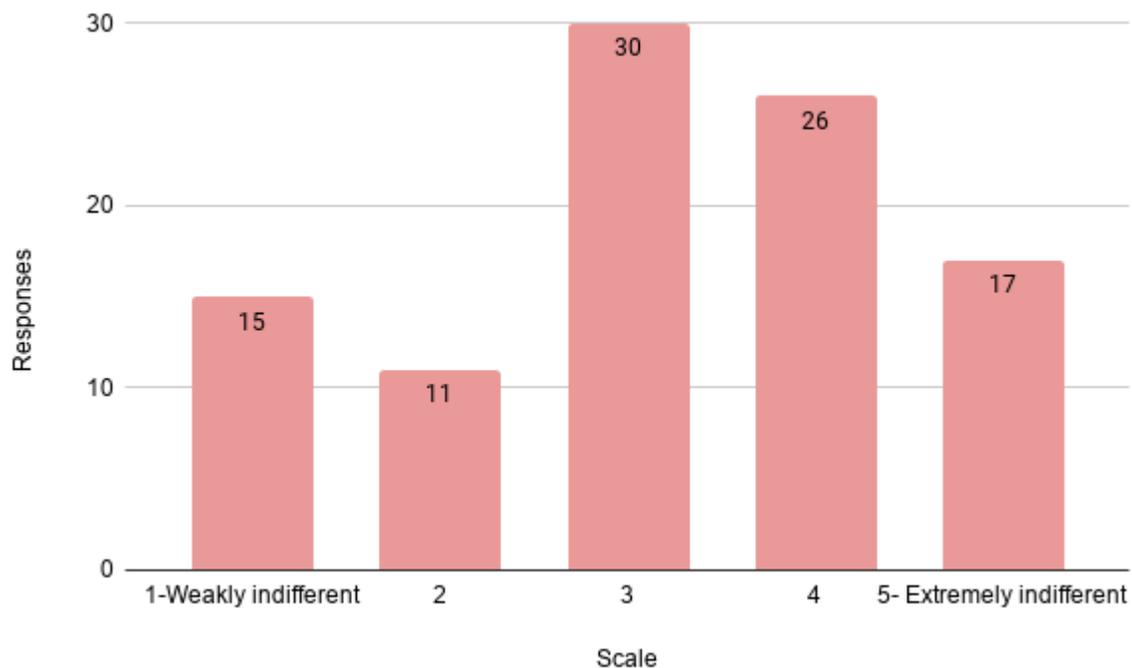


Figure 11. An overview of the average respondents' indifference about oat milk brands (n=99).  
Source: Author's calculations

Moving on, as the author is studying the factors that effect and influence buyers when they're purchasing oat milk, the author has decided to make participants choose between these factors: price, flavour and taste, ingredients, and recommendation. The author has decided to choose these factors, because each one of these factors belong to either social, personal, or psychological factors. Turns out, that the least important factor is recommendation, which 31 people chosen this. The highest factor that was chosen as being the most important, is flavour and taste, which 28 people have chosen this factor. The author can see that the price has got the highest 'slightly important' option, which 31 people have chosen that. This could be linked to the question of why people choose to consumer oat milk, and health reasons was the highest, so the respondents will most likely not look at the price when it comes to health. After the factor of flavour and taste being extremely important, comes the ingredients, which 26 people have chosen it.

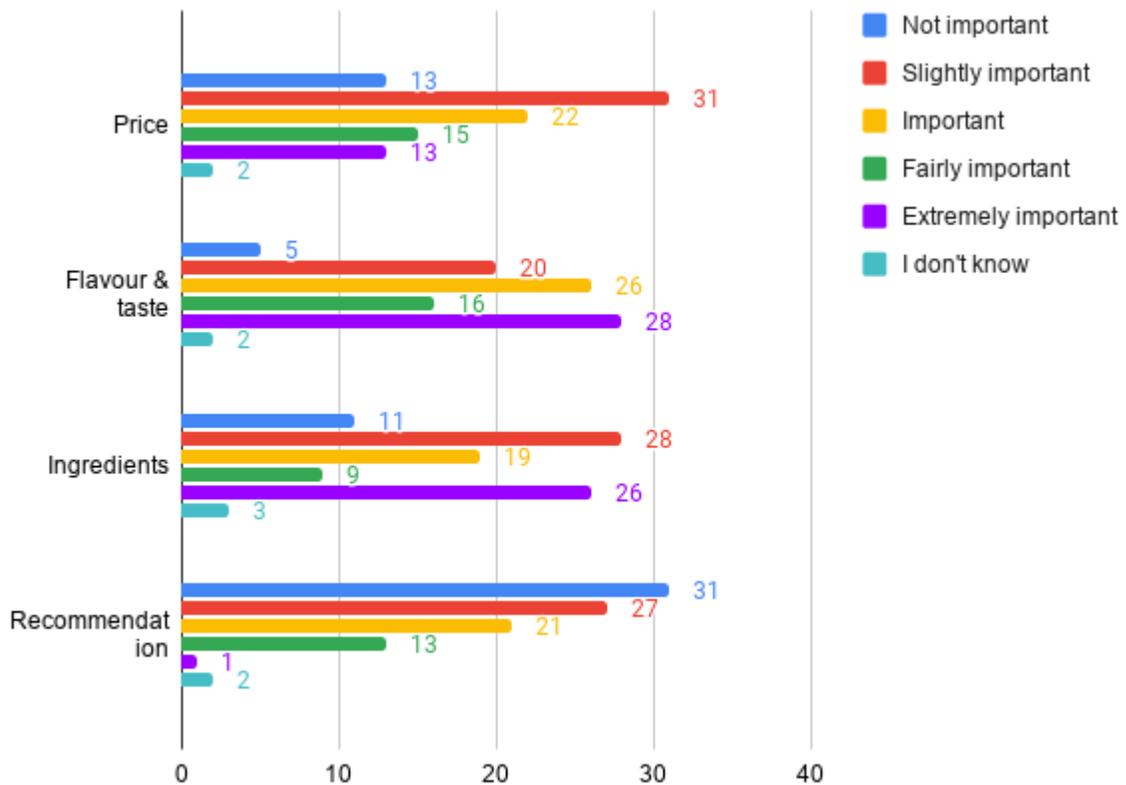


Figure 12. An overview of the participant’s answer to different factors being important or not when purchasing oat milk (n=96). Source: author’s calculations.

To know which factor out of personal, social, and psychological ones, the author asked the participants to choose among personal, social, and psychological factors with providing different examples to each factor, so the person can understand which factor to choose Figure 11. After conducting the survey, the author has realized that the majority of the respondents has chosen that the personal factors are the strongest factors that influence consumers when buying oat milk, and it’s very significantly clear based on the answers, which 37 of people has chosen the personal factor, and only 12 people chose that it’s not important. The least important one, was the social factor, which 43 people have chosen it, and only 3 people have chosen to be important. Also, there is a small amount of people who answered, ‘I don’t know’.

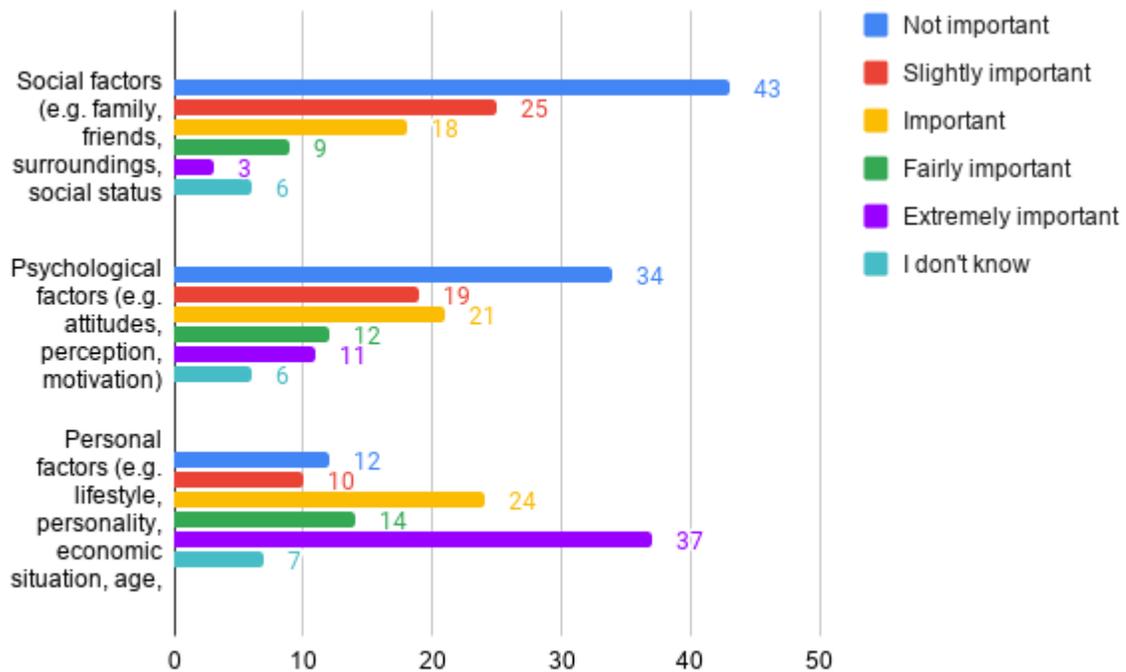


Figure 13. An overview of the participants' the most important factor from personal, social, and psychological when buying oat milk (n=104). Source: author's calculations.

To move deeper to the consumer's decision-making process, the author has asked a question to the participants to know how much how often they spend time reading the information about a product's ingredients Figure 13. The author has realized that the majority of the respondents have answered sometimes, which are 39 people (37.1%). Then comes the highest chosen option, which is 'often', 23 people (21.9%) have chosen it. And 17 people (16.2%) have answered always. Only 18 people (17.1%) have chosen the option rarely. Based on the results of this question, it answers the author's second question, which is: Do Individuals have the time to read the ingredients of a product? And looking at the results, the author can safely conclude that yes, consumers are most likely to spend time reading the information about a product's ingredients.

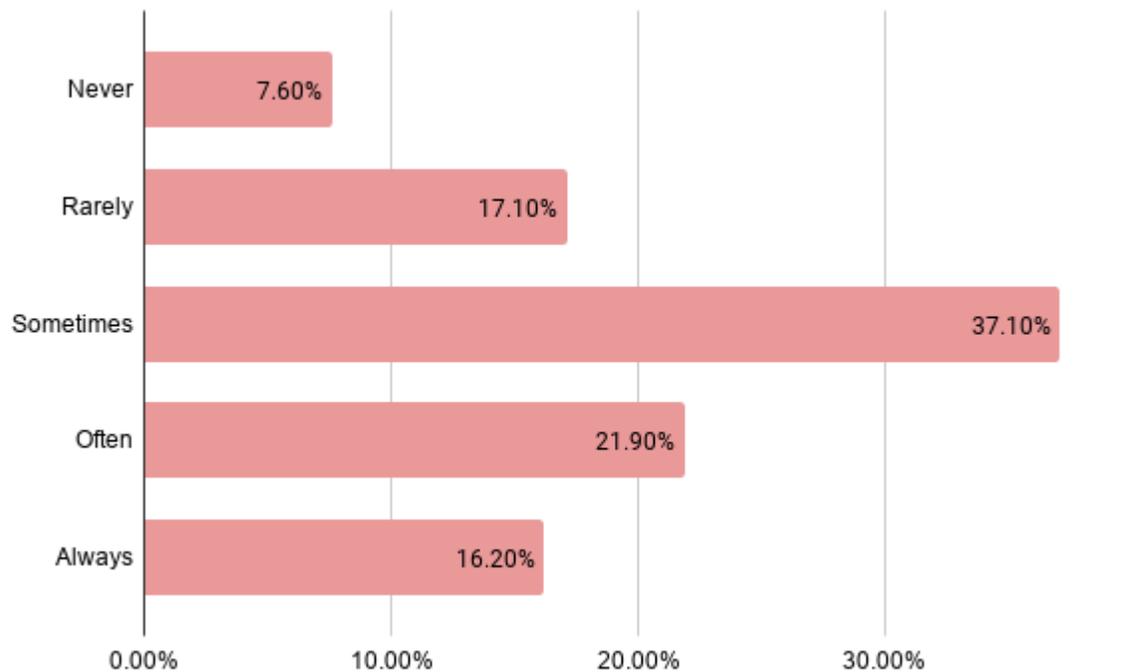


Figure 14. An overview of how often the participants spend time reading the product’s ingredients (n=105).

Source: Author’s calculations.

Now it comes to the interesting part for the author. In order to get a clear answer to the author’s first research questions, which is: ‘Is there a positive relationship between family affect and the consumer’s decision-making?’ a question was asked to the participants, to know whom they trust the most when they receive information about a product Figure 14. Because as mentioned above in the theoretical part, consumers tend to gather information about a product from different sources before making the final decision and purchasing the product. The least source that the majority of the respondents trust when receiving information about a product, are influencers, 55 people have chosen that, and only 1 person chosen always. The second least trust source is a salesperson, 53 people have chosen that, and no one chosen the option always for salesperson. The third least source are ads, 47 people have chosen, and only 3 people have chosen always. When it comes to family, 14 people have chosen to always trust family, 11 people have chosen most of the time, 25 people have chosen sometimes, and only 18 people have chosen rarely. Based on that, the author can conclude that most likely there is a positive

relationship between family affect and the consumer’s decision-making, and also it has the highest answers from choosing the option always.

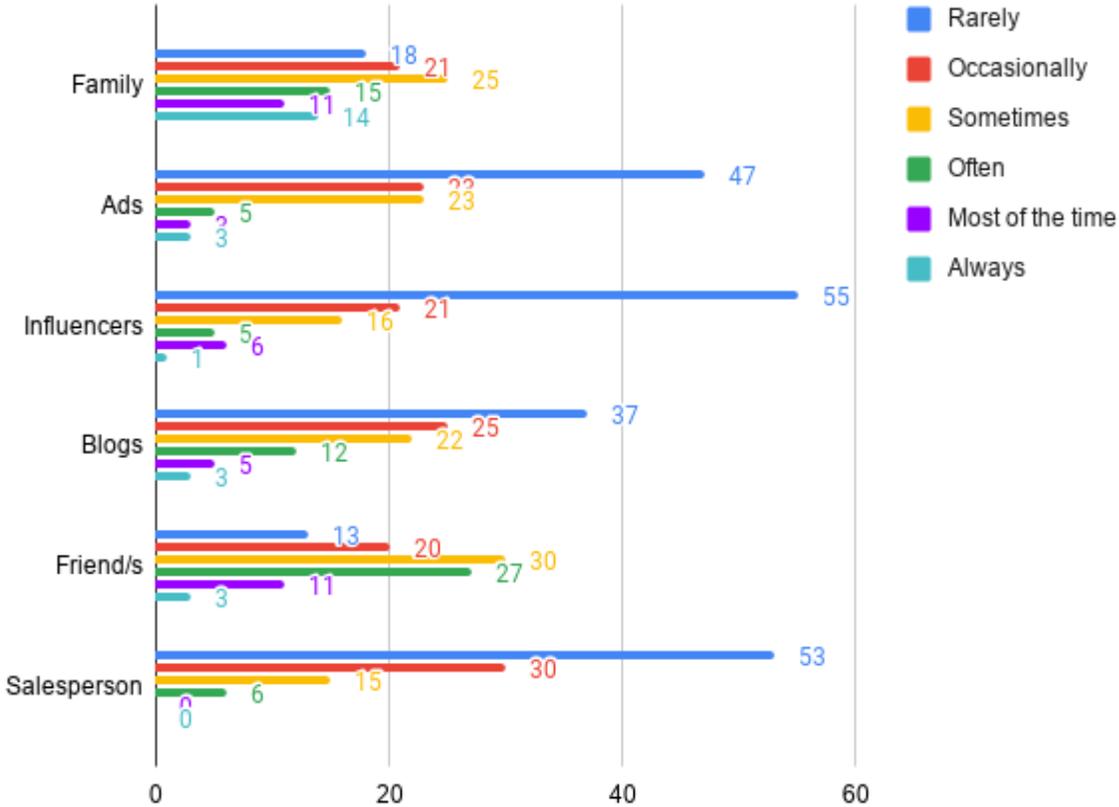


Figure 15. An overview of whom the participants trust the most when gathering information (n=105). Source: Author’s calculations.

Moving on, since the author is speaking about social, personal and psychological factors, the author has decided to ask the participants to know how much they care about promotions, ads, and discounts, since these fall under the psychological factors, how can one person interpret this information based on his/her perception, and also it falls under the social since the buyer can get affected by promotions, ads, and discounts from their surroundings Figure 15. The question is a liker-scale type, 1 represents (never), and 5 represents (always). The majority of people have chosen 3, which is likely to care about them, 36 (34.4%) of people have chosen that. 16 people (15.2%) have chosen to always care about promotions, ads, and discounts, which is more than the people who have chosen to never care about them, they were only 9 people (8.6%).

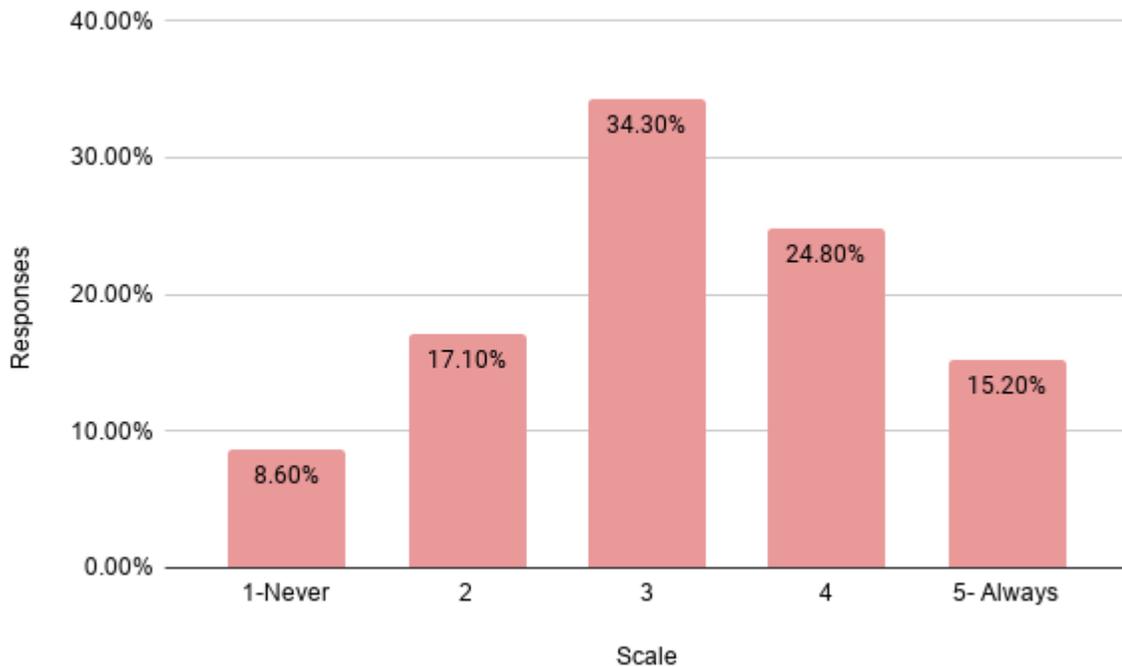


Figure 16. An overview of how much the participants care about promotion, ads, and discounts (n=105).

Source: Author's calculations.

Since the author is also talking about the decision-making process, the author has asked the participants to describe their buying decision process in Figure 16. As it was mentioned in the theoretical part, that people either tend to spend a lot of time to search for information about a product or spend little time or make impulsive purchases. Surprisingly, the majority of the people spent little time gathering the information needed before buying a product, 74 (44.8%) people have chosen that. Then it comes to the highest chosen option which is 'I always take my full time gathering all the information needed', 36 (34.3%) of people have chosen that. And only 22 (21%) of people have chosen that they make impulsive purchases. As it is noticeable that the majority spend little time gathering information, it can be linked to the question of when the majority of the participants to sometimes spending time on searching information about a product's ingredients before buying it.

The author has carried out a correlation analysis between two questions, question number 7, and question number 11, to identify the association between factors consumers believe to be important when purchasing oat drink, and the statements describing their buying decisions. The purpose of this correlation study was to answer the following research question of this thesis: ‘Is there a positive relationship between family affect and the consumer’s decision-making?’. Note that this question is also being answered by the Likert-scale results of survey question number 6.

According to the Spearman correlation analysis, the author found a negative relationship between the following: “Social factors (e.g. family, friends, surroundings, social status) are important when buying oat drink” and “I always take my full time gathering all the information needed” with the correlation coefficient being -0.067, as well as between “Social factors (e.g. family, friends, surroundings, social status) are important when buying oat drink” and “I tend to make impulsive purchases”, with the correlation coefficient being -0.058. This translates into a conclusion that there is a negative relationship between consumer belief that social factors including family are important when buying oat drink, and them taking time to gather product information or making impulsive purchases. However, there is a weak positive relationship between consumer belief that social factors including family are important when buying oat drink, and them spending little time on searching for information before buying a product.

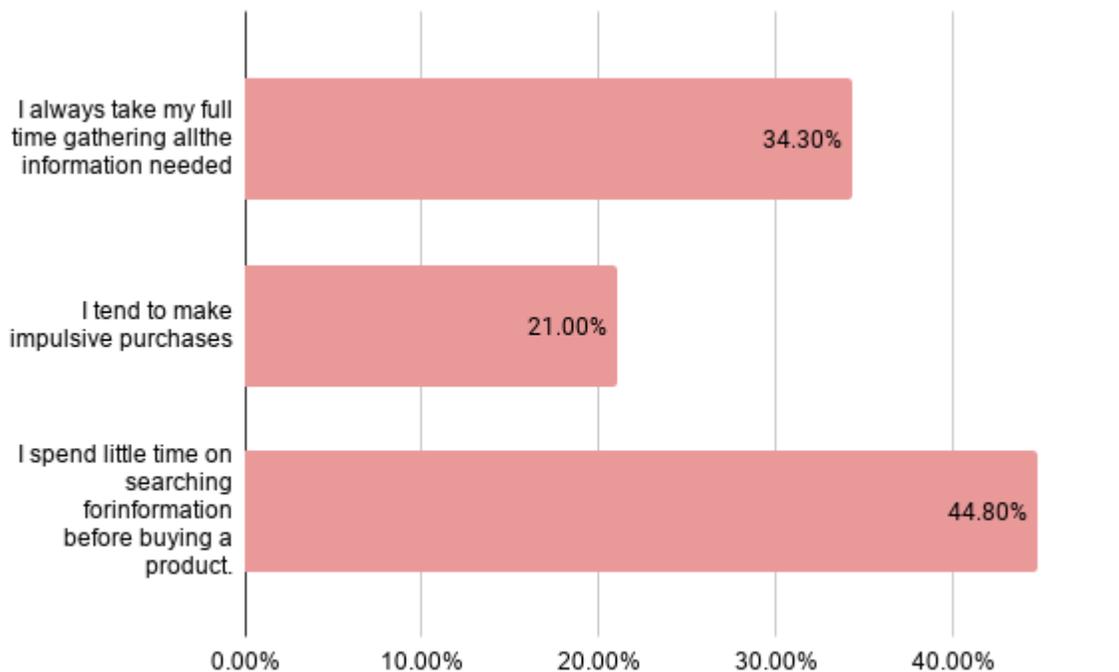


Figure 17. An overview of the participants' buying decision process (n=105).

Source: Author's calculations.

Moving on, the author wants to know about how the participants rate themselves as a buyer based on the personality table mentioned in the theoretical part Figure 17. 26 of people have voted to never being a glamorous, upper class buyer. The most personality that got the highest option for 'always' was honest, and down to earth, and got 36 people choosing often, and 34 people choosing sometimes. This can explain that the majority of the participants trying oat milk and the reasons that the author has seen are because of health reasons, environment reasons, and animal cruelty reason, and this leads that the oat milk's brand represent these things. Although, the highest option for (often) was chosen for the reliable, and intelligent personality, 47 people. The least personality that got the option 'always' was tough, and carefree, only 6 people, and it is mostly rarely with that personality, 35 people have chosen that.

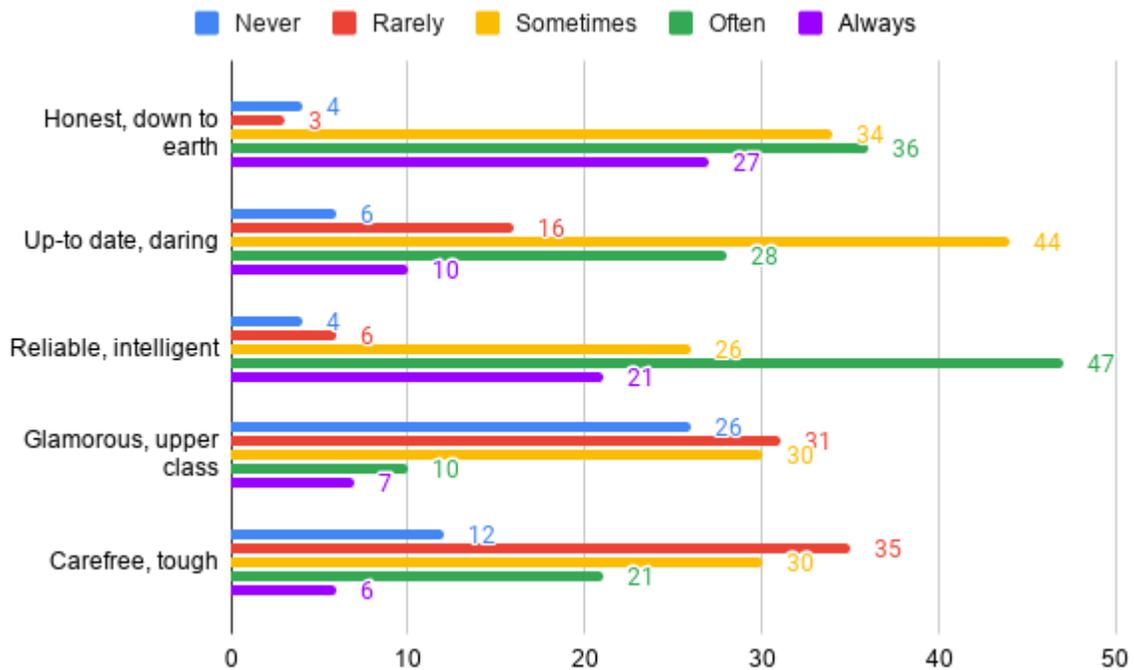


Figure 18. An overview of the respondents' personality as a buyer (n=105).

Source: Author's calculations.

The last question was asked to the participants, was their opinion about different plant-based alternatives to milk, since the author has spoken about oat milk, almond milk, cashew milk, and coconut milk Figure 18. Of course, this question was optional to consider the fact that some people might haven't tried them before, so this can limit the results. The most answers for the option 'very bad' went for soy milk 15 people have chosen that, and following it by coconut milk, 7 people have chosen that. On the other hand, oat milk, has got the most answers to the option 'excellent', 21 people have chosen that. The next excellent plant-based milk was coconut milk, 19 people have chosen that. However, the author can see a high amount of people choosing 'good' for milk, 42 people have chosen that. Nevertheless, the author can see that the most likeable plant-based to milk alternatives is oat milk. And only 5 people said that oat milk is very bad. Also, soy milk seems to be the least likeable plant-based alternative to milk, and 35 of people have said it is bad.

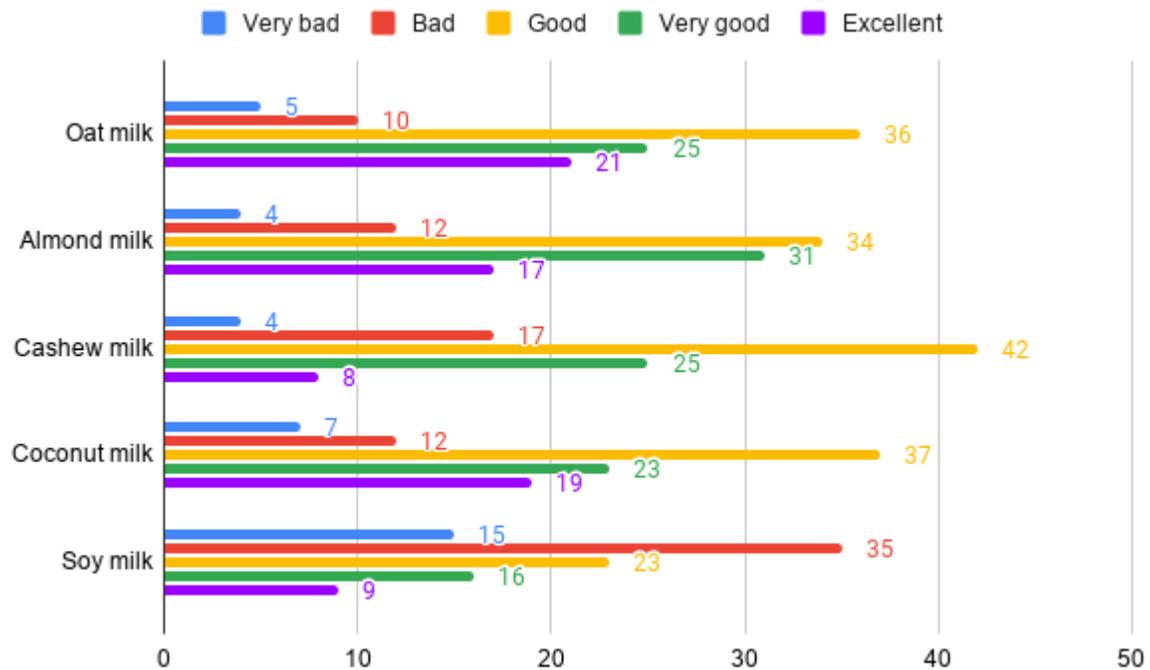


Figure 19. An overview of the participant’s opinion about different plant-based alternatives to milk (n=97).

Source: Author’s calculations.

### 3.3 Discussion and recommendations

The results have showed that the majority of the respondents have tried oat milk. And the main reason for consumers to purchase oat drink is for health reasons then it is followed by environment reasons, and diet reasons. On the other hand, people who don’t want to consume oat drinks, the main reason for them was that it is expensive, then it is followed by not interested, and not being tasty like regular milk is.

Moving on, the consumers are less likely to care about the price when it comes to buying and choosing oat drinks brands, as they care for high quality for their health, and because consumers think that the ingredients of oat drinks, are extremely important. Also, it turns out that when people have decided to consume oat drink, their highest influence was their own choice, rather than being influenced by family, friends, ads, etc. And they were rarely influenced by their families, and by influencers. Moving

on, the most likeable and preferred plant-based alternative to milk to the participants is oat drink. And the least likeable and preferred plant-based alternative to milk to the participants was soy drink. Jumping to the important part for the author, it is now clear that the personal factor was the most chosen factor to being important when purchasing oat drinks, and that is the most factor that affects the consumers when they buy oat drinks.

According to the results, it turns out that the participants are most likely indifferent when it comes to choosing and buying oat drinks' brand.

The author has made a test for the survey before finally conducted it, and sent it to family and friend, to get an opinion on if everything was asked professionally and accordingly. A couple of the initial respondents who tested out the test version of the survey, suggested that questions that start with 'How', better to be asked using Likert scale, as it is more understandable and gives the participant to clearly and freely answer the question. They also suggested the author to make the question of 'Who do I live with' to make it an optional question, as some respondents might feel it is an invasive question, and would be less comfortable to answer, and that would lead to dropping the survey in the middle of answering it and finishing it.

To be more precise with the discussion, based on the results, the author has noticed that respondents are in most cases, they consider themselves reasonable and reliable consumers who are able to do their own research about the products and ingredients, as shown in question 12, and 11 that respondents are most likely to spend time to search for information about a product before making the final purchase. This can give a suggestion to business companies to use a more sophisticated targeting techniques, product placement, product positioning, and to enhance the 'know your customer' rule.

## CONCLUSION

The author's aim of this thesis was to find out which was the strongest factor out of personal, social, and psychological one had the most effect on consumers when they are buying oat drinks in Estonia, and to get a deeper overview of the decision-making process of the consumers. The author has followed and used a quantitative method. The survey covered and focused about taste preferences to other plant-based alternative to milk, their decision-making process, the reasons for consumption of oat drinks and the reasons for not doing so. And the results have showed that 81% tried oat drinks, and 19% did not. Also, the respondents were 74.3% females and 25.7% males.

After asking the participants why they have chosen to consume oat drink, 70.5% answered that it was for health reason. However, for the people who have chosen not to try oat drink or any other plant-based alternative to milk, 18.3% chose that it is expensive, and 16.3% said it is not tasty.

When buying oat drinks, the author has found out that the main influence was actually their own decision, 43 people have chosen that. And the least influence to have an impact on them was influencers on social media, 53 people have chosen that.

Not to forget the fact that ads were amongst the least trusted resources when consumers try to receive and gather information about a product. Which this can give a recommendation and alert for marketers to search and find out how this can be fixed in order to attract consumers more and make the ads trustworthy.

Since the survey mostly consisted of women rather than men. The author believes and agrees that a researcher should try to include more male respondents for a different overview and a deeper understanding.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1. The survey

Hello!

I'm currently studying Business Administration specialized in Marketing in Tallinn University of Technology, and I'm writing my graduation thesis on factors affecting consumers' buying decision in purchasing oat milk, and if not, then what is the reason.

Your answers would be very helpful for my research, and I kindly ask you to find about 3-5 minutes to answer this short survey.

The questionnaire is anonymous!

1- Have you tried oat milk?

- Yes - 81%
- No - 19%

2- How indifferent are you when choosing oat milk brands?

- 1 (Weakly indifferent) - 15
- 2 - 11
- 3 - 30
- 4 - 25
- 5 (Extremely indifferent) - 1

3- Which factors are important to you when choosing oat milk brands?

	Not important	Slightly important	Important	Fairly important	Extremely important	I don't know
Price	13	31	22	15	13	2
Flavour & taste	5	20	26	16	28	2
Ingredients	11	28	19	9	26	3
Recommendation	31	27	21	13	1	2

## Appendix 1 continued

4- What could be the reasons that you've consumed or want to consume oat milk?

- Health reasons - 70.5%
- Environment reasons - 34.3%
- Animal cruelty reason - 29.5%
- It is tastier - 29.5%
- Diet reasons - 34.3%
- I don't want to try oat milk - 15.2%

5- What could be the reasons that you haven't consumed oat milk or any non-dairy milk?

- It is not tasty - 16.3%
- It is less healthy, and doesn't deliver the nutrition values needed for our body - 3.8 %
- Not interested - 17.3%
- More expensive - 18.3%
- Don't believe in them - 4.8%
- Health reasons (e.g. Allergies) - 5.8%
- Neophobia (Fear of trying new things) - 1%
- None, I want/tried oat milk - 62.5%
- It is less healthy, and doesn't deliver the nutrition values need for our body - 1.9%

6- Who influenced you to try oat milk? (1 is weakest, 5 is strongest)

	1 (Weakest)	2	3	4	5 (Strongest)
Family	49	4	9	12	8
Friend/s	30	8	21	11	11
An influencer on social media	53	6	10	4	4
It was my decision	12	2	9	17	43
Ads	43	14	15	5	1
While shopping at the store	27	11	17	16	10
I can't recall the reason	50	4	11	2	5

## Appendix 1 continued

7- How would you rate each factor being important when buying oat milk?

	Not important	Slightly important	Important	Fairly important	Extremely important	I don't know
Social factors (e.g. family, friends, surroundings, social status)	43	25	18	9	3	6
Psychological factors (e.g. attitudes, perception, motivation)	34	19	21	12	11	6
Personal factors (e.g. lifestyle, personality, economic situation, age, occupation)	12	10	24	14	37	7

8- How often do you spend time on searching and reading the information about a product's ingredients?

- Never - 7.6%
- Rarely - 17.1%
- Sometimes - 37.1%
- Often - 21.9%
- Always - 16.2%

## Appendix 1 continued

9- Whom do you trust the most when receiving information about a product?

	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	often	Most of the time	Always
Family	18	21	25	15	11	14
Ads	47	23	23	5	3	3
Influencers	55	21	16	5	6	1
Blogs	37	25	22	12	5	3
Friend/s	13	20	30	27	11	3
Salesperson	53	30	15	6	0	0

10- How often do you care about promotions, ads, and discounts?

- 1 (Never) - 8.6%
- 2 - 17.1%
- 3 - 34.3%
- 4 - 24.8%
- 5 (Always) - 15.2%

11- Describe your buying decision process:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Honest, down to earth	4	3	34	36	27
Up-to date, daring	6	16	44	28	10
Reliable, intelligent	4	6	26	47	21
Glamorous, upper class	26	31	30	10	7
Carefree, tough	12	35	30	21	6

## Appendix 1 continued

13 - Based on your preference, how would you rate the following plant-based milk alternatives?

	Very bad	Bad	Good	Very good	Excellent
Oat milk	5	10	36	25	21
Almond milk	4	12	34	31	17
Cashew milk	4	17	42	25	8
Coconut milk	7	12	37	23	19
Soy milk	15	35	23	16	9

14- Your age:

- 17 - 30 (56.5%)
- 31 - 41 (25.9%)
- 42 - 52 (11.6%)
- 55- 71 (6.9%)

15- Gender:

- Female - 74.3%
- Male - 25.7%

16- Marital Status:

- Single - 40.4%
- Divorced - 1.9%
- In a relationship, but not married - 20.2%
- Widowed - 0%
- Married - 36.5%
- Engaged - 1%

17- Occupation:

- Employed - 61%
- Student - 18.1%
- Unemployed - 2.9%
- Freelancer - 5.7%
- Senior Citizen - 1%
- Student and Employed - 7.6%
- Other:
  - In hiding - 1%
  - Self-employed - 1%
  - Retired - 1%
  - Mother leave - 1%

18- Who do you live with?

- I live alone - 28.8%
- Partner/Wife/Husband - 49%
- Child/Children - 22.1%
- Brother(s)/Sister(s) - 3.8%
- Parent(s) - 12.5%
- Flatmate(s) - 11.5%
- Grandparent(s) - 0%

19- Monthly net income per household:

- No regular income (12.4%)
- €300 or below (0%)
- 301 - €600 (5.7%)
- 601 - €900 (8.6%)

- 901 - €1200 (18.1%)
- 1201 - €1500 (10.5%)
- Over €1500 (44.8%)

Source: Author's survey research

**Appendix 2. The Spearman correlation analysis based on the importance of different factors when purchasing oat drinks.**

	1	2	3	4
1	1	-0.067	-0.058	0.111
2	-0.067	1	N/A	N/A
3	-0.058	N/A	1	N/A
4	0.111	N/A	N/A	1

Source: Author's calculations

Nr	Statements
1	Social factors (e.g., family, friends, surroundings, social status) are important when buying oat drink
2	I always take my full time gathering all the information needed
3	I tend to make impulsive purchases.
4	I spend little time on searching for information before buying a product.

Source: Author's survey questions

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