

An Investigation into The Meat Industry: How the Use of Motivation, and Perception as Marketing Tools Influence Consumer Buyer Behaviour

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**Dissertation submitted as part of the requirements for the award BA (Hons) Marketing and
Management**

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This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated consumer perception within the meat industry, and how the identified perception motivates purchasing decisions. A literature review was conducted to establish a broad understanding on the topic area, following this a collection of interviews were carried out; the primary and secondary data retrieved was then combined and analysed.

This was a cross-sectional study that took a deductive approach, where a voluntary self-selected sampling technique was used, semi structured interviews were conducted with eight participants.

The analysis demonstrated that consumers are motivated to buy meat for one of the following three reasons: they like to eat meat more than other alternatives, the convenience of it, or through habit.

This study identified that the meat industry uses perceptive marketing techniques, such as colour marketing and paralanguage to create the desired perception of their products to consumers.

Product perception had a big impact on consumer purchasing decisions, the findings show that most consumers look to buy meat that they perceive to have minimal drawbacks, such as cruelty free, or grass fed. It was discovered that this behaviour was due to consumers making buying decisions that reflect their 'self-identity', more commonly than not leading them to choose the 'least worst' option.

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ABBREVIATIONS

NFU – National Farmers Union

ASA - Advertising Standards Authority

CIM – Chartered Institute of Marketing

PETA - People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

HFSS – High Fat Salt Sugar

1. CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

In the last few years there has been a rise in plant-based products appearing on the British food market, with Gregg's (2020) vegan sausage roll and KFC's (2020) plant based burger just to name two; Hancox (2020) refers to the trend of 'the unstoppable rise of the vegan' forcing fast food outlets and supermarkets alike to keep up with the meat-free shift.

Jones (2020) highlights how in recent years veganism has risen as a trend with increasing popularity year on year, a vegan diet involves removing animal products from an individual's diet, products such as: dairy, eggs, fish and meat. While some individuals choose to opt for a less extreme vegetarian diet and others just choose to add a few 'meat free days' to their routine, however it is becoming clear that the trend of reducing animal consumption in the UK is becoming increasingly popular. Veganuary (2020) highlight their pledge which is growing in popularity, which asks its participants to try Veganism for the month of January, figure 1.1 shows the increasing number of participants that have signed up to Veganuary in recent years.

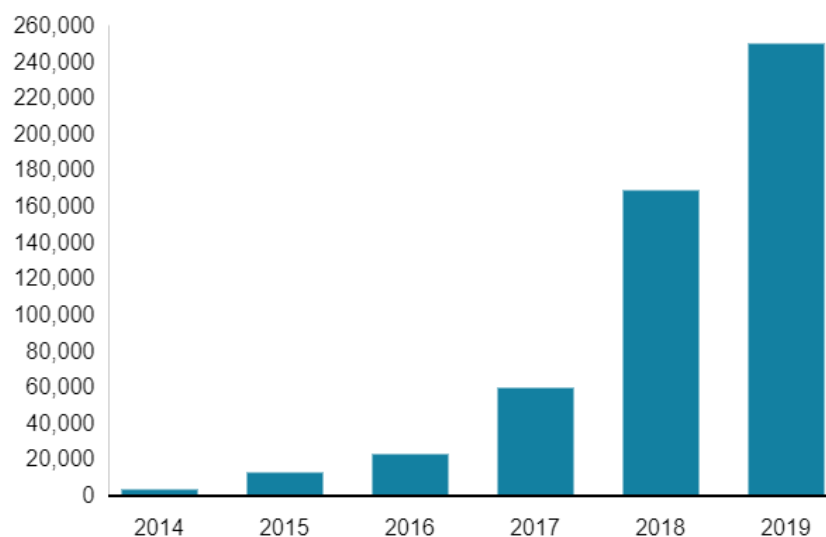


Figure 1.1 Rise in Veganuary participants (2020)

Chapter 1

Additionally figure 1.2 below shows the activity in relation to specific words relating to diet such as 'Vegan' which has increased year on year, spiking every January during the 'Veganuary' period.

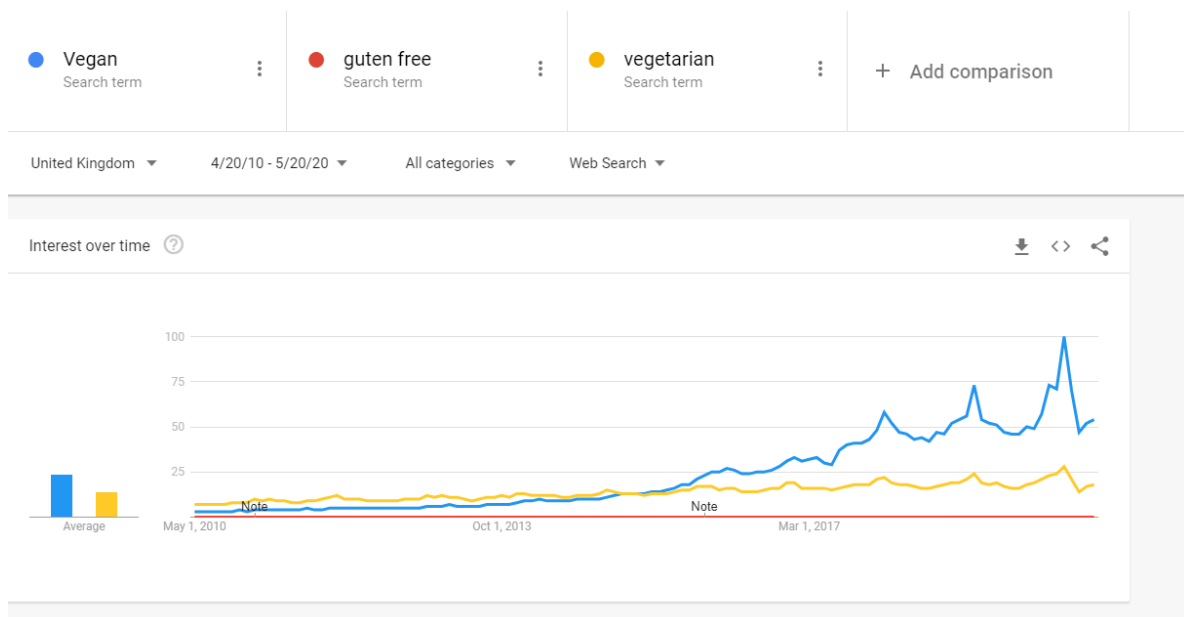


Figure 1.2 Google Trends Diet comparison analytics (2020)

Both Jones (2020) and Hancox (2020) highlight some of the key issues leading to the increased number of individuals following a plant-based diet to include: health, lifestyle, animal welfare, and environmental factors. However, when investigated contradictory literature was found with the NHS (2020) advising a restricted red meat intake, and PETA (2020) highlighting the environmental damage caused by farming, to highlight just two issues. When compared with statistics released by The NFU (2020) who claim there is a relatively small environmental impact and comparable to most other food industries, The NFU (2020) also state that meat is an essential part of a balanced diet, without meat it would be difficult to source vital vitamins and minerals. However, it is important to note that groups such as PETA (2020) and the NFU (2020) are likely to have vested interests.

The Vegan Society (2020) highlight the rapid growth of veganism in the UK to be the greatest growth for any individual country worldwide, with a growth of 987% in demand since 2016 for meat-free food; however with that said the vast majority of the population are still 'traditional' meat eaters. The vegan society (2020) and jones (2020) highlight how consumers perceptions are changing towards the meat

industry pushing some individuals to cut meat out of their diets entirely. This research aims to identify what the perception held by consumers of the meat industry is, as well as what motivates them to buy meat. To do this the current perception of the meat industry must be understood, as well as the marketing tools the meat industry are using to counter the increase in plant-based products. The NFU (2019) released a statement that criticised Tesco's (2019) marketing campaign for their recently released plant-based sausages, stating that they felt 'demonised as a food group' by Tesco's marketing campaign.

The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) (2020) regularly run marketing campaigns such as the 'we love lamb' campaign, these adverts are aimed at advertising the free ranged, grass fed, as well as fresh nature of British farming; this study is hoping to identify what marketing techniques employed by the British meat industry are working if any.

Blythe (2013) highlights the use of perception techniques in marketing, how it can be of advantage to organisations to use techniques such as colour association and paralanguage to help create a perception of a product to their customers. Paralanguage is the use of words within a particular context, the selection of certain words can change the context and or tone of a sentence (Schuller et al., 2013). Blythe (2013) continues to highlight how the use of perception is a psychological marketing technique, Wilkie (1994) identified perception to be one of the four fundamental pillars of psychological marketing techniques, colours and the use of descriptive labelling are frequently used in marketing throughout all industries, this can be seen in the meat industry with the colour green and grass.

1.2 RATIONALE

Clarke (2019) highlights some recent and frequent 'news headline' topics relating to the meat industry, with some concerning topics such as: animal cruelty and neglect, environmental damage, and jail sentences for farmers not following the correct guidelines. Hammett (2019) highlights the rise in plant based diets in the UK, and the pressure on retailers to provide plant based options to their customers,

that there are more individuals choosing to have meat free days as well as cut all animal products out of their diet entirely. Martinelli and Berkmanienė (2018) couple these issues together highlighting how the 'rise of veganism' and the increased importance the role of food holds in social, political and cultural discourses coincide. Although what is unclear is what is motivating consumers to make these changes to their diet.

As the above background research highlighted there is an extensive amount of research that suggests that psychological marketing is used throughout all industries, with Blythe (2013) paying attention to that of motivation and perception. Additionally, there appears to be a considerable amount of research linking consumer perception and buyer behaviour. However, despite the rise in veganism and plant-based products there is seemingly a lack of research that highlights the consumer perception of the meat industry as well as if / how it effects buyer behaviour.

The academic paucity on what appears to be such a contemporary topic is the supporting rationale for this research.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to investigate consumer perception of the meat industry, and how the identified perception motivates their purchasing decisions.

The objectives are as follows:

1. To critically analyse literature to recognise to what scope motivational and perception marketing techniques are used within the meat industry.
2. To conduct primary research in the form of interviews to fully understand consumers motivations for buying meat and participants personal perception of the product they are purchasing.
3. To analyse the combined secondary and primary data, allowing for an evaluation of current motivations relating to meat consumption and the impact perception plays in them; based on the

findings of this research allow for recommendations to be made relating to further action and research that should be taken on this topic

1.4 RESEARCH

The researcher will conduct primary research using a mono-method qualitative approach, the single research technique used will be that of interviews, the researcher will conduct interviews until theoretical saturation is achieved. Qu and Dumay (2011) State that interviews provide a well-rounded information relating to participants viewpoints and experiences on a topic. Additionally, the use of interviews will allow the researcher to gain a more in-depth understanding of consumer perceptions relating to the meat industry, allowing for the interpretation of each participants experiences to be made.

The subsequent chapter will be a review of current literature relating to the use of motivation and perception within marketing as well as evidence of such techniques being used within the meat industry; additionally the literature reviewed in the following chapter will help support the findings made by this investigation.

2. CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter is set out to evaluate the current state of knowledge relating to Psychologic marketing techniques how they are used broadly, as well as in specific relation to that of the meat industry. With the intention to identify gaps within the research are and establish a research agenda.

2.2 MARKETING

The CIM (2015, p.2) 'Marketing is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably.' The CIM (2015) state that the 'forces of marketing' have shaped every choice we make as consumers, that marketing is the process of delivering 'value' to the consumer through advertising. Blythe (2013) and The CIM (2015) agree that the 7 P's also known as the marketing mix: Product, Place, Price, Promotion, People, Process, and physical evidence, all help mould the way consumers view a brand and their products.

The CIM (2015) highlight marketing's ability to interpret consumers desire and then match or exceed them, meaning that a marketeers job is more than that of just selling and advertising, it is understanding why consumers buy, then making the product they are selling meet the needs and desires of said consumer.

2.3 PSYCHOLOGICAL MARKETING

Statt (1997) argues that to fully understand the consumer a marketer must first understand that consumers need, such as needs for power, status, and achievement, to ultimately fill the parts of the consumers life that they are not yet satisfied with. Also identifying the issue of satisfaction in relation to consumer behaviour, Blythe (2013) first addresses the concept of psychological marketing in relation to dissatisfaction; that all behaviour begins with dissatisfaction, if we were not ultimately dissatisfied then there would be no need to change what we do, we would simply stick with what we have. Wilkie (1994) identifies consumer motivation, consumer perception, consumer attitudes, and

consumer learning to be four pillars within consumer behaviour theory. Blythe (2013) identifies the same four to be the foundations of psychological marketing as well as: Goals and incentives, Personality and self-concept, and formations and change. For the purpose of this dissertation Motivation, and Perception, will be identified, understood and critically analysed.

2.3.1 MOTIVATION

Stratt (1997, p95.) defines motivation in relation to consumer behaviour as: *'a general term for any part of the hypothetical psychological process which involves the experiencing of needs and drives, and the behaviour that leads to the goal which satisfies them'*

Arguably one of the most well-known theories for motivation is Maslow's (1954) Hierarchy of needs which identified motivations in a hierarchy, with survival needs being the most basic and essential motivations in human life and therefor these needs will be met before any others, with self-actualisation the need to become the ideal self being the last needs to motivate individuals. However, Blythe (2013) criticises this theory for being too simplistic and stating that exceptions to Maslow's theory can be seen in every-day life, that the hierarchy of needs appears to ignore these exceptions. Blythe (2013) also argues that most of the western world have their survival needs met and are functioning at more of a self-actualisation level of motivation.

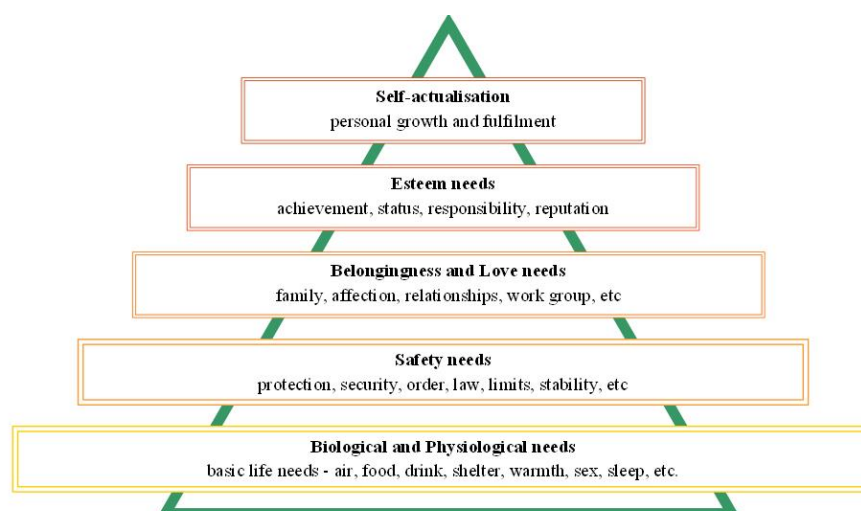


Figure 2.1 Maslow's (1954) Hierarchy of needs

Another model that identifies what motivates a consumer in a hierarchical structure is Zuckerman's (2000) Hierarchy of Stimulation, which looks towards the arousal theory of motivation, operating on a motivational level above that of just fulfilling basic survival needs. Zuckerman's (2000) theory argues that some individuals seek a boring but low risk lifestyle while others seek a high risk but exciting lifestyle, stating that most settle for something in the middle.

Foxall and Goldsmith (1994) identify one of the key elements marketers must consider when attempting to implement a psychological marketing strategy to be consumer motivations, consumer motivation asks the question, why do consumers do what they do? Foxall and Goldsmith (1994) continue that pinpointing why consumers do what they do is only one step towards further understanding consumers pre-purchase and purchase decisions.

Blythe (2013) heavily criticises motivation based theories in relation to psychological marketing for more than one reason; Blythe (2013) starts by stating that one can not simply ask a consumer why they have made the decision they have, as consumers can not always identify their own motivations, that motivation often operates below the conscious level of thinking, on top of this individuals are not always willing to admit to their own motivations, reasons such as embarrassment, and/or illegal or immoral motivations can all stop a consumer from being honest when it comes to their motivations. Blythe (2013) also argues that to understand the consumers true motivation you must first dissect the layers of identifiable as well as admitted motivations, some of these motivations may conflict each other, with consumers often choosing the 'least worst option' and rationalise their motivations after a decision to make themselves more comfortable with their own decisions.

Maslow's (1954) Hierarchy of needs and Zuckerman's (2000) Hierarchy of stimulation can be used to create an example of both layers of motivations as well as contradicting motivations, Maslow's (1954) theory argues that the need for stability in life would be more important to individuals than that of status and reputation, and personal fulfilment however in today's society it is not uncommon to find individuals without a home of their own and driving the newest model car on loan or finance as well

as traveling the world, spending money that Maslow's (1954) theory would argue should have first been spent on stability and shelter.

2.3.2 PERCEPTION

Roth and Bruce (1995 p.13) define perception as 'how we make sense of all the information we receive from the world via our senses, continuing that the characteristics of an object effects the way in which an individual will perceive it, characteristics such as but not limited to : size, shape, as well as weather or not the object moves. Blythe (2013) identifies perception in a marketing context as the picture a consumer developed of the world based on how they analyse the information around them, that this is of great interest to marketers. Blythe (2013) argues what puts products on shelves is a brands awareness of the perception process, that every consumers perception of the world becomes their 'whole truth'.

Faxall and Goldsmith (1994) highlight the selectiveness of the consumers cognitive, stating that consumers are bombarded daily by marketing messages and advertisements that are attempting to persuade, convince, teach and change the individual in some way, the way that most consumers have learnt to cope with this is by only taking in selective information, information that usually fits with a pre-existing cognitive, this can be a disadvantage to an organisation when creating marketing materials but can also be used to their advantage.

Blythe (2013) identifies an example of how using a consumers pre-existing cognitive can be used to an organisation advantage when trying to influence perception, is that of the use of colour. Šliburytė and Skėrytė (2017) analyse the effect that colour has on perception in depth, identifying that Colour (sight) marketing significantly influences consumer behaviour that colour creates linkages in relation to the Characteristics of a product, green creates a link to good as well as being environmentally friendly, while red has links to negative effects, as well as bad for your health. Meaning that if a brand is trying to create a 'Green' image for themselves then the use of the colour green in their marketing materials

is more likely to be absorbed by a customer than the words on the packaging themselves, words such as environmentally friendly.

Schuller et al., (2013) identifies paralanguage or paralinguistic to be the use of words within a certain context, and the ability for certain words to be used to change the whole context of a conversation. Schuller et al., (2013) gives the example of the words 'Woman' and 'Slut', both words have exactly the same denotation [Human + Female + Adult] however the connotation of each word is completely different, at the same time the choice of word speaks for the characteristics and class of its speaker. Blythe (2013) highlights the use of paralanguage in a marketing context, in relation to how words are used within marketing content, as well as the adjectives used, the use of expressions such as yawning as well as speaking quickly verses speaking slowly. Schuller et al., (2013) agrees with Blythe (2013) in relation to the use of adjectives within paralanguage, stating that the use of a particular adjective over another can indicate the personality traits and or emotional state of an individual, or in the case of marketing the brand and or the product.

O'Loughlin (2005) criticises the use of perception in marketing, acknowledging that if perception is fully understood and done well it can be a crucial marketing tool to an organisation, however there is significant room for mistakes that can lead to a brands downfall. O'Loughlin (2005) continues that brands do not always get it right, that if a brand does not fully understand its targets market then it is not possible to use perception as a marketing technique. What is the use in creating a 'Green' image for your consumer if your consumer does not care about the enviroment?

2.4 THE MEAT INDUSTRY

2.4.1 CONTEMPORARY ISSUES WITH MEAT

Beaton (2018) highlights how in recent years the meat industry has faced some backlash in relation to the transparency of their marketing techniques, highlighting the issue of sustainability, Beaton (2018) highlights the industries inability to be sustainable, stating that meat as a product is itself unsustainable. Beaton (2018) continues to state that meat is slowly but surely beginning to be driven

out of the market by its plant-based competitors, that its plant based competitors are able to highlight the meat industry unsustainable nature through their own transparent marketing techniques. MarketLine's (2019) report highlights the introductions to more ethically sourced real meat alternatives, in the form of lab grown meat, the same real meat without the death and use of factory farms, what is still unsure is how the public will perceive lab grown meat.

2.4.2 INDUSTRY TRANSPARENCY

The NHS (2019) highlight the importance of restricting red meat within an individual's diet in order to reduce the risk of heart disease, The NHS (2020) also highlight the importance of reducing red meat and dairy consumption to reduce the risk of bowel cancer to an individual. While the NFU (2020) released a report that 'busts the Myths that relate to the meat industry arguing that red meat and dairy is an essential part of a balanced diet, providing a variety of essential vitamins and minerals that otherwise would be hard to source.

PETA (2020) argue that farming agriculture is contributing up to 18% of the global greenhouse gas emissions, that is more than all forms of transport combined, as well as increasing air and water pollution, causing deforestation and species extinction. The NFU (2020) released a report that directly contradicts these statistics, stating that agricultural farming accounted for 10% of greenhouse gas emissions while transport accounted for 24%. The NFU (2020) report goes on to indicate that British farmers are more of a benefit to the global environment than that of a burden.

It has become evident that it is difficult to gain a transparent insight into the potential damage that the meat industry may or may not be causing.

2.4.3 INDUSTRY REACTION TO ALTERNATIVE ADVERTISING

Tesco (2019) launched an advert titled 'Carl's 'All Change' Casserole', the advert focusses on little girl deciding she does not want to 'eat animals anymore' while her father accepts her decision, and continues to enjoy his choice to eat meat while catering for his daughters plant based diet with the

'all change casserole'. Cockburn (2019) highlights the backlash that Tesco faced for this advert, Tesco as a company where accused of 'Demonizing Meat as a food group' and that the advert itself has 'caused significant distress to farmers'. The NFU (2019) released a statement in response to Tesco's advert, which highlighted their 'significant concerns with the language used within the advert' with particular concern to that of children creating misleading views of the food group, that a child relating animals to the meat that is put on their plate could have consequences to their diet and health in the future. For the NFU's (2019) full statement relating to TESCO's 'all change casserole' advert view appendix A.

2.5 MARKETING PARALLELS

2.5.1 HIGH FAT SUGAR AND SALT (HFSS) FOODS

Harris, Brownell and Bargh, (2009) highlights the damage that was caused when the fast food industry was allowed to market freely to children, that advertising a product to vulnerable individuals without fully explaining the health risks, and link to childhood obesity arguably lacked moral conscience. The advertising standards Authority (2017) have since put in place restrictions on the marketing of High Fat Sugar or Salt (HFSS) foods, restrictions including type of advertising, as well as to what audience, an outline of these restrictions can be found in appendix B. Harris, Brownell and Bargh, (2009) outline this type of selective marketing to be dangerous as the product itself is not marketed honestly, rather a depiction of the product that the company wants the consumer to perceive is marketed. For example Turkey Twizzlers being marketed as a tasty, quick and easy meal for your children, that fits easily into the busy schedule of working parents, whereas an alternative depiction of the product would be a HFSS food type that is linked to childhood obesity. The former depiction resulted in the arguably dangerous introduction of such foods into British school dinner menus, since the ban of turkey twizzlers Bernard Matthews has stated it has had to reconsider its branding in 'a big way' (Marketing week 2007).

2.5.2 LUXURY GOODS

Hartmann Nitzko and Spiller (2016) identify the emergence of the 'Luxury Food Market', identifying that self-identity and quality were the two most important 'dimensions' of a product to consumers shopping for luxury food items. Meaning that if the product is perceived to relate to the customers self-identity, attributes such as their morals and values, it is likely that a customer will spend over the odds on the product. Hartmann Nitzko and Spiller (2016) continue that other dimensions relating to customer perception such as the sustainability and authenticity were also important to the consumer. Arguably Hartmann Nitzko and Spiller's (2016) findings relate directly back to Kotlers (2009 p865) definition of marketing 'process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organisational goals', that the luxury goods satisfy an idea an individual may hold of themselves this is done by creating perception, while also satisfying the motivation for the product in the case of food basic survival.

Athwal et al., (2019) highlights the luxury goods industry as a whole, and the scrutiny it has faced in recent years, with particular relation to the sustainability and ethicality of its product, highlighting that this is down to the increasing transparency of their supply chain. van der Veen (2010) highlights that the luxury food industry is expected to create a refinement in taste and quality, Athwal et al., (2019) continues that the luxury food industry has more pressure on the expectation of sustainability. Athwal et al., (2019) outlines how these brands have slowly gotten better at creating the perception that they are sustainable, that there has to be a balance, it is imperative that there is truth in the marketing.

2.6 CONCLUSION

It can be concluded, that while there is a relatively large amount of literature available in relation to psychological marketing with specific attention to motivation and perception, that credible peer reviewed sources are not available in the masses post 2010. Another conclusion that can be made is in relation to the lack of publications relating to consumer perception within the meat industry,

despite the ever-growing rise in veganism. Another point to note is that of the NFU active 'anti' marketing techniques, where instead of attempting to market their products they seem to criticise the marketing of alternative products. It proved difficult to definitively identify the draw backs of meat consumption, in relation to health and the enviroment, the information available was widely contradictory.

3. CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

3.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter aims to provide clear definitions to help explain the key elements that underpin research as well as the importance of the research process, using Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill's (2016) research Onion the structure of the investigation will be outlined. The Research onion will be used to walk the reader through the research process, allowing for the methodology to be explained in its entirety, credible peer reviewed academic resources and definitions will be used to help support the research structure.

This chapter will conclude with an in-depth evaluation of both the limitations and ethical implications that the research will face as well as how the researcher plans to resolve said issues.

3.2 DEFINITIONS

Defining research proves more complex than at that of surface value, there is no set and/or agreed upon definition for research, for this some of the better known definitions will be discussed to get a more comprehensive understanding of the concept.

Jankowicz (1995, p.1) defined Research as: 'People undertake research in order to find things out in a systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge'. shortly afterwards Hussey and Hussey (1997, p.1) defined research to be: 'enquiry and investigation [that]...is systematic and methodical...[and] increases knowledge'. A more modern take on the definition of research is provided by Collis and Hussey (2014, p.2) who argue that the historically inconsistent definition of research is because 'research means different things to different people' this inevitably results in a differing in given definitions. Collis and Hussey (2014) however still identify the key themes broadly recognised when attempting to define research, these are:

- A process of inquiry and investigation

- A systematic and methodical approach
- With the aim to increase knowledge

McNeil and Chapman (2005) argue the importance of using suitable methods when collecting and analysing research data, Collis and Hussey (2014) highlight that the methods chosen should be able to satisfy the intention of the research, which is generally to answer a research question and generate knowledge. Another means to define research is highlighted by Walliman (2011) who gravitates his definition around two factors, the first being 'systematic collection of data', and the second being 'finding things out'.

The general theme seen amongst authors is that the word 'research' is used too liberally in everyday life, that the information observed by an individual in their day to day activities does not qualify as actual research. For the process of information gathering or data collection to be justified as research it must be systematically collected and allow the for the researcher to learn something new.

3.3 RESEARCH ONION

To allow for a comprehensive explanation of each stage of research, the author will use Saunders Lewis and Thornhill's Research Onion (2016) (figure 3.3 as seen below), additionally this will allow for a clear justified approach to each research stage.

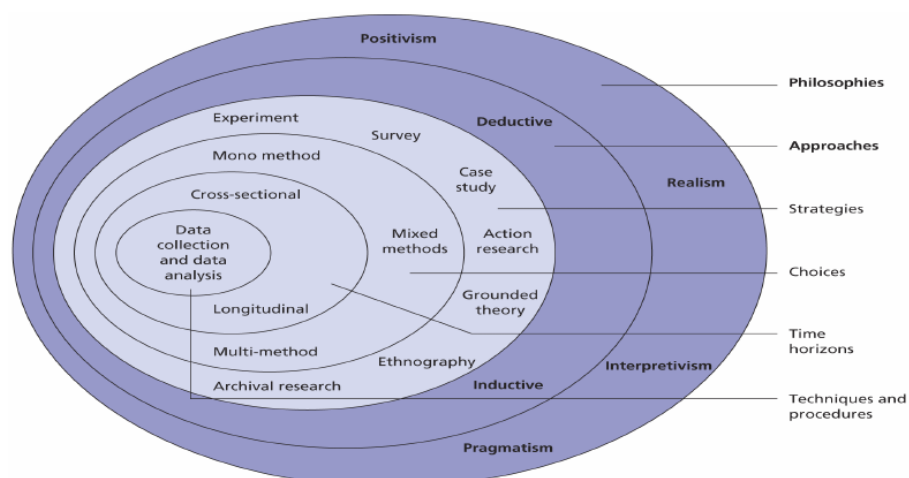


Figure 3.1: Saunders Lewis and Thornhill's Research Onion (2016)

The above model allows research to be broken down into stages, each stage is represented by a layer in the Research Onion; Saunders Lewis and Thornhill (2016) argue that an effective research strategy can be achieved by a systematic approach to research using the Research Onion to pursue each layer of research through to the centre section of the 'Onion'. This Links back with the previous discussion relating to effective research needing to take a systematic approach.

3.3.1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Research Philosophy is the outmost layer of the research onion depicted in figure 3.3 above, Saunders Lewis and Thornhill (2016 p.124) define research philosophy as: 'a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge'. While Saunders Lewis and Thornhill (2016) acknowledge that their definition sounds rather profound they highlight that it is precisely what an individual is doing when they embark on new research; to develop knowledge in a specific field.

Burrell and Morgan (1979) state that whether an individual is consciously aware or not, they will make assumptions through their research, Saunders Lewis and Thornhill (2016) state these assumptions will include: assumptions about human knowledge (epistemological assumptions), assumptions about the encountered realities during their research (ontological assumptions), and the ways as well as extent their own values influence their research (axiological assumptions). Saunders Lewis and Thornhill (2016) state that a credible research philosophy is constituted by a consistent and well sort out set of assumptions, underpinning methodology choice, research strategy and data collection techniques, and analysis procedure.

Saunders Lewis and Thornhill (2016) state that before the individual research philosophies can be discussed, first they must be distinguishable, this can be achieved by understanding the assumptions that underpin each. Saunders Lewis and Thornhill (2016) highlight the three key categories to be: Ontology (nature of reality), epistemology (Assumptions about knowledge) and axiology (roles of values and ethics withing the research). Pring (2004) Highlights the marriage of epistemological

assumptions and ontological assumptions to be the researcher's unique perspective of our knowledge of the social and physical world.

Saunders Lewis and Thornhill (2016) Highlight the five major research philosophies in business and management to be: Positivism, critical Realism, Interpretivism, Postmodernism and Pragmatism. For this research, the researcher could have chosen any of the above five philosophies, interpretivism has been chosen for the greatest benefit to the research. Interpretivism has been chosen due to its key characteristics of:

- Being socially constructed through culture and language. (ontology)
- Focusses on narratives, stories, perceptions, and interpretations (epistemology)
- in depth investigations, qualitative methods (typical methods)

Whereas a positivism research philosophy would have been less compatible with the research due to its: one true realism, scientific nature, observable and measurable facts, as well as quantitative approach using large sample sizes (Saunders Lewis and Thornhill 2016).

3.3.2 RESEARCH APPROACHES

The second layer in the research onion depicted in figure 3.3 is research approaches, Collis and Hussey (2014) highlight there to be two types of research approach, deductive and inductive.

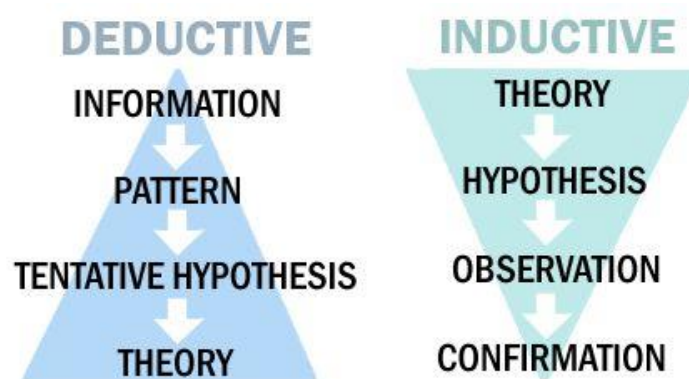


Figure 3.2: A Visual Depiction of Deductive and inductive research methods.

Woiceshyn (2018) states deductive research to be '*Moving from the general to the particular*' starting with information, then moving through to the creation of a hypothesis, testing the hypothesis, and finally revising the theory. On the other hand, Woiceshyn (2018) defines inductive as '*moving from the particular to the general*', Collis and Hossey (2014) expand on the inductive method by stating that inductive research is when theory is derived from the observation of 'empirical reality'.

A deductive approach will be used throughout this investigation, this is due to the study being grounded on the notion that perception effects consumer buyer behaviour in relation to the meat industry. There for there is a pre-existing 'conclusion', however the premises need to prove true to prove the conclusion true, with the final intent to be the falsification or verification of the original notion.

3.3.3 RESEARCH METHODS

Saunders Lewis and Thornhill (2016) highlight the third layer of the research onion to be strategies, stating there to be seven strategies: experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography, and archival research. Continuing, Saunders Lewis and Thornhill (2016) outline how different research strategies should be used dependent on the research nature, as well as the nature of the research techniques used, such as qualitative or quantitative.

Using Saunders Lewis and Thornhill's (2016) research onion there is an argument that the research in this investigation could fall under that of the 'case study' strategy however, it is not the best matched strategy for this investigation. This shows the research onions imperfect nature as it does not include all possible methods of research, therefor for the research method section an additional method of research will be used, phenomenological research (Carins et al., 2016).

Vagle (2018) identifies phenomenological research to gravitates around the aim of developing an understanding of our everyday experiences at a deeper level, to allow for a more direct contact with

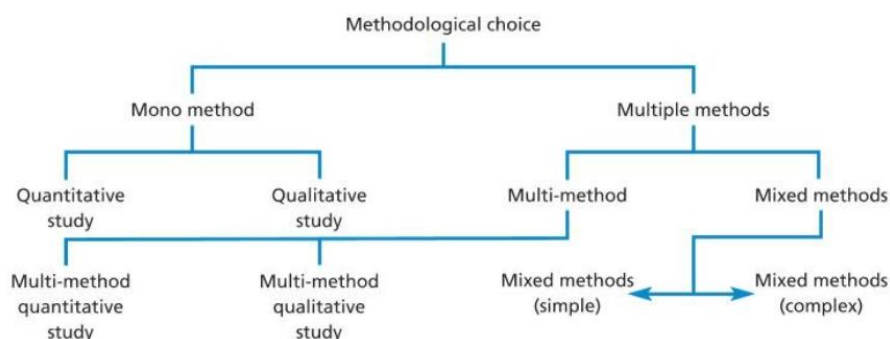
the world using plausible insights, without the need for theory which explains or controls the world. Neubauer, Witkop and Varpio (2019) Highlight a phenomenological research method to be a qualitative research method that need the researcher to understand the experiences of its participants.

This Study has chosen to use a phenomenological research method, this method has been chosen as a best match due the nature of the research philosophy being Interpretivism which uses interpretation and experiences, as well as the nature of the research being both qualitative and deductive.

3.3.4 RESEARCH CHOICES

Creswell (2018) highlights the different research choices available for research to range from mono methods for both qualitative and quantitative data collection, to mixed methods where both a type of quantitative data collection such as a questionnaire is used as well as a qualitative data collection method such as a focus group.

This investigation will use a mono-method, qualitative study; in the form of semi-structured interviews, view Figure 3.3.4 for a visual representation of methological choices. . Saunders Lewis and Thornhill (2016) hihlight characteristics of a qualitative method to include: the development of conceptual framework, procedures and questions may alter and emerge during the research process, the process is natural and interactive.



3.3 Saunders Lewis and Thornhill's (2016) Methodological Choices

3.3.5 TIME HORIZONS

Phillips et al., (2008) identifies there to be two recognised time horizons, cross-sectional studies, and longitudinal studies, with the latter being carried out over a long period of time with a capacity to measure change and development. Saunders Lewis and Thornhill (2016) highlights a cross-sectional study to involve the study of a '*particular phenomenon at a particular time*'.

Levin (2006) outlines the advantages of using cross sectional studies to be their inexpensive nature as well as only taking a short time to conduct, additionally there is no loss to follow up, and the ability to asses many risk factors and outcomes. Cross sectional studies allow for a large amount of data to be collected in a relatively short time period; the cross-sectional approach is of benefit if there is a time restraint on the research.

Due to the time constraints of this research, as well as its advantages the investigation will be using a cross-sectional study assessing the current perceptions held by consumers in relation to the meat industry as well as how it effects their buying behaviour.

3.3.6 TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES

Denscombe (2014) highlights that using interviews as a research method allows for opinions, feelings, and emotions to be gathered, allowing for a more in depth understanding of participants answers. Denscombe (2014) continues by highlighting that interviews allow for the participants to gain a better understanding of the topic being studied, this is particularly useful when the topic is complex or has multiple connecting factors.

This study will use Interviews as its only method of primary data collection, these interviews will be structured following a consistent set of questions that evoke discussion, allowing for a more open-ended answer than that a questionnaire allows. Interview participants will be provided with a document that stipulates the details of the interviews, as well as their ability to withdraw their consent at any time and maintain anonymity.

3.4 SAMPLING

Lansford (1995) identifies sampling to be a subsection of a target population that is picked to take part in a specific piece of research. Saunders Lewis and Thornhill (2016) highlight sampling to be a useful research tool, due to the impracticality, sometimes impossibility of collecting data from the whole population, stating that census reports can be used to gather a very basic level of information however in most instances it is more effective to use a sample population. Denscombe (2014) outlines the principal of sampling as a realistic way to collect data from an accurate representation of a research population, without having to ask every single member of that population for their thoughts and opinions.

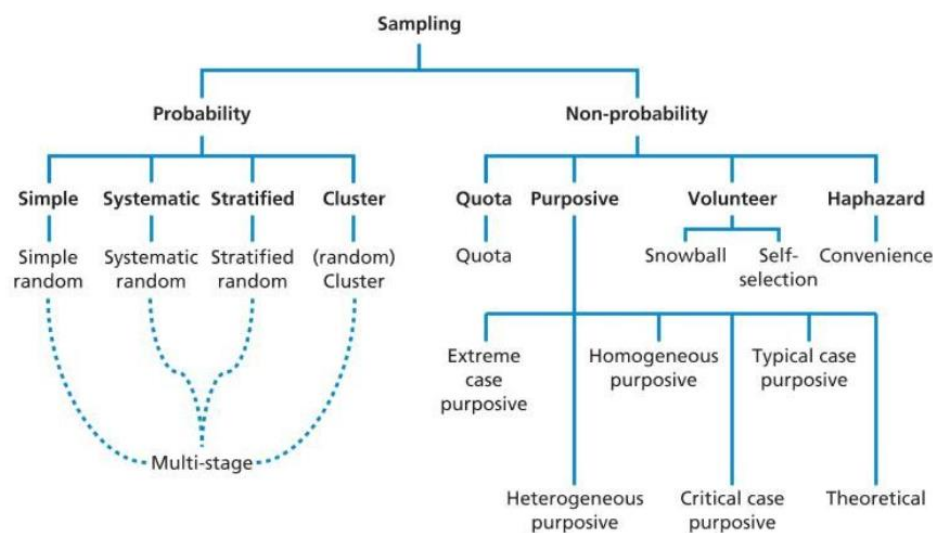


Figure 3.4: Techniques Saunders Lewis and Thornhill (2016)

This study will use a non-random sampling technique, specifically Voluntary self-selection, although this method of sampling can reduce the chances of obtaining an accurate representation of the target population, due to the implications of the covid-19 pandemic it was the best method of sampling available at this time. A request for interview participants will be made across social media platforms by the researcher, the volunteers will then be interviewed and become the sample; with the aim to obtain theoretical saturation.

3.5 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY: DEPENDABILITY AND CREDIBILITY

Research reliability is commonly defined as the ability to obtain the same results if the study was repeated under comparable circumstances, meaning that research results are subject to minimal researcher error, that if repeated the investigation would return the same results (Gleason, 2010).

Saunders Lewis and Thornhill (2016) highlight there to be four main threats to research reliability these are: participant error, participant bias, researcher error, and researcher bias, examples of error based threats can be as simple as the time of day the interviews are conducted impacting on how tired the participant and or researcher may be, this may influence the interview results. Whereas, bias based threats can relate to the participant favouring one researcher over another therefor changing their answers to meet what they think the researcher is hoping for, as well as potential topic biased.

Research Validity is commonly defined as the suitability of the measures used, the generalizability of the findings and the accuracy of the analysis of the results (Saunders Lewis and Thornhill 2016).

Taylor (2013) highlights some of the threats to validity to include: person factors such as bias and maturation, as well as situational factors such as past and or recent events, as well as both statistical measurement factors and alternat statistical models.

Saunders Lewis and Thornhill (2016) state that both reliability and validity are 'central to judgements' relative to the quality of the research, Ihantola (2011) highlight how research reliability and validity is core aspect when creating a research design, that the understanding of reliability and validity as well as the threats to each in relation to the potential research being discussed is crucial to creating a convincing argument around the credibility of the results.

Simon and Goes (2016) highlight how reliability and validity in qualitative research are commonly discussed in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Simon and Goes (2016) outline the importance of credibility (internal validity) and transferability (external validity) in

relation to qualitative research, stating that using techniques such as triangulation, saturation and peer review help ensure credibility, while using a variation in participation selection help ensure transferability; continuing Simon and Goes (2016) state that dependability (qualitative reliability) can be established using triangulation and audit trials.

Simon and Goes (2016) outline that in order for qualitative research to be dependable it must be credible, a researcher must demonstrate how they will ensure their research is dependable in order for it to be deemed credible by others.

3.6 LIMITATIONS

Kamur (2014) highlights the importance of understanding research limitations; limitations being the difficulties or problems faced by the researcher throughout the course of the investigation, that the researcher has little to no ability to control.

One limitation this investigation faces is that of its time restraints, the study's results will create a picture of consumer perception during the time period the research is conducted during, meaning that if the research was conducted during a different time period the results could vary (Saunders Lewis and Thornhill 2016). However, this limitation could be considered minor to the investigation due to its contemporary nature.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the sampling techniques available have been limited, resulting in a voluntary self-selected approach to sampling, meaning that the participants may have an interest in the nature of the study and therefore have a pre-existing bias to the topic, as well as limiting the ability to gain a perfectly representative sample of the wider population.

3.7 ETHICAL ISSUES

Oliver (2010) discusses the importance of confidentiality and anonymity, that it is essential for such issues to be discussed as part of the informed consent process. To resolve these issues the researcher will provide a detailed information sheet and consent form prior to the participation in any interview,

detailed will be information relating to the study, as well as the storage and destruction of participants data. Clearly outlining each participants ability to withdraw consent at any time as well as highlighting the anonymous nature of the investigation. All data will be anonymous and confidential, all data will be destroyed once analysis is completed, this includes all recordings of interviews.

The investigation will deliberately exclude the participation of any volunteers under the age of 18 years old, therefor no considerations need to be made in relation to their wellbeing.

All research conducted will follow the University of Wales Trinity St David's ethical approval procedure.

4. CHAPTER 4 – ANALYSIS

4.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter aims to satisfy the second objective that was set in chapter 1:

‘To conduct primary research in the form of interviews to fully understand consumers motivations for buying meat and participants personal perception of the product they are purchasing.’

This chapter will analyse the findings from the interviews conducted, allowing for a significant insight into what motivates consumers to purchase meat products, as well as their perceptions of the products they are buying; to do this both the software’s NVivo and excel will be utilised.

4.2 MOTIVATIONAL FINDINGS

To raise the topic of motivation during the interviews the question, ‘why do you eat meat was asked?’ participant responses ranged, however certain themes remained prominent with 100% of participants stating one of the following: habit, convenience, or they ‘like’ too as their main motivation for purchasing. See appendix C for full answers in relation to what motivates consumers to purchase meat.

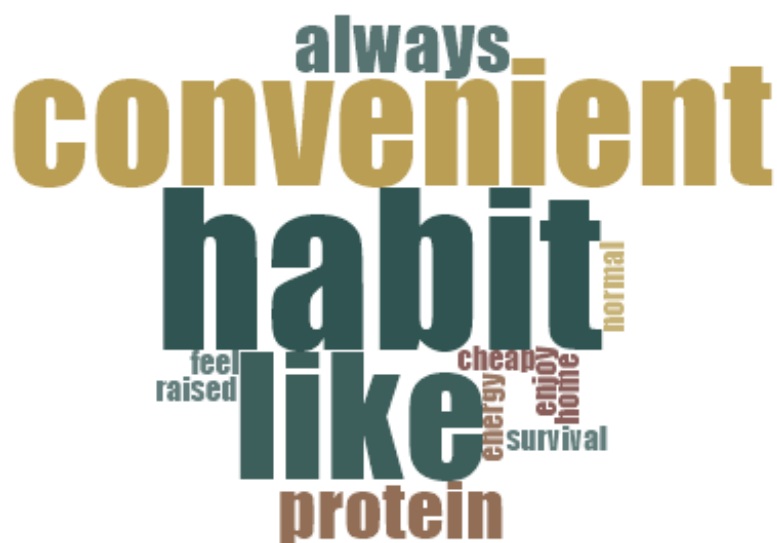


Figure 4.1 - Visual Representation of the Motivational Themes Identified in the Interviews

This was further supported when individuals were asked if they believed meat was an essential part of their diet, all participants stated that they are aware it is possible to live without meat as 'vegans' do. However, participants expressed concerns relating to weight loss, as well as a lack of knowledge of alternatives if they were to not consume meat; ultimately highlighting how it would just make their lives more difficult not to.

Participants were asked where they most frequently purchase their meat based products, with most purchasing their meat from supermarkets, others chose to purchase from sources such as their local butchers as well as online.

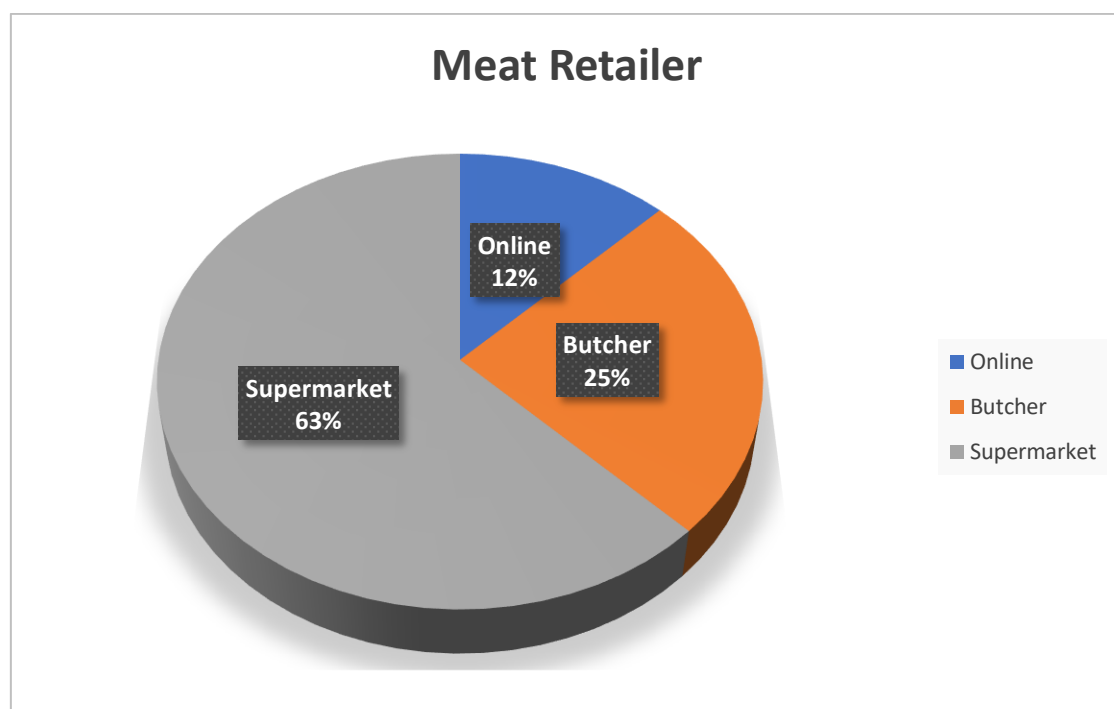


Figure 4.2 - Percentage Representation of Where Participants Purchase their Meat Products

It was then investigated why individuals chose one 'outlet' over another, what was the perception of each that influenced their buying behaviour, figure 4.3 represents the themes present in relation to why individuals choose supermarkets. Figure 4.4 represents Butchers and online outlets as the themes were identical.



Figure 4.3 - Why Consumers Choose supermarkets?’



Figure 4.4 Why Consumers Choose Butchers/Online?’

It was clearly identified that individuals’ choose supermarkets down to convenience, it was identified that it was easy for shoppers while they carry out the rest of their weekly shop, mostly due to the selection available in supermarkets as well as it’s sometimes lower price.

However, when individuals where asked why they would buy from the Butchers the answers related to better quality meat, individuals where particularly interested in butcher’s meat for special occasions such as Christmas, and Sunday dinners. When these individuals where asked why they perceived butcher’s meat to be better quality they did not know, it was just a belief that they held with little knowledge of where it came from. On a side note one interview brought back a response that directly highlighted how they would not buy from a butchers, due to ‘*not being able to see the cuts of meat*’ [as they created] ‘*too much of a link to the live animals*’.

For the small percentage of participants that choose to buy their meat online, when asked why the answers again related to quality, as well as animal welfare with the hope to avoid factory farming.

4.3 THE INFLUENCE OF PACKAGING

Now that what does or does not get the consumer 'through the door' has been identified, what motivates them to purchase items once inside the store can be looked at. To do this packaging was considered, what consumers like, what they do not like, and what they associate with particular packaging and why.

The first question looked to identify what makes consumers more inclined to buy a product, asking both about wording as well as logos / imagery or anything else the consumer deemed relevant. These responses were not initially prompted, allowing for individuals to honestly answer to the best of their abilities; If participants said 'no' they were then prompted with a second question highlighting 'free ranged' as an example. However this did not generate a different response, the individuals who answered 'No' to everything stated they were more interested in the quality of the 'Cut' and the expiry date as opposed to the process it went through to get to them. The themes identified are represented below in figure 4.5.



Figure 4.5 - What Consumers Look for on Meat Packaging

The table below (Figure 4.6) outlines the main phrases and or logo's that individuals look for when purchasing meat, the below themes were afterwards prompted to each individual to ensure they understood the concept of the question asked. No new themes were identified after interview 2.

What Consumers Look For	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5	Interview 6	Interview 7	Interview 8	T
Free ranged	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	4
British Flag	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	3
Red Tractor	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	2
Humane / Ethical	No	yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	2
Grass Fed	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	1
Organic	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	1

Figure - 4.6 The Main Themes Identified – Meat Packaging

As well as looking at what consumers look for when purchasing meat, the investigation looked to identify what consumers look to avoid when purchasing meat. It was found that it was more personal when choosing to avoid certain meats, with the exception of 'Halal Meat' which 100% of participants stating they would avoid where possible; with some stating they would not purchase if it was the only choice. Other reasons to avoid included, processed meat, past expiration date, and imagery of the animal on the packaging. Figure 4.7 below represents the themes consumers would choose to avoid, for a full list of reasons View appendix D.



Figure 4.7 –What Consumers Choose to Avoid when Purchasing Meat

Participants were also asked what colour they associate most with meat product packaging, Figure 4.8 provides a visual representation of all the colours identified for this question, the main colours identified were: white, red, green, and blue as well as the use of the word 'clear' as a colour or lack thereof.

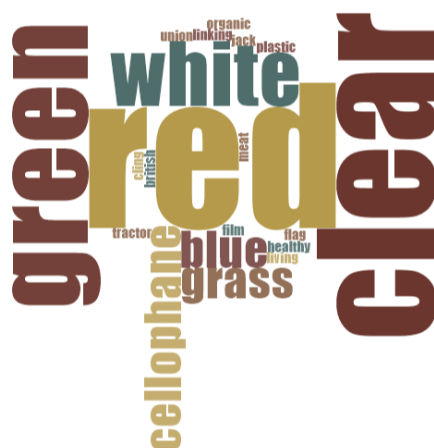


Figure 4.8 – The Colour's most Associated with Meat Packaging

Chapter 4

Participants discussed what each colour represented to them, as well as how it may or may not influence their purchasing decisions. The colours and their associations will be discussed individually Below:

White - People associated the colour white with meat in direct relation to the colour of the tray most meat products are sold in.

Clear - Was identified both when buying meat from the butchers and the supermarket, meat from the butchers often comes in transparent bags, while supermarket meat has a clear cellophane sheet across the top of the tray.

Green – was most frequently associated with grass relating to RSPCA approved chicken, and grass-fed beef; green was also recognised on lots of meat product packaging such as sausages. When asked to explain in further detail participants stated that the green on a product made them feel as though the animals were being treated in a more humane way.

Blue – was exclusively identified to match the blue on the union jack, that represents British meat.

Red – was identified most frequently to represent the actual colour of the cut of meat, as well as to represent the red in the union jack.

4.4 HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL STIGMA SURROUNDING MEAT CONSUMPTION

When asked 50% of the participants interviewed stated that they were aware that there was a link between certain meat consumption, bowel cancer, and heart disease, the other 50% were either unsure or did not believe there was. Some of the participants that were aware of the link also highlighted their understanding to be in direct relation to excessive red meat consumption. Figure 4.9 is a visual representation of these findings.

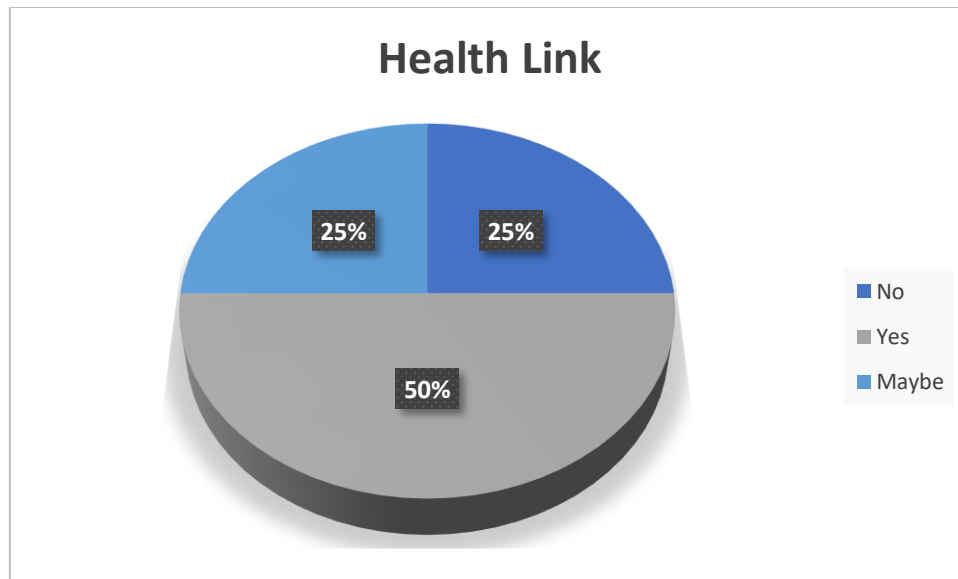


Figure 4.9 – Consumer Awareness of Related Health Risks

When asked if there was a transparent link between meat consumption and medical conditions, would they be less likely to consume meat, all participants said yes, they would be more careful. Some stated that if they were already pre-disposed to a health issue then they would most definitely make an active choice to stop eating something that has the potential to increase their risk. All participants agreed that if there was a clear health warning on the packaging, they would definitely reduce their consumption and ensure they were eating a balanced amount.

When participants were asked if they believed meat production damaged the environment 62% stated that it has a negative effect on the environment in some way, while 25% believed that it did not impact the environment negatively. Figure 4.10 gives a visual representation of the perception of the meat industries impact on the environment.

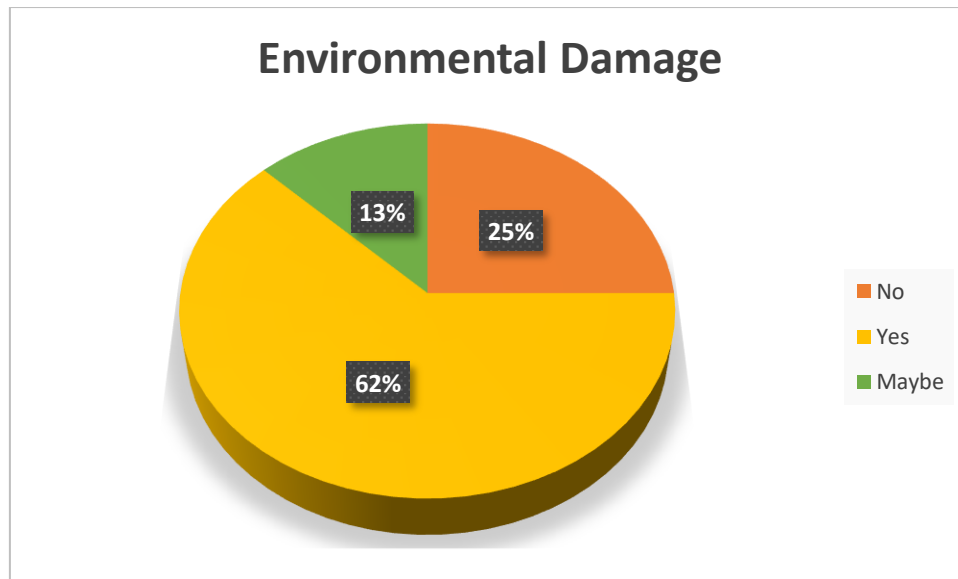


Figure 4.10 - Consumer Awareness of Related Environmental Damage

Participants that believed that meat production is having a negative impact on the environment were then asked what they believed these effects to be, see appendix E for the full answers to this question. While some participants were unsure of why they believe there is a link, some identified factory farming specifically to have environmental issues while others highlighted methane gas, as well as excess water usage, excess land usage, and deforestation.

All participants were then asked if they would be less inclined to buy meat products if there was a clear link between meat production and its effects on the environment, everyone stated that they would at least cut down their meat consumption and or stop eating any meat that was identified as particularly bad.

4.5 CONSUMERS AND MARKETING

When asked if participants believed that the marketing of meat products to consumers is truthful and transparent, 86% stated that they do not believe that the marketing is transparent. Figure 4.11 is a visual representation of the results.

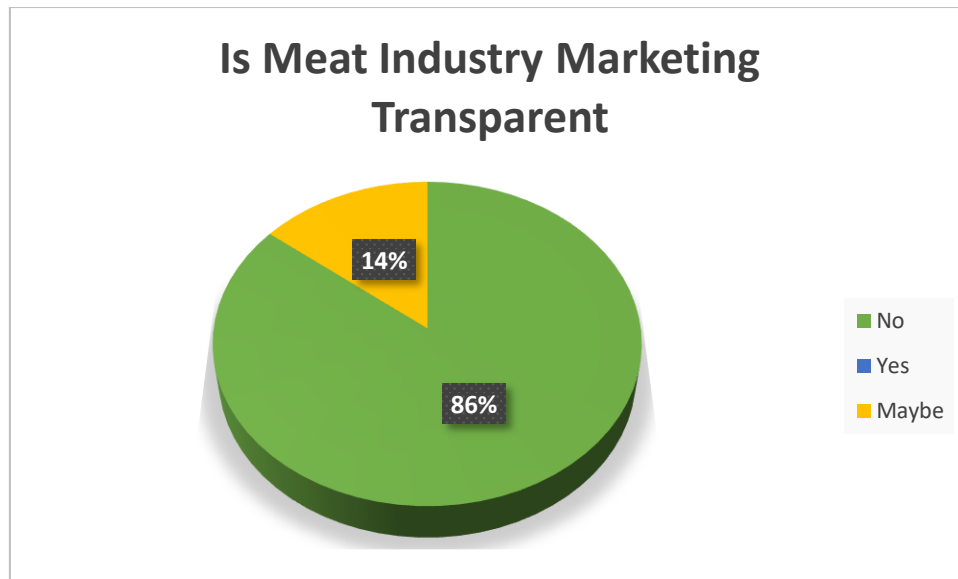


Figure 4.11 – Do Consumers Believe Meat Industry Marketing is Transparent (1)

Some Participants believed that it is '*in the nature of marketing*' to be deceptive, other participants believed that the meat industry is intentionally hiding aspects relating to animal welfare, as well as the farming process. A visual representation of the themes identified within this question are represented in figure 4.12 below.



Figure 4.12 – Do Consumers Believe Meat Industry Marketing is Transparent (2)

Participants were then asked if they investigate the claims made on the packaging or whether they just trust the brand, all participants stated that they have never done their own investigation, and just take what is marketed to them on the packaging as the truth; despite believing that the product marketing is not depicting the '*whole truth*'. Figure 4.13 below is a visual representation of the participants thoughts and feelings on conducting their own research into marketing claims.



Figure 4.13 – Participants Thoughts and Feelings Towards Consumer Research

4.6 ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

Another theme was identified whilst the research was undertaken, the theme relates to the consumer 'not wanting' to make a connection between live animals and the meat on their plate, there was not a specific question asked to identify this however the theme appeared repeatedly throughout the course of the interviews. Below Figure 4.13 highlights the feelings towards animal consumption.



Figure 4.14 – Consumer Feelings Towards Animal Consumption

This theme was identified first when one participant stated that they were unable to buy meat from a butchers due to the 'real life' nature of the cuts, another two participants stated that they would not be able to buy beef if a photograph or name of the cow was on the packaging inside a store. One participant highlighted how they did not realise meat came from animals until they were in their 20's and '*ended up working in a slaughterhouse*' where the '*reality hit them*'. It became evident that some participants actively choose to avoid making the connection between live animals and meat. All of the information in this theme was volunteered during discussion and was not prompted.

5. CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION

5.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The aim of this chapter is to satisfy the final objective:

'To analyse the combined secondary and primary data, allowing for an evaluation of current motivations relating to meat consumption and the impact perception plays in them; based on the findings of this research allow for recommendations to be made relating to further action and research that should be taken on this topic.'

This chapter will use the primary data collected in chapter four and combine it with the secondary data collected in chapter two to gain a broad understanding of the topic and allow for recommendations to be made for further research.

5.2 MOTIVATION

Referring to Stratt's (1997) definition of motivation as the behaviour that satisfies needs or drives, as well as remembering that there are several layers of motivation, some that consumers will not admit as well as those that the consumer themselves are not aware of; this investigation sought to identify what motivates individuals to buy meat. The findings in chapter two can be compared against Maslow's hierarchy of needs, during analysis a variety of possible motivations became apparent however most consumers admitted that their reasons for eating meat have surpassed that of the need to 'survive' and are functioning at more of a 'self-actualisation' level. All the participants stated that they

5.3 PERCEPTION

To create a more straightforward read, the perception section of this chapter will be broken down into four major themes: Packaging Perception, Health Perception, Environmental Perception, and Marketing Perception.

5.3.1 PACKAGING PERCEPTION

Both the use of paralanguage and colour association (sight) are perception marketing techniques that were identified in chapter two. Paralanguage is the use of certain words to shape the context of a sentence or phrase, colour association (sight) marketing is where colours are used to create linkages between colour and a characteristic of the product; Both techniques were identified in chapter four.

First Paralanguage, the interview participants highlighted how they look for certain phrases on meat packaging, Phrases such as 'free ranged', 'grass fed', and 'RSPCA approved, the participants admitted that these words and phrases make them believe that they are doing their 'best by the animals', by ensuring that the animals connected to the products they are buying are treated in the most humane way possible. However, all the participants stated that they do not follow up on these claims, nor do they understand what classifies as a free ranged, or grass fed animal; neither did the participants know what criteria had to be met by the farmer in order to be RSPCA approved. This is evidence that the words and phrases on meat packaging is an example of paralanguage, and it is creating a context relating as to how the animal was kept.

Secondly colour association (sight) marketing, this was identified throughout the interview process with participants identifying the colours red, green, and blue. The colours red and blue were perceived to represent British meat, often seen used on the Union Jack. Participants admitted that these colours or the imagery of a 'Union Jack' were likely to increase their likelihood to purchase. The colour green was identified by participants in relation to meat packaging, when asked what they feel it represented all stated grass, continuing to state it gave them the perception of roaming cattle as well as happier animals.

5.3.2 HEALTH PERCEPTION

While half of the participants believed that there was a proven link between meat consumption and negative health conditions, none fully understood what the link was, or how to best reduce the risks to themselves. Despite it being identified in chapter four that The NHS (2020) highlight there to be a negative impact on health through excessive meat consumption, consumers were either unaware or confused as to what that link is. Participants felt as though the marketing by other organisations such as The NFU (2020) who potentially have vested interests is somewhat deceptive, that there should be clearer information from such organisations relating to health risks associated with the products they are promoting.

5.3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL PERCEPTION

Part of the rationale for this investigation was the rise in Veganism in the UK, one reason for this rise was identified to be the environmental damage caused by the farming industry. However, when this was researched briefly in chapter two it was difficult to find clear non-biased information, that would be easily available to consumers identifying if and how farming effects the environment. When asked more than half of the participants believed meat production to be damaging to the environment, however were unsure exactly of its effect. With the only sources that the participants could remember receiving information from being social media posts and Netflix documentaries, participants stated that they would re-evaluate their decision to buy meat so frequently if there was clear information relating to its impact on the environment on the packaging.

5.3.4 MARKETING PERCEPTION

Referring to section 5.2 which identified that the motivation for purchasing meat is underpinned by the self-actualisation level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it could be argued that meat consumption has only moved to this level since the rise in Veganism. If a product is to satisfy needs that fall under a self-actualisation level, then they can be classified as luxury goods as they are no longer essential. Chapter two highlighted the demands faced by the luxury food industry that other food industries do

not necessarily face, these demands include the need for a product meets the 'self-identity' of the consumer, this can mean conforming to their morals. It was evident that the participants buy meat that fits within their 'morals'. This was previously discussed by identifying that consumers look for meat that is free ranged, and or grass fed.

Chapter two continued to highlight the pressure put on luxury industries to be transparent throughout their supply chain, that consumers are less likely to purchase luxury goods if they do not agree with the whole process a product has gone through to get to them. However, when asked nearly all participants did not believe that the marketing of meat products was honest or transparent, with direct concern relating to the supply chain of the product, particularly the treatment of animals.

This lack of trust in the marketing of meat products, coupled with the somewhat recent shift of meat into the luxury food category could lead to the downfall of certain brands or the industry as a whole.

5.4 DO CONSUMERS HELP THE MEAT INDUSTRY HIDE THE TRUTH?

Chapter two identified Tesco's (2019) all change casserole advert, more importantly chapter two highlighted the backlash faced by Tesco from the NFU (2019) in relation to the advert; stating that Tesco had '*demonised meat as a food group*'. Additionally, some of chapter four's findings highlighted the separation between animals and meat, while all participants recalled understanding where meat comes from during their formative years, some identified a '*moment of realisation*' and others stated they '*try not to think about it*' as well as some experiencing the inability to visit butchers due to the reality it creates. Most participants stated that they choose to opt for the most '*ethical*' and '*humane*' option when making their purchasing decisions, this can be linked back to chapter two where it was identified that consumers often choose what they perceive to be '*the least worst option*'.

It was also identified in chapter four that none of the participants had conducted their own research into the claims made on the product packaging, that they just take what it is stated on the packaging as the truth despite believing that the marketing in the meat industry is not transparent. A theme that was identified during the interview process is that of '*ignorance is bliss*' that the truth about the

farming process can sometime be upsetting, so they actively choose to ignore some of the information available.

Another idea that was brought up during two of the interviews was that: if meat packaging displayed an image of the animal it came from on the packaging, such as a cow with its name, then the participant would no longer be able to purchase the product. That this type of marketing would make it too difficult for consumers to be comfortable with the 'morals' of the product and inevitably be incompatible with their 'self-identity'. It was found that it is not necessarily the industries active decision to hide certain aspects of the production process to its consumer, but the consumers active decision to ignore some of the issues surrounding the product; arguably the meat industry helps the consumer do this. However, this may become more of a problem for the meat industry as other alternatives become more readily available to consumers, alternatives such as lab based meat which has been previously discussed may cause a drop in sales of real meat products, as this option may fit the consumers 'self-identity' more comfortably.

6. CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSION

6.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter will summarise and the main findings of the investigation, as well as discuss whether the aims and objectives of the study where met. Then the limitations of the research completed will be discussed, allowing for the implications of the research to academia and practitioners to be outlined and evaluated. This will allow for recommendations to be made for future research to create a greater understanding of the topic.

6.2 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

The findings relating to the motivation behind why consumers choose to eat meat were relatively strait forward. Finding that despite understanding that as an individual they do not need to eat meat to 'survive' consumers are motivated to buy meat for one of the following three reasons: they like to eat meat over other food types, out of habit, or because of convenience. Additionally, it was found that if there was more information available on the potential drawbacks on eating meat, as well as information relating to meat alternatives consumers would happily reduce their meat consumption. For as long as meat is the most convenient option for most individuals they will continue to purchase, meaning that despite the availability of meat alternatives, due to the need for investigation an individual level consumer are unlikely to change their habit.

The findings relating to consumer perception of the meat industry were more varied, while 25% of consumers do not actively look for meat with any particular characteristics, they still do not perceive the meat industry to be harmful overall.

It was identified that the other 75% of consumers interviewed attempt to choose what they perceive to be the '*least worst*' option, these options include 'free ranged meat' and 'British meat', the consumers choose to look for these labels as they perceive there to be either less cruelty to the animals, or less damage to the environment. However, not a single participant could recall a time

where they investigated the claim on the packaging, nor could they explain what exactly the claims they were buying into meant.

6.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research was to: *investigate consumer perception of the meat industry, and how the identified perception motivates their purchasing decisions*. This aim was to be reached by completing the following three objectives:

6.3.1 OBJECTIVE ONE

To critically analyse literature to recognise to what scope motivational and perception marketing techniques are used within the meat industry.

Objective one was achieved by the researcher on completion of chapter two of this study, chapter two identified the theoretical underpinning of psychological marketing techniques, as well as drawing parallels with other industries that are known to use such techniques. Finally, this chapter highlighted recent evidence to suggest the above techniques being used by both the farming community and the meat industry. This was achieved by using a range of academic sources, utilising textbooks journals and relevant articles to give a broader understanding of the topic area.

6.3.2 OBJECTIVE TWO

To conduct primary research in the form of interviews to fully understand consumers motivations for buying meat and participants personal perception of the product they are purchasing.

Objective two was achieved across chapters three and four, chapter three used comprehensive methodology to demonstrate how the researcher would conduct the primary research, while chapter four detailed the analysis of the data collected during the interview phase.

6.3.3 OBJECTIVE THREE

To analyse the combined secondary and primary data, allowing for an evaluation of current motivations relating to meat consumption and the impact perception plays in them; based on the findings of this research allow for recommendations to be made relating to further action and research that should be taken on this topic

The first half of objective three was completed in chapter five, where the two types of research were combined to create an in-depth discussion that analysed the primary data collected against the secondary data outlined in chapter two.

The second half of objective three was completed within chapter six, on completion of chapter five the researcher could understand the limitations and the implications of the research and make recommendations for further research on the topic area; these can be found below.

6.4 LIMITATIONS

The most evident limitation of this study was the Covid-19 pandemic, Covid-19 has affected several aspects of this study, those aspects as follows: Interviews had to be conducted virtually, it was not at all possible to conduct interviews face to face, this had several implications. The first was that not all interviews could be conducted across the same platform, zoom, teams, and the telephone were used to conduct interviews this means that not all aspects of the interview could be the same for each interview; the researcher had to work with what technology each participant had available to them. This also effected the types of audio files made when recording each interview, not all were compatible with the data analysis software, meaning written transcripts also had to be taken. The ability to obtain signed interview consent forms was affected, however consent forms were signed digitally where possible and all participants were read the consent form at the start of the interview. An example of the consent form can be seen in appendix F. The Second is in relation to the data analysis software, while the researcher is aware that NVivo is an intuitive software capable of complex analysis, due to the limitations of Covid-19 the researcher has only scratched the surface of the

software's capabilities, and feels that the data collected during this investigation could have been represented in a more coherent way.

Other limitations identified throughout the study include the small sample size, and the complexity of the marketing techniques being investigated. The sample size for the interviews was small, and while the researcher feels that an adequate representation of the consumer population was met, they recognize that a larger sample would have generated more comprehensive findings. The small sample was due to the sampling method being voluntary self-selected, this was mostly due to the restrictions of Covid-19 making it difficult for the researcher to 'find' participants.

Motivation and perception marketing techniques are complex, this was identified in chapter two during the literature review. The complex nature of these techniques meant that the findings are unique to each individual, this is partly due to each individuals perception of the world being their own 'whole truth'. Another complexity of such techniques is that of motivation, while this study identifies some of the motivation for why individuals buy meat, it does not produce an understanding for the motivations some consumers are either not aware of or not willing to admit.

6.5 IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH

The findings of this research have numerous implications for academia, the meat industry, and marketers that choose to connect with consumers and gain their custom.

The findings partly support the meat industry, demonstrating that despite initially identifying what appeared to be organisations within the meat industry attempting to hide the 'whole truth', consumers are relatively happy to turn a 'blind eye' anyway. Consumers are seemingly aware that the truth behind the meat industry can be unpleasant, as individuals they do their best to avoid investigating the products they purchase in too much depth. However, if alternatives continue to gain popularity, particularly that of 'lab grown meat' there is evidence to suggest that consumers would

happily switch to the lab grow option, as it would more likely suit their moral, and self-identity more comfortably.

Additionally, there was evidence to suggest that most of the purchasing decisions made by consumers when it comes to meat are done so based on the packaging claims. Although this investigation cannot identify if the claims made on meat products are true, there is evidence to suggest that if found untrue consumers would stop purchasing.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The first recommendation is that based on the findings of this study further research should look to identify if the claims made on meat product packaging by marketeers are in entirety true. This investigation found that the consumers perception of the product has a significant impact on their purchasing decisions, if the claims made by marketeers such as 'free ranged' and 'grass fed' on meat based products were found to be deceptive it could significantly alter the consumers buying behaviour.

The second recommendation that can be made based on the findings of this report is in relation to consumers 'self-identity', as well as their preference to make what they perceive as the 'least worse' choice. With the rise of Veganism, and alternative products such as 'lab-grown meat' the meat industry could potentially begin to suffer considerably. Lab-grown meat may fit with consumers self-identity more comfortably and fit with the theory that they choose the least worse product; it would be recommended that future research identifies whether lab-grown meat would fit consumers self-identity, allowing for them to make what they perceive to be the least worse choice.

The final recommendation that can be made based on this investigations finding is that if a longitudinal study is conducted, would it allow for an in depth understanding of consumer perception relating to meat. Product perception created by marketeers depends heavily on the pre-existing cognitive of its consumers, if the pre-existing cognitive of consumers in relation to the meat industry was better understood, marketeers could potentially better target their market. Due to the time restraints of this

study it was not possible to achieve an in depth understanding of the consumers pre-existing cognitive in relation to the meat industry during this investigation.

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Appendices

Appendix

A

NFU disappointed with Tesco advert



The NFU has contacted Tesco to raise its objections with a new TV advert shown on 10 October 2019 which promotes a move towards a vegetarian diet which sees a child state, 'daddy I don't want to eat animals anymore'. The advert is entitled The Carl's 'All Change' Casserole advert, which is part of Tesco love stories.

NFU President Minette Batters has this morning written to Tesco to outline our members' significant concerns with the language used within the advert and how it has caused significant distress for British Farmers.

The NFU believes that messaging such as this is demonising meat as a food group, which not only has negative connotations for farmers but also for the avocation of customers eating a healthy balanced diet.

The NFU is clear that food and nutrition must be looked at as a whole, rather than food groups in isolation. Meat as a food group provides naturally rich in protein and are a good source of iron, zinc and essential vitamins. There are certain parts of the population, especially teenage girls, who are currently not eating sufficient quantities of these micro-nutrients to fulfil their dietary requirement.

We believe it is vital that children do not establish misleading views of food groups, which may later affect their health and diets.

:: As well as continuing to follow up with Tesco on this issue, the NFU will be pushing strongly for the message of a balance diet approach within the [National Food Strategy](#).

Media coverage on this issue:

The NFU's concerns over Tesco's new Food Love Stories advert, promoting vegetarian sausages, was highlighted in The Times, the Daily Telegraph and on Jeremy Vine's Channel 5 programme and reported in BBC Radio 4's news bulletins.

NFU member and dairy farmer Abi Reader featured in a debate on ITV's *This Morning* where she stressed that, no-matter what diet they choose, consumers must be better informed about meat as part of a healthy diet.



National Farmers' Union
@NFUtweets





A column in [The Daily Telegraph](#) by Staffordshire dairy farmer Noreen Wainwright explores the 'victimisation of farmers', and cites Tesco's latest advert as another kick for farmers whose livelihoods are at risk. The piece highlights the mental health issues experienced by farmers and the great lengths they go to to work in an environmentally friendly way.

Share this tweet on your own social media channels:



Overview of the new HFSS placement and content restrictions



Appendix C

[<Internals\\Interview 1>](#) - \$ 1 reference coded [2.78% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.78% Coverage

I enjoy eating meat, I like stake, I am good at cooking meat : fully aware of the ability to eat 100% plant based

[<Internals\\Interview 2>](#) - \$ 1 reference coded [1.13% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.13% Coverage

Habit – Always Have – How I was Raised

[<Internals\\Interview 3>](#) - \$ 2 references coded [2.98% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.62% Coverage

I need food, survival

Reference 2 - 2.36% Coverage

live at home, convenient, habit, it is normal, but we do not eat that much meat anyway

[<Internals\\Interview 4>](#) - \$ 1 reference coded [1.72% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.72% Coverage

I like it, convenient, habit, lack of knowledge of alternatives

[<Internals\\Interview 5>](#) - \$ 1 reference coded [1.52% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.52% Coverage

Cheap, Convenient, Good source of protein, I like it

[<Internals\\Interview 6>](#) - \$ 1 reference coded [2.68% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.68% Coverage

Because I like chicken, it gives me energy, I feel better after eating chicken I feel like I have had proper food – like eating beef sometimes too.

[<Internals\\Interview 7>](#) - \$ 1 reference coded [0.86% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.86% Coverage

Always have eaten meat, habit

[<Internals\\Interview 8>](#) - \$ 1 reference coded [1.11% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.11% Coverage

Live at home, Convenient, Habit Protein

Appendices

Appendix D

<Internals\\Interview 1> - § 2 references coded [1.50% Coverage]
Reference 1 - 1.21% Coverage
A lack of information. No information no purchase
Reference 2 - 0.30% Coverage
Avoid Halal
<Internals\\Interview 2> - § 1 reference coded [2.44% Coverage]
Reference 1 - 2.44% Coverage
Danish bacon, halal – does not it right through own research – animal rights issues
<Internals\\Interview 3> - § 1 reference coded [0.14% Coverage]
Reference 1 - 0.14% Coverage
halal
<Internals\\Interview 4> - § 2 references coded [0.51% Coverage]
Reference 1 - 0.38% Coverage
images of cows
Reference 2 - 0.13% Coverage
halal
<Internals\\Interview 5> - § 2 references coded [0.49% Coverage]
Reference 1 - 0.34% Coverage
Out of Date
Reference 2 - 0.14% Coverage
halal
<Internals\\Interview 6> - § 2 references coded [0.33% Coverage]
Reference 1 - 0.20% Coverage
out of date
Reference 2 - 0.13% Coverage
organic
<Internals\\Interview 7> - § 1 reference coded [0.17% Coverage]
Reference 1 - 0.17% Coverage
halal,
<Internals\\Interview 8> - § 1 reference coded [0.39% Coverage]
Reference 1 - 0.39% Coverage
Processed meat

Appendices

Appendix E

[<Internals\Interview 2>](#) - 5 1 reference coded [3.22% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.22% Coverage

Q14. If yes, How? To the response of question 13.

Participant Answer: Excess water – Excess land usage

[<Internals\Interview 3>](#) - 5 1 reference coded [5.12% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 5.12% Coverage

Q14. If yes, How? To the response of question 13.

Participant Answer: Disruption of the food change, dee forestation and habitat destruction – also disrupting the animal food chain

[<Internals\Interview 4>](#) - 5 1 reference coded [3.46% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.46% Coverage

Q14. If yes, How? To the response of question 13.

Participant Answer: Animal treatment, mass production, factory farming

[<Internals\Interview 5>](#) - 5 1 reference coded [4.20% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.20% Coverage

Q14. If yes, How? To the response of question 13.

Participant Answer: Not Sure, have read some information but cant remember the specifics

[<Internals\Interview 6>](#) - 5 1 reference coded [7.17% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 7.17% Coverage

Q14. If yes, How? To the response of question 13.

Participant Answer: I was watching something on Netflix, and it was saying that cows create loads of methane gas, that's why fast food restaurants are responsible for global warming, because they increased the demand for meat, so farmers increased the supply and it is now the main cause of greenhouse gasses, that creates global warming.

Information

Study Title: *The Impact of Perception on Consumer Buyer Behaviour in the Meat Industry*

Aims of the Research

To understand the influence consumers product perception has on their purchasing choices and buyer behaviour.

Invitation

You are being invited to consider taking part in the research study *The Impact of Perception on Consumer Buyer Behaviour in the Meat Industry*

This project is being undertaken by *Heather Jackson*

Before you decide whether or not you wish to take part, it is important for you to understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read this information carefully and discuss it with friends and relatives if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is unclear or if you would like more information.

Why have I been chosen?

Non- Random Selection, Voluntary based on a response to a request for volunteers put out across social media platforms. Sample of target population – Target population is as follows: Meat eaters Living in Britain

Do I have to take part?

You are free to decide whether you wish to take part or not. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign two consent forms, one is for you to keep and the other is for our records. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time and without giving reasons.

What will happen if I take part?

You will complete a short Interview, conducted by the researcher Heather Jackson. The interview will consist of a set of structured questions, the interview will be conducted Via Zoom or over the phone. Interviews will be recorded.

If I take part, what do I have to do?

*Take part in the interview described above
Answer questions honestly to the best of your ability*

What are the benefits (if any) of taking part?

None N/A

What are the risks (if any) of taking part?

None N/A

How will information about me be used?

Data will be analysed and published anonymously, and data findings will be available in final research outcomes.

Who will have access to information about me?

Your confidentiality will be safeguarded during and after the study.

- *The data collected will be stored securely and where the data will be stored (on a password protected computer)*
- *The level of identifiability (unlinked-anonymous)*
- *Long term arrangements relating to keeping and destroying data (data including interview recordings will be securely disposed of immediately after research paper is finished on or before 01/06/2020)*

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you may wish to speak to the researcher(s) who will do their best to answer your questions. You should contact <Heather Jackson> on <1704024@student.uwtsd.ac.uk>. Alternatively, if you do not wish to contact the researcher(s) you may contact Dr Caroline Jawad <caroline.jawad@uwtsd.ac.uk>

If you remain unhappy about the research and/or wish to raise a complaint about any aspect of the way that you have been approached or treated during the course of the study please write to Dr Caroline Jawad who is the University's contact for complaints regarding research at the following address:-



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: *The Impact of Perception on Consumer Buyer Behaviour in the Meat Industry*

This research seeks to identify the consumers perception of meat, its production, and as a product in whole

Name and contact details of researcher: <Heather [Jackson](mailto:1704024@student.uwtsd.ac.uk), 1704024@student.uwtsd.ac.uk >

**Please tick box if you
agree with the statement**

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. | ☐ |
| 2 | I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time. | ☐ |
| 3 | I agree to take part in this study. | ☐ |
| 4 | I understand that data collected about me during this study will/will not* be anonymised before it is submitted for publication. | ☐ |
| 5 | I agree to the interview/focus* group being audio/video recorded* | ☐ |
| 6 | I agree to allow the dataset collected to be used for future research projects | ☐ |
| 7 | I agree to be contacted about possible participation in future research projects. | ☐ |

Heather Jackson
Researcher

Date

Signature

Appendix G

Q1. Do you eat meat or are you a vegetarian?

Participant Answer:

Q2. At what Age if you can remember did you make the correlation between live animals, and the meat you were eating?

Participant Answer:

Q3. Why do you buy meat?

Participant Answer:

Q4. If previous (question 3) answer was related to (survival/hunger) – What motivates you to buy meat over another food source, as technology has allowed for our survival independently of meat consumption?

N/A

Q.6 Where do you purchase your meat-based products?

Participant Answer:

Q7. Why? – in response to question fives answer

Participant Answer:

Q8. Is there anything Packaging Related that would encourage you to buy a particular product?

Participant Answer:

Q9. Is there any wording you look for on meat-based Products?

Participant Answer:

Q10. Is there any wording you look to avoid on meat-based products?

Participant Answer:

Q11. If No to question 8 and 9 – What about free range, cruelty free, halal etc.?

Participant Answer:

Q12. Do you believe meat is an essential part of your diet?

Participant Answer:

Q12. Do you believe meat is linked to either heart disease bowel cancer or any other medical condition?

Participant Answer:

Q13. Do you consider meat production to have a negative impact on the environment?

Participant Answer:

Q14. If yes, How? To the response of question 13.

Participant Answer:

Q15. Do you think the marketing and advertising of meat products is transparent?

Participant Answer:

Q16. When you buy meat products do you ever investigate the claims made on the product such as free ranged?

Participant Answer:

Q17. Would you be less inclined to buy meat if there was a clear transparent link between certain medical conditions and meat consumption?

Participant Answer:

Q18. Would you be less inclined to buy meat if the facts were clearer on what if any damage to the environment the process of production causes?

Participant Answer:

Q19. What colour do you associate most with the colour of meat products packaging?

Participant Answer:

-