Behavior of Swedes towards Milk Substitute Products

With participation of Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund
Abstract

Bachelor Thesis in Business Administration

Title: Behavior of Swedes towards Milk Substitute Products

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Course: Degree Project, Business Administration, Bachelor - Marketing

Spring Term 2015

These days, milk substitute products are getting more popular and exist together with milk on the market. These substitute products are appreciated by consumers due to animal welfare, environmental or health related reasons. The purpose of the investigation was to make assumptions about the future situation of farmers and which demographic, personal, sociological, cultural and psychological determinants have an impact on Swedish consumers purchasing substitute products. The proposed methodology to reveal the impact of those factors was a qualitative research. Ten semi-structured interviews with residents of Västra Götaland, aimed to gain a deeper and better understanding of the reasons for consumption of milk substitute products, were conducted in total. The existing theory and scientific articles about demographic, personal, sociological, cultural and psychological determinants of consumer behavior, in terms of food choice and consumption, were used to create an interview guide and also to compare the collected primary data in the end. Participants were asked questions regarding their demography, lifestyle, awareness and perception of milk substitute products and other reasons for their consumption of milk substitutes. The findings revealed that demographic factors such as age and gender seemed to have an impact on the consumer behavior. Moreover, personal and psychological factors were revealed to have a significant impact on the consumption behavior. In particular lifestyle, perception, attitudes and motivations, knowledge and learning had a significant influence on Swedish consumers and their food consumption behavior. Regarding sociological factors it was discovered that friends had a significant influence on food consumption. Cultural determinants were also important to consider. However, they did not have a significant influence on the participants. The findings also revealed that health and animal welfare were the main reasons for changing the consumption. Interestingly, no participant started to consume these products due to environmental reasons in the beginning. The strong competition of milk and milk substitute products on the market is most likely to continue. The future situation for farmers will look different and might get more critical as milk consumption in Sweden could change. This small scale research does not make it possible to generalize the revealed findings. Nevertheless, this qualitative investigation provided the basis for future research in the field of consumer behavior towards substitute products.

Key Words: “consumer behavior”, “consumer psychology”, “consumers’ attitudes”, “food choice motives”, “milk substitute products” and “functional foods”
Acknowledgements

This thesis has been completed through the support and encouragement of various people including my family, friends, supervisor and Lantbrukarnas Riksförsbund. It is a pleasure to express my thanks to all those who contributed to the success of this thesis in different kinds of ways.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Nataliya Galan, for her support and understanding during the whole project. I appreciate all contributions of ideas and time which helped me to develop an interesting and successful bachelor thesis. She provided me with great input and without her guidance this work would not have been possible.

Secondly, I would like to thank my family and friends, without their love and support this project would have been a very hard journey. I want to thank my mother for making this study abroad possible and for her consistent support. I also appreciate the faithful support and encouragement of my sister Jessica and brother-in-law Florian. They encouraged me during this entire stay in Sweden and were always there whenever I have needed them. My thanks also go to several friends from Germany who helped me by looking critically at my thesis and thereby encouraged me to always improve myself. I would also like to thank all international friends who I met during this entire year in Sweden. By meeting all these people, I learned so much about other cultures and I am more open-minded now.

Lastly, I would like to thank Lantbrukarnas Riksförsbund for providing me with this interesting topic and the trust they had in my work. I would also like to say that I am very grateful to all the people who collaborated in the data collection.

Thank you all very much!

Janine Hammes

June 2015
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1. Introduction

The market situation for milk and its substitute products is currently changing. Milk substitute products are getting more popular. They are highly appreciated due to health, animal and environmental reasons. This chapter initially addresses various issues related to consumer behavior changes as a result of the appearance of alternatives to milk drinks. Moreover, milk and its substitute products exist together on the market and therefore the chapter also explains the importance of investigating the determinants of consumer behavior in order to comprehend the reasons that drive consumption of milk alternatives instead of its original counterpart.

1.1 Background

There are various kinds of milk in the world such as goat’s-, sheep’s- or cow’s milk. Milk is consumed in several countries and it is an important part of our everyday diet. Cow’s milk is the most consumed in the world and for many people it is hard, if not impossible, to imagine a life without milk, as it is used for various reasons. Milk is the base product for numerous other foods such as butter, cheese or cream. Moreover, milk is used for several purposes, whether as addition to coffee, cooking or baking, using together with muesli or just for drinking.

The leading cow milk producers worldwide in 2013 were the USA with 91.3, India with 61 and China with 35.3 million metric tons (Statista, 2015). Worldwide, milk is consumed by more than six billion people (Fao, 2015). According to Rollinger (2010), the top three countries which consume milk are Finland, Ireland and Sweden. Milk was, and still is, a symbol for what is considered traditionally Swedish.

However, the Swedish Board of Agriculture (2014) stated that the consumption of milk decreased from 158 liters per person in 1960 to 87 liters per person in 2012. In 2007 and 2012, consumption of milk decreased by about 11 liters per person per year. Wille-Sonk and Lassen stated in their report of 2013 that a decrease of milk production in Sweden became apparent and milk deliveries went down as far as to 2.861 million kilogram in 2012.

During the last years, many people have decided to not consume milk anymore. One reason for this is that many people suffer from the common digestive problem which is called lactose intolerance. People who suffer from this are unable to digest lactose, which is a type of sugar mainly found in milk and dairy products (Nhs.uk, 2015). Other people are suffering from cow’s milk allergy, which simply means that by consuming milk they are reacting allergic to the proteins included in the milk and their body is starting to build milk-specific antibodies (Liu et al., 2012). This is the reason why they have to completely avoid milk proteins in their diet. Together with other allergens like soy, egg or peanuts, milk is building the so-called “Big-8” food allergens (Network, 2015).
Besides allergies and intolerance towards milk, more people are adapting a vegan lifestyle due to the fact that they are worried about the pollution of the environment and animal welfare (Fink-Kessler, 2013). They are concerned about the way milk is produced, as many cows get antibiotics against diseases or they have to live in cramped, concrete-floored milking enclosures. Apart from this, some people are also adapting a vegan lifestyle due to other health related reasons or religious and cultural beliefs (Dyett et al., 2013).

A consumer who wants to prevent nutrition-related diseases or achieve a higher well-being might decide to purchase functional foods, as they aim to increase their health (Menrad, 2003). Other consumers might decide to renounce any dairy or meat products due to health-, ethical-, animal- or environmental reasons. When it comes to food choice and consumption it is important to consider and examine consumer behavior determinants. The food choice and consumption can change due to various demographic, sociological, cultural, personal or psychological reasons. Peltzer (2000) stated that beliefs and opinions of consumers regarding the link between food choice and health can influence the behavior of an individual. According to Mohd Shariff and Khor (2005), urbanites and people of a higher social class are more concerned about their health and fitness and therefore care more about their food intake. Age can also lead to different product choices and preferences (Palmer, 2003). There is a connection between demographic, sociological, cultural, personal and psychological determinants and they all have a certain impact on the purchase intention of consumers.

The image of milk as a healthy and nutrient food has changed. In recent years, there has been some research that critically examined the health effects of milk on the human body. A study published by Swedish researchers in 2014 examined the risk of mortality and fractures in women and men by the intake of milk. They carried out a sample with 61433 women and 45339 men from three counties in central Sweden. The study discovered that a higher consumption of milk does not cause a lower risk of fracture and instead could be associated with a higher rate of death (Michaelsson et al., 2014). Similar results were also found by the Nurses’ Health study, which showed no effect of increased milk consumption on fracture risk (Feskanich et al., 1997).

Needless to say that such critical research as mentioned above also influenced the consumption of milk, as people are uncertain about whether to drink or not to drink milk. Due to all these reasons people limit their milk consumption or even renounce milk completely from their diet.

The responses to these changes in the perception of milk were milk substitute products. Cow’s milk has had some new competitors such as soy, rice, oat, almond or coconut milk. The interest in such non-dairy products is growing and they are an integral part of the market now. According to a report by Packaged Facts in 2011, the total retail sales of such alternative beverages reached $1.33 billion in the United States. The acceptance of those substitute products is growing and consumers are turning more often to those products, as they are becoming more convinced of personal health benefits, choose a vegan lifestyle, and care for the environment or animal rights.

Due to the availability of these non-dairy alternatives, the consumption of milk is changing as well. In America the consumption is decreasing the last years, milk consumption has dropped 36% between 1970 and 2011 (Cardello, 2013). This is due to
the fact that the market is providing more products these days. Consumers can choose between various kinds of products and all of them promise and provide them with some kinds of benefits. Depending on what an individual is pursuing or seeking for, he or she will purchase different kinds of products.

1.2 Problem Discussion

As already mentioned in the background, in our modern society, there are various reasons for the change in milk consumption. One of these is that people have an allergy or intolerance towards milk. Other people are concerned about saving the planet, animal rights, protecting the environment and renounce milk for these reasons. People are also concerned about their health and search for products which fulfill their requirements on a healthier lifestyle.

These changes on the food market also affected the consumer buying and consumption behavior. Consumers now have the opportunity to choose and consume both milk and milk substitute products such as soy, almond, coconut, oat or rice milk. The food industry makes use of all those reasons in order to enter the market with so-called milk substitute products. Milk alternative products are having a stronger presence on the market than ever before and exist together with dairy products. In recent years, more of these milk substitute products have occurred on the market and a lot of new varieties and flavors are consistently brought to the market.

There is an ongoing change in taste preferences, beliefs and opinions, which is the reason why these products were able to enter the market. Therefore it was interesting to examine if it is possible that milk substitute products and milk exist together on the market or if there will be a change in consumption due to those non-dairy products. Moreover, it was of interest to examine why people who live in Sweden are interested in buying those milk substitute products and how demographic, psychological, personal, sociological or cultural determinants affect their behavior.

According to statistics made by the Swedish Board of Agriculture (2013), the highest number of dairy cows was found in the county of Västra Götaland, with 12,800 cows. Farmers here already have a hard time making their businesses profitable, due to retailers refusing to pay them more money for their produced milk. These days the milk substitute products are getting more popular and influence the consumption of milk. Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund (LRF) aims to support farmers and therefore they are interested in those changes on the market. The industry association wants to get a better understanding of how those changes for farmers will look like in the future.

Factors that influence the behavior of the consumers can be demographic, cultural, sociological, personal or psychological. Every consumer has a different lifestyle, belief, behavior, various attitudes and motivations from which he or she eventually makes a purchase decision in the end. These determinants are overlapping each other and therefore it was important to consider every single factor and examine its impact on the consumer. Various models such as the sociological, psychological or stimulus-organism-response model pointed out these factors and their impact on consumer behavior in a better way.
These models contributed to get a better understanding and knowledge of an individual and its needs and wants. These determinants and models can also be applied and used when examining the food choice and consumption. They helped to detect certain influences which lead to the decision of buying and consuming milk substitute products.

This research provided farmers and LRF with a better understanding of the factors which change the consumption behavior of Swedes and drive them to buy milk substitute products. Moreover, this investigation provided the business community with more knowledge about the extent of influence that demographic, cultural, sociological, personal and psychological factors have on consumers. It was very interesting to study this topic, as it helped to understand the way Swedish consumers behave and think about milk substitute products in a better way. It was important to examine by which internal and external factors consumers are influenced and how they think about and react to the availability of milk substitute products.

Until now most research has examined the acceptance and quality of milk substitute products and the knowledge which people have about them. This research aimed to fill this gap of knowledge about the demographic, sociological, cultural, personal and psychological determinants which influence Swedish consumers when buying and consuming milk substitute products.

1.3 Research Questions

There exist different determinants such as demographic, psychological, social, cultural and personal which can influence the consumption behavior. A recently conducted study by Animal Rights Sweden found out that one in ten people in Sweden is a vegetarian or vegan (The Independent, 2014). This study underlined that there is some kind of change in food consumption in Sweden. That is why it was important to investigate this topic and examine how Swedes regard the current market situation, with all those alternative non-dairy products.

Considering the above mentioned points, the following two main research questions were created:

1. How do demographic, psychological, sociological, cultural and personal factors affect the behavior of Swedish consumers in terms of the consumption of milk substitute products?

2. Why are Swedish people interested in buying milk substitute products instead of milk?

In order to answer the research questions a qualitative method was chosen. With a qualitative method, the reasons of Swedish consumers for buying and consuming milk substitute products could be revealed. More precisely the data to answer the research questions was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews. By doing so, it was possible to reveal unique and valuable opinions and reasons of every participant. Similarly it contributed to a better understanding of the chosen problem area.
1.4 Purpose

This research aimed to provide a better understanding of the current changes on the market. Thus this thesis aimed to investigate the main reasons why people change their consumption habits, more particularly which factors influence consumers’ behavior for food choice.

Furthermore it aimed to determine if there is a consumption change in Sweden and the motivations of Swedes to purchase milk substitute products. This study also had some practical implications, as it aimed to predict what farmers have to expect in the future. The purpose of this thesis also consisted of providing Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund with more knowledge about consumer behavior in Sweden and making some assumptions about a possible change regarding milk and milk substitute consumption.

The study contributed to the extensive body of knowledge on consumer behavior by addressing the influence of demographic, sociological, cultural, personal and psychological determinants on substitute products.

1.5 Delimitations

The project was delimited by excluding some aspects and areas. First of all this research only examined the consumer behavior towards liquid milk and no other dairy products were considered. The collection of data was adjusted to the time frame and therefore no quantitative research was chosen. Instead of a quantitative research, a qualitative research was conducted in order to obtain preferably a detailed knowledge of the reasons which influenced the behavior of Swedish people. In total the amount of interviewed people was ten, hence there was a barrier to generalizing the obtained results. All participants were residents of Sweden’s county Västra Götaland. No other county of Sweden was included and therefore some constraint for generalization was given.
2. Methodology

The aim of this chapter is to describe how people can perceive and interpret the world. It describes the research approach, the choice of method and the implementation of the investigation. Furthermore, a clarification of the data collection and evaluation is given. The chapter also defines some problems which arose in performing the data collection and the resolution of them. In addition, the steps of analysis for the data processing are illustrated. The chapter addresses ways and possibilities of achieving and increasing the reliability and transferability. Finally, it describes ethical issues which occurred during the interaction with the participants.

2.1 Scholarly Approach

The way people perceive and think about the world and the kind of knowledge a researcher wants to acquire has an impact on the choice of research method. It is important to examine the lifeworld of people and try to comprehend which attitudes, motivations and behaviors people have. Therefore either interpretivism or positivism is used in order to understand the world around us. According to Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000), interpretivism and positivism possess strengths and weaknesses depending on what kind of knowledge a researcher tries to obtain.

Lee (1994, p. 147) described that positivism “refers to an observing researcher’s formal propositions and points out that those do not only specify independent variables, dependent variables, and the relationships among them, but also must satisfy the rules of formal logic and the rules of empirical testing.” Positivist researchers are creating a distance between themselves and the participants of the study in order to be able to stay emotionally neutral and distinguish between reason and feeling (Carson et al., 2001). Hovorka and Lee (2010) provided a new perspective, considering positivism as explanation and interpretivism as understanding. The model of explanation is characterized by the fact that it “…treats human intention not as based on individual goals, subjective or history, but instead as a caused, mechanical, and quantifiable construct” (Hovorka and Lee, 2010, p. 8).

By using the interpretivism view, people are observing the world in a completely different way. Since human beings think, feel and reflect, have motives, attitudes and meanings, it is crucial to understand and examine those factors for the interpretivism view (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988; Neuman, 2000). According to Carson et al. (2001, p.5), a researcher rather acquires socially constructed knowledge than objectively determined knowledge. While positivist research has a more rigid structural framework, the structures for this view are more flexible and do not create a distance between researcher and participant (Carson et al., 2001). Hovorka and Lee (2010) argued that researchers have to avoid to be influenced by their own opinions and meanings while observing the phenomenon. Hovorka and Lee (2010) stated that understanding is related to thoughts, beliefs and motivations of the participants and that the aim of researchers is to create their own understanding of the subjective understanding. Solomon (2011) also stated that behavior can be interpreted in multiple ways, as it depends on the experience of the individual.
My research aimed to achieve a better understanding of different demographic, cultural, sociological, personal and psychological determinants in order to comprehend why people consume certain products. I wanted to gain more knowledge about behavior and this is why I decided to follow the interpretivism view. I held the opinion that for examining feelings, motives, attitudes or perception, it was important to talk to people face to face.

By doing so, I was able to interpret these determinants in a better way and gain a deeper understanding. I wanted to be close to people and comprehend their reasons for consuming and their behavior towards milk substitute products. By following the interpretivism view, I was able to answer my research questions in the most efficient way, as all participants were open-minded and gave me information. According to Solomon (2011), behavior can be interpreted in multiple ways, as it depends on the experience of the individual.

### 2.2 Research Strategy

I decided to use the qualitative approach as it focuses on the individuals’ concerns, interests, views and what they perceive as important and significant (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Compared to a qualitative approach, a quantitative approach rather addresses the own concerns and interest of the investigator. He or she is the driving force and does not lay the point of orientation on the individual (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The study aimed to observe attitudes, values, experiences and behaviors of people and therefore it was important to focus on the individuals’ topics, concerns and interests, which are important and significant to them. For this reason, a qualitative approach was more suitable for the investigation than a quantitative one. Besides this fact, following a quantitative approach means to keep a distance to the participants and to stay uninvolved (Bryman and Bell, 2011). However, I wanted to be flexible and reduce the distance towards the participants in order to gain valuable insights and knowledge. Therefore, qualitative research is an effective tool, as it is aimed to comprehend the world through the eyes of the individuals by creating a close involvement (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Quantitative methods are highly structured and mostly present a “…static image of social reality…” (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 410). My research focused on individuals who all had different opinions, meanings, attitudes, hence I did not want to obtain a static image of the whole population. I rather wanted to gain individual pictures, impressions and opinions and therefore I followed the unstructured qualitative approach (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Another reason to choose a qualitative approach was the intention to comprehend every individual regarding their individual values, behavior, beliefs and attitudes. Quantitative research rather focuses on a larger amount of people in order to create a general image of the overall population (Bryman and Bell, 2011).
I decided to conduct interviews, as they allowed me to have a face to face discussion and observe body language of fewer units. This provided me with more valuable, rich and detailed information about the individuals. The aim was to reveal demographic, sociological, cultural, personal and psychological determinants which influence an individual by consuming milk substitute products. Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill (2012) stated that interviews are helpful in gathering valid and reliable data for research questions.

2.3 Investigation Approach

To conduct my investigation I chose a qualitative method and decided to follow the inductive research approach. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) pointed out that inductive research enriches the already existing theory and helps to develop it further. I followed a qualitative research, more particularly, I conducted interviews. My goal was to examine if there are similarities and differences between the existing theory and my findings. According to Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2005), the theories and research will provide the researcher with evidence and support for his or her research. However, the authors stated that a researcher has to gain confirmation about this previous research and hence has to search for more evidence in order to confirm or disprove these facts. Inductive research allows going back and forth between theory and own data collection (Bryman and Bell, 2011). I was able to create an appropriate interview guide by reviewing my collected literature and thereby formulating questions which aimed to answer my research questions.

2.4 Data Collection

For the purpose of collecting primary data it was useful to consider the full range of possibilities for data collection. There are specific methods of data collection, depending on what kind of research is conducted. My data was collected by the help of a qualitative method, more particularly by conducting interviews. By conducting interviews I was able to perceive the reactions of my participants and could assess their facial expressions and body language. Furthermore I could explore their reasons more deeply and ask additional questions, which I had not considered before.

There exist various types of interviews, but due to the fact that I wanted to comprehend reasons for behavior, attitudes, motives and opinions more deeply, I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews. According to Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2005), semi-structured interviews aim to fulfill two goals. One goal is to reveal individuals’ perception, information and knowledge about the discussed topic. The other goal for the researcher is to find out whether those findings confirm the previous theories and research about the topic. Sankar and Jones (2008, p. 134) stated that a “…semi-structured interview allows for comparison across subjects as well as the freedom to explore what distinguishes them.” Semi-structured interviews are characterized by the fact that the
researcher only has a list of themes and questions that should be answered, even though their use and order can vary (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). Thus many questions will be created during the interview itself and this allows flexibility to probe for further information or to discuss issues (Bryman and Bell, 2007). For my research, the semi-structured interview was a very productive tool due to its flexibility.

Sankar and Jones (2008) declared that it can be difficult to find people who fit to the intended research sample. To find Swedish people who only consume milk substitute products was indeed very difficult in the beginning. In that case, the snowball sampling can be helpful for a researcher. This method identifies potential participants “…by asking initial subjects to suggest names of other people who might be interested in participating in the study” (Sankar and Jones, 2008, p. 123). Most interviews took place at the “vegolyckan vegetarisk restaurang” in Trollhättan. The employees and customers were very open-minded and willing to provide information and a better understanding of their reasons for the consumption of milk substitute products. People who were interviewed were asked if they knew other persons who were interested in participating in this study as well. Many participants had friends who were also interested in doing an interview. In total I was able to conduct interviews with ten persons. Out of those ten people, only one was male. The participants varied in age and reasons to consume milk substitute products. Participants who disagreed with the publishing of data were excluded from my research.

I compiled an interview guide to get answers to all imperative questions. This interview guide can be found in the appendices to clarify the questions which were asked. Sankar and Jones (2008) pointed out that it is important to go back and forth in the literature review of the chosen topic in order to formulate questions. The goal was to create an interview guide which enables to collect similar information of all participants but at the same time also captures the individuals’ perspective (Sankar and Jones, 2008). The chosen questions should be clear and comprehensible to all respondents as well as the additional questions which occurred during the interview itself. The order of the interview guide varied, depending on the participant and the flow of each conversation. Participants were asked questions concerning demographic factors, lifestyle, attitudes, knowledge, opinions and other factors such as influence of family and friends or personal reasons. Many of those questions were genuinely open in order to ensure that my participants were not influenced and did not indicate a preferred answer (Gillham, 2010). Those questions definitely allowed me to reveal attitudes and obtain facts, as the interviewees were encouraged to provide an extensive and developmental answer (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). Furthermore I also included some probing questions, as I wanted to explore some responses of the participants further. In case of a problem with understanding the response of an interviewee or where the reasoning behind the answer cannot be revealed, such questions are of great help (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012).

During the time I conducted the interviews I had to face issues of bias, which Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) defined as interviewer, response and participation bias. However, I tried to avoid them the best I could by being very responsible and objective. My language, body language and way of asking questions could have influenced the participants, which is why I had to make sure that I controlled all my actions. I ensured that I was open-minded to any facts and opinions, so that my participants could say anything related to the topic and were not influence by my own opinions. By doing so I guaranteed true responses and an unlimited information flow.
Questions which seemed too intimate for the participant were reformulated during the interview or I started a discussion about a related question to fill and overcome the gap of information. The length of each interview was approximately half an hour and during this time I made sure that the interviewees felt comfortable and therefore increased their willingness of taking an active part.

Each interview was different and unique, but did cover the same ground. Each interviewee was asked whether or not they agree to get recorded. According to Gillham (2010) it is very important to use a tape recorder, as it facilitates to remember and repeat the whole conversation. Furthermore, I took notes to be able to write down the most impressive and interesting points of view. Immediately after I conducted all my interviews I did a transcript of them to ensure that all relevant data were included.

Secondary data like scientific articles and books for background information and theory were collected through “Google Scholar”, “ebrary” and the search engine of University West named “Primo”. To ensure specific and suitable literature results I used keywords such as: “consumer behavior”, “consumer psychology”, “consumers’ attitudes”, “food choice motives”, “soy consumption” and “functional foods”.

In order to comprehend people’s way of thinking and acting, I looked up several determinants of and theories about consumer behavior. All books used were related to marketing, consumer behavior and consumer psychology. I read those books to get a general understanding of those factors and to comprehend to which extent they can influence a consumer. Through this I was able to gain certain background knowledge about my topic. I laid my focus on demographic, psychological, socio-cultural and personal factors, as I perceived them as the most relevant factors for my investigation. These determinants consist of several different components (for example gender, age, social status, perception, attitudes or lifestyle). For the purpose of getting a better understanding of these components, I read several scientific articles. These articles addressed these determinants related to milk substitute products, food consumption or food decisions and choices in general. The results of these previous studies contributed to a better understanding of the primary data and also helped to analyze them in a better way. The articles enabled a comparison of the primary data, draw conclusions and see relationships between demographic, sociological, cultural, personal and psychological determinants. I tried to comprehend how people became aware of these milk substitute products and hence I also considered briefly what kind of consumer trends exist on the food market. There exist several models for explaining consumer behavior. I used the S-O-R, sociological and psychological model to summarize and connect all the various determinants with each other in the end.

I had to deal with some difficulties regarding the collecting of secondary data. Studies conducted about milk substitute products mainly referred to the acceptance of those related to their taste. It was difficult to find suitable material that specifically concern consumer buying behavior towards milk alternative products. I had to broaden my focus of the literature and hence I also included related topics such as food consumption or food choice in general.
2.5 Analysis Methods

After I conducted all interviews, I started to analyze the data of all my participants. Due to the fact that qualitative results often consist of huge databases, it can be difficult to reveal all relevant information (Bryman and Bell, 2011). I took notes and recorded every interviewed person to make sure that I could reproduce their answers again. All information which I recorded was written down immediately after the interview, to ensure that I kept all relevant data.

For the next step of analyzing, I followed the qualitative content analysis. Bryman and Bell (2011) pointed out that this approach is used very often when the qualitative data were analyzed. I also followed some guidelines of Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003), who discussed the procedure of analyzing data. In the beginning it was important to comprehend and familiarize myself with the collected data. I listened to my recordings and re-read my transmitted data of the interviews several times. I received much information by all participants, but not all information was necessary for my research, why I excluded some information from further investigation and interpretation.

In the next step I reviewed my research questions and theories and clarified the main points which I wanted to interpret. Bryman and Bell (2011) stated that coding is helpful in understanding the collected data and connecting them with the consisting theory. I began by making notes about significant facts and searching for keywords which all participants used. By doing so, a researcher is not getting lost in the huge amount of collected data. Sankar and Jones (2008, p. 127) defined coding as “…process of mapping interview transcripts so that patterns in the data can be identified, retrieved, and analyzed.” I coded my transcript data by giving names to elements which stood out after re-reading a few times. These codes were related to each other and were connected to my research questions. Afterwards I searched for relations between the developed codes and started to connect them with each other. Moreover, I looked for connections between the developed categories and the existing literature of my chosen topic. By looking at all interviews, I could reveal patterns, connections and differences between the categories and participants. Out of these, it was possible to create some cause and effect relationships among those connections. Over the whole process of analyzing the responses, I was objective in order to overcome the interviewer bias.
2.6 Source Critique

For collecting primary data, a high degree of responsibility is necessary in order to fulfill all needed requirements. Considering all collected data it can be stated that the obtained results were relevant and contributed to the development of my study. The study was conducted with ten participants who were residents of Sweden’s county Västra Götaland. Due to this fact it is not possible to generalize the obtained results. Of all participants, only one person was male, which made it difficult to compare the demographic factors such as male and female opinions towards milk substitute products. Also the income could not be considered in the interpretation as the participants did not want to give a clear statement about it. Due to this fact the participants were asked whether they perceive their income as low, medium or high. It can be said that due to the usage of the snowball sampling there could be an influence of the results as some of the participants were friends and had a similar lifestyle.

2.7 Reliability and Transferability

For the purpose of establishing and ensuring a high quality of my qualitative research I had to consider the validity and reliability of my work. Bryman and Bell (2011) described validity as a very important criterion, concerned with the extent to which a researcher truly measures what he or she intended to measure. They further distinguished between internal and external validity. Thereby they indicated the difficulty for a qualitative researcher to obtain external validity, due to the fact that qualitative researcher do not often deal with large amounts of people. Internal validity can be ensured by an effective link between the obtained theoretical knowledge and the collected data (Bryman and Bell, 2011). In order to increase the validity of my study I sent back the transcript data to the participants and ensured that I transcript what the participants tried to express in the right way.

Björklund and Paulsson (2014, p.66) defined the reliability of an investigation as “…the degree of operational reliability of the measuring instruments”. In other words it describes the degree to which the research is reproducible (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) claimed that there can be a lack of standardization when using semi-structured interviews and this can affect the reliability of the research. I had to face some issues of bias during my research which affected the reliability and validity of my research. My interviews were conducted in English, therefore sometimes misunderstandings and misinterpretations occurred. I investigated a more complex topic where many different factors affect one another at the same time. Due to this fact I had to state that my findings described the reality as it was when my data were collected. However, during the whole process I reported in a transparent way. This led to another important factor in qualitative research which is the transferability of data. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), results obtained in a qualitative research are rather unique and significant as they reflect the social world at a specific point of time. Geertz (1973a) pointed out that a researcher’s aim should be to produce a thick description, more particularly to gain as many details as possible. Therefore my findings were not intended
to be repeatable again later on. However, my study can be repeated by future researcher in other settings.

In view of the fact that my interview guide consisted of rather open and probing questions, I tried to clarify and explain the questions as well as possible in order to ensure that the participants can comprehend and answer the questions in the right way. By doing so, I tried to obtain the right information which I intended to get. In the beginning of each interview I introduced myself and my research in order to create a basis of trust and erase any doubt a participant might have had about participating in the study. The validity of my study was thereby increased and I ensured to receive data which can be interpreted very precisely.

By using a qualitative method and contacting Swedish people who are interested in buying and consuming milk substitute products, I can state that I kept my focus on my main purpose. By including real quotes from the interviews, I also supported the credibility of my results.

### 2.8 Ethical Issues

It is crucial to consider ethical issues, as a researcher can harm an individual through stress, forestall participants’ development or invade their privacy (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 128). A researcher has to minimize these factors to give a good feeling to the participants and to obtain the valuable data he or she needs. One important factor is confidentiality of data (Bryman and Bell, 2011). I interviewed and recorded various people and had to ensure that all identities were maintained confidential. I also asked for their permission to record them. In advance, every participant was asked whether he or she agreed that the transmitted data of the interviews were published later on. Furthermore I asked every participant for the permission of using statements of them as quotes in order to underline my empirical findings afterwards.

By telling them the reason for my research and for whom I am investigating, I erased doubts and uncertainties and created a certain trust basis between my participants and me. According to Bryman and Bell (2011) it is important to fully inform respondents about the reasons for investigating in the research topic, even though they already agreed to be interviewed.

During every interview a situation can occur where a participant considers a question as too intimate. In this case the participant does not want to answer this question. Bryman and Bell (2011) pointed out that a researcher cannot know beforehand if any of the prepared questions can be perceived as too private by an individual. I prepared myself for such situations and reformulated these questions or talked about a related question in such situations.
3. Theoretical Frame of Reference

In view of the fact that this research aimed to explore the behavior of Swedish people towards milk substitute products, it was important to consider consumer behavior determinants and models of consumer behavior. A consumer is influenced over his or her whole life. Hence, this chapter explains determinants which influence consumer behavior. Particularly this chapter examines which reference groups and which characteristics of an individual have an impact on the behavior. It also considers how these determinants influence the behavior, food choice and preferences of an individual. There exist various models which try to comprehend consumer behavior in a better way, therefore this chapter also addresses the S-O-R, sociological and psychological model. Each model considers important determinants of consumer behavior and lead to a better understanding of them. By combining these models, a strong and effective analysis model, which helps to answer the research questions, can be created.

A consumer is any individual who buys products or services for his or her personal use or satisfaction (Nair, 2009). Every person, no matter what age, can be a consumer and all have different preferences and determinants. Consumers can be influenced by various factors such as beliefs, motivation, knowledge about or attitudes towards a product. Therefore consumer behavior “…is the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires” (Solomon, 2011, p. 33).

These days, consumers are getting more diverse and demanding regarding their consumption claims, due to the existence of a broad range of products and services. After all, consumers are the ultimate decision makers, influenced by various factors. A consumer is influenced by demographic, sociological, cultural, psychological and personal determinants. These determinants consist of several components, which all have a stronger or weaker influence on a consumer. Furthermore these determinants are very difficult to distinguish, as they are overlapping each other. It is very important to consider several components such as age, gender, attitudes, perception, motivation, sub-cultures, social class or lifestyle in order to comprehend the consumers’ mind.

Palmer (2003) claimed that companies always search for new market opportunities and hence always want to comprehend what is going on in a consumers’ mind and what kind of needs there are to be satisfied. These needs are unique and differ from person to person. They can consist of various things, be it to adopt a healthier lifestyle, support the environment or try to act like the family members do. Whatever kind of need a consumer has, companies try to convince the customer that their specific products and services are the most suitable ones to satisfy their various needs. Competition on the food market is increasing and consumers are provided with many different kinds of products in order to satisfy their specific needs (Gray et al., 2003).

There exist various models such as the sociological, psychological or the S-O-R model which attempt to understand the consumer behavior in a better way. Foscht and Swoboda (2011) described this model as consisting of a stimulus which comes upon a certain
organism and this leads to a response. The S-O-R-Model does consider the “black box” and reveals the “inner” behavior and characteristics of an individual (Foscht and Swoboda, 2011, p. 29). Thereby this model can help to comprehend how consumers make their choices. The sociological model takes a look at social influences and considers a persons’ purchase behavior as affected by culture, sub-culture and social groups. The psychological model considers a persons’ purchase behavior as affected by learning experience.

The purpose of this thesis was to comprehend the main reasons why people change their consumption habits, more particularly which factors influence behavior of Swedes towards milk substitute products. Thus, it was necessary to include all demographic, psychological, sociological, cultural and personal determinants which have an impact on consumer behavior and to gain a deeper understanding of the extent to which they influence the consumers who purchase milk substitute products. A brief understanding of how companies try to make use of consumers’ concerns and interests was necessary as well, in order to understand why consumers are interested in buying these products. Authors such as Solomon (2011), Palmer (2003) and Foxall, Goldsmith and Brown (1998), who dealt with consumer behavior and psychology were of great help in comprehending the research area and provided me with the basic theories. Scientific articles which considered each above mentioned determinant applied on the food industry were beneficial for understanding how those determinants act.

In order to not get lost in a large quantity of data, it was important to narrow down the data at an early stage and only consider topics which were relevant for the investigation. The key search terms were: “consumer behavior”, “consumer psychology”, “consumers’ attitudes”, “food choice motives”, “soy consumption” and “functional foods”. Marketing aspects were not considered in more detail. The way companies try to market products or how marketing in general can have an influence on consumers’ decision making was not as relevant for my investigation as the consumer behavior determinants. I only discussed briefly how companies try to develop perfect segments to reach their desired audience. This is due to the fact that the main focus and research questions were aimed at understanding the behavior of Swedish consumers. The models applied in the theory aimed at summarizing all determinants of consumer behavior and connect them with each other. A combination of the particular factors of each model led to an analysis model which takes all relevant factors for the investigation into consideration.

By considering consumers’ behavior and psychology I gained knowledge about my problem area and was able to comprehend which factors have an influence on the consumer as well as to what extent. Through the provided theory and scientific articles I could gather all relevant information, considering the chosen area, and create an interview guide for the semi-structured interviews.
3.1 Determinants for Consumer Behavior

3.1.1 Demographic Influences

“Demography is the study of populations in terms of their size and characteristics” (Palmer, 2003, p. 60). Researchers consider demographic characteristics in different ways. Palmer (2003) used demographic characteristics such as age, family life-cycle, gender, ethnic group and household composition, to segment consumer markets. However, Solomon (2011) for example defined demographic factors as age, family structure, gender, race and ethnicity, social class, income, lifestyle and geography.

The choice for a product or service is often age-related (Palmer, 2003) as the needs of a consumer vary depending on the age group (Solomon, 2011). A consumer will also be in various positions regarding the family role and due to this reason, consume different products at different stages (Palmer, 2003). Regarding consumer behavior it is also important to look at gender differences as they can account for different product choices as well (Palmer, 2003). Palmer (2003) explained that households differ from their size and therefore also from their consumption. Furthermore he stated that they consume as an economic union and usually not consider individual needs and wants. The world is becoming more connected and consumers’ needs and wants more diverse than ever before. Racial and ethnic aspects also play a role when it comes to choosing products and services and hence the market prepares offers which are adapted to these aspects (Solomon, 2011). Depending on where a consumer lives, the availability and consumption of products is different (Solomon, 2011). Markets aim to appeal specific consumers who live in different parts of a country, as their needs and wants can vary (Solomon, 2011). Even though Solomon (2011) considered lifestyle as a demographic factor he clearly stated that it goes beyond demographics.

Categorizing people is often done by companies in order to gain knowledge about the needs and wants of a specific group. Solomon (2011) pointed out that all the above mentioned factors can have an impact on consumer behavior, as all of them influence consumers’ preferences and needs. Thus, it is interesting to examine which factors are considered and excluded by various researchers and whether these factors have a certain impact on consumers’ food consumption and choice.

Villegas, Carbonell and Costell (2009) investigated among other factors the influence of demographic characteristics such as gender, age, marital status, occupation and education, regarding on the acceptance of milk and soymilk vanilla beverages. They conducted a consumer acceptability test and a ranking test with 142 Spanish people. Their findings revealed that the participants had more knowledge about milk than vegetable milk beverages in general. Furthermore the results showed that for the overall acceptance, soymilk samples had a lower acceptability than the milk samples.

The authors held the opinion that the mean acceptability values do not always accurately reflect the opinion of the population surveyed. They believed that the demographic criteria in terms of examining consumer habits or individual preferences can be helpful and should be taken into consideration.
Concerning the acceptability of the sample, the researchers could not find a significant difference between the genders. Nevertheless, they observed a considerable effect regarding age and acceptability of the samples. Younger participants differed from the older ones. The younger ones considered milk samples to be more acceptable and soy milk beverages as less acceptable in comparison to the older consumers. Similarly, by taking a look at the acceptability between the consumers and non-consumers of soymilk, they detected a significant effect in the interaction between consumer habit and sample acceptability. Regarding the acceptability of the milk samples between soy milk consumers and non-consumers the researchers could not detect any difference. In Villegas, Carbonell and Costell’s (2009) view, this confirmed that habitual consumption of a food product increases its acceptability. Overall they concluded that the differences between the acceptability of vanilla-flavored milk and that of soymilk beverages was mostly linked to the sensorial aspects of both types of beverages. However, demographic criteria such as age, also had some impact.

Another study conducted by Ares and Gámbaro (2007) explored the functional foods market in Uruguay. Functional foods are considered a new category of products and promise some health benefits (Zychowicz-Jezewska, 2009). The authors defined and examined different carriers and enrichments. Among other aims, the authors wanted to investigate the influence of age, gender, education, marital status and household dimension on food choice behavior and functional food acceptance. In total they had 200 participants who filled out a survey. The results showed that depending on gender and age group, varying preference patterns existed. Men and women perceived the healthiness and willingness to try functional food differently. People who were older than 45 years old did not show much interest in changing their food consumption regarding for example their iron intake.

The authors conducted a cluster analysis to reveal possible patterns in food choice between the participants. Every cluster varied significantly from the others. The first cluster consisted of many young people, most of them male. The majority of them lived together with more than three people. The authors supposed that most of these people still live together with their family, who are responsible for food selection and food preparation. They were not significantly concerned about the convenience of the food. The authors linked this result to the family structure of Uruguayan society.

The second cluster, compared to the first one, consisted of a significantly higher age and the distribution of female and male was almost the same. The dimension of households comprised mostly more than three members and regarding food choices, they were more concerned about the use of additives and natural ingredients than the first cluster. The last cluster comprised mostly women and showed the largest average age. 44 people who were 45 years older were situated in this cluster. In this cluster people who lived alone were also included. In general people of the third cluster cared a lot for health and gave great importance to price and convenience. Different factors for different segments were seen as important for the participants, Ares and Gámbaro (2007) therefore concluded that the preference patterns depend on gender as well as age and that functional food should not be aimed for the whole marketplace.

Sun (2008) investigated the impact on food choice motives and attitudes toward healthy eating when taking various health concerns into consideration. The author also created a demographic profile of the participants. This profile consisted of gender, age, vegetarian lifestyle and average eating-out expense. The results revealed significant correlations
between age and gender with health concern factors and some food choice motive factors. Vegetarian lifestyle did not significantly correlate with the major study variables.

Wu et al. (2005) attended to assess consumer attitudes and determine the acceptability of commercial soymilk and dairy yogurts. The authors also took age groups, gender and race into consideration. The results revealed differences regarding the attitudes towards soy products depending on gender, age and race. They also indicated significant differences in the acceptance of soymilk yoghurt among races. The results proved that there were differences regarding demographic factors.

Each above mentioned study considered some demographic factors in their research. However, every author considered and defined different demographic characteristics as important for their research. Although demographic criteria are still important and have some impact on consumer behavior, in developed countries they lose explanatory power (Dagevos, 2005). In the words of Nunes and Cespedes (2003, p.99) “Demographic segmentation can still tell you what people buy,… but demographics no longer tell you how people shop.” There exist other determinants which also help to get a better understanding of consumer behavior.

### 3.1.2 Psychological Factors

Psychological factors which can have an impact on consumer behavior are learning, perception, motivation and attitudes. A consumer is learning new things and therefore acquires more knowledge his or her whole life. Solomon (2011) explained that people are exposed to new stimuli, which modify their attitudes and change their behavior, as they acquire new information and gain experience all the time. These factors change the way people perceive the world. Perception refers to the way individuals reflect, understand or think about people or products. Foxall, Goldsmith and Brown (1998) stated that the choice of a product is influenced by consumers’ perceptions, as these perceptions are strongly related to attitudes and behaviors and powerful enough to account for different reactions toward products. Thus it can be said that depending on how a consumer perceives a certain type of product he or she tends to consume it or not. Opinions and knowledge about foods also have an impact on the perception and hence have an influence on whether the consumer has a positive or negative image about the product (Foxall, Goldsmith and Brown, 1998).

A research done by Jones et al. (2008) addressed the perception of soy and dairy products in order to gain knowledge about consumer’s views and opinions about the health benefits of both products. They were interested in investigating this topic, as both products are perceived to give some benefits to consumers when consuming them. Aimutis (2004) claimed that dairy helps to prevent dental caries, whereas Heaney (2000) discussed the ability to maintain healthy bones. Wu et al. (1998) stated that including soy in a diet can reduce the risk of certain types of cancer. Therefore it was important for the researchers to gain a better understanding of consumers and comprehend what their real opinions about dairy and soy products are. Similarly, both product types contain protein and some consumers especially aim to consume this, as it can enhance immunity (Ha and Zemel, 2003).
However, there could be differences regarding product acceptance between countries. That is why the authors conducted a cross-cultural study in which consumers from the U.S.A and New Zealand participated. Their results revealed that people in both countries shared more or less the same perceptions. The participants of both countries stated that dairy products taste better than soy products. Similarly, they perceived dairy products as a better supplier for calcium and more efficient for developing and maintaining healthy bones. On the other hand, regarding soy products, consumers of the U.S as well as of New Zealand believed that they would decrease the risk of heart disease or cancer and help to deal with weight issues. Here the authors made clear that those beliefs most likely refer to the marketing of both types of products. Nevertheless they found some small differences regarding product feature and health claim perception. For instance, consumers in the U.S hold the opinion that soy products contain a high protein amount, whereas consumers in New Zealand believed that dairy products were high in protein. The authors also stated that there were different views of health benefits in both countries. Regarding some of these differences (high protein and low carbohydrate), the authors concluded that dairy products were more favored by New Zealand consumers and soy products by U.S consumers. Their key findings were the revealing of these small cross-cultural differences regarding knowledge of the health and product benefits of soy and dairy. They also detected a stronger preference for dairy products, compared to soy products, by New Zealand consumers. The authors only considered the perception of these products and did not include other psychological factors such as motivation or attitudes, which could also have been interesting in understanding the behavior of consumer.

Another influencing factor on behavior is the motivation. According to Solomon (2011, p. 154), “motivation refers to the processes that lead people to behave as they do”. Consumers, who feel the urge to satisfy a specific need, are motivated to take some action. It can also be said that consumers want to reach specific goals and therefore motivation is an activity that intends to achieve these objectives (Markin, 1977). Foxall, Goldsmith and Brown (1998) revealed that motivating situations for consumers can occur when there is a given incentive goal, which is normally located outside the consumer. Equally they can be found when there is a condition or state (for example a social need or a physiological stimuli) which drives them to take action.

A research by Nasir and Karakaya (2013) investigated in the underlying motivations of consumers when buying organic foods. Among other things, they considered the environmental responsibility, social responsible consumption, health orientation and hedonic-utilitarian consumption as possible intention factors when purchasing and consuming organic foods. In total, 316 shoppers participated in this study and filled out a questionnaire with 40 different statements. The findings of this study revealed that environmental responsibility and social responsible consumption were significant and interacted with each other. Environmental responsibility acted as a moderator by affecting the impact of socially responsible consumption behavior on purchasing organic foods. Higher purchase intention was given when environmental responsibility was high, but social responsible consumption was low. The authors assumed that consumers’ guilty feelings are the reason for this purchase motivation, as their social responsibility consumption behavior is low. On the other hand, when social responsibility consumption behavior was high, the moderator did not have a strong impact. The authors also detected health orientation and hedonic-utilitarian consumption behavior as predictors or motivation to purchase organic foods.
Comparing this article with the theory about motivation, it can be concluded that people are motivated to purchase certain products, if they feel the urge to contribute to certain things or keep a balance between their actions (for example environmental responsibility and socially responsible consumption behavior). Motivation is an activity that drives consumers when they want to achieve a certain condition such as well-being or eating healthier.

Another psychological factor is the attitude of a consumer. Every person holds specific opinions and has attitudes towards persons, statements, products or services. Fishbein (1975) and Lutz (1991) stated that many factors such as experiences, information or interaction with other people are steps in developing an attitude. They do not hold the opinion that attitudes are inborn. Therefore attitudes also influence what consumers want to buy and what they refuse to purchase. Factors within a person can modify their attitudes and force them to think about their behavior or beliefs. Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory pointed out that people will change their attitudes and behavior if an inconsistency exists. This is due to the fact that people have an inner drive to maintain harmony among feelings, thoughts and behavior (Solomon, 2011).

Considering all the above mentioned factors it can be stated that all of them are interrelated with one another. Each one is having an impact on consumer behavior and influences the way people make their food choice. These days many people are concerned about the environment and their health and therefore their attitudes can change as well. Cardello (1994) and Schifferstein (2001) pointed out that information acquired about a product, past experience as well as attitudes and beliefs contribute to the food selection of consumers.

Sun (2008) investigated in the impact on food choice motives and attitudes toward healthy eating when taking various health concerns into consideration. For the investigation she collected questionnaires of 500 undergraduate students. Her results revealed that variables such as demographics, health concerns, attitudes toward healthy eating and food choice motive factors were significantly correlated. The health concern of consuming too many calories was having a huge impact of consumers’ healthy eating attitudes. These people would directly influence their healthy eating attitudes and indirectly affect their food choice motive. Thus, the author stated that intrinsic determinants predicated eating attitudes in a reasonably reliable manner.

Another study conducted by Wu et al. (2005) attended to assess consumer attitudes and determine the acceptability of commercial soymilk and dairy yogurts. The authors followed a sensory analysis and collected questionnaires of 185 college students in northern Louisiana. The questionnaire was constructed in such a way that they were able to measure the knowledge, consumer attitudes and acceptance of soymilk yogurt. The findings showed that soymilk yogurts were significantly lower rated than dairy yogurts by all participants. However, in another research done by Tuitemwong (1993) Asians tended to accept soy products more willingly, as it would fit to their food consumption habits. Participants who believed that soy products are healthier had a higher acceptance and positive attitude towards them. Contributing to these findings Babb (2002) already revealed that the increased soy consumption might be connected with the fact that people are getting more aware of the health benefits of soy food. Therefore the authors hold the opinion that the level of soy products in a diet can increase when consumers obtain more information about the benefits of the products.
Villegas, Carbonell and Costell carried out a study in 2008 and investigated in the influence of information type for the product as well as consumer attitudes and beliefs on purchase intention of milk and soybean vanilla beverages. 108 people participated in a sensory analysis. The results revealed that depending on the degree of interest in eating healthily, the acceptability and purchase intention for the samples were different. Some of the soy samples were significantly higher rated for consumers who had interest in eating healthily. In general many people were interested in trying new food. A consumers’ attitude or opinion towards these products can depend on the characteristics of the package. The authors hold the opinion that sensory properties of food products are heavily related to the acceptance and expectation towards these products. The type of provided information over these products and the extent to which this information influenced consumer behavior was depending on consumers’ attitudes, such as the interest in eating healthily.

3.1.3 Sociological and Cultural Factors

Social factors such as reference groups, social status or social class can influence consumer behavior significantly. Solomon (2011) asserted that people who belong to the same social class tend to be very similar. This simply means they have many things in common such as similar occupation, lifestyle, income or tastes and often have the same values and ideas. Palmer (2003) held the same opinion by pointing out that consumers can identify themselves with and get influenced by the values of a social class. Solomon (2011) claimed that those people will most likely socialize with one another. Consumers are influenced by the society. Ekström (2010, p. 308) pointed out that social values are important to consumers, as they are considered as “…the desired behavior or end-state for a society or group…” A guide for the behavior of people can consist of reference groups (Palmer, 2003). Palmer (2003) stated that those peer groups can influence consumers primary and direct (considering friends or colleagues) or secondary and indirect (considering media figures or celebrities).

Story, Neumark-Sztainer and French (2002) explained that there are social factors which have an impact on eating behavior of adolescents. Possible influencing factors during this time consist of different reference groups for example family, work colleagues or friends. According to the authors, food choice and eating behavior is strongly related to the relationship within these reference groups. Furthermore they believed that the family of an individual is having a longer lasting and greater influence on the eating behavior and food choice. This is due to the fact that the family provides the food and influences attitudes, preferences and values of the adolescents for a long time. The food environment at schools can also have an impact on adolescents, as they spend much time there. In the view of the authors, friends also played a role in food selection and acceptability, because they spend more time together and people seek approval and a social identity.

The findings about the impact of the family are in line with the opinion of Foxall, Goldsmith and Brown (1998) who stated that this reference group is often the most important one on consumer decisions. Further they claimed that family members influence consumer decisions of an individual with their own desires and attitudes.

Cultures and subcultures are considered as other influencing factors on consumer behavior. However, Palmer (2003) claimed that regarding buying behavior, culture, only
in its widest sense, influence a consumer. Foxall, Goldsmith and Brown (1998, p. 226) defined culture as “…the most general and pervasive influence of the social structure,… which… consists of the knowledge, behaviors, customs and technologies socially acquired by human beings.” There are some similarities in all cultures, but at the same time also differences in beliefs, values and behavior (Foxall, Goldsmith and Brown, 1998). According to Foxall, Goldsmith and Brown (1998), every culture consists of several subcultures, more particularly small scale societies which have beliefs and behaviors which are different from the main groups within that culture. Foxall, Goldsmith and Brown (1998) believed that also social classes can be considered as subcultures and can be divided by for example economic criteria (such as income and wealth). Solomon (2011) noted that individuals could be inclined to follow similar patterns when they are in similar circumstances. With this Solomon (2011) simply meant when people are in similar economic or social circumstances it could be that they have related consumption patterns. Therefore it is also important to consider cultural and subcultural factors, as they impact consumer behavior as well.

Wenrich and Cason carried out a study in 2004 with the aim to gain more knowledge about consumption and perception of soy. More particularly, the authors wanted to focus on and examine a specific group, which were low-income adults. In total they had 353 participants and each of them had to fill out a survey. The results showed that the majority of the target population did not consume soy foods (only 13% included soy foods in their diet). Moreover 42% did not even try soy foods yet. A possible reason for the lack of consumption of soy products could be the price, as 55% stated that the products are too expensive. Also 45% pointed out that these products were not available in their areas. All consumers in this study were in the same economic circumstances and had more or less the same consumption pattern. Lu, Samuels and Huang (2002) claimed that consumers who belong to a lower-income class and are not high educated, do not have good dietary practices. Their statement is supported by the results as all low-income participants were not very familiar with using soy and equally stated that soy is too expensive to purchase.

3.1.4 Personal Factors

Many impacts like demographic, psychological, sociological or cultural determinants influence the consumer’s product and decision choice. However, it is equally important to look at personal factors such as the individual’s personality and lifestyle. All these determinants evolve throughout the life of an individual and always have an impact on the way she or he reacts to different stimuli. “The concept of… personality refers to a person’s unique psychological makeup and how it consistently influences the way a person responds to her environment” (Solomon, 2011, p.240).

However, makeup is not consistent forever and equally is the psychological makeup not forever the same. People can act normal in one situation and at a future date, in a similar situation, they can act completely different. A consumer could follow a very unhealthy diet and then decide to change his or her way of life to a healthier diet in order to support their health. These changes can occur when consumers think about their way of living and might decide to change their lifestyle. Lifestyle defines what consumers tend to
consume and may be considered as “…a statement about who one is in a society and who one is not” (Solomon, 2011, p.254).

Consumers’ preferences regarding lifestyle, view of the world, belongingness to a group or food consumption develop over time. “Products are the building block of lifestyles”, (Solomon, 2011, p. 256), this simply means that consumers seek to purchase and consume products which reinforce the image of them and support their way of living. By following this kind of lifestyle they want to make a statement and demonstrate what kind of values and beliefs they have. Furthermore people can adapt a healthier lifestyle due to the fact that they care for their health and well-being. Jansson-Boyd (2010) claimed that depending on which types of products an individual consumes, he or she is being viewed differently by the society. However, every person somehow seeks for belongingness and therefore people aim to have a clear concept of themselves in order to know what they really want, where they fit in society and to which type of (lifestyle-) group they want and can belong to.

Waldmann et al. (2003) investigated among other things in the lifestyle factors which influence the vegan population in Germany. In total, data of 154 strict and moderate vegans were collected. Regarding the lifestyle factors, the majority stated ethical (64 participants) and health (75 participants) as their main reason for being vegan. Other lifestyle factors such as hygiene, aesthetics, ecology and social were also indicated as possible reasons, but were considered as less important. The authors also examined smoking behavior, consume of alcohol, physical activity, time for relaxation, religious faith and duration of the vegan diet as lifestyle factors. Approximately 73% did not consume alcohol at all and only 3% of all participants smoked. The physical activity was high by approximately 23%, low or middle by about 50% and never by about 30% of the participants. The time of relaxation were considered very differently by all participants and roughly 20% stated not to relax at all. Common activities to relax were meditation, autogenic training, yoga as well as prayers and reading the bible (35% were Seventh-Day Adventists, 30% were Christians and 25% belonged to no religious faith). The duration of the vegan diet was roughly four years for both groups. The authors concluded that vegans practice a healthier lifestyle compared to the average population and that the choice of food and dishes is related to the diet. Different lifestyle factors should be considered when investigating in reasons for consumption, as the lifestyle influences the product choice of a consumer.

Regarding this study, it can be said that it is important to include personality, interests and lifestyle of consumers when trying to comprehend why they purchase and consume certain products. Consumers can be of the same age or have similar socio-economic status, but still differ from each other due to various interests and lifestyles (Palmer, 2003). Thus they will tend to consume different kinds of products, which fit to their personality.
3.2 Current Changes on the Food Market

These days’ consumers are getting more diverse regarding their consumption claims for food. After all, consumers are the final decision makers, influenced by various factors such as demographic, psychological, sociological, cultural and personal factors. Many consumers live more conscious and are better informed about product convenience. Their demand for healthier, high quality and natural food is thereby increased in comparison to other consumers. This can be due to the fact that consumers are more interested in the impact of foods on their health these days (Franz and Nowak, 2010; Lalor et al., 2011), but equally if they have a certain allergy or intolerance. Gray et al. (2003) stated that therefore the competition on the market is increasing and that the market provides consumers with many different kinds of products in order to satisfy their specific needs.

Palmer (2003) pointed out that companies try to develop ideal types of life-style segments in order to address desired consumers. Companies aim to address the right segment of people by pointing out features which are important to a specific group. These features can exist of various things such as health benefits or supporting the environment when consumers are buying specific products or services. In the food industry the voice of the consumer is the core, as consumer are very careful with their bodies and consider what they ingest. Their decision for products is depending on various factors such as their attitudes towards health, lifestyle, quality or consumption patterns (Hollywood, Armstrong and Durkin, 2007). The authors also stated that milk witnessed some changes in recent years due to the fact that consumers are changing their behavior and attitudes towards milk. Many milk alternative products such as soy, oat, rice or almond milk entered the market in order to satisfy the constantly changing consumer needs, compete with milk and provide more options.

The increased awareness of consumers regarding health and considering foods for improving the life quality, forced companies to respond with new products, the so called functional foods (Bland and Medcalf, 1994; Blades, 2000; Verschuren, 2002). Functional foods can be considered as providing additional benefits to consumers (Menrad, 2003). According to Menrad (2003, p.181), functional food is intended to “…prevent nutrition-related diseases and increase physical and mental well-being of consumers”. Camire, Dougherty and Teh (2006) described the development of specialized functional foods by combining functional ingredients in order to enhance specific health benefits. Maftei et al. (2013) considered the mixture of soy milk beverages and fruit juices as a new generation of soy products and an answer to the health interests of consumers.

It can be concluded that the food industry is constantly changing and developing products which meet the expectations and lifestyle of consumers. Consumers are concerned about their health and therefore they might tend to purchase products which are claimed to support and improve their health and well-being. Also milk substitute products can be received as functional foods as they provide some benefits to the consumers. Almond milk is a good source of magnesium or Vitamin E which protects the cell membranes (The Ecologist, 2015). Soy milk contains for example cancer-fighting isoflavones which could be a reason why consumers are interested in consuming this product (The Ecologist, 2015).
3.3 Models of Consumer Behavior

The Stimulus-Response Model (S-R Model) assumes that a certain stimulus enters the “black box” of a consumer and produces a response (Foscht and Swoboda, 2011). The behavior of the individual is only analyzed based on the input and output variables of the “black box”. This means, that the buyers’ characteristics are not considered and this model cannot examine or explain why consumers buy specific products and others do not.

Unlike the S-R Model, the Stimulus-Organism-Response Model (S-O-R Model) attempts to understand the wide range of characteristics variables which influence the consumer and take a look at the so called “black box”. According to Foscht and Swoboda (2011) the S-O-R Model considers the observable (stimuli and responses) and intervening (aimed to describe the “black box”) variables and connect them with each other. Kroeber-Riel, (1974, p.160 f.) described the intervening variables as activating (emotion, motivation, attitudes) and cognitive (perception, learning, memory) processes. This model helps to comprehend consumers and to a large extent reveals the reasons behind a consumers’ behavior. Due to the complexity of the consumer behavior, there exist other partial analyses which consider psychological, personal, sociological and cultural determinants in more detail.

Other models which try to comprehend the underlying forces operating within consumers are for example the sociological and psychological model. Interaction of needs, stimuli, cues, responses and reinforcements are according to the psychological model (Pavlovian Learning Model) the reasons for a certain behavior (Sahney, n.d). This model was proposed by Ivan Pavlov, who conducted conditioning reflex experiments on dogs (Al-Jeraisy, 2008). By purchasing and consuming certain products, consumers are seeking to experience satisfaction. Sahney (n.d) discussed these models in her lecture and described that according to the model, learning experience by buyers is strongly related to their behavior. She further explained that consumers, who experienced satisfaction, got reinforced to purchase the product again and thereby the decision process was routinized. A limitation of this model is the fact that it only considers learning, any other determinant like perception, personality, attitudes or reference groups is not included (Sahney, n.d). Sahney (n.d) also discussed the sociological model, which considers social groups and forces such as reference groups and culture. According to this model, social influences such as culture, sub-culture and social group have a significant influence on consumer behavior.
3.4 Analysis Model

All the existing theories and articles about consumers’ behavior and psychology provided the basics in order to comprehend consumer behavior in general and specifically consumers’ food choices in a better way. There exist many scientific articles which examined the importance of demographic, psychological, sociological, cultural and personal determinants considering the food consumption and choice. These articles provided a good basis for creating the analysis model, as they considered all topics which were relevant for the investigation. Every article covered different factors, thus it was difficult to decide which factors would be of interest for my own investigation. However, by reading and connecting all these articles with each other, it was possible to figure out which determinants were of specific interest for the research. The main goal was to examine the behavior of Swedes towards milk substitute products. Considering the psychological factors, many articles addressed perception, attitudes and learning when considering the food consumption and choice of consumers. Every article considered different psychological determinants and revealed interesting results. Articles about demographic, social and cultural and personal influences on food choice contributed to a better understanding as well. These articles provided crucial factors about different kinds of influences and were included in the analysis model. The theories and scientific articles about demographic, psychological, sociological, cultural and personal determinants helped to understand the behavior of Swedish people and interpret the collected primary data. The gained knowledge about the determinants further allowed making assumptions for the milk consumption in the future.

It can be stated that many researchers already tried to examine the reasons for specific behavior and attitudes towards food choices and consumption. However, there barely exist qualitative research that considers milk substitute products and most scientific articles consisted of a quantitative investigation. Thus, most research did not specifically investigate further how and what consumers perceive by purchasing milk substitute products. Factors, which change the consumption behavior and attitudes of consumers and drive them to buy milk substitute products, are important to examine as there could be an impact on the consumption of milk in the future. Furthermore, most articles about milk substitute products attempted to investigate in the taste and acceptance of those products. A qualitative study which considers all consumer behavior determinants towards milk substitute products has not been conducted yet. Therefore the analysis model consisted of all factors which influence an individual when making a consumption choice. By combining all factors which are described by the S-O-R, sociological and psychological model an analysis model could be created.
In my investigation I assumed that certain stimuli such as demography, health, environment, animal welfare, reference groups and subcultures enter the “black box” of a consumer. These stimuli have a certain impact on the consumer behavior towards milk substitute products. Furthermore the individuals’ attitudes, lifestyle, perception, motivation, interests and learning influence the way how the consumers behave towards these milk alternative products and predict whether there is a purchase intention or not. This means that one or several stimuli combined with certain determinants of the “black box” can predict why consumers buy those specific products.
4. Empirical Evidence

By following the qualitative research approach it was possible to conduct ten interviews in total. All gained information of the interviews is presented in this chapter. The aim of this chapter is to explain which kinds of people participated in the interviews and what kind of data was collected. Furthermore the chapter illustrates how the data are arranged in order to create an efficient connection to the theoretical framework and analysis model. Finally it highlights and summarizes all important information in order to enable an effective interpretation of the data according to the analysis model.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

4.1.1 Gender

For the qualitative study ten interviews were collected in total. Out of these ten interviews nine participants were female and one was male.

4.1.2 Age

![Figure 3: Age of the Participants (own creation)](image)

One participant was 21 years old. Two people were situated between 27-36 years with an age of 27 and 33. Two participants were also situated between 37-46 years with an age of 37 and 38. Five of the people were situated between 47-56 years with an age such as 48, 51, 52, 55 and 56.
4.1.3 Place of Residence

Four participants named Vänersborg as their place of residence. Other three participants pointed out to live in Gothenburg. One participant lives in Lidköping, another one lives in Stenungsund and one in Åmål.

4.1.4 Occupation

Regarding the occupation of each participant it was revealed that some participants had two occupations. The male participant is an engineer for hybrid cars and at the same time he also repairs cars in his private car workshop. Another participant stated to work as a
dance teacher and massage therapist. One participant is working at a university as a political science teacher and is responsible as the international coordinator. Due to her new born child one woman indicated to be a housewife at the moment. Two people stated to be self-employed as owners of a restaurant. Three people are working for civil service and one participant is working as a store manager.

### 4.1.5 Income

![Figure 6: Perception of Income of each Participant (own creation)](image)

All participants were asked whether they perceive their income as high, medium or low. Six of the participants regarded their income as medium. Three participants perceived it as low and only one as a high income.

### 4.1.6 Household Group

![Figure 7: Household Group of the Participants (own creation)](image)

Two of the participants stated to live in a single household whereby four of the participants indicated to live together with another person. Two people pointed out to have two other people living in their household. One participant stated to live together with four other people and another one stated to live in a six-people-household.
4.2 Lifestyle

In total ten people were interviewed and all had different kinds of hobbies. Some of the participants had more than one hobby or interest. Mentioned outdoor activities were running, cycling, being outside in the nature, skiing, horse riding and swimming. Other activities were politics and activism, dancing, sewing and interest in cars. Two people also stated weight lifting as a hobby. One participant stated not to have the time for doing any kinds of sport or hobbies.

Three of the participants run a lot in order to maintain their health. One person pointed out “I am running the half marathon in Gothenburg every year.” A common hobby was yoga as four of the participants declared to practice it on a regular basis. Three participants also expressed their involvement with the nature and stated to be interested in nature. “I love to be outside in the nature, because then I feel calm.” Other three people also claimed that their way of living is very stressful attended with more work and responsibility.
Out of the ten participants five noted the aim of following and maintaining a healthy way of living. The following statements were made: “I want to live a healthy lifestyle.” “I eat very healthy.” “I pay attention to nutrient and ethical aspects when I make food choices.” One participant also stated to follow and get inspired by a specific way of living, the Ayurveda lifestyle. This lifestyle emphasizes to eat more fresh, seasonal, organic fruits and vegetables and reduce the consumption of dairy products. Two participants regarded it as part of their lifestyle to regularly produce their own food. “I have my own mini-farm where I produce my own food, because I want to know where the meat is coming from.”

All participants were asked whether they follow a vegan or vegetarian diet. A vegan diet normally excludes all products of animal origin whereas a vegetarian normally still consumes eggs or dairy products. Participants who were vegan or vegetarian (four participants) mentioned this as an integral part of their lifestyle. Statements like “It is important how you live and I make sure that I live in a good way” or “It is not just about skipping dairy or meat products, it is also about choice of clothes or shampoo” were made. The other six participants stated to consume meat.

![Diet of the Participants](image)

Figure 10: Diet of the Participants (own creation)
4.3 Kinds of Milk Substitute Products

The participants were asked which kinds of milk substitute products they consume. The majority consumes more than one kind of milk substitute products.

Eight interviewees pointed out to like oat milk and include it in their diet. One woman stated to like oat milk but due to the oat allergy of her child she cannot consume it. The last participant pointed out to only consume almond milk. Three participants also stated to regularly consume soy milk. Two participants expressed that they only consume oat milk as an alternative for milk. One participant stated “I only consume oat milk from Oatly, because they add more vitamins, like B12, which I cannot get from eating vegetables.” Three participants also like rice milk. Similarly also coconut milk was mentioned by two interviewees as possible alternative to milk.
The participants were asked to name their favorite milk substitute brands. Most participants had more than one favorite brand. Eight out of ten mentioned oat milk from Oatly as one of their favorites. Five people also mentioned Alpro as a favorite brand. The home brand of ICA is purchased by two participants. The home brand of Hemköp and the Ricedream brand are purchased by one participant each as well. Two participants only purchase the products of Oatly and one participant only buys Alpro. All participants go either to ICA, Hemköp or Coop to buy milk substitute products, no participant goes to a special food store.

### 4.4 Duration of Consumption

Figure 13: Duration of Milk Substitute Products Consumption by each Participant (own creation)
The duration of consumption varied between each participant. The male participant consumed milk substitute products the longest time with 24 years. The shortest period of consumption was stated to be half a year. Other participants stated consumption since approximately one, two, four or five years. Two participants expressed to live without milk for 15 years. The other two participants do not consume milk for ten and 20 years. When considering an ordinary week eight of the participants stated to consume milk substitute products every day. Only two people stated to consume the products twice or thrice a week. Statements like “I try to make food without any substitutes” or “I only use milk substitutes when I am cooking” were made.

4.5 Awareness of Milk Substitute Products

Figure 14: How the Participants got to know the Products (sometimes more than one reason) (own creation)

The results of how the participants got to know milk substitute products are different and sometimes more than one reason was responsible for their knowledge about them.

The male participant started to learn about these products back in the eighties when he decided to be a vegetarian. At that time there were not many milk substitute products or supermarkets which sold these products, that is why he had to search for special health food stores. “I remember the first time when I went in one of those special stores, it was very exciting to explore all these new and uncommon products.” He got to know these products due to his own interest. When he turned vegan in 1991 he received some inspiration from health societies. Also two other participants explained that they searched for these products in shops out of their own interest.

One participant also commented to get to know these products due to her own interest. “I mainly navigated myself through this jungle of milk alternative products.” However, she also stated that friends, online blogs and advertisements on TV and Facebook contributed to her knowledge about the products. Another participant read blogs and got advice and recommendations by friends. Two other participants had first contact with those milk alternative products through friends and advertisements on TV. A friend of one participant recommended her the Oatly products and that is how she learned about them.
One participant had to change her diet due to her child and therefore she went to a dietician to learn more about her diet and the milk substitute products. The last participant read in health magazines about the products and saw advertisements on TV.

4.6 Reasons for Consumption

For the male participant the animal welfare was the main motivation to stop consuming dairy products in the beginning. “I know a lot about the dairy industry and how the animals are treated there.” He stated that he is “very well aware” of the fact that the dairy and meat industry are closely related to each other and he does not want to support any of those industries. He feels solidarity with the animals and the people in developing countries and therefore he does not want to consume milk. These days, he also does not consume milk due to mental and environmental reasons. For him it is very important to contribute something positive to the planet and to change something. “I think it is the easiest and most valuable way to contribute to the health of the planet.” He stated to not consume milk anymore due to animal, environmental and health reasons. He commented “I cannot say that animal or environmental reasons are more important than my health or my health more important than animal or environmental reasons. All these reasons are equally important to me.” Due to these reasons it is a strong conviction for him to be a vegan and there is “no turning back anymore.” He pointed out that he would never start to consume milk again.

Also another participant pointed out to not consume milk due to animal reasons. “It is a compassion for me because I started to see animals as equals to humans.” In her childhood she witnessed a situation which changed her attitudes towards meat and dairy products. She was in a summer camp where they had many cows and she looked after them every day. One day the cows were gone and the farmer told her that she would have them for dinner. “It was very devastating for me, it was horrible to take care of a living animal and
then to get them as a meal.” Due to this bad experience she started to change and think about dairy products in a different way. Later on she also started to interest herself for the environmental perspectives. “I started to work for Greenpeace and understood the whole environmental perspective in a better way.” She did not adopt this lifestyle due to health reasons. Similarly, also another participant explained that she stopped the consumption of milk due to the animal abuse. She consumed more milk before but then she watched different movies and started to critically think about the meat and dairy industry. “I am an animal lover, since I was 14.” These days, she also considers it as a personal and moral obligation to not consume milk.

Other motivations to exclude milk from the diet were health related. One participant stated that she had extreme problems with allergies, acne and eczema since she was a teenager. First she got medicine against it, but it got worse and for this reason her doctor recommended her to leave out dairy products from her diet. She was a large milk consumer before, but due to her health she had to adapt. She commented: “When I saw that there were more milk alternatives and I did not have to change my diet heavily, it was okay for me.”

Another participant expressed that her stomach cannot handle milk because it is really sensible towards it. Health was the main reason why she started to exclude milk from her diet. Now she also cares for animal and environmental reasons. “I did not consume those products due to animal or environmental reasons in the beginning.” But since I became limited in what I can eat, I have been reading what milk does to the environment, animals and to our bodies and we are not supposed to drink milk.” She expressed that even if her stomach would be better again, she would not start to consume milk again. She stated that “nobody benefits from cow’s milk expect from the industry and the farmers.”

Similarly, also another person was having health problems when consuming cow’s milk. She stated to have a bad stomach, ache in her whole body and often headache when consuming milk. However, the reason she stopped consuming milk in the beginning was due to the fact that she got inspired by the Ayurveda lifestyle. She did not consider animal or environmental aspects as a reason for her consumption change. Regarding the milk substitute products she pointed out that “it is nice to have something that is almost like milk.”

One participant also stated to have a bad stomach when consuming milk. She went to a homeopath who recommended her to exclude dairy products from her diet. These days, she also cares for animal rights and wants to contribute something good to the planet. According to her “it is not good for anybody to drink milk and more people have health issues because of dairy consumption.”

Other motives to change the milk consumption were due to the dislike of the taste of milk and a milk protein allergy of the child. One participant pointed out to not like the taste of milk and thus she never consumed large amounts of milk. She also had problems with her throat and stomach when drinking milk and therefore she decided to exclude it from her diet. In this case neither animal nor environmental reasons were of relevance to her. She stated “I tried out a milk substitute product and found out that it works better for my body.” After consuming this milk substitute product for half a year she tried to consume milk again but found out that she did not like the taste of milk at all anymore and therefore she did not shift back to milk consumption.
The last participant did not consume milk for over 50 years due to the fact that she does not like the taste of milk. “It is not about health or environmental reasons.” For five years she discovered the milk substitute products and started to consume them.

One person explained to stop consuming milk due to her baby. The baby is having a milk protein allergy and she is still breastfeeding her and therefore she cannot drink milk. Before then she pointed out that she consumed more milk. She stated that even if her baby is older, she “is convinced to still consume some milk substitute products.”

4.7 Differences since Consumption Change

The participants were asked whether they feel or not feel any differences since they stopped consuming milk. Nine participants pointed out to notice different kinds of changes in their bodies and their general feeling. The male participant explained that while he consumed milk he had to deal with skin problems. After excluding dairy products he stated that the problems disappeared and that he “feels more energetic and better” since he adopted the vegan lifestyle. Also another participant reported about skin problems such as acne or eczema, which disappeared after excluding milk from her diet.

Another participant expressed that she feels “more pure and awake” since she excluded dairy and meat products from her diet. One participant stated that she is not sure about whether she feels better in her body or if it is just an imagination in her head due to her knowledge about the milk substitute products. She said that “a person reacts to the things he or she has knowledge about.” However, she expressed to feel more pure and feels stronger in her beliefs and opinions, because she knows that she consumes the right products. Four participants pointed out to have a better stomach and digestion after shifting to milk substitute products. Statements like “My stomach is not so swollen anymore”, “I felt that my stomach became so much better when I quit drinking milk” or “My stomach and bowel works much better” were made. Decline of headache and ache in the body as well as loss of weight were reported.
The majority of participants (8 participants) also pointed out to feel healthier now. Among others, the following statements were made “I had more infections before the consumption change”, “I have more energy and not so many colds anymore.” One participant who stopped consuming milk half a year ago stated to not feel up and downs with her blood sugar anymore and therefore more balanced.

4.8 Household Adaption and Reference Groups

Considering the influence of reference groups the participants described different scenarios.

The male participant explained that he and his mother went vegetarian together and stopped consuming milk. His parents also adapted to his way of living as “they wanted to be able to offer me food.” Later on, his whole family adapted to this lifestyle as well. “It developed to be important for them too.” Also three other participants stated that their household adapted to the consumption of milk substitute products. The statement of one participant was “I do not want to cook several different meals to satisfy every single one in my household and therefore everyone had to adapt.”

However, six of the participants indicated that their household did not adapt to the consumption of milk substitute products. One participant stated that her mother always told her to be nice to animals and gave her this idea of thinking differently. However, also no one of her family stopped to consume milk. Another participant who lives in a single household expressed that her parents bought the milk substitute products for her when she was still living at home, but they continued to consume milk. Also four other participants pointed out that their household still consumes milk but not such large amounts. One participant stated that she buys more milk substitute products when her son comes to visit them due to the fact that he is a vegan. “My son makes me try new products and inspires me.” She said that she started to think more about animals and the environment due to her son. Furthermore, she pointed out that she wants to influence other people. “A person does not have to use milk and it is an important mission for me to show that to other people.” Another participant pointed out that she would not buy milk when her son is coming to visit her. “I would not buy milk just for him. He can eat what we offer him.”

Nine participants stated to have people who also not consume milk in their circle of friends. One participant explained that she went to a vegetarian cooking course with two others of the participants and afterwards a friend of her turned a vegetarian. She also stated that during this course one of her friends had some impact on her regarding the food choice and attitudes towards the dairy and meat industry. One participant also expressed that she has a friend who is vegan and that “she is really inspiring” for her. However, all participants also have friends who still consume milk in their circle of friends.

All participants pointed out that the opinion of other people does not matter a lot to them when they consume or purchase milk substitute products. One participant stated “I never really cared about what other people said about my way of living.” However, three people
feel slightly uncomfortable due to the fact that going out, for example in a restaurant, is difficult to them. This is due to the fact that some of them excluded not only milk, but also meat and gluten from their diet. One participant stated “I feel a little bit different and like I would stick out of the crowd.” Another participant expressed “It is difficult to go out because milk and cream is included in every food in Sweden.” Another one stated that she sometimes feels offended because friends do not understand her way of living. Another participant stated “I miss the simplicity of eating milk, because it is difficult to go out and eat in a restaurant or by other relatives and friends.”

4.9 Perception of Milk and Milk Substitute Products

All participants considered the milk substitutes as very positive and tasty. The majority of the participants stated to “forgot the taste of milk” over the years. The opinions about the price of milk substitute products varied. One statement of a participant was “I always try to think that the price tag we see is not the real price. I mean the price tag for cow’s milk does not show the real cost for it. If I look at the milk substitute products which I buy in a bigger perspective, it is much cheaper. Not cheaper for my wallet, but better for the environment.”

Also other participants stated that they do not care about the price of milk substitute products, as they help to contribute to their health and well-being. “When you look at the product itself, it is not worth the more expensive price. But by looking at the health benefits which they give me, they are worth the money.” Furthermore, some participants pointed out that they do not use as much milk substitute products as they used milk before. “I do not drink it pure, as I did it with milk, so in that sense I think milk is still tastier and I would probably prefer it, but for some reasons I do not miss it.” “I think they are worth it because of the personal benefits and the environmental reasons, but I do not consume them so often.”

However, compared to milk not every participant believed that the milk substitute products are worth their more expensive price. One participant stated that almond milk is “a bit too pricy” in her opinion. Another participant regarded all kinds of milk substitute products as overpriced.

Two other participants stated that they do not want to consume products which contain soy. This attitude is due to the fact that one participant believed that soy is bad for her body when regarding hormones. Another reason for a participant was that the soy industry is related to the meat and dairy industry and she does not want to support those industries. Moreover, she believed that those products are overpriced.

Considering the taste, texture and similarity to milk all participants said that they got used to the taste and perceived the milk substitute products as different but acceptable. “I do not miss milk, I like the oat-milk.” Another participant explained “I do not know if you can compare it exactly, they have a different taste and texture, but not in a bad way.” The male participant perceives milk as slimy in his mouth and milk substitute products as better in taste and feeling. Another participant, who cannot consume milk due to health
problems pointed out that milk is still tastier for her but “as long as there are many opportunities and varieties “she can exclude milk from her diet.

Another participant described the branding of Oatly as very catchy and nice. “Oatly- wow no cow”, this statement on the package made me start thinking.” She pointed out that she feels really good with the product, as she perceives it as pure. “I know that it is made in Sweden and I feel secure with the product.”

The conversations with the participants always led to a short discussion about the future of milk consumption in Sweden. Nine out of ten participants actually believed that there is going to be a consumption change in the future. One participant stated “People are more open-minded and might try different products.” Another participant expressed that she believes that the brand Oatly will be a threat to the milk industry in the future. She also stated that when she gets children, they will never consume any dairy or meat product. Only one participant did not believe in a bigger consumption change as “Sweden is a milk country, so there will not be a huge change.”

4.10 Summary of Empirical Data

Reviewing the demographic factors it can be said that the majority of milk substitute consumers were women (nine participants). Among the interviewees many different age-groups starting from 21 until 56 years were represented. Various areas of Västra Götaland as well as different kinds of occupations were represented in the results. The income was perceived as medium by the majority of people (six participants). The household size varied between the participants but the majority lived together with another person (four participants).

The milk consumption and adaption to milk substitute products of the households was examined. The participants stated the following results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adapted</th>
<th>Not Adapted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Participants</td>
<td>6 Participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 17: Household Adaption of the Participants (own creation)

The lifestyle of most participants was very active with various kinds of hobbies. Three participants run to maintain a healthy condition and four people do yoga in order to relax and maintain a balance. One participant followed the Ayurveda lifestyle which emphasizes the reduction of dairy consumption. Five participants stated the goal of living healthy and following a healthy lifestyle.

The majority of the participants had more than one favorite product and brand of milk substitute products. Top three products were oat, soy and almond milk. Eight people stated to include oat milk from Oatly in their diet. Five participants also stated Alpro as a favorite brand. The milk substitute products were consumed every day by eight of the
participants. Six persons were consuming these products in the stretch of one and a half and eleven years.

Regarding how the participants got to know milk substitute products it can be stated that friends, advertisements and the own interest about milk substitute products were the most common causes.

Reviewing all conducted interviews the following aspects were the most important reasons to change the milk consumption.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>4 Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Welfare</td>
<td>3 Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike of Milk Taste</td>
<td>2 Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to the Child</td>
<td>1 Participant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 18: Main Reason of the Participants to consume Milk Substitute Products (own creation)

The majority of participants also reported about differences in their bodies and in general feeling. Two participants stated skin problems which disappeared and four people stated to have a better stomach and digestion. Also the feeling of having more energy and feeling more pure was named by two participants. Eight participants also expressed to feel healthier after shifting to milk substitute products.

Nine out of ten participants had friends in their circle who also do not consume milk. All participants stated that the opinion of other people does not matter to them when they purchasing or consuming milk substitute products. However, to some extent three people feel uncomfortable because they feel like they would stand out of the crowd.

Most participants were willing to pay a higher price for the products due to personal, animal or environmental reasons. Some brands were perceived as a bit too expensive by participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worth the higher Price</td>
<td>8 Participants</td>
<td>2 Participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 19: Price Perception of the Milk Substitute Products by the Participants (own creation)

Nine of the participants believed that Sweden will witness a milk consumption change in the future.
5. Interpretation

This chapter aims at analyzing and discussing the revealed findings of the investigation. It also aims at answering the research questions by connecting the primary data with the analysis model and theoretical framework. In addition, it also examines the different stimuli and the “black box” of the individuals. In the next step it makes assumptions about factors which influence the behavior of Swedish people towards milk substitute products. Furthermore, the chapter discusses which factors could be related to each other. Finally it aims at making assumptions and giving information about the future milk consumption in Sweden for Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund.

5.1 Influence of Different Stimuli

5.1.1 Demography

The empirical findings revealed that there were significant differences of consumption regarding the age and the gender of the participants. Five people who were between 47-56 years tended to consume milk substitute products more often. These findings are in line with the theory of Palmer (2003) who stated that a product choice is often age-related. Milk substitute products were mainly consumed by women. Due to these findings there could be a tendency that women consume milk substitute products more often than men do. Ares and Gámbaro (2007) showed similar findings with varying preference patterns depending on gender and age.

Three people who were between 47-56 years also stated to care a lot for their health and therefore consider their food choice very carefully. Similar findings were made by Sun (2008) who revealed correlations between age and gender with health concern factors and food choice motive factors.

The availability and consumption of products can vary depending on the geographic location or area of a consumer (Solomon, 2011). However, the results showed that the same kinds of milk substitute products were available in parts of Västra Götaland such as Gothenburg, Vänersborg, Lidköping, Stenungsund and Åmål. There was no geographic significance in terms of unavailability of the products. Similarly, no differences could be revealed in terms of consumption behavior of milk substitute products and occupations of the participants. The consumption occurred in different occupations and also the income did not play an important role. Also participants with a low, medium and high income stated to consume and purchase milk substitute products.

The results also showed that four households adapted and started to consume milk substitute products. These findings are in line with Palmer (2003) who explained that households normally consume as an economic union and do not consider individual needs and wants. However, six households did not adapt to the new consumption behavior and...
therefore it can be stated that the majority of households likely do not consume as an economic union.

**5.1.2 Health, Animal Welfare and Environment**

Three participants stated animal welfare as their main reason of starting to change their consumption. They do care for them and feel a kind of solidarity with the animals and that is why they consume milk substitute products. The well-being of animals therefore plays a major role for a consumer when it comes to deciding whether to consume or not consume milk. Also health problems were pointed out by four participants and stated to be the main reason for the change in their consumption. Participants had to deal for example with skin problems, headaches or digestion problems. There could be a tendency that more people have to stop the consumption of milk due to health problems.

A significant result was that none of the participants stated the environment as a reason for the beginning of consuming milk substitute products. However, participants who started to consume milk substitute products due to animal reasons also started to care for the environment later on. Similarly, some participants who stopped consuming milk due to health reasons also started to care for animal welfare or the planet at a later date. According to these findings it can be concluded that people started to change their consumption due to one main reason and at a later time strengthened their consumption pattern with other things which seemed important to them.

**5.1.3 Reference Groups and Subcultures**

Different results were revealed regarding the influence of reference groups on the consumption behavior of the participants. Two out of ten participants pointed out that the family adapted to consume milk substitute products instead of milk. Another participant pointed out that her mother influenced her and gave the idea of thinking differently about animals to her. These results could be compared with the findings of Foxall, Goldsmith and Brown (1998) who explained that family members are the most important reference group and influence consumers with their own desires and attitudes. The findings were also in line with Story, Neumark-Sztainer and French (2002) who also stated that the family has a longer lasting and greater influence on food choice and behavior.

The results showed that they were people who had the same income and occupation such as civil servant and stated that they socialized with each other and spend some free time activities together. They tended to have the same values and beliefs regarding milk substitute products. Solomon (2011) also stated that people who belong to the same social class tend to be similar in regard of their occupation, lifestyle, income, values and beliefs. The findings also revealed that people who work in the same working place, had similar incomes and values which led to a tendency to socialize with each other. Additionally these people tended to have the same way of living. The participants who perceived their income as medium seemed to have similar consumption patterns. This is in line with the
assumption of Solomon (2011) who stated that consumers have related consumption patterns when they are in the same economic or social circumstances. The findings are also in line with the study made by Wenrich and Cason (2004) who revealed that people in the same economic circumstances had more or less the same patterns regarding substitute products.

Palmer (2003) pointed out that peer groups such as friends or colleagues can also have a direct impact on consumers. Six out of ten participants pointed out that they got to know the milk substitute products due to friends, which consumed such products before. People also stated to have friends who had an impact on their way of thinking and their food consumption behavior. Nine out of ten participants stated to have friends in their circle who also consume milk substitute products. These findings were in line with the study results of Story, Neumark-Sztainer and French (2002) who stated that friends played a role in food selection and acceptability due to the fact that they spend much time together and seek for approval and social identity.

5.2 The Organism

5.2.1 Personal Factors

In order to understand the behavior of Swedish consumers towards milk substitute products it was important to reveal personal factors such as the individual’s lifestyle and interests. The lifestyle of an individual defines what he or she tends to consume (Solomon, 2011). Four participants either followed a vegan or vegetarian diet due to health or ethical reasons which led to a change in their consumption behavior. Also Waldmann et al. (2003) revealed in their investigation that main reasons to follow a vegan lifestyle were ethical or health related. Also a healthy way of living and thus a more carefully choice of foods was pointed out by participants who were vegan, vegetarian or none of both. One participant also stated to follow the Ayurveda lifestyle and thus adapted the consumption behavior.

Solomon (2011) asserted that people seek to buy products which support their lifestyle and reinforce their image. The results of this study are in line with the assumptions of Solomon (2011) and it can be stated that consumers are willing to consume milk substitute products to support their specific way of living and to demonstrate what kind of values and beliefs they have. It was revealed that people who consume milk substitute products tended to have a quite active way of living as many people stated outdoor activities and yoga as common interests. This can also be related to their wish of living a healthy lifestyle, keeping a mental balance and therefore supporting their health.

Even though the opinion of other people seemed not to matter a lot to the participants some of them still pointed out to feel uncomfortable when going out with other people due to their specific consumption behavior. This is due to the fact of standing out of the crowd, or not feeling the belongingness to the group as well as being viewed differently. However, most people stated to have friends or family members who have a similar consumption behavior and therefore to feel comfortable most of the times. These findings
were in line with Jansson-Boyd (2010) who explained that people are viewed differently by society depending on which products they consume. Individuals seek for belongingness and therefore the majority of people had friends in their circle who were vegan or vegetarian or friends who do not consume milk in general. This gave them a feeling of not being different and contributed to strengthen the concept of themselves as they know that there are other people who have the same consumption behavior as they do.

5.2.2 Psychological Factors

Consumers learn new things and gain knowledge about products throughout their entire life. All participants got to know about milk substitute products for different reasons such as advertisements, friends, social media or due to their own interest. The general knowledge of a consumer also has an impact on consumer behavior towards substitute products. Participants stated a different perception of the meat and dairy industry after seeing documentations or reading books which dealt with the treatment of animals in industries. Due to the fact that an individual is exposed to new stimuli all the time the own attitudes are likely to alter and a change of behavior occurs over time. The perception of a product is strongly related to the attitudes and behavior of a consumer and can be the reason for different reactions toward these products (Foxall, Goldsmith and Brown, 1998).

All participants of the study perceived milk substitute products as different to milk but acceptable and positive. They also had a positive perception towards milk alternative products due to personal and health benefits such as well-being or the feeling of pureness which arose by consuming the products. Also the fact that those products contributed to different goals the consumers had such as better health conditions, animal welfare or supporting the planet could be a reason for the consumption.

Milk was perceived as negative by many participants and connected with a bad feeling or taste in comparison to milk substitute products. Similarly, also two participants perceived soy milk as negative either to health concerns or due to a relation of the production of soy products with the dairy and meat industry. Due to these reasons they refused to consume soy products. Jones et al. (2008) investigated in the perception of consumers towards soy and dairy products and revealed some small differences regarding product feature and health claim perception. These findings support the fact that the perception of a product contributes to the willingness of consuming it. Even though some participants perceived milk substitute products as too expensive the majority of them expressed to be willing to pay a higher price for the products due to personal, animal or environmental reasons. This can also be related to their positive perceptions and attitudes towards those products.

As already mentioned above perception is strongly correlated to attitudes and behavior of a consumer. Fishbein (1975) and Lutz (1991) explained that an attitude is developed by experiences, information or interaction with people. These findings are in line with the current study as for example one participant stated to witness a bad situation in her childhood which changed her attitudes towards dairy and meat products. Also another participant pointed out to have different attitudes after the interaction with other people in a vegetarian cooking course.
Solomon (2011) claimed that people have an inner drive to maintain harmony among their feelings, thoughts and behavior. The current study also revealed that the participants tended to seek for a balance between supporting their goals, opinions, maintain a good feeling by consuming the, in their opinion, the “right products” and behaving in a certain way. The participants had a positive attitude towards milk substitute products due to the fact that they feel healthier since they started to consume them. The current results can be compared with the study made by Wu et al. (2005) who revealed that people who believed in soy products to be healthier also had a higher acceptance and positive attitude towards them. Villegas, Carbonell and Costell (2009) revealed that many people are interested in trying new kind of foods. In addition the type of provided information over a product and the extent to which this information influenced consumer behavior was depending on consumers’ attitudes. These results are comparable with the current investigation as one participant pointed out to be very open-minded to new milk substitute products and that her attitudes got modified by reading the information on the package of substitute products. The current findings confirmed the statement of Hollywood, Armstrong and Durkin (2007) who stated that various factors such as attitudes towards health, lifestyle, quality or consumption patterns influence the purchase intention for products.

Also motivation can be seen as a significant factor which influenced the consumption behavior of Swedish people. Foxall, Goldsmith and Brown (1998) stated that motivating situations can occur when there is an incentive goal or a situation which is located outside of a consumer. Each participant had the urge for a consumption change due to a specific need such as a better health condition or to take some action regarding animal or environmental support. Nasir and Karakaya (2013) revealed a connection between environmental responsibility and social responsible consumption as underlying motivation of organic food consumers. In their study environmental responsibility was acting as a moderator and differences between the purchase intention depending on whether the environmental or social responsible consumption was high or not were revealed. Their findings cannot be compared with the current results as the participants did not show any higher or lower purchase intention depending on the reasons for their consumption.
5.3 Summary of Analysis Model

On the basis of all mentioned above evidence it can be concluded that demographic factors such as age and gender had a significant impact on the consumer behavior. Regarding health, animal welfare and environmental reasons, no one started to change the consumption due to the environment in the beginning. Also reference groups had an impact on consumer behavior. The majority of participants got to know milk substitute products due to friends and also stated to have friends with similar consumption patterns in their circle. No secondary peer group such as media figures or celebrities seemed to be responsible for the consumption of substitute products. The main stimuli for consumers were health and animal welfare. However, sociological and cultural determinants should be taken into consideration when examining the behavior towards substitute products.

Considering the “black box” of an individual it was revealed that personal and psychological determinants had a significant impact on the consumers. More particularly the lifestyle, attitude, motivation, perception, knowledge and learning of the individuals. All factors were interrelated to some extent and thus it was very important to examine all of them.

All the above mentioned stimuli and the personal and psychological determinants of the “black box” determinants are connected with each other and led to a positive behavior and purchase intention towards milk substitute products.

5.4 Milk Consumption in Sweden

These days it seems like consumers are interested in the impact of food consumption regarding their own health, animal welfare and the environment. The competition on the market increased over the last years and various products were introduced in order to satisfy the specific needs and wants of consumers. Among those products are the so called “functional foods”. Menrad (2003, p. 181) defined those foods as “…prevent nutrition-related diseases [which] increase physical and mental well-being of consumers”. This is why milk substitute products can be seen as functional foods as they provide consumers with some mental and physical benefits. The majority of participants in the current study noticed different kinds of body and mental changes. Among those changes were for example increased well-being, disappearance of skin problems, loss of weight or in general a healthier feeling in their body. All these changes were seen as positively by the participants and it seemed as it reinforced them in continuing the consumption of milk substitute products.

Five people stated to follow and maintain a healthy way of living. In these cases the consumers paid attention to their food choice and aimed at improving their health condition. In the future there could be a tendency that more people adapt a healthier lifestyle and therefore change their buying behavior functional foods which can provide them with some benefits. These consumers will make their food choice very carefully and might change their consumption behavior. Milk consumption could decrease in the next
years as people get aware of the possible mental and physical benefits of milk substitute products.

Moreover, the participants of the study were concerned about animal welfare or in general saving the planet and therefore changed their consumption behavior. Also due to these reasons milk consumption could diminish in the future as people think differently about the dairy industry. Lactose intolerance or milk protein allergy were also significant reasons for a shift of milk consumption to milk substitute products. It seemed like many people have to deal with a sensitivity towards milk these days. These people will most likely change their milk consumption and consume alternative products in order to maintain a good health condition. In individual cases also the dislike of the taste of milk was stated as a reason for consumption change. However, this reasons was not a significant driver for changing the consumption behavior.

Significant was also the fact that more than a half of the people started to consume milk substitute product in the stretch of half a year and eleven years. These findings supported the assumption that the consumption of these products started to increase in the last years and that there could be a tendency that people start to consume milk substitute products more often in the future.

Milk substitute products such as oat, almond and soy milk became increasingly popular among the participants and the brands *Oatly* and *Alpro* were named as their favorite ones. The majority of people perceived oat milk by *Oatly* as positive and stated to include it in their diet. Products by *Oatly* could be a threat to the milk consumption in the future as people have a high acceptability towards these products. These days no one has to go to a special food store anymore in order to purchase milk substitute products. In general the market provides consumers with many varieties of milk substitute products and even supermarkets provide consumers with their own home brand of substitutes. Milk and milk substitute products exist together on the market and it can be said that there will be an ongoing competition between those two products.
6. Conclusion

6.1 Conclusion of the Investigation

The aim of the study was to investigate the main reasons why Swedish people change their food consumption habits. As part of that it was aimed to reveal which kinds of motivations drove Swedes to purchase milk substitute products which lead to a lesser milk consumption. The study also had some practical implications in terms of providing Lantbrukarnas Riksförsbund with knowledge about consumer behavior in Sweden. Also making assumptions about the future situation of farmers due to the existence of milk substitute products was an aim of this investigation.

In order to answer the purpose of the study two main research questions were created. One question addressed the effect of demographic, personal, sociological, cultural and psychological determinants on Swedish consumers in terms of the consumption of milk substitute products. Another questions aimed at revealing reasons for the interest of Swedish consumers in buying those products.

Both questions were answered by following a qualitative investigation approach. By doing so the purpose of the investigation was succeeded and a deeper understanding of the consumer determinants and reasons for consumption were revealed. The results indicated that demographic, personal and psychological seemed to have a significant impact on Swedish consumers. Reference groups such as friends had a significant influence on the food consumption of the participants. However, cultural determinants did not have a significant influence on food choice or consumption. The main reasons for the interest of consuming milk substitute products were due to animal welfare or related to health conditions.

Considering the methodological part it can be said that a qualitative research was relevant in order to observe the behavior of Swedes towards milk substitute products. Following this method allowed to observe individuals’ values, behavior, beliefs and attitudes. The results were highly credible due to real quotes which were included in the empirical findings. Also a high validity was given as both research questions could get answered and connected to the existing consumer behavior theories.

For future research it would be interesting to use a quantitative approach in order to collect more data. The current collected data add up ten people which made it impossible to generalize the revealed findings for the consumption behavior of all Swedes. However, a possible trend in consumption of milk substitute products could be revealed. Furthermore, the research only observed the behavior of residents of Sweden’s county Västra Götaland and therefore it would be interesting to include other parts of Sweden. By doing so, the results could be generalized more easily and a better pattern could be revealed. Future research could also include how companies use marketing tools such as the Internet or TV advertisements to call attention to these substitute products.

However, this research prepared the basis for future research in the field of consumer behavior towards substitute products.
6.2 Future Perspective for Farmers

The purpose of this investigation was not only to investigate the demographic, personal, psychological, sociological and cultural determinants which affect Swedish consumers in terms of the consumption of milk substitute products. It also aimed at providing Lantbrukarnas Riksförsbund (LRF) with information about the future consumption of milk and milk substitute products. Furthermore, LRF also sought to gain more knowledge about the future situation of farmers.

Due to these revealed findings some assumptions for the future of milk consumption and the situation of farmers could be made. According to the results many Swedes aimed at maintaining a healthy lifestyle and thus paid attention to their food choice. Milk substitute products provided them with physical and mental benefits and therefore it can be said that these reasons definitely strengthen the positive behavior towards these products. All participants will continue to consume those products even though some people regarded the products as a bit too expensive. Also animal welfare and environmental reasons are seen as increasingly important and tend to contribute to a change in milk consumption.

Milk consumption will most likely witness a change as consumers get aware of personal, animal or environmental benefits when consuming milk substitute products. In view of the fact that milk substitute products are becoming increasingly popular the situation of farmers will probably change and will get more critical.
References


The Independent (2014). *One in ten Swedes is vegetarian or vegan, according to study.* [Electronic]. Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/one-in-ten-swedes-is-vegetarian-or-vegan-according-to-study-9212176.html [2015-03-30].


Appendices

1. Question Guide

Sex, Age, Place of Residence

Household Group - How many people are living in your household?

Occupation

Income

How would you describe your lifestyle?

Which kinds of milk substitute products do you buy?

For how long do you consume those non-dairy milk products now?

Did you ever consume milk? – Did you shift from milk consumption to milk substitute products?

How often do you consume those milk substitute products? (If you consider an ordinary week)

How did you get to know those non-dairy alternatives? (Advertising, Impulses, Friends etc.)

Which brands of non-dairy substitute products do you consume?

Where do you buy those products?

Why are you buying those products? (What is your motivation to buy milk substitute products?)

Do you feel any differences since you started to consume those products?

Is there someone who influences you by buying those products? (family, friends etc.)

Does your family or friends also consume milk substitute products?

Do you think the milk substitute products are worth their more expensive price?

Are they a good substitute for you considering quality and similarity to milk? (Depending on the fact if participant ever consumed milk before)
2. Interesting Statements about some Questions of the Interviews

How would you describe your lifestyle?

- I want to live a healthy lifestyle.
- I eat very healthy.
- I pay attention to nutrient and ethical aspects when I make food choices.
- I have my own mini-farm where I produce my own food, because I want to know where the meat is coming from.
- It is important how you live and I make sure that I live in a good way.
- It is not just about skipping dairy or meat products it is also about choice of clothes or shampoo.
- I love to be outside in the nature, because then I feel calm.
- I would describe my lifestyle as active and healthy. - I have a healthy lifestyle.
- My interests are really natural. I try to come down and take time to just relax.

Why are you buying those products?

- I started mainly because of the animal right reasons and then it became obvious to me that it is also healthy for me.
- It is for the animals, this is the main reason because I know a lot about the dairy industry and how the animals are treated there. It is a big part of the meat industry too, so I am very aware of that, so that is a big reason.
- Environmental reasons, solidarity with animals and people in developing countries. Because cow’s milk and meat industry, I see them as one, they are the most water consuming and bad for environment. People seem to not know or do not care about that.
- Mental reasons- I think it is the easiest and most valuable way to contribute to the health of the planet. I cannot say that the animal reasons are more important than my health or my health more important as animal reasons- they are all equally important to me.
- When I became a vegetarian it was because of the animals and because I was very young and I did not want to kill animals or be a part of that. But then it changed more, I started to work for Greenpeace and I started to get the whole environmental perspective. It is a compassion for me because I started to see animals as equals to humans.
- I had allergies, acne and eczema since I was a teenager. I used medication against it and went to the doctor because it got worse. I went to the doctor and excluded milk protein from my diet. Therefore I changed and stopped consuming milk.
- My stomach cannot handle ordinary milk, it is very sensible.

- I do not like the taste of milk. And my stomach works much better without milk products. I tried out a milk substitute product and found out that it works better for my body.

- I am concerned about the nature and the environment. I think it is important how you live. I think about that I don’t consume too much.

- The reason why I tried to avoid milk products from the beginning was because I was inspired of Ayurveda- lifestyle. Then I started to feel well. I felt much better without the dairy products.

- I did not consume those products due to animal or environmental reasons in the beginning, but since I became limited in what I can eat, of course if have been reading what milk does to our bodies and we are not supposed to have milk. Milk is not healthy to our bodies. I think that even if my stomach would get better and I could eat milk products again, I would not do it.

**Do you feel any differences since you started to consume those products?**

- I definitely had some health benefits from it. I used to have skin problems, which disappeared.

- I do feel healthier, before I had a lot of infections. I also lost a lot of weight, after stopping consuming milk products. My stomach is not so often swollen anymore, as if I would eat dairy products.

- I feel better and I like the taste. My stomach feels better and my bowel works much better as well.

- Health, I felt that my stomach became so much better when I quit drinking milk, there was a big change. I also excluded gluten and sugar. Before that I had stomach problems. I had to do something about that. I do not think it is not good for anybody to drink milk. I think a lot of people have problems and health issues because of milk.

**Do you think the milk substitute products are worth their more expensive price?**

- I always try to think that the price tag we see, is not the real price. I mean the price tag for cow’s milk does not show the real cost for it. The real cost for cow milk – both for money but also the environment. If I look at the products I buy, in a bigger perspective, it is much cheaper. It is not cheaper for my wallet, but better for the environment. The suffering is not on the price tag.

- When you look at the product itself, it is not worth the more expensive price. But by looking at the benefits that they give to my health and well-being, they are worth the money. I prefer to spend those extra crowns for those products. I do not drink it as much, like just pure, as I did it with milk, so in that sense I think milk is still tastier and I would
probably prefer it, but for some reasons I do not miss it. I think I get as much quality from those alternatives as I did from milk.

- I think they are worth it because of the personal benefits and the environmental reasons, but I do not consume it so often. I do not think about how much it costs when I buy groceries, I grab what I want. The best thing would be if dairy products would not exist or they would not sell them in the food store. Nobody benefits from cow’s milk except from the industry and the farmers.

- They are more expensive but they are worth it because I feel healthier.

- Higher price of milk substitute products is necessary at the moment, not so highly produced as the other products, so they need economy to survive and I am willing to pay that extra money because I feel that if I want to live in that way then I am willing to pay for it. I think I am worth it- healthful way of living, no worries by spending money for good food.