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„When Do Consumers Switch Brand?
The Impact of Demographics and Lifestyle on Benefits
Sought and Brand Switching“

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Martina Nikić

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Declaration of Authorship

I certify that the work presented here is the result of my own investigations, except as acknowledged, and has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for a degree at the University of Vienna or at any other university.

Vienna, July 2012   Martina Nikic

Mojim roditeljima…

Dali ste mi snagu kad sam bila slaba.
Bili ste strpljivi kad nije išlo dalje.
Bili ste mi podrška kad sama nisam mogla.
Dali ste mi utjehu kad sam bila očajna.
Pokazali ste mi pravi put kad nisam znala kamo idem.
Bili ste mi oslonac kad sam posrnula.
Bili ste mi svjetlo kad mi se zasjenila ćud.
Dali ste mi ljubav bez koje ne bih mogla postojati.

Hvala!

Executive Summary

The present thesis examines the link between benefits sought by consumers and brand switching behavior as well as the influences of demographics and lifestyle on the variables analyzed.

The importance of customer value and brand switching are highlighted by combining these concepts in one study. The influences and antecedents of brand switching have been researched extensively. Brand switching is primarily attributed to an inherent variety drive referred to as 'variety seeking'. This implies that sometimes the consumers do not evaluate the product characteristics when making a choice, they rather satisfy an inherent need for variety regardless of the product attributes of the objects switched to or from. Psychological variables influencing brand choice include preference, attitude, satisfaction and intention. Although the consumer evaluates objects favorably, brand switching still occurs. Many authors stress the importance of situational variables on brand choice, but still some unexplained variance remains.

In the recent past much research focussed on customer value delivery on multiple dimensions, namely benefits. They include functional, emotional and social benefits. This viewpoint on perception of benefits is different from evaluation of mere product attributes in that customer value includes judgements of a branded product on a more abstract basis, that is, the consumer translates these characteristics into a subjective meaning. For example, the consumer interprets the objective price as cheap or expensive, which is reflected in value for money of the branded product. Furthermore the consumer might not switch brands because of different colors or shapes of the product or the brand name but rather because of what these attributes communicate to others, which is reflected by social benefit.

Accordingly, it is postulated that consumers are guided by benefits sought when choosing branded products and customers perceive brands in terms of benefits provided. Thus, the present study addresses the question of whether benefits sought by consumers influence brand switching behavior. This relationship is investigated across four frequently purchased product groups. Furthermore, in order to shed more light into benefits sought by various consumer groups, consumer characteristics such as demographics and lifestyle are included in the research. This thesis also investigates if consumer characteristics determine brand choice.

In order to examine the concepts analyzed, a pre-study and a main study were conducted. The pre-study had the main purpose of identifying four product groups which are bought at least once during one month by the Austrian consumers.

The product groups extracted are milk, mineral water, beer and chocolate. These product groups were also found suitable to reflect four benefits sought by consumers. In the main study, 300 students, their relatives and friends, representing the five age groups under investigation, were asked to keep shopping records in the four product groups identified in the pre-study during a one-month-period in order to have enough data to analyze brand switching behavior. Furthermore they were asked to evaluate each brand on the PERVAL Scale, which includes the four value dimensions of quality benefit, value for money, emotional and social benefit. Consumer characteristics such as age, gender, education and income were collected in order to reflect the demographic variables and lifestyle was measured on a scale which comprises items on aesthetic styles, values and life visions. 208 questionnaires were completed, returned and used for analysis.

First, an exploratory factor analysis is performed on the PERVAL Scale in order to extract the underlying value dimensions. After the four benefits are identified, an exploratory data analysis is performed in order to check for normal distribution and multicollinearity of data. Then the relationship between benefits sought and brand switching is tested. Since the variables are not interval, the relationships between the variables are mainly examined with non-parametric procedures, in this case by performing rank correlations between each benefit and switch-variable and by performing a logistic regression in order to examine all benefits in conjunction. After that the influence of the product groups on this relationship is investigated by conducting a linear regression and rank correlations. The differences between product groups in benefits sought are examined in a Kruskal-Wallis test and by comparing mean scores on each benefit. In the next step, the link between demographic variables and benefits sought is investigated by conducting rank correlations. In order to compare influences of demographics and lifestyle on benefits sought, firstly, lifestyle groups are generated by performing an exploratory factor analysis. Thereby 23 lifestyle groups are identified, which are used to test the link between lifestyle and benefits sought. Accordingly, linear regressions are performed on the lifestyle factor scores and each value dimension. Finally, the relationships between consumer characteristics and brand switching are examined by conducting rank correlations for demographics and logistic regression on lifestyle-brand switch link.

The results show that brand benefits sought exert a significant influence on brand switching. More specifically, social benefit increases tendency to switch, especially among chocolate brands, while the other value dimensions, namely quality benefit, value for money and emotional benefit, motivate the customer to stay with the brand. Concerning brand benefits sought by different consumer groups, it was found that women and older consumers seek more quality benefit than men and younger age groups.

The relationships between education and income are found to be very weak but positive concerning quality, social and emotional benefit and negative regarding value for money. The link between lifestyle and benefits sought is stronger compared to demographic variables, especially between lifestyle and social benefit. The only demographic variables which exert a significant but weak influence on brand switching are gender and education. Conversely, the link between lifestyle and brand switching is found to be significant and considerably stronger compared to demographic variables.

In general the data support all hypotheses, except for two hypotheses on benefits sought in the product groups. It turned out that emotional benefit is sought primarily in the beer group and only second in the chocolate group, which originally was assumed to be on the first place, while quality benefit is primarily sought in the chocolate group.

Marketing managers can benefit of the present study's results by getting an insight into brand benefits which drive or inhibit switching behavior. The knowledge can be used for segmentation and targeting of specific customer groups, since benefit segmentation can explain variation in behavior. Based on this information, the firm can improve value offering to existing target groups, or stress values, life visions and aesthetic styles when designing new products or marketing communication strategies.

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1. Introduction and research focus

The relationships between humans and their possessions is an issue which has been studied by many researchers of various areas, such as psychology, sociology and marketing for many decades (e.g. Solomon, 1983; Belk, 1988; Richins, 1994; Prentice, 1987). Why customers purchase certain branded products and why they tend to switch away from a preferred choice is an interesting issue, especially in marketing science. It has been recognized that possessions do not just serve a utility maximizing purpose or a biological function. Academic researchers as well as marketing practitioners need to be aware of the ability of possessions to act as a support for success in life, to express self-image or to communicate social placement.

The population in the western countries nowadays enjoys material prosperity and is not limited to satisfying basic needs, such as hunger or thirst, but aims to highlight their self-concepts by purchasing certain branded products. This trend is also reflected in various advertising efforts to highlight the emotional experience through consumption, even consumption of simple everyday products such as mineral water.

Thus, products and brands should not be regarded exclusively from a functional point of view. Consumers rather tend to associate hedonic experiences with consumption and enjoy the vast variety of material goods offered in the marketplace. Scientists and firms make an effort trying to understand why people actually appreciate this variety of goods, i.e. researchers try to attribute brand switching to differences in attributes across alternatives and research what utility consumers assign to products and their attributes or make a big effort in modelling of purchase patterns. However, customers might just switch brands because 'they feel like it', which in scientific terms is referred to as a variety drive. Research in the field of brand switching motives is important, especially for marketing managers, due to costs of acquiring new customers, negative word-of-mouth, or decreases in market share, to name a few. However, it has been criticized that past research has mainly focused on brand loyalty (Shukla, 2004). Therefore only a small amount of literature discusses the issue of brand switching, since antecedents and consequences of brand loyalty cannot be equally applied to brand switching (e.g. satisfaction versus dissatisfaction as drivers of consumer behavior).

The present study, attempts to explain the reasons for consumer behavior from various perspectives. Hence, not only the marketing point of view is stressed, but the study also attempts to explain the motivation for specific consumer choices and the values sought by consumers when performing certain actions.

The primary purpose of this study is to fill the research gap by merging the concepts of benefits sought as components of customer value and brand switching tendency. Accordingly, the findings of the present study provide organizations with valuable knowledge of becoming better at competing on superior customer value delivery. Furthermore, general consumer characteristics, i.e. demographics and lifestyle, are included in the research in order to complement the benefits sought-brand switch linkage and to contribute to the general understanding of the proposed relationship. Thus, the theory may be used to predict, describe and explain consumption behavior.

Consequently, the present research addresses the following questions:

- Can benefits sought drive a certain consumer to switch brand in a given product class?
- Do different benefits sought in different product groups drive consumers to switch brand?
- Do consumers differ in benefits sought with respect to their demographic characteristics and lifestyle?
- Do consumers differ in their brand switching tendencies with respect to their demographic characteristics and lifestyle?

The present study is divided into nine chapters: Chapters 1 to 5 give an overview of existing literature, serving as a basis for concepts that are relevant for this thesis, namely brand switching and customer value. Chapter 6 includes derived hypotheses from previous research work and presents the central framework which illustrates the main assumptions for the empirical study. Chapter 7 describes the sample, the research design and the methodology of the two empirical studies employed. Chapter 8 gives the results of the analyses, while Chapter 9 discusses the results of the studies previously described, presents conclusions, managerial implications and future research directives.

2. Introduction to brand loyalty and brand switching

The present study focuses on customers' brand switching behavior. In order to understand and define this concept, it is important to describe the opposing concept of customer loyalty regarding practically and theoretically relevant reasons.

The present section is divided in five chapters: Chapters 2.1. and 2.2. focus on brand loyalty by giving definitions of the concept and linking it to brand switching behavior. Chapters 2.3. to 2.5. recognize the importance of brand switching for marketing research and give an overview of existing literature dealing with major influences of brand loyalty and brand switching. However, the main focus is on the concept of variety seeking, to which most of switching behavior can be attributed. Furthermore, a review on other important influences on choice behavior is given.

2.1. Recognition of the importance of customer loyalty

It is well recognized that costs of acquiring a new customer are higher than retention of existing ones (Fornell & Wernerfelt, 1987). Loyal customers tend to be less price-sensitive, but if a customer decides to switch, the firm loses the customer's future revenue stream and needs to invest more resources in advertising and promotion in order to attract new customers (Anisimova, 2007). Customers who are loyal to a firm's brand represent an entry barrier for competitors, spend more and tend to spread favorable word of mouth to other potential customers (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Dowling & Uncles, 1997). Furthermore, increased knowledge about a brand and favorable associations increase the probability of a customer's purchase and thus raise sales and revenue, while reducing the customer's tendency to switching behavior (Keller, 1993). That is, the basic goal of brand loyalty for firms is to improve their business performance and to enhance their profitability in the long run.

However, a firm's successful market penetration strategy and new brand introduction can be attributed to many customers' willingness to try new brands (Blin & Dodson, 1980). Competing firms will strive to lure a customer away from the preferred choice in order to increase their own market share.

Hence, by focussing on customer retention, and thereby preventing one's customers from defecting, while encouraging customers of competing brands to defect, a firm can increase its market share and long-term profits.

The concept of brand loyalty has been intensively researched in the past and various explanations for this behavior have been found, such as satisfaction with a brand or inertia (Newman & Werbel, 1973; Oliver, 1989; Bawa, 1990; Seetharaman & Chintagunta, 1998). Regarding brand switching, many drivers for this type of behavior can be found in contrary motives for brand loyalty, such as variety seeking v. inertia and satisfaction v. dissatisfaction (Bawa, 1990; Newman & Werbel, 1973). For example, one could think that a satisfied consumer stays loyal to a brand and the dissatisfied consumer switches. Considerable evidence suggests that, even if the customer was satisfied with a previous choice, the customer would, under certain circumstances, switch to another brand (Mazursky, LaBarbera & Aiello, 1987). This notion can be supported by various explanations, such as other factors influencing choice and factors intervening between satisfaction/dissatisfaction and choice (Rust & Zahorik, 1993). Hence, it can be useful to regard brand loyalty and brand switching separately, but a researcher can also benefit from comparing drivers of the two distinct behaviors in conjunction.

Furthermore, many researchers have used brand switching and brand loyalty in the same study in order to operationalize these behaviors. For example, some researchers used the inverse of brand switching in order to measure a customer's brand loyalty (Romaniuk & Sharp, 2003) and the inverse of the number of purchases divided by the number of brand loyal phases (McCann, 1974) to measure brand switching. Brand loyalty and brand switching can also be shown in an event history analysis, where the repeat purchases of a product are counted (Du Wors & Haines, 1990). In this context an event occurs the minute the customer changes his/her behavior, that is, buys another brand. Thus conceptualizations of brand loyalty and brand switching are used in the same context very often, although they are two opposing concepts.

Although the present study examines drivers of brand switching behavior of consumers, the arguments mentioned above show that the opposite behavior, namely brand loyalty, deserves consideration in this context. Thus, the Chapters 2.2. to 2.5. review existing literature on brand switching behavior as well as on brand loyalty.

2.2. Brand loyalty

Many researchers analyzed purchase records in the past in order to describe a consumer's brand loyalty (Farley, 1964; Romaniuk & Sharp, 2003; Hellier, Geursen, Carr, & Rickard, 2003). Even though behavioral measures of brand loyalty provide poor predictions and explanations of the concept, especially early research only looked into brand selections (Tucker, 1964; Farley, 1964; McConnell, 1968) without taking into account what the customer actually thinks. For example, a customer was termed brand loyal when choosing the same brand on four consecutive occasions before a brand switch and on three consecutive occasions after a brand switch (McConnell, 1968) or when the calculated proportion of total purchases was the highest for a particular brand (Ford & Ellis, 1980). This type of measure is often referred to as 'spurious loyalty' in the literature (Day, 1969). The basic motivation for spurious loyalty often lies in situational constraints, such as the availability of the product, price deals or coupons offered by the firm. As soon as the customer gets drawn to a competitive product by a better price deal or a better shelf location, he/she would rather switch to the more attractive brand (Tucker, 1964; Day, 1969). Thus, it is relatively easy to encourage switching behavior in markets characterized by spurious loyalty.

Although such reports of purchase decisions give information on brands purchased and where and how much consumers spend, they do not provide an insight into factors which influence repeat purchase (Dick & Basu, 1994). However, some authors defined brand loyalty in terms of preference or satisfaction, without considering purchase behavior at all (Guest, 1944). Yet, this view could be problematic as well because, while a customer might have a strong preference for or a favorable attitude towards a brand, the customer might not be able to actually purchase it. For example, the product might be too expensive, unavailable in the store, or unsuitable for a particular use.

Thus, neither attitudinal nor behavioral measures on their own can explain brand loyalty. In this regard it seems reasonable that a measure of repeat purchase together with a favorable attitude better reflects true customer brand loyalty. Besides, from a managerial point of view, a composite brand loyalty measure may provide information not only about how often a customer buys which brand(s), but also why he/she repeatedly purchases a particular

brand and may shed light on strengths and weaknesses of the firm's brand (Bandyopadhyay & Martell, 2007).

The importance of the two aspects of behavioral and attitudinal loyalty is expressed in that Jacoby and Kyner's (1973, p.2) definition of brand loyalty: "Loyalty is (1) the biased (i.e., non-random), (2) behavioural response (i.e., purchase), (3) expressed over time, (4) by some decision-making unit, (5) with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of such brands, and (6) is a function of psychological (decision-making, evaluative) processes."

Thus, true brand loyalty can only exist when all six conditions are present. Given that the definition incorporates both "behavioral response" and "psychological processes", where the customer evaluates different alternatives and chooses the optimal brand(s), this definition highlights the difference between the two similar but distinct concepts of repeat purchase and brand loyalty.

Keller (1993, p.8) also refers to brand loyalty as occurring "when favorable beliefs and attitudes for the same brand are manifested in repeat buying behavior." Thus, repeat purchase as a necessary condition of brand loyalty needs to be supplemented by psychological processes surrounding the purchase decision.

Similarly, Bandyopadhyay & Martell (2007) examine two aspects of brand loyalty. They operationalized the attitudinal component by counting the respondents' positive associations with the brand. The more positive attributes the respondent believes a brand has, the stronger his/her attitude towards the brand. However, the behavioral component was analyzed by presenting the respondents with a list of behavioral questions, in which the authors relied on recalled information rather than on actual measures.

Oliver (1999, p.34) merges the two components of loyalty and describes the concept as: "a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior." Oliver (1999) divides the evolution of brand loyalty in four phases. He postulates that a consumer can become loyal at each of the four steps.

Firstly the consumer becomes loyal to the brand in a cognitive sense, secondly becomes emotionally tied to it, thirdly internalizes loyalty in a conative manner before reaching the final, the fourth, action phase. Cognitive loyalty is inspired when the customer has knowledge about the performance of brand attributes which is preferable to that of competing products. If the consumer is satisfied by the usage of the product, he/she develops a liking of the brand, which is termed affective loyalty. Repeated satisfactory use causes the customer to develop a deeply held commitment to repurchase the brand, which can be equated with intention to buy. If the customer actually buys the product and overcomes obstacles which might seduce the person to defect, then the customer has reached the final action phase of brand loyalty. Day (1969) also highlights the benefits of reaching the final action stage. Here, the consumer is governed by inertial repurchasing, which allows a minimizing of the effort to make a purchase decision. However, the characteristics of all previous stages, together with those of the final stage, are included in the aforementioned definition of brand loyalty.

To sum up, a customer is termed brand loyal if he/she is committed to the brand in an attitudinal and behavioral manner. This definition of loyalty not only considers visible behavior as an important indicator but also explains the motives behind such continuous behavior as a customer can easily be seduced to defect. Oliver (1999) highlights that all loyalty phases are subject to switching when particular weaknesses occur, such as better attributes, dissatisfaction with the present brand, advertising, unavailability, or a need for variety. Before action loyalty the brand has achieved 'product superiority'. In this phase the customer is deeply committed to the brand but is not yet ready to resist incentives which lure him/her away from the already formed intention to repurchase the brand. Hence, a brand loyal buyer does not only repeatedly buy the brand but is also deeply committed to it in that he/she has a favorable attitude towards the brand, which decreases vulnerability to competitive marketing actions.

2.3. Why do customers decide to switch?

The whole concept of customer loyalty can be questioned in current economic markets as firms strive to improve their offers in order to be more competitive (Oliver, 1999). Thus, it does not seem reasonable to be loyal to a specific brand as the competition will always find

a way to beat the actual offer and introduce new, better and cheaper products with more benefits, which better meet the customers' needs.

Furthermore, it appears unrealistic for a firm to achieve ultimate brand loyalty as considerable evidence describes human choice behavior to rather resemble multibrand loyalty (Dowling & Uncles, 1997). McAlister (1982) mentions two different types of exploratory behavior individuals exhibit when choosing among various products. First they switch among brands in order to learn about the product offer and to seek information. In the second step, the customers determine their preferred brands but tend to switch among them just to satisfy their need for variety or to refresh their memories about brands purchased in the past (Keon, 1980).

Hence, researchers should shift their focus to inquiring brand switching behavior as many authors criticize that past research concentrated on brand loyalty and that only few studies paid attention to the concept of brand switching (Shukla, 2004). The present research makes an attempt to add important knowledge to this research area, since, for example, drivers of brand loyalty cannot be equally applied to brand switching and vice versa (e.g. satisfaction versus dissatisfaction as drivers of consumer behavior).

There are various reasons why customers might want to use a different brand than previously consumed. One major reason for this is variety seeking, where the customer switches brands out of an intrinsic motive to try out something different (Van Trijp, Hoyer, & Inman, 1996). Other authors attribute brand switching to situational factors (Belk, 1974), varying preferences (Pessemier, 1978), or product involvement (Shukla, 2004). Although there is extensive knowledge considering brand choice and a multitude of factors have been identified influencing choice behavior, some unexplained variance in the data still remains.

Some researchers do not even regard human choice behavior to be a deterministic process and believe that this behavior can never be fully explained. Therefore it seems reasonable to develop stochastic models of choice. These models predict the likelihood of choice, surrounded by the external uncertainty attributed to a multitude of influences (Blin & Dodson, 1980). Consequently, the researchers often include only one factor in their model to which varied consumption behavior can be attributed, such as the need for variety (Givon, 1984) or preference (Blin & Dodson, 1980).

However, such models cannot be applied in an actual market situation as they ignore major internal as well as external influences on human choice behavior.

Thus, the present study supports the deterministic view and aims to look in detail at variables which potentially influence human choice behavior, thereby reducing unexplained variance in such behavior. In doing so, this study attempts to draw conclusions for marketing practice as well as to make a contribution to the understanding of human choice behavior and to add knowledge to existing research in this area.

2.4. Exploratory behavior

A rat in a Y-maze is standing in front of an intersection. At the end of every path is a box with food. During every trial the rat chooses a particular arm with no significant probability. For the last trial the rat is confronted with a third maze arm. The animal is attracted to the new arm and readily explores the unknown.

A human baby is playing with a toy for some hours. Then the baby is presented with a different toy. The baby drops the old toy and dedicates all of its attention to the new, interesting one.

Similar experiments with animals and humans have been summarized by Berlyne (1960), all of them suggesting the same: There must be an innate motivation to try something different. As Berlyne (1960) states, every stimulus activates, to some extent, some inherent drive. The following response or behavior is performed in order to reduce the drive, which in turn, is perceived as rewarding. Many activities of individuals can be attributed to the satisfaction of a biological need, such as thirst, hunger or sexual appetite. These biological needs serve one purpose: To secure the creature's survival. Still, an individual often engages in 'perceptual and intellectual activities' for their own sake. This is the main reason why people are interested in activities, which are not primarily motivated by biological needs. Such "ludic behavior" (lat. *ludare* = play) involves recreation, entertainment, idle curiosity, art, philosophy, and pure science. This kind of behavior is induced by certain factors. External stimuli arouse a certain response while internal factors, such as drives, appetites, desires, and wishes, so-called motivational states, influence the moment when the action starts and ends and which course it takes.

The main focus in researching exploratory behavior is not to predict the response to a certain stimulus, but rather to find an explanation which stimulus out of a collection of stimuli will be chosen by the individual. Berlyne (1960) states that the choice of external stimuli depends on their novelty, uncertainty, conflict arousing potential and complexity. Novelty is also manifested by supplementary variables such as change, surprisingness and incongruity in stimulation. The novelty of a stimulus depends on the frequency of its occurrence in the past, similarity with stimuli that have occurred in the past and how recently the stimulus was faced. However, a particular stimulus is not being selected at its maximum novelty, rather at an intermediate level, so that the stimulus is not perceived as frightening, but interesting.

The term 'stimulus selection' may be a little confusing. This term has to be set apart from 'selective attention', where the senses perceive stimuli in the stimulus field and transmit certain information to the brain. This serves the primary purpose of preventing the brain from too much information. Stimulus selection takes place at the previous step, i.e. it alters the stimulus field (Fowler, 1965). Thus, exploratory responses select those stimuli to which, in turn, attention will be drawn.

Berlyne (1960) distinguishes between three exploratory responses: orienting, locomotor, and investigatory responses. Orienting refers to physiological reactions, locomotor to approaching the object and investigatory actions involve manipulation of the object itself in order to get more information out of it. Typically, the novelty of a stimulus and change in stimulation arouse such reactions. Thus, exploratory behavior may be induced by the presentation of a novel object or just by the change in stimulation which is induced by the different external stimulus. Change itself can be regarded as rewarding, especially when novel stimuli are presented. The response strength is thus proportionally linked to the extension of the change (Fowler, 1965). Hence, exploratory behavior can be initiated by familiar stimuli just because of the change of stimulation it brings, although the intensity of such behavior rises with the stimulus' novelty. Berlyne (1960) summarizes evidence on the aversiveness to monotony, which can also be referred to as 'boredom' or 'satiation' (Fowler 1965). This drive can only be satisfied by increasing exploratory behavior and occurs after deprivation from external stimulation or exposure to familiar and unchanging stimuli.

2.5. Variety seeking

There is considerable evidence that variety seeking is a determining factor in brand switching behavior (Van Trijp, Hoyer, & Inman, 1996). Kahn, Kalwani & Morrison (1986, p.90) view variety seeking "as the deliberate tendency to switch away from the brand purchased on the last one or more occasions". The authors give quite a general definition on variety seeking, only describing a 'tendency to switch' but do not give insight into reasons for this behavior. Now the questions arising are why customers exhibit this tendency to switch and which factors alternate the switching tendency.

To this effect, Givon (1984, p.2) is more concrete and describes variety seeking (or avoidance) "to be the phenomenon of an individual consumer switching brands (or repeat buying) induced by the utility (or disutility) she derives from the change itself, irrespective of the brands she switches to or from." Givon (1984) mentions two different stimulus groups, namely the "brands" and "the change itself". It appears reasonable that consumers who switch to a brand because they perceive a certain superiority of the new brand have a different motivation to behave in this manner than individuals who are motivated to switch 'by the change itself'. Thus, the definition above can be interpreted in terms of motivation theory.

"To be motivated means to be moved to do something" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 54). That is, an individual is made to perform a task through motivation. However, people differ in their levels and the orientation of motivation. In their self-determination theory, Ryan & Deci (2000) distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. An individual performs an activity out of intrinsic motivation because the act per se is rewarding, while extrinsic motivation implies that a specific outcome is expected. Thus, the two different kinds of motivations refer to attitudes and goals which make an individual perform a task. The basic goals of engaging in behavior which is intrinsically motivated are, for example, to satisfy one's curiosity or need for novelty and to enjoy growth in knowledge and skills. Conversely, the aim of behaving in an extrinsically motivated manner is the act's instrumental value, that is, the expectation of some particular reward.

Accordingly, the variety seeking individual exhibits a tendency to switch in order to satisfy his/her need for change. Faison (1977, p.173) terms this behavioral predisposition 'variety drive' and explains that "what is desired is not a new or unfamiliar experience but simply a change of pace." Hence, variety seeking is caused by intrinsic motivation, which drives the individual to try something different because the act itself is perceived as inherently rewarding.

Consumers often engage in such kind of behavior out of boredom (Faison, 1977) or satiation with the product's attributes (McAlister, 1982; Givon, 1984). After some time of repeatedly consuming a particular product, the customer reaches a point where he/she decides to try something different just for the sake of variety. Consequently, variety seeking implies that the probability of choosing the same brand as previously bought on the next purchase occasion decreases, while the probability of choosing a different brand increases (Givon, 1984). Hence, even if the customer strongly prefers his/her currently consumed brand, he/she would rather defect to satisfy his/her need for variety. The consumer views the action of brand switching as rewarding in itself regardless of the utility derived from consuming a product.

2.5.1. True variety seeking v. derived variety seeking

Not every brand switch can be attributed to true variety seeking behavior. Motivation theory distinguishes between switching behavior driven by intrinsic motivation and behavior induced by extrinsic motivation. Van Trijp, Hoyer, & Inman (1996) make a clear distinction between true variety seeking behavior and derived variety seeking behavior. Thus, true variety seeking behavior is intrinsically motivated, i.e. by curiosity or risk taking (Raju, 1980), a need for change (Faison, 1977), or attribute satiation (McAlister, 1982). In contrast, derived variety seeking behavior is driven by other factors, such as sale, favorable word of mouth, and gift for friends. Both types lead to the same behavior but have different underlying motivations. All other factors to which brand switching can be attributed are termed 'derived variety seeking' (Van Trijp, Hoyer, & Inman, 1996).

Furthermore, exploratory behavior can be attributed to the product category (Givon, 1984; Van Trijp, Hoyer, & Inman, 1996). Research suggests that consumers exhibit different levels of variety seeking depending on the involvement or perceived differences between

brands. For example, in low involvement situations, consumers exhibit greater variety seeking than in high involvement contexts. This can be attributed to the lower perceived risk of low involvement choice settings. Banks (1950) also highlights the difference between brands as a driver of brand switching. The smaller the perceived differences, the greater the tendency to switch if, for example, a small price change is introduced. Conversely, the respondents only switched brands in contexts where the perceived difference was relatively higher when the preferred brand was not available.

2.5.2. Distinguishing variety seeking from other exploratory tendencies

McAlister and Pessemier (1982, p.311) give a general definition of what 'varied behavior' basically represents, namely, "switching among product variants, switching among service alternatives, switching among various activities, and so forth." In particular, variety seeking is defined as varied behavior of being motivated by a need for change.

There are other drivers of exploratory behavior which can also be attributed to intrinsic motivation but do not exactly match the definition of variety seeking behavior. Baumgartner & Steenkamp (1996) split exploratory buying behavior in two components, namely, exploratory acquisition of products (EAP) and exploratory information seeking (EIS). In both cases the underlying motivations are intrinsic. EAP is characterized by satisfying a need for sensory stimulation by engaging in exploratory acquisition of products, while EIS delivers cognitive stimulation, such as information and knowledge, to satisfy a consumer's curiosity. Apparently, the former refers to the need for change, while the latter delivers some reward through information acquisition.

Hirschman (1980) also supports this view stating that exploratory behavior has two intrinsic motivations. The need for change, exhibited by switching among known stimuli, has the only benefit of reducing boredom and fatigue, whereas 'novelty seeking' satisfies the need for information acquisition. Even if this information may not be useful now, it can be important in the future, thus it gives the consumer some constructive purpose, which needs to be distinguished from the pure variety drive.

Raju (1980) even proposes a seven-point categorization of exploratory buying behavior:

- Repetitive behavior proneness,
- Innovativeness,
- Risk taking,
- Exploration through shopping,
- Interpersonal communication,
- Brand switching, and
- Information seeking.

However, taking a closer look at the descriptions of the categories, some common underlying motivations can be identified. For example, the author describes repetitive behavior proneness as "the tendency to stick with the same response over time" and brand switching as "switching brands primarily for change or variety". The latter motivation follows the notion of variety seeking, while the former seems to be simply the opposite of brand switching. Moreover, regarding exploration through shopping ("a preference for shopping and investigating brands"), interpersonal communication ("communicating with friends about purchases"), which basically represents acquisition and exchange of new information, and information seeking ("interest in knowing about various products and brands mainly out of curiosity") a common motive, namely curiosity, can be identified. Hence, these two motivations of exploratory behavior can be compared to the conceptualizations of Baumgartner & Steenkamp (1996) and Hirschman (1980), who both identified variety seeking and curiosity to be two main causes of exploratory tendencies. Raju (1980) basically supports this view, but adds risk taking as a third motive, which accounts for innovative and adventurous behavior.

Ratner & Kahn (2002) discuss variety seeking, which is attributed to social standing and to an individual's desire to appear interesting. They hypothesize that even if an individual prefers a particular brand and keeps purchasing it, he/she would switch to another brand just to have a favorable image in other peoples' eyes and to make an interesting impression. They suggest that people who make repeat choices are perceived as narrow-minded and boring. Hence, in situations where the consumer's decisions can be observed, he/she tends to avoid switching to a particular item, which is favorable in other peoples' minds, but think that the simple act of switching brands would give them social approval.

Apparently, people expect varied behavior to be judged favorably by others, which is why they would also choose non-favorite items out of a desire to appear interesting.

2.5.3. The dynamic attribute satiation process

Many authors assume that a consumer's purchase history does not depend on the brands involved. McAlister (1982) views the occurrence of variety seeking behavior as being best explained by a 'dynamic attribute satiation process', which to a great extent attributes a consumer's brand switching behavior to his/her individual choice history. Accordingly, a collection of items is built up by the items' constituent attributes and their values, each of which contributes to the inventory of every attribute. The author assumes that for each individual an ideal level of each attribute wanted by the customer exists.

Now, for simplicity, if an item with only one attribute is considered and if that item is purchased on multiple occasions, then the consumer reaches a point of satiation of that attribute. So above this point, every added unit of the same attribute decreases preference for this attribute and thus for the item which possesses it. Compared to multi-attribute items, if one purchases items with the same attribute(s) on many occasions, he/she gets satiated by its attributes. That is, the more often attributes of a particular item are purchased, the less the preference for that item becomes. Conversely, if the previously purchased items failed to provide a particular attribute, then preference for that attribute increases, and so does preference for an item that possesses this attribute. Depending on the individual's choice history, the attributes deliver different weights to the overall preference. Thus, if the item previously purchased possessed a particular attribute which the current item consists of, then the customer will rather switch to an item which has different attributes from the previously chosen brands. Thus, the next choice is in great part attributed to the individual's choice history, with older choices having less influence on current choice.

2.5.4. Taxonomy of varied behavior

Until now many different but seemingly similar motivations and causes for varied behavior have been identified and described, namely derived v. true variety seeking and different types of exploratory behavior. In their taxonomy on varied behavior, McAlister and Pessemier (1982) give a general overview of causes of such tendencies.

Firstly, they distinguish between two schools of thought, namely the stochastic and the deterministic. The stochastic view looks at varied behavior as basically inexplicable or as being influenced by too many factors so that it appears impossible to consider all of them in an understandable concept of varied behavior. Those researchers provide probabilities with which individuals engage in exploratory behavior. Conversely, the deterministic view focuses on factors which influence varied behavior and continuously provide explanations to piece the puzzle together. In their taxonomy, the authors focus on the deterministic view and divide explicable varied behavior into derived and direct behavior. The former embraces all those causes of varied behavior which have nothing to do with the need for change. As described above, Van Trijp, Hoyer, & Inman (1996) share this view in that they define derived variety seeking as all other motivations apart from switching just for the sake of variety.

Derived behavior includes multiple needs and changes in the choice problem. In the case of multiple needs, an individual engages in varied behavior if the brand purchased is of benefit to someone else (multiple users), used in a particular situation (multiple contexts), or can be used in different ways (multiple uses). Changes in the choice problem refer to changes in the feasible set so that the choice decision is based on new conditions, such as new alternatives or changes in the marketing mix. Furthermore, they embrace a change in tastes of the individual, due to external or internal factors, and a change in constraints, such as time or income.

In contrast, direct behavior involves interpersonal and intrapersonal motives. Interpersonal motives, such as the desire for group affiliation or group distinction, lead an individual's choice decisions. Ratner & Kahn (2002) support this view and state that varied behavior is partly attributed to social standing and an individual's desire to appear interesting. Therefore, in situations where choice decisions are observable, consumers tend to switch brands in order to be perceived as open-minded and interesting. Intrapersonal motives basically follow Raju's (1980) view on exploratory behavior, which includes the desire for the unfamiliar, alternation among the familiar, and acquisition of information. The taxonomy is shown in Figure 1.
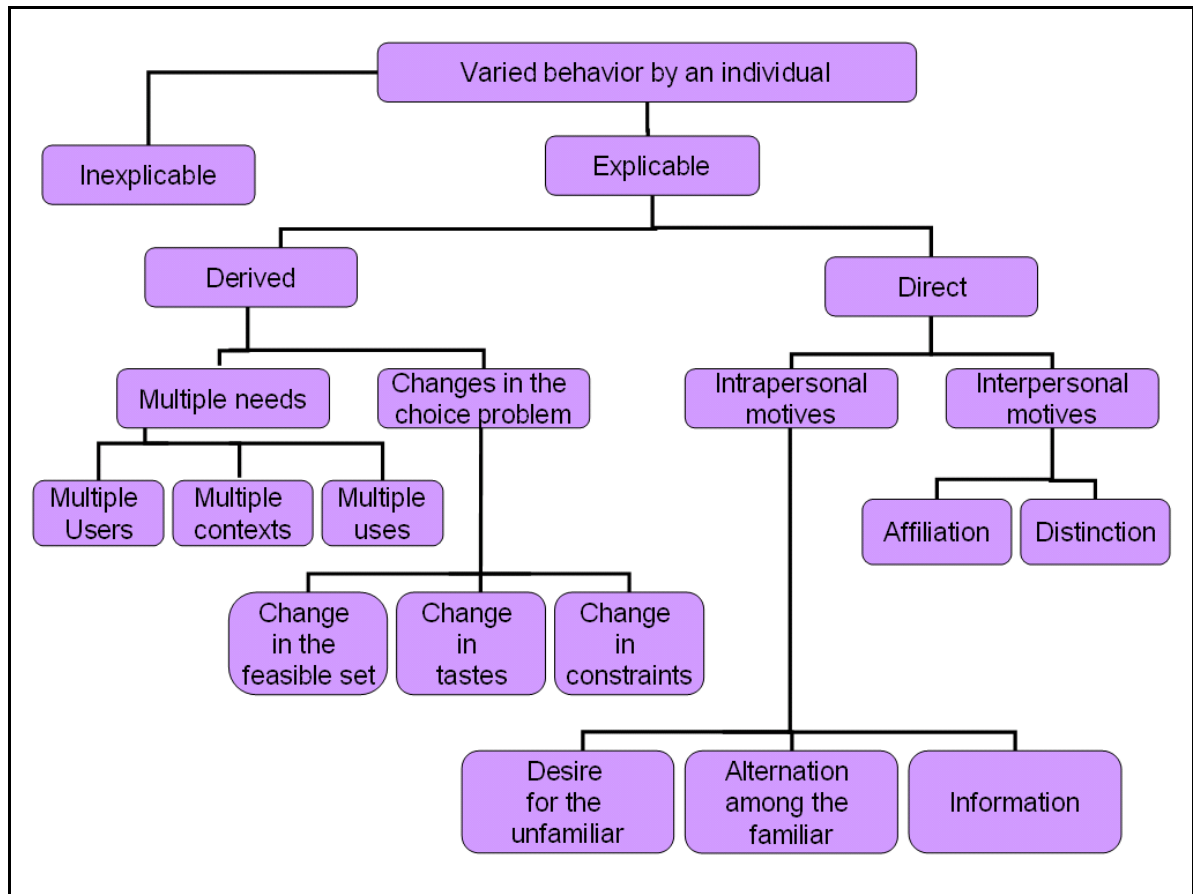
Figure 1: A taxonomy of varied behavior

(Source: McAlister and Pessemier, 1982)

2.5.5. Interpersonal differences in intrinsic desire for variety-OSL

Not all individuals exhibit the same exploratory tendencies. Considerable evidence suggests that there are individual differences in intrinsic desire for variety (Lattin & McAlister, 1985). Hence, people who have a higher need for variety rather engage in exploratory behavior than repeat purchase (Van Trijp, Hoyer, & Inman, 1996; Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1992).

This need for variety can be explained by an imbalance in stimulation input as individuals strive to maintain a specific level of stimulation obtained from their environment, the so-called Optimum Stimulation Level (OSL) (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1992). Berlyne (1960) suggests that there is an 'arousal tonus', a specific level of arousal which is above the lower extreme of no arousal and which is always present, except during sleep. In order

to maintain this arousal tonus, the individual looks for stimulation when the arousal potential is low and tries to decrease stimulation when it gets above the tonus. That is, if the consumer experiences too little or too much stimulation by an object, he/she would engage in certain behavior to return to his/her optimum stimulation level. Accordingly, the difference between actual level of stimulation and a person's OSL makes the individual engage in varied behavior (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1992). The exploratory tendencies mentioned above, namely variety seeking, curiosity and risk-taking, can be attributed to a deficit in the level of stimulation (Raju, 1980). Thus individuals engage in such exploratory behavior, or some kind of 'stimulus seeking', to return to their optimal level of stimulation (Kish & Busse, 1968).

McAlister (1982) explains in the dynamic attribute satiation model that the optimal collection of attributes depends on the amount of cognitive stimulation that the collection provides. The author defines optimum stimulation as a single peaked function between preference and the amount of arousal that particular attributes provide. Thus, too little of an attribute and too much of the same result in a disequilibrium, which consumers attempt to adjust by engaging in exploratory behavior.

However, some persons engage in more exploratory behavior than others, due to different levels of stimulation need. These individual differences in the range of stimulation which individuals find to be optimal can be attributed to demographic variables, such as age, education, and employment status. Accordingly, younger, better educated, and employed people tend to exhibit more varied behavior (Kish & Busse, 1968; Raju, 1980). However, age seems to have the greatest impact on stimulation seeking as it explained 13.3 of 14.7 percent of total variance (Raju, 1980). Furthermore, men seem to exhibit more arousal seeking behavior than women (Zuckerman, Eysenck, & Eysenck, 1978).

Berlyne (1960) describes intra-individual characteristics and personality traits which also account for differences in stimulation need. For example, people who participate in art, science, and mental activity do it out of a specific need for challenges and risk without any external reward. Engaging in challenging and demanding tasks is perceived as rewarding in itself. This level of aspiration can be illustrated by a new, complex task which at the beginning can be supra-optimal arousing. The more the individual exercises his/her abilities, the more rewarding it feels to take the risk of failing. The more experience one has

with challenging situations, the more the specific stimulation will reduce the exploratory drive. The question of why people should engage in such challenging tasks depends on personality traits, such as intolerance of ambiguity and complexity. Some people may be unable to cope with complex situations, that is, they feel an excess of stimulation in such situations. This can be attributed to anxiety due to expected social disapproval of failure. Those who have problems with facing anxiety will be less likely to engage in complex tasks. The relationship between demographic and personality variables, OSL, and exploratory tendencies is exhibited in Figure 2.
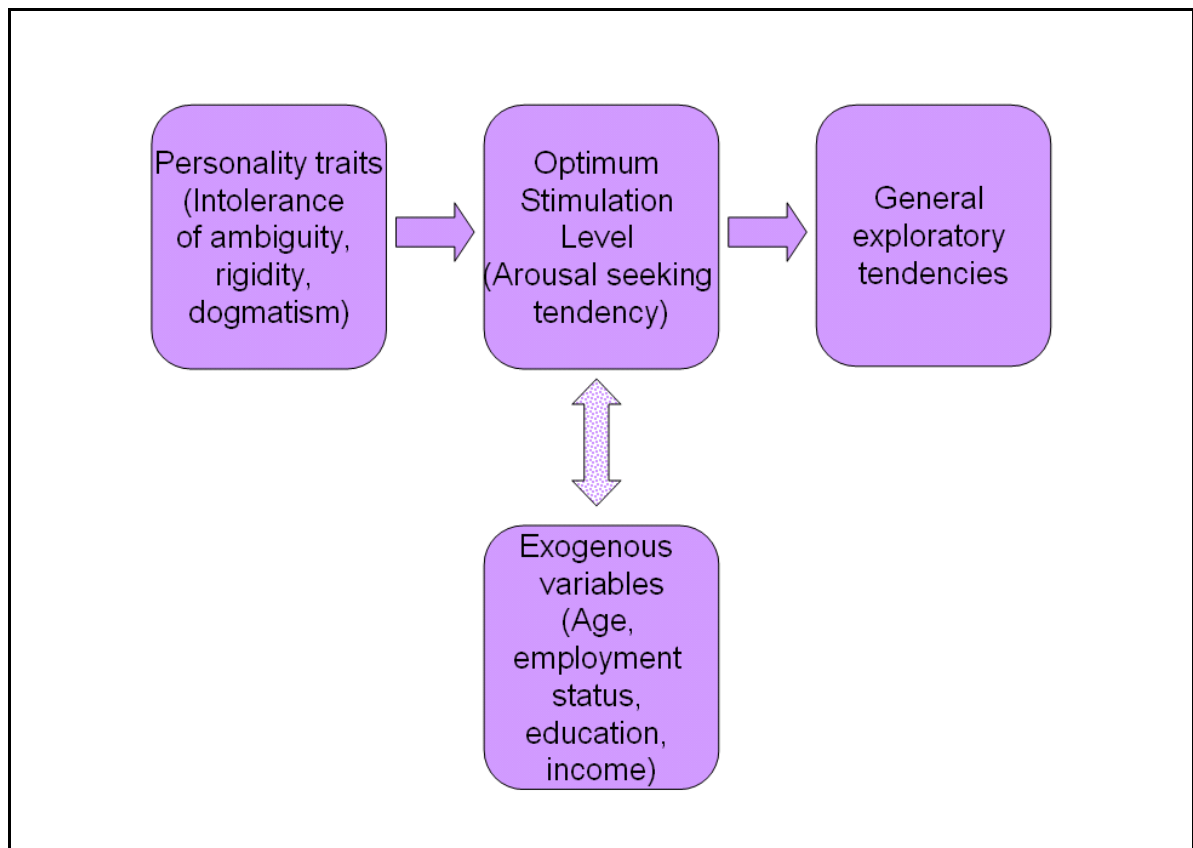
Figure 2: Framework of relationships between OSL and other variables
(Source: Raju, 1980)

In order to measure such inter-individual differences in arousal-seeking, research mainly relied on verbal instruments, such as the Sensation Seeking Scale (Kish & Busse, 1968; Mittelstaedt, Grossbart, Curtis & Devere, 1976). This scale describes forced-choice item pairs, where a low-stimulation and a high-stimulation activity or situation is presented at one time. The more highly stimulating activities are picked by the respondent, the higher the

sum of scores on the SSS and, thus, his/her preferred level of stimulation. Hence, a person who scores high on the SSS is likely to engage in four dimensions of stimulus seeking, namely thrill and adventure seeking, experience seeking, disinhibition, and boredom susceptibility (Zuckerman, 1971).

These factors go in line with Raju's (1980) definition of exploratory tendencies as they can all be attributed to curiosity, a pure variety drive, and some motivation to take risks. For example, the researchers view the factor 'boredom susceptibility' to involve both a need for change and variety. The thrill and adventure seeking factor can be linked to risk-taking motivations as individuals who engage in such behavior satisfy their need for stimulation with speed and danger.

Concerning consumer behavior, people with higher OSLs tend to be aware of new products and to try these new products more than people with lower OSLs (Mittelstaedt, et al., 1976). They are also more apt to introduce new brands and products to others (Raju, 1980). Raju (1980) also provides evidence that the OSL can be retained by exploratory behavior, with risk taking delivering the most satisfaction, followed by variety seeking and curiosity motivated behavior. Also, high OSL people tend to evaluate new products and decide to try a new product much faster than low OSL people (Mittelstaedt et al., 1976).

In sum, true variety seeking behavior can to a great extent be attributed to an inherent need for variety or change, rather than to attributes of the brands involved in the choice process. This implies that the change in stimulation itself is perceived as rewarding. In this context, the concept of Optimum Stimulation Level accounts for differences in the need for stimulation across individuals. Variety seeking behavior can also be motivated by a need for sensory and cognitive stimulation in the form of information acquisition to satisfy an inherent curiosity. Thus, next to the variety drive, there are two complementary intrinsic motivational states, namely curiosity and risk taking. Exploratory behavior can also be attributed to interpersonal motives, implying that varied behavior is evaluated positively by others.

In contrast to this, all other motivations, subsumed under extrinsic motivation, such as sale, out of stock situations, or switching brand for the benefit of someone else, are regarded as derived variety seeking behavior.

3. Influences and cognitive antecedents of brand switching

Chapter 2 focused on variety seeking, as an intrinsic motivation of brand switching behavior. In the present chapter research on other direct and indirect influences and precursors of brand switching, which mainly represent extrinsic motivational states, such as preference, attitude, satisfaction, and intention, are described. Effects of changes in the choice problem, as a concept of the derived varied behavior mentioned above, are discussed again at the end of the following section, when the influence of situational factors on brand choice are explained.

3.1. The S-O-R paradigm

An individual's reactions to various stimuli are amply discussed in research on consumer behavior. Specifically, the choice process, which describes the formation of a decision whether a brand will be purchased or not, is paramount to marketing managers as they steadily improve their market offers in order to increase purchase probability of their items. Some researchers view this process as deterministic and others as probabilistic. The first try to explain human behavior mainly through empirical research and rationally explain human choice behavior, whereas others rely on calculations of purchase probabilities (Pessemier, 1978). The deterministic view regards the final choice decision as a result of awareness, comprehension, and evaluation (Pessemier, 1978). These processes take place inside the individual. The S-O-R paradigm, which stands for Stimulus, Organism and Response, is one of the main paradigms explaining consumer behavior (Kroeber-Riel & Weinberg, 2003). A certain stimulus is perceived by the organism, assimilated, and leads in turn to a certain response. The response, just as the stimulus, is an observable variable. The researcher can see what stimulus exerts an influence on the organism and which outcome is produced, but he/she cannot observe which internal processes lead to the outcome.

Berlyne (1954) describes those internal processes as 'intervening variables' standing between the observable antecedent and consequent variables. The internal processes include activating and cognitive processes and attitudes which are responsible for decoding information coming from outside, structuring it, and leading to a specific reaction. The relationship between the three variables is shown in Figure 3.
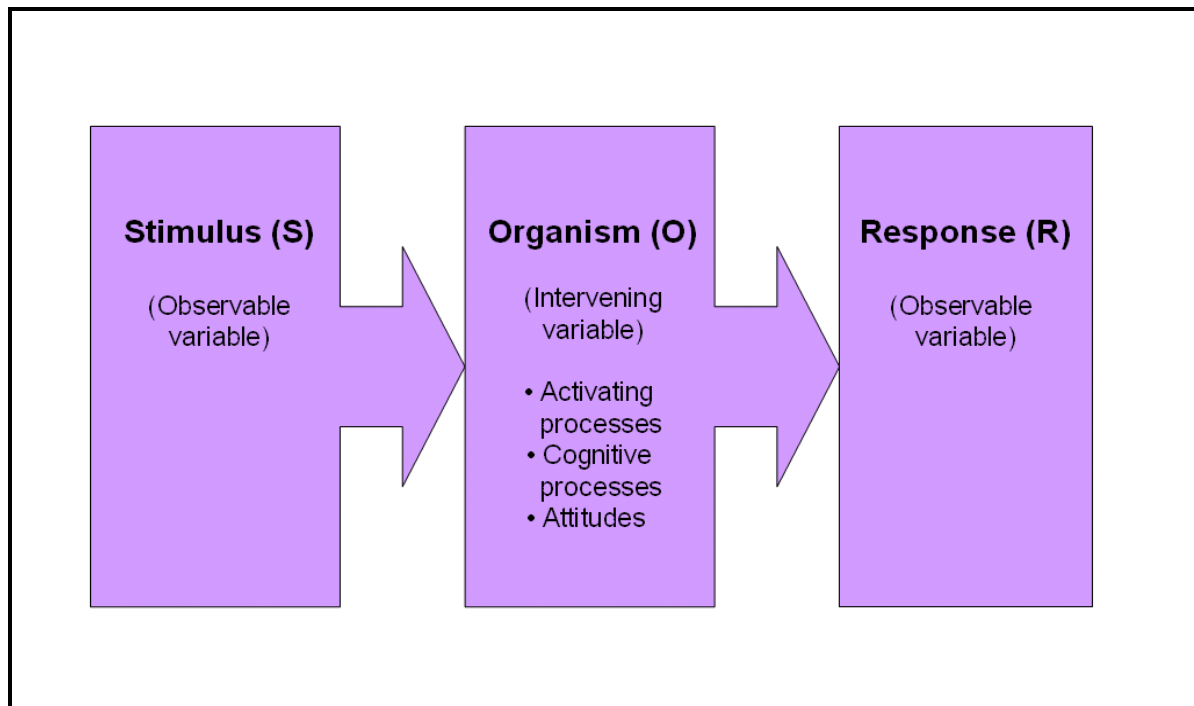
Figure 3: S-O-R model

(Source: adapted from Kroeber-Riel and Weinberg, 2003)

Mursell (1922) points out that the three concepts in S-O-R cannot be strictly separated from each other. Response is described, in part, as the end-result of all these internal processes, which are initiated by perception, i.e. stimulation of sense organs, are transmitted by nervous impulses, and lead to overt behavior. He further points out that a certain response already starts inside the organism which at some point initiates all these processes in order to produce subsequent behavior. A stimulus is conceptualized as an impulse from outside, initiating an intra-individual response and accordingly a change of state.

The researcher's main function is to make assumptions and draw inferences from the manifestations of individual behavior on internal processes. This is a real challenge, since the responses do not only depend on the external influence but also on the events taking place inside the organism. Thus, different individuals react differently to external stimuli and, conversely, the same individual reacts differently to the same stimulus on different occasions (Mursell, 1922). This is due to learning processes, since, next to activating processes and attitudes, cognitive variables influence the outcome (Berlyne, 1954). Furthermore, the response often does not immediately occur after the stimulus-inducing

event. It is also possible that a reaction takes place after some considerable time or that the stimulus has more effect on the organism than could be observed directly after the new impulse, such as the formation of habits (Mursell, 1922). This is also why the 'O' in S-O-R is often referred to as 'Black-Box'.

The concepts in the following chapters will shed some light on some intervening variables which are relevant to the choice process, i.e. what happens between stimulation and an observed response inside the individual. The previous chapter has mainly considered intrinsic motivation as a precursor to brand switching, whereas the following Chapters 3.2. to 3.5. describe internal processes of dealing with external variables. These include evaluation of one or more brands and their attributes and the formation of a certain judgement, which leads to a response, i.e. a purchase. Section 3.6. on situational factors ends this sequence by giving an explanation why the choice decision often does not lead to congruent behavior.

3.2. Preference

Lefkoff-Hagius & Mason (1993) describe preference as the result of the comparison of an existing and an ideal product. Lehmann (1972, p. 331) supports this view by giving a more geometrical explanation on this concept as "the distance of a brand from an ideal point, which consists of the ideal amount of each attribute." To present the different preference levels of various brands, a perceptual map can be created. The axes represent the salient attributes. There is an ideal point which shows the most preferred attribute levels. Then the points of the product alternatives are shown with the perceived attribute collection. The smaller the distance between the actual and ideal attribute levels, the higher the preference for that product (Lehmann, 1972).

The preference for a particular object is manifested in more attention which is drawn towards it and through approaching the object more often than the less preferred alternative(s). It is further defined as the subjective equivalent to utility and value. Preference thus emerges when a product is perceived as possessing superior utility or value. These concepts are viewed as being evaluated on a composing basis. That is, the overall preference or utility are formed by evaluating the constituent features. Thereby, the components' salience and subjective evaluation are taken into account.

First, the features need to be identified on a cognitive basis. Then affective value is being attached to each of the constituent parts (Zajonc & Markus, 1982).

This definition is similar to Fishbein's multi-attribute model of attitude (Wilkie & Pessemier, 1973). The model can also be used to predict an individual's preference ranking of brands quite well (Bass & Talarzyk, 1972). What makes the difference between attitude and preference is that alternative objects, or an ideal object, are taken into account when forming preferences, whereas an attitude is formed based on information on one object (Bass & Talarzyk, 1972; Powell Mantel & Kardes, 1999). The concept of attitude is explained in the next Chapter 3.3.

When comparing two competing brands, the unique attributes of the brands are those which are salient for a preference decision. Thus, when two objects are similar in many features, the point which makes the difference are the unique attributes of each brand which get the most attention. Consumers tend to concentrate on the more recently encountered brand as the focal brand. The focal brand's unique attributes are thus perceived to be more important than those of the referent, i.e. the longer ago encountered brand. Specifically, when the focal brand's more important unique attributes are perceived to be positive, the consumer is likely to make a better preference judgement about the focal brand. Conversely, if they are perceived as negative, a positive judgement about the referent brand is likely to occur (Powell Mantel & Kardes, 1999).

However, an attribute-based evaluation is not the precondition for each preference judgement. Especially when the initial brand choice decision was made a longer time ago and thus the brand attributes on which the decision was based are forgotten, the comparison between overall attitudes may be used to form a preference judgement (Powell Mantel & Kardes, 1999). As explained later, preference has a more dominating affective component, which explains why after some time the cognitive representation of an object is not so important in forming preferences. The affective component represents overall attitude and thus stays in memory for a longer time than the evaluations of single attributes on which the evaluation is based (Sengupta & Fitzsimons, 2000).

It can be reasonably assumed that those objects which are similar in their features will also get a similar preference judgement. Lefkoff-Hagius & Mason (1993) disprove this assumption in that they provide evidence which suggests that objects are evaluated differently when judging their similarity and preference. Specifically, individuals give different importance to attributes and benefits in these two comparison tasks. Product characteristics are more useful in making similarity judgements, such as size, color, or taste. The derived benefits, such as safety of a car or cleanliness of a detergent, are relied on when forming preference judgements. Thus, even if products do not significantly differ in their features, they can, due to perceived levels of benefits they provide to the consumer, have differing impacts on preference judgements.

On the other hand, there are many situations in which the affective reaction precedes the cognitive evaluation of the object's features. The affective component is generally seen as dominating the cognitive representations and after some time even suppressing it. It is comprehensible that, in the first encounter with the object, the individual proceeds in the above described manner, by first identifying the important features on a cognitive basis and afterwards attaching affective value to them. However, after some time and experience with the object, the affective component tends to become independent from the cognitive dimension. That is, preference becomes a more expressive aspect of emotion as the individual forgets the initial ratings of the constituent features. This view is confirmed by various somatic representations of preferences. For example, when a person recalls a situation which aroused an intense emotional reaction, the same muscles which were activated in the original occasion also react when the situation is only mentally represented (Zajonc & Markus, 1982).

In sum, overall preference is being formed on a cognitive and an affective basis. In their definition on preferences, Zajonc & Markus (1982, p. 124) highlight the affective component in describing preferences as 'primarily affectively based behavioral phenomena'. This also reflects that preference contains a conative dimension as well in that favorable cognitive and affective evaluation of an object is expressed in a behavioral tendency to approach it. This conceptualization is again very similar to the attitude concept, which is discussed in section 3.3. As the affective component becomes more autonomous regarding the cognitive evaluation, the behavioral response tends to be activated by the

dominating component. That is also the reason why it is harder to change preferences when only addressing the cognitive component.

Moreover, preferences can be formed and modified by different social and cultural surroundings. Zajonc & Markus (1982) observe different food preferences in distinct cultural environments. For example, in the Mexican culture many dishes cannot be imagined without chilli pepper, whereas other cultures have a strong aversion to chilli. This observation can be adopted to consumer behavior in that preferences can be changed through affective supports, such as cultural influences, parental reinforcement, or group pressure. Furthermore, an object can be evaluated favorably when the individual is influenced by cognitive components. Media, word of mouth, and other sources of information can influence a consumer's judgment of a particular item.

Preference is a judgement formed by evaluating alternative objects on a cognitive and an affective basis, by comparing their constituent product attributes. As noted earlier, this conceptualization is very similar to that of attitude, which is explained in the following Chapter.

3.3. Attitude

Choice behavior is generally seen as being influenced by an evaluation system inside of the individual, such as preference, attitude, or utility (Dick & Basu, 1994; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). Many authors use multi-attribute models in order to analyze the various components of a consumer's attitude towards a product (Shocker & Srinivasan, 1979). These models hypothesize that consumers view products as consisting of various attributes, such as color or taste. Based on the probability that the object of interest possesses a particular attribute and its subjective evaluation (if it is good or bad), the attitude toward the object is formed (Cohen, Fishbein, & Ahtola, 1972; Bass & Talarzyk, 1972).

Very often not all attributes an object possesses can be included in the model because this would make it too difficult and impossible to interpret. Therefore a selection of salient attributes is included in the analysis. Those are components of the product which distinguish products from each other and which are taken into consideration by the consumer when making a choice decision (Shocker & Srinivasan, 1979).

A favorable attitude, manifested in repeat purchasing behavior, represent the two components of brand loyalty. A true brand loyal customer possesses a favorable attitude towards an object on all attitude dimensions, namely cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions (Jacoby, 1971). Dick and Basu (1994) go further into detail: An attitude is strong in its cognitive dimension if it is well defined, can be activated quickly, and if the underlying information is reliable and consistent with the individual's value system. For example, consumers who place more importance on symbolic values tend to possess objects which serve a self-expressive function (Prentice, 1987). The individual further has a positive attitude towards an object when it is associated with favorable emotions, moods and even when primary affect arouses a positive physiological response. Satisfaction, as a postpurchase response, is seen as an affective component.

This is consistent with Westbrook & Oliver (1991), who view attitude as a more generalized evaluation of objects, which can be changed through satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Oliver, 1989). As mentioned in the previous section on preference, the emotional component tends to dominate evaluation of an object, since the particular attributes tend to be forgotten as time passes (Sengupta & Fitzsimons, 2000). Conative antecedents include switching costs, which reflect opportunity costs of switching to a competing brand, sunk costs, and expectations. Thus, an object is not only favorably evaluated on a cognitive and affective basis but also implies a disposition for certain behavior.

This view is also reflected in the following definition, where attitudes are seen as "dispositions to react to objects on various occasions with signs of like or dislike" (Sandell, 1968, p. 405). These "signs of like or dislike" have generally been measured from a multi-attribute perspective. Beliefs describe a person's assessment that a particular product possesses certain attributes. These beliefs are weighted by the individual importance of each attribute (Wilkie & Pessemier, 1973).

Mitchell & Olson (1981) generally support this relationship but criticize that relatively little is known about consumers' cognitive structure, which underlies the formation of beliefs about product attributes. They may form an attitude, not only based on "subjective associations between cognitive representations" (Mitchell & Olson, 1981, p. 327) but rather on other factors, the non-attribute components of an object. As an individual's value structure underlies his/her attitudes, certain psychological benefits, in addition to attribute-

beliefs, can influence the evaluation of an item (Prentice, 1987). The concept of brand benefits, a central component of the present study, is described Chapter 4.4.

Although a favorable attitude may lead to repeat purchase of a product, it does not mean that this predisposition actually leads to a purchase of a certain brand or to attitude congruent behavior (Jacoby, 1971). A customer may hold favorable attitudes towards alternatives as well, or situational factors may prevent the consumer from acting in an attitude-consistent behavior (Dick & Basu, 1994).

There has been a discussion whether attitude is a good predictor of behavior. Some authors argue that attitude should only under certain circumstances be relied on as a predictor of choice. For example, the variance in choice behavior explained above differs to a large extent depending on the formation of attitude. That is, attitude may be formed based on personal experience with the product or by relying on indirect information, such as advertising. According to this, attitude predicted choice three times better when subjects were able to form an attitude based on trial than on advertisement information (Smith & Swinyard, 1983). An interesting finding suggests that repeated exposure to an object improves the attitude to that object (Zajonc & Markus, 1982).

There have also been attempts to explain attitude formation based on brand benefits. Kim & Morris (2007) investigated attitude formation in low- and high-involvement situations for hedonic and functional product categories. Their results suggest that affective responses were responsible for a favorable product attitude in the hedonic product category and cognitive structure in the functional product category, whereas both benefits accounted for a favorable brand attitude in low-involvement situations.

Sengupta & Fitzsimons (2000) make a similar argument when stating that, when attitude was formed on an affective basis, it is likely to lead to attitude-consistent behavior. In their study they asked their respondents for reasons for a favorable attitude towards a particular brand and found that this weakens the attitude-behavior relationship because the evaluation of the attributes at the initial trial tend to be forgotten as time passes and, according to preference formation, the affective component has become autonomous from the cognitive component and dominates attitude. Thus, the more accessible the attitude is to memory,

which, to a large part, can be seen as a strong affective attitude component, the more likely the consumer is to behave in an attitude-consistent manner.

Dick and Basu (1994) introduce the concept of relative attitude as providing more stable predictions of choice behavior. The individual rather behaves in an attitude-consistent way when comparing a strong attitude towards one brand to potential alternatives. A customer may hold a favorable attitude towards an object but may decide to purchase a different brand because of an equal evaluation of the alternative. The relative attitude thus depends on its strength and differentiation. The stronger the attitude and the more differentiated it is compared to similar objects, the higher the relative attitude and thus the probability of purchase on the next occasion. Also a weak, but clearly differentiated attitude leads to high relative attitude. Conversely, a strong attitude, which is not perceived as being different from other objects and delivering comparable satisfaction, leads to multibrand-loyalty which is characterized by switching among familiar alternatives. Finally, a positive, but weak attitude together with a weak perceived differentiation facilitates brand switching behavior.

This view is equivalent to the view of preference, described in section 3.2. Preference has been explained as being formed by comparing an ideal product with an actual product. As the constituent attributes, on which the preference decision was based initially, tend to be forgotten, the individual forms a favorable attitude towards the object in the long run. Also, the consumer may hold favorable attitudes towards different items. These attitudes are taken as comparison levels in order to form a preference judgement. In conclusion, it can be stated that attitude is antecedent to preference and serves as a reference point to product evaluation in the long run. Thus, preference serves as an intervening variable between attitude and behavior.

3.4. Satisfaction

Although quite similar, attitude and satisfaction are two different concepts in that attitude representing a more generalized evaluation of an object. Satisfaction can moderate attitude as a post-purchase evaluation. Consistent with Dick & Basu (1994), who describe satisfaction as being an affective component of attitude, Westbrook & Oliver (1991) find that next to the uni-dimensional construct of satisfaction exist other affective states.

For example, when a consumer exhibits high brand satisfaction, this feeling is likely to be accompanied with happiness, contentment, and delight. Conversely, low satisfaction correlates with upset and angry feeling patterns.

The view of satisfaction is rooted in the disconfirmation paradigm. Satisfaction is generally viewed as a post-purchase evaluation of perceived performance and an evaluation standard, such as expectations or prior attitude (Oliver, 1980; Shukla, 2004). Many products can, at the moment of purchase, only be judged by their external cues, such as packaging, brand, or price. The intrinsic cues of a product, such as the quality or some emotional response, can be experienced when consuming a product (Selnes, 1993). If the consumer perceives the performance as being better than expected, thus generating a positive disconfirmation, he/she feels satisfied. Conversely, if the product provides poorer performance than expected, then dissatisfaction with the brand is likely to occur (Oliver, 1980). Accordingly, in order to make satisfaction judgements two points are important: First, the customer needs prior experience with the product class in general to form expectations. Secondly, the consumer can very often, through a consumption situation, experience the actual performance of the product.

Selnes (1993) shares this view by providing empirical evidence of the relationship between satisfaction and brand loyalty in four businesses, namely life insurance, salmon feed providers, telephone services, and business colleges. The first two businesses can hardly be evaluated because ample experience with the service is needed. Life insurance is needed only when an incident occurs and salmon food when observing the animals over a long time. Selnes (1993) provides evidence that satisfaction is more thoroughly correlated to brand loyalty in those businesses where the customers have unambiguous information about the service than in other businesses. This notion also supports the view that direct experience with a brand is needed in order to form a feeling of satisfaction.

Many researchers measure the difference between point of reference and performance objectively, while others see it as an implicit process of generating a feeling of satisfaction (Oliver, 1980). Bloemer & Kasper (1995) expand this notion by further distinguishing between two types of consumer satisfaction, namely manifest satisfaction and latent satisfaction. In this respect, this differentiation is important when measuring true brand loyalty depending on the amount of brand deliberation. Manifest satisfaction implies that

the consumer is motivated to spend more mental energy on evaluating the brand, while the latently satisfied consumer is not. The consumer who explicitly compares perceived performance with expectations tied to the brand is more aware of the satisfaction provided by the brand, while the latently satisfied consumer only unconsciously evaluates the brand. Their findings support this distinction in that manifest satisfaction has a stronger positive impact on true brand loyalty than latent satisfaction.

Moreover, Tse & Wilton (1988) provide empirical evidence on multiple comparison standards. Firstly, they state that perceived performance has a more direct relationship to satisfaction and, secondly, that consumers use expectations and an ideal standard when evaluating a brand. The standards are either used in parallel or change during and after product use. Thus, dissatisfaction arises not only when the inherent performance is poor but also when it differs from an ideal level or the consumer's expectations are not met, for example through continuing performance which does not meet contemporary performance levels (Rust & Zahorik, 1993). Although satisfaction seems to be of finite duration, it influences a certain adaptation level, such as attitudes or purchase intentions. The feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction can thus be internalized and affect future evaluations. Since the adaptation level persists over a longer time span than satisfaction judgements, they can, although indirectly, affect purchase decisions (Oliver, 1980).

There is considerable evidence suggesting that satisfaction with an item leads to increased brand loyalty (Newman &Werbel, 1973). La Barbera & Mazursky (1983) investigated a model for multiple consecutive product purchases where the satisfaction with a particular product mediates changes between pre-purchase and post-purchase intentions. They found that satisfaction and both intention levels had higher correlations with repeat purchase behavior than brand switching. The pre-purchase intention level had a more direct relationship on post-purchase intention for repeat purchasers as brand loyal customers' intentions tend to be more stable than those of brand switchers. This implies that satisfaction with the brand plays a minor role for brand loyal consumers than for brand switchers. Conversely, dissatisfaction after use of a product influenced revised intention to switch significantly. Interestingly, despite being highly satisfied by a product, 43.5% of the switchers defected to another brand. The authors also investigated the effects of both intention levels and satisfaction on overt behavior, i.e. repeat purchase or brand switch. They found significant but poor correlations between satisfaction and intention and

purchase behavior. Both intention levels with satisfaction/dissatisfaction scores correctly predict between 60% and 70% of cases, which is a relatively low value given that revised intention is the last cognitive stage before the purchase act. These results again emphasize the importance of situational influences which affect the purchase decision on the point of sale, despite high satisfaction with the brand.

On the other hand, past research lends support to the proposition that there is a weak relationship between level of satisfaction and choice behavior (Shukla, 2004). This may be attributed to the finding that brand preference mediates brand satisfaction and intention to purchase (Hellier et al., 2003). Another interesting finding is the weak relationship between dissatisfaction and brand switching behavior. That is, even if the customers are dissatisfied with a brand, they keep on buying the same brand. Conversely, high satisfaction with a brand does not imply that a consumer would keep buying the same brand on the next purchase occasions, due to a desire to try something different. 23.5% of those who indicated high satisfaction with the previously bought brand reported switching (Mazursky, LaBarbera & Aiello, 1987).

3.5. Intention

It is generally agreed that behavioral intention is the last cognitive stage prior to behavior (Bonfield, 1974; Oliver, 1980). Intention is both directly and indirectly influenced by the concepts of attitude and satisfaction described in Sections 3.3. and 3.4. Experiences with the product compared to what was expected are internalized as a global evaluation of the item. Thus, a consumer with a favorable attitude towards an item, which already represents a behavioral predisposition, is likely to form a buying intention consistent with this attitude. Indirectly a consumer's attitude will only lead to consistent choice behavior if it is highly correlated to intention (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977).

As mentioned above, satisfaction, which in turn mediates attitude, can only be generated through experience with the product. As intention precedes behavior, there must be an intention preceding trial as well as a future intention to rebuy the brand or to switch to a competing offering. LaBarbera & Mazursky (1983) name the first intention lagged intention and the second revised intention. As pre-exposure attitude serves as an adaptation level, which can be taken as an anchor point for further evaluations, lagged intention mediates

revised attitude, which, in turn, affects revised intention. This relationship between cognitive variables may become clearer when being visually represented in Figure 4.
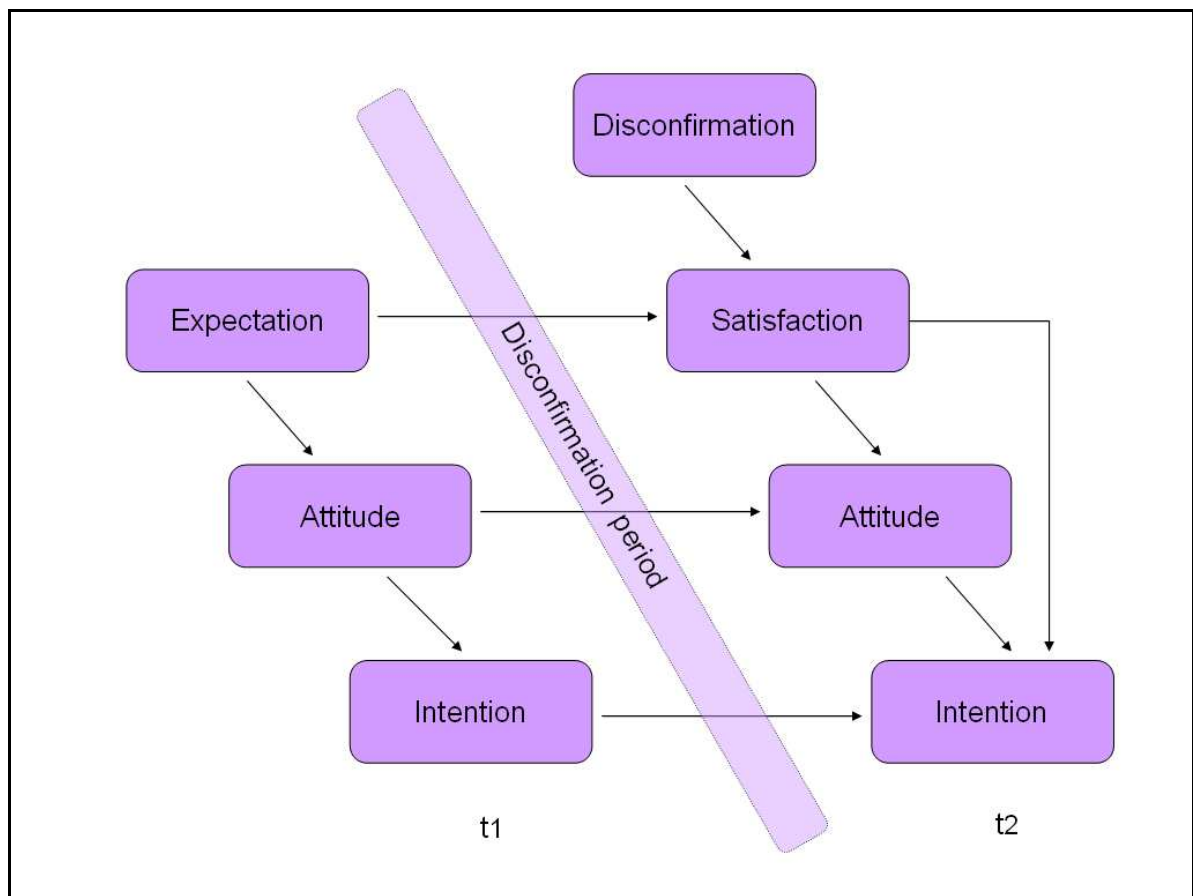
Figure 4: Cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions (Source: Oliver, 1980)

The left hand side of the graph represents the pre-exposure period with expectations, attitude, and intention both directly and indirectly influencing the choice decision. Through the disconfirmation period, the consumer compares perceived performance and a specific evaluation standard, which he/she can do implicitly or explicitly (Bloemer & Kasper, 1995). After this action, positive disconfirmation, which refers to a performance exceeding prior expectations, leads to a feeling of satisfaction, whereas negative disconfirmation, which refers to performance perceived as being poorer than expected, leads to a feeling of dissatisfaction. The findings suggest that one's sense of satisfaction/dissatisfaction both has a direct, although poorer, correlation and an indirect correlation with future buying intentions. Indirectly satisfaction impacts intention through post-exposure attitude, which

leads directly to the formation of an intention to buy. LaBarbera & Mazursky (1983) add important empirical evidence to brand loyalty research in that they state that lagged intention is more strongly correlated to revised intention with repeat purchasers than with brand switchers. This evidence is logical as intentions of repeat purchasers tend to be more stable across multiple purchase occasions. Conversely, brand switchers are more likely to change their intentions and, in turn, brand choices due to extrinsic or intrinsic incentives to switch.

On the other hand, considerable research suggests that although buying intention is viewed as the last stage prior to purchase behavior, this concept is only poorly associated with actual buying behavior. Various authors cite correlation coefficients of 0.40 (Harrell & Bennett, 1974) or even lower, namely between 0.18 and 0.30 (LaBarbera & Mazursky, 1983; Bonfield, 1974) in the frequently purchased goods category. This correlation is enhanced when the consumer's purchasing history is taken into account. A loyal consumer, or one who has bought a brand continuously over successive purchase occasions, is likely to continue this behavior on the next purchase occasion.

Warshaw (1980) explains these findings by a false measure of buying intentions. Firstly, he suggests to rather inquire about purchase probabilities as an intention measure than verbal ratings on binary purchase outcomes. Accordingly, he defines purchase intent as a "subjective probability (…) of performing a specific behavior" (p. 27). Secondly, Warshaw (1980) attributes the poor correlation between intention and behavior to situational influences. In analyzing past studies on the relationship between purchase intention and behavior, he found that poorer correlations were found in studies where purchase conditions were unknown, whereas higher correlations were generated where the situation was anticipated. Probably the time span between the formation of intentions and the actual buying act is quite long and unanticipated, or anticipated changes occur, which, in turn, affect the purchase decision. He cites purchase location and number of brands bought as situational influences in the soft drink product class which alternate the intention-behavior relationship. Warshaw's (1980) findings support his suggestions by providing a correlation coefficient of 0.652 when only purchase probabilities are taken into account and of 0.766 when including purchase conditions. This notion is reflected in the stronger correlation between the two concepts in the brand loyal segment as these consumers tend to be less susceptible to situational influences.

Taking these important findings into consideration, the present view of cognitive antecedents of choice decisions can be extended by the important impact that situational factors have on purchase behavior.

3.6. Situational Variables

As the antecedents of choice decisions all have varying influence on them, one can never predict a particular choice with a 100 per cent certainty. In many cases there is an intervening variable between the evaluative systems in a consumer's mind and his actual purchase behavior. These weak correlations are to a large part due to situational variables (Shocker & Srinivasan, 1979).

It has already been shown in section 2.5. that exploratory behavior and thus variety seeking can be attributed to intrinsic motivation. That is, the need to try something different comes from a need of the individual. There is considerable evidence which suggests that varied behavior can be attributed to external influences, i.e. situational influences (Mattson & Dubinsky, 1987; Belk, 1975). Even though a customer holds a favorable attitude towards a brand, the introduction of extrinsic incentives, such as price reductions, would decrease the probability of repeat purchase of the favorite brand. The brand switching effect is even more significant compared to intrinsic motives. Hence, consumers who are highly satisfied with their previously bought brand are more likely to switch because of external factors than because of the simple desire to try something different. Consequently, when redrawing the extrinsic incentive, the consumer is likely to switch to another brand as he/she has no motivation to continue purchasing the current brand (Mazursky, LaBarbera & Aiello, 1987).

Belk (1975) describes a situation as a subunit of the environment which an individual faces at a particular point in time. It is important to distinguish personal characteristics and stimulation, which are not part of the situation but still affect individual behavior, from the object of interest. Stable individual traits, such as personality, general skills, and intellect, cannot be attributed to a particular situation. The same differentiation between general features and situation-specific characteristics of the object need to be taken into consideration. On the other hand, temporary characteristics of the individual and the object of interest, such as illness or a special sale can be part of the situation.

In this chapter two different types of situations need to be distinguished:

- The purchase situation
- The consumption situation

Both situations involve a choice but occur in different surroundings. The purchase situation refers to the situation in which a product is bought, while the consumption situation describes the occasion where the product is actually consumed. This distinction is important inasmuch as different factors are salient in different situations which could get the customer to switch to another brand. For example, in specific occasions where a product is consumed, particular consumption roles might arise which are stable across individuals. The individual is tied to some social expectations which influence his/her brand choice therein or at a purchase situation. The customer attempts to choose a brand whose image fits the situation (Xue, 2008). McAlister and Pessemier (1982) refer to this influence on varied behavior as 'multiple contexts'. Depending on the anticipated usage situation, the consumer is likely to choose the brand which fits his/her role in the particular situation.

Very often the situational influences on brand choice are measured verbally by purchase reports. Sandell (1968), for example, presented verbal explanations of different usage situations of drinks, such as accompanying a meal or when feeling really thirsty. Respondents indicated the product which they would choose for that particular situation. The results suggest that there is a significant impact of anticipated consumption situation on product choice in that a person would choose water in one particular situation, but would rather decide to drink coffee in a different situation. The main effects and the interaction terms even accounted for 73% of the variance.

The same effect can be observed when discriminating among different brands. Consumers even tend to choose different brands for different occasions. Moreover, customers placed different weights on product attributes and had differing perceptions of the products across usage situations (Miller & Ginter, 1979). That is, situational variables not only influence purchase frequencies of products and brands but also the perception of the item in general and its attributes in particular. Xue (2008) supports this view by stating that different usage situations have common effects across individuals when choosing a car brand for either a wedding or a hiking trip. Moreover, his findings suggest that, in low involvement choice

decisions, the situational variable is the only influencing factor, compared to personal variables.

Botti et al. (2008) develop a categorization of restrictions that consumers face when making decisions. Restrictions are seen as "any internally or externally imposed boundary that limits and/or confines choices" (p. 185). They distinguish between four different types of restrictions:

- Source,
- Object,
- Characteristics, and
- Presentation of the restriction.

The source refers to certain external (physiological, social, legal, and economic) and self-imposed boundaries. A consumer's budget constraint, for example, represents an economic restriction. This type of restriction includes not only limited resources but also strategic competitive actions of the supplier. In this context, brands stocked by retailers, recommendations, and product positioning should be mentioned. As every retailer attempts to increase sales, he/she has to efficiently allocate products to available shelves. Offering too much would be a waste of precious space compared to the returns, and offering too little would lead to out-of-stock situations. Considerable evidence shows that different product positioning affects sales, due to visibility and convenience. For example, positioning at the eye level increases the probability to be purchased (Dreze, Hoch & Purk, 1994). Price reductions, coupons, and advertising on the point of sale affect choice behavior in that brand switching is more likely to be induced (Mazursky, LaBarbera & Aiello, 1987).

The object of restriction refers to the target of the restriction, i.e. individuals, groups, within-groups or universe.

Nature of the object, stringency, and timeframe are the characteristics of a restriction. An object can be represented in a place by its type, variety, and quantity and the option-related information. For example, the availability of a brand at the point of sale refers to the nature of the object because retail stores differ in breadths and depths of assortment or a certain brand may be out of stock (Mazursky, LaBarbera & Aiello, 1987). A customer could be induced to switch if he/she is offered a variety of other brands or to continue buying his/her

preferred alternative, due to a lack of other incentives. A situation can become stringent when, for example, a need has to be satisfied immediately or when only one product is left for purchase. The consumer might not have the time or energy to evaluate the present offer. For example, Mattson and Dubinsky (1987) found in their study that time pressure during a shopping trip, as a situational variable, has a significant impact on behavior. According to their findings, time pressure prevents the customers from gathering information about special sales and reduces the shopping effort in general.

How a consumer reacts to a restriction also depends on how the restriction is presented, thus, if it suggests to the consumer a loss or a gain of something when performing certain behavior. A restriction's timeframe includes its duration and immediacy. A restriction can last for quite a long time or can be over after some time, for example, when an out-of-stock situation is overcome by refilling the shelf. A graphical representation of the types of restrictions can be seen in Figure 5.
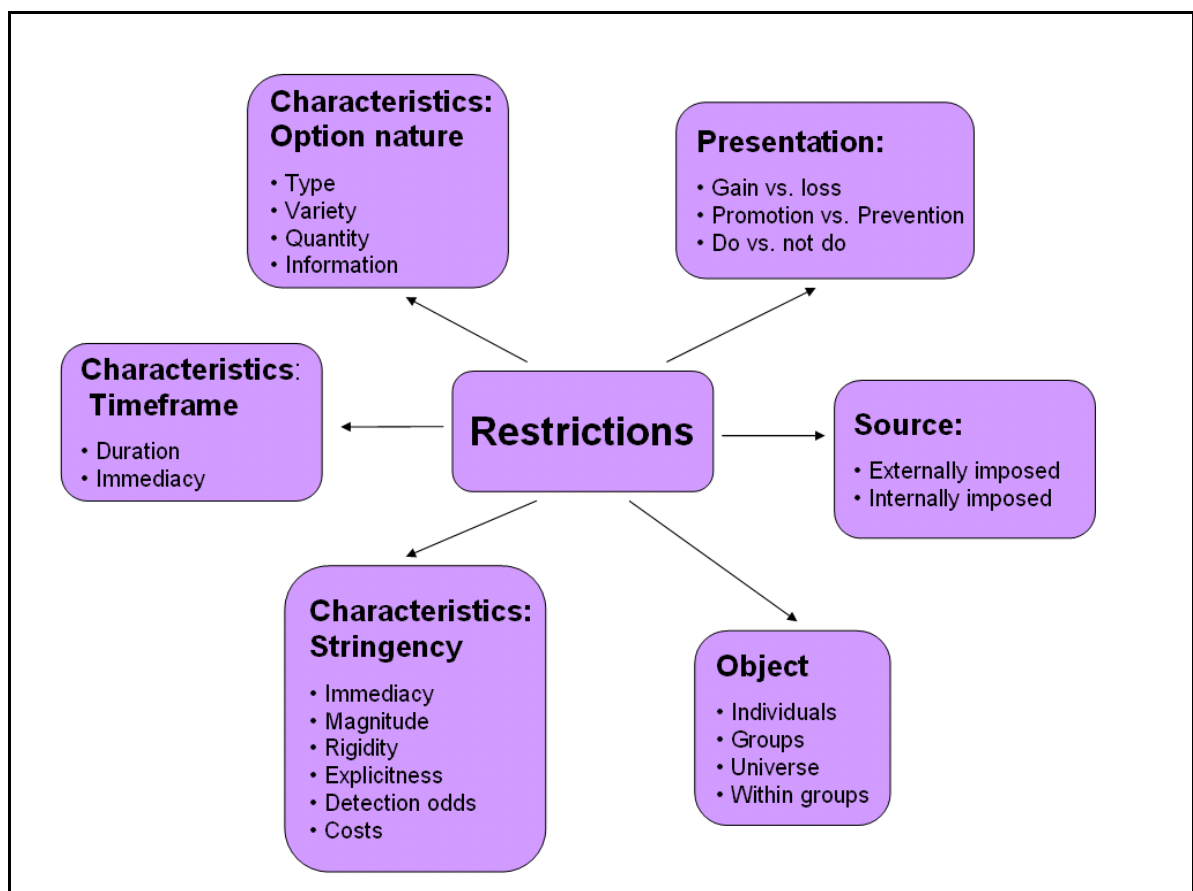
Figure 5: Types of restrictions on choice decisions
(Source: Botti et al., 2008)

The literature review attempts to shed some light into processes taking place inside the individual, which cannot be observed by the researchers. They can only draw inferences from observable behavior to which processes might occur inside the organism and how overall judgements on the various alternatives of the market offers are formed. Marketing researchers can only rely on the accuracy of their assumptions as some unexplained variance in human behavior always remains. They can only strive to find some new variables and thereby find explanations for behavioral tendencies. Hence, even if the consumer finds his/her preferred brand, derives satisfaction by consuming it, and reinforces the favorable attitude he/she holds about it and, in turn, makes a purchase decision, there will always be intervening factors or unobserved internal variables which account for the unexplained variance and which lead to intention-inconsistent behavior. It can thus be argued that there is a need for further research in brand switching behavior in order to explain the concept more thoroughly.

The present study links benefits sought of a branded product, which will be discussed in Chapter 4, to consumer choice behavior. The hypotheses linking benefits sought and brand switching behavior are presented in Chapter 6 and tested in Chapters 7 and 8.

4. Customer value

In the present study one main focus of research is perceived customer value. The difference between objective value and perceived value is explained in Chapter 4.4., after discussing the basic intra-individual processes taking place when a certain stimulus is encountered. Thus, in order to understand how consumers perceive objects and why it is important not only to examine measurable and observable concepts but also the viewpoint of the consumer, the process of perception and selective attention is briefly discussed. Then attention is drawn to means-end-chains, which describe the various levels of abstractness on which consumers derive personal meanings from characteristics of an object.

4.1. Perception

The organism is connected to the outside world by its senses. These sensory organs serve as intervening points between incoming information and processed information. Gregory (1989) characterizes perception as a process which enables humans to discover the world of objects. This discovery of the outside world happens through organisation and interpretation of incoming information from which conclusions are drawn of how reality might look like (Goldstein, 1997). Pessemier (1978, p. 380) supports this subjective conceptualization by describing perception as "…beliefs or judgements about the properties of the object". Thus, humans learn about things through sensory experience. The subsequent information processing basically operates unconsciously due to the huge amount of information which stimulates the senses. Only a fraction of this information enters the sensory organs, in part because it has to work quickly, which is why perception is a quite unreliable process (Gregory, 1989).

Gregory (1989) outlines that for a long time perception had been thought of as a passive process, which is referred to as a window to the outside world, through which sensory information is picked up. In contrast, by now it is generally agreed that perception is an active process of creation of pictures in the mind. This is also why it is important to differentiate between appearance and reality (Belk, 1975). The mind appears to be separate from the objective world, since it receives information through sensory organs, which are encoded and passed on through threads of nerves and decoded in the brain. Thus the whole process of perception consists of acceptance of energy arriving at the receptors, and

encoding and decoding of information. Characteristics of objects are represented by activity of the nerves, which is referred to as sensory code (Goldstein, 1997). These neural signals, just like small pieces of a puzzle, come from all sensory organs and are merged in the brain in order to put together the whole picture which is encountered and referred to as perception. The whole process must be viewed from a very subjective viewpoint. Thus, the generated picture is not necessarily an exact copy of reality, rather the output of filtered information, which is compared to what is already known and understandable. In the same way, perception of hedonic consumption is not primarily based on what the consumers know to be real but rather how they desire reality to be. So the consumer constructs his/her own internal picture of reality (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982).

The reason why Gregory (1989) speaks of 'unreliability of perception' is because perception is the result of a process which filters information of the physical world (Goldstein, 1997). Moreover, the whole process can be compared to some sort of hypothesis testing (Hoch & Deighton, 1989). Incoming information is analyzed in order to generate predictive hypotheses (Gregory, 1989). By comparing new information with already stored knowledge and experiences, the brain comes to a conclusion what reality must be like (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985; Hoch & Deighton, 1989; Goldstein, 1997). Thereby, these conclusions are drawn inductively, that is whenever a particular situation or object is encountered some knowledge is generated. Accordingly, the next time a similar situation or object is encountered, from another viewpoint, more information is added to existing knowledge and inferences about the object or situation are drawn in order to form general rules or views. This process basically describes learning by experience, that is, putting all those pictures encountered consistently together and forming judgements about the reality of objects. Perception is thus considered to be empirical and acquired by learning. This is also how research hypotheses are generated: First existing knowledge on the topic is collected and then, as a logical inference, a general hypothesis about reality is formulated (Gregory, 1989).

However, individuals do not share the same experiences with objects and situations. The main research problem arising from the S-O-R model is that the same stimuli produce different responses among different individuals (Ritchie, 1974). Knowledge and experience, i.e. what reactions are appropriate in particular situations, enable humans to behave in an intelligent manner and to anticipate events and corresponding responses.

4.2. Selective attention

Perception basically represents an information processing purpose. Berlyne (1960) states that since the human brain has limited information processing capacity it had to develop a certain mechanism to filter relevant information in order to prevent information overload. With selective attention, cortical processes, which work at the same time, can be blocked in order to limit the amount of incoming information. Thus, only a small fraction of information that reaches sensory organs is transmitted to the brain to be further processed.

Berlyne (1960) summarizes certain factors which determine selective attention:

- Innate factors: Those stimuli, which arouse instinctive reactions, are rather chosen than those which do not primarily serve the purpose of securing survival,
- Stimulus intensity and color: The bigger and more colorful the stimulus is, the more likely it is to attract attention,
- Sensory mode: depending on the sense the stimulus activates, for example, visual information is often being preferred to auditory information,
- Affective value: those stimuli that are associated with punishment are learned to be ignored. Responses to stimuli which are associated with reward are performed instead,
- Motivational state: When a drive has been activated, then attention tends to be drawn to those objects which reduce the drive,
- Novelty, change and complexity: New, varied and diverse stimuli are preferred to familiar and simple ones,
- Indicating stimuli: Those stimuli, to which a particular response has been learned, are likely to be perceived.

According to Berlyne's (1960) last point, consumers tend to process information which can be linked to stored knowledge and experience. This system helps them to filter relevant information from irrelevant information, because this reduces efforts in cognitive action. Furthermore, information consistent with prior knowledge is more likely to be perceived, and in turn, to be processed, than stimuli which contradict experience. This is reasonable since it requires more cognitive effort to generate new cognitive structures for discrepant evidence than classifying consistent information within already existing mental structures (Hoch & Deighton, 1989).

Furthermore, Ratneshwar, Warlop, Mick and Seeger (1997) investigate selective attention drawn to product attributes when certain product benefits are sought. According to their findings, in situations with limited information processing capacity, product benefits sought influence to which extent attention is drawn to a product's features and the form to which the stimuli are encoded. Thus, in situations when certain concepts in the brain are activated, i.e. certain benefits are sought, perceptual processes favor attributes which are thought of as delivering these benefits. This attentional filter is necessary in order to prevent information overload.

The above evidence on perception and selective attention suggests that for subjects there is no objective reality, in the sense that the sensory organs filter certain information and this data is collected in the brain, which in turn, forms a picture of how the outside world might look like. It also implies that the individual's readiness to perceive certain stimuli rather than others, leads to different perception and information processing, which results in different behavior, in a given situation. As Biel (1992, RC-7) puts it "…consumer behavior is, at root, driven by perceptions of a brand". This knowledge appears helpful in understanding the concepts of customer value and quality, and why it is so important to distinguish objective value from perceived value.

4.3. Means-end-chains

Graeff (1997) states that products are not perceived by their constituent attributes alone, but rather by interpreting this information and inferring personal meaning to it, based on prior knowledge and experience. Thus every single product attribute has a personal consequence which represents a subjective translation of data in terms of what is desired in an item and what is not (Keller, 2003). This order of information processing is attributed to the specific structure of knowledge, starting with perception of physical attributes, which are interpreted in terms of personal consequences, leading to the highest levels, the values or goals. This sequence is referred to as means-end-chains. This concept plays an important role in connecting consumers' values to their behavior. Accordingly, attributes are characteristics of the product, while consequences are personal meanings derived from these attributes and which are learned through experience, that is by product trial, word-of-mouth, marketing communications etc. Consequences thus refer to focal points between the product and the consumer.

The highest level of abstraction is represented by values, which captures what a person thinks he/she is or wants to be (Pieters, Baumgartner & Allen, 1995).

Gutman (1982) states that in means-end models consumers are hypothesized to engage in certain behavior in order to reach some desired goals. Accordingly, in means-end-chains it is assumed that the subject's choice decisions are guided by individual desired values, and that goods are pooled into groups in terms of similarity of consequences derived from these products. Not only are these goods combined in product groups, but also the benefits the goods provide in order to reach some specific goal. Thereby consequences are referred to as results of a person's behavior. Positive consequences are considered as benefits and benefits are perceived by the consumer, while the product consists of certain attributes. Gutman (1982) argues that products can provide various benefit dimensions, which he refers to as physiological, i.e. satisfying some need, psychological (self-enhancing benefit) and sociological benefits. These benefits are either derived from the product or during consumption of the product. Moreover he distinguishes between direct and indirect consequences, where direct consequences are derived directly from the product, i.e. some functional benefit, and indirect consequences refer to other people's favorable or unfavorable reactions to the consumption act.

The extent to which a consumer is able to infer meanings from physical attributes depends on the consumer's product knowledge. This knowledge is generated by experience and use of various products and interpretation of the derived benefits (Graeff, 1997). Thus, through usage experiences with various products, consumers gain knowledge about which products provide which benefits on different consumption occasions (Gutman, 1982). If the consumer's knowledge is high on a particular product, then the developed means-end-chains where new information can be integrated facilitate associations and interpretation thereof. Consequently, as it represents less cognitive effort, already presented consequences, for example, messages from advertisements or product descriptions, can be more easily processed than raw attribute information, which facilitates evaluation of products even for consumers with a small knowledge (Graeff, 1997).

4.4. What is customer value?

The concept of customer value has been researched widely by many authors (Sheth, Newman & Gross, 1991; Richins, 1994b; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001) and plays an important role in understanding consumer behavior in the marketplace. In attempts to describe this concept, it has to be distinguished between objective value and perceived value. Perceived value is described as including judgements and beliefs about the characteristics of an object (Pessemier, 1978). Those characteristics are represented on abstract levels in a consumer's mind, called perceptual space (Pessemier, 1978). However, these judgements and beliefs are all products of a person's perception (Belk, 1975). As noted in Chapter 3.1., S-O-R, as a main paradigm in marketing, explains responses coming from an individual as being formed during a process, which takes place inside the organism and serves an information processing purpose. Since experiences, motivations and other variables regarding the consumer all influence this process, it is reasonable that the same stimulus influencing one person will unlikely lead to the same response in another person. How subjects perceive their environment is a focus for research in various fields, as different persons interpret information in a different manner. If two persons find themselves in the same situation, they first interpret their environment and its features before each of them decides how to appropriately react to it (Belk, 1975). Therefore, some researchers suggest that perceptions of situations rather than tangible or observable characteristics thereof should be investigated in research experiments (Hauser & Urban, 1979; Clarke, 2001). These 'psychological measurements' are more likely to reflect consumers' perceptions than 'objective' assessments of situational factors (Belk, 1975). In the present study this more subjective view of the value concept is adopted.

In the literature value is conceptualized as a trade-off between a give and get component, i.e. some sort of sacrifice compared to what is received (Zeithaml, 1988; Richins, 1994b; Dowling & Uncles, 1997; Hellier et al., 2003). It appears to be a perceptual comparison between costs and benefits of a product or service. Accordingly, the 'give' component in the value concept does not equate objective price, but is also represented by a more abstract level, such as cheap or expensive (Zeithaml, 1988). Richins (1994b) points out that the 'give' component can also be considered as willingness to pay by the consumer, rather than the objective price the marketplace attaches to the product or service.

Conversely, Sweeney and Soutar (2001) argue that value comprises more than just the functional components of products, namely other hedonic dimensions. They state that customer value is a multi-dimensional construct, which reflects functional benefits, such as quality and value for money, as well as social and emotional benefits. The consumption experience should not be reduced to evaluation of a product's performance, but also generate a social and emotional payoff (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). Thus, the conceptualization of customer value as a trade-off between what is received and what is given as described above captures value for money, which is only one of four value dimensions.

Sweeney and Soutar's (2001) results also suggest that the four value dimensions capture customer choice better than a single value for money variable. This is reasonable because functional benefits basically measure benefits derived from the product, whereas the brand is the focal point when deriving hedonic benefits (Vazquez, Belen del Rio & Igleasias, 2002). This view of value as a multi-dimensional concept is supported by Dowling & Uncles (1997), who regard these value dimensions as representing functional, economic and psychological benefits. More exactly, Sheth et al. (1991) consider customer value as providing five different benefits to the consumer, namely functional benefit, social benefit, emotional benefit, epistemic benefit and conditional benefit, which are regarded as operating on a more abstract level than product attributes. These dimensions are described further in Chapter 4.4.

Thus, individuals do not appear to derive value from the product as such. Lancaster (1966) states that objects per se are not the sources of utility but their constituent attributes, which deliver utility by themselves. These attributes are interpreted in terms of the benefits they deliver to the consumer, that is, abstract representations of the object's constituent features are stored in their memory, enabling consumers to make evaluations of an item's value. Such abstract representations are, for example, power and status. Hence, possessions are not necessarily valued for what they are but what they represent. They are sources from which certain symbolic benefits can be derived. Not only symbolic benefits play a role in value formation. To the same extent, possessions are valued for the functional benefits they provide, as they serve as tools to manipulate the environment. Thus, material objects serve a self-expression function but also represent instruments to affect and control the environment (Prentice, 1987).

Moreover, Richins (1994a) distinguishes two different views on value, namely, value in exchange and value in use. Value in exchange appears to be an object's worth from an economical viewpoint, representing the counter value in the marketplace, i.e. what actors in the marketplace are willing to pay for the object. Conversely, value in use is a more individual view on the concept, as it represents the personal utility attached to the object. For example, the exchange value of an analogue camera in the 21st century of digital photography may be just a small fraction of the value in use, i.e. the unique value that the consumer attaches to the object. This unique value, thus, does not only comprise its physical attributes but also all the emotions and feelings it arouses through consumption. These affective states, for example, form a certain meaning for the owner. Thus, the physical product may provide functional value helping to reach goals and facilitate life, but as noted earlier, an object's constituent features do not only provide utility by themselves. They are rather decoded and interpreted in the consumers' minds and certain meaning is attached to them. The product can also be regarded in terms of what it communicates to others and what it communicates to the owner, since possessions also serve some kind of self-expressive function. The meaning attached to an object by a group of people or society as a whole is referred to as 'public meaning', whereas the unique associations the object has to the individual and the unique value derived from consumption is referred to as 'private meaning'. Private meaning must not be regarded as being independent from public meaning. Private meaning is rather formed and influenced by society and social groups, since socialization processes throughout life determine an individual's interaction with the public and the social environment. Consequently, every individual assumes a role in society and he/she acts to confirm this role, which is why private meaning must not be regarded in isolation. Thus, the aforementioned dimensions, namely, private meaning and public meaning, make up the value of an object, since meaning is an important source to perceived value.

To sum up, the value concept has been defined in terms of consequences derived from a product's constituent attributes. However, 'customer value' must not be confused with 'values' in terms of end points in means-end-chains theory, which people learn throughout their lives and which serve as anchor points to behavior. These values are internalized through education and experience, influencing perception and the interpretation of information. Customer value is also a more abstract representation of certain tangible concepts, such as product attributes, but is referred to as partly being derived from

consumption experience (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Customer value is thus not placed highest in the means-end chain, but comprises all consequences derived from consumption of a product (Orth, McDaniel, Shellhammer & Lopetcharat, 2004). Woodruff (1997, p. 140) highlights this subjective view of the concept, describing customer value as ''....what they [customers] want and believe that they get from buying and using a seller's product''. Thus, this concept is not directly observable or measurable in terms of product characteristics, rather it is the output of an individual's perception. Consequently, he refers to the concept as perceived value rather than the objective value of a product, since his conceptualization embraces beliefs and desires of customers.

4.4.1. The dimensions of value

Lancaster (1966) outlines that a product is not the primary source for value, but attributes are interpreted in terms of benefits sought. Product characteristics are rather perceived and interpreted by individuals and every individual derives his/her own meaning from every attribute and translates it into consumer value. Means-end-chains theory suggests that not the product as such, but its representation in a consumer's mind is what produces value. For example, product attributes such as durability, reliability and price are considered sources of functional benefit (Sheth et al., 1991). Benefits are defined as "personal value and meaning that consumers attach to the brand's product attributes" (Keller, 2003, p. 596). Thus, possessions are not necessarily regarded as objects that serve particular functions, but rather representing subjective symbols (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982).

Customer value is considered to be a multi-dimensional concept, consisting of several benefit dimensions. As value is a crucial factor in choice decisions, different value dimensions are paramount in different choice situations. Sheth et al. (1991) name five value dimensions:

- Functional benefit,
- Social benefit,
- Emotional benefit,
- Epistemic benefit, and
- Conditional benefit.

Functional benefit is described as serving a useful purpose and providing necessary functions for the consumers, derived from product attributes. This benefit dimension helps consumers to simplify their lives and to reach their goals. Social benefit is the utility derived from associations with a social group. Mostly products which are consumed in public or shared with others score high on this benefit. Emotional benefit refers to feelings that the object arouses in the consumer, or reminds him/her of feelings at a previous consumption occasion. Epistemic benefit is considered satisfaction of a curiosity need through acquisition of information and knowledge. Conditional benefit is only relevant in particular situations, where it is needed but in not in others. All benefits are independent from each other, but can be connected additively, as a higher score per benefit results in higher perceived value.

Richins (1994a) also considers value a multi-dimensional product, comprising the following components:

- Utilitarian value,
- Enjoyment,
- Representation of personal ties, and
- Identity and self-expression.

Utilitarian value mainly captures the idea of functional value by Sheth et al. (1991), and enjoyment can be subsumed under emotional value, since enjoyment is an affective state which is aroused by emotional benefit. Representation of personal ties describes the product's ability to generate associations with a beloved person, for example, because the object was a gift or it reminds him/her of a dear person. Identity and self-expression refers to the meaning attached to the product, concerning one's values or religious beliefs. Concerning benefits stressing one's identity, two viewpoints can be defined, namely, personal identity and social identity. Personal identity refers to the picture that the individual has of him/herself, while social identity refers to the picture an individual has of the groups he/she belongs to (Orth & Kahle, 2008). Possessions can serve both purposes, i.e. they offer utility to enhance one's personal identity as well as offering social identity through its benefits.

Now, the utilitarian value can to a great extent be attributed to the physical characteristics of an object. The other three benefits rather refer to what the object represents to the owner

and to society. Richins (1994b) outlines that different benefits are valued differently by either individuals who place great emphasis on materialistic values than those who value symbolic representations of possessions. In her study Richins (1994b) describes that respondents, who value their possessions for their material value, mainly possess objects which are consumed in public, i.e. highly visible objects. On the other hand, respondents whose possessions are basically intended for private use or with guests, score low on the materialism values.

This means that not all benefits at a time make up perceived value. Of course, the more benefits a product has the more value is attached to it. Conversely, not all benefits make the same contributions in different situations. For example, in situations where the consumer wants to satisfy an emotional need, only the emotional benefit can serve this purpose, whereas the other benefits are of need in other situations. Since many firms focus on specific segments or on specific needs to gain advantage by being the best to satisfy a particular need of their customers because it is relatively impractical to deliver all benefits to the individual. Moreover, consumers are willing to prioritize, i.e. to accept less of one benefit when they value another benefit more in a particular situation (Sheth et al. 1991).

Richins (1994b) outlines that functional value derives from tangible features of a product, while other, symbolic, benefits arise from a more abstract source. Apparently, an item offers different sources from which different types of benefits can be derived. So far, when describing sources of perceived customer value it has only been referred to products and their attributes. However, the term 'product' is used as a more general concept referring to 'brand name product' (Keller, 2003). Brand equity thus comprises attribute-based and non attribute-based components (Park & Srinivasan, 1994). These components are also regarded as providing different benefits for the consumer (Richins, 1994).

However, a brand is regarded as adding value to the product. Vazquez et al. (2002) outline that consumers are able to distinguish between those perceived benefits derived from the product and those attributed to the brand. They support Richins' (1994a) view by distinguishing between functional and symbolic benefits deriving from possessions, with functional benefit representing the ability to manage the environment with the possession and symbolic benefits as related to social and emotional utility derived from the branded product. Furthermore, Vazquez et al. (2002) state that both, product and brand, can provide

both kinds of benefits, i.e. functional and symbolic. Brand attributes are conceptualized as associations to a product which can be attributed to the fact that the product is marketed with a brand. For example, perceptions of duration and performance, both representing functional benefits to the consumer, may not only arise from the physical attributes of the product but also because these characteristics are associated with the brand. In their study of sports shoes, benefits such as quality and value for money are both attributed to brand, while attributes such as flexibility, weight, size and grip are associated with the product under investigation. Thus, they argue that perceived customer value of a branded product embraces both components, namely product and brand. They conclude, however, that although consumers are able to assign certain characteristics to the product and others to the brand, it does not mean that they perceive these two concepts as separate nor do they equalize product and brand. Keller (1993) supports this view by arguing that certain characteristics of the product tend to be associated with the brand and vice versa.

To sum up, concerning perceived customer value, benefits derived from the product's attributes and benefits derived from the brand's characteristics can be defined. This is important as functional benefits are mainly provided by the tangible features of the product, whereas symbolic benefits are attributed to the value that the brand adds to the product. On the other hand, brand and product should not be investigated as two separate concepts since perceived customer value consists of benefits derived from a branded product as a whole. Furthermore, consumers tend to assign certain characteristics to the product, such as durability and reliability, which are primarily functional, but derive from strong associations with a brand.

4.4.2. The PERVAL Scale

In order to measure perceived value of products and brands, Sweeney and Soutar (2001) developed the PERVAL Scale. Respondents in focus groups were asked, for example, what they value about preferred brands and why they refused to buy a particular product when they had the chance to. The objects under investigation were durable products and, as a result, four underlying benefit dimensions were identified. Two benefit dimensions reflect functional benefits, i.e. derived from product attributes such as features, durability or price, and two reflect hedonic dimensions. The functional benefits describe an object's perceived ability to reduce short term and long term costs, which is referred to as value for money,

and an object's perceived performance or quality benefit. The hedonic values consider social and emotional benefits, with the former enhancing social self concept and from the latter deriving desired feelings and affects, such as enjoyment and pleasure.

The scale was developed based on the article by Sheth et al. (1991) who described five value dimensions, which capture epistemic and conditional value, next to the functional, emotional and social benefit investigated by Sweeney and Soutar (2001). They excluded the former two benefits, as epistemic benefit is not viewed as being important for regularly consumed goods, since it is viewed to be important in sensory experiences and certain other goods that can satisfy curiosity and the need for knowledge and surprise. Conditional value was also dismissed from the scale as it is only valued in special situations and the scale should be applicable for all situations and across a variety of goods and brands.

Sweeney and Soutar (2001) further outline that the scale proved valid and reliable for all purchase stages, i.e. it can be used to evaluate perceived value at a pre-purchase as well as post-purchase level. They also found that different benefits not only influence certain purchase occasions, but also different levels of the purchase process. For example, willingness to buy was strongly linked to emotional benefit, while perceptions of potential problems with the product were linked to quality benefit.

The scale was developed in order to measure benefits derived from products as well as brands across all product groups. Moreover, it can be used at pre-purchase as well as at post-purchase level. Orth et al. (2004) used this scale to examine the link between 'benefits sought' and preference for beer brands in different consumption situations. As was discussed in Chapter 4.1., desired value influences perceptions of a branded product's value. Thus the authors inferred the benefits consumers seek in beer brands from respondents' ratings on the PERVAL Scale. Not only was the scale appropriate for measuring the influence of benefits sought on brand preference, but also on brand choice (Orth & Kahle, 2008). Different benefits can be of importance when making choices, for example, consumers might choose a branded product because it is perceived to have a high quality, purchase generic brands because they desire good value for money, or buy a certain beer brand because they seek social benefit.

The present study takes up this notion in order to examine the link between benefits sought and brand switching behavior. Chapter 3 has pointed out the need for research on this concept, since brand choice behavior has not yet been fully explained. As already discussed in this chapter, benefits sought by consumers have been linked to brand preference (Orth et al. 2004) and brand choice for different usage situations (Orth, 2005; Orth & Kahle, 2008). No study has so far linked benefits sought to brand switching behavior. The present study attempts to fill the identified research gap by examining the following hypothesis, which is central to the present study:

H1: Benefits sought by consumers in branded products and brand switching tendency are significantly correlated.

The PERVAL-Scale described in this chapter was found to be suitable for measuring benefits sought from branded products for the present study, because the items could be used for FMCGs with only minor adjustments, i.e. two questions were deleted from the scale because they make more sense in a durable good category than in regularly purchased product groups. Moreover, since the present empirical study used purchase reports over a one-month-period in order to investigate brand switching in four product categories, it seems reasonable to assume that certain patterns in perceived benefits reflect benefits sought in branded products. The product groups used in the present study and the hypotheses on benefits sought in these product groups are discussed in Chapter 6.

4.4.3. Quality

The value concept is very often confused with quality. Zeithaml (1988) defines objective quality as superiority or excellence, clearly distinguishing the objective concept from a perceptual reproduction of quality, which refers to judgements and beliefs thereof. When contrasting quality and value, Zeithaml (1988) refers to means-end chains. This theory assumes that objects are represented in a person's mind on varying levels of abstraction. Consequently, values are on the highest level of means-end-chains, often being the cause for choice decisions.

According to this theory, Zeithaml (1988) points out that quality is represented on two levels of abstraction. On the one hand, it is considered a product attribute.

Quality on the attribute level can be objectively measured and compared to similar products or an ideal standard in a technical sense. On the other hand, consumers appear to translate a product's features into a meaningful concept, just as absolute price is represented as a benefit in consumer's minds. Individuals' perception of concepts like price or quality is especially important to marketing managers, since they can directly influence the attribute-level quality by improving the product, and perception of quality benefit, the higher abstraction-level construct, by altering the variables in the marketing mix.

Bolton and Drew (1991) consider value as a more general evaluation of a product or service, while quality is viewed as being a product characteristic. Since value is conceptualized as a trade-off between give- and get-components, it includes quality of an item as one of the determinants of perceived value. Quality also seems to be a precursor to value, as Bolton and Drew (1991) provide evidence that disconfirmation, i.e. comparison between expected and received performance, has a bigger influence on quality than on perceived value. This is explained by a stronger disconfirmation effect influencing perceived value directly and indirectly through perceived quality.

4.4.4. Satisfaction

As both value and satisfaction represent evaluative judgements about objects, both terms are discussed in the following section. Satisfaction has already been described in Chapter 3.4.

Value and satisfaction have several aspects in common. Both represent evaluative judgements about objects and both presuppose experience with the product. Since satisfaction is based on the disconfirmation paradigm (Oliver, 1980), which compares expected with actual performance, satisfaction is a post-purchase evaluative judgement. Furthermore, satisfaction is a unidimensional concept, i.e. after comparing the expected and the received performance, the consumer is either satisfied or dissatisfied. In comparison, a product generates value for a consumer on more than one dimension, such as on functional, emotional and social benefits (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001).

Woodruff (1997) refers to value as being antecedent to satisfaction, seeing value as an evaluation of the disconfirmation between expectations and perceived value. Moreover, satisfaction can also be generated at every abstract stage in the means-end-value chain.

Thus satisfaction arises when comparing attributes as well as benefits and values with expectations.

4.4.5. Utility

Utility is a term often encountered in the relevant literature about consumer preferences (Hauser & Urban, 1979). These preferences do not necessarily mean certain objects or situations. Utility theory rather involves preferences concerning a set of alternatives, levels of wealth, different consumption occasions or levels of risk (Friedman & Savage, 1948; Modigliani, 2005, Thaler, 2008). Modigliani (2005), for example, analyzes individual consumption functions, indicating that the consumer derives utility from every consumption occasion given a budget constraint or limited resources (Varian, 1983). Hence, the consumer tries to maximize his utility by allocating his income appropriately. This implies that an individual always prefers more to less, given that the utility function is concave, which means that marginal utility decreases with every increase in the preferred level.

Fishburn (2005) outlines that preference is closely tied to utility and that the numerical manifestation of preference is a person's utility function. Thus, a utility function gives information about an individual's preference structure and can help to rationally evaluate alternative decisions, as decision making is the main goal of utility research (Hauser & Urban, 1979). At the starting position is a consumer who has to choose one item out of a set of alternatives. He/she has certain preferences and it is assumed, that he/she selects an alternative preferred to the others in the set. In order to compute the utility function, each alternative receives a numerical value (utility), which increases proportionally to its preference. Furthermore, the assumption is that the consumer chooses the alternative with the higher utility. Thus, the utility function can arrange the alternatives according to the individual's relative preferences in order to guide the decision maker. In marketing, these utility functions are used to predict consumer behavior, such as the purchase of a product (Hauser & Urban, 1979). Fishburn (2005) furthermore describes a concept, which matches Mc Alister's (1982) conceptualization of an attribute satiation process discussed in Chapter 2.5.3. Altogether, Mc Alister (1982) views items as being pools of attributes, which make up the choice set. Now Fishburn (2005) describes utility functions, where the numerical values are not assigned to entire choice alternatives, but to each attribute of an alternative. Consequently, a set of alternatives consists of a pool of attributes, where each attribute has

its own utility and accounts for a part in the function. This view is referred to as 'holistic preference' and is relevant for an evaluation of consequences rather than tangible objects.

Friedman and Savage (1948) outline that, for example, participation in lottery cannot rationally be explained by utility maximization, as the individual accepts the highly probable risk of losing a small amount of money, given the very small chance or near impossibility of winning a large amount. So in the end the individual has a negative expected utility, but chooses to participate in this game again at the next occasion. This is contradictory to the utility function's assumption of more always being preferred to less. By contrast, a concept like value could explain participation in games of chance as being attributed to some emotional benefit, which is perceived as adrenaline, excitement and suspension, rather than, for example, functional benefits. Thus, the value concept even allows irrational decisions, based on other benefits than 'more is preferred to less' on one dimension.

To sum up, the conceptualization of utility in economic terms represents an arranging of preferences, which help market actors to maximize their utility function and helps them in making choices. However, on a product level, Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) refer to utility as being measured based on the attributes a particular product consists of. Thus, utility seems to be an overall evaluation of the product's observable and tangible features, which is included in the value concept by functional benefits, such as performance or quality and value for money. Thus, utility seems to be on the same abstraction level (the lowest) as product attributes. Utility, as a summary judgement of an item's features, is thus interpreted in terms of a consumer's desired benefits, which in turn leads to perceived customer value. In conclusion, perceived customer value is a general evaluative concept of branded products, which embraces both, product quality and utility, with certain consequences and personal meaning being attached in order to reach higher level goals.

5. Consumer characteristics: Demographics and lifestyle

Many studies in marketing science have tried to link demographic variables to consumer behavior and thereby to identify homogeneous markets, unfortunately, with poor results (Bonfield 1974, Zuckerman, Eysenck & Eysenck, 1978). Recent research attempts, however, tried to benefit from combining segmentation variables, such as demographics and lifestyle, which resulted in an improvement of the hypothesized correlations (Orth, 2005; Orth & Kahle, 2008). Moreover, Lin (2002) argues for mixed segmentation methods, which incorporate both, demographic and psychographic variables, and thus deliver better information on consumer characteristics. Orth et al. (2004) examined the influence of lifestyle on brand benefits sought in beer brands and found that lifestyle is a suitable variable to explain brand benefits sought, which in turn are drivers of brand preference.

Segmentation serves the purpose of distinguishing homogeneous consumer groups in the market (O'Connor & Sullivan, 1995). Smith (1956) was the first to introduce the concept of market segmentation as a counterpart to mass-production, where the same product is offered to the whole market due to low cost. However, Smith (1956) recognized that all consumers are different, but can be divided into homogeneous groups which share similar characteristics, attitudes and behaviors. Haley (1968) distinguishes three types of segmentation: Geographic segmentation, demographic segmentation and volume segmentation. The first method refers to the product used only in certain areas, the second to consumer characteristics such as age and gender, and volume segmentation means identifying frequent users of the product type. Nowadays there are many different variables which can be used to group segments together, such as demographics (Kish & Busse, 1968), values and lifestyle (Kahle, Beatty & Homer, 1986) and life cycle stage (Wells & Gubar, 1966).

Market segmentation discloses certain market opportunities to firms, such as market niches, a segment with considerable potential that has not yet been discovered by competitors. Thereby, firms adjust their products or services to fit the segment's profile with respect to shared customer needs and wants. Companies are also able to design marketing communication more effectively in order to reach a particular segment, especially if marketing managers can anticipate reactions to the new design based on the segment's common characteristics (O'Connor & Sullivan, 1995).

Consequently, in this study, demographic variables, i.e. age, gender, education and income, as well as a measure on lifestyle are applied in order to compare correlations and explanatory power of each of the variables with respect to benefits sought. Vyncke's (2002) lifestyle scale is used for this study because this scale has certain advantages. Being a fairly recent instrument, Vyncke's (2002) lifestyle scale incorporates several of the best items of the previous scales (e.g. AIO, LOV). Furthermore, the complete scale comprises items on values, aesthetic styles, life visions, media preferences and products. The different scales can be used separately or combined according to the sample and research purpose. In order to measure lifestyle, the concepts of values, life visions and aesthetic styles are combined in this study. This was done for two reasons: Firstly, to shorten the questionnaire, since the original comprised 12 pages, and, secondly, because some items on the scale, e.g. media preferences, were tailored to the Flemish population, since the questionnaire was developed in Belgium. This is also an important advantage of the scale, since it was developed in a European country and it can be argued that the Belgian culture is comparable to the Austrian culture. The whole questionnaire is included in the appendix.

6. Research framework and hypotheses

The present study examines the link between benefits sought by consumers and their brand switching behavior and influences of demographics and lifestyle on benefits sought and brand switching tendencies. Figure 6 shows the hypothesized relationships, which will are formulated in the Chapters 6.1. to 6.4.
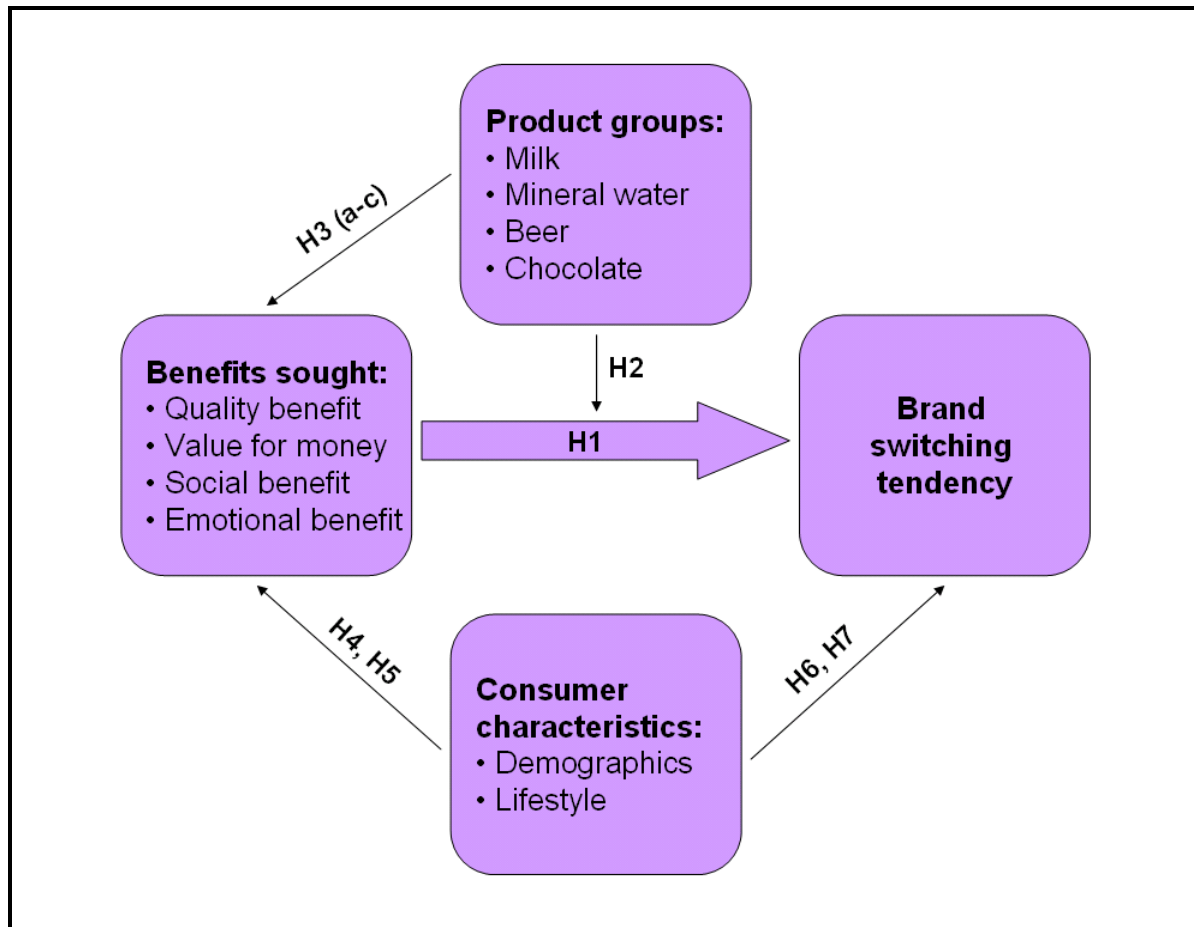
Figure 6: Hypothesized relationships

6.1. Brand benefits sought as drivers of brand switching

There is much criticism about past studies mainly focussing on product attributes when researching evaluation of products and choice but less on more abstract components of customer value, since the product attributes are not the only sources of value (Hirschman &

Holbrook, 1982; Keller, 2003; Orth, 2005). Orth (2005) and Orth and Kahle (2008) examined brand benefits sought in different usage situations and argue that a more abstract concept such as consumer value reflects motivational drivers of brand choice better than mere product attributes. Orth's (2005) findings lend support to the proposition that benefits sought are significantly related to brand choice in different usage situations.

In chapter 3 it was recognized that research on the concept of brand switching is needed, since brand choice behavior has not yet been fully explained. Hence, the present study attempts to increase knowledge in this area by examining benefits sought by customers in branded products and linking these benefits to brand switching. Sweeney and Soutar's (2001) PERVAL scale, which was described in Chapter 4.4. is thus considered suitable for measuring benefits sought by consumers, as it can be used on a wide variety of branded products. This scale was already used in order to examine the link between benefits sought and preference for beer brands (Orth et al., 2004) as well as choice in different usage situations (Orth, 2005; Orth & Kahle, 2008).

Thus, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H1: Benefits sought by consumers in branded products and brand switching tendency are significantly correlated.

6.2. Product group as a moderator variable

Sweeney and Soutar (2001) suggest that there are differences between product groups concerning benefits sought in an object. Since it is a hypothesis in the present study that different benefits drive consumers to switch brands, it is reasonable to assume that product groups also exert an influence on this relationship.

For various reasons frequently purchased goods, namely milk, mineral water, beer and chocolate, are examined in this study. Firstly, consumers are less involved in the purchase decision of everyday products, meaning the decision happens at a low risk. Therefore, consumers only go through limited information processing, instead of comparing information on various product attributes and rather rely on extrinsic factors such as brands, which also embrace associations with the product group (Keller, 1993).

Secondly, the product groups analyzed in this study neither possess many attributes to evaluate nor are there considerable physical differences between products of a product class. Hence, brands are thought to account for the perceptual differences between products in a product group, which could cause brand switching (Mitchell & Olson, 1981). Biel (1992) outlines that the perceived differences in benefits provided by different products can mainly be attributed to brands since functional characteristics between branded products in this category are marginal. Moreover, Park and Srinivasan (1994) examined frequently purchased products and state that the non-attribute based component, i.e. associations with the brand, is much bigger than attribute perceptions, since there is high product parity in these product groups. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that brand switching in the product groups researched in this study can mainly be attributed to differences in benefits sought from brands in different product categories.

Consequently the following hypothesis was derived:

H2: The moderator effect of the product groups exerts a significant influence on the link between benefits sought by consumers and brand switching.

6.3. Product groups and benefits sought

As was discussed in Chapter 4.3., Gutman (1982) argues that consumers tend to group products in their minds in terms of which benefits can be derived from their consumption in order to reduce the information load. It can thus be argued that consumers seek different brand benefits in different product groups. Consequently:

H3: Product groups differ significantly regarding benefits sought by consumers.

Banks (1950) suggests that in product groups where differences in brands are not perceived as considerable, customer behavior can be attributed to perceptions of functional benefits, such as value for money. Furthermore, Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) outline that for branded products whose primary purpose is to deliver value in the sense of functional benefits, the hedonic dimension does not seem paramount. Accordingly, the following hypothesis can be derived:

H3a: Functional benefits, i.e. quality and value for money, are sought primarily in the milk and mineral water groups.

Orth et al. (2004) chose beer as the focus category for their study to measure the relationship between brand benefits sought and brand preference. They argued that this product group is consumed both in private and in public. Furthermore, brand choice of noticeable products is likely to be influenced by reference groups (Bearden & Etzel, 1982). In summary, research implies that beer, as a publicly consumed good, is suitable to measure social influence on brand choice (Dolich, 1969; Ariely & Levav, 2000). Thus it can be proposed:

H3b: Social benefit is sought primarily in the beer group.

Even simple products, such as cigarettes, food or clothing, can arouse emotional states (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). Christensen and Brooks (2006) describe that food, especially fat rich snacks and sweets, can soothe emotional distress, thus offering emotional benefit.

H3c: Emotional benefit is primarily sought in the chocolate group.

6.4. Demographics and lifestyle

Since previous research work already demonstrated a correlation between demographic variables, lifestyle and benefits sought (Orth et al., 2004; Orth, 2005), which was discussed in Chapter 5, the following hypotheses are derived:

H4: Demographic variables and brand benefits sought by consumers are significantly correlated.

H5: Lifestyle and brand benefits sought by consumers are significantly correlated.

Kish and Busse (1968) found a relationship between age, education and variety seeking, stating that younger consumers with higher educational levels tend to seek more variety.

Zuckerman, Eysenck and Eysenck (1978) examined sensation seeking and found correlation to gender, with men tending to seek more variety than women. Consequently, it can be proposed that:

H6: Demographic variables and brand switching are significantly correlated.

From the proposition that demographic characteristics, as a segmentation variable which explains variation in consumer behavior, are linked to brand switching, it is reasonable to infer that lifestyle, as a segmentation variable, also influences consumer behavior. Thus it is proposed that:

H7: Lifestyle and brand switching are significantly correlated.

7. Method

In order to examine the concepts analyzed, a pre-study and a main study were conducted. The pre-study had the main purpose of identifying four product groups which are bought at least once during one month by the Austrian consumers. In the main study the hypotheses on the links between the central concepts are examined. Firstly, correlation analysis for the links between benefits sought and brand switching behavior is conducted. Secondly, a moderator effect of the product groups on this linkage is explored. After testing these relationships, the demographic variables are analyzed in order to find differences in benefits sought and brand switching between the groups. Finally, a lifestyle typology is performed through factor analysis and its influence on brand benefits sought and brand switching tendency is tested. The results of these analyses are discussed in Chapter 8.

7.1. Study 1

7.1.1. Sample

The data used for Study 1 were obtained by a quota sample. 200 respondents categorized by age and gender were spontaneously polled in a shopping mall and asked to name the first product that came to their mind when thinking of products bought at least once a month for their household. The period of one month was selected, as the main study examined shopping records during a one-month-period.

In order to represent the Austrian population as accurately as possible, quotas based on age and gender were computed. The quotas are based on data from Statistik Austria's census of the year 2001 *Bevölkerung nach Alter und Geschlecht seit 1869 (Österreich)*, which is constantly updated every ten years, and are shown in Table 1. Age groups between 15 and 65+ were used to represent the employable and retired population. The percentage of each age group was then transferred to 200 respondents and the number of respondents in each age group was computed.

Age groups	Men (Statistik Austria)	Women (Statistik Austria)	Age groups in Study 1	Number of men in age group	Number of women in age group	Quota men (200 part.)	Quota women (200 part.)
0 - 4	210.080	199.944					
5 - 9	240.593	229.142					
10 - 14	242.791	230.932					
15 - 19	247.452	236.505	15-19:	247.452	236.505	7	7
20 - 24	240.171	232.606	20-24:	240.171	232.606	7	7
25 - 29	268.179	270.852	25-34:	605.300	602.012	18	18
30 - 34	337.121	331.160					
35 - 39	358.748	346.124	35-49:	936.931	918.931	28	27
40 - 44	316.280	309.503					
45 - 49	261.903	263.304					
50 - 54	255.906	258.629	50-64:	693.924	723.933	21	21
55 - 59	220.827	231.438					
60 - 64	217.191	233.866					
65 - 69	152.844	179.752	65+:	471.947	769.732	14	23
70 - 74	140.193	187.128					
75 - 79	97.886	192.254					
80 - 84	45.800	105.442					
85 - 89	25.556	70.610					
90 - 94	8.413	28.842					
95 +	1.255	5.704					
Total	3.889.189	4.143.737		3.195.725	3.483.719		

Table 1: Austrian population and computed quotas for Study 1

7.1.2. Identification of product groups

The main purpose of the first study was to find out four frequently purchased product groups, which could be used for the main study. Since the main study uses purchase records during a one-month period in order to analyse brand switching behavior, the focus of the pre-study was on products bought on at least one purchase occasion during that period by a typical Austrian consumer for his/her household.

As a first step a questionnaire was designed, which consisted of two questions on buying behavior and four on demographics. The questionnaire was kept short so that as many respondents as possible could be reached in a shopping mall.

The first question asked about a product group that came to the consumer's mind when thinking of products bought at least once a month. This question was chosen because it seems reasonable that items which are encountered most often during shopping occasions are the first to be retrieved. Furthermore, as an aid to memory, various product groups were presented to each respondent, who had to indicate which product group(s) he/she usually buys once a month. The classification was based on the ÖNACE category 47 for *Einzelhandel*. NACE is an acronym for *Nomenclature générale des activités économiques dans les communautés européennes*, and was developed in 1970 in the European Community in order to compare all economical and statistical data among European countries. To this classification some categories from the *Statistik Austria Konsumerhebung 2009/10* were added. Accordingly, the second question included the following product groups: food products, beverages, tobacco products, newspapers and magazines, clothing, shoes and leather goods, cosmetics and toiletries, and watches and jewellery. Food products were further split into fruit, vegetables, meat and meat products, fish and seafood, dairy products, eggs, convenience foods, bread and cereals, confectionery, and pet food. The beverages category was divided into two groups, namely soft drinks and alcoholic drinks. For each product group the respondents bought during a month, they were asked to additionally indicate which specific product in that group they bought most often.

For segmentation and comparison purposes with the main study, data on age, gender, income, and education were collected. The study was executed during a three day period in February 2010 and the questioning of each person lasted about 3-4 minutes. The whole questionnaire is included in the appendix. Table 2 shows the six product groups most often spontaneously mentioned, with milk and bread on the top. Figure 6 shows all included product groups with the amount of mentions in descending order.

Spontaneously mentioned products			
		Frequency	Rounded relative frequency (%)
Valid	Milk	51	26
	Bread	34	17
	Detergent	10	5
	Toilet paper	10	5
	Butter	8	4

Table 2: Product groups most often spontaneously mentioned
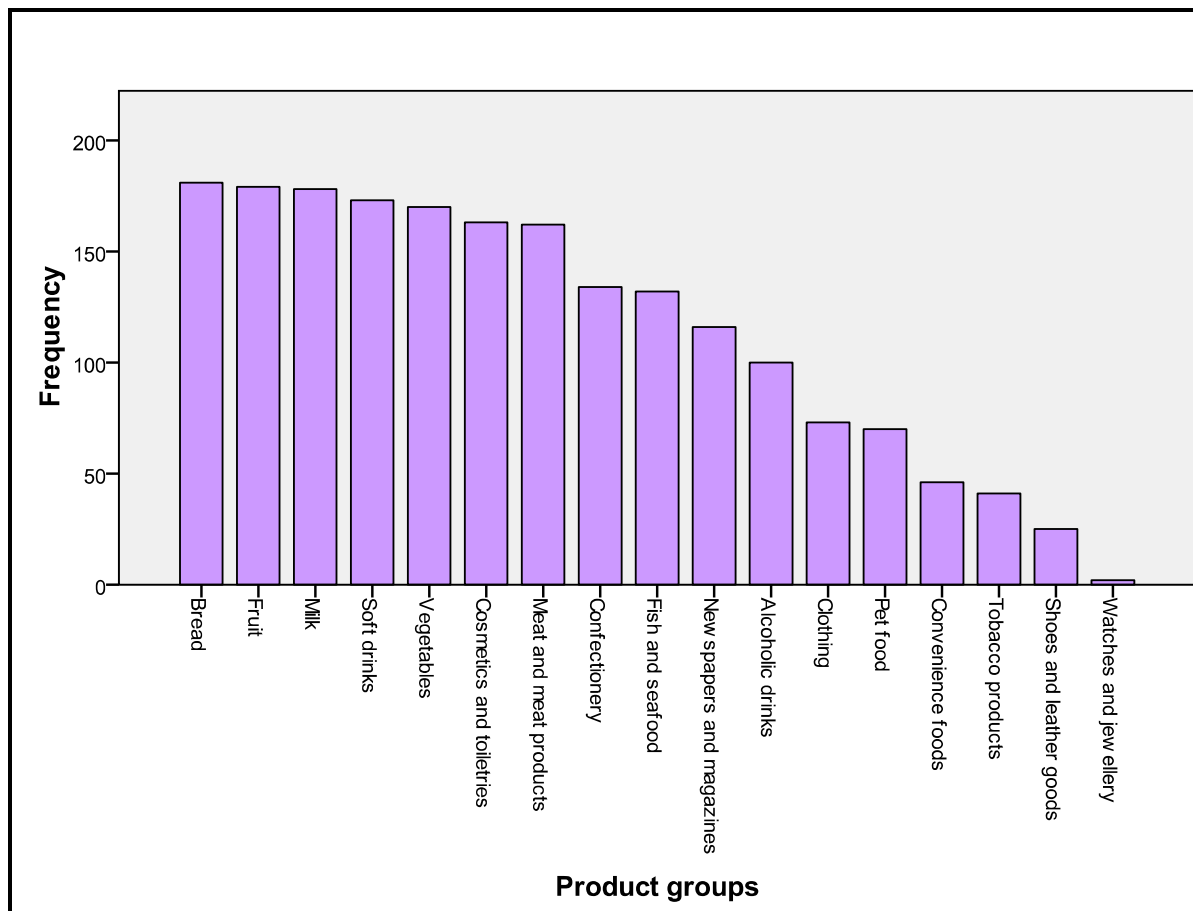
Figure 7: Product groups and amount of mentions

Before any product group was chosen, the goals of the main study had to be taken into account. The main study attempts to find links between demographics, lifestyle and benefits sought by customers and brand switching tendencies.

It thus seems reasonable to include those product categories in the main study, where certain benefits are paramount.

Orth et al. (2004) found that four brand benefits are sought when choosing brands: quality, value for money, emotional benefit and social benefit. The authors further outline that Craft Beer is an appropriate product group to measure delivered social benefit, as it is consumed both in private as well as in public. Figure 7 shows the product category 'alcoholic drinks', with beer being the most popular alcoholic drink among the respondents. Figure 6 also indicates that alcoholic beverages are regularly and sufficiently frequently purchased
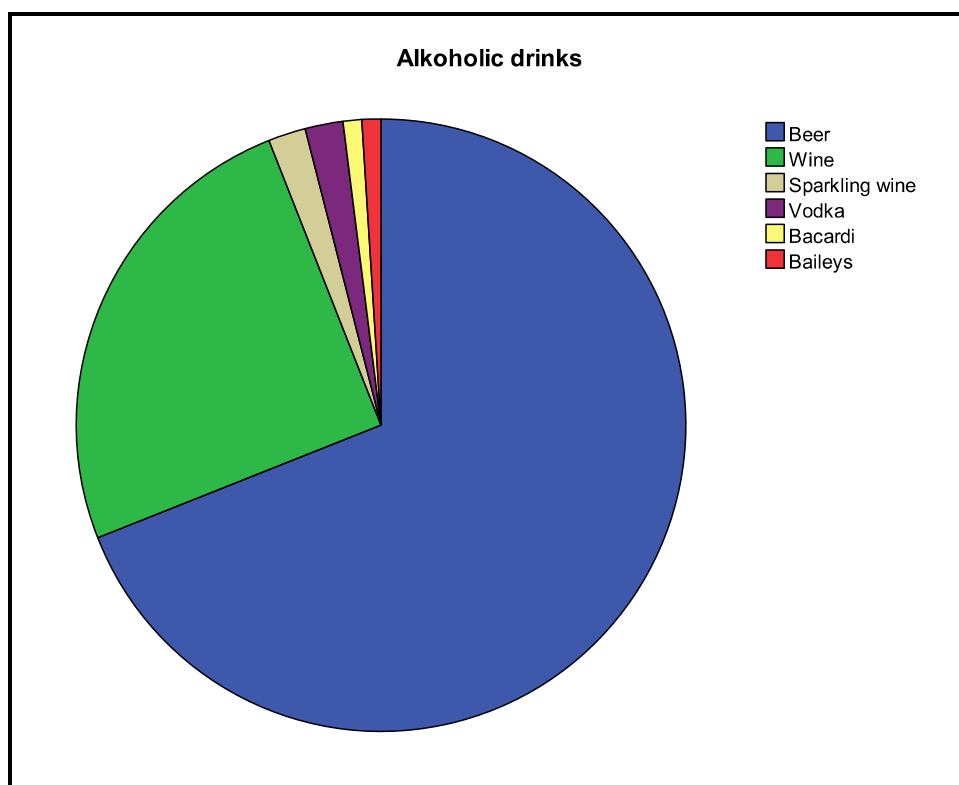
Figure 8: Alcoholic drinks

According to Christensen (2001) and Christensen and Brooks (2006), food has a major influence on feelings and mood. Particularly sweets and fat-rich snacks have a positive influence on mood enhancement especially in situations of emotional distress. Since the Figure 6 indicates that sweets are bought quite often by the majority of the sample group it can be argued that emotional benefit is well reflected by brands in this group. Figure 8 shows that chocolate is the favorite sweet in this category.
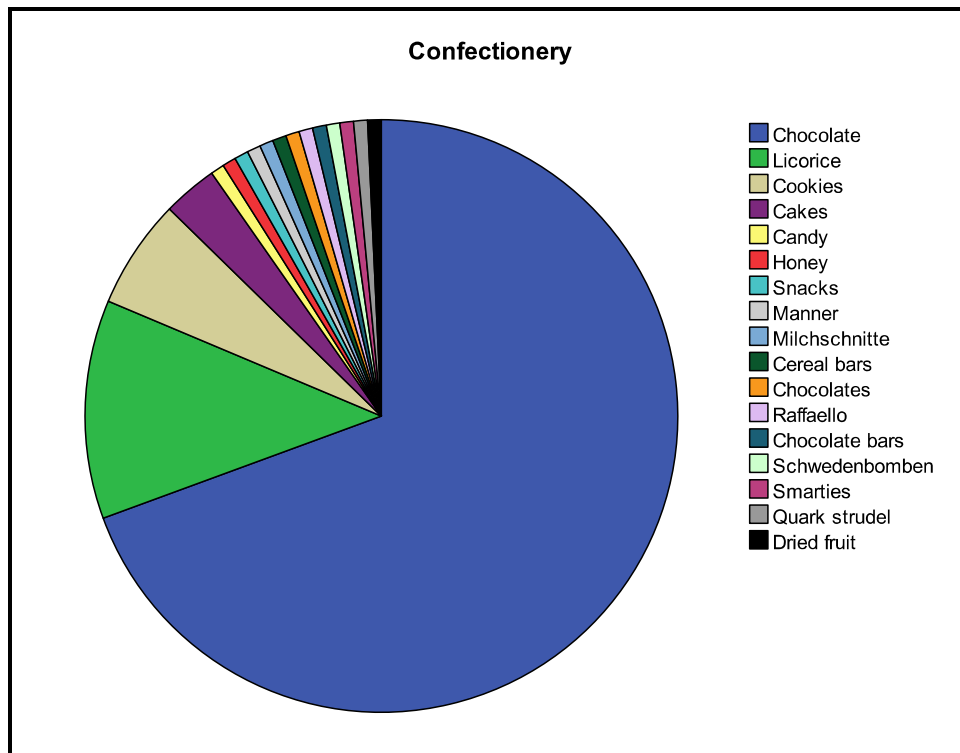
Figure 9: Confectionery

For the last two benefits, namely quality and value for money, milk and mineral water are included in the main study. Banks (1950) suggests that in product groups where differences in brands are not perceived as considerable, customer behavior can be attributed to perceptions of functional benefits, such as value for money. Furthermore, Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) outline that for branded products whose primary purpose is to deliver value in the sense of functional benefits, the hedonic dimension does not seem paramount. Study 1 showed that milk is the first product spontaneously mentioned among many respondents, while mineral water is the non-alcoholic drink most often bought and it is also a consumer item with a relatively high frequency of purchase, as Figure 6 indicates. It can be argued that these product groups are suitable to discuss quality benefit and value for money. Figures 9 and 10 show that milk is the dairy product and mineral water the non-alcoholic drink bought most often in the sample.
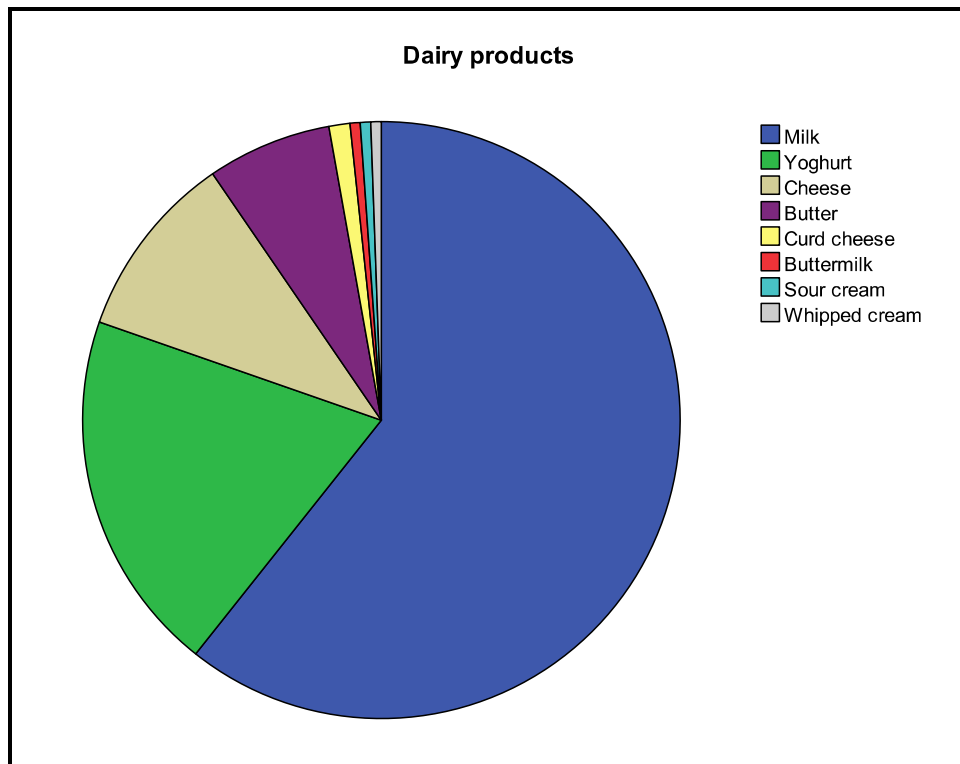
Figure 10: Dairy products
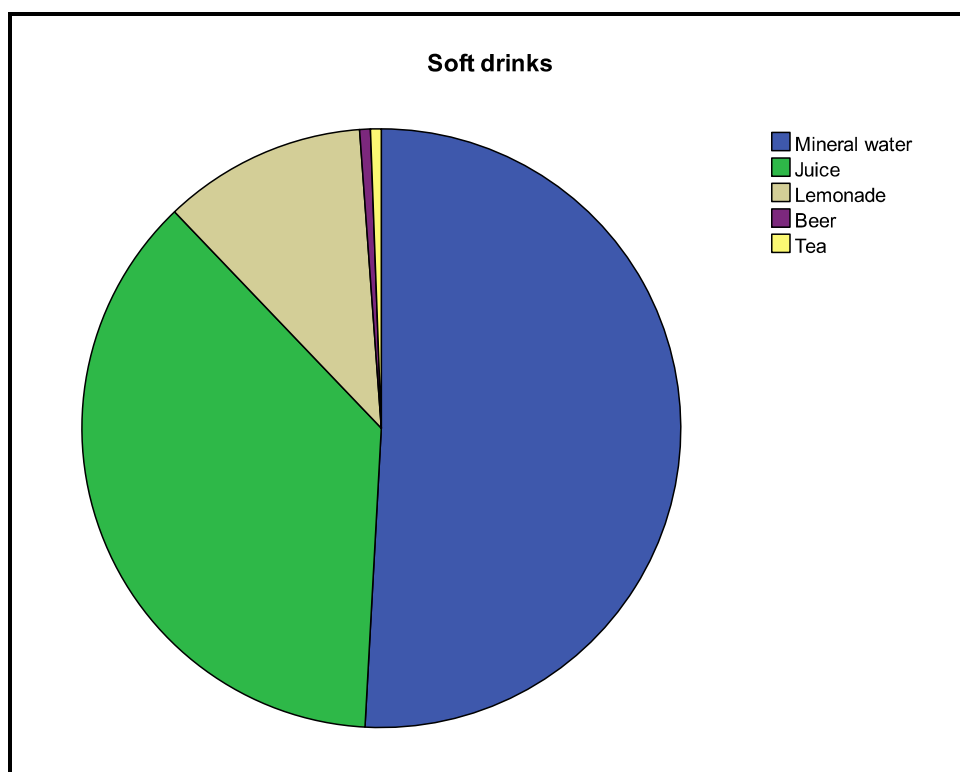
Figure 11: Non-alcoholic drinks

In Table 3 all products which have been selected for analysis and their predicted benefits are indicated.

Product groups	Hypothesized benefits
Milk	Functional benefit
Mineral water	Functional benefit
Chocolate	Emotional benefit
Beer	Social benefit

Table 3: Product groups and benefits sought

Furthermore, based on the results from Study 1 the age group 15-19 years can be excluded for the main study, because it was found that respondents who belong to this age group are not very likely to purchase these product groups for their household.

7.2. Study 2

In the main study, 300 students, their relatives and friends, representing the five age groups under investigation, were asked to keep shopping records in the four product groups identified in the pre-study during a one-month-period in order to have enough data to analyze brand switching behavior. Furthermore they were asked to evaluate each brand on the PERVAL Scale, which includes the four value dimensions of quality benefit, value for money, emotional and social benefit. Consumer characteristics such as age, gender, education and income were collected in order to reflect the demographic variables and lifestyle was measured on a scale which comprises items on aesthetic styles, values and life visions. 208 questionnaires were completed, returned and used for analysis.

First, an exploratory factor analysis is performed on the PERVAL Scale in order to extract the underlying value dimensions. After the four benefits are identified, an exploratory data analysis is performed in order to check for normal distribution and multicollinearity of data. Then the relationship between benefits sought and brand switching is tested. Since the variables are not interval, the relationships between the variables are mainly examined with non-parametric procedures, in this case by performing rank correlations between each benefit and switch-variable and by performing a logistic regression in order to examine all benefits in conjunction. After that the influence of the product groups on this relationship is

investigated by conducting a linear regression and rank correlations. The differences between product groups in benefits sought are examined in a Kruskal-Wallis test and by comparing mean scores on each benefit. In the next step, the link between demographic variables and benefits sought is investigated by conducting rank correlations. In order to compare influences of demographics and lifestyle on benefits sought, firstly, lifestyle groups are generated by performing an exploratory factor analysis. Thereby 23 lifestyle groups are identified, which are used to test the link between lifestyle and benefits sought. Accordingly, linear regressions are performed on the lifestyle factor scores and each value dimension. Finally, the relationships between consumer characteristics and brand switching are examined by conducting rank correlations for demographics and logistic regression on lifestyle-brand switch link.

For a better overview, Figure 12 shows the steps during data analysis:
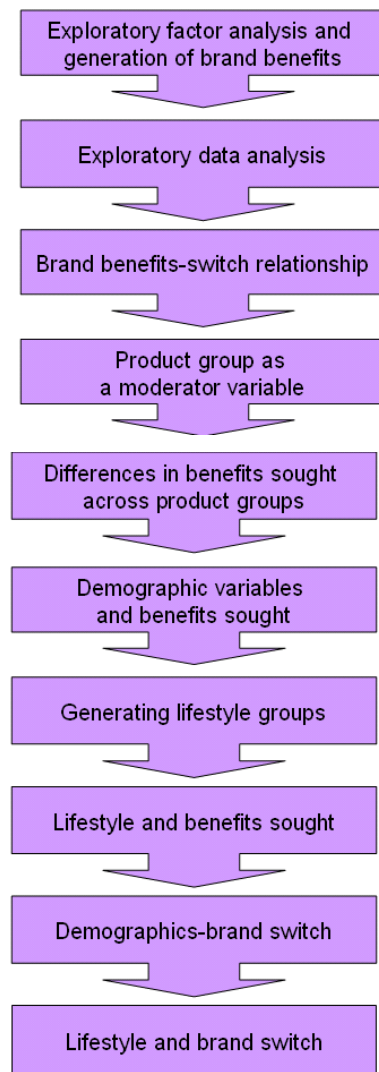
Figure 12: Steps during data analysis

7.2.1. Sample

300 students of International Business at the University of Vienna, who were willing to participate, were chosen from two classes. For the purpose of representativeness of the employed and retired Austrian population, quota regarding gender and age were computed. Since Study 1 suggested excluding the age group 15-19 years, only those aged between 20 and 65+ are considered in the main study. Students were asked to contact friends and relatives to provide data for the study. Those students who fulfilled the quota requirements provided data themselves. As an incentive every student who provided data for the study received class participation points for the lecture.

Brand switching was measured by a diary, which the consumers had to fill out during four weeks in May and June 2010. They were asked to indicate brands bought in four product categories, namely milk, mineral water, beer and chocolate. In order to examine benefits sought in the products, they were asked to evaluate the brands bought on the adapted PERVAL scale by Sweeney and Soutar (2001). The multiple-item scale measures four dimensions of perceived value, namely quality benefit, value for money, emotional and social benefit. Since the scale can be used to investigate both attitudes and behavior, it was decided to include it as an instrument in the present study. The scale was a little modified, since this study researches frequently purchased goods instead of durable goods, as in the study of Sweeney and Soutar (2001). Two items, namely 'would (not) last a long time' and 'would perform consistently' were deleted, as they do not make much sense in this research-frame. At the end of the data collection period, a questionnaire developed by Vyncke (2002) on lifestyle was adapted and given to the participants. All documents used for data collection are included in the Appendix.

Although almost 300 students agreed to participate in the study, only 208 questionnaires were completed and returned and could be used for analysis. Since the study was conducted in May and June 2010, at the end of the semester, many students decided not to participate in the study because they did not need the class participation points for the lecture. As only 70% of the questionnaires were returned, it can be stated that the age and gender distribution of the sample does not reflect the original quotas for the sample.

Therefore the sample in this study is not representative for the Austrian population and thus the results should not be generalized. The main purpose of the present study is to test the proposed hypotheses for the sample and to provide insights to the links between the concepts looked at in detail. Table 4 gives an overview of sample characteristics.

Characteristics	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency
Gender		
Male	84	40.4
Female	124	59.6
Age groups		
20-24	22	10.6
25-34	45	21.6
35-49	63	30.3
50-64	41	19.7
65+	37	17.8
Education		
Compulsory education	19	9.1
Apprenticeship	17	8.2
Foreman	4	1.9
Patient care	4	1.9
Vocational school	14	6.7
Secondary academic school	56	26.9
Technical high school	28	13.5
University	60	28.8
Academy	6	2.9
Income		
No income	15	7.2
1-600	37	17.8
601-1200	33	15.9
1201-1800	40	19.2
1801-2200	17	8.2
2201-2600	16	7.7
2601-3,000	13	6.3
3,001-3,500	9	4.3
3,401-4,000	9	4.3

4,001-4,500	3	1.4
4,501-8,000	10	4.8
8,001 and above	3	1.4
No reply	3	1.4

Table 4: Sample characteristics

7.2.2. Analysis of the PERVAL scale: Generation of brand benefits

In order to examine the dimensions measured by the PERVAL Scale, an exploratory factor analysis was performed according to the steps described in Backhaus, Erichson, Plinke and Weiber (2006). The scale comprised the following 17 items. The german questionnaire is included in the appendix.

This product…

1. Is one that I would feel relaxed about using,
2. Would help me to feel acceptable,
3. Has consistent quality,
4. Would give its owner social approval,
5. Is well made,
6. Would give me pleasure,
7. Would make a good impression on other people,
8. Would make me want to use it,
9. Offers value for money,
10. Has an acceptable standard of quality,
11. Is a good product for the price,
12. Would improve the way I am perceived,
13. Has good workmanship,
14. Would be economical,
15. Is one that I would enjoy,
16. Is reasonably priced,
17. Would make me feel good.

Every item was evaluated on a Five-Point-Likert Scale ranging from 'agree' to 'disagree'. The factor analysis was performed and eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were used as a cutoff criterion to identify four factors, which explain 72.9% of total variance. In the scree-plot, a break in the slope can be identified before the fifth factor, which also suggests a four factor solution. The first factor already explains more than 29%, while the second explains 19%, the third 15%, and the fourth factor almost 9% respectively. Finally, a varimax rotation on the component matrix is performed in order to maximize the factor loadings and to be able to interpret the factors better. The rotated component matrix is illustrated in Table 5. The findings generally correspond with those by Sweeney and Soutar (2001), as all items load on four factors with rotated loadings above 0,6.

Rotated components matrix[a]				
Items	Komponente			
	1	2	3	4
Is one that I would feel relaxed about using	,221	,853	,033	-,072
Would help me to feel acceptable	,882	,202	-,046	,029
Has consistent quality	-,027	,077	,759	,046
Would give its owner social approval	,901	,162	-,003	-,025
Is well made	,030	,204	,831	-,023
Would give me pleasure	,226	,851	-,001	-,005
Would make a good impression on other people	,887	,182	,046	-,010
Would make me want to use it	,145	,767	,281	-,059
Offers value for money	-,016	,021	,226	,781
Has an acceptable standard of quality	,002	,097	,832	-,002
Is a good product for the price	,052	-,078	-,103	,797
Would improve the way I am perceived	,901	,178	-,040	,045
Has good workmanship	-,045	,157	,852	-,012
Would be economical	,020	-,080	-,236	,803
Is one that I would enjoy	,018	,645	,470	-,091
Is reasonably priced	-,023	,002	,099	,808
Would make me feel good	,206	,801	,186	,027

Table 5: Rotated component matrix

All items that load on Factor 1 indicate social benefit, Factor 2 represents emotional benefit, Factor 3 quality and Factor 4 value for money. In order to use the factors for further analyses, as a next step, each respondent's scores for each factor are computed. This is done by adding the ratings on each item. Per factor, there are four items, except for the emotional benefit, which is represented by five items. In order to compare benefit scores with each

other, the values of emotional benefit were adapted so that each benefit is rated on a 17-point scale, with a minimum of 4 and a maximum score of 20. Doing that, four new variables are created, which comprise the respondents' ratings on each of the benefits.

7.2.3. Exploratory data analysis: Normal distribution and multicollinearity

In order to analyze if there is a relationship between benefits sought and brand switching in general, some analyses need to be conducted. In order to evaluate which is the right analysis for the present study, the data have to be further examined. As Bryman and Cramer (1994) outline, not all procedures and tests can be performed on all kinds of data, as statistical tests presume certain kinds of variables. There are certain limitations. For example, there are differences between parametric and non-parametric tests. Many parametric tests should not be performed on data if the underlying population is not normally distributed. Conversely, non-parametric tests can be performed on data of all distributions, and the requirements to levels of measurement of the variables under investigation are not as strict as for parametric tests. Furthermore, the levels of measurement of the present scales need to be examined. Demographics, such as age and income, are measured on an ordinal scale, since the two variables comprise distinct groups instead of continuous values. Lifestyle is measured on a multiple-item scale, i.e. it is on ordinal level as well. Since the benefit-factors derive from multiple-item scales, more exactly from a Likert-Scale, it can be concluded that they are measured on an ordinal level. However, product group, gender and brand switch are investigated on a nominal scale. Table 6 provides information on all variables under analysis and their levels of measurement.

Variables in the study	Level of measurement
Gender	Nominal
Age	Ordinal
Income	Ordinal
Education	Ordinal
Lifestyle (Factors)	Nominal
Brand benefits	Ordinal
Product groups	Nominal
Brand switch	Nominal

Table 6: Variables and their levels of measurement

For the purpose of the next analysis, namely testing the hypothesis of a relationship between benefits sought and brand switching, an exploratory data analysis is performed. This analysis tests the distribution of the scores on the four benefits, which were extracted during factor analysis. Figures 13-16 show the distributions of the variables. Since the distributions all deviate from the normal distribution curve, it can be argued that they are not distributed normally. A test of normal distribution is provided by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov-test. This procedure tests the hypothesis that the data are normally distributed. Apparently, all values are highly significant, which means that the Null-Hypothesis, assuming normal distribution, can be rejected (Table 7).
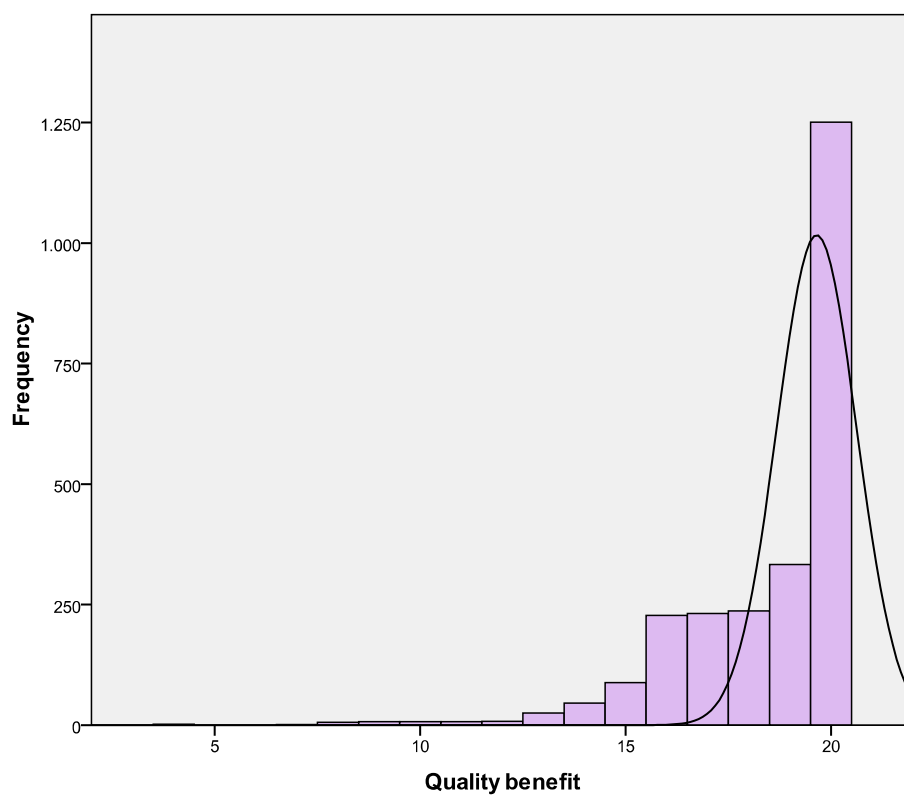
Figure 13: Distribution of 'Quality benefit'
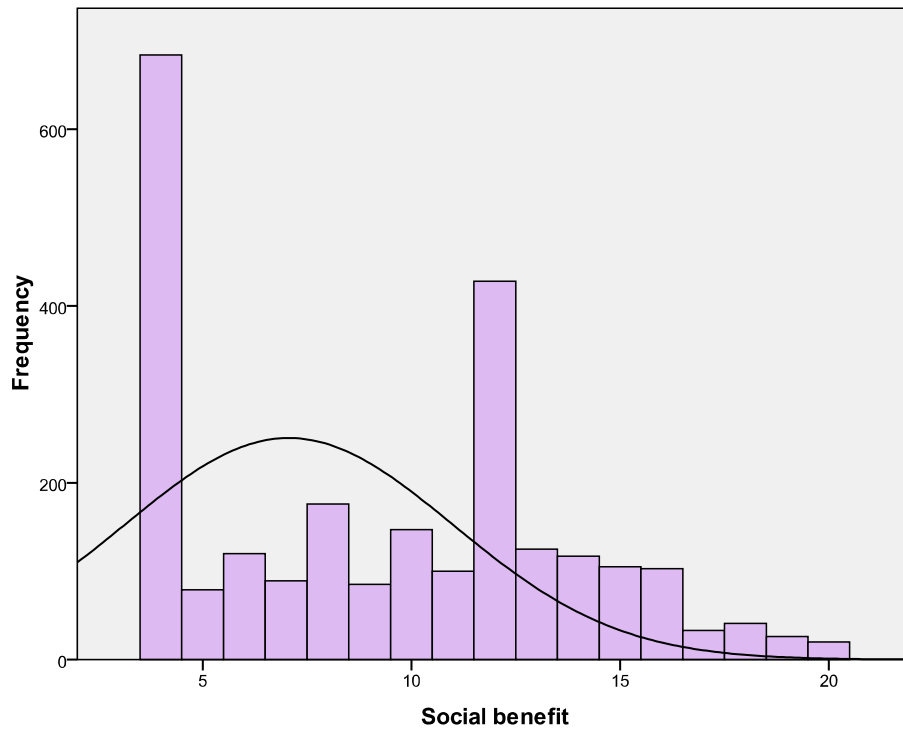
Figure 14: Distribution of 'Social benefit'
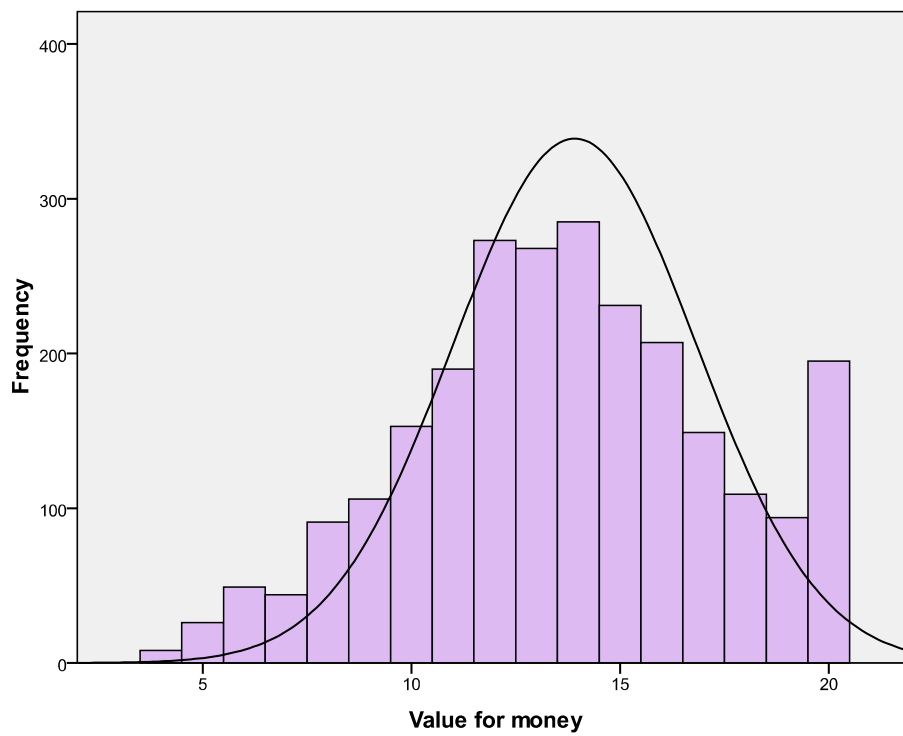
Figure 15: Distribution of 'Value for money'
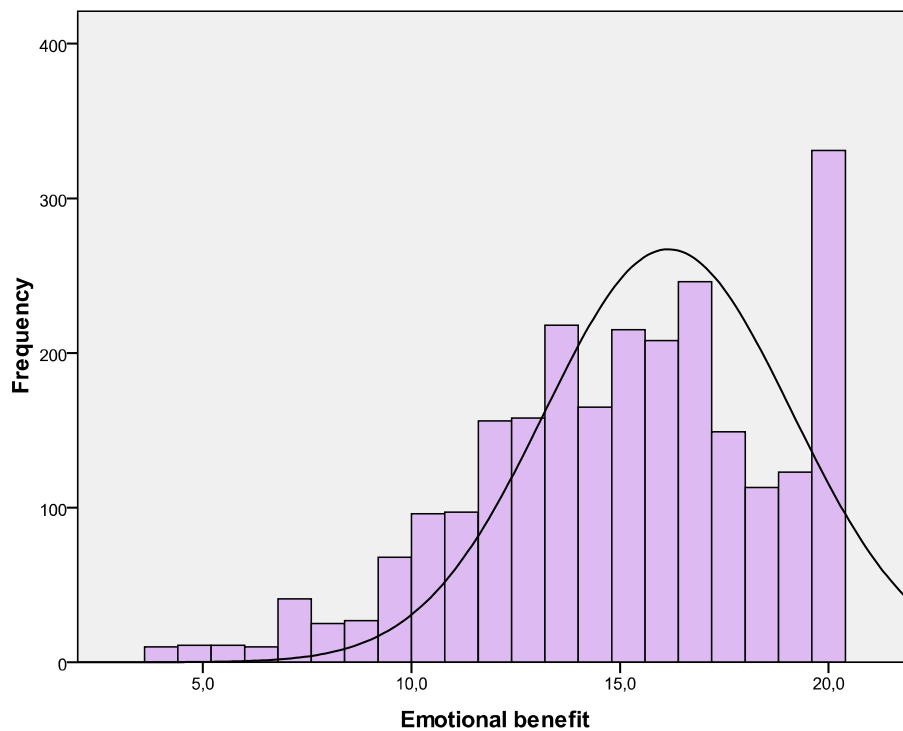
Figure 16: Distribution of 'Emotional benefit'

Kolmogorov-Smirnov-Test					
		Quality	Emotion	Price	Social
N		2478	2478	2478	2478
Parameters of the normal distribution[a,b]	Mean	18,51	15,067	13,63	9,29
	Standard deviation	2,084	3,5179	3,640	4,419
Extreme Differences	Absolute	,268	,080	,062	,161
	Positive	,237	,080	,062	,161
	Negative	-,268	-,077	-,058	-,133
Kolmogorov-Smirnov-Z		13,334	4,003	3,085	7,995
Asymptotic significance (2-tailed)		,000	,000	,000	,000

Table 7: Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

Thus, there are only a limited number of analysis procedures suitable for the present data set, even though there is a discussion on whether some parametric methods could eventually be performed on ordinal data (Bryman & Cramer, 1994).

Furthermore, before any analysis is performed, it is advised that a test on multicollinearity is performed (Schneider, 2007). First, paired correlations between the benefits are computed. Since the benefits are measured on ordinal scales, but comprise up to 17 categories each, all three correlation coefficients are computed for every pair-wise comparison. Table 8 gives an overview of all correlation coefficients.

	Coefficient	Quality	Emotion	Price	Social
Quality	Kendall's-Tau	1,000	0.259**	-0,035*	-0,026
	Spearman's-Rho	1,000	0,328**	-0,045*	-0,034
Emotion	Kendall's-Tau	0.259**	1,000	-0,068**	0,283**
	Spearman's-Rho	0,328**	1,000	-0,097**	0,377**
Price	Kendall's-Tau	-0,035*	-0,068**	1,000	0,005
	Spearman's-Rho	-0,045*	-0,097**	1,000	0,007
Social	Kendall's-Tau	-0,026	0,283**	0,005	1,000
	Spearman's-Rho	-0,034	0,377**	0,007	1,000

*. 0,05 level of significance (2-sided).
**. 0,01 level of significance (2-sided).

Table 8: Paired correlations

Coefficients between social benefit and quality benefit and value for money are very small and non-significant. Thus it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity between these variables. Taking a closer look at the other cells, such as the value for money-quality and value for money-emotion relationships, the coefficients are relatively low. Conversely, the coefficients between emotion-quality and emotion-value for money are considerably higher, with Spearman's Rho coefficients slightly above 0.3. Generally speaking, these coefficients are not very high, although the literature mentions that coefficients above 0.3 can become problematic concerning multicollinearity (Schneider, 2007).

Even if these correlations are quite small, the data are further analyzed. More detailed examination of multicollinearity can be performed with auxiliary regressions.

Thereby, a linear regression model between the independent variables, i.e. the benefits, is computed in order to see if one variable can be explained by linear combination of the other variables. It is decided to perform a linear regression on the benefit variables, with emotional benefit as the dependent variable, as the two highest correlations were found in the emotion - column. Social benefit, quality benefit and value for money are selected as the independent variables. Tables 9-11 exhibit the results on the linear regression.

Model summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the estimate
1	,535[a]	,287	,286	2,9733
a. Predictors : (Constant), social, quality, price				

Table 9: Output of the linear regression

Coefficients[a]								
		Unstandardized Coeffizients		Standardized Coeffizients			Collinearity statistics	
Model		B	Std. error	Beta	T	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2,288	,599		3,821	,000		
	Quality	,599	,029	,355	20,879	,000	,999	1,001
	Price	-,086	,016	-,089	-5,218	,000	,998	1,002
	Social	,308	,014	,386	22,753	,000	1,000	1,000
a. Dependent variable: Emotion								

Table 10: Coefficients

Collinearity diagnostic[a]							
				Variance proportions			
Model	Number	Eigenvalue	Condition index	(Intercep)	Quality	Price	Social
1	1	3,799	1,000	,00	,00	,00	,01
	2	,149	5,050	,00	,00	,06	,93
	3	,047	9,015	,03	,07	,86	,04
	4	,006	25,607	,97	,93	,07	,01
a. Dependent Variable: Emotion							

Table 11: Collinearity diagnostic

The analysis results in a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.286. According to Schneider (2007), an R^2 near 1 is a first evidence of multicollinearity. Thus a value of 0.286 only shows weak multicollinearity. The table on the coefficients shows tolerance values around one. Tolerance is a complement value to R^2, as it is computed through the difference between 1 and R^2. Hence, contrary to R^2 where a higher value implies higher correlation, a lower tolerance can be interpreted as an indication for multicollinearity, especially below 0.4. In the last column the VIF, variance inflation factor, is indicated, which is relatively low, since values above 2 begin to become problematic. And in the last table, the highest condition index of 25 indicates some multicollinearity. Finally, an eigenvalue, which explains a big part of the variances of two or more coefficients, can be interpreted in terms of multicollinearity. Since there is no such eigenvalue, there is no evidence for multicollinearity.

Above, many criteria on testing for multicollinearity were used to evaluate linear relationships between the variables. However, as most coefficients show no multicollinearity, except the condition index, it is decided that the amount of multicollinearity, if any, is accepted in further analyses, since it is insignificantly low. Furthermore, when comparing the effort of multicollinearity correction methods, such as deletion of correlated variables from the model or further data collection to the benefit of little improvement to multicollinearity, it is decided not to modify the variables and to proceed with the analysis, since major distortions during data analysis are not expected.

7.2.4. Relationship between brand benefits and brand switch

When analyzing relationships, as between benefits sought and brand switching, in the literature it is advised to use contingency tables, as this analysis method is the most common with nominal and ordinal data (Bryman & Cramer, 1994). Since the data in a contingency table are difficult to interpret because of the up to 17 categories each factor comprises, it is preferred to use rank-correlations. For each relationship between the benefits and the brand switch variable, a distinct correlation analysis is performed. For each relationship measure the Kendall's Tau and Spearman's Rho are computed. They can vary between -1 and +1, with '0' indicating no relationship, '-1' a perfect negative relationship and '+1' a perfect positive relationship, respectively.

7.2.4.1. Examination of all brand benefits in conjunction

As already outlined earlier, there should be some caution when analyzing ordinal data. Thus, in order to test all benefit variables in conjunction and their combined influence on the dependent variable, namely brand switch, a binomial logistic regression is performed. This analysis procedure, however, does not require normal distribution of data and is the appropriate method when analyzing a nominal dependent variable, as the independent variables can be of any measurement level. Since the dependent variable, namely brand switch, is a dichotomous variable and thus can take two parameter values, the binomial logistic regression is deemed appropriate for this particular connection. The independent variables, i.e. the brand benefits, will be treated as metric variables, as they comprise up to 17 categories. The binomial logistic regression only requires low multicollinearity of regressors, which was already discussed in the section above.

7.2.4.2. Effect of product group as a moderator variable

Although, as mentioned above, linear regression should not be performed for ordinal data, for the purpose of identifying if any moderator effects exist, a regression analysis is conducted. If moderator effects exist, in a next step, the above inquired connection between brand benefits and brand switch can be tested for each product group separately. Nevertheless, in the literature sometimes ordinal data are treated as if they were interval and, thus, parametric methods are being performed on them (Bryman & Cramer, 1994).

7.2.4.3. Influence of the product groups on the connection between brand benefits and brand switch

In order to examine which product group produces the highest significant correlation between each brand benefit and brand switch, rank correlations are performed holding product groups constant. This is done by first selecting those cases in the data set where Product Group 1 is evaluated. Then four separate rank correlation analyses are performed for each brand benefit-brand switch relationship. Afterwards, those cases are selected where Product Group 2 is evaluated and the same four analyses are conducted for this product group and so on. This results in 4x4 analyses of benefit-switch correlations.

7.2.4.4. Differences in benefits sought across product groups

In the previous section differences between the four product groups with respect to their influence on the connection between brand benefits and brand switching were analyzed. However, aside from the brand benefit-brand switch relationship, it is also interesting to examine if different benefits are sought in different product groups. Thus, it is researched if the ratings on the brand benefits differ among product groups. For this purpose a nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis test is performed. The Null-hypothesis in this case is that the mean rank values on brand benefits between the product groups are equal. If there are significant differences between the mean rank values, then the Null-hypothesis should be rejected. In order to get a complete picture of scoring tendencies of the respondents, the mean scores of each benefit in each group are computed.

7.2.5. Relationship between demographics and brand benefits sought

7.2.5.1. Gender and brand benefits sought

In the next step a possible connection between gender and brand benefits sought is examined. In order to research such a connection, rank correlations between the gender-variable and the four brand benefits are conducted.
Furthermore, a Mann-Whitney-U test for two unrelated samples is performed, to test whether this difference is significant.

7.2.5.2. Age groups and brand benefits sought

In order to find out whether there is a linear connection between age groups and brand benefits sought, rank correlations on each benefit variable are conducted.

In the next step a test on differences between the age groups with respect to benefits sought is conducted in order find other patterns in relationships to brand benefits sought As the ANOVA compares means of ratings on brand benefits across various groups, it also provides a post-hoc Scheffé- Test which uncovers where the differences lie. Thus, in this section first a Kruskal-Wallis test is performed due to the ordinal levels of measurement, and in order to compare results of the ANOVA outcome to find out if this analysis is applicable for ordinal data.

7.2.5.3. Education and income and brand benefits sought

In order to test a linear relationship between the ordinal variable 'education' and brand benefits sought, again rank correlations on education and each benefit variable are conducted. To examine the differences between the educational levels, an ANOVA with a post-hoc Scheffé-Test is performed.

7.2.6. Generating lifestyle groups

In this section respondents' lifestyles are examined and the proposal that lifestyle and brand benefits sought by consumers are significantly correlated is discussed. Before any relationships are researched, first a factor analysis is conducted in order to group the various dimensions of the lifestyle questionnaire. The exploratory factor analysis was conducted by following the steps described by Backhaus et al. (2006).

7.2.7. Relationship between lifestyle and brand benefits sought

In order to test the hypothesis that lifestyle and brand benefits sought by consumers are significantly correlated, linear regressions are performed on factor scores of lifestyle groups and every brand benefit sought. Since a main assumption of factor analysis is that factors are independent, this analysis procedure is deemed appropriate for this purpose.

7.2.8. Relationship between demographics and brand switch

The present analysis is conducted in order to test the hypothesis that demographic variables and brand switching are significantly correlated. For this purpose rank correlations between each demographic variable and brand switch are established.

7.2.9. Relationship between lifestyle and brand switch

Finally, in order to test the hypothesis that lifestyle and brand switch are significantly correlated, a binomial regression analysis is performed on lifestyle groups and brand switch.

8. Results

In the present chapter the results of the previously discussed methods are presented by examining each hypothesis and reporting the corresponding findings.

8.1. Hypothesis 1: Correlation between benefits sought and brand switching tendency

The present analysis is conducted in order to test the first research hypothesis:

H1: Brand benefits sought by consumers in branded products and brand switching tendency are significantly correlated.

Table 12 summarizes all correlation coefficients and p-values.

Brand benefits	Coefficients	Brand switch
Quality	Kendall's Tau	-,153**
Quality	Spearman's Rho	-,168**
Emotion	Kendall's Tau	-,080**
Emotion	Spearman's Rho	-,094**
Price	Kendall's Tau	-,033*
Price	Spearman's Rho	-,039*
Social	Kendall's Tau	,027
Social	Spearman's Rho	,031

*. 0,05 level of significance (2-sided).
**. 0,01 05 level of significance (2-sided)..

Table 12: Correlation coefficients for benefits-switch link

The two coefficients indicating the strength and direction of the relationship between quality benefit and brand switch, show highly significant values below the 0.01 level of confidence. Thus it can be argued that the relationship between these two variables is highly significant. Furthermore, the correlation coefficients indicate negative values of -0.153, and

-0.168, respectively. Since it is discussed whether benefits lead the consumer to switch to a brand, the results imply that if a brand is perceived to have a high quality benefit, it is preferred to stay with the brand rather than to switch.

Concerning the correlation coefficients between emotional benefit, value for money and brand switch, the same observation can be made. The relationship between emotional benefit and brand switch is negative and highly significant below the 0.01 level of confidence and the correlation between value for money and brand switch below the 0.05 level. The correlation coefficients between these two benefits and brand switching are much lower, compared to that between quality benefit and brand switching, indicating that emotional benefit and value for money have a lower importance than quality to consumers, when it comes to brand switching. The results also imply that the more emotional benefit and value for money a brand is perceived to have, the more likely the consumer is to repeat the purchase of that brand, although the effects attributed to emotional benefit and value for money are not as big as the influence attributed to the quality benefit.

The interesting results, however, provides the connection between the social benefit and brand switch. The correlation coefficients of 0.027, and 0.031, respectively, indicate a positive correlation between social benefit and brand switch. In other words, the more social benefit a brand is perceived to have, the more likely the consumer is to switch to that brand. However, the coefficients are neither relatively high nor significant, as the p-value indicates 0.123 in both cases.

As a next step, the relative influence that each benefit has on brand switching compared to the other benefits is examined. Tables 13 and 14 show the output of the binominal logistic regression, with quality benefit, emotional benefit, value for money and social benefit being the independent variables and brand switch the dichotomous dependent variable.

Model summary			
Step	-2 Log-Likelihood	Cox & Snell R-Square	Nagelkerke R-Square
1	3320,895[a]	,034	,046

Table 13: Output of the binomial logistic regression

Variables in the equation							
		B	Standard error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1	Quality	-,142	,022	40,606	1	,000	,867
	Emotion	-,045	,014	10,305	1	,001	,956
	Price	-,029	,011	6,570	1	,010	,971
	Social	,030	,010	8,674	1	,003	1,031
	Constant	3,208	,437	53,973	1	,000	24,723

Table 14: Included variables

The model explains only a small part of brand switching, with Pseudo-R² indicating values of 3.4%, and 4.6%, respectively. The regression coefficients of the independent variables are exhibited in table 14 in the second column, with quality benefit explaining most of the variance in brand switching. All independent variables exert a significant influence on the dependent variable, although the coefficients are relatively low, with value for money exhibiting the smallest coefficient. The Exp(B) coefficients can be interpreted in terms of consumers' probability to switch. Those coefficients with values lower than 1 indicate a lower probability to switch, while values above 1 indicate increased switching probability, compared to no perceived benefits. Accordingly, quality benefit, emotional benefit and value for money decrease the probability of brand switching, while social benefit increases this probability.

Overall, the results support hypothesis 1, which states that brand benefits sought by consumers in branded products and brand switching tendency are significantly correlated. More specifically, high regard of the first three brand benefits, namely quality benefit, emotional benefit, and value for money seem to motivate the consumer to stay with the brand. Conversely, social benefit seems to be the only brand-switch-driving force, although the correlation coefficients are not significant, indicating that such a relationship is likely to occur by chance. It will be interesting to find out if any other variables, such as product group or psychographic variables, put this connection to the front.

8.2. Hypothesis 2: Effect of product group on the benefits sought-brand switch link

Since the present study looks at influences of product groups on benefits sought and their connection to brand switching, the next step is to examine the moderator effects by product group. The hypothesis to be tested is:

H2: The moderator effect of the product groups exerts a significant influence on the link between brand benefits sought by consumers and brand switching.

Table 15 displays the results of the conducted linear regression.

Model summary									
					Change statistics				
Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Standard error of the estimate	Change in R-Square	Change in F	df1	df2	Sig. change in F
1	,185[a]	,034	,033	,489	,034	21,927	4	2473	,000
2	,277[b]	,077	,075	,478	,042	113,172	1	2472	,000

Table 15: Linear regression

The first model is a linear regression testing the influence of the various benefits on brand switch, i.e. the dependent variable. In the second model, the effect of the hypothesized moderator effect of the product group is added to the equation. R^2 shows that the first model, without the product group variable, explains 3.4% of the variance of the dependent variable. This value can be compared to the Pseudo-R^2 in the binomial logistic regression described above. It is clear that both analysis methods provide the same results. However, the change in R^2, which is displayed in the sixth column, indicates that the inclusion of product group into the equation causes an increase of 4.2% in R^2, resulting in a coefficient of determination of 0.077. Furthermore, the change in the F-test is highly significant, indicating a p-value below 0.01% level of confidence.

In conclusion, the Null-hypothesis, postulating that no mediator effect by the product group exists, can be rejected, i.e. the data support hypothesis 2.

In the next step the question where the main effect of the product groups lie are answered. Table 16 gives an overview of the correlation coefficients between brand benefits and brand switch for every product group.

Product group	Brand switch	Brand benefits			
	Coefficients	Quality	Emotion	Price	Social
Milk	Kendall's Tau	-0,143**	-0,180**	-0,010	-0,033
	Spearman's Rho	-0,213**	-0,213**	-0,012	-0,038
Mineral water	Kendall's Tau	-0,209**	-0,177**	0,023	0,058
	Spearman's Rho	-0,229**	-0,210**	0,027	0,067
Beer	Kendall's Tau	-0,146**	-0,126**	0,008	-0,046
	Spearman's Rho	-0,162**	-0,146**	0,010	-0,054
Chocolate	Kendall's Tau	-0,134**	-0,094*	-0,038	0,079*
	Spearman's Rho	-0,146**	-0,110*	-0,044	0,092*

*. 0,05 level of significance (2-sided).
**. 0,01 level of significance (2-sided).

Table 16: Correlation coefficients for benefits-switch link per product group

Both Kendall's Tau and Spearman's Rho are included in the table with one asterisk indicating significance below the 0.05 level of confidence and two asterisks indicating significance below 0.01, respectively. It can be observed that all coefficients for quality and emotional benefit are highly significant, below the 0.01 level of confidence, except for the chocolate product group, where emotional benefit is significant below the 0.05 level. Concerning the other benefits, only social benefit is significant below the 0.05 level, namely, in the chocolate product group. Examining the strength of the significant correlation coefficients, only Spearman's Rho coefficient will be regarded, because in some cases the two coefficients diverge remarkably, for example in the milk group.

In the milk group quality benefit and emotional benefit have the greatest influence on the dependent variable, which is confirmed by the correlation coefficient of -0.213 for both brand benefits. Value for money and social benefit exert a very weak, non-significant influence. In the mineral water group the quality benefit coefficient is even greater, indicating a value of -0.229. The coefficient for emotional benefit is -0.210, respectively. It can be stated that these two benefits play a major role in brand switching behavior, compared to value for money and social benefit, as they motivate the consumer to stay with the brand, rather than to switch, if the brand is perceived to score highly on the two benefits. The same observation can be made for the beer group, although here the coefficients are lower, with Spearman's Rho indicating -0.162 for quality benefit, and -0.146 for emotional benefit, respectively. In the chocolate group quality and emotional benefits exert the biggest influence on the brand switch variable. The positive value in the social benefit column can be interpreted in the sense that the more social benefit the consumer perceives a chocolate brand has, the more likely he/she is to switch to that brand. Thus, in this particular product group, quality and emotional benefit motivate the consumer to buy the brand repeatedly, while social benefit, although very low in magnitude, represents a brand switch inducing factor.

Overall, quality benefit and emotional benefit exert the biggest influence on brand loyalty across all groups, while the social benefit in the chocolate group drives switching behavior, although they do not explain much of the variance in the dependent variable.

8.3. Hypothesis 3: Differences in benefits sought across product groups

In this section the following research hypothesis is examined:
H3: Product groups differ significantly regarding benefits sought by consumers.

Table 17 shows the result of the Kruskal-Wallis test. The significant p-values indicate that differences exist in scoring tendencies between product groups. This finding supports hypothesis 3, i.e. there are significant differences between the ratings on brand benefits between the various product groups.

Statistic for test[a]				
	Quality	Emotion	Price	Social
Chi-Square	10,843	345,005	127,987	35,576
df	3	3	3	3
Asymptotic significance	,013	,000	,000	,000

Table 17: Kruskal-Wallis test

In the next step the mean scores of each benefit in each group are computed in order to get a complete picture of scoring tendencies of the respondents and to test the following hypotheses:

H3a: Functional benefits, i.e. quality and value for money are sought primarily in the milk and mineral water groups.

H3b: Social benefit is sought primarily in the beer group.

H3c: Emotional benefit is sought primarily in the chocolate group.

Table 18 shows the output. The results indicate that, compared to the other benefits, quality benefit is rated highest across all product groups, followed by emotional benefit, value for money, and social benefit.

Report				
Mean				
Product group	Quality	Emotion	Price	Social
Milk	18,46	13,882	14,54	8,74
Mineral water	18,62	14,804	13,51	9,29
Beer	18,28	16,798	12,88	10,24
Chocolate	18,63	16,692	12,37	9,79

Table 18: Mean scores

Figure 17 shows a more comprehensive picture of respondents' scoring tendencies.
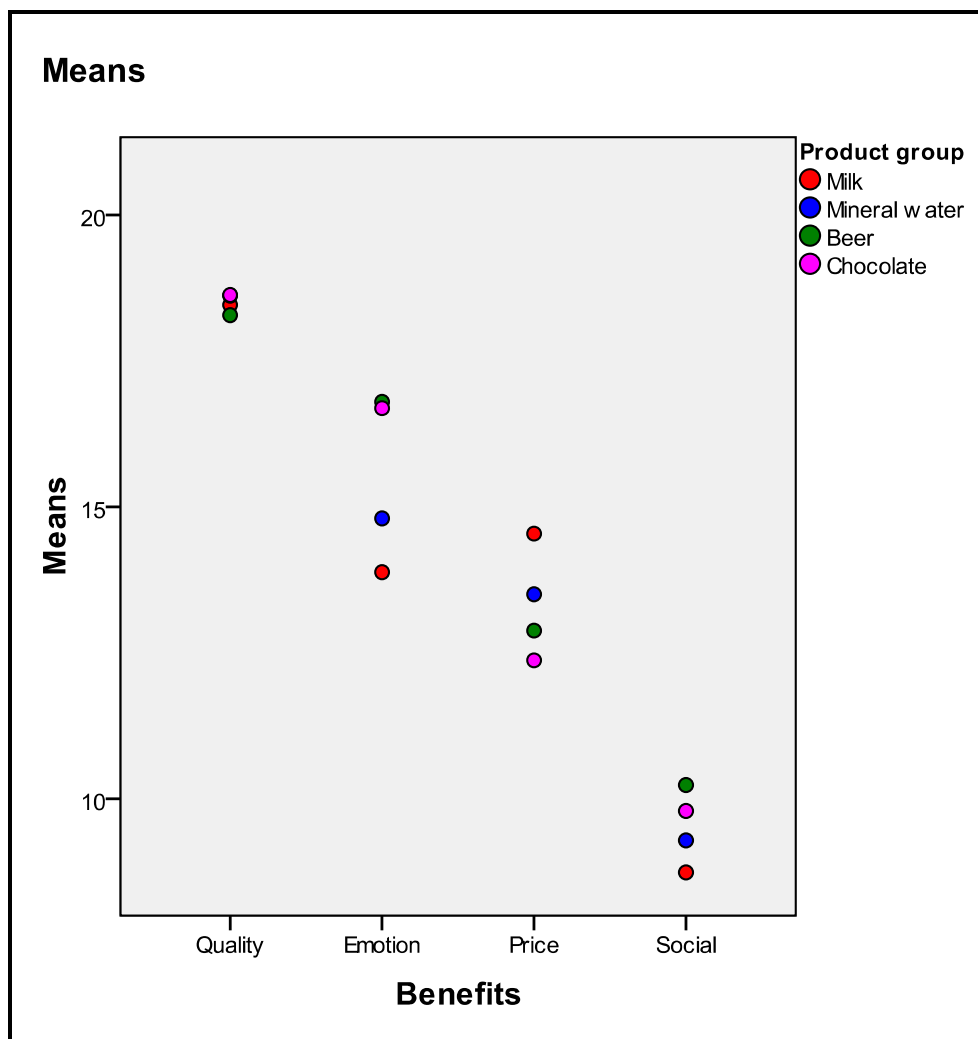
Figure 17: Respondents' scoring tendencies

There are considerable differences in ratings of brand benefits. Overall, the upward tendency goes in the left direction, indicating that mean ratings for quality benefit are higher across all product groups, compared to the other benefits. This graph also indicates that the mean scores on social benefit were the smallest across all product groups. Quality benefit however, appears to be most important in the chocolate group, followed by mineral water, milk and beer.

Emotional benefit scores highest in the beer and chocolate groups, indicating that respondents tend to consume beer in situations where the emotional benefit is appreciated. According to that, H3c cannot be supported, since the emotional benefit is paramount in the beer group.

Conversely, it's not surprising that scores on the emotional benefit were not that high in the mineral water and milk groups, as these products are not associated with emotionally laden consumption situations.

Concerning value for money, it can be observed that it is most important in the milk group, followed by mineral water, beer and chocolate. Thus, H3a can be supported in terms of value for money, while quality benefit is sought primarily in the chocolate group, followed by milk and mineral water.

Social benefit is valued highest in the beer group, since it is very often consumed in the company of other people, followed by chocolate, which appears to be consumed in public as well or shared with others. Unsurprisingly this benefit appears to be least important in the mineral water and milk groups. Thus, H3b, stating that social benefit is primarily sought in the beer group, can be supported.

To sum up, the analysis shows that quality benefit was by far the most positively evaluated benefit across all product groups, followed by emotional benefit, value for money and social benefit. It is hardly surprising that the functional benefits, i.e. quality and value for money, are paramount in the milk and mineral water groups, whereas emotional and social benefits appear to be highly appreciated in situations where beer and chocolate are consumed. Two out of four hypotheses concerning benefits sought in different products groups could not be supported, as quality is primarily sought in the chocolate group and emotional benefit in the beer group.

8.4. Hypothesis 4: Correlation between demographics and benefits sought

In this chapter the following research hypothesis is examined:

H4: Demographic variables and brand benefits sought by consumers are significantly correlated.

Since demographics are represented by gender, age, education and income, the following sections will first examine the particular links. Afterwards, it can be inferred from the results whether hypothesis 4 can be accepted or rejected.

8.4.1. Gender and benefits sought

In order to research the connection between gender and brand benefits sought, rank correlations between the gender-variable and the four brand benefits are conducted. Table 19 sums up the results.

	Coefficients	Brand benefits			
		Quality	Emotion	Price	Social
Gender	Kendall's Tau	0,104**	0,013	0,015	-0,010
	Spearman's Rho	0,114**	0,015	0,018	-0,012

**. 0,01 level of significance (2-sided).

Table 19: Correlation coefficients for gender-benefits link

It can be clearly seen that the only significant relationship exists between gender and quality benefit. The correlation coefficients are positive, indicating that for women quality benefit seems to be more important than for men.

In order to test whether this difference is significant, a Mann-Whitney-U test for two unrelated samples is conducted. The outcome in Table 20 indicates a significant difference only with respect to the quality benefit, which goes in line with the above outlined correlation.

Statistic for test				
	Quality	Emotion	Price	Social
Mann-Whitney-U	651013,000	730677,500	728343,500	733567,500
Wilcoxon-W	1171723,000	1251387,500	1249053,500	1797178,500
Z	-5,674	-,739	-,872	-,579
Asymptotic significance (2-tailed)	,000	,460	,383	,562

Table 20: Mann-Whitney-U test

8.4.2. Age groups and benefits sought

Table 21 sums up all correlation coefficients between the variable age group and each of the four brand benefits.

		Brand benefits			
	Coefficients	Quality	Emotion	Price	Social
Age group	Kendall's Tau	,116**	,014	-,013	,018
	Spearman's Rho	,140**	,017	-,017	,025

**. 0,01 level of significance (2-sided).

Table 21: Correlation coefficients for age group-benefits link

The p-values indicate one significant linear relationship, namely between age groups and quality benefit. This link is positive, which implies that the importance of this benefit to consumers tend to increase with age. Although there are no linear relationships between age group and the other benefits, further analyses are conducted to find out what other possible links could exist.

In the next step a test on differences between the age groups with respect to benefits sought is conducted in order find other patterns in relationships to brand benefits sought. Table 22 indicates the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test.

Statistic for test				
	Quality	Emotion	Price	Social
Chi-Square	65,987	11,083	68,215	40,363
df	4	4	4	4
Asymptotic significance	,000	,026	,000	,000

Table 22: Kruskal-Wallis test

Table 23 shows the Oneway-ANOVA, illustrating the differences between the five age groups in benefits sought.

ONEWAY ANOVA						
		Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F	Significance
Quality	Between groups	289,366	4	72,342	17,097	,000
	Within groups	10463,972	2473	4,231		
	Total	10753,339	2477			
Emotion	Between groups	181,639	4	45,410	3,685	,005
	Within groups	30472,761	2473	12,322		
	Total	30654,400	2477			
Price	Between groups	930,157	4	232,539	18,035	,000
	Within groups	31885,761	2473	12,894		
	Total	32815,918	2477			
Social	Between groups	891,337	4	222,834	11,608	,000
	Within groups	47473,611	2473	19,197		
	Total	48364,948	2477			

Table 23: Oneway ANOVA

Compared to the non-parametric test described above, ANOVA provides the same results as the Kruskal-Wallis-Test. Both indicate significant differences between age groups across all brand benefits under investigation.

Even the Chi-Square and F-Test magnitudes can be directly compared.

Knowing that there are significant differences between age groups on the evaluation of brand benefits, in the next step it shall be examined which age groups differ and in which direction. For this purpose, a post-hoc Scheffé-Test is conducted. In Figure 18 the relationship between the mean scores on the benefits and the age groups, as well as the differences between them, are depicted.
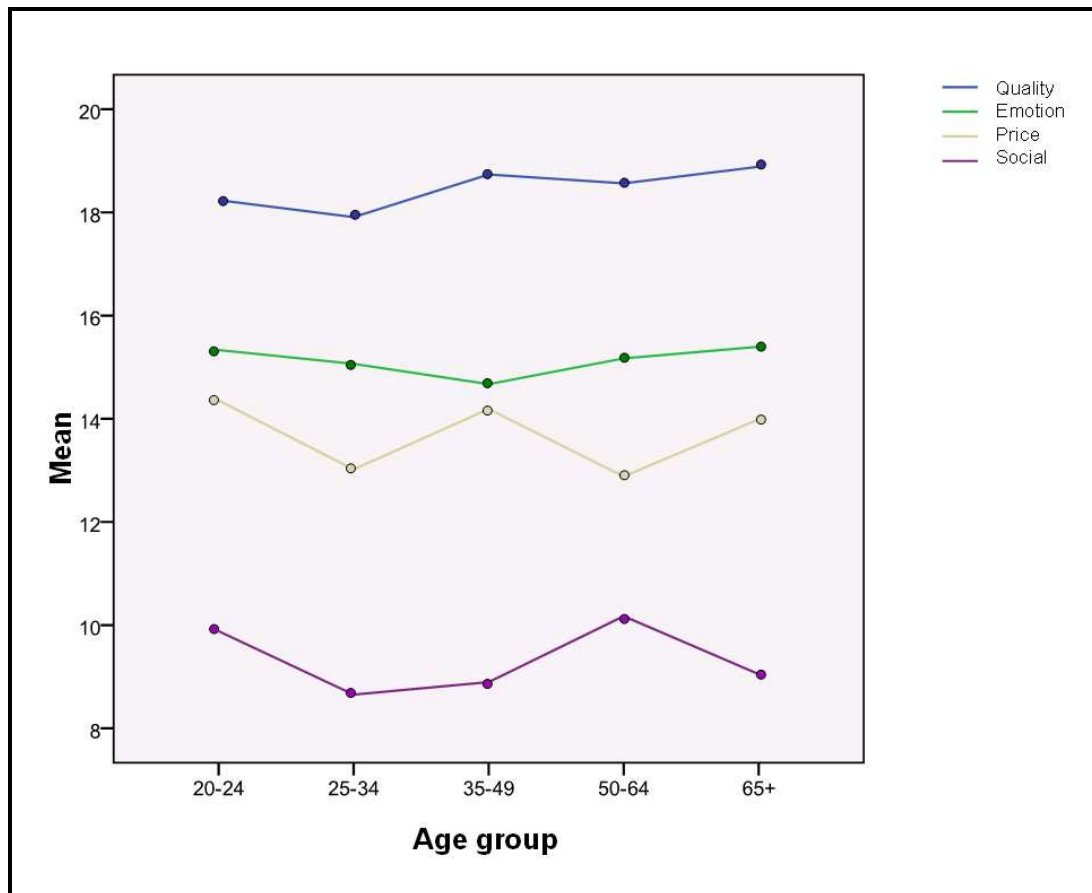
Figure 18: Age groups and mean scores

As the correlation coefficients in the first test indicated, the relationship between age group and quality benefit resemble a linear relationship, with older age groups tending to place more importance on quality benefit in their brands bought. Although in the quality line a small upward trend can be observed, the graph on emotional benefit indicates only small differences between age groups, which is also implied in the lowest Chi-Square and F-Levels in the above tests.

Concerning value for money, the youngest, the 35-49 group and the oldest age groups are most concerned about this benefit, while the 25-34 and 50-64 groups care less about value for money in brands bought. Looking at the last line, indicating the differences in mean scores on social benefit across age groups, it can be stated that the youngest age group and the 50-64 age group care most about social benefit. Those between 25 and 34 seem to care the least about social benefit, although there seems to be an upward trend between 25 and 64, before the trend decreases after the age of 65.

Generally speaking, there are significant differences between age groups on brand benefits sought, although the last graph also confirms the former observation that the relative importance of the benefits are again the same. Here, the quality benefit is by far most important across all age groups, indicating that the brands bought by consumers, in general, score high on this benefit. Conversely, the social benefit is least important when evaluating brands bought, as respondents across all age groups do not appear to seek social benefit in brands they regularly buy.

8.4.3. Education and income and benefits sought

Table 24 summarizes the rank correlation analysis for the education-benefits sought link.

		Brand benefits			
	Coefficients	Quality	Emotion	Price	Social
Education	Kendall's Tau	,035*	,048**	-,056**	,058**
	Spearman's Rho	,041*	,065**	-,074**	,075**

*. 0,05 level of significance (2-sided).
**. 0,01 level of significance (2-sided).

Table 24: Correlation coefficients for education-benefits link

All correlation coefficients are significant, although very low of value. However, as the coefficients on quality benefit, emotional benefit and social benefit are positive, they indicate that the higher the educational level of the subjects, the more positively these benefits are evaluated. Conversely, the lower the educational level, the more positively value for money is evaluated.

This is reasonable insofar as, in general, income level is positively correlated with education, i.e. those with a higher educational level tend to earn more. This relationship will be examined in the next step. Table 25 shows the correlation between education and income level.

	Coefficients	Income
Education	Kendall's Tau	,254**
	Spearman's Rho	,347**

**. 0,01 level of significance (2-sided).

Table 25: Correlation coefficients for education-income link

The coefficients indicate that there is a considerable correlation between education and income. The positive coefficients imply that the more educated a subject in the sample is, the higher his/her monthly income is. This test provides better understanding of why those subjects with lower educational level judge value for money more positively than those subjects with higher educational levels.

To examine the differences between the educational levels, an ANOVA with a post-hoc Scheffé-Test is performed. Table 26 gives the F-Tests and the p-values for this analysis.

ONEWAY ANOVA						
		Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F	Significance
Quality	Between groups	375,285	8	46,911	11,160	,000
	Within groups	10378,053	2469	4,203		
	Total	10753,339	2477			
Emotion	Between groups	279,294	8	34,912	2,838	,004
	Within groups	30375,106	2469	12,303		
	Total	30654,400	2477			
Price	Between groups	511,994	8	63,999	4,891	,000
	Within groups	32303,924	2469	13,084		
	Total	32815,918	2477			
Social	Between groups	1917,996	8	239,749	12,744	,000
	Within groups	46446,952	2469	18,812		
	Total	48364,948	2477			

Table 26: Oneway- ANOVA

As can be seen, the most significant differences between educational levels are found in scores on quality and social benefit, as the difference between within groups and between groups mean squares indicate. Thus the F-Values for these two benefits are higher in magnitude than F-Values for value for money and social benefit, where the differences between educational levels do not appear to be so high. Figure 19 makes these differences clearer.
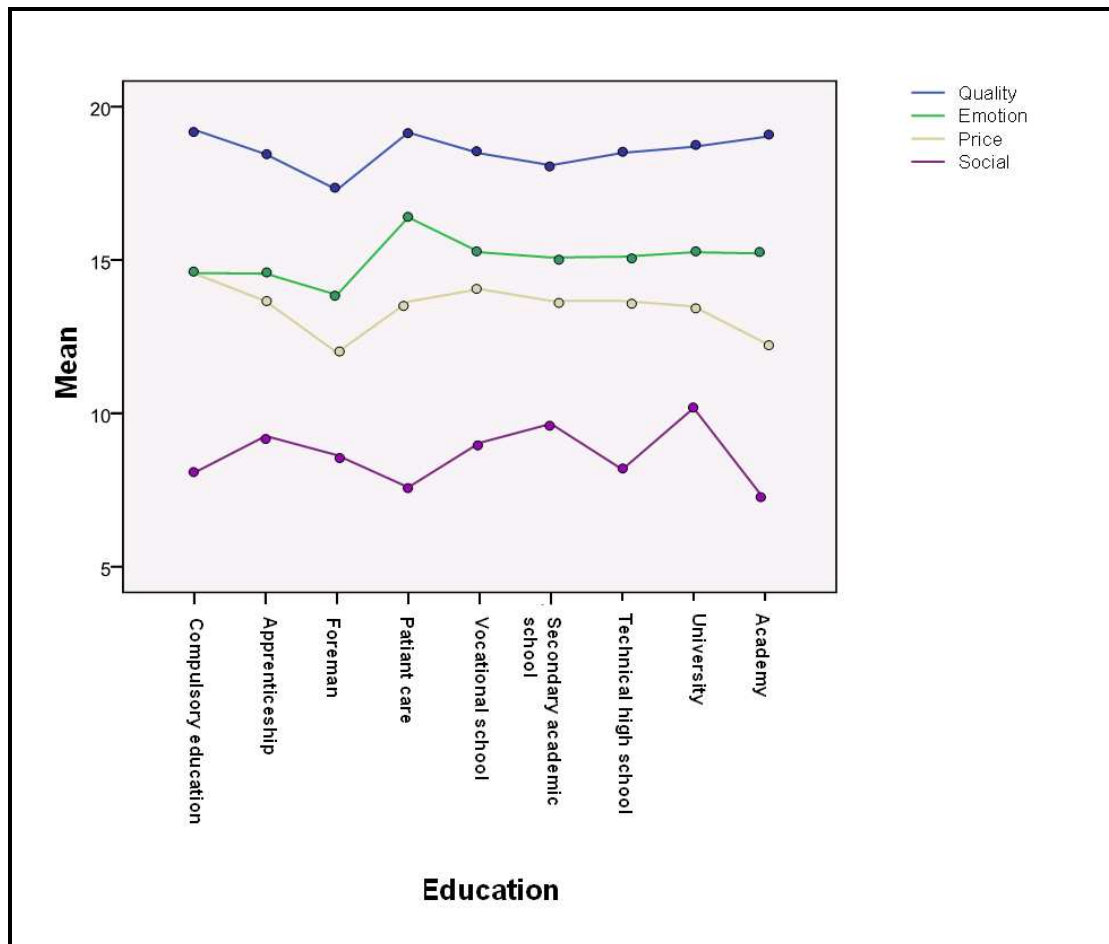
Figure 19: Education and mean scores

In the first three lines, indicating quality, emotion and value for money, the trends show bigger differences in the left part of the graph, while in the right part the educational levels do not appear to differ so much anymore. This is mainly because the level 'Foreman' scores lowest on the first three benefits, while in the social benefit it scores on an intermediate level. Conversely, the 'Patient care'-level scores very high on the quality and emotional benefit, intermediate on value for money, and attributes very small importance to social benefit. As there is only a small number of respondents in these two groups, namely four respondents in 'Foreman'-level and four respondents in 'Patient care'-level, a graph is provided excluding these two educational groups (Figure 20).
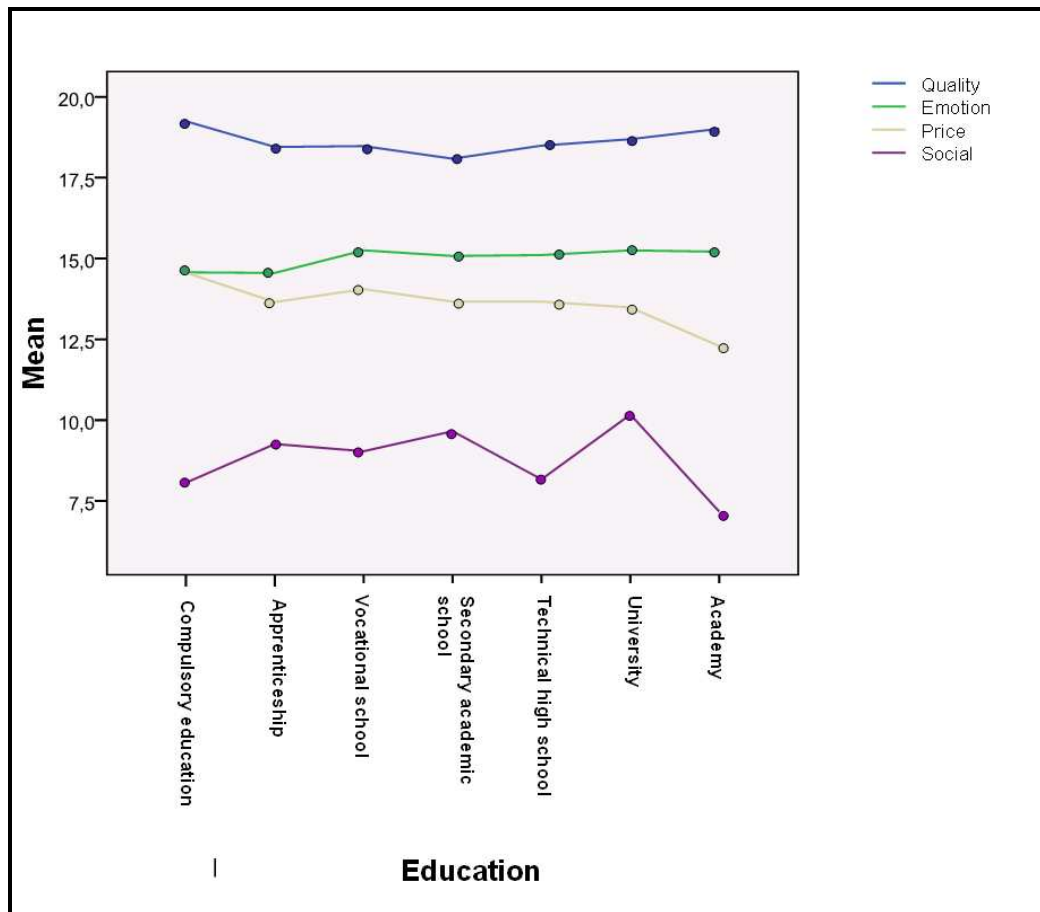
Figure 20: Education and mean scores (excl. 'Foreman' and 'Patient care')

It can be seen that the differences between educational levels are much flatter and that small trends can be identified such as the slight upward slope in emotional benefit and the slight downward slope in value for money. Concerning social benefit, there are still big differences between the groups, with 'University'-level scoring highest and those having 'Academy'-level scoring lowest on this benefit.

As a next step the new coefficients for the education-benefit relationship can be computed. It is expected that the coefficients on quality, emotion and price will be higher, while no such improvement is expected for the social benefit. Table 27 provides the results of this analysis. The values before the slash indicate correlation coefficients before education Levels 3 and 4 were excluded from analysis and values after the slash indicate correlations after exclusion.

		Brand benefits			
	Coefficients	Quality	Emotion	Price	Social
Education (excl.2,3)	Kendall' s Tau	,035*/,039*	,048**/,049**	-,056**/-,070**	,058**/,051**
	Spearman's Rho	,041*/,046*	,065**/,065**	-,074**/-,092**	,075**/,065**

*. Die Korrelation ist auf dem 0,05 Niveau signifikant (zweiseitig).
**. Die Korrelation ist auf dem 0,01 Niveau signifikant (zweiseitig).

Table 27: Correlation coefficients for education-benefit link (excl. 2 and 3)

The coefficients on price benefit show the biggest improvement, while the education-quality and education-emotion relationship only improve slightly. However, the correlation between education and social benefit has deteriorated. The same observation can be made when analyzing the income levels, illustrated in Figure 21.
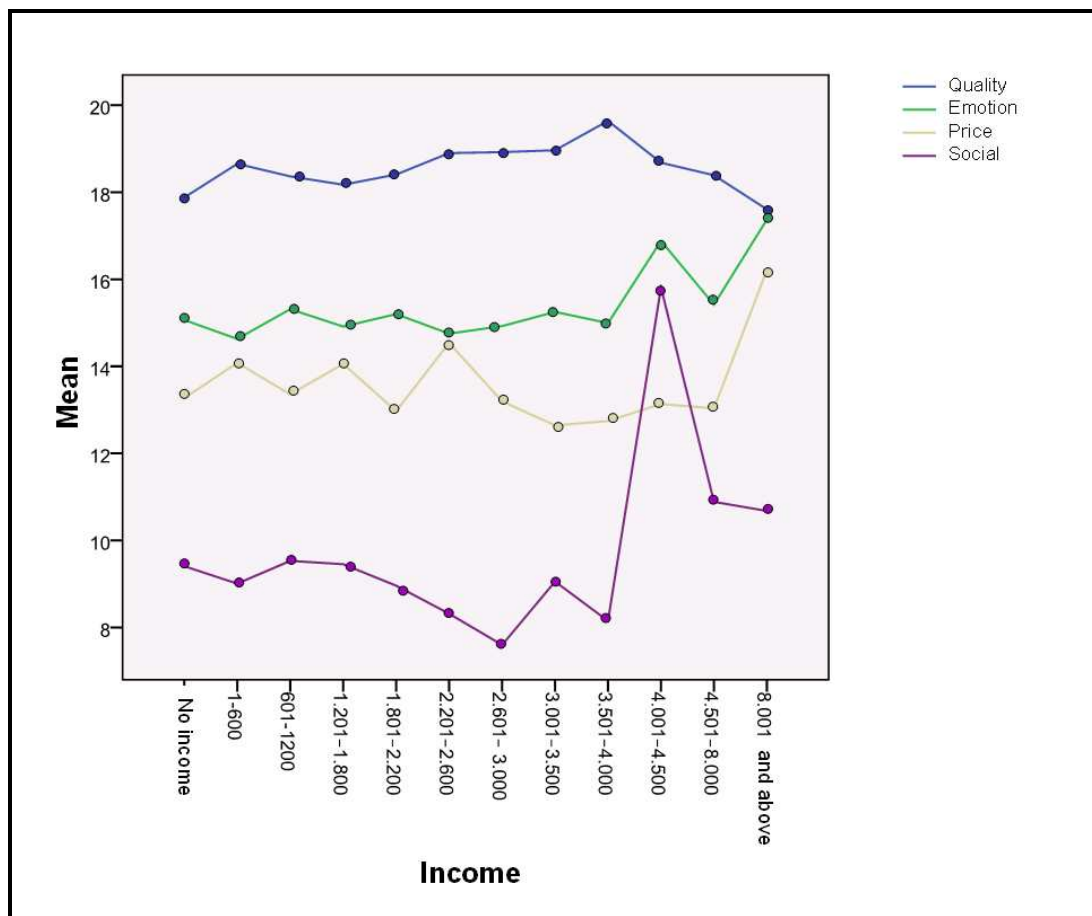
Figure 21: Income and mean scores

As there seems to be a cut in the income level 9 between 4001-4500 Euros, it was decided to take a closer look at the descriptive analysis of income levels, finding that there are only three respondents in this group. Figure 21 shows the result after removing this income group from analysis.
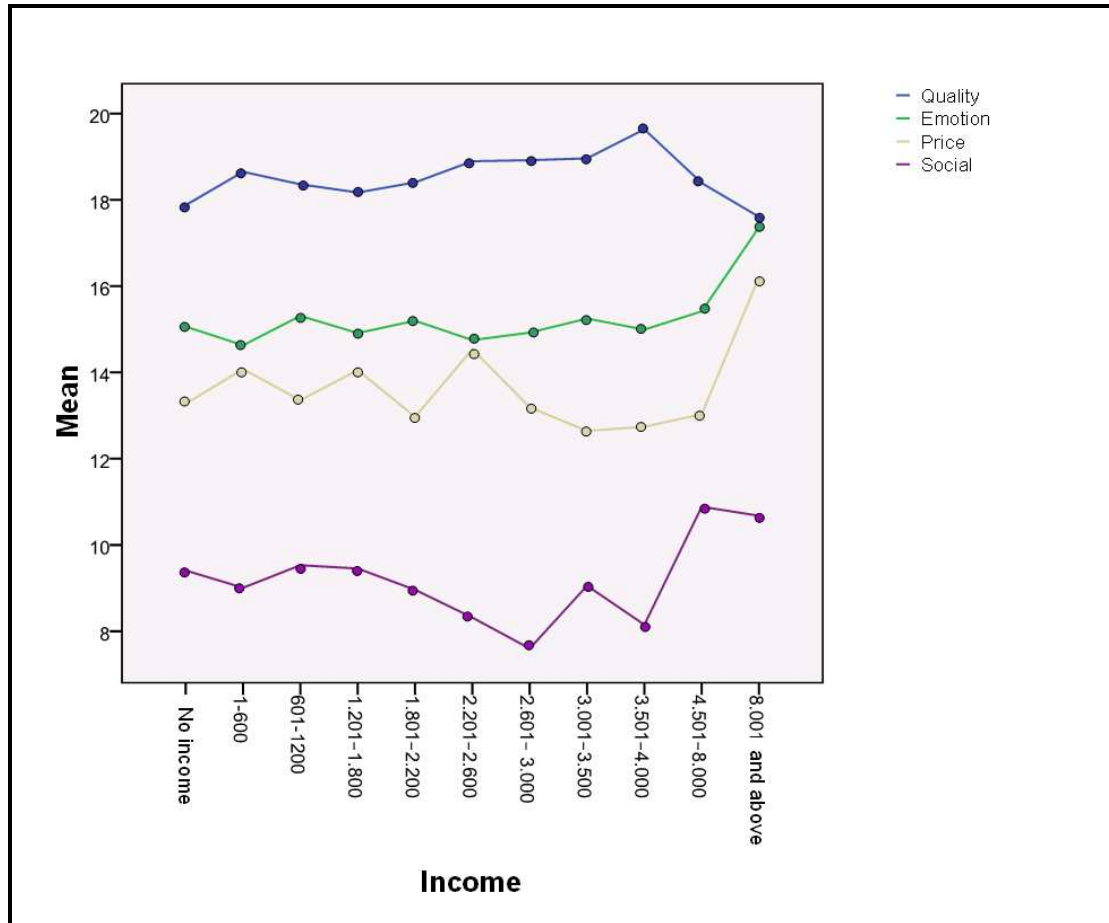
Figure 22: Income and mean scores (excl. 9)

The lines are a little flatter than before and there is no extreme value in emotional and social values anymore, but as the new computed correlation coefficients in Table 29 imply, the new model, excluding income level 9, does not show a clearer linear relationship. Overall, income, as well as educational level, do not seem to influence respondents' evaluation of brand benefits to a great extent, as the lines above don't show any clear trend, which is also reflected in the low correlation coefficients.

Income (excl. 9)	Coefficients	Brand benefits			
		Quality	Emotion	Price	Social
Income (excl. 9)	Kendall's-Tau	,062**/,068**	,026/,013	-,037*/-,034*	,032*/-,003
	Spearman's Rho	,078**/,085**	,034/,016	-,051*/-,046*	,046*/-,002

*. 0,05 level of significance (2-sided).
**. 0,01 level of significance (2-sided).

Table 28: Correlation coefficients for income-benefit link (excl. 9)

In the previous sections demographic variables and their influence on brand benefits sought was examined. Overall, it can be stated that the correlations between demographics and brand benefits sought are relatively low. To be more exact, no correlation between any demographic variable and any brand benefit exceeds the value of 0.116. The demographic variables and their respective coefficients are summarized in Table 29.

	Coefficients	Brand benefits			
		Quality	Emotion	Price	Social
Gender	Kendall's-Tau	,104**	,013	,015	-,010
	Spearman's-Rho	,114**	,015	,018	-,012
Age groups	Kendall's-Tau	,116**	,014	-,013	,018
	Spearman's-Rho	,140**	,017	-,017	,025
Educational level	Kendall's-Tau	,035*	,048**	-,056**	,058**
	Spearman's-Rho	,041*	,065**	-,074**	,075**
Income	Kendall's-Tau	,062**	,026	-,037*	,032*
	Spearman's-Rho	,078**	,034	-,051*	,046*

*. 0,05 level of significance (2-sided).
**. 0,01 level of significance (2-sided).

Table 29: Correlation coefficients for demographics-benefits link

Regarding the education and income variable, it was decided to keep those cases in the sample, which were excluded in previous analyses, simply because their exclusion did not improve any linear model and because the first aim was to get a better picture on trends in brand benefits sought. Thus, hypothesis 4, stating that demographic variables and brand benefits sought by consumers are significantly correlated can be supported. In conclusion, it can be stated that, even though the demographic variables do not explain much of the variance in benefits sought, relatively speaking, gender and age groups seem to exert the biggest influence on quality benefit sought, with older people and women rather than younger respondents and men seeking more quality benefit.

8.5. Hypothesis 5: Correlation between lifestyle and benefits sought

The previous analysis shows clearly that demographics do not appear to play a major role in explaining brand benefits sought by consumers. This can be interpreted in terms of first implications for marketing managers, for whom it is reasonable to focus on one segment, as demographic variables are the simplest segmentation methods and most easily observable. Thus, marketing practice should not solely rely on this concept when developing new market offerings for their customers. However, in this section respondents' lifestyles are examined and the following hypothesis is examined:

H5: Lifestyle and brand benefits sought by consumers are significantly correlated.

Before any relationships are researched, first a factor analysis is conducted in order to group the various dimensions of the lifestyle questionnaire.

8.5.1. Generating lifestyle groups

The exploratory factor analysis was conducted by following the steps described by Backhaus et al. (2006). As a first step the data needs to be examined regarding acceptability for factor analysis, using some of the following criteria. Firstly, the correlation coefficient matrix should be looked at and a closer look should be taken at its values. Another criterion, which is also used to prove the appropriateness of the scale for factor analysis, are significance levels of the correlation coefficients.

Since there are more than 80 items in the lifestyle questionnaire, the two matrices are too big for an appropriate evaluation of data quality. Neither the Bartlett-Test, which provides a significant level regarding correlation of the variables, can be used as an appropriate measure, as normal distribution of the underlying data is presumed. Therefore, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's measure of sampling adequacy and the anti-image matrices are computed. In Table 30 the levels of MSA and their verbal equivalents are given.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's measure of sampling adequacy	
MSA >= 0,9	marvellous
MSA >= 0,8	meritorious
MSA >= 0,7	middling
MSA >= 0,6	mediocre
MSA >= 0,5	miserable
MSA < 0,5	unacceptable

Table 30: KMO-criterion

The overall MSA shows a value of 0,647, which is 'mediocre', since an MSA <0,5 is unacceptable for factor analysis. In the anti-image correlation matrix, which is included in the appendix, the variances of all variables are computed. The image, meaning the part of a variable's variance explained by the correlated variables, is depicted by the diagonal. The 'anti-image', the other part of a variable's variance, which is independent from the other variables, is aside from the diagonal. Regarding each variable's MSA, it can be observed that 17 variables indicate an MSA of lower than 0.5. Backhaus et al. (2006) advise to successively eliminate those variables with the smallest explained variance, in order to get a better fit to the factor model. Accordingly, it is decided to eliminate those variables with MSA values below 0.4 first, before checking if the fit has improved. There are four variables to which this criterion applies, namely, 'Car rank 3', 'House rank 3', 'Values rank 4', and 'Values rank 5', with MSAs of 0.34, 0.39, 0.39, and 0.29, respectively.

After exclusion of the variables mentioned above, the KMO-test improved to 0.677. However, only two of the variables, whose MSAs were below 0.5, improved on MSA to a level above 0.5, namely 'Value 24' and 'Value 28'.

This is why the remaining variables below 0.5 MSA-level have also been removed, except for those which have a chance to improve to above 0.5, namely 'Interiors rank 2', 'Clothing 3', 'Values rank 1', and 'Men and women'. In Table 31 the summarized MSAs of all 17 critical variables are indicated before and after exclusion of 'Car rank 3', 'House rank 3', 'Values rank 4', and 'Values rank 5'.

Variable	MSA	MSA after first exclusion
Car rank 3	0,34	excluded
House style rank 3	0,39	excluded
Interior rank 2	0,44	0,47
Interior Rank 3	0,41	0,43 -> excluded
Clothing 3: Natural, spiritual	0,45	0,49
Value 6	0,41	0,42 -> excluded
Value 24	0,49	0,52
Value 28	0,46	0,53
Value rank 1	0,41	0,47
Value rank 3	0,46	0,46 -> excluded
Value rank 4	0,39	excluded
Value rank 5	0,29	excluded
Helath: Body vs. from the inside	0,41	0,41 -> excluded
Men and women: Equal vs. different	0,47	0,47
Friends: Direct environment vs. whole world	0,40	0,45 -> excluded
Aging: Youth vs. knowledge of life	0,43	0,45 ->excluded
Science: Trust vs. Mistrust	0,46	0,45 -> excluded

Table 31: MSAs of all 17 critical variables

After elimination of the last critical variables, the KMO-test improved to a value of 0.705, which is 'middling', according to the table above. All MSAs indicate values above 0.5, which permits a further factor analysis.

After having performed another factor analysis, the rotated factor matrix shows weak eigenvalues for the rank variables, such as 'Car rank' or 'Clothing rank'. Consequently, these variables have been excluded from the analysis to improve model fit and facilitate

interpretation. The last KMO shows a value of 0.724. The scree-test indicates an elbow after the 4th factor. The eigenvalue falls below 1 after the 23rd factor, which means the 24th factor would explain less than one single variable. Since the difference between four and 23 factors is relatively large, a closer look at the tables of total explained variance needs to be taken. Four factors, as the scree-test would advise, only explain 34.7% of the variance of the variables. On the other hand, 23 factors explain 72.7% of total variance. For the sake of interpretation, the KMO-criterion has been applied and 23 factors have been selected for further analysis. In Table 32 the 23 factors are given with the variables that load on each factor and their rotated factor loadings. Those variables, which were not sufficiently explained by one factor, are listed in the third column with their respective rotated factor loadings.

Factor	Variables (strongest rotated factor loadings)	Variables (weaker factor-loadings)
1	Cars: sportive, luxurious (0.363) Cars: casual, modern (0.646) Cars: young, modern (0.802) Cars: young, trendy (0.755) Houses: casual, modern (0.695) Houses: modern, trendy (0.723) Haouses: ultramodern, design (0.549) Interiors: casual, modern(0.713) Interiors: trendy, design: 0.646 Clothing: casual, modern (0.642) Clothing: young, modern (0.767) Clothing: young, trendy (0.779)	Partner (0.299) Free to be oneself (0.266) Self-development (0.312) Technology (0.315)
2	Cars: Classical, luxurious (0.675) Houses: Classical, luxurious (0.817) Houses: cosy, luxurious (0.778) Interiors: classical, luxurious (0.862) Interiors: cosy, luxurious Clothing: classical, luxriouss (0.724) Clothing: luxurious, special (0.704)	Cars: sportive, luxurious (0.348) Prosperous and comfortable life (0.399)
3	Tolerance and respect (0.592) Simple and modest life (0.449) Nature, animals and plants (0.612) Wisdom, knowledge of life (0.751) Economic (0.525) Self-development (0.369)	Having children (0.306) Inner peace and harmony (0.384) Flexibility (,453) Security, count on someone (0.372)
4	Hobby (0.536) Beauty: Body vs. from the inside (0.580) Active vs. relaxing (0.758) City life vs. close to nature (0.410) Own path vs taking others into account (0.480)	Sex (0.403) Capitalistic system: Trust vs. mistrust (0.305)
5	Honesty, reliability (0.418) Family (0.806) Friendships, social contacts (0.525) Home sweet home (0.492) Family vs. self (0.672)	Having children (0.316)
6	Houses: rural, romantic (0.815) Interiors: rural, romantic (0.774)	City life vs. close to nature (-0.300) Technology (-0.324)
7	Joy, happiness,fun (0.418) Time for oneself (0.781) Partner (0.422) Free to be oneself (0.463)	Being respected and appreciated (0.270) Sex (0.278) Hobby (0.334) Friendships, social contacts (0.318)

8	Discipline, strong character, principles (0.765) Being respected and appreciated (0.329) Self-control (0.735) Flexibility (0.538)	Free to be oneself (0.320) Self-development (0.330)
9	The best (0.670) Popular (0.786) Conservative values (0.499) Prosperous and comfortable life (0.423) Technology (0.350)	Being respected and appreciated (0.324) Christianity (0.263)
10	Cars: solid, modern (0.550) Houses: simple, affordable (0.610) Clothing: natural, spiritual (0.717)	Economical (0.384) City life vs. close to nature(-0.343) Capitalistic system: Trust vs. mistrust (-0.365)
11	Inner peace and harmony (0.390) Health (0.533) Security: safe world (0.724) Security: count on someone (0.575)	Partner (0.357) Free to be oneself (0.261) Self-development (0.329)
12	Romance and tenderness (0.705) Having children (0.403) Optimistic, good temper (0.684)	Joy, happiness, fun (0.342) Simple and modest life (0.300)
13	Converging cultures vs own culture (0.629) Equal cultures vs assimilation (0.769)	Tolerance, respect (0.390)
14	Self-confidence (0.644) Own style (0.668)	Honesty, reliability (0.360)
15	Interiors: striking, own style (0.583) Interiors: exotic, foreign cultures (0.691)	Houses: Ultramodern, design (0.407)
16	Cars: Practical, modern (0.788)	Home sweet home (0.397)
17	Clothing: sportive, leisure time (0.728)	Cars: sportive, luxurious (0.337) Health (0.388)
18	Capitalistic system: Trust vs. mistrust (0.429) Christianity (0.336) New religions (0.770)	Having children (0.321)
19	Partnership: everlasting vs. temporary (0.779)	
20	Men and women: equal vs. different (0.759) Own path vs taking others into account (0.307)	
21	Money vs. time (0.814)	
22	Well-being: past vs. future (0.723)	
23	Democracy vs. few politicians (0.769)	Christianity (0.251)

Table 32: 23 extracted lifestyle-factors

Factor 1 could be interpreted in terms of comprising those respondents who are young, trend-conscious and have an affinity for new technologies. They are termed 'trendy'. Factor 2 represents luxurious and wealthy people who value material goods. Their lifestyle can be described as 'materialistic'. The 3rd factor describes the simple, close-to nature people, who value respect, wisdom and self-fulfilment. Their lifestyle is referred to as 'ethical'. Factor 4 comprises the independent, active, urban and good-looking people, who are categorized as having a 'dynamic' lifestyle. Factor 5 contains respondents who are characterized as social and reliable family persons. Thus their lifestyle is termed 'family-oriented'.

Factor 6 appears to represent the counterpart to Factor 4, characterizing close-to-nature and rural people, who regard new technologies with suspicion. This group is pooled under 'country'-lifestyle. Factor 7 comprises the social fun-people, who try to get the most out of their lives and who value self-actualization, in short, a 'hedonistic' lifestyle. Factor 8 comprises those who value respect and discipline, who are autonomous and flexible. They are best described with an 'authority-oriented' lifestyle. Factor 9 relates to those conservatives who strive to be number one in all areas of life: in their jobs, their circle of friends, and who value wealth and technology. Their lifestyle is characterized as being oriented towards 'competition'. The characteristics that load highest on Factor 10 are simple, solid, economical, natural, down-to-earth, in short 'functional'. Factor 11 comprises well-balanced, secure, healthy people, those who represent a 'stoic' lifestyle. Factor 12 describes the sensitive and emotional optimists, leading an 'emotion-oriented' lifestyle. Factor 13 represents the tolerant people, who value social integration, the so-called 'tolerance-oriented' lifestyle. Factor 14 represents an 'individualistic' lifestyle. The adjective that best describes the lifestyle that loads on Factor 15 is 'eccentric'. Factor 16 represents a 'functional and home-oriented' lifestyle. Factor 17 includes those members of the population, who lead a 'healthy' lifestyle. Factor 18 comprises the 'religion-oriented' respondents. The 'relationship-oriented' respondents are pooled in Factor 19. Factor 20 describes a 'self-oriented' lifestyle, Factor 21 a 'career-oriented' lifestyle, Factor 22 a 'retrospective', and Factor 23 a 'democratic' lifestyle. The computed standardized factor scores are saved and can be used for further analyses.

8.5.2. Relationship between lifestyle and brand benefits sought

Tables 33 and 34 summarize the results of the linear regression, by giving the multiple regression coefficients, coefficients of determination and corrected coefficient of determination on all brand benefits and the F-Tests with their p-values, respectively.

Model summary				
Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. error of the estimate
Lifestyle-quality	,299[a]	,090	,081	1,997
Lifestyle-emotion	,245[a]	,060	,051	3,4269
Lifestyle-price	,240[a]	,057	,049	3,550
Lifestyle-social	,383[a]	,146	,138	4,102

Table 33: Linear regression

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of squares	df	Means squares	F	Sig.
Lifestyle-quality	Regression	962,896	23	41,865	10,494	,000[a]
Lifestyle-emotion	Regression	1836,331	23	79,840	6,799	,000[a]
Lifestyle-price	Regression	1885,530	23	81,980	6,504	,000[a]
Lifestyle-social	Regression	7081,307	23	307,883	18,301	,000[a]

Table 34: ANOVA

Regarding the ANOVA results, it can be observed that all four models are significant and below the 0.1% level of confidence, which implies that the Null-hypothesis of no systematic correlation can be rejected. Since the F-Test is highest in the lifestyle-social benefit relationship, the R² also indicates the highest value, which means that lifestyle explains most of the variance in social benefit sought compared to the other benefits. Lifestyle appears to least influence value for money.

Tables 35-38 summarize standardized Beta coefficients concerning lifestyle groups and benefits sought. Standardized Beta coefficients are included in the table in order to compare links of lifestyles to the examined benefit.

Model: Lifestyle-quality		Standardized Beta	Sig.
1	(Constant)		,000
	Trendy	,040	,038
	Materialistic	-,045	,020
	Ethical	-,100	,000
	Dynamic	,052	,007
	Family oriented	-,049	,012
	Country	-,109	,000
	Hedonistic	-,140	,000
	Authority	,040	,038
	Competition	,094	,000
	Functional	-,007	,730
	Stoic	-,045	,019
	Emotion oriented	-,044	,022
	Tolerance oriented	,014	,456
	Individualistic	-,065	,001
	Eccentric	,040	,036
	Functional home oriented	-,112	,000
	Healthy	,003	,895
	Religion oriented	-,037	,052
	Relationship oriented	-,011	,581
	Self oriented	-,007	,726
	Career oriented	-,064	,001
	Retrospective	,012	,520
	Democratic	-,021	,283

Table 35: Standardized Beta-coefficients for lifestyle-quality link

The largest significant influence on quality benefit is exerted by hedonistic, functional, country and ethical lifestyles, in descending order. All coefficients are negative, which implies that the more committed a respondent is to his/her lifestyle, that is the more he/she values the underlying attitudes compared to other respondents, the less he/she seeks quality benefit. This explanation is due to factor scores representing the independent variables,

which indicate relative ratings of the lifestyle variables. Thus respondents who have a negative factor score on a particular lifestyle group rated the variables that load on this factor more negatively than the average. Thus, those respondents who score high on hedonistic, functional, country and ethical lifestyles do not place as much importance on quality benefit as other lifestyle groups. Those lifestyle groups who value quality benefit the most are those leading a competition-oriented and dynamic lifestyle.

Model: Lifestyle-emotion		Standardized Beta	Sig.
1	(Constant)		,000
	Trendy	,002	,916
	Materialistic	-,044	,026
	Ethical	-,020	,311
	Dynamic	,005	,802
	Family oriented	-,042	,030
	Country	-,084	,000
	Hedonistic	,000	,986
	Authority	-,104	,000
	Competition	-,039	,049
	Functional	-,021	,280
	Stoic	-,022	,260
	Emotion oriented	-,026	,189
	Tolerance oriented	,003	,895
	Individualistic	,010	,598
	Eccentric	,007	,705
	Functional home oriented	,020	,295
	Healthy	-,075	,000
	Religion oriented	-,127	,000
	Relationship oriented	-,028	,153
	Self oriented	,044	,023
	Career oriented	-,062	,002
	Retrospective	-,073	,000
	Democratic	,026	,192

Table 36: Standardized Beta-coefficients for lifestyle-emotion link

Those lifestyle groups which exert a relatively large significant negative influence on emotional benefit are religion-oriented, authority, country, healthy and retrospective lifestyles groups in descending order. It can be argued that respondents belonging to these lifestyle groups do not place as much importance on emotional benefit as the self-oriented lifestyle-group.

Model: Lifestyle-value for money		Standardized Beta	Sig.
1	(Constant)		,000
	Trendy	-,042	,033
	Materialistic	-,091	,000
	Ethical	-,118	,000
	Dynamic	,003	,893
	Family oriented	,037	,060
	Country	,058	,003
	Hedonistic	,050	,011
	Authority	-,040	,043
	Competition	-,011	,578
	Functional	-,043	,029
	Stoic	,023	,239
	Emotion oriented	-,010	,598
	Tolerance oriented	,030	,127
	Individualistic	-,011	,558
	Eccentric	,036	,067
	Functional home oriented	-,123	,000
	Healthy	,005	,814
	Religion oriented	,058	,003
	Relationship oriented	-,032	,101
	Self oriented	-,007	,710
	Career oriented	-,008	,674
	Retrospective	,003	,885
	Democratic	-,012	,529

Table 37: Standardized Beta-coefficients for lifestyle-value for money link

Regarding value for money it appears that respondents leading a country, hedonistic or religion-oriented lifestyle seek value for money more than the other lifestyle groups. Conversely, functional-home-oriented, ethical and materialistic lifestyle groups do not appear to place much importance on this benefit.

Model: Lifestyle-social benefit		Standardized Beta	Sig.
1	(Constant)		,000
	Trendy	-,050	,008
	Materialistic	-,073	,000
	Ethical	-,100	,000
	Dynamic	-,009	,644
	Family oriented	-,062	,001
	Country	,026	,168
	Hedonistic	,168	,000
	Authority	-,029	,114
	Competition	-,198	,000
	Functional	-,079	,000
	Stoic	-,052	,006
	Emotion oriented	-,001	,955
	Tolerance oriented	,046	,013
	Individualistic	,019	,309
	Eccentric	,053	,005
	Functional home oriented	,010	,584
	Healthy	-,076	,000
	Religion oriented	-,115	,000
	Relationship oriented	-,068	,000
	Self oriented	-,075	,000
	Career oriented	-,046	,014
	Retrospective	-,014	,446
	Democratic	,098	,000

Table 38: Standardized Beta-coefficients for lifestyle-social benefit link

Hedonistic, democratic and eccentric lifestyle groups place the highest importance on social benefit, whereas competition, religion-oriented and ethical lifestyle groups demonstrate a negative relationship to social benefit sought.

To sum up, the data support H5, this means that lifestyle and brand benefits sought are significantly correlated. Some patterns in benefits sought can be identified: While the competition-group places an emphasis on quality benefit, it seeks less social benefit. The hedonistic group places more importance on social benefit and value for money than on quality benefit. The country group seems to make a trade-off between quality benefit and value for money, as it seeks much more of the former compared to the latter. The religion-oriented group seeks value for money, compared to emotional and social benefit.

8.6. Hypothesis 6: Correlation between demographics and brand switching

The following analysis is conducted in order to test the following hypothesis:

H6: Demographic variables and brand switching are significantly correlated.

For this purpose rank correlations between each demographic variable and brand switch are established. The summary of the results is shown in Table 39.

	Coefficients	Brand switch
Gender	Kendall's-Tau	-,072**
	Spearman's-Rho	-,072**
Age groups	Kendall's-Tau	-,028
	Spearman's-Rho	-,031
Educational level	Kendall's-Tau	-,041*
	Spearman's-Rho	-,046*
Income	Kendall's-Tau	,006
	Spearman's-Rho	,007

*.0,05 level of significance (2-sided).
**.0,01 level of significance (2-sided).

Table 39: Correlation coefficients for demographics-brand switch link

The greatest significant correlation is found between gender and brand switch, with women demonstrating a greater brand switching tendency. There is also a weak relationship between educational level and brand switching, with lower education levels exhibiting a larger tendency to switch. Age group and income level do not appear to be linked to brand switching.

These results generally support H6, although age and income groups do not demonstrate any connection to brand switch.

In order to test the explanatory combined power of gender and education, a binomial logistic regression is performed on these two demographic variables and brand switch. The results are shown Tables 40 and 41.

Model summary			
Step	-2 Log-Likelihood	Cox & Snell R-Square	Nagelkerke R-Square
1	3386,816[a]	,008	,011

Table 40: Output of the binomial logistic regression

Variables in the equation							
Gender, education-brand switch		B	Standard error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	Gender	,326	,083	15,394	1	,000	1,385
	Education	-,049	,018	7,673	1	,006	,952
	Konstante	-,052	,115	,206	1	,650	,949

Table 41: Included variables

The Pseudo-R^2 indicates that gender and education explain very little variation of the dependent variable. Nevertheless, gender has a greater influence on brand switch than educational level, which was already noted earlier during establishing the rank correlations. The statistics also show that women and lower educational levels are eager to switch brands compared to men and higher educational levels.

8.7. Hypothesis 7: Correlation between lifestyle and brand switching

H7: Lifestyle and brand switching are significantly correlated

Finally, in order to test this hypothesis, a binomial regression analysis is performed on lifestyle groups and brand switch (Tables 42 & 43).

Model summary			
Step	-2 Log-Likelihood	Cox & Snell R-Square	Nagelkerke R-Square
1	3228,816[a]	,070	,093

Table 42: Output of the binomial logistic regression

Lifestyle-brand switch		B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	Trendy	-,087	,042	,917
	Materialistic	,040	,334	1,041
	Ethical	,106	,012	1,112
	Dynamic	-,092	,031	,912
	Family_oriented	-,065	,126	,937
	Country	,241	,000	1,272
	Hedonistic	,338	,000	1,402
	Authority	-,018	,676	,982
	Competition	,044	,309	1,045
	Functional	-,100	,019	,905
	Stoic	-,014	,737	,986
	Emotion_oriented	,141	,001	1,152
	Tolerance_oriented	,177	,000	1,193
	Individualistic	-,019	,647	,981
	Eccentric	,113	,008	1,120
	Functional_home_oriented	,095	,025	1,100
	Healthy	-,072	,090	,931
	Religion_oriented	,053	,211	1,054
	Relationship_oriented	-,051	,236	,951

		-,130	,002	,878
	Self_oriented	-,130	,002	,878
	Career_oriented	-,057	,182	,945
	Retrospective	-,093	,027	,911
	Democratic	,048	,256	1,049
	Constant	-,227	,000	,797

Table 43: Included variables

The Pseudo-R² indicates that lifestyle is a better predictor of brand switch, even if the value is not very high. Those lifestyle groups that exhibit a high brand switch tendency are hedonistic, country, tolerance-oriented and emotion-oriented lifestyle groups. Conversely, those lifestyle groups that are rather brand loyal are self-oriented, functional, retrospective and dynamic lifestyle groups. The high brand switching tendency of the hedonistic group can partly be explained by the fact that this group also seeks social benefit, which was found to be a driver of brand switching. The country group also exhibits a higher brand switching tendency than many other groups because it scores high on value for money, as price is generally not considered a loyalty increasing factor. Conversely, the self-oriented and dynamic lifestyle groups scored high on emotional and quality benefit, respectively, which tend to increase loyal behavior.

In general, lifestyle exerts an influence on brand switching behavior, thus H7 is supported. As already discussed in the literature review, lifestyle explains brand switching better than demographic variables, with Pseudo-R² indicating 0.093 for lifestyle and 0.011 for gender and education, i.e. the only related variables to brand switch, respectively.

Table 44 shows the lifestyle groups in the first column and the standardized Beta coefficients of the benefits sought by each lifestyle group and brand switching in Columns 2 to 6. The blue cells indicate significant (<0.05) negative standardized Beta coefficients while the pink cells indicate significant positive standardized Beta coefficients.

Lifestyle	Lifestyle-Quality	Lifestyle-Emotional benefit	Lifestyle-Value for money	Lifestyle-Social benefit	Lifestyle-Brand switch
Step 1[a] Trendy	,040	,002	-,042	-,050	-,087
Materialistic	-,045	-,044	-,091	-,073	,040
Ethical	-,100	-,020	-,118	-,100	,106
Dynamic	,052	,005	,003	-,009	-,092
Family_oriented	-,049	-,042	,037	-,062	-,065
Country	-,109	-,084	,058	,026	,241
Hedonistic	-,140	,000	,050	,168	,338
Authority	,040	-,104	-,040	-,029	-,018
Competition	,094	-,039	-,011	-,198	,044
Functional	-,007	-,021	-,043	-,079	-,100
Stoic	-,045	-,022	,023	-,052	-,014
Emotion_oriented	-,044	-,026	-,010	-,001	,141
Tolerance_oriented	,014	,003	,030	,046	,177
Individualistic	-,065	,010	-,011	,019	-,019
Eccentric	,040	,007	,036	,053	,113
Functional_home_oriented	-,112	,020	-,123	,010	,095
Healthy	,003	-,075	,005	-,076	-,072
Religion_oriented	-,037	-,127	,058	-,115	,053
Relationship_oriented	-,011	-,028	-,032	-,068	-,051
Self_oriented	-,007	,044	-,007	-,075	-,130
Career_oriented	-,064	-,062	-,008	-,046	-,057
Retrospective	,012	-,073	,003	-,014	-,093
Democratic	-,021	,026	-,012	,098	,048

Table 44: Standardized Beta coefficients for lifestyle-benefits sought and lifestyle-brand switch links

A negative Beta coefficient in the lifestyle-brand switch column means that this lifestyle group has a lower switching tendency compared to the other lifestyle groups. A positive Beta coefficient indicates a positive brand switching tendency. The table also allows comparison of brand benefits sought by the different lifestyle groups.

The trendy lifestyle group seeks more quality benefit and less value for money and social benefit, which seems to prevent the members of this group from switching. A similar observation can be made in the dynamic lifestyle group, who also places relatively much importance on quality benefit and thus is motivated to stay with the brand. The self-oriented group would rather continue buying the same brand because of the emotional benefit sought.

The materialistic group does not seem to seek any benefit or to show any brand switching patterns. The same observation can be made in the family-oriented, the stoic, the individualistic, the healthy, the relationship-oriented and the career-oriented groups.
Conversely, although the ethical, emotion-oriented and functional-home-oriented groups do not seek any particular benefit, they, however, show a strong brand switching tendency. This could be explained by a strong need for variety in these groups, regardless of the benefits the brands provide. These lifestyle group members seem to switch just for the sake of variety. By contrast, although functional and retrospective lifestyle groups do not seek any particular brand benefit, they prefer to avoid switching. These groups are characterized by a low need for variety or even inertia.

The country group appears to be motivated by value for money to switch brand. In the hedonistic group, not only value for money but also social benefit seem to be brand switch inducing factors. For the tolerance-oriented and eccentric groups, social benefit also plays a major role in brand switching, with quality being the second important factor in the latter group. Both, authority and competition groups, place high importance on quality benefit, but do not appear to show a brand switching pattern. Also in the religion-oriented and democratic lifestyle groups the benefits sought, namely value for money for the former and social benefit for the latter, do not seem to induce or inhibit brand switching.

9. Discussion

9.1. Summary of results and comparison with other studies

The factor analysis of the PERVAL scale resulted in four factors, namely quality, value for money, social and emotional benefit. Thus the findings of Sweeney and Soutar (2001) and Orth et al. (2004) can be supported. In this study it was examined if brand benefits have a significant impact on brand switching behavior. This proposal was supported by the fact that social benefit increases, while quality benefit, emotional benefit and value for money decrease the tendency to switch. Considerable evidence suggests that price deals are important brand switch inducing factors (Banks, 1950; Keon, 1980; Mazursky, LaBarbera & Aiello, 1987; Dick and Basu, 1994; Keaveney, 1995). Thus, the findings of the present study can be interpreted in terms of higher perceived value for money being more likely to motivate the consumer to stay with the brand instead of motivating the customer to switch. Woodruff (1997) also supports this view by stating that high provided customer value is likely to affect a customer's long-term commitment to a brand. This also means that firms, in order to retain loyal customers, should focus on providing value rather than short-term price deals.

Conversely, social benefit was found to induce brand switching, although the influence on brand switching was not significant. This effect could also be compared to past research where it was found that reference group salience affects choice and that variety seeking is likely when choice is observable (Dolich, 1969; Bearden & Etzel, 1982; Solomon, 1983; Orth & Kahle, 2008).

The product groups were found to exert a significant influence on the benefits-switch connection. It was also found that consumers are more likely to switch chocolate brands because of social benefit and less likely because of other benefits. Buyers of the other product groups seem to be characterized by loyal behavior, placing most importance on quality and emotional benefits. This is important for firms in this product group insofar as evidence suggests that their product group is characterized by social benefit seeking and eager to get buyers to switch. Thus, firms can attract new customers more easily by emphasizing the social benefit their brand offers.

For producers of the other products, namely milk and mineral water, this means that they should stress the emotional and quality benefits provided by their branded products more in order to prevent customers from defecting. The findings also support Gutman's (1982) suggestion that consumers tend to group products in their minds with respect to their common perceived benefits.

It was shown that gender has an influence only on quality benefit sought, with women placing more importance on quality benefit than men. When examining the age groups, the only significant relationship was found between age and quality benefit, with older respondents tending to seek more of this benefit compared to their younger counterparts. All in all, there does not seem to exist a linear relationship between age and brand benefits sought, so it cannot be stated that older consumers tend to seek more or less of a particular benefit, as every age group shows a different pattern. This may also be the case because age was not metrically scaled but ordinally. Thus Orth's (2005) findings cannot be supported, as he found significant links between gender, age and emotional and social benefits, stating that older respondents tend to seek less social and emotional benefits.

Education is significantly correlated to all benefits, with the highest correlations to social, emotional and quality and the highest negative correlation between education and value for money. This also means that firms targeting higher educational levels should stress the value of their product or service. Those companies targeting lower educational levels should stress the value for money. The same pattern could be observed among the income levels, since it was found that education and income are correlated. Concerning demographics, with gender and age having the biggest influence only on quality benefit, it can be stated that older people and women rather than younger respondents and men place more emphasis on quality benefit.

During factor analysis 23 lifestyle groups could be identified. The links between lifestyles and all brand benefits were found to be significant, with lifestyle explaining by far most of the variance in social benefit compared to the other benefits. This is consistent with Orth et al.'s (2004) findings, as they also proved a significant link between their eight lifestyle groups and benefits sought in beer brands.

Age groups and income levels were not found to exert any influence on brand switching, which is contrary to the main findings. For example, Orth (2005) outlines that younger respondents tend to be eager to switch brands, compared to their older counterparts. Kish and Busse (1968), Zuckerman (1971) and Zuckerman et al. (1978) found sensation seeking to be negatively connected to age, arguing that younger respondents are stimulus seekers and thus engage in more variety seeking behavior (Mittelstaedt et al. 1976; Steenkamp & Baumgartner 1992). However, although the correlation between gender, education and brand switching was found to be significant, which is consistent with Kish and Busse's (1968) findings on sensation seeking, the two variables only explain a very small, negligible part of the variance in brand switching behavior. However, the statistics show that women and lower educational levels are eager to switch brands compared to men and higher educational levels.

The link between lifestyle and brand switching is considerable and implies that lifestyle explains patterns in switching behavior better than the demographic variables. Thus the results of the present study generally support Orth et al.'s (2004) findings, outlining the link between lifestyle and brand choice on different occasions.

For a better overview Table 45 sums up all research hypotheses and marks the rejected hypotheses red and the accepted ones green.

Hypotheses	Accepted/rejected
H1: Brand benefits sought by consumers in branded products and brand switching tendency are significantly correlated	👍
H2: The moderator effect of the product groups exerts a significant influence on the link between brand benefits sought by consumers and brand switching	👍
H3: Product groups differ significantly regarding benefits sought by consumers and brand switching	👍
H3a: Functional benefits, i.e. quality and value for money are sought primarily in the milk and mineral water groups	👎
H3b: Social benefit is sought primarily in the beer group	👍
H3c: Emotional benefit is sought primarily in the chocolate group	👎
H4: Demographic variables and benefits sought by consumers are significantly correlated	👍
H5: Lifestyle and benefits sought by consumers are significantly correlated	👍
H6: Demographic variables and brand switching are significantly correlated	👍
H7: Lifestyle and brand switching are significantly correlated	👍

Table 45: Hypotheses

9.2. Academic relevance of the study

Although brand loyalty has been researched extensively, the concept of brand switching still requires more investigation as brand switching can to a great extent be attributed to variety seeking. Even if all psychological variables, such as consumer preference or attitude, are favorably directed towards the brand in use, some switching still occurs. The present study is one more step in the process of explaining individual choice behavior by introducing benefits sought as antecedents to buying behavior.

The present study also adds valuable knowledge to existing research on customer value. Many past studies focused on product attributes as determinants of preference and choice. The results of this study support the notion that consumers evaluate products on a more abstract level in contrast to attitude, which includes evaluation of product attributes. Marketing research should examine more abstract levels of brand evaluation, since consumers tend to decode information provided by branded products by attaching personal meaning to them, i.e. customer value. The present study provides insights into which dimensions of customer value drive brand switching for the selected product groups.

The present analysis is based on actual purchase behavior. Many studies operationalized choice behavior by measuring intentions to buy or linking preferences to actual choice behavior. Chapter 3 of this thesis shows that cognitive antecedents of buying behavior are sometimes very poorly linked to actual buying behavior. Thus this study delivers valuable insights into variables that drive actual choice behavior.

Moreover the present study proposes mixed segmentation methods by applying demographics and lifestyle when explaining consumer choice behavior. Benefits sought are also suitable variables for segmenting a population and explaining its purchase behavior, since it was found in past studies that demographic variables alone are poor predictors of brand choice.

9.3. Implications for marketing practice

The study focused on benefits sought in branded products of given product classes by different consumers. The knowledge can be used by marketing managers for segmentation and targeting of specific customer groups, since benefit segmentation can explain variation in behavior (Haley, 1968; O'Connor & Sullivan, 1995). Moreover, the connection of demographics and lifestyle to brand benefits sought and brand switching helps marketers understand how certain segments react to other brands. This connection also shows which benefits are most competitive when attracting new customers and which benefits should be emphasized in order to keep existing customers. Marketing managers could also use the present lifestyle typology in order to identify homogeneous consumer segments as this variable was found to explain considerably more variance in benefits sought than demographic variables. The present study also helps marketing managers to anticipate reactions of such groups to benefits provided by the firms' branded products. Clearly then, a successful segmentation of consumers by benefits sought combined with descriptive variables could be very beneficial to management.

Knowledge in this area helps to evaluate the brand's competitive position regarding other brands and to stress certain benefits in marketing efforts and product development. The knowledge generated may not only help in segmentation of the market but also in targeting specific consumer segments, especially those who seek the benefits a firm's brand has to offer. Based on this information, the firm can improve value offering to existing target groups, or stress values, life visions and aesthetic styles when designing new products or marketing communication strategies. For example, since women and older people were found to value most quality benefit when it comes to choosing a brand at the next purchase occasion, firms targeting these consumer groups should stress this benefit when designing new products and communication strategies. As quality benefit was the most important benefit across all product groups, all firms operating in the industries investigated in this study should focus on this benefit by concentrating on the female and older consumer segments. Regarding the other demographic variables, those firms targeting higher income and educational levels should emphasize more the social benefits of their branded products. Lower income and education levels place more importance on value for money.

Marketing managers can benefit of the present study's results by getting an insight into brand benefits which drive or inhibit switching behavior. Since the present study helps to understand how consumers respond to a range of competing brands and their perceived benefits, this knowledge helps marketers to design their range by selecting and communicating benefits through their brands in order to attract new customers who are willing to try something different.

The study also lends support to the idea that consumers seek benefits in frequently purchased products, such as milk, mineral water, beer and chocolate, which were examined in the present studies. Many past studies measured evaluations of product attributes when trying to predict choice behavior in such product categories. Moreover, the findings suggest that not only associations with the product group can motivate switching or repurchasing behavior. Since the brand adds value to the product, it is also perceived to provide benefits and thus to influence choice behavior. Thus, not only functional but also symbolic benefits are sought in the product categories investigated. Many firms operating in these industries can benefit from this finding in that, for example, firms in the beer industry can stress the emotional and social benefits of their brands by designing communication methods which include such pictures and stimuli generating such associations with the brand. Since pictures are most easily processed by consumers (Kroeber-Riel and Weinberg, 2003), this method should be beneficial in creating pictures associated with the social and emotional benefits of the brand. Not only communication should stress customer value but also other components of the marketing mix, such as packaging. Colors, shapes and textures all are decoded by the consumer and have some meaning attached to them.

As the social benefit was paramount in the chocolate group, marketing communication should stress this benefit in communication where groups of people are involved in consumption as people tend to consume chocolate with other people or to share it with them. Concerning milk and mineral water, the results suggest that more emphasis should be placed on functional benefits than on symbolic benefits. Firms should stress associations with quality and value of money when advertising their brands and emphasize the biological origin and ingredients of their products. However, the knowledge gained can help firms to select, combine and design media and loyalty programs. Not least by understanding customer value, firms can better compete on superior value delivery. This represents an instrument to retain valued customers as this issue gets more priority.

9.4. Limitations

The present study does not make any claim to representativeness, due to the sampling method and to a response rate of 70%. Therefore the results cannot be used for general reference. The aim of the present study was rather to test the research propositions and to bring to light linkages between the included variables.

Another limitation is that the age variable was measured on an ordinal scale in order to increase willingness to respond. However, no strong linear relationship between age groups and the other variables could be found, which might have been different if age had been a metrical variable.

Moreover, the switch from one brand to another within the product class was used as the measure of brand switching in this study. In reality, however, consumers might be loyal to several brands simultaneously, which means that they switch among these brands rather than switch away from brands. Different measures of brand switch might lead to different results than those presented in this study.

In this study only brand benefits sought were included as predictors of brand switching. However, research suggests that there are many other variables with an impact on brand switching, such as the intrinsic desire for variety and situational factors. Inclusion of such variables would probably have improved the predictions of brand switching. However, this would be beyond the scope of the present study as the main focus was to analyze the effect of benefits sought on consumer behavior.

9.5. Future research directions

The present study enriches the existing literature not only by analyzing consumer behavior in general, but also by splitting it up and focussing on different consumer segments based on their demographic and lifestyle characteristics. Furthermore, the study extends knowledge on brand switching behavior and delivers important insights to customer value.

Since the present study examines benefits sought from branded products in the product categories milk, mineral water, beer and chocolate, future research attempts could extend

this knowledge to other product groups. Also, the influence of involvement in the product group could be researched, as certain benefits sought could have different effects on switching behavior when the perceived risk in the product group is manipulated.

Brand benefits sought and their relationship with consumer behavior could also be compared across various cultures and ethnic groups. Globalization and the exchange of knowledge beyond borders facilitate mobility, not least by standardizing academic studies across European countries, which encourages student exchange. Many people decide to emigrate from their countries because their knowledge and skills are demanded abroad rather than in their home countries. Particularly in Austria there are various cultural subgroups, especially in Vienna, who form separate segments whose members share common needs and wants different from the main population. Thus, their benefits sought and the patterns in behavior as reactions to perceived benefits could be examined in future research attempts.

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Appendix

Vorstudie zur Diplomarbeit

Martina Nikic

Studie zur Frage: Welche Produkte werden von österreichischen KonsumentInnen mindestens monatlich für den Haushalt angeschafft?

(Der/die InterviewerIn wählt eine/n PassantIn entsprechend der Geschlechter- und Altersquote und spricht diese/n an:)

„Guten Tag, ich mache für die Universität Wien eine Umfrage zum Thema „Welche Produkte werden von österreichischen KonsumentInnen **mindestens** monatlich für den Haushalt angeschafft". Darf ich Ihnen dazu kurz ein paar Fragen stellen?"

(InterviewerIn trägt das Geschlecht selbst ein:)

1. Geschlecht: ☐ männlich   ☐ weiblich

(Wird vorgelesen:)

2. Um herauszufinden, ob Sie für die Studie in Frage kommen möchte ich Sie bitten sich in folgende Altersstufen einzuordnen:

☐ 15-19   ☐ 20-24   ☐ 25-34   ☐ 35-49   ☐ 50-64   ☐ 65+

Weiter: Falls der/die RespondentIn in die gesuchte Altersgruppe fällt, weiter mit 3.

Falls nicht: „Leider kommen Sie für die Studie nicht in Frage, ich danke Ihnen trotzdem für Ihre Zeit und wünsche Ihnen noch einen schönen Tag."

(Wird vorgelesen:)

3. Nennen Sie bitte spontan ein oder mehrere Produkte, die Sie **mindestens** einmal im Monat für Ihren Haushalt kaufen!

_____

(Wird vorgelesen:)

4. Welche der folgenden Produktkategorien kaufen Sie **mindestens** einmal im Monat für Ihren Haushalt? Nennen Sie bitte für jede zutreffende Kategorie ein Produkt!

Nahrungs- und Genussmittel:
☐ Obst:
☐ Gemüse:
☐ Fleisch und Fleischwaren:
☐ Fisch, Meeresfrüchte und Fischerzeugnisse:
☐ Milchprodukte:
☐ Eier
☐ Fertiggerichte:
☐ Brot- und Getreideprodukte:
☐ Süßwaren:
☐ Tiernahrung:

Getränke:
☐ Alkoholische Getränke:
☐ Alkoholfreie Getränke:

☐ Tabakwaren:

☐ Zeitschriften/Zeitungen:

☐ Bekleidung:

☐ Schuhe und Lederwaren:

☐ Kosmetische Erzeugnisse/Körperpflegemittel:

☐ Uhren und Schmuck:

(Wird vorgelesen:)

Abschließend möchte ich Ihnen für die Statistik noch zwei Fragen stellen:

5. Nennen Sie mir bitte Ihre höchste abgeschlossene Schulbildung:

☐ (Max.) Pflichtschulabschluss
    Beispiele: Hauptschule, AHS-Unterstufe, Sonderschule; früher: Bürgerschule,
    8-jährige Volksschule, Volksschule-Oberstufe

☐ Lehre (Berufsschule)
    Abschluss: Lehrabschlussprüfung (Gesellenprüfung)

☐ Meister-, Werkmeisterausbildung
    Abschluss: (Werk-)Meisterprüfung

☐ Ausbildung zum gehobenen Dienst für Gesundheits- und Krankenpflege
    Krankenpflegeschule; Nur Ausbildung zum diplomierten Pflegepersonal

☐ Berufsbildende mittlere Schule
    Beispiele: Handelsschule, Gastgewerbefachschule, Kindergärtnerinnen-
    /Kindergärtnerschule, Haushaltungsschule

☐ Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule (AHS-Matura)
    Beispiele: Gymnasium, Mittelschule, Frauenoberschule

☐ Berufsbildende höhere Schule (BHS-Matura)
    Normalform, Kolleg, Abiturientenlehrgang
    Beispiele: HAK, HBLA, HTL, Bildungsanstalt für Kindergartenpädagogik

☐ Universität, Fachhochschule
    Erst- oder Zweitabschluss eines Studiums an einer öffentlichen oder privaten
    Universität, Kunsthochschule oder Fachhochschule, Pädagogische Hochschule

☐ Hochschulverwandte Ausbildung, Akademie
    Voraussetzung: Matura
Beispiele: Pädak, Militärakademie, Schulen des gehobenen medizinisch-technischen
Dienstes, Akademie für Sozialarbeit, Universitätslehrgang ohne vorangegangenes Studium

(Wird vorgelesen und Karte wird überreicht und anschließend Einkommensstufe angekreuzt)

6. Ich überreiche Ihnen nun eine Karte wo unterschiedlichen Einkommensstufen Buchstaben zugeordnet sind. Bitte nennen Sie mir jenen Buchstaben, der Ihr monatliches Bruttoeinkommen in Euro repräsentiert!

- ☐ Kein Einkommen L
- ☐ 1 – 600   W
- ☐ 601 – 1.200   R
- ☐ 1.201 – 1.800   Z
- ☐ 1.801 – 2.200   I
- ☐ 2.201 – 2.600   P
- ☐ 2.601 – 3000   A
- ☐ 3.001 – 3.500   S
- ☐ 3.501 – 4.000   G
- ☐ 4.001 – 4.500   V
- ☐ 4.501 – 8.000   B
- ☐ 8.001 und darüber K
- ☐ Antwort verweigert

Vielen Dank!

Liste der gekauften Marken

Bitte tragen Sie in die erste Spalte das Datum Ihres Einkaufs und daneben in die entsprechenden Spalten die Marke(n) der gekauften Produkte!

Ihr Geschlecht: ☐ männlich ☐ weiblich

Ihre Altersgruppe: ☐ 20-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-49 ☐ 50-64 ☐ 65+

Vor- und Zuname des Studierenden,
über den die Studie vermittelt wurde:_____

Datum des Einkaufs	Produktgruppen			
	Milch	Mineralwasser	Bier	Schokolade

Bewertungsbogen

Bitte bewerten Sie die gekaufte Marke auf dem folgenden Bogen und beachten Sie dabei für jede Marke einen separaten Bogen zu benützen!

Ihr Geschlecht: ☐ männlich ☐ weiblich

Ihre Altersgruppe: ☐ 20-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-49 ☐ 50-64 ☐ 65+

Markenname: _____

Frage	trifft zu	trifft eher zu	weder noch	trifft eher nicht zu	trifft nicht zu
Dieses Produkt würde mich entspannen wenn ich es konsumiere	1	2	3	4	5
Dieses Produkt verhilft mir zu Anerkennung	1	2	3	4	5
Dieses Produkt hat eine gleich bleibende Qualität	1	2	3	4	5
Dieses Produkt würde seinem Besitzer soziales Ansehen verleihen	1	2	3	4	5
Dieses Produkt ist gut gemacht	1	2	3	4	5
Dieses Produkt würde mir Vergnügen bereiten	1	2	3	4	5
Dieses Produkt würde einen guten Eindruck auf andere machen	1	2	3	4	5
Dieses Produkt weckt den Wunsch in mir es zu konsumieren	1	2	3	4	5
Dieses Produkt hat ein gutes Preis-Leistungsverhältnis	1	2	3	4	5
Dieses Produkt hat einen akzeptablen Qualitätsstandard	1	2	3	4	5
Dieses Produkt ist günstig	1	2	3	4	5
Dieses Produkt würde die Art wie ich wahrgenommen werde verbessern	1	2	3	4	5
Dieses Produkt hat eine ordentliche Qualität	1	2	3	4	5
Dieses Produkt ist am preisgünstigsten	1	2	3	4	5
Ein solches Produkt würde ich genießen	1	2	3	4	5
Dieses Produkt hat einen vernünftigen Preis	1	2	3	4	5
Mit diesem Produkt fühle ich mich gut	1	2	3	4	5

LIFESTYLE-FRAGEBOGEN

ÄSTHETISCHE STILE

Im Folgenden werden Ihnen Fragen zu vier Stilen in Bezug auf Autos, Häuser, Innenausstattung und Bekleidung gestellt. Bitte geben Sie in jeder Kategorie an wie sehr Ihnen ein solcher Stil gefällt. Für die folgenden Tabellen können Sie unter den folgenden Aussagen wählen:

+ + + = **dieser Stil gefällt mir sehr**
+ +   = **dieser Stil gefällt mir**
+   = **dieser Stil gefällt mir einigermaßen**

-        = **dieser Stil gefällt mir nicht wirklich**
- -   = **dieser Stil gefällt mir nicht**
- - -   = **dieser Stil gefällt mir definitiv nicht**

Bitte geben Sie jedes Mal auch die Nummern der drei Stile an, die Ihnen am besten gefallen.
Sie können diese unter jeder Tabelle angeben.

BEREICH 1: AUTOS

STIL 1: Klassisch, luxuriös	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 2: Sportlich, luxuriös	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 3: Praktisch, modern	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 4: Lässig, modern	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 5: Solide, modern	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 6: Jung, modern	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 7: Jung, trendig	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -

Die drei Stile, die Ihnen am besten gefallen (nach Präferenz geordnet), sind: …../…../…..
(Bitte tragen Sie die Nummern der Stile ein)

BEREICH 2: HÄUSER

STIL 1: Klassisch, luxuriös	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 2: Gemütlich, luxuriös	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 3: Ländlich, romantisch	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 4: Lässig, modern	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 5: Einfach, leistbar	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 6: Modern, trendig	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 7: Sehr modern, Design	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -

Die drei Stile, die Ihnen am besten gefallen (nach Präferenz geordnet), sind: …../…../…..
(Bitte tragen Sie die Nummern der Stile ein)

BEREICH 3: INNENAUSSTATTUNG

STIL 1: Klassisch, luxuriös	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 2: Gemütlich, luxuriös	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 3: Auffällig, eigener Stil	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 4: Lässig, modern	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 5: Ländlich, romantisch	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 6: Exotisch, fremdländisch	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 7: Trendig, Design	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -

Die drei Stile, die Ihnen am besten gefallen (nach Präferenz geordnet), sind: …../…../…..
(Bitte tragen Sie die Nummern der Stile ein)

BEREICH 4: BEKLEIDUNG

STIL 1: Klassisch, luxuriös	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 2: Luxuriös, besonders	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 3: Natürlich, spirituell	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 4: Lässig, modern	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 5: Sportlich, Freizeit	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 6: Jung, modern	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
STIL 7: Jung, trendig	+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -

Die drei Stile, die Ihnen am besten gefallen (nach Präferenz geordnet), sind: …../…../…..
(Bitte tragen Sie die Nummern der Stile ein)

WERTE

Untenstehend finden Sie eine Reihe von Werten (Dinge, die Ihnen im Leben wichtig oder nicht wichtig sind). Bitte geben Sie für jeden Wert an wie sehr Sie dieser anspricht und wie wichtig dieser für Ihr Leben ist. Sie können nur eine Antwortkategorie pro Wert angeben.

+++ = **für mich ist dieser Wert äußerst wichtig; Er spricht mich sehr stark an**
++ = **für mich ist dieser Wert jedenfalls wichtig**
+ = **für mich ist dieser Wert einigermaßen wichtig**

- = **für mich ist dieser Wert eher unwichtig**
-- = **für mich ist dieser Wert jedenfalls unwichtig**
--- = **für mich ist dieser Wert definitiv unwichtig; Er spricht mich in keiner Weise an**

1. Selbstvertrauen; selbstsicher und durchsetzungs-fähig zu sein; imstande zu sein für sich einzustehen	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
2. Einen eigenen Stil und eine eigene Persönlichkeit zu haben; sich zu trauen anders, einzigartig und etwas Besonderes zu sein	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
3. Der/die Beste in etwas zu sein; jemand zu sein zu dem man aufschauen kann; einen gewissen Status zu haben; Karriere zu machen	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
4. Bei anderen beliebt zu sein und von anderen gemocht zu werden, auch vom anderen Geschlecht	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
5. Konservative Werte zu vertreten; religiös und patriotisch zu sein	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
6. Im Stande zu sein ein Leben fern von Ärger, Angst und Sorgen zu führen; Verschont zu werden von Verlust und Unglück	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
7. Romantik, Zärtlichkeit, Gefühl und Zuneigung; zu schätzen und geschätzt zu werden; Trost und Behaglichkeit; Leidenschaft	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
8. Kinder zu haben; sie liebevoll und fürsorglich zu erziehen	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
9. Freude und Glück zu empfinden; Spaß zu haben; das Leben zu genießen	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
10. Optimistisch zu sein; gute Laune zu haben	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
11. Toleranz, Demokratie und Redefreiheit; Gleich-heit und Brüderlichkeit; Respekt und Verständnis für jeden	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
12. Einfach und bescheiden zu leben; Einfache Dinge zu genießen; das Leben zu nehmen wie es kommt	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
13. Genug Zeit für sich selbst zu haben und Dinge zu t die man gerne tut ohne von anderen gestört zu werden	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
14. Respekt gegenüber der Natur, der Tier- und Pflanzenwelt; eine bessere Umwelt und auch deren Erhaltung anstreben	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
15. Weisheit, Lebenserfahrung, Menschen zu kennen	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---

	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
16. In Wohlstand und Komfort zu leben; Einen hohen Lebensstandard zu erlangen oder zu bewahren	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
17. Disziplin und einen starken Charakter, Ausdauer und innere Stärke zu haben; Prinzipien zu haben und sich nach ihnen zu richten	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
18. Inneren Frieden und Harmonie zu genießen; standfest zu sein; gelassen zu sein	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
19. Respektiert und geschätzt zu werden; ein Beispiel für andere zu sein; von anderen gebraucht zu werden und ihnen dienlich zu sein	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
20. Selbstkontrolle, Selbstdisziplin, Stabilität, und die Sorgfalt zu besitzen Dinge zu einem guten Ende zu bringen	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
21. Flexibilität und Anpassungsfähigkeit zu besitzen; standhaft und entschlussfreudig zu sein um effizient agieren zu können	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
22. Sex, erotische und sexuelle Intimität zu genießen; ein befriedigendes Liebesleben zu haben	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
23. Ehrlichkeit, Verlässlichkeit, Integrität, Treue, Gerechtigkeit	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
24. Ein Hobby zu haben, das einem erlaubt dem Alltag zu entfliehen (eine sportlich-spielerische Tätigkeit)	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
25. Ein enges Verhältnis zur Familie zu pflegen; Respekt gegenüber allen Familienmitgliedern vor allem gegenüber den Eltern	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
26. Ein enges Verhältnis zu seinen Freunden zu pflegen; ein Gefühl der Zugehörigkeit und des Zusammenhalts zu verspüren; wertvolle Freundschaften und soziale Kontakte zu pflegen	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
27. Ein gemütliches Zuhause zu haben wohin man sich zurückziehen kann; Seine Privatsphäre in den eigenen vier Wänden zu haben; „Home sweet home"	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
28. Sparsam und ökonomisch zu sein	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
29. Gesundheit; gesund zu sein; einen gesunden Lebensstil zu führen	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
30. Sicherheit; in einer sicheren Welt zu leben; von Schmerz, Verlust, Angst und Pech verschont zu sein	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
31. Sicherheit; auf jemanden zählen können	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
32. Ein enges, vertrautes und reifes Verhältnis zum Partner zu haben	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
33. Freiheit man selbst sein zu können; im Stande zu sein zu tun was man tun möchte; ein Leben nach eigenen Vorstellungen zu führen	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---
34. Sich selbst ganz zu entfalten; kreativ zu sein; die Person zu werden, die man werden könnte	+++	++	+	0	-	--	---

Bitte wählen Sie nun fünf Werte, die Ihnen im Leben am wichtigsten sind.
Bitte schreibe die Nummern dieser Werte in Ihrer bevorzugten Reihenfolge:
…../…../…../…../…..

LEBENSVISIONEN

Untenstehend finden Sie 20 Lebensvisionen in der linken Spalte, die mit einer jeweils gegenteiligen Aussage in der rechten Spalte verbunden sind. Bitte geben Sie jedes Mal an wie sehr die Aussage auf der linken oder auf der rechten Seite Sie persönlich anspricht. Sie können nur eine der gegensätzlichen Aussagen wählen, nämlich jene, die am ehesten Ihrer Ansicht entspricht. Je nachdem wie sehr die Aussagen Ihre Meinung widerspiegeln, können Sie unter den folgenden Antwortkategorien wählen

+ + + = **Dieser Aussage stimme ich gänzlich zu**
+ +   = **Dieser Aussage stimme ich stark zu**
+   = **Dieser Aussage stimme ich einigermaßen zu**

Im Falle, dass Ihre Ansicht genau zwischen der Aussage in der linken Spalte und jener in der rechten Spalte liegt oder, dass Sie wirklich keine Meinung zu diesem Thema haben, können Sie „0" wählen. In allen anderen Fällen sollten Sie sich entweder für die linke oder für die rechte Aussage entscheiden.

GESUNDHEIT						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Die beste Weise um gesund zu sein ist sich aktiv dafür einzusetzen im Sinne von Bewegung und gesunder Ernährung.			Von innen gesund zu sein ist der beste Weg zu Gesundheit, indem man genießt was man mag und sich nicht zu sehr darüber sorgt.			

SCHÖNHEIT						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Schönheit ist etwas, woran man arbeiten muss, also tue ich mein Bestes um für andere gut auszusehen und attraktiv zu wirken.			Schönheit kommt von innen. Innere Schönheit ist wichtiger als sein Äußeres den allgemeinen Schönheitsidealen anzupassen.			

MÄNNER UND FRAUEN						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Männer und Frauen sind grundsätzlich gleichberechtigt. Die Rollen, die von der Gesellschaft vorgeschrieben werden sollten abgeschafft werden.			Männer und Frauen sind grundsätzlich verschieden. Deswegen sollte die Gesellschaft Männern erlauben wie echte Männer und Frauen wie echte Frauen zu handeln.			

ARBEIT, GELD UND ZEIT						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Geld ist wichtig im Leben. Man sollte hart arbeiten für ein besseres Leben und eine bessere Zukunft, für ein Leben in Wohlstand jetzt und später.			Zeit ist wichtig im Leben. Deswegen versuche ich so viel Freizeit wie möglich zu haben um jede Minute zu genießen, jeden Tag. Ich lasse mich nicht mehr vom Alltagsstress hetzen.			

FREIZEIT						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Ich bevorzuge es meine Freizeit sehr aktiv zu gestalten, weil ich in meinem Leben so viele Dinge wie möglich erleben möchte.			Ich bevorzuge es meine Freizeit Entspannung und Ruhe zu widmen. Ich vermeide Stress so weit es geht. Ich bevorzuge eher Frieden und innere Harmonie.			

LEBEN						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Ich bevorzuge das dynamische und aktive Stadtleben. Es bietet mir in jeder Hinsicht mehr Möglichkeiten als das langweilige Landleben.			Mir gefällt ein Leben nahe der Natur: einfach, friedlich, harmonisch, rein und echt. Das Stadtleben ist mir zu künstlich.			

PARTNER						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Eine echte Partnerschaft hält ewig. Wahre Liebe hält ein Leben lang, auch wenn man von Zeit zu Zeit etwas investieren muss.			Eine Partnerschaft macht nur Sinn, solange man sich darin wohl fühlt. Falls man unglücklich in der Partnerschaft ist, sollte man dieser ein Ende zu setzen.			

FAMILIE						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Meine Familie hat absolute Priorität für mich. Meiner Meinung nach ist ein gutes Familienleben eine wichtige Glücksquelle.			Familie ist nicht am wichtigsten in meinem Leben. Man sollte in erster Linie etwas Zeit für sich selbst haben.			

FREUNDE						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Meine Freunde sind vor allem Menschen aus meiner direkten Umgebung, die mit mir arbeiten oder in meiner Nähe wohnen. Es ist besser einen guten Nachbar zu haben als einen entfernten Freund.			Ich möchte meine sozialen Kontakte nicht auf mein direktes Umfeld beschränken. Ich möchte so viele Freunde aus der ganzen Welt haben wie möglich.			

ANDERE						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Es ist wichtig seinen eigenen Weg in diesem Leben zu gehen, ohne andere allzu sehr einbeziehen zu müssen. Es kommt darauf an man selbst zu bleiben und imstande zu sein sich von den anderen zu unterscheiden.			Im Leben geht es darum gemeinsam zu leben und zu arbeiten. Deswegen muss man andere auch immer einbeziehen, nach dem Prinzip geben und nehmen. Je mehr, desto besser!			

KULTUR						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Es ist gut, wenn verschiedene Kulturen zusammentreffen. Es ist immer schön Neues mit anderen Kulturen zu erleben, nicht-westliche Kulturen mit eingeschlossen.			Ich denke meine eigene Kultur ist die beste. Es ist schade, dass sie aufgrund von Ein-flüssen anderer Kulturen verloren geht. Ich denke es wäre besser sich zurück auf unsere eigene kulturelle Identität zu besinnen.			

POLITIK						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Ich denke es ist wichtig, dass eine wahre Demokratie besteht, wo jeder das Recht hat an Politik teilzunehmen, wie zum Beispiel in einem Referendum.			Nicht jeder ist ein geborener Politiker. Es ist besser Politik fähigen Leuten zu überlassen, die wissen was sie tun. Vorzugsweise einem oder einigen starken, machtvollen Anführern.			

GESELLSCHAFT						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Alle Menschen, ob männlich oder weiblich, homo- oder heterosexuell, weiß oder schwarz,… sind gleichberechtigt und müssen dieselben Rechte und Chancen bekommen. Emanzipation für jeden!			Menschen sind sehr unterschiedlich. Um in einer gemeinsamen Gesellschaft leben zu können, muss sich die Minderheit der Mehrheit anpassen.			

WIRTSCHAFT						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Ich unterstütze den aktuellen Trend zur Globalisierung von Industrie und Märkten. Die weltweite Verbreitung des kapitalistischen Systems bringt letzten Endes das Beste für jedermann hervor.			Ich misstraue der aktuellen weltweiten Verbreitung des amerikanischen kapitalistischen Systems. Ich befürchte das Schlimmste für die Natur und die Schwachen in unserer Gesellschaft.			

ALTERN DER BEVÖLKERUNG						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Die Jungen haben eine Zukunft in unserer Gesellschaft. Wenn man seinen Platz in der kommenden Gesellschaft haben möchte, muss man jung und dynamisch sein.			Lebensweisheit, welche auf Erfahrung basiert, ist sehr wichtig. Deswegen werden auch die Älteren eine wichtige Rolle in der Gesellschaft der Zukunft spielen.			

INFORMATIONS- UND KOMMUNIKATIONSTECHNOLOGIE						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Die neuen Informations- und Kommunikationstechnologien, wie Computer und Internet, bieten mir mehr Möglichkeiten meine Persönlichkeit zu entwickeln und effizienter zu arbeiten.			Die neuen Informations- und Kommunikationstechnologien sind nicht mein Fall. Ich gehe dem lieber aus dem Weg. Unsere Gesellschaft wird dadurch kalt und unpersönlich.			

WISSENSCHAFT						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Die aktuelle wissenschaftliche Entwicklung wird uns ein besseres, blühenderes und anständigeres Leben bereiten.			Die Wissenschaft ist bereits zu weit gegangen und wird uns das Ende der Welt bescheren.			

WOHLBEFINDEN						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Früher war das Leben besser: Ehrlicher, Menschen haben einander mehr respektiert, es war einfacher, menschlicher und sicherer…			Das Leben wird in Zukunft besser sein: Weniger Sterbefälle, weniger Kriege und Not. Es wird mehr Möglichkeiten für jedermann geben.			

DIE ALTE RELIGION						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Ich bin dem Christentum gegenüber positiv gestimmt, weil es dem Leben einen Sinn verleiht und es Normen und Werte umfasst, die uns lehren ein gutes Leben zu führen.			Die Kirche und das Christentum sind nicht dazu da um Menschen glücklich zu machen. Meiner Meinung nach muss jeder für sich selbst entscheiden was richtig und was falsch ist.			

DIE NEUEN RELIGIONEN						
+ + +	+ +	+	0	-	- -	- - -
Ich bin bestimmten neuen, geistigen, momentan beliebten Bewegungen gegenüber positiv gestimmt. Dazu gehören New Age, Buddhismus, Taoismus,… Manche, oder zumindest eine, weisen mir meinen Lebensweg.			Die neuen geistigen Bewegungen wie New Age, Buddhismus, Taoismus,… sind nichts als Unsinn. Ich gestalte meine Prinzipien lieber selbst.			

Abschließend möchte ich Sie bitten folgende Angaben zu machen:

1. Bitte geben Sie Ihr Geschlecht an: ☐ männlich ☐ weiblich

---

2. Bitte geben Sie Ihre Altersstufe an:

☐ 20-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-49 ☐ 50-64 ☐ 65+

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3. Bitte geben Sie Ihre höchste abgeschlossene Schulbildung an:

☐ (Max.) Pflichtschulabschluss
    Beispiele: Hauptschule, AHS-Unterstufe, Sonderschule; früher: Bürgerschule,
    8-jährige Volksschule, Volksschule-Oberstufe

☐ Lehre (Berufsschule)
    Abschluss: Lehrabschlussprüfung (Gesellenprüfung)

☐ Meister-, Werkmeisterausbildung
    Abschluss: (Werk-)Meisterprüfung

☐ Ausbildung zum gehobenen Dienst für Gesundheits- und Krankenpflege
    Krankenpflegeschule; Nur Ausbildung zum diplomierten Pflegepersonal
    z.B.: Diplomkrankenschwester

☐ Berufsbildende mittlere Schule
    Beispiele: Handelsschule, Gastgewerbefachschule, Kindergärtnerinnen-
    /Kindergärtnerschule, Haushaltungsschule

☐ Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule (AHS-Matura)
    Beispiele: Gymnasium, Mittelschule, Frauenoberschule

☐ Berufsbildende höhere Schule (BHS-Matura)
    Normalform, Kolleg, Abiturientenlehrgang
    Beispiele: HAK, HBLA, HTL, Bildungsanstalt für Kindergartenpädagogik

☐ Universität, Fachhochschule
    Erst- oder Zweitabschluss eines Studiums an einer öffentlichen oder privaten
    Universität, Kunsthochschule oder Fachhochschule, Pädagogische Hochschule

☐ Hochschulverwandte Ausbildung, Akademie; Voraussetzung: Matura
    Beispiele: Pädagogische Akademie (Pädak), Militärakademie, Schulen des
gehobenen medizinisch-technischen Dienstes, Akademie für Sozialarbeit,
Universitätslehrgang ohne vorangegangenes Studium

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4. Bitte geben Sie jene Stufe an, die Ihr monatliches Bruttoeinkommen in Euro repräsentiert!

☐ Kein Einkommen
☐   1 – 600
☐   601 – 1.200
☐ 1.201 – 1.800
☐ 1.801 – 2.200
☐ 2.201 – 2.600
☐ 2.601 – 3000
☐ 3.001 – 3.500
☐ 3.501 – 4.000
☐ 4.001 – 4.500
☐ 4.501 – 8.000
☐ 8.001 und darüber

Vielen Dank!

Abstract (English)

While there is extensive research on consumer brand switching behavior and various explanations have been provided so far, for example for variety seeking and situational variables, some unexplained variance in choice behavior still remains. The present study attempts to close the research gap by linking the concept of customer value to choice behavior, since this concept was shown to be related to brand preference. The present study tests the hypothesis that benefits sought by consumers influence their brand switching behavior and includes consumer characteristics such as demographics and lifestyle.

Two studies have been conducted to test the hypothesized links between benefits sought and brand switching and consumer characteristics and benefits sought. The purpose of the pre-study was to find out four frequently purchased product groups used later in the main study in order to test possible mediator influences. The results suggest that consumers are guided by benefits sought when deciding whether to switch brand or to buy the same brand again on the next purchase occasion. More specifically, it was found that in general perceptions of social benefit induce brand switching, while high quality benefit, value for money and emotional benefit motivate consumers to stay with a brand. Furthermore, the four product groups, namely milk, mineral water, beer and chocolate, differ with regard to benefits sought by customers. Finally, it was found that demographic variables and lifestyle both influence benefits sought by consumers and brand switching behavior in that the impact of lifestyle is considerably higher compared to demographic variables.

The results suggest that consumers tend to evaluate branded products on a more abstract basis and that they are guided by benefits sought when making choice decisions. Various implications for marketing managers are discussed and the relevance of the topics for marketing research is highlighted.

Abstract (Deutsch)

Trotz der umfangreichen Studien im Bereich des Markenwechsels von Konsumenten und der vielen Erklärungen dessen, wie zum Beispiel, dass dieses Verhalten großteils auf einen Wunsch nach Abwechslung oder situative Gegebenheiten zurückzuführen ist, ist immer noch eine Reststreuung in diesem Verhalten zu beobachten. Die vorliegende Studie versucht diese wissenschaftliche Lücke zu füllen, indem der Kundenwert mit dem Wahlverhalten der Konsumenten in Verbindung gebracht wird, da bereits früher gezeigt wurde, dass dieser mit Markenpräferenz zusammenhängt. Diese Studie testet die Hypothese, dass begehrte Markenbenefits das Wahlverhalten beeinflussen, und bezieht Konsumenteneigenschaften, wie Demografie und Lebensstil mit ein.

Um die Annahmen zu der Verbindung zwischen begehrten Markenbenefits und dem Wahlverhalten der Konsumenten, sowie jener zwischen Konsumenteneigenschaften und begehrten Markenbenefits zu überprüfen, wurden zwei Untersuchungen durchgeführt. Das Ziel der ersten Untersuchung war vier häufig gekaufte Produktgruppen herauszufinden, die in der Hauptstudie verwendet werden konnten um eventuelle Mittlereffekte dieser Variablen zu testen. Im Allgemeinen zeigen die Ergebnisse, dass Konsumenten von begehrten Markenbenefits geleitet werden, wenn sie darüber entscheiden die Marke zu wechseln oder wieder zu kaufen. Im Besonderen verleitet sozialer Benefit die Konsumenten eine Marke zu wechseln, während die anderen Benefits, nämlich Qualität, Preis-Leistung und emotionaler Benefit eher den Konsumenten motivieren den Kauf der Marke zu wiederholen. Weiters unterscheiden sich die vier Produktgruppen Milch, Mineralwasser, Bier und Schokolade in den Benefits, die von den Konsumenten begehrt werden. Schließlich zeigen die Ergebnisse, dass die Konsumenteneigenschaften die Bereitschaft zum Markenwechsel beeinflussen und welche Benefits von den Konsumenten begehrt werden bestimmen.

Die Analyse zeigt, dass Konsumenten Objekte auf einer abstrakten Ebene beurteilen und, dass sie in Ihrem Markenwahlverhalten von begehrten Benefits geleitet werden. Schließlich werden Folgerungen für das Marketing und die Relevanz für die Marktforschung erörtert.

Lebenslauf

ANGABEN ZUR PERSON

Name	Martina Nikic
Geburtsdatum, Ort	15.06.1986, Trebinje, Bosnien und Herzegowina
Staatsangehörigkeit	Österreich

AUSBILDUNG UND SCHULE

10/2004 – 09/2012	Studium der Internationalen Betriebswirtschaft an der Universität Wien Spezielle: Marketing, Controlling
06/2004	Matura am BRG/BORG St. Pölten Gymnasium mit musikalischem Schwerpunkt

BERUFSTÄTIGKEIT UND PRAKTIKA

01/2005 – 06/2012	Praktika/Geringfügige Beschäftigungen bei verschiedenen Institutionen: Ferienmesse Wien, Magistrat Graz/Amt für Wirtschafts- und Tourismusentwicklung, Wiener Staatsoper, Internationalen Atomenergiebehörde (IAEO, Uno City Wien)

SPRACHKENNTNISSE

Muttersprache	Kroatisch
Sonstige Sprachen	Deutsch (Fließend)
	Englisch (Fließend)
	Französisch (Maturaniveau)
	Spanisch (Maturaniveau)

SONSTIGE KENNTNISSE

EDV - Kenntnisse	MS-Office, SPSS, SAP