



THE MIND OF THE FLEXITARIAN CONSUMER

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OUTLINE

1. Background problem

2. Research aim

3. Methodology

4. Results

- Demographics
- Food choice behavior
- Food choice motives
- Perception
- Mediation

5. Conclusion



Rising meat consumption in the Netherlands



Growing number of flexitarians
– expected to grow even further



Not much research has been done into the behavior of flexitarians

BACKGROUND PROBLEM



Eating
motives



Perception of
meat products
and plant-
based products



Filling the
gap of
knowledge



Developing
strategies



Eventually
reduce the
impact
environment

RESEARCH AIM

A wooden cutting board with several slices of citrus fruits, including grapefruit and orange, arranged on it. The background is a light-colored surface with a white fringed cloth. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

How do food choice motives and the perception of animal products (and plant-based products) determine food choices in Dutch flexitarian consumers?



SCOPE

Demographics

Food choice behavior

Food choice motives

Perception of meat products

Perception of plant-based products

Mediator perception

TYPES OF EATERS COMPARED

Meat eaters

Meat reducers (i.e. flexitarians)

Meat avoiders (i.e. vegetarians and vegans)

Hypotheses

H1a: In all types of consumers, an age above 35 years old is associated with consuming less meat.

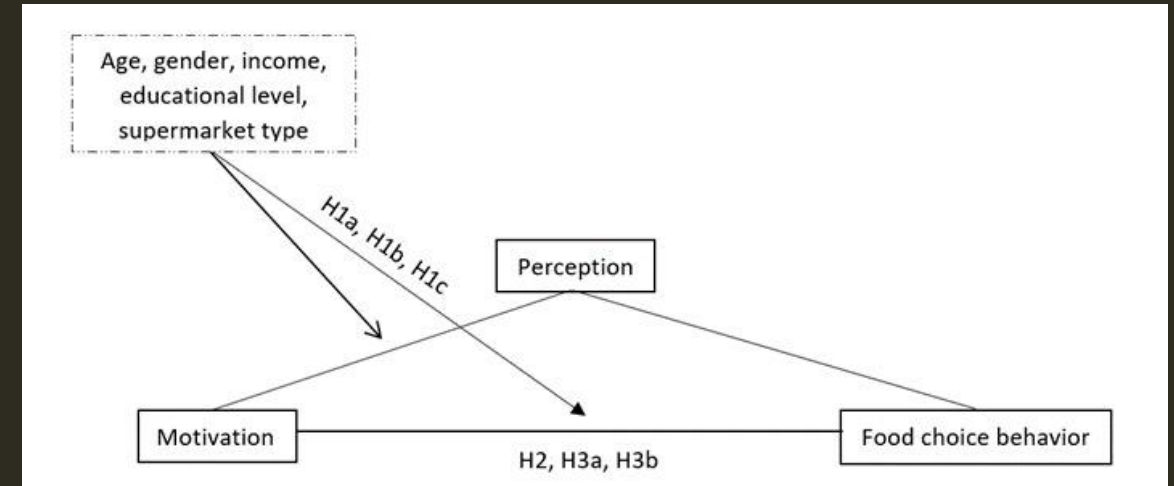
H1b: In all types of consumers women are more likely to consume less meat compared to men.

H1c: In all types of consumers, a higher education is positively associated with consuming less meat.

H2: Health, environmental and animal rights are the main food choice motives for meat avoiders compared to meat eaters and meat reducers.

H3a: Health is a more important food choice motive in flexitarian consumers compared to meat eaters and vegetarian consumers.

H3b: Food choice motives 'environmental protection' and 'political values' are more important in vegetarian consumers than in flexitarian consumers and meat eaters.

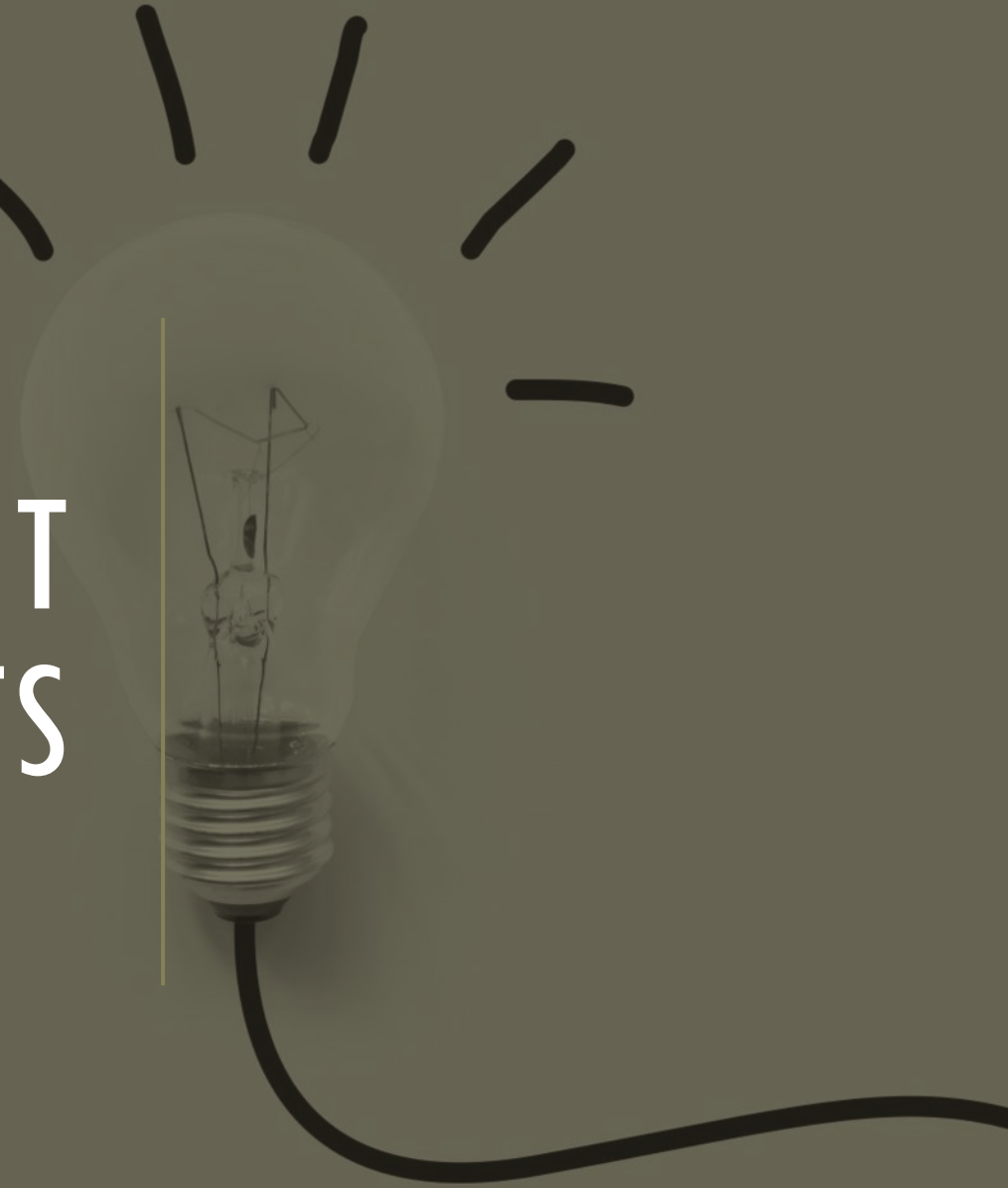


- Quantitative research approach: survey
- 194 Dutch participants
- Statistically analyzed by using SPSS

METHODOLOGY

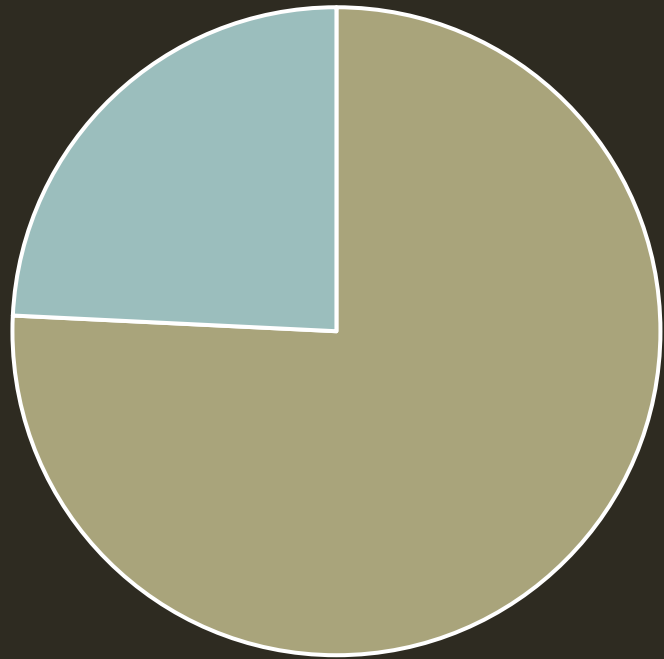
Survey

MOST IMPORTANT RESULTS



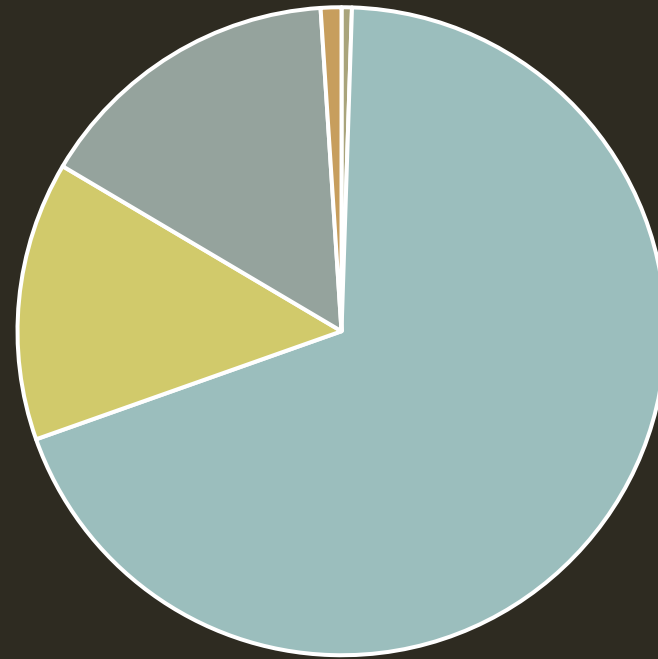
DEMOGRAPHICS (N=194)

Gender



Female Male

Age



<18 18-25 26-39 40-64 65+

MOST CONSUMED FOODS PER EATER

Meat eater

Meat products: chicken

Plant-based products: other beans/legumes

Flexitarian

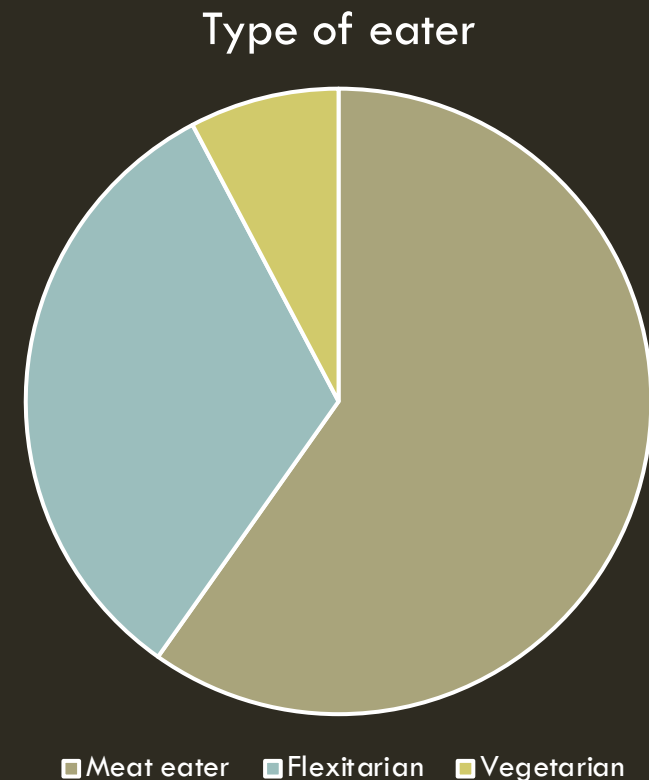
Meat products: fish

Plant-based products: meat replacers from soy

Vegetarian

Meat products: /

Plant-based products: other beans/legumes



Health

Mood

Convenience

Sensory appeal

Natural content

Weight control

Price

Familiarity

Animal welfare

Environmental protection

Political values

Religion

Social justice

FOOD CHOICE MOTIVES

13 types

MOST IMPORTANT FOOD CHOICE MOTIVES

Meat eaters: social justice, sensory appeal, price

Flexitarians: social justice, sensory appeal, animal welfare

Vegetarians: social justice, animal welfare, environmental protection

COMPARISONS FOOD CHOICE MOTIVES

Familiarity

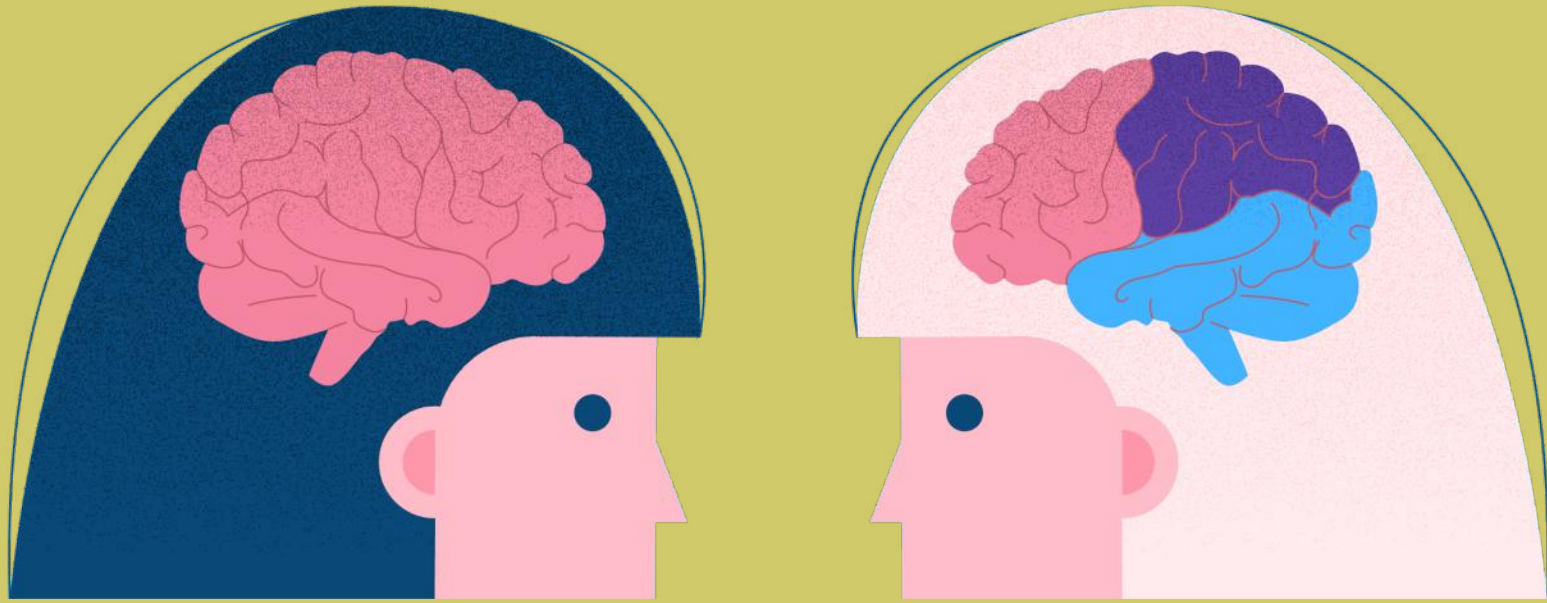
- Flexitarians find the familiarity of a food product significantly less important compared to meat eaters
- Vegetarians find the familiarity of a food product significantly less important compared to flexitarians

Animal welfare

- Flexitarians and vegetarians are more motivated by animal welfare compared to meat eaters when making food choices

Environmental protection

- Vegetarians and flexitarians are more motivated by the environmental protection compared to meat eaters when making food choices



PERCEPTION

Meat perception

Plant-based perception

Traditional – modern

Artificial – natural

Unhealthy – healthy

Expensive – cheap

Environmentally unfriendly – environmentally friendly

Disgusting – tasty

Difficult to prepare – easy to prepare

Low in protein – high in protein

Not nutritious - nutritious

9 TYPES OF PERCEPTION |

MEAT PERCEPTION



Vegetarians

- Perceive meat as significantly more traditional, artificial, unhealthier, environmentally unfriendlier, disgusting and less nutritious compared to meat eaters
- Perceive meat as less nutritious compared to flexitarians

Flexitarians

- Perceive meat as significantly unhealthier and environmentally unfriendlier compared to meat eaters
- Perceive meat as tasty, but less tasty compared to meat eaters

PLANT-BASED PERCEPTION



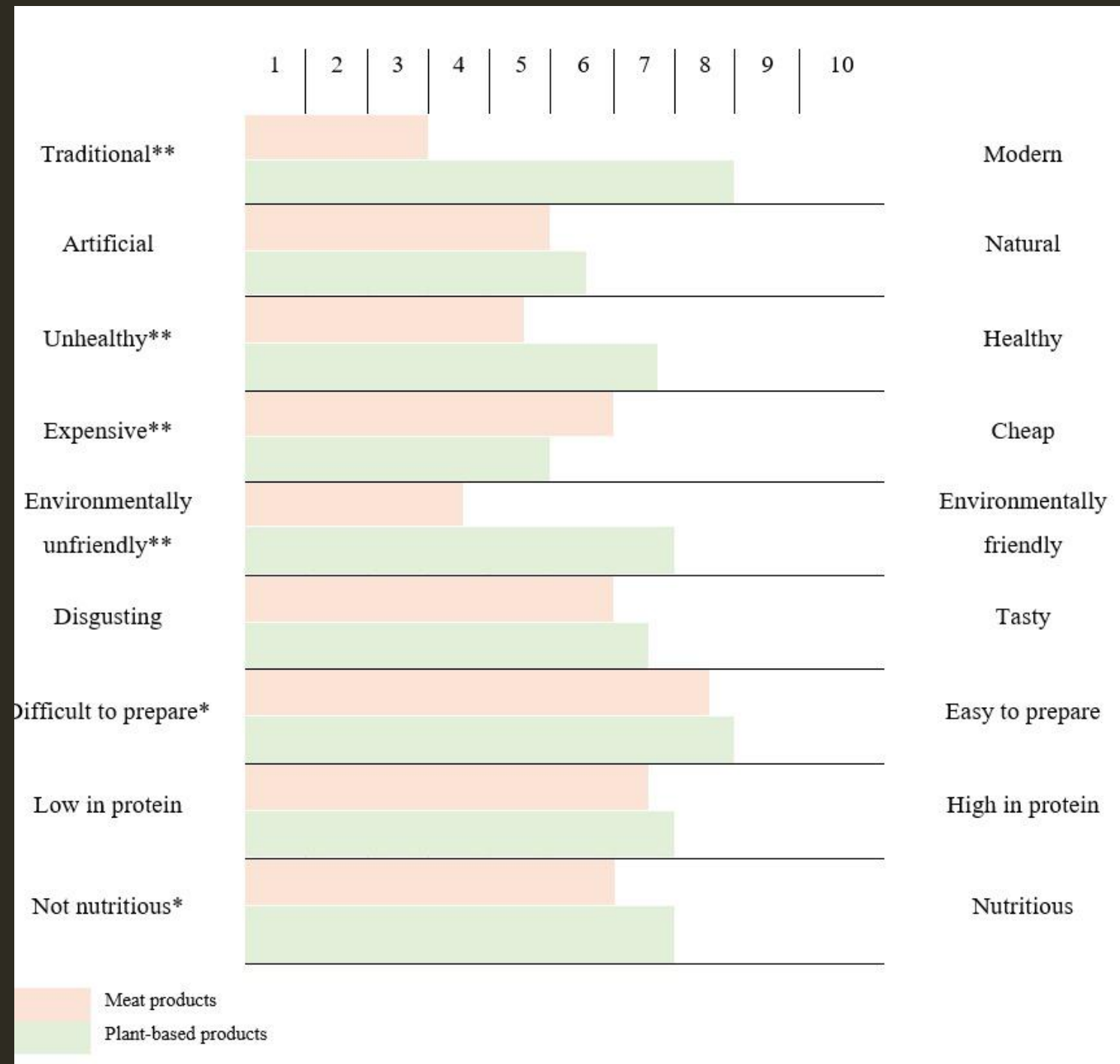
Flexitarians

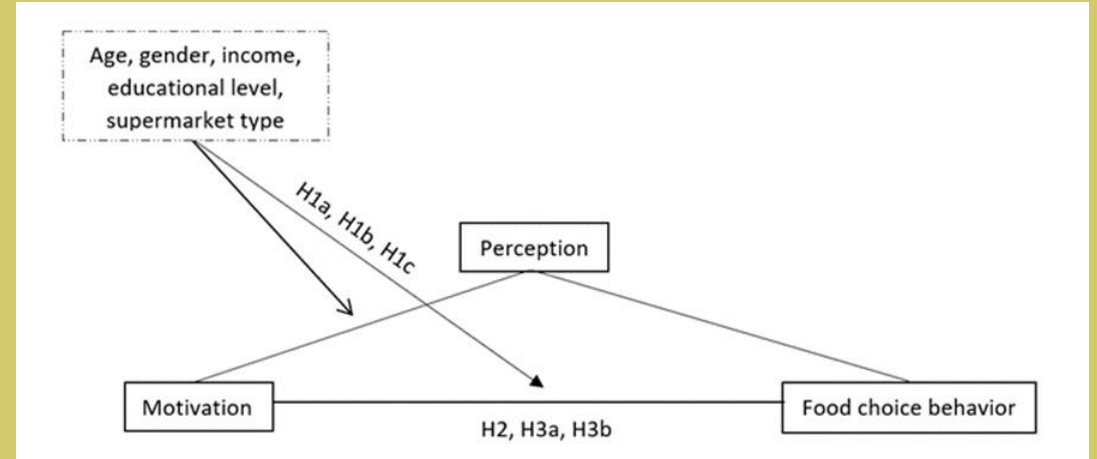
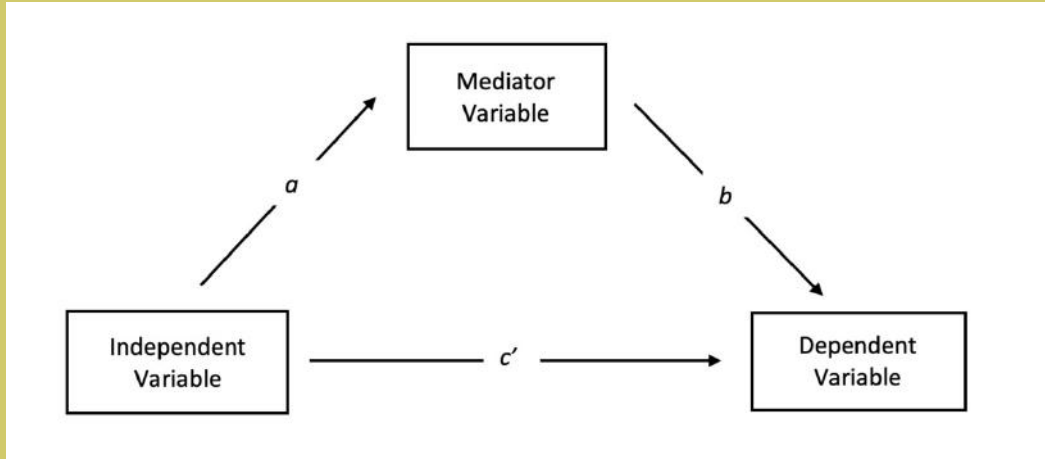
- Perceive plant-based products as significantly cheaper, tastier, easier to prepare and higher in protein compared to meat eaters

Note: meat eaters do not find plant-based products disgusting!

FLEXITARIAN PERCEPTION

- Meat significantly more traditional compared to plant-based
- Meat significantly unhealthier compared to plant-based
- Meat significantly cheaper compared to plant-based
- Meat significantly environmentally unfriendlier compared to plant-based
- Meat significantly more difficult to prepare compared to plant-based
- Meat significantly less nutritious compared to plant-based

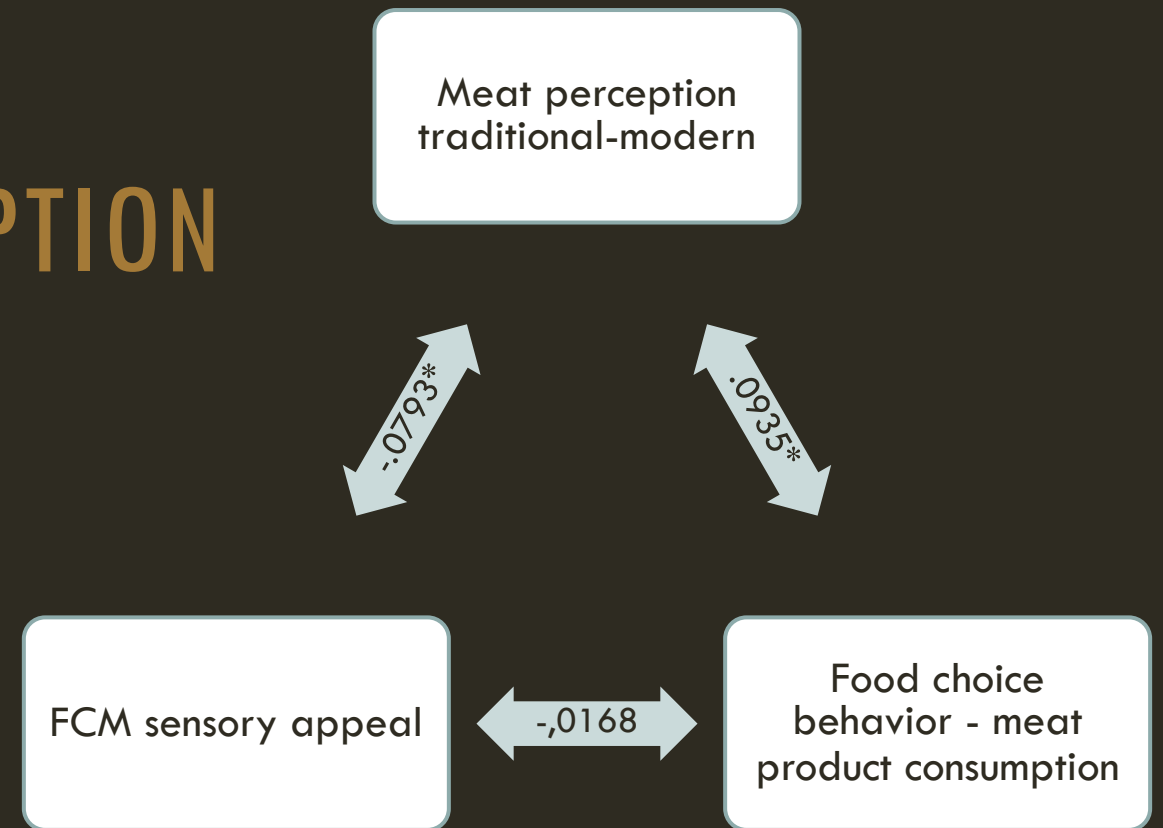




MEDIATION

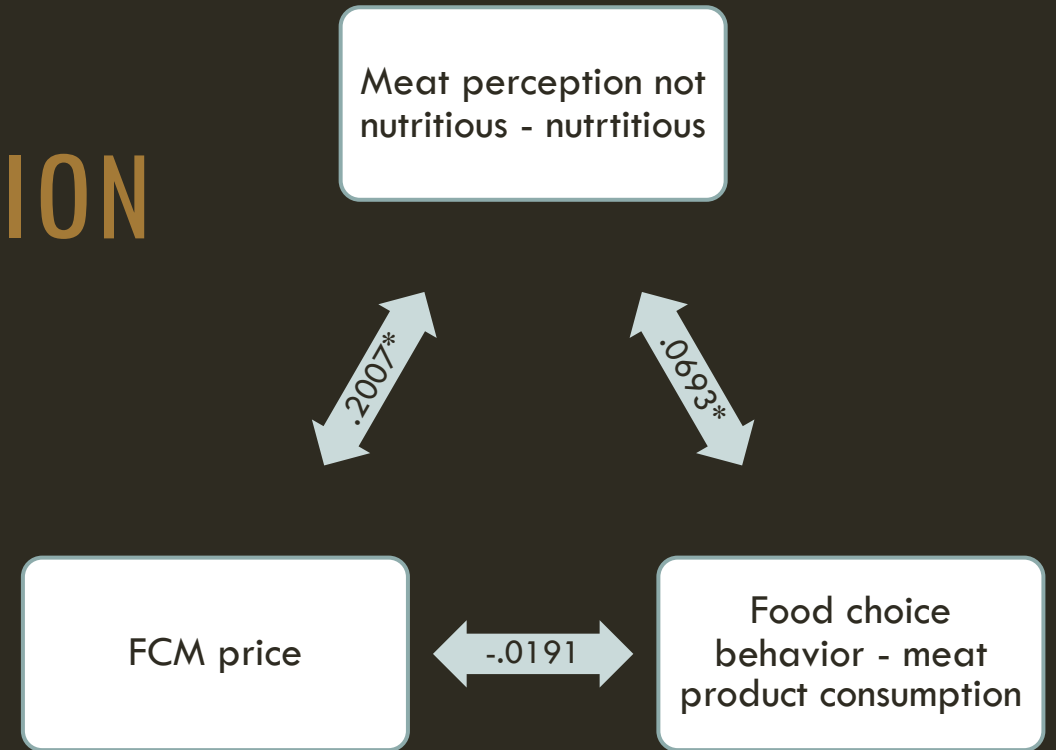
MEDIATION – MEAT PERCEPTION

The higher an individual values the food choice motive ‘**sensory appeal**’, the more they perceive meat products as **traditional**, which leads to a significantly **higher meat consumption**



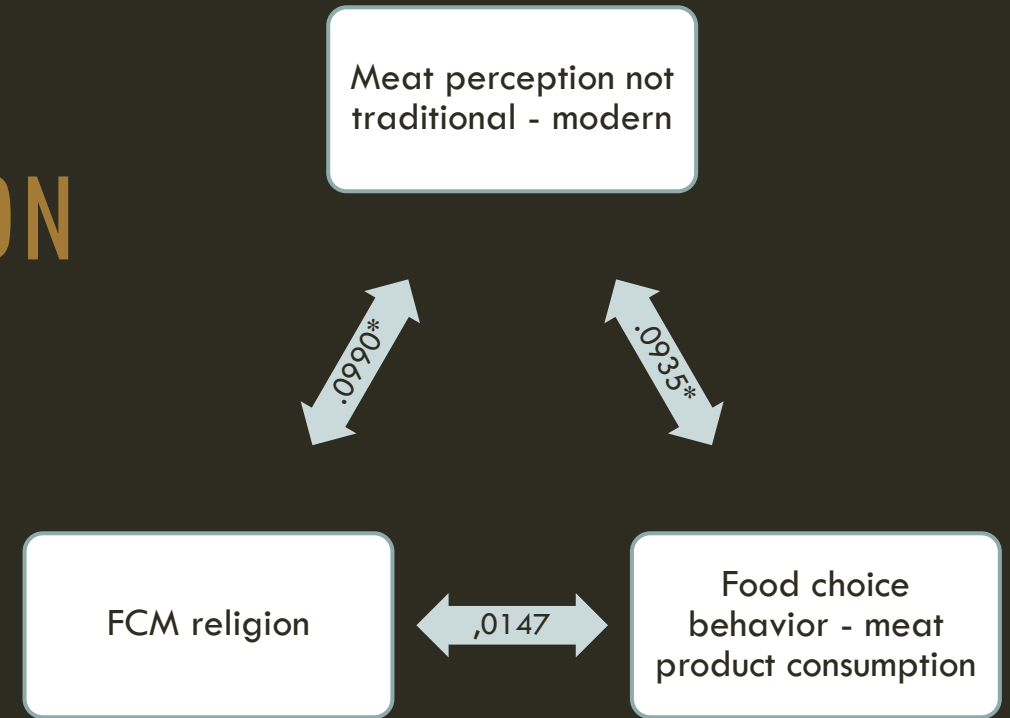
MEDIATION – MEAT PERCEPTION

The higher an individual values the food choice motive ‘**price**’, the more they perceive meat products as **nutritious**, which leads to a significantly **higher meat consumption**



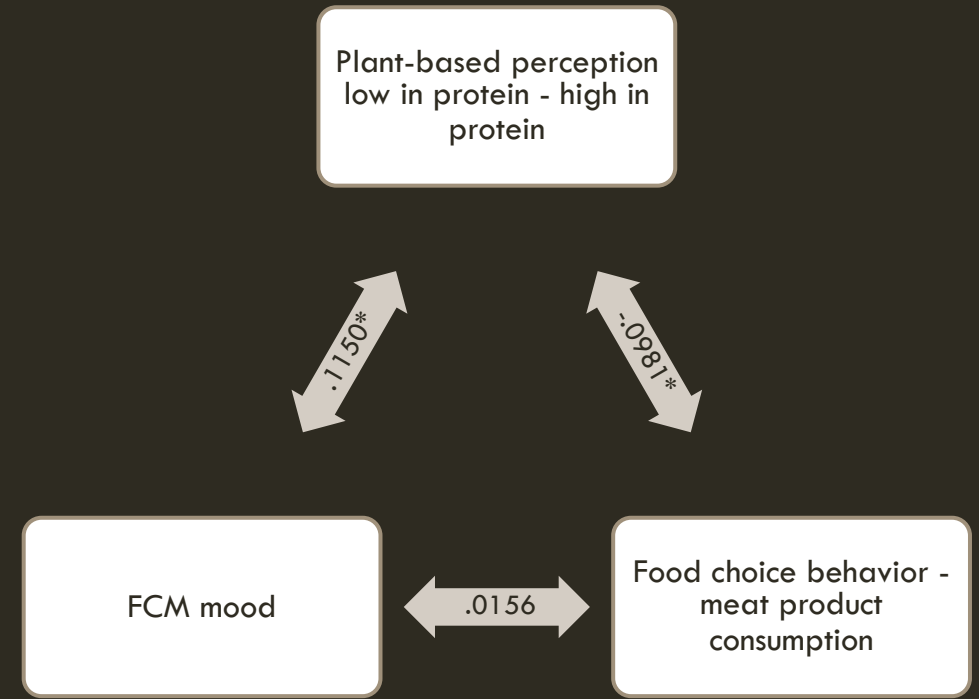
MEDIATION – MEAT PERCEPTION

The higher an individual values the food choice motive '**religion**', the more they perceive meat products as **modern**, which leads to a significantly **higher meat consumption**



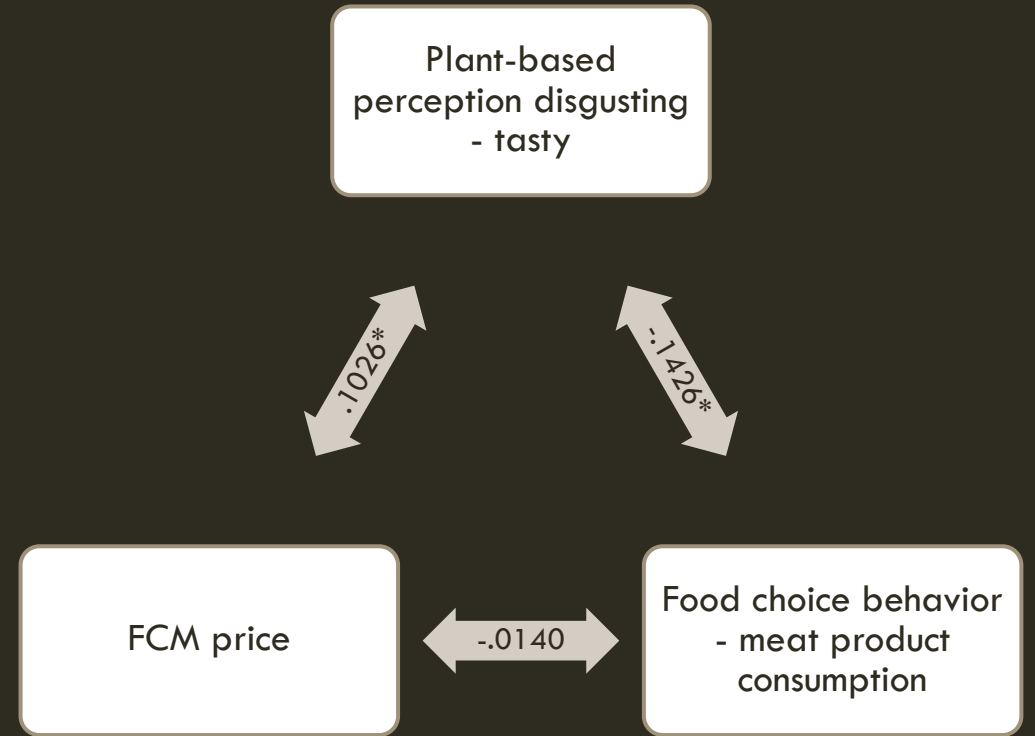
MEDIATION — PLANT-BASED PERCEPTION

The higher an individual values the food choice motive ‘**mood**’, the more they perceive plant-based products as **high in protein**, which leads to a significantly **lower meat consumption**



MEDIATION — PLANT-BASED PERCEPTION

The higher an individual values the food choice motive 'price', the more they perceive plant-based products as **tasty**, which leads to a significantly **lower meat consumption**



CONCLUSION

- Women are more likely to be flexitarians
- Flexitarians are mostly motivated by social justice, sensory appeal and animal welfare – aware of the effects of meat but find it tasty
- Meat eaters do not find plant-based products disgusting. Additionally, they are motivated by social justice, sensory appeal and price – might be easy to target
- Some types of perception are found to be significant mediators – further research necessary