Meaning Pursuit and Food Choices:

Does meaning affect the healthiness, price, and variety of people's groceries?

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Abstract

Meaning is one pillar of happiness and well-being in people's life. However, scant research has investigated the effect of meaning pursuit on consumer behavior. This study aims to find evidence for this relationship with food choices, consisting of the healthiness, price, and variety of the choices. Understanding consumers' food choices is important as it affects overall health and choices are made on a daily basis. Additionally, this study tests whether subscribing to a so-called 'lay theory' (i.e. healthy=expensive) and possessing variety seeking traits appear as moderating variables in the relationship between meaning pursuit and food choices.

A sample of 200 persons was drawn from the population of Dutch adults. The sample was divided into two groups: meaning pursuit group and baseline group. Participants then selected ten products with a maximum budget of €50. Independent t-tests and linear regression were used to find whether differences in food choices occurred between the two groups.

Whereas previous research suggests that people in the pursuit of meaning cheap out on their product choices, this study finds no evidence for these findings in the context of food choices. Furthermore, this study yields no evidence for any moderating effect of the lay theory and variety seeking. Nevertheless, the results suggest that subscribing to the lay theory that healthy food is more expensive has a direct effect on the healthiness of food choices. Additionally, a higher education was associated with healthier food choices, and hunger was associated with less healthy food choices.

This research contributes to a better understanding of meaning pursuit and consumer behavior. It opens new directions of research in the context of food, while it challenges previous literature on meaning pursuit.

Key terms: meaning pursuit, food choices, consumer behavior, variety seeking, healthy=expensive intuition, healthiness, price.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Human behavior is a complex interplay consisting of social, cultural and psychological aspects (Parsons 1996; Grossman et al., 2005; Smith, 2006). A fundamental aspect of human existence, the pursuit of meaning, encompasses the individual's endeavor to derive significance, purpose, and connection from their experiences and relationships with others (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002). Individuals engage in a continual process of pursuing meaning as a guiding force in their decision making and overall well-being (Heintzelman & King, 2014; Zika & Chamberlain, 1992; Ryan & Deci, 2001). The perceived meaningfulness of products increases well-being as well (Wang et al., 2021).

As such, meaning in life holds a central and important place in people's construction of their existence. For example, people can pursue meaning through specific goals in life, such as sports to gain overall fitness, or nurturing children. People can also have aspirations regarding their nutritional intake, to make sure they maintain their overall health, or to strive for a healthier version of themselves (Haws & Winterich, 2013). Therefore, the selection and consumption of food is one of the pillars that affects a person's daily activities, because it is something humans do almost every day.

Food is an essential ingredient for overall well-being, and people can make poor dietary choices in day-to-day consumption. Understanding consumers' decision making in the context of food is as complex as it is important, because healthy food choices increase general health, well-being, and happiness (Haws et al., 2016; Mujcic & Oswald, 2016; Wahl et al., 2017). However, while examining meaning pursuit and food choices, scant research has investigated the relationship between meaning pursuit and consumer behavior. For example, there is much literature on pleasure pursuit and people that as a result become less price sensitive (Strahilevitz, 1999).

Mead & Williams (2023) recently found that motivated pursuit of meaning leads to individuals' preference for less expensive products, as a result of considerations for alternative uses for one's money (i.e. opportunity costs). These findings conflict with the prior, more traditional notion that individuals that pursue meaning tilt towards more expensive and higher quality products, similarly to individuals that pursue pleasure (Alba & Williams, 2013; Wakefield & Inman, 2003). However, Mead and Williams (2023) did not test their findings for food products. Food choices recur on a daily basis, and understanding what factors potentially influence these choices is of great importance. If, similarly to Mead and Williams' (2023) study, meaning pursuit results in cheaping out on food, this can result in

people ultimately choosing less healthy food, as it generally is more expensive than unhealthy alternatives (Drewnowski, 2010).

Additionally, a study by Haws and colleagues (2016) finds that people intuitively perceive healthier food to be more expensive. This intuition, a so-called 'lay theory', would suggest that people that cheap out on food choices, choose the unhealthier and cheaper alternative. In combination with Mead and Williams' (2023) findings, people that pursue meaning would then cheap out on food, which results in an unhealthy lifestyle. In a world where obesity figures have never been this high (World Health Organization, 2024), the importance of understanding why people eat unhealthy food does not need to be overstretched.

Furthermore, a varying diet is associated with a healthy energy balance and good nutritional intake (Raynor & Vadiveloo, 2018). More varying food choices can be a consequence of variety seeking behavior. Variety seeking is a personality trait that relates to boredom, satiation, and curiosity (Sheth & Raju, 1974; Zuckerman, 1979). It is not the case that variety seekers, in principle, live a healthier lifestyle, because they try more different products. For example, variety seekers try different flavors of crisps, but this variety of food choices is not necessarily healthier. Because people differ in their degree of variety seeking, it is interesting to study whether it affects the relationship between meaning pursuit and food choices.

This study potentially sheds light on the complex interplay between pursuit of meaning and food choices. It aims to provide insights into the implications of the 'healthy=expensive intuition', while it may also challenge assumptions about meaning pursuit and healthy food choices. Furthermore, this study aims to find if variety seeking traits affect food choices, and whether it moderates the meaning pursuit and food choice relationship. Ultimately, this research contributes to a better understanding of how people can achieve well-being and happiness through their consumptive behavior. Practically, this research can offer guidance to marketers for more effective marketing strategies, and governmental institutions for better campaigns aimed at healthy food. Furthermore, it can provide practical insights to consumers as well, about their behavioral patterns.

In Chapter 2, meaning in life and its pursuit are discussed to get a better understanding of what this construct means, and how it potentially affects food choices. After an extensive elaboration on this relationship, the healthy=expensive intuition and variety seeking are discussed to provide the possibility of moderating effects. In Chapter 3, the methodological considerations and the research design are explained for a clear overview of how we could get answers to the hypotheses. Chapter 4 explains the findings this study has yielded and provides answers to the hypotheses. Finally, Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the general

findings and how they relate to the current literature. Furthermore, theoretical and practical implications, and directions for further research are discussed.

Chapter 2. Literature review

Meaning

Some time ago, before 1960, there was little knowledge of and interest in research on people that experience problems affected by the absence of meaning in life, because it traditionally could not be represented as a legitimate disease. Frankl (1962) firstly described these problems as "the existential vacuum" (p. 93) individuals can encounter, which is the experience of a total lack of an ultimate meaning to one's existence. Pursuing meaning is an illustration of the human tendency to enrich one's life. Or, as Frankl once stated, "man's search for a meaning is not pathological, but rather the surest sign of being truly human" (Frankl, 1962, p.94).

Since Frankl's first description, scholars have been studying the construct of meaning and its pursuit, and have tried to define it properly. An assemblage of prior definitions results in one overarching definition for meaning in life, which is composed of three elements: the perceived feeling that one has significance, purpose, and connections in life, beyond one's self (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Heintzelman & King, 2014). Not all people actively pursue meaning in life. But what drives people that do actively seek a sense of meaning? Some research suggests that there are positive correlations between searching for meaning and psychological distress, and negative correlations between searching for meaning and well-being (Park, 2010; Steger et al., 2008). However, at the same time other studies imply that there is no relationship between pursuing meaning and psychological indicators of well-being (Cohen & Cairns, 2012; Steger et al., 2011).

Individuals possibly experience meaning in life through one's feelings of significance in their careers, social life, or through cultural activities. Significance refers to the feeling that one matters to the world, that one's existence has value (Mead & Williams, 2023), and that one makes important contributions that are directed and motivated by valued goals beyond the self (George & Park, 2017; Martela & Steger, 2016). A meaningful life could add significance through praying, or nurturing children. Religious attributions are one way of searching for significance in one's life through the conception, experience, or expression of higher powers, undertaken to enhance one's sense of meaning, but also one's control and self-esteem (Pargament, 1992). Researchers suggest that to increase significance, people

could maximize the impact of each moment of time, and ultimately their life (Rudd et al., 2019).

Secondly, people seek a purpose in life, something to grasp in the future. Purpose refers to the sense that one has direction, goals, and a mission in life (Mead & Williams, 2023; McKnight & Kashdan, 2009). A meaningful life incorporates purpose as the long-term aspirations that motivate relevant actions (Steger, 2012). People can buy products, services, and experiences to strive toward these purposeful aspirations: "purpose in life and personal growth are not contributors to, but in fact defining features of positive mental health" (Ryff & Singer, 1998, p. 216). Purposeful individuals have a sense of direction, and have goals, or a mission in life that guides them toward purposeful activities (Rudd et al., 2019). One important antecedent of increased senses of purpose is a strong sense of the true self (Schlegel et al., 2011). Without knowing who you are, and what your passions are, it is hard to find a sense of direction, goals, or a mission. Through goal setting (and goal accomplishment) individuals induce meaning via personal growth when the goals are important, with longer lasting value (Kauppinen, 2012). Connection with the self as an antecedent of purpose in life is included in the third element of meaning: connection.

Lastly, connection refers to the broad sense of connecting with the self, others, places, times (Baumeister, 1991), and with a coherent narrative that people tell themselves (King & Hicks, 2021). Meaningfulness through connection is associated with the integration of the past, present, and future perceived self (Baumeister et al., 2013). Connecting with others is a social interplay that is shown to be associated with a deeper sense of meaning over time (Krause, 2007). People can buy products, services, and experiences to help them socialize with others, to link different selves (i.e. past, present, and future self), or to immerse themselves in different places (Mead & Williams, 2023). For example, buying a camera helps people to link their past self from pictures with the present self.

Meaning in life is fundamentally distinct from the meaning of life individuals can assess. Meaning of life refers to the general evaluations of the world and/or human life broadly (Debats et al., 1995). Therefore, scholars address meaning in life through research on how people experience meaning in their life, rather than philosophical matters on what the point of life is. Furthermore, meaningfulness relates to multiple constructs that are studied in people's lives (but that are not synonymous), such as importance (i.e. most meaningful activities are perceived to be important, but not all important activities are meaningful), involvement (i.e. meaningful things may be involving, but not all involving things are meaningful), and happiness (Rudd et al., 2019). Meaningfulness is linked to helping others (i.e. being a

‘giver’), whereas happiness is linked to self-interest (i.e. being a ‘taker’) (Baumeister et al., 2013). Meaning in life thus refers to what a person has to give to others around them, more than one’s self-interest (Wolf, 2010).

Next to meaning, literature suggests that pleasure plays a major role in well-being (Dwyer et al., 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2001). Meaning and pleasure are often distinct and compensatory, which creates a trade-off between the two (Baumeister et al., 2013). However, Kim and colleagues (2014) suggested and found there is a temporal dynamic between the two: pleasure pursuit is more salient for short-term gains, whereas meaning pursuit is associated with more long-term decisions. Additionally, research suggests that the consumption of products is more pleasure-based, whereas the consumption of experiences results in meaning-based happiness (Schmitt et al., 2015).

Pursuing meaning, and ultimately experiencing meaning in life has some positive consequences in comparison with people that do not perceive their life to be meaningful. Individuals with higher levels of meaningfulness in their lives tend to exhibit more self-esteem and self-acceptance (Ryff, 1989; Steger et al., 2006; Steger et al., 2008), but also tend to show an increase in self-actualization (Ebersole & Humphreys, 1991). Meaningfulness is furthermore associated with people being more appealing to others, being happier in general, being more satisfied with life, and having more feelings of warmth and appreciation (i.e. elevation) (Rudd et al., 2019). It is not surprising that meaningfulness is thus of influence on one’s overall well-being (Steger et al., 2008).

Meaning has been linked to cognitive benefits as well. People that find their life meaningful tend to exhibit a higher sense of direction and self value (Heisel & Flett, 2004), and a higher sense of cohesiveness and order (Heintzelman & King, 2014). Meaning is also positively associated with locus of control, people find that their life and future is within their control (Phillips, 1980; Ryff, 1989). Individuals with meaningful lives even feel physically healthier (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Ryff, 1989).

People can buy products to fulfill aspirations or goals resulting from the pursuit of meaning. Individuals find meaning in the consumption of products and services (Wang et al., 2023) and can socially express themselves through their consumption behavior (Belk et al., 1989). People can also travel, buy running shoes, or engage in educational programs as ways to pursue meaning in their lives. For example, running shoes helps people accomplish certain goals in life regarding their health, and in the meantime it shows one’s sportive lifestyle. However, marketplace products are affected by market valuation. Consumers are consequently confronted with tradeoffs due to these valuations; for example, price and

quality tradeoffs. Someone that would want to buy a new laptop to use for work at home is now confronted with a choice on whether to spend more or less money, resulting in different quality valuations. Consumers thus can add meaning to their life using their wallet, but there are conflicting findings on how meaning pursuit affects their decision making.

Traditionally, the common intuition is that people that seek meaning in consumption buy relatively more expensive products (McGraw et al., 2016; Alba & Williams, 2013; Wakefield & Inman, 2003). The general argumentation here is that people that pursue meaning in product consumption select the products that have the highest quality to fulfill their pursuit. More often than not, higher quality products are more expensive for consumers (Zeithaml, 1988). Mead & Williams (2023) find a counterintuitive pattern: consumers that pursue meaning prefer less expensive products, because they focus on opportunity costs (i.e. alternative uses for money).

Food choices

People consume and buy products for over 1,000 meals per year. Food provides us with the nutrients and energy to be able to work, sport, and think (Banwart, 1989). But not all food has equal nutritional value to our body. Food is considered healthy when it is low in sugars, saturated fat and salt, and high in protein and necessary carbohydrates (World Health Organization, n.d.). What factors are known to influence food choices?

Consumers keep health and financial goals in mind while making food choices (Haws & Winterich, 2013). When moving towards a health goal, consumers can choose healthier products in order to achieve that goal. But when there are financial constraints while doing groceries, one can only consider less expensive options. Healthier food is generally associated with higher costs (Drewnowski, 2010; Hughner et al., 2007), but the consumption of healthy food increases drastically when the prices are lowered (French, 2003). Since before 2000, for instance, low-income consumers stretch that fruits and vegetables are more (and too) expensive (Reicks et al., 1994). Interestingly, people with a more unhealthy lifestyle are more willing to pay a price premium for healthy food, in opposition to people with a healthy lifestyle (Alsubhi et al., 2022).

The consumption of healthy food is an important aspect in current societies, for 12.5% of the world's population is currently diagnosed with obesity (World Health Organization, 2024), which has detrimental effects to people's overall health, such as type-2 diabetes (Rahati et al., 2014). People get in contact with unhealthy food on a frequent basis through advertisements

and images (Berthoud, 2012), which can lead to a vicious circle of eating unhealthy food and being incentivized to choose unhealthy food in the future.
Furthermore, apart from cost and health, people consider many other factors when making decisions about food, such as taste (Feeney et al., 2010), social status (Larsen & Story, 2009), convenience (Ahlgren et al., 2005), and environmental costs (Johnston et al., 2011). The latter entails eating organic food, or buying food in environmentally friendly packages. People that eat organic food generally pay more money over time (Marian et al., 2014). Some food choices are deliberate, but some tend to be influenced by heuristic-based decision-making (Wansink & Chandon, 2014), of which the healthy=expensive intuition is an example..
People then rely on previous knowledge they encountered to make judgments in the present, sometimes unconsciously (Chen & Chaiken, 1999). Additionally, the healthiness of food is found to be an important driver of food choices (Kamphuis et al., 2015).

Meaning pursuit and food choices

As previously discussed, people that pursue meaning seek a purpose, direction, and feeling of significance in life (Steger, 2012). Eating healthy food might be a goal one could pursue, as it can be regarded as an investment in one's well-being (Mujcic & Oswald, 2016; Ares et al., 2014). However, not all people eat healthy, or do not have the financial opportunities to do so. Additionally, people increasingly choose more unhealthy options, because of convenience and financial considerations (Chaurasiya et al., 2020; Thienhirun & Chung, 2017).
There is some indication that high prices of healthy food are a barrier to consumers (e.g. Reicks et al., 1994). Mead and Williams (2023) found that people that pursue meaning prefer less expensive options of material and experiential products. Therefore, we assume that people in the pursuit of meaning would cheap out on food products.

H1: People that pursue meaning have a preference for less expensive food products than people that do not pursue meaning.

As stated in the prior sections, healthier food is generally associated with higher prices (Drewnowski, 2010). We hypothesize that if people cheap out on their food choices when pursuing meaning, this would also lead to a decrease in the healthiness of the food choices.

H2: People that pursue meaning have a preference for less healthy food products than people that do not pursue meaning.

In general, people tend to only focus on the options presented in front of them instead of considering alternative options for their money, especially for utilitarian products (e.g. breakfast products) (Frederick et al., 2009). However, when pursuing meaning people tend to not only focus on the products shown before them, but also have a focus on alternative options (i.e. opportunity costs) to spend their budget on (Mead & Williams, 2023). In this situation, consumers broaden their mindsets with alternative uses of their money, which can result in a more varying basket of products than people that do not actively pursue meaning. People find numerous means to serve and achieve one overall goal (Kruglanski et al., 2002). Overall, variety tends to be positively associated with dietary quality and energy balance (Raynor & Vadiveloo, 2018). However, due to a lacking definition and measurement of variety, it is hard to derive conclusions whether variety indeed enhances one's diet. According to previous knowledge on people that pursue meaning and the broadening of their mindset, we hypothesize the following effect.

H3: People that pursue meaning have a preference for a more varying food selection of products than people that do not pursue meaning.

Healthy=expensive intuition

In certain food product categories it is difficult for consumers to understand the true relationship between price and healthiness (Carlson & Frazão, 2012). In these kinds of situations, people tend to find solutions based on "lay theories", which are "explanations people use to understand their environment, although some are not objectively true" (Furnham, 1998, p. 993). The healthy=expensive intuition is one example of such lay theory. Healthiness and expensiveness of food are not two distinct measurements of one's choice pattern, but rather an intertwined duo. They are related as such that people can assign higher prices towards more healthy food. A study by Haws et al. (2016) describes the healthy=expensive intuition. In the absence of certain quality cues or information, people intuitively find healthy food products more expensive than unhealthy products. The intuition is not driven by differing quality perceptions, and consumers rely on it when making inferences of missing food attributes (Broniarczyk & Alba, 1994). Furthermore, Haws and colleagues (2016) conclude that the intuition is bidirectional, meaning that consumers infer greater healthiness on more expensive food, but at the same time infer a higher price on healthy products. The intuition thus can possibly drive one's food choice

The intuition may hold true for some product categories, as we have argued for organic food (Marian et al., 2014), but consumers tend to overgeneralize this intuition in the food marketplace. However, whether healthy food is actually more expensive than unhealthy food depends on one's own perspective on, availability and knowledge of healthy food.
Mead and Williams' (2023) reasoning that pursuit of meaning results in consumers cheaping out on product choices, which, as described above, can have effects on the products' healthiness. When people already cheap out on their food choices, we argue that subscribing to the healthy=expensive intuition could amplify the cheaping out of food choices when pursuing meaning. People that believe in the intuition that healthier products are more expensive can make different food choices than people that do not subscribe to the intuition. Therefore, this study argues that the healthy=expensive intuition moderates the relationship between meaning pursuit and food choices. A moderator is a variable that affects the direction and/or strength of the relation between an independent variable and a dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). This yields H4.

H4: People that subscribe more to the healthy=expensive intuition, have a more pronounced preference for less healthy food when pursuing meaning.

Variety seeking

Variety seeking is defined as switching behavior that is independent of preferences for a particular product (Menon & Kahn, 1995, p. 286). This inclination towards variety can manifest itself in different forms. For example, a consumer may choose a different brand of cereal for breakfast, not because the consumer's preferences have switched, but just because they want something different. Variety seeking can be the intrinsic result of mere curiosity (Sheth & Raju, 1974), unresolved boredom, or product satiation (Zuckerman, 1979). Consumer variety seeking in this manner is thus considered to be an intrinsically motivated behavior that differs per individual, called one's optimal stimulation level. The optimal stimulation level describes one's need for variety, which results in three differences between people with high optimum stimulation levels and low optimum stimulation levels: the desire for the unfamiliar, the desire for alternation among familiar alternatives, and the desire for information (Raju, 1980; McAlister & Pessemier, 1982). They are proposed to be the three forces as the basic concepts of motives for variety seeking.
Food choices are prone to one's variety seeking behavior. There is hardly any study that investigates the effect of variety seeking on the healthiness and/or price of one's food

choices. Therefore, H5 is an explorative two-sided investigation on whether the characteristics of variety seeking (i.e. boredom, satiation, and curiosity) moderate the effect of meaning pursuit and food choices.

H5: People that have higher variety seeking traits do not have a more pronounced preference for less healthy food when pursuing meaning.

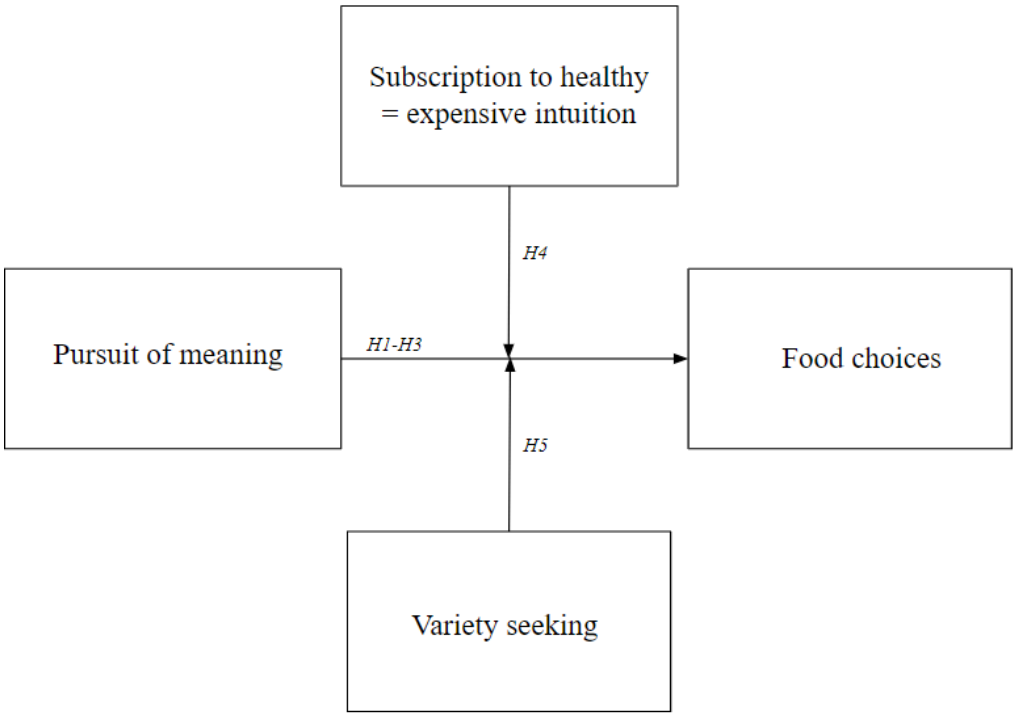

Figure. 1: Conceptual model

Chapter 3. Methodology

An experiment was conducted to test the five hypotheses. Through an experiment one can draw causal conclusions by manipulating an independent variable (i.e. pursuit of meaning) while maintaining control over other constant factors (Field & Hole, 2003). Experiments are ideal for isolating cause (i.e. pursuit of meaning) and effect (i.e. food choices) (Vennix, 2006), which makes the experiment the best method to test the hypotheses whether one's pursuit of meaning affects food choices, and to what extent the healthy=expensive intuition and/or variety seeking moderate the effect.

Design of the experiment

This study's research design resembles Mead and Williams' (2023) study on pursuit of meaning and product choices. Respondents were given a budget of €50 with which they were instructed to select ten food products. All products were assigned a price (visible for the respondents) and healthiness score (See Appendix C). Prior to the food choices, respondents were randomly assigned to the baseline group (no meaning pursuit) and the meaning pursuit group. Respondents in the meaning pursuit group were shown a manipulation text.

The previous manipulation of meaning pursuit by Mead and Williams (2023) was found to be successful, and therefore is used in this study likewise. The goal was to induce a meaning goal for the product choice task, to put them into a meaning pursuit mindset. Respondents in the meaning category read the following text:

> As you make your choices, please focus on deriving meaning from your choices. That is, focus on the aspects of each option that you personally find most purposeful, fulfilling, and valuable. Really try to make it a meaningful experience!

After the manipulation text, the respondents in this group were instructed to do a two-minute writing task on what meaning means to them, to induce them into a meaning pursuit mindset. To ensure that the effect of the manipulation worked, two manipulation checks were implemented at the end of the experiment to check whether their choices were motivated by meaning, and to what extent they took the writing task seriously.

After the manipulation the respondents were directed towards the online shopping environment (See Appendix B for the full procedure). When the respondents finished the food choices, they were directed to statements that measured their perception of the final basket, healthy=expensive intuition, variety seeking, and other control variables and demographics. The statements provided information for the analyses in Chapter 4: Results. The respondents were incentivized to provide realistic answers with a lottery. After participation they had the possibility to win their basket of products and the remaining budget.

There were several product categories from which respondents could select their products, such as dairy products, snacks, fruit and vegetables (See Appendix C for all products and categories).

The products were chosen by looking at the wheel of five ('*de Schijf van Vijf'* in Dutch), which represents the five healthy categories of food people need to maintain their overall

health, such as fruit and vegetables, unsaturated fat, grain products, and proteins (Boon et al., 2017). We deliberately selected products that are recommended from the wheel, and products that (explicitly) are not. By selecting products that either belong to the wheel or not, we ensured a varying selection of healthy and unhealthy products. There is an equal number of products (i.e. 11 products) for each health score. Similarly, the price of the products varied from €0.85 to €7.80 (*M = 3.19; SD = 1.70*). The prices of the products date from February 2024 and through inflation or deflation they can be subject to changes over time.

This experiment was conducted in Qualtrics, an online survey and experiment environment, for two main reasons. Firstly, an online experiment enables researchers to distribute it as quickly as possible. Secondly, people do not encounter social pressures when going through the experiment. Research suggests that a persons' mere presence or the presence of others influences people's behavior and choices (Argo et al., 2005). This could have affected the outcomes of the experiment.

Measurement of key concepts

The dependent variable food choices consisted of three separate variables: price, healthiness, and variety. These variables were computed in SPSS (See Appendix E). The healthy=expensive intuition and variety seeking were both measured by three items (i.e. statements) each (See Table 1 for all items).

The products' healthiness scores were assigned on a five-point scale (*1 = very healthy; 5 = very unhealthy*), based on the nutritional values of products. To ensure reliability, the values were assigned as an average score of five researchers' independent scores. The healthiness of the basket was then measured by two items: the cumulative basket health score, and the average product health score. The higher the value on both items, the less healthy a respondent's basket was, and vice versa. The price of the respondents' basket was measured by two items: the total price of the basket, and the average product price in the basket. The variety of respondents' baskets was measured with one item, i.e. the number of different product categories from which (at least) one product is selected. The more different categories, the higher one's food choice variety.

The items from the healthy=expensive intuition, perception of food choices, and variety seeking were measured on a five-point Likert scale (*1 = totally disagree; 5 = totally agree*), because the Likert scale provides a clear overview for the respondents, and it makes data analysis significantly less complex (Vennix, 2006).

Table 1: Overview of all measured variables

Items	*Scale*	*Variable*	*Source*
3 (*3–5*)	1-2-3-4-5*	Healthy=expensive intuition	Haws et al. (2016)
5 (*6–10*)	1-2-3-4-5*	Food preferences	Mead & Williams (2023)
3 (*11–13*)	1-2-3-4-5*	Variety seeking	Sheth & Raju (1974); Zuckerman (1979)
2 (*1, 25*)	1-2-3-4-5*	Manipulation check	Mead & Williams (2023)

Scale: 1 = totally disagree; 5 = totally agree

The healthy=expensive intuition was measured across three items. Item 1 and 2 were each other's opposites, because Haws et al. (2016) found that the intuition was bidirectional. The two items were "*healthy food products are generally more expensive than unhealthy food products*" and "*more expensive food products are generally more healthy than less expensive food products*". Higher values on the first two items suggested that respondents more strongly subscribed to the intuition. Item 3 (i.e. "*more expensive food products are generally of a higher quality than less expensive food products"*) served as a check whether the intuition was independent from quality assumptions. Lower values indicated that quality was not part of the intuition.

Moreover, variety seeking was measured with three items: curiosity, boredom, and satiation. The statements were: "*I am curious about food products I have never drank or eaten*", "*eating the same food products every week is boring*", and "*I am quickly done with a food product I eat or drink regularly*". High values indicated more variety seeking characteristics.

Additionally, perception of respondents' baskets was measured on three items: perceived expensiveness, perceived healthiness, and perceived variety. The items were: "*to my knowledge, I made relatively cheap (or healthy/varying) food choices*". To control for the increased consideration of alternatives when in the pursuit of meaning (Mead & Williams, 2023), one item was implemented: "*I made deliberate food choices after considering all alternatives*".

Furthermore, some control variables were incorporated to increase reliability of the experiment results. The researchers test for resemblance to a real online supermarket to test whether respondents perceive the online supermarket to be believable, authentic, and realistic. Additionally, respondents were asked whether they followed a diet, and if so which sort. People that follow a certain diet (e.g. gluten-free or vegan) make different food choices

than other people. This reasoning also held for those respondents that had allergic reactions to specific food ingredients. The researchers included a binary question (yes or no) to test for allergies. To test whether respondents do their own groceries, which was a requirement to accurately derive conclusions on consumer behavior in the supermarket. The item "*how often do you do your own groceries?*" was answered on a five-point Likert scale (*1 = never; 5 = always*). Lastly, we controlled for heuristics and mental processes respondents used while doing the experiment, e.g. whether respondents made food choices based on previous experiences with products, whether they eat the same products every week, whether they made their own unique choices, and whether they kept aware of the total price during the experiment. The researchers tested this to ensure respondents made unique choices that did not deviate much from their regular eating pattern.

The demographics (i.e. gender, age, education, income, living situation) were surveyed to indicate whether results were robust, or whether some effects resulted from any of the demographic variables gender, age, education, income, and living situation.

To finalize the experiment, the researchers checked whether the manipulation had sufficient effect, and whether respondents in the meaning pursuit group took the writing task seriously.

Population and sample

The population for this experiment was native Dutch speakers in the age of 18 to 85 years old. There were no further requirements to be accepted to the experiment. A sample was drawn from this population with a total sample size of N_{total} = 200 (63.0% female, [no respondents were non-binary]; M_{age} = 30.3, SD_{age} = 13.0; 80.7% with at least an HBO degree; 33.0% with at least a modal income; 66.0% living on their own). This sample exceeds 50 respondents per condition (2 x 50 = 100 respondents), which is the minimum for a reliable sample size (Hair et al., 2018). The respondents were assigned randomly to one of the two conditions, with sample size $N_{baseline}$ = 120 and $N_{meaning}$ = 80.

Additionally, respondents were contacted via a link that was shared on social media (i.e. Instagram and LinkedIn) and WhatsApp. Respondents were asked afterwards to share the link with friends and family for further distribution.

Procedure

Because respondents were native Dutch speakers, all text and explanations in the experiment were translated to Dutch (See Appendix B). To ensure that the translations were done correctly, an independent individual translated them back to English to check the core meaning.

Food choices: First, in the introductory text respondents were greeted and informed about the experiment and their participation. In the following text, they were explained the topic of the experiment, and the scenario in which they would have to immerse themselves in: the selection of ten products for a weekend away from home with a maximum budget of €50. Respondents were stressed to resemble their regular eating pattern. At the end of the explanatory text they were told that they could participate in a lottery where they could win the selected products and the spare budget. They would need to submit their mail address at the end of the experiment. Finally, the individuals that randomly were assigned to the meaning group were directed towards the manipulation text and writing task (see p. 15). Afterwards, the meaning pursuit group was tested for their degree of seriousness in the writing task performance. Before the respondents entered the shopping environment, they were tested for their degree of hungriness at the time of participation. Then, they were directed towards the supermarket. All respondents could then select one or multiple items from different product categories. The products were accompanied with textual and visual information (i.e. picture from a random supermarket's website). At the end of the page, respondents could skip to the next page, which would consist of statements.

Healthy=expensive intuition: The respondents were first shown three statements about the healthy=expensive intuition. These would measure the extent to which they believed that healthy products were more expensive, that expensive products were of better quality, and that expensive products were healthier than cheaper products.

Perception of food choices: Furthermore, the respondents were shown four statements regarding their food choices in the previous part. The respondents had to answer whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements on perceived healthiness, price, and variety of their basket.

Variety seeking: After the perceived food choices, respondents were asked to what extent they engage in variety seeking behavior. The three statements regarded their curiosity, boredom, and satiation levels on food product consumption.

Control variables: Furthermore, the respondents were shown statements and questions on previously discussed control variables. Firstly, they were asked whether the supermarket was perceived as believable, authentic, and realistic. Secondly, respondents had to fill in possible allergies, and if they followed a specific diet at the time of participation. Thirdly, respondents were questioned to what extent they do their own groceries. Fourthly, they were shown five statements regarding their use of previous experiences with the food products, the degree of regularity in their eating pattern, the uniqueness of their food choices, to what extent they

calculated their remaining budget, and the degree of difficulty they encountered while doing the calculation.

Manipulation check: Afterwards, the extent to which the respondents' food choices were motivated by meaning was tested for all respondents.

Demographics: Finally, some demographic questions were presented. They included gender, age, education, income, and living situation. To all questions respondents had the possibility to answer "I would rather not say".

The respondents were debriefed and thanked for their participation. At the end, respondents had the option to enter the lottery by submitting their mail address. In the next section, the research ethics are discussed.

Research ethics

Prior to the experiment, respondents were informed about the core topic of this experiment, namely food choices. However, they were not fully informed, because this experiment studied the effect of meaning pursuit on food choices, the subscription to the healthy=expensive intuition, and variety seeking characteristics. If this were to be elaborated, it would not have represented a real-life setting, which could have harmed the reliability and validity of the findings. At the start of the experiment, the respondents were instructed of their rights during and after the experiment. Firstly, in the introductory text respondents were explained that during the experiment they had the right to withdraw from the experiment at any given time. Secondly, in this text it was also shown that all respondents' choices and answers would be fully anonymous and confidential. During and after the experiment, anonymity was ensured, because respondents were never asked for their name. We understood that names could have been deducted from their mail address, but it was not obligated to leave the address, and the mail address was immediately excluded from the dataset in SPSS. Furthermore, confidentiality was ensured, because only those persons that were involved in this research were granted access to the dataset. The data was safely stored on the researcher's computer, which ensured that data was not leaked and others could not access it. Thirdly, respondents were told what the expected duration of the experiment would be 10-15 minutes, depending on whether someone had to perform the writing task. Fourthly, to incentivize the respondents they were given the opportunity to enter the lottery to win their basket and the remaining budget in cash. After the experiment was done, the researchers randomly selected one respondent who was contacted by email and received the price.

Moreover, after respondents submitted their responses, they were debriefed. In the debrief respondents again were told that responses were anonymous. Furthermore, they were thanked for participation and explained that the researchers hoped they had a positive experience. Lastly, respondents were provided with the researcher's contact information (i.e. mail address) for further questions regarding the experiment.

Data analysis

The data from Qualtrics was stored and cleaned in SPSS, which is a statistical program to use for statistical tests and analyses. In SPSS, independent t-tests were used to test H1–3. The independent t-test is a statistical measure to determine significant differences of group means (Hair et al., 2018). In this case, the t-test would indicate whether there were differences of price, healthiness, and variety between the baseline group and the meaning pursuit group. To understand possible moderator effects of healthy=expensive intuition and variety seeking on the relationship between meaning and food choices, linear regressions were used. Linear regression is a statistical technique used to analyze the relationship between one dependent variable and several independent variables (i.e. meaning pursuit, healthy=expensive intuition, variety seeking) (Hair et al., 2018). This technique was used to find answers for H4 and H5. The regression analysis provided whether independent variables had a significant effect on the dependent variable.

To continue after having explained the research design, the next section covers the findings of the independent t-tests and linear regressions, supported with additional analyses to find answers to the five hypotheses.

Chapter 4. Results

Exclusion criteria

The first sample included 200 responses, of which 17 respondents did not reach the end of the experiment. Respondents that took too long to do the experiment were excluded, because the manipulation's reliability could be harmed. The mean for the total duration of the experiment was around 135 minutes, due to big outliers. In order to prevent the exclusion of elderly and/or dyslexic people that take more time to read and fill in the experiment, the upper boundary was set at 40 minutes, whereas the expected duration was 15-20 minutes. As a result, seven respondents were excluded due to disproportionately long duration times. After their removal, the mean of the total duration was approximately 11 minutes (*MAX* = 30

minutes). Furthermore, the maximum budget amount of €50 was exceeded by five respondents, who were excluded from further analyses.
Some respondents did not select precisely ten products, which previously was described as a criterion. However, for further analyses an average score was computed for the price and healthiness of respondents' baskets (See Appendix E). Therefore, those that did not overspend their budget, but selected more or less than ten products, remained included.

Sample characteristics

After applying these criteria, the final sample size yielded N_{total} = 170 (62.9% female [no respondents were non-binary], M_{age} = 30.4, SD_{age} = 12.9). The minimum age was 17 years, and the maximum was 79 years. Additionally, 63 respondents received an HBO degree, 39 a university's Masters degree, 35 a university's Bachelor degree, 22 only finished high school, and 11 received an MBO degree. Of the 170 respondents, 53 lived together with a friend or partner, 52 with their parents, 42 in student housing, and 20 lived alone. Furthermore, 66.5% earned a below modal income (i.e. €3,666 per month). Only 13% of the respondents had some form of allergic intolerance for specific food (i.e. gluten or lactose), and only 11% followed a specific diet. The respondents do their groceries themselves most of the time (M = 4.03), which was a main criteria to be able to extract information from respondents' food choices. Respondents disclosed that a healthy lifestyle contributes to a more meaningful experience (M = 3.49; SD = 1.07).
Additionally, the respondents found the shopping environment to be relatively believable (M = 3.79), authentic (M = 3.18), and realistic (M = 3.77). This would prove that the experiment resembled an actual shopping experience. Lastly, the respondents made relatively little effort to calculate their remaining budget during the experiment (M = 2.63).

Manipulation

The manipulation resulted in two groups (baseline group and meaning pursuit group), of which the respondents that were shown the manipulation were assigned to the meaning pursuit group (N = 70). The writing task was executed with a high degree of seriousness (M = 4.30). An independent t-test showed a significant difference of meaning as a motivation of the choices (M_{base} = 2.44; SD_{base} = 1.10 vs. $M_{meaning}$ = 3.19; $SD_{meaning}$ = 1.35, t(170) = -3.96; p = .019). Therefore, it can be concluded that the manipulation had an effect.
Because some respondents did not select exactly ten products, a deliberate choice was made to use average scores for the healthiness and price of the food choices ($M_{price\ per\ product}$ = € 2.81;

$SD_{price\ per\ product}$ = € .44; $M_{healthiness}$ = 2.61; $SD_{healthiness}$ = .57; $Range_{healthiness}$ = [1, 5]). Otherwise, dozens of respondents had to be excluded from the analyses, which could have harmed the reliability of the results. Table 2 shows all metrically scaled variables in further analyses of this research. Some variables have been computed with already existing variables from the experiment to find answers to the hypotheses (See Appendix E how variables were computed).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of all metric variables in this research

Variable	Statistics			
	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Average healthiness of basket	2.62	.57	-.08	-.34
Average price of products in baskets (€)	2.84	.44	.77	1.16
Total price of basket (€)*	27.96	4.41	.51	-.08
Variety of product categories*	7.18	1.14	-.00	-.78
Healthy=expensive intuition	3.95	1.04	-1.05	.58
Degree of variety seeking	3.35	.87	-.26	-.48
Age	30.27	12.71	1.65	1.93
Degree of hungriness	2.76	1.29	.10	-1.23
Perceived healthiness	2.43	1.06	.60	-.44
Perceived budget spent	2.88	1.03	.15	-.83
Perceived variety of basket	3.89	.81	-1.27	2.10

*variables computed using N = 138 (see H3 on p. 23 for an explanation)

Meaning pursuit and cheaping out

H1 seeked to find whether people make less expensive food choices when they pursue meaning. Results of a t-test suggest there is no clear indication that people pursuing meaning ($M_{meaning}$ = € 2.86) have less (or more) expensive food preferences than the baseline group ($M_{baseline}$ = € 2.78; $t(170) = -1.05$; $p = .245$). The respondents' perceived expenses during the experiment also suggests that respondents did not deliberately select cheaper options ($M_{baseline}$ = 2.83 vs. $M_{meaning}$ = 2.91). Thus, on the statement whether the respondents found their basket to be relatively cheap, the bigger portion disagreed. Furthermore, people in the meaning

pursuit condition have a bigger consideration of all alternatives before selecting the product ($M_{meaning}$ = 3.94) than people in the baseline group ($M_{baseline}$ = 3.66; t(170) = -1.66; p = .116). However, the t-test suggests that the difference is not entirely significant, but it resembles Mead and William's (2023) conclusion.

People thus do not select less expensive products in an online supermarket environment when in the mindset of pursuing meaning. Therefore, the first hypothesis cannot be accepted, and consequently is rejected.

Meaning pursuit and healthiness

H2 prescribed that people in the meaning pursuit condition would most likely make less healthy food choices, due to the fact that they would cheap out as a result of opportunity costs (e.g. Mead & Williams, 2023). In the previous section, there was no evidence found that meaning pursuit leads to a cheaper selection of food products. But do people in the pursuit of meaning buy less healthy products? There is a negative answer to this question as well. The t-test results suggest that although the mean health score of meaning pursuit ($M_{meaning}$ = 2.68) is slightly higher (which is unhealthier) than the baseline group mean ($M_{baseline}$ = 2.56), there is no significant difference between the two groups (t(170) = -1.26; p = .796). This suggests that for meaning pursuit, alongside the absence of evidence on cheaping out on food products, there seems to be no evidence of more unhealthy food choices. Therefore, H2 is also rejected.

Remarkably, people in the meaning pursuit condition perceive themselves to select significantly more healthy products than they actually do. A t-test showed that the mean average health score of their basket (M_{health} = 2.68) significantly varies from their perceived health score ($M_{health,\ perceived}$ = 2.30; t(170) = 2.78; p < .001). Whereas, people from the baseline group have a more accurate perception of their basket healthiness ($M_{health,\ perceived}$ = 2.49 vs. M_{health} = 2.56; t(170) = .564; p = .573). See Fig. 2 for an illustration.

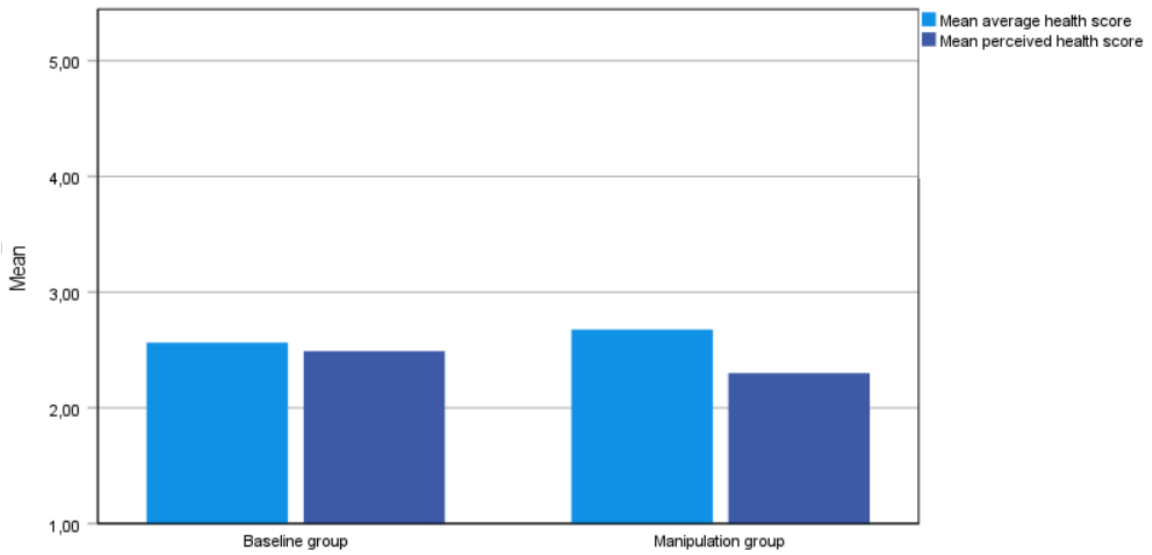

Figure 2. Average health score against perceived health score

Meaning pursuit and variety of products

H3 tested whether the pursuit of meaning increases the variety of products selected. In order to test the variety of food choices, the respondents that did not precisely select ten products were now removed from the analysis, because it could cause trouble in analyzing the amount of different product categories used by respondents. For example, respondents that selected 13 products had a bigger probability of selecting more varying categories than respondents with 10 products. The amount of respondents excluded in this step was 32 (i.e. new $N = 138$). The variable variety of product categories was computed ($M = 7.2$; $SD = 1.1$) with the new sample size ($N_{baseline} = 81$ vs. $N_{meaning} = 57$) (See Appendix E for computations).

Results of a t-test suggested that there is no significant difference between the two groups on the amount of different product categories selected from in the experiment ($M_{baseline} = 7.14$ vs. $M_{meaning} = 7.18$; $t(138) = -.205$; $p = .199$). Therefore, the t-test results suggested that meaning pursuit has no direct influence on the variety of respondents' food choices. H3 is thus rejected.

Finally, Pearson's bivariate correlation test showed that the variety of products selected was significantly correlated with the healthiness of respondents' baskets ($r(138) = .331$; $p < .001$). This suggested that an increase in the variety of product categories could decrease the healthiness of one's food selection, and vice versa. Another Pearson's bivariate correlation test showed that the variety of the products selected also significantly correlated with the total price of the baskets ($r(138) = .246$; $p = .006$). Therefore, a more varying selection of food products could increase the total price of the selection, and vice versa. However, the nature

and direction of the two relationships were outside the scope of this research and thus remained unstudied.

Healthy=expensive intuition as moderator

The healthy=expensive intuition variable was measured on a five-point scale with $M_{H=E}$ = 3.95 ($SD_{H=E}$ = 1.04). This shows that, on average, the majority of the respondents subscribed to the intuition. The results also indicated that the intuition was somewhat independent from quality perceptions, because when asked whether more expensive products are generally of higher quality they responded neutrally ($M_{quality}$ = 3.01; $SD_{quality}$ = 1.23).

H4 seeked to find if the healthy=expensive intuition (from now on H=E intuition) positively affected the relationship between meaning pursuit and food choices. In order to find an answer to H4, two linear regression were conducted which examined the effect of the H=E intuition on the relationship between meaning pursuit and food choices (i.e. healthiness and price of basket), and the main effects of meaning pursuit and the subscription to the H=E intuition. The first linear regression incorporated average health as the dependent variable, meaning pursuit and the intuition as independent variables (including the interaction term). The second linear regression incorporated average price as the dependent variable, and the exact same independent variables. The control variables gender, age, education, income, living situation, and hunger were in both linear regressions implemented to analyze their potential effects.

Assumptions: Firstly, the assumptions for linear regression were tested. The first assumption tested whether there were linear relationships between the H=E intuition and average price and healthiness. Two scatter plots indicated no signs of non-linear relationships, which is a necessity for linear regression (Hair et al., 2018). The second assumption tested for multivariate normality. A univariate analysis showed that the variables had skewness and kurtosis values between the accepted boundaries of -3 and +3 (See Table 2), which indicated a normal distribution (Hair et al., 2018). The third assumption tested for multicollinearity, which is the extent to which any variable's effect can be predicted or accounted for by other variables in the analysis (Hair et al., 2018). The Pearson bivariate correlations were found to be between -.70 and +.70 (i.e. ranging from r = -.246 - .276), which indicated no signs of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2018). Additionally, tolerance values were well above .10 (i.e. ranging from .646 - .923), and VIF values are below 10 (i.e. ranging from 1.084 - 1.547), which also indicated no cause for multicollinearity concerns (Hair et al., 2018). The fourth assumption tested for homoscedasticity, which is the consistent variance of residuals across

all independent variables (Hair et al., 2018). A scatter plot of the residuals against the predicted dependent values showed no consistent pattern, which indicated no heteroscedasticity (Hair et al., 2018). Therefore, the variables met all assumptions.

Results: The first linear regression was performed. Meaning pursuit had no direct influence on the average health of the baskets (t = .939; p = .349), which was in line with the previous findings on H2. Furthermore, the interaction term of meaning pursuit x H=E intuition was also non-significant (t = -.652; p = .516), which indicates that subscribing to the H=E intuition seems to play no role in the relationship between meaning pursuit and the healthiness of the basket. This seems logical, because that relationship seemed to be non-existent, according to the regression results. However, the results suggested that the H=E intuition had a (moderate) significant main effect on the healthiness of the basket (t = 1.949; p = .053). Additionally, hunger (t = 3.269; p < .001) and education (t = -2.140; p = .034) also seemed to have main effects on the healthiness of the basket. All other control variables had no significant effects (i.e. ranging from p = .390 - .841). After removing all clearly non-significant variables, the new regression model showed good utility (F(3, 166) = 8.457; R^2 = .133; p < .001). The H=E intuition had a positive relationship with healthiness of basket (β = .148; p = .043). This means that the more people subscribe to the intuition that healthy food is generally more expensive, the less healthy food choices they make, because a higher healthiness score corresponds with less healthy nutritions. Furthermore, hunger also had a positive relationship with the healthiness of basket (β = .263; p < .001). This suggested that a higher extent of hungriness can be associated with less healthy food choices. Finally, education has a negative relationship with healthiness of basket (β = -.187; p = .011). Within the Dutch schooling system, a higher educated person is suggested to make more healthy food choices. This could mean that someone has had more education on nutrition and healthy food, which could result in more healthy considerations. The final model explained 13.3 % of the variance of the dependent variable healthiness of the basket.

The second linear regression was then performed with average price as the dependent variable. The utility of this model was not significant (F(9, 157) = .917; R^2 = .050; p = .512, There were no control variables with significant relationships to the average price (i.e. ranging from p = .163 - .511), except for hunger, which had a moderately significant effect (t = -1.706; p = .090). Additionally, There were no main effects found of meaning pursuit (t = .425; p = .672) and H=E intuition (t = -.602; p = .548). Moreover, the regression indicated that the interaction of meaning pursuit x H=E intuition was not significant (t = -1.29; p =

.198). The results suggested that neither meaning pursuit nor the subscription to the H=E intuition affected the average price per product spent.

Variety seeking as a moderator

H5 intended to find whether variety seeking as a characteristic trait affects respondents' food choices. The three items that together measure one variety seeking characteristics are: curiosity, boredom, and satiation. Cronbach's reliability analysis tested the acceptability for the creation of a composite score for respondents' variety seeking. Cronbach's alpha (α) was .641, which is deemed as reliable between the accepted boundaries of >.60 for a composite score (Hair et al., 2018). The composite score was computed as an average of the three items previously described (See Appendix E).

To get answers for H5, two linear regression analyses were performed. The first linear regression incorporated average health as the dependent variable, meaning pursuit and H=E intuition as independent variables (including the interaction term). The second linear regression incorporated average pierce as the dependent variable, and the exact same independent variables. The control variables gender, age, education, income, living situation, and hunger were in both linear regressions implemented to analyze their potential effects. Firstly, the assumptions of linear regression were tested again.

Assumptions: The first assumption tested whether there were linear relationships between variety seeking and average price and healthiness. Two scatter plots indicated no signs of non-linear relationships, which is a necessity for linear regression (Hair et al., 2018). The second assumption tested for multivariate normality. Previously, this assumption was already tested and accounted for in H4 (See Table 2). Therefore, this assumption is not tested again. The third assumption tested for multicollinearity, the extent to which any variable's effect can be predicted or accounted for by other variables in the analysis (Hair et al., 2018). The Pearson bivariate correlations were again found to be between -.70 and +.70, which indicated no signs of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2018). The fourth assumption tested for homoscedasticity. A scatter plot of the residuals against the predicted dependent values showed no consistent pattern, which indicated no heteroscedasticity (Hair et al., 2018). Therefore, the variables met all assumptions.

Results: The linear regression was firstly performed with average price as the dependent variable, and included all control variables. The utility of this model was not significant ($F(8, 158) = .975$; $R^2 = .047$; $p = .458$, Logically, all control variables had no significant relationship to the average price. Therefore, the regression was run again without the control

variables. The new model also did not have a significant utility ($F(3, 166) = 1.16$; $R^2 = .020$; $p = .328$). There were no main effects found of meaning pursuit ($t = 1.514$; $p = .132$) and variety seeking ($t = .259$; $p = .796$). Moreover, the regression indicated that the interaction of meaning pursuit x variety seeking was not significant ($t = -1.29$; $p = .198$).

Secondly, the following linear regression was performed with average healthiness as the dependent variable. The utility of the model including the control variables was significant ($F(8, 158) = 3.71$; $R^2 = .158$; $p < .001$). However, the main effects of meaning pursuit ($t = -.968$; $p = .335$) and variety seeking ($t = -1.09$; $p = .277$) were not of significant influence on the average healthiness of the basket. Additionally, the interaction term meaning pursuit x variety seeking was also non-significant ($t = 1.34$; $p = .181$), like the first linear regression. Furthermore, there were two control variables that had significant main effects on the average healthiness: education ($\beta = -.156$; $t = -2.01$; $p = .046$) and hungriness ($\beta = .244$; $t = 3.29$; $p = .001$). Thus, hungriness had a positive effect on healthiness, which indicated that a larger degree of hungriness leads to higher values on healthiness (i.e. more unhealthy food choices), and education had a negative effect on healthiness, which indicated that a higher degree of education leads to lower values of healthiness (i.e. more healthy food choices).

Chapter 5. Discussion and conclusion

General discussion

The scant research that investigated the role of meaning pursuit on consumer behavior, suggested that people in the pursuit of meaning either are willing to pay a price premium for products (Alba & Williams, 2013; Wakefield & Inman, 2003) or cheap out on their product choices due to the alternative uses of money (Mead & Williams, 2023). These studies, however, did not specifically investigate food products and food choices. Our aim was to find evidence for any relationship between meaning pursuit and food choices.

Unfortunately, this study yields no findings of a relationship between meaning pursuit and food choices (See H1-H3). Meaning pursuit does not seem to have any effect on either the price of the food choices, nor the healthiness. The food choices people in this experiment make suggests that the findings by Mead and Williams (2023) do not hold for food, and therefore, people do not seem to cheap out on food choices in the pursuit of meaning.

Schmitt and colleagues (2015) suggested that product consumption, of which food is an aspect, is more heavily related to pleasure pursuit than meaning pursuit. In Mead and Williams' (2023, p.748), the categories 'cups of coffee' and 'water bottles' had the least

effects for the preference for less expensive products, suggesting that within these categories their described relationship was the weakest. Maybe, meaning pursuit is generally not salient for food choices. Furthermore, pleasure pursuit is associated with near-future decision-making, whereas meaning pursuit is more salient for long-term decision-making (Kim et al., 2014). There is a possibility that participants perceive food choices to be short-term oriented, possibly due to their recurring nature. If this were to be true, this would explain why the effect of meaning pursuit is non-significant. However, this is speculative. Food differs from other product categories, because it directly impacts people's health through daily consumption (Pelau, 2011). One could argue that people do not want to cheap out on food, because people physically consume it, but much research considers and finds price as a dependent variable for food choices (e.g. French, 2003; Steenhuis et al., 2011; Privitera et al., 2018). We argued that because people would cheap out on food choices in pursuit of meaning, they automatically would make more unhealthy choices, because they generally are more expensive (Drewnowski, 2010). Because we do not find evidence for cheaping out, we also find no evidence for differences in food healthiness.

Furthermore, we assumed that meaning pursuit would broaden people's mindset, that they would consider more alternatives (Mead & Williams, 2023). However, one could argue that the relationship between a broadened mindset and the preference for less expensive products (Frederick et al., 2009) does not hold for food choices. This would suggest that considering alternatives does not affect food choices.

Interestingly, people that pursue meaning are significantly less accurate in predicting their food choices' healthiness than people that do not pursue meaning. This could be, because they would want to perceive themselves as healthier for a better self-image. Meaning pursuit is associated with a congruent perception of the self (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002). People already tend to overestimate their own character traits, which results in flawed self-assessments (Dunning et al., 2004). Flawed self-assessments are done unconsciously, but also knowingly to inflate one's own positive traits (Williams & Gilovich, 2008): being healthy. The tendency of overestimation appears in both groups in this study. Nonetheless, one could argue that people in the pursuit of meaning increasingly try to overcompensate to connect with a certain self image. However, this would not prescribe why specifically this group overstates themselves, as it is shown to be a general human tendency. People that experience meaningfulness in life have increased feelings of self-value (Heisel & Flett, 2004). Possibly, individuals that pursue meaning then have a broader gap to reality then people that do not pursue meaning.

This study enters more uninvestigated territory. Findings suggest there is no significant effect of meaning pursuit on the variety of people's food choices. We hypothesized that a broadened mindset during meaning pursuit, would result in more varying food choices. We reject this hypothesis. The variety of product categories selected, however, correlates significantly with healthiness and price of the food choices. This positive correlation means that a higher variety of product categories is associated with more unhealthy and more expensive products. Although one could argue that a more varying choice is generally considered to be more healthy (Raynor & Vadiveloo, 2018), this does not seem to be the case in this study.

The first correlation seems counterintuitive, because more variety could increase healthiness, but in this research the different product categories differed much in their health scores, to create an equal distribution of healthy and unhealthy products. Therefore, these correlations need to be interpreted with caution. Eating different vegetables is found to be healthy, but this type of variety is not within the scope of this research.

We also find that hungriness results in relatively unhealthy food choices. Prior studies on the subject of hunger and food intake already suggested that hunger leads to unhealthy food and drink intake (e.g. Mason et al., 2020; Stok et al., 2015). Pleasure towards the satiation of hunger seems to be one of the psychological factors (Lowe et al., 2009). The short-term pleasure pursuit (i.e. Kim et al., 2014), therefore, seems to have played a role for people that were hungry during this study. Furthermore, we find that higher education results in more healthy food choices. People in higher and lower educational levels differ in their food choices, because people in lower levels generally are at a financial disadvantage, resulting in unhealthy food choices (Lalluka et al., 2007). People with higher educational degrees are also associated with eating more vegetables, protein, and dietary fiber (Hulshof et al., 2003), and also with perceiving healthy food as more valuable, whereas people with lower educational degrees tend to put lower prices as more important (Kamphuis et al., 2015). For the latter part, however, we find no evidence.

We find that the healthy=expensive intuition still exists in people's minds, whether the intuition is true or not, and that it is not associated with people's quality perceptions of products, as described by Haws et al. (2016). There is no moderating effect by the intuition (in H4). However, the healthy=expensive intuition has a direct positive effect on the healthiness of people's food choices. This means that the more an individual believes that healthy food is more expensive, the more unhealthy products this person selects. For some food categories, healthy food is more expensive (Hughner et al., 2007). However, the stronger this belief, the more people prefer less healthy food, which could be reason to

believe that people do consider price in food choices. It could be that the price is measured inaccurately in this study, while a different measurement could have yielded more significant insights into this phenomenon.

Furthermore, variety seeking, the intrinsic characteristics with regard to curiosity, unresolved boredom, or product satiation (Zuckerman, 1979; Sheth & Raju, 1974), does neither predict nor explain the healthiness and price of respondents' baskets (in H5). Like the H=E intuition, it does not have any moderation effect. Although one could argue that a more varying choice is generally considered to be more healthy (Raynor & Vadiveloo, 2018), this does not seem to be the case in this study.

Limitations

Some adjustments to the design of this study could possibly have yielded different findings. Firstly, more men could have participated in the study. Literature suggests that men have significantly different attitudes towards food than women, and thus make different food choices (Beardsworth, 2002). A more equally divided population sample could have yielded different findings. Secondly, the manipulation of meaning pursuit could have been executed with more immersive power, for the current manipulation only entailed a writing task without any researcher's supervision on its seriousness. Maybe the results would have been different in a more immersive environment, because the mindset shapes consumer behavior (Murphy & Dweck, 2016). Getting the participants more heavily into a meaning pursuit mindset could be an improvement. Thirdly, the number of different products and product categories could have been expanded. By creating an even more realistic supermarket environment, people could then select their preferred food products from a larger set of alternatives. When people select from a too short or large assortment of choices, their preferences weaken (Chernev, 2003). Researchers should be cautious in this consideration, but it could enrich the findings. Additionally, this study could have set a strict number of products to select for respondents (i.e. $N = 10$) to provide more equality. Lastly, by incorporating the possibility for respondents to select one product multiple times, the variety of one's basket could have been computed differently, which possibly would have yielded other findings.

Theoretical and managerial implications

This study has some theoretical implications. The pursuit of meaning has not had much attention in scientific literature, whereas it does ensure and increase well-being (Steger et al., 2008), happiness and satisfaction in people's life (Rudd et al., 2019).

Consumer behavior is directly associated with consumer welfare (e.g. Banwart, 1989). This study contributes to a better understanding of consumers' consideration when making food choices. For example, because we find no relationship between meaning pursuit and food choices, one could argue that meaning is less salient than pleasure pursuit. However, we did not test for pleasure pursuit in this study. There is scant research investigating meaning pursuit and food choices, but this study adds to the current body of research. Mead and Williams (2023) provided first steps. We argue that the healthy=expensive intuition has implications in people's food choices, and that variety seeking seems to not play a role at all. Further research must show and conclude more.

Practically, marketers strategically align their products and brands with underlying motives, such as meaning or happiness (e.g. Belanche et al., 2013). The current study attenuates the effectiveness of inducing consumers in a meaningful mindset in a food choice situation. People do not buy more or less expensive and/or healthy products when they pursue meaning. Potentially, marketers could design product advertisements around happiness or other motives that could affect (willingness to) consumption. Furthermore, the findings suggest that an increased subscription to the healthy=expensive intuition leads to less healthy food choices. Governmental institutions advocating a healthy lifestyle could inform consumers on healthy alternatives that are cheaper, which could help people understand that healthy food does not need to be expensive.

Directions of future research

We argued that meaning holds an important place in people's lives. Because, next to pleasure, meaning seems to affect many psychological aspects, such as well-being and happiness. Consumer behavior is affected by a legion of factors, but we argue that meaning pursuit is one of the key drivers of consumer choice. We do not neglect the fact that pleasure pursuit is also one of those drivers. Food is at the core of our existence. Healthy food can possibly contribute to more than a meaningful life, it can contribute to a longer and more vivid life. Hopefully, research continues to maintain the iterative study of food choices to enrich knowledge on healthy food, and create more awareness in the literature, and in society.

This research yields no evidence of a relationship between meaning pursuit and food choices. Indeed, more studies are necessary to be able to yield reliable and valid conclusions. However, it seems that pleasure pursuit and the saturation of hunger play a more prominent role (e.g. Schmitt et al., 2015) in food choices than meaning pursuit. We encourage other

scholars to study pleasure pursuit in accordance with food choices, possibly in contrast with meaning pursuit.

This study finds that people in the pursuit of meaning have a decreased accurate self-image than people that do not pursue meaning. Currently, we find no clear explanations as to why this phenomenon appears. Further research could study meaning pursuit and (perceived) self-image. For instance, it would be interesting to find if people in an induced meaning mindset want to consider themselves healthier, or if they actually perceive themselves as such.

We also encourage scholars to study more dimensions of consumer behavior and meaning pursuit. This study found no moderating effect of variety seeking and meaning pursuit. Other studies could look into different aspects of consumer behavior, such as mindset or opportunity costs. Finally, other moderating factors could influence Mead and Williams's (2023) findings. For example, would culture affect the degree to which meaning pursuit leads to cheaping out? Cultures differ on the degree of valuation of materialistic and experiential goods (e.g. Inglehart, 2000; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). We encourage researchers to compare different moderators on the relationship of meaning pursuit and food choices.

Conclusion

People need to pursue meaning on a daily basis. Despite its centrality, little is known about how meaning shapes consumer choice. This study aimed to provide prudent answers to fill the gap in relationship to food choices. We currently find no evidence for an effect of meaning pursuit on the healthiness, price, and variety of consumer food choices. We hope that this study inspires researchers to continue how meaning pursuit shapes food choices in the marketplace.

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* See Appendix A for the full reference list.

Appendices

Appendix A: Reference list

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Appendix B: Procedure experiment in English and in Dutch.

Procedure English Master thesis

Dear respondent,

First of all, we would like to thank you for participating in the survey. Your participation will help us to gather insights for our Master Thesis. We are three students at Radboud University, and we are doing a study on people's food choices. This survey will approximately take 10 - 15 minutes of your time. We would like to mention that your participation is fully voluntary, and your answers will be used confidential and anonymously. For further questions, you could send an email to one of our researchers (jurre.tlam@ru.nl).

Be reminded: it is not possible to stop and save the survey intermediately. We would appreciate it if you could fill in the survey in one take. Finally, we want to let you know that you can stop the survey at any moment. Thank you in advance for your contribution to our research,

Maaike Hinssen, Michelle Kway, and Jurre ‘t Lam.

Please try to immerse yourself in the the scenario that will be outlined. Imagine you are going to spend the weekend alone in a house on holiday. You get a budget of €50 to select 10 products for your own consumption. You choose these products by scrolling through our online supermarket. Please select the products you prefer and eat on a regular basis. Please try to resemble your standard eating pattern. In the online supermarket there are different product categories. You do not have to explicitly select products from every category. Just choose the product you like. Please check if you have selected exactly 10 products.

You are lucky! You have the opportunity to participate in a lottery, in which you can win your selected products and the remaining budget. At the end of the survey you will receive more information.

Manipulation of meaning pursuit

While making your choices, please focus on seeking meaning in your choices. This means that you can focus on every aspect of your choices you personally find the most goal oriented, satisfying, and valuable. Make it a real meaningful experience!

In the coming two minutes, we ask you perform a writing task to write down everything you associate with meaning in life. Please make sure you think about what meaning means to you.

You can now fill in your associations with meaning in life. After two minutes u will be forwarded automatically to the next page.

[Manipulation check writing task]

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

1. I took the writing task about meaning in life seriously.
   Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree

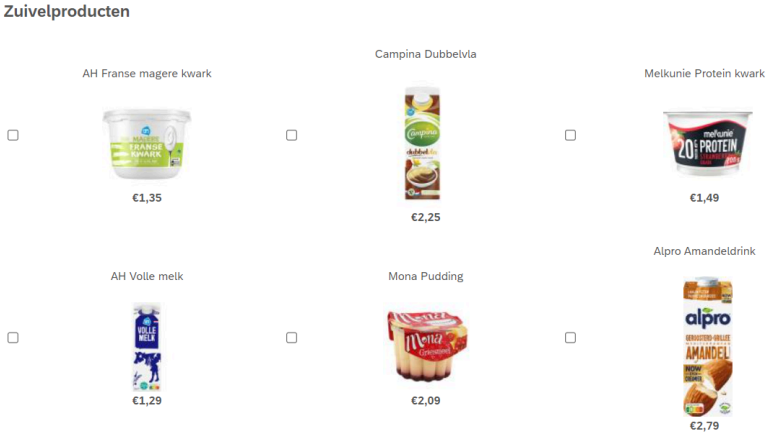
Hunger

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

2. At the moment I am feeling hungry.
   Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree

Food choices

At the next page you get to see all products that you can select. Please check at the end of the food choices if you have selected 10 products with a maximal budget of €50.



Healthy = expensive intuition

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

3. Healthy products are generally more expensive than unhealthy products.
   Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree
4. More expensive products are generally healthier than less expensive products.
   Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree
5. More expensive products are generally of higher quality than less expensive products.
   Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree

Perceived food choices

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

6. To my knowledge, I made a relatively healthy selection of products.
   Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree
7. To my knowledge, I made a relatively cheap selection of products.
   Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree
8. To my knowledge, I made a relatively varying selection of products.
   Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree
9. I made conscious choices after considering all alternatives.
   Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree

Meaning and lifestyle

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

10. I seek meaning in the form of a healthy lifestyle.
    Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree

Variety seeking

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

11. I am curious about products I have never eaten and/or drank before.
    Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree
12. I find it boring to eat and/or drink the same products every week.
    Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree
13. I easily get satiated of products I regularly eat and/or drink.
    Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree

Control variables

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

14. I found this online supermarket to be believable.
    Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree
15. I found this online supermarket to be authentic.
    Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree
16. I found this online supermarket to be realistic.
    Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree

17. Are you allergic to certain products?
    0 No
    0 Gluten
    0 Lactose
    0 Nuts
    0 Others, namely…

18. Do you currently follow a specific diet?
    0 Yes
    0 No

19. How often do you do your own groceries?
    Never O O O O O Always

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

20. I made my choices based on prior experiences with the products.
    Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree
21. I eat and/or drink the same products every week.
    Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree
22. I made my own, unique choices.
    Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree
23. While making my food choices, I calculated the remaining budget.
    Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree
24. I had trouble calculating the remaining budget.
    Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree

Manipulation check

This statement is about meaning in your food choices.

25. My choices in this experiment are motivated by the pursuit of meaning.
    Totally disagree O O O O O Totally agree

Demographics

26. How do you identify yourself?
    0 Male
    0 Female
    0 Non-binary
    0 Other, namely …
    0 I would rather not say

27. What year were you born? ____

28. What is your highest educational degree?
    0 High school
    0 MBO
    0 HBO
    0 Bachelor University
    0 Master University
    0 Other, namely …

This question regards your income. The modal income in the Netherlands is currently €3.666 before taxes per month.

29. My income situation is …
    0 Far below modal
    0 Below modal
    0 Modal
    0 Above modal
    0 Far above modal
    0 I would rather not say

30. What is your current living situation?
    0 I live with my parents.
    0 I live alone in a house/apartment.
    0 I live with a partner or friend in a house/apartment.
    0 I live in student housing.
    0 Other, namely …
    0 I would rather not say.

This is the end of this survey. We hope you had a good time helping us. We would like to remind you again that all personal information is anonymous and will be used confidential. If you would like to participate in the lottery to win your basket and the remaining budget, please enter your email address below. The winner will be announced on May 31.

Finally, we would like to thank you for your participation. If there are any questions, please contact one of our researchers (jurre.tlam@ru.nl). We would like to wish you a pleasant day!

Kind regards,

Maaike Hinssen, Michelle Kway, and Jurre ‘t Lam.

Mail address: ____

Procedure Dutch Master Thesis
Beste respondent,

Allereerst willen wij u hartelijk danken dat u deel wilt nemen aan deze enquête. Uw deelname zal ons helpen om inzichten te verkrijgen die wij nodig hebben voor onze Master Thesis. Wij zijn drie studenten aan de Radboud Universiteit en momenteel doen wij onderzoek naar welke voedingskeuzes mensen maken. De enquête die wij zo bij u zullen afnemen zal ongeveer 10 - 15 minuten van uw tijd in beslag nemen. Graag vermelden wij dat deelname aan deze enquête volledig vrijwillig is en dat uw antwoorden vertrouwelijk en anoniem worden behandeld. Bij vragen kunt u een mail sturen naar een van onze onderzoekers (jurre.tlam@ru.nl).

Let op: het is niet mogelijk om de enquête tussentijds op te slaan dus wij zouden het heel erg op prijs stellen als u de enquête in één keer kunt invullen. Tot slot willen wij u laten weten dat u op ieder gewenst moment kunt stoppen met de enquête. Alvast bedankt voor uw bijdrage aan ons afstudeeronderzoek,

Maaike Hinssen, Michelle Kway, Jurre 't Lam

Doe uw best om volledig op te gaan in het scenario dat hierna geschetst wordt.
Stelt u zich voor dat u een weekend alleen doorbrengt in een vakantiehuis ter ontspanning. U krijgt een budget van €50 om 10 producten te selecteren voor uw eigen consumptie. U kiest deze producten door in onze online supermarkt te scrollen. Kies de producten die u graag wilt en regelmatig eet. Probeer niet te veel af te wijken van uw standaard eetpatroon. In de online supermarkt bestaan verschillende productcategorieën met gevarieerde producten. U hoeft niet expliciet producten uit elke categorie te selecteren. Kies welk product u wilt. Controleer op het eind alstublieft of u 10 producten heeft geselecteerd.

U heeft geluk! U kunt deelnemen aan een loterij, waarbij u kans maakt om uw volledige winkelmand te winnen, inclusief het overgebleven budget. Hier wordt aan het eind van de enquête meer informatie over gegeven.

Manipulatie van meaning pursuit
Terwijl u uw keuzes maakt, focus dan vooral op het zoeken naar betekenis in uw keuzes. Dit betekent dat u zich focust op elk aspect van uw keuze die u persoonlijk het meest doelgericht, bevredigend en waardevol vindt. Maak er echt een betekenisvolle ervaring van! (Mead & Williams, 2022).

In de komende twee minuten vragen wij u een schrijfopdracht te doen, waarbij u alles opschrijft wat u associeert met betekenis in het leven. Zorg dat u echt nagaat wat betekenis in het leven voor u is.

U kunt nu onderstaand invullen wat u associeert met betekenis in het leven. Na twee minuten wordt u automatisch doorverwezen naar de volgende pagina.

[Manipulatiecheck schrijfopdracht]
In hoeverre bent u het eens met deze stelling?

1. Ik heb de schrijfopdracht over betekenis in het leven serieus genomen.
   Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens

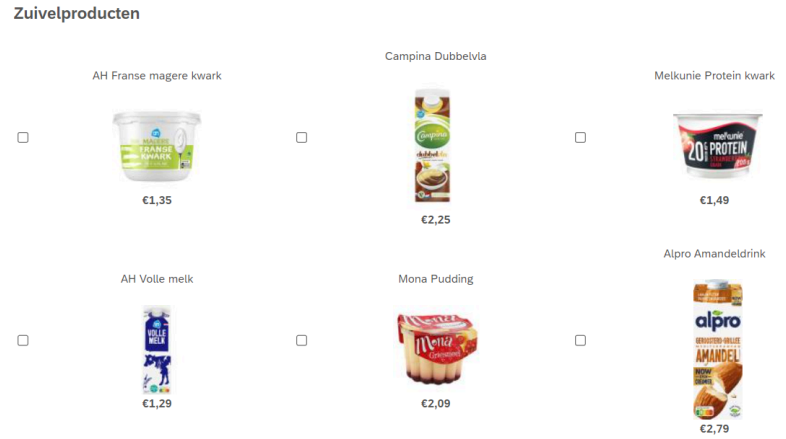
Honger

In hoeverre bent u het eens met de volgende stelling:

2. Ik heb op dit moment honger.
   Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens

Voedingskeuzes

Op de volgende pagina krijgt u alle producten te zien die u kunt selecteren. Controleer alstublieft achteraf of u precies 10 producten heeft geselecteerd met een maximaal budget van €50.



Gezond is duur intuïtie

In hoeverre bent u het eens met de volgende stellingen:

3. Gezonde producten zijn doorgaans duurder dan ongezonde producten.
   Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens
4. Duurdere producten zijn doorgaans gezonder dan goedkopere producten.
   Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens
5. Duurdere producten zijn doorgaans van hogere kwaliteit dan goedkopere producten.
   Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens

Gevonden voedingskeuzes

In hoeverre bent u het eens met de volgende stellingen:

6. Naar mijn idee heb ik een relatief gezonde selectie van producten gemaakt.
   Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens
7. Naar mijn idee heb ik een relatief goedkope selectie van producten gemaakt.
   Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens
8. Naar mijn idee heb ik een relatief variërende selectie van producten gemaakt.
   Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens
9. Ik heb bewuste keuzes gemaakt na het overwegen van alle alternatieven.
   Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens

Betekenis en leefstijl

In hoeverre bent u het eens met de volgende stelling?

10. Ik zoek betekenis in de vorm van een gezonde levensstijl

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens

Zoeken naar variëteit

In hoeverre bent u het eens met de volgende stelling?

11. Ik ben benieuwd naar producten die ik nog nooit gegeten en/of gedronken heb.
    Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens
12. Ik vind het saai om iedere week dezelfde producten te eten en/of drinken.
    Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens
13. Ik krijg snel genoeg van een bepaald product dat ik regelmatig eet en/of drink.
    Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens

Controlevariabelen

In hoeverre bent u het eens met de volgende stellingen over de online supermarkt:

14. Ik vond deze online supermarkt geloofwaardig.
    Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens
15. Ik vond deze online supermarkt authentiek.
    Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens
16. Ik vond deze online supermarkt realistisch.
    Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens

17. Bent u allergisch voor bepaalde producten?
    0 Nee
    0 Gluten
    0 Lactose
    0 Noten
    0 Anders, namelijk

18. Volgt u momenteel een specifiek dieet?
    0 Ja
    0 Nee

19. Hoe vaak doet u zelf uw boodschappen?
    Nooit O O O O O Altijd

In hoeverre bent u het eens met de volgende stellingen?

20. Ik heb mijn keuzes gebaseerd op eerdere ervaringen met de producten.
    Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens
21. Ik eet en/of iedere week dezelfde producten.
    Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens
22. Ik heb mijn eigen, unieke keuzes gemaakt.
    Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens
23. Ik heb tijdens het maken van mijn keuzes berekend hoeveel budget ik over heb.
    Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens
24. Ik heb veel moeite ervaren met het berekenen van mijn budget.
    Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens

Manipulatiecheck

Deze stelling gaat over betekenis in uw keuzes.

25. Mijn keuzes in dit experiment zijn gemotiveerd door het zoeken naar betekenis.
    Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O Helemaal mee eens

Demografische vragen

26. Hoe identificeert u uzelf?
    0 Man
    0 Vrouw
    0 Non-binair
    0 Anders, namelijk
    0 Wil ik liever niet zeggen

27. In welk jaar bent u geboren? ___

28. Wat is uw hoogst behaalde opleidingsniveau?
    0 Middelbare school
    0 MBO
    0 HBO
    0 Universiteit Bachelor
    0 Universiteit Master
    0 Anders, namelijk

Deze vraag gaat over uw inkomenssituatie. Het modaal inkomen in Nederland is momenteel €3.666 bruto per maand.

29. Mijn inkomenssituatie is
    0 Ver onder modaal
    0 Onder modaal
    0 Modaal
    0 Boven modaal
    0 Ver boven modaal
    0 Wil ik liever niet zeggen

30. Wat is uw huidige woonsituatie?
    0 Ik woon bij mijn ouders.
    0 Ik woon alleen in een huis/appartement.
    0 Ik woon met een partner of vriend in een huis/appartement.
    0 Ik woon in een studentenhuis
    0 Anders, namelijk
    0 Wil ik liever niet zeggen

Dit is het einde van dit experiment. We hopen dat u het leuk vond om ons te helpen. We willen u nogmaals eraan herinneren dat alle persoonlijke informatie anoniem en vertrouwelijk worden behandeld. Als u mee wilt doen aan de loterij om uw geselecteerde winkelwagen en overgebleven budget te winnen, vul dan onderstaand alstublieft uw e-mailadres in. De winnaar zal op 31 mei bekend worden gemaakt.

Als laatste willen wij u graag bedanken voor uw deelname. Als er nog vragen zijn, neem dan gerust contact op met een van de onderzoekers (michelle.kway@ru.nl). Wij wensen u een fijne dag!

Met vriendelijke groet,

Maaike Hinssen, Michelle Kway en Jurre 't Lam

Mailadres: _____

Appendix C: Product categories and products (with price and health score)

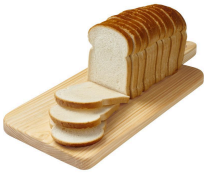
	Price	Health score		Price	Health score
Dairy products			Snacks		
AH Franse magere kwark (1L)	€ 1.89	1.0	Lays Chips (paprika)(200g)	€ 1.99	5.0
AH Volle melk (1L)	€ 1.29	2.2	Milka Chocoladereep (melk)(100g)	€ 0.85	5.0
Campina Dubbelvla (choco/vanille)(1L)	€ 2.25	3.6	Redband Winegums (235g)	€ 2.49	4.4
Mona Pudding (griesmeel/rode bessen)(450mL)	€ 1.89	4.0	Body & Fit Perfection bar (45g)	€ 1.99	2.6
Melkunie Proteïne kwark (aardbei)(200mL)	€ 1.49	2.0	AH Chocolate chip cookies (225g)	€ 1.15	4.6
			AH Donuts (pink) (4 stuks)	€ 3.15	5.0
			AH Ongebrande amandelen (200g)	€ 1.98	1.0
Bread toppings			Grain products		
AH Goudse oud 48+ plakken (190g)	€ 4.15	3.4	Grand 'Italia Fusili (volkoren)(500g)	€ 2.19	1.8
AH Goudse jong 48+ plakken (190g)	€ 2.95	2.8	Grand ‘Italia Mini fusili (350g)	€ 2.09	2.6
AH Salami (150g)	€ 1.79	3.4	Woknoedels (248g)	€ 1.19	3.2
Terra Plantaardige salami (80g)	€ 1.99	2.8	Woknoedels (volkoren)(500g)	€ 1.19	1.8
Calvé Pindakaas (350g)	€ 2.89	3.6	Rond heel brood (volkoren)	€ 1.89	1.4
Terra 100% pindakaas (360g)	€ 2.59	2.2	Rond heel brood (wit)	€ 1.89	3.8

AH Biologisch witte eieren (6 stuks)	€ 1.99	1.4			
Fruit and vegetables			Drinks (non-alcoholic)		
Mango (heel)	€ 2.19	1.0	Coca-Cola Original (1L)	€ 2.29	5.0
Mango (stukjes)(120g)	€ 2.25	1.0	Coca-Cola Zero sugar (1L)	€ 2.29	3.2
Fruitmix (framboos/blauwe bes)(250g)	€ 4.99	1.0	Lipton Ice tea (green)(1.5L)	€ 2.85	3.8
Elstar appels (4 stuks)	€ 2.09	1.0	Perla Huisblends classics koffiepads (36 stuks)	€ 4.69	2.4
AH Roerbakgroente (Hollands)(400g)	€ 2.39	1.0	Crystal Clear Sparkling (lemon)(1.5L)	€ 1.99	2.0
AH Roerbakgroente (Italiaans)(400g)	€ 2.09	1.0	AH Verse sap (sinaasappel/aardbei)(1L)	€ 4.76	2.0
			Perla huisblends koffiepads dark roast (36 stuks)	€ 4.69	2.4
Desserts			Meat/fish/vegetarian		
Lohilo Proteïne ijs (cookie dough)(350mL)	€ 5.49	3.0	Rundergehakt (300g)	€ 3.49	3.4
AH Roomijs (vanille)(1L)	€ 2.99	4.6	Terra Plantaardig rulgehakt (375g)	€ 2.49	2.2
Ben & Jerry’s ijs (cookie dough)(465mL)	€ 6.59	5.0	Zalmfilet (170g)	€ 5.85	1.8
Hertog Vegan ijs (vanille)(900mL)	€ 5.45	4.2	Vivera Plantaardige zalmfilet (200g)	€ 3.75	2.2
			Ossenhaas puntjes (200g)	€ 7.80	2.6
			Kipfilet (300g)	€ 4.49	1.0
Beverages (alcoholic)			Other		
Heineken Pilsener Premium (6x0.33L)	€ 6.45	5.0	Dr Oetker Ristorante pizza (mozzarella/pesto)	€ 2.65	5.0
Adobe Chardonnay reserva (0.75L)	€ 6.65	3.8	AH Oven partymix (320g)	€ 3.09	4.6

Saint Louis Provence rosé (0.75L)	€ 6.99	3.8	Kwekkeboom Oven en airfryer mix (272g)	€ 5.49	4.6
Heineken Pilsener premium 0.0 (6x0.25L)	€ 4.59	3.4			
Galilei Hugo 0% (0.75L)	€ 3.39	3.6			

Appendix D: Product images

Product	Image	Product	Image
AH Franse magere kwark		Lays Paprika	
AH Volle melk		Milka Chocoladereep	
Campina dubbelvla		Redband Winegums	
Mona Pudding		Body & Fit Perfection bar	
Melkunie Protein kwark		AH Chocolate chip	
		AH Ongebrande amandelen	

		AH Donuts pink	
AH Goude oude 48+		Gran d'Italia Fusilli	
AH Goudse jong 48+		Gran d'Italia Mini fusilli	
AH Salami		Woknoedels	
Terra Plantaardige salami		Woknoedels (volkoren)	
Calvé Pindakaas		Rond volkoren heel brood	
Terra 100% pindakaas		Rond wit heel brood	

AH Biologische eieren			
Mango		Coca-Cola	
Mango stukjes		Coca-Cola zero	
Fruitmix framboos en blauwe bes		Litpon ice tea	
AH Roerbakgroente		Crystal Clear	
AH Roerbakgroente		AH Verse sap	
AH Elstar appel		Perla Huisblends koffiepads	

Lohilo Proteïne ijs		Rundergehakt	
AH Roomijs		Terra Plantaardig rulgehakt	
Ben & Jerry's Cookie dough		Zalmfilet	
Hertog Vegan roomijs		Vivera Plantaardige zalmfilet	
		Ossenhaaspuntjes	
		AH Scharrel kipfilet	
Heineken Premium pilsener		Dr. Oetker Ristorante pizza	

Adobe Chardonnay		AH Oven partymix	
Saint Louis Provence rosé		Kwekkeboom Oven en airfryer gemixte hapjes	
Heineken Premium pilsener 0.0%			
Galilei Hugo 0%			

Appendix E: Computations of all new variables

Variable	*Computation*
Total health of basket	$\sum$ *Health scores of products*
Total price of basket	$\sum$ *Prices of products* (in €)
Average healthiness of basket	$\frac{\textit{Total health of basket}}{\textit{N of products}}$
Average price of products in basket	$\frac{\textit{Total price of basket}}{\textit{N of products}}$ (in €)
Variety seeking	$\frac{\textit{Curiosity score} + \textit{Boredom score} + \textit{Satiation score}}{3}$
Variety of categories (number of different categories)	$\sum$ *All binary* (0 *or* 1) *variables per category* used