Project Report **EatMe – I'm fancy**

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The philosophy of a bowl of muesli

Variability

Muesli is a category of diverse foods rather than one specific product. There is an almost limitless freedom to combine different ingredients and to compose an individual mixture by adding or avoiding a specific foodstuff. It requires creativity and courage to design a new muesli, to combine flavors and textures of different ingredients to create an overall foodstuff that excites the taste buds and leaves the consumer satisfied. Each component is different from the others and has its own distinct attributes, and it is the unique combination of ingredients which defines the overall character of a muesli.

Consciousness

Nevertheless, taste is not the only criterion to consider. This is a general rule that is true for all foodstuffs we consume. We often base our selections on more ethical criteria too, for example, in order to make consciously considered and socially responsible choices. In addition to the taste, accordance with personal opinions and attitudes matter. Where does the product come from? How and how far was it transported? Is it a natural product or processed by industry? How much of the final price does the farmer earn? Was the product produced under organic and sustainable conditions? Considering these different criteria makes the composition of an ideal muesli more complicated or perhaps even impossible. There cannot be one ideal muesli which is healthy, affordable, socially and ecologically friendly and which contains all desired ingredients. Thus, a careful weighing and judging of many different factors is required to create a personal favorite mixture.
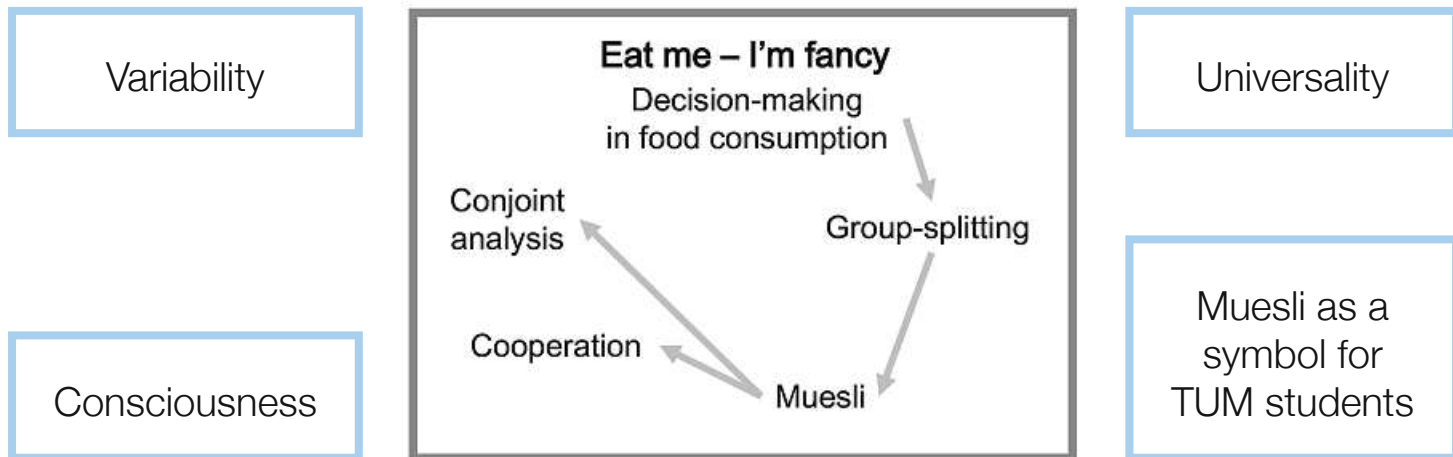
Universality

Muesli is universal. This undemanding foodstuff is simple and the preparation could not be easier, making it one of students' favorite foods. A package of premixed muesli or the ingredients in isolation can be stored for a long time without the risk of spoiling, which is ideal for those who do not have time – or who forget – to shop for fresh groceries on a regular basis. A bowl of muesli can serve as a full, satisfying and filling meal, supplying one with all essential nutrients. It can be a conventional breakfast or snack or even served as lunch or dinner. Muesli is known and valued by many cultures, each interpreting and preparing this universal meal in a unique way.

Muesli as a symbol for TUM students

The community of TUM members is highly diverse and heterogeneous. Students originate from countries all over the world, they have different sociocultural backgrounds, religions, attitudes and opinions, their interests and subjects of study range from agriculture to quantum physics – every person at TUM is unique and contributes to the harmony of our diverse community. This heterogeneity is reflected by our model foodstuff "muesli" which consists of a variety of different ingredients characterized by their unique taste, texture, price, origin etc. – together forming a harmonious composition.

The Philosophy of a Muesli Bowl

Variability

Consciousness

Universality

Muesli as a symbol for TUM students

Eat me – I'm fancy
Decision-making in food consumption
Conjoint analysis
Group-splitting
Cooperation
Muesli

Abstract

Buying food is an everyday activity involving many decisions. We have never had so many options and possibilities when choosing our food as we do nowadays. Which factors play a key role when it comes to the final decision? The aim of our project was to analyze this question by concentrating on the muesli consumption of students at TUM. Using a "conjoint analysis," we were able to gain an insight into the priorities governing the choice of ingredients for making muesli specifically in relation to the categories of regionality, price, nutritional value, and organic certification. The results show some surprising characteristics and these should be of interest and relevance to further studies in this area.

Background

Shopping for groceries is a common activity which is part of our everyday life. On average, a German household spends over 10 % of all expenses on food (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2013). Globalization has provided us with an enormous diversity of products lined up on the stores' shelves. However, this diversity can be friend or foe: being given choices obviously forces one to make decisions and to choose certain products over others. Why do we add a certain foodstuff to the shopping cart rather than another? Certainly, this question cannot be answered easily, but we can make a reasonable guess at some of the numerous factors that might play a role in the decision-making process.

The recent trend toward health and fitness has put the nutritional values of foodstuffs into focus, in terms of, for example, protein content, fiber, calories and vitamins. Despite denials of the climate-change crisis by a few, awareness of a product's origin, transportation, sustainability and conditions of production is rising; keywords in this context are the ecological footprint, certificates, regionality and social responsibility. Besides all this, the shopping routine is influenced by less rational factors such as habits, curiosity or temptation. Whatever plays a role in one's decisions on groceries, this is a highly controversial topic, reflecting an individual's lifestyle and position on fundamental questions.

Based on this subject's high topicality and future relevance we decided to analyze the decision-making processes concerning food consumption in depth from theoretical and practical perspectives.

Therefore, a set of rational criteria, leading to a certain outcome, were defined and their importance was studied. For our analysis, we decided to concentrate on one specific foodstuff to allow for a precise investigation. Ideal targets are simple products which enable the consecutive variation of different parameters to determine the analyzed factors. After intensive research, we opted for muesli as our food of interest. Apart from being consumed among many different potential target groups in Germany, muesli is a composite foodstuff composed of several ingredients, thus enabling the separate investigation of each decision made when choosing each of these. With muesli, therefore, we were able to analyze many decisions while focusing on just one product. To allow for a more precise analysis of our initial question and to control the comparability of results, we decided to focus on a particular target group: students at TUM. This choice was determined not only by the fact that the latter represented an easily accessible group for us, but also by the high degree of heterogeneity of sociocultural background among TUM students.

Goals and methods

Muesli is a product composed of a variety of ingredients, each possessing its own characteristics. Each consumer might value these attributes differently according to, for example, individual taste, attitude toward costs, personal definition of healthy eating, and ethical views on fair trade. All these things can influence shopping behavior (Gensler 2006). The aim of our research was to determine the factors and characteristics which influence the decision-making of our fellow students most. Intensive analysis of the decision-making process and clustering of criteria yielded four general categories of attributes which we chose to concentrate on for further investigation: "regionality" "label/certification," "price" and "nutritional value". Those preferences were determined to produce a tailor-made TUMuesli, which represents the desires of TUM stakeholder.

The selection of a suitable method for our research involved a long process, led by practical considerations and studies on questionnaire-answering and self-assessment. To determine the most important decision-making factors, several approaches were discussed, such as the use of a questionnaire, a virtual model simulation, and an econometric model. Problems occurring in research fields when participants were asked to state their opinion on ethical topics have been described in the relevant literature. If par-

ticipants are asked directly whether they prefer a more expensive fair-trade product over a cheaper conventional one, most will state their willingness to buy the fair-trade one. The participants feel obligated to do so, even though they would behave differently in real life (Schöberl 2012). Thus, it is better to ask questions in which such ethical statements get rouged. A method to do this is the conjoint analysis which aims to measure the importance of individual factors without overtly asking about them, while still trying to resemble a realistic decision.

There are two general types of conjoint analyses: a choice-based one and a direct one. We used the latter one to design our conjoint analysis which asks the participants to rank a group of products according to their preferences. Since muesli is a composite product, we separated it into four general components: the basic substance, e.g. cornflakes or oats; milk; chocolate toppings; and dried fruits. For each of these sub-ingredients we designed a group of products using the orthogonal design algorithm of the statistics software SPSS. This was necessary to generate a smaller set of products that was still representative for all products and allowed the consecutive calculation of the importance of the individual factors from the data set. The products differed from one another in terms of the four characteristics of interest: "regionality," "label/certification," "price" and "nutritional value." In their product ranking, the study participants had, for instance, to decide whether they preferred a pack of organic oats from Germany for 4,95 €, or the cheaper but considerably less healthy option of corn flakes from USA.
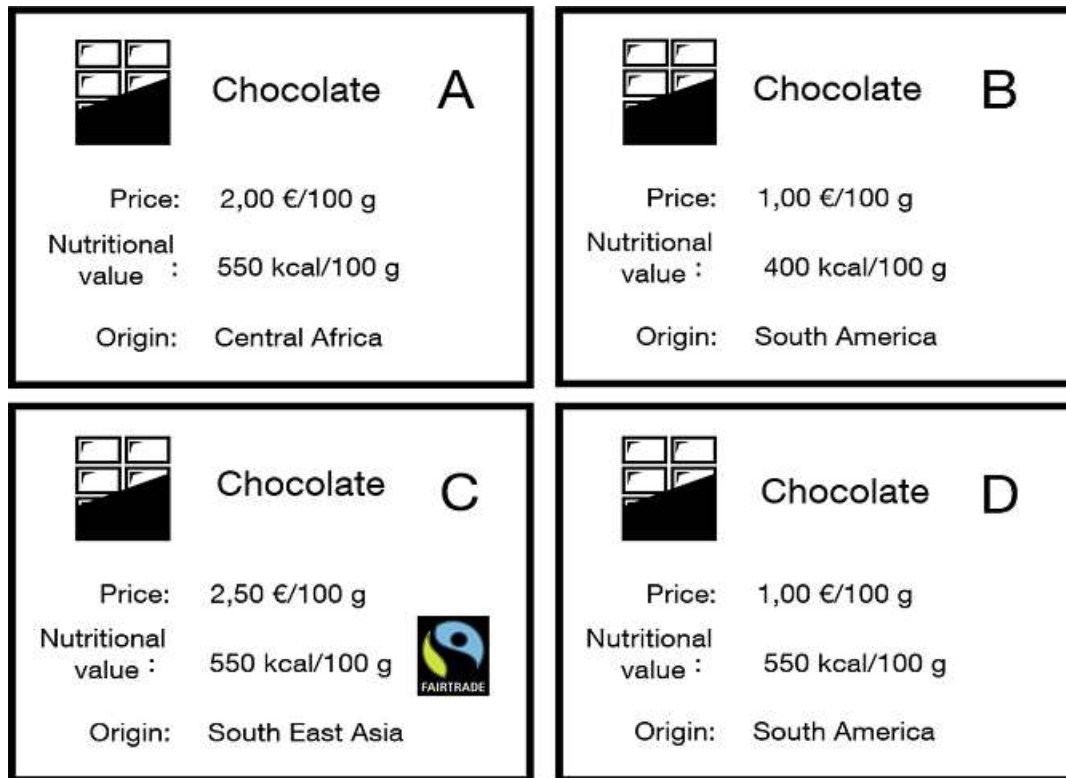

Figure 1: Decision example as part of a conjoint analysis

Using the generated ranking data of all participants, the conjoint algorithm of SPSS calculated the so-called "part-worth utility," which is a measure for the importance of each factor.

As an overall aim, we wanted to create a TUM-specific muesli mixture that represented the personal preferences and attitudes of TUM students. Therefore, we added a short survey to our questionnaire which asked for the participant's favorite muesli ingredients. By combining the data from the conjoint analysis that specify the most important characteristics for each sub-product with the results of the poll that determine the most preferred ingredients, we were able to generate a representative TUMuesli.

Outcome and Discussion

To assess students' decision-making about food consumption, a conjoint analysis with a questionnaire was designed. The analysis was based on the model foodstuff muesli, whereby the muesli ingredients of milk, cereal base, chocolate and dried fruit were considered. We administered the questionnaire using the evasys software to check our initial hypothesis:

TUM students take nutritional value, price, social and environmental factors into account differently when selecting their muesli

The survey was conducted over several weeks, allowing us to collect a significant and representative amount of data. A total of 122 persons participated in the survey. As visualized in Figure 1 the sex distribution was nearly evenly spread. Most of the participants were from the campus Innenstadt or Garching. Yet there were also several participants from Weihenstephan, Rechts der Isar and other campuses. Furthermore, the majority of the participating TUM students ate muesli several times per week, some even on a daily basis.

Asking participants questions about their consumer behavior helped us to understand the relative importance in their decision-making of our four chosen factors: origin, certification labels, price, and nutritional value per muesli ingredient. After processing the data, we were able to prioritize the different factors analyzed in the four examined muesli product categories, thus enabling a product-wide comparison. In figure 2 the results after the post-processing are shown.
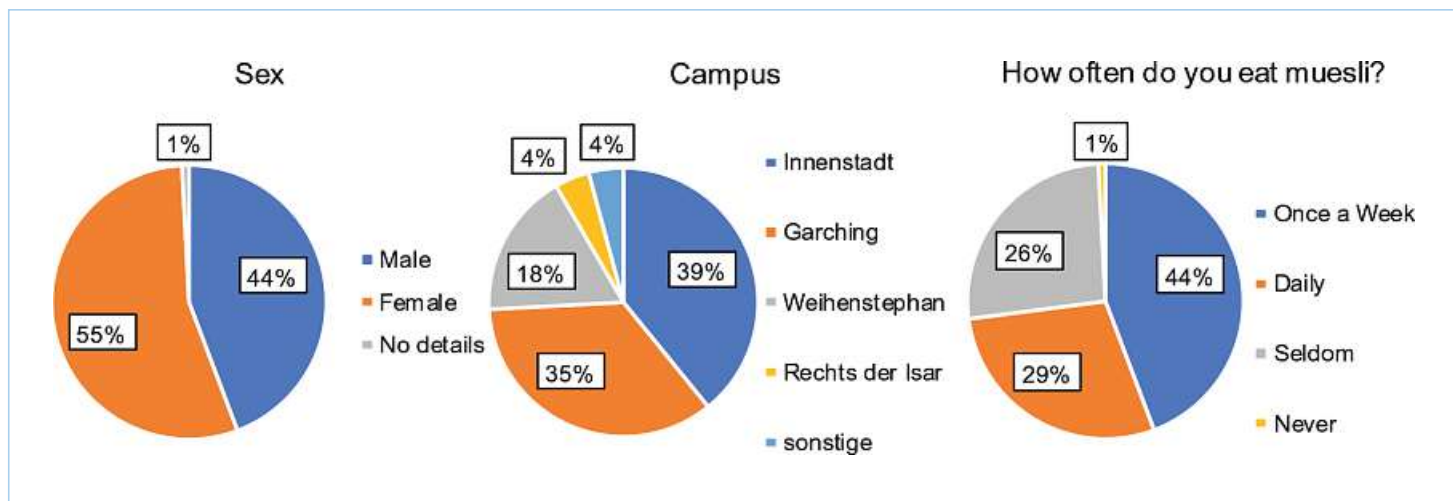

Figure 2: Left: Sex distribution of participants, middle: distribution between TUM campuses of the participants, right: muesli consumption frequency

Asking participants questions about their consumer behavior helped us to understand the relative importance in their decision-making of our four chosen factors: origin, certification labels, price, and nutritional value per muesli ingredient. After processing the data, we were able to prioritize the different factors analyzed in the four examined muesli product categories, thus enabling a product-wide comparison. In figure 2 the results after the post-processing are shown.

In accordance with the growing consciousness for an ethical lifestyle, we observed a high impact on decisions of the organic/fairtrade label and the origin of ingredients. TUM students especially preferred regional milk, if possible from the own federal state. Moreover, it was very important to them that the chocolate additive had a fairtrade label. Also for the cereal base and dried fruit the highest scoring factors were the origin and/or quality/organic label. Nevertheless, considering the economic status of students in
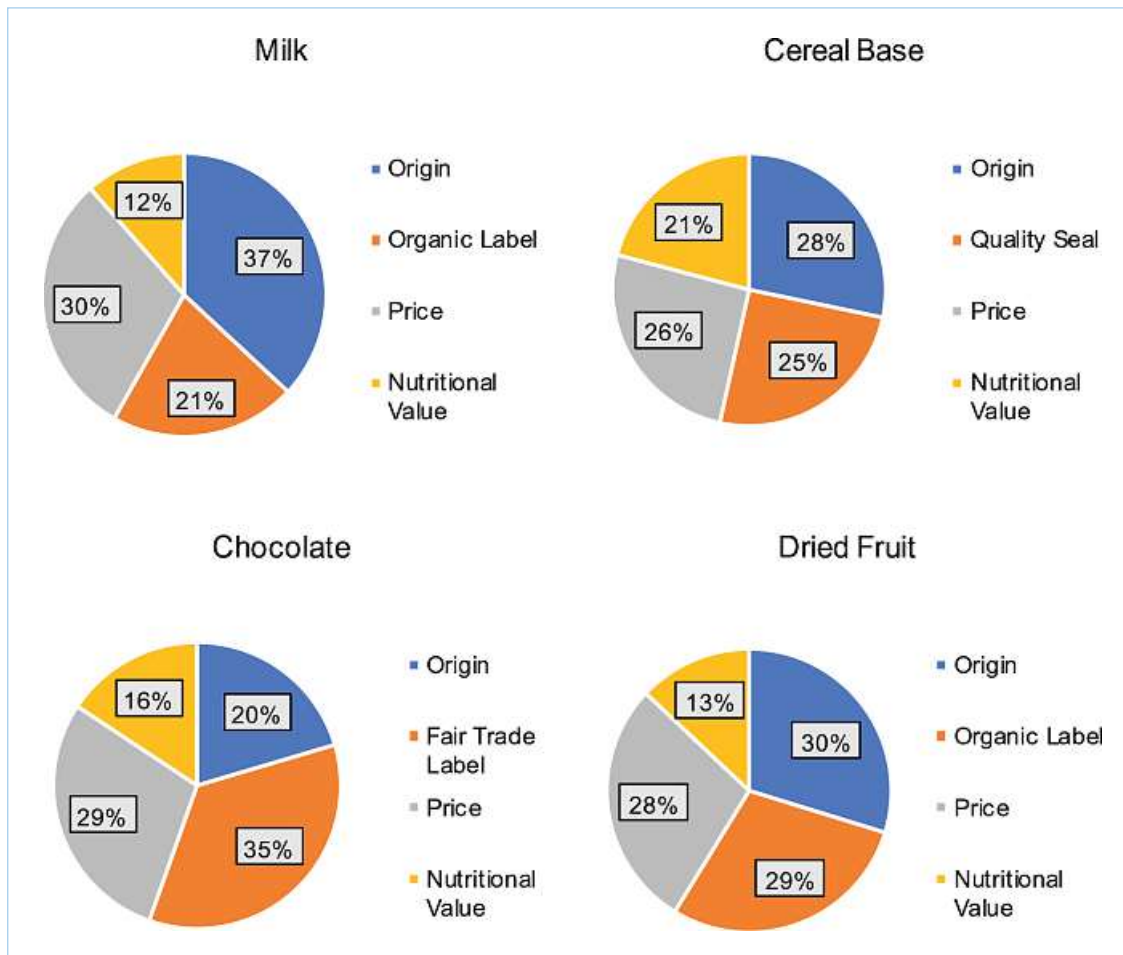

Figure 3: Importance per factor for the muesli ingredients milk, cereal base, chocolate and dried fruit
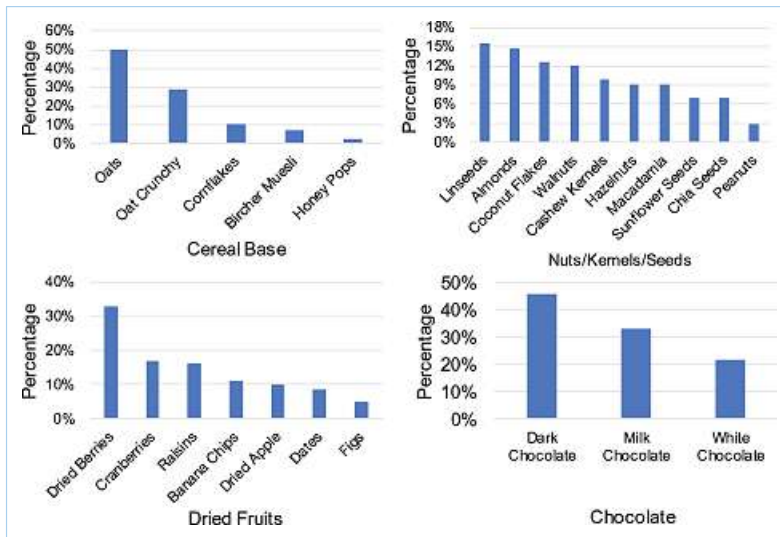
Figure 4: Results of the questionnaire

society, we also noted that the price was one of the determining factors on final decisions and was therefore evaluated as equally important for each ingredient. The importance of a regarded factor can vary significantly between different products. Moreover, all four components analyzed displayed highly diverse properties and may play different roles in everyday life.

Returning to our hypothesis, we can see that the four factors (origin, certification label, price and nutritional value) were evaluated differently. Hence, the investigated factors are not taken equally into account in the decision-making process of students when selecting muesli. This confirms our hypothesis mentioned above. In addition, we recognize, that the influence of the examined factors on the decision-making process might vary depending on the observed product.

Another important and not less interesting finding on the matter of the applicability of a conjoint analysis was that the ranking of products can be an exciting but also quite mentally exhausting endeavor. A dropout rate of approximately 60% of the participants indicated that it took a lot more effort to process a conjoint analy-

sis than a usual questionnaire. For future implementations of conjoint analyses, we would suggest carrying out the conjoint analyses in a lower volume with a more transparent structure so as to decrease the dropout rate.

By uniting the results of the conjoint analysis with the outcome of the upstream questionnaire (Figure 3 and 4) we were able to determine the composition of the TUMuesli as follows:

• Milk from Bavaria

• Oats from Germany

• Dark Chocolate with Fair-Trade Label

• Dried berries from Germany

• Regional almonds and linseeds

These results are not only valuable for the composition of the TUMuesli but also for companies of the food industry, as the importance of certain influencing factors in the decision-making process are illustrated. In particular the change of the utility values according to changes of the characteristic of a certain influencing factor might be of great interest. This can be very useful for decisions in marketing. For instance, companies could better define their pricing according to specific factors of consumer choice.

To conclude, the proposed composition of TUMuesli will be made available at the TUM shop and might also give existing food companies an incentive to produce a custom-made muesli for students.

Summary and Future Goals

The aim of the project was to gain an insight into the preferences of our fellow students and to determine which factors in their decision making are considered most. The result of this analysis is a muesli tailor-made to their desires. The conjoint analysis allowed us to achieve the latter as we were able to examine the decision-making processes of our fellow students and avoid bias due to indirect measurements of preferences. The data on

consumption clearly pointed out the significance of muesli in a student's diet. The results of our analysis served as a basis for creating the optimal muesli for TUM students. This is muesli to please the palates of all students: A careful composition of rich German oats, complemented by regional almonds and linseeds, with a serving of fine fair-trade dark chocolate and an intricate mixture of dried berries, all of which is completed by a healthy portion of wholesome Bavarian milk. A muesli fulfilling their desire for a satisfying meal, yet containing a dash of that something special that makes the TUMuesli a product that has been missing on their daily breakfast menu.

One of the most crucial things we learned was the importance of an appealing survey. This factor is critical keeping in mind the complexity of the conjoint analysis. An array of seemingly redundant questions can quite quickly irritate the survey taker. This is reflected by the high dropout rate in our survey, proving a need for a more appealing approach to designing the survey. Reducing the dropout rate must hence be viewed as one of the biggest goals for future projects which use the conjoint analysis as a method.

Lastly, we looked at the product itself. As aforementioned, the team created TUMuesli by combining the ingredients most favoured by TUM students. This recipe was subsequently sent to various cereal companies who can market TUMuesli on a trial basis to judge the success of the product. These samples will be sold in the TUM shop to provide access not only to all students but also to visitors wishing to try the product. The trial run in market conditions will serve as a benchmark for the quality of the product. A positive initial response will lead to the addition of TUMuesli to the regular stock of the TUM shop. This way, everyone will be able to enjoy this healthy and satisfying muesli.

Acknowledgments

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EatMe

Decision-making processes concerning food consumption.

Buying food is an everyday activity for most of us. Yet the choice of food has become a highly emotional topic in our western society.

We want to analyse what unconsciously and consciously drives people when it comes to the decision of buying a certain foodstuff.

Imagine yourself on a Saturday morning, shopping the groceries for next week. Are you walking through the abundantly packed aisles of a supermarket or do you prefer to visit your local farmer's market?

Which criteria are influencing your decision for a particular product when buying apples, yoghurt, eggs or coffee?

prize, vegan, presentation, intolerances, cultural background, organic, sustainable, seasonal, taste, healthy, brand, regional origin, nutritional value, availability, ecological footprint, manufacturing conditions, ugly food, fair trade, habit, lifestyle, packaging, appearance, convenience

BACKGROUND

In 2014 the average German household spent 293 euro on food each month [1]. At the same time, the decision-making processes concerning food consumption have become increasingly difficult, as consumers are confronted with a huge variety of products and influenced by a diverse range of factors. This trend has been vividly demonstrated in a field study by Columbia and Stanford University: when confronted with an extensive array of 24 choices of jam or chocolate, consumers show much greater difficulties and less satisfaction with their decisions than for a limited array of six choices [2].

Furthermore, the awareness of food consumption is increasing in today's European society. For example, numerous EU initiatives have come to life to promote healthy nutrition and reduce diseases caused by a poor diet [3]. In a recent poll around half of German citizens have stated that they pay attention to a balanced nutrition [4], while vegetarianism and veganism are becoming increasingly popular as well. Since food consumption is responsible for approximately 30 % of greenhouse gas emissions in Europe [5], another important aspect to consider is sustainability. In addition, countless labels exist to certify today's food as regional, fairly traded or ecologically produced.

The interaction of all these aspects makes decision-making processes concerning food consumption highly complex, multi-layered and often suboptimal. That conclusion is underlined by the fact that about three quarters of consumers in Germany experience uncertainty, undecidedness and mistrust when buying food [6]. Therefore, this is a highly interesting area of research with a significant potential for improving decision-making processes.

GOALS AND METHODS

Our overarching goal is to improve decision-making processes concerning food consumption based on a better understanding of the influencing factors involved and their interaction. Our initial research focuses on the hypothesis

Better informed consumers will choose their food more consciously.

We are going to analyse that supposition thoroughly with respect to two different aspects: Firstly, we want to understand the importance of the ecological footprint as a numerical measure of a product's sustainability for consumer's conscious decisions. Secondly, we want to decipher how marketing and the related ideas of regional, seasonal and ecological food influence consumer's unconscious decisions. In a second step, we are going to translate our research results into a practical concept in order to improve decision-making processes concerning food consumption.

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inspired by TUM: Junge Akademie

Poster 1: Annual Conference 2016

EatMe. I'm fancy!

Decision-making processes concerning food consumption.

Buying food is an everyday activity for most of us. Yet the choice of food has become a highly emotional topic in our western society.

We want to analyse what unconsciously and consciously drives people when it comes to the decision of buying a certain foodstuff.

BACKGROUND

Student's choice on groceries is an often stereotyped topic that is primarily associated with a limited budget and individual shopping habits. However, this narrow point of view ignores a variety of other factors that may influence this highly emotional decision. Our project aims at reflecting the mood of TUM students on food consumption by analyzing the impact of certain characteristic factors such as quality, price, organic origin and nutritional value.

Muesli represents a widespread universal foodstuff which can be individually composed based on personal preferences. Imagine a place where you get to choose every ingredient of your muesli and can develop a new mixture every day – just like the cafeteria's salad bar. By prefering certain products in comparison to others the student intuitively ranks food criteria that define the different ingredients. Thus, a bowl of muesli depicts a personal profile and reveals decisive factors of one's food consumption.

GOALS AND METHODS

Our goal is to find out which conscious and unconscious factors influence the decision making process of food consumption. Therefore, we focused on the product muesli by analysing the selection criteria for muesli ingredients of TUM students.

We are going to investigate the prioritization of criteria in terms of food consumption by applying conjoint analysis as a theoretical tool as well as in a practical way. The latter will be an experiment in cooperation with a muesli producing company where students are supposed to arrange their own muesli by choosing different ingredients. From the obtained data on selection of the ingredients we want to draw conclusions about the influencing factors of muesli consumption.

JANUARY 2017

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Poster 2: Evaluation Day I

EatMe I'm fancy!
Decision-making processes concerning food consumption.

TUM

ABSTRACT   Decisions about food consumption are more relevant than ever. Our team is interested in the decision making of students based on the model food muesli. We want to elucidate what drives our target group when it comes to the decision of buying a certain foodstuff, using the approach of conjoint analysis and enabling us to rise consumption awareness.

HYPOTHESIS   TUM students take nutritional value, price, social and environmental factors into account differently when choosing their muesli.

GOALS AND METHODS
In a modern world, in which marketing is part of everyday life, design and advertisement for food and drinks get more fancy to catch consumers attention. But marketing is just one side of the coin. The nutritional value, social and environmental factors as well as the price of a product are attributes which should be additionally considered whilst purchasing food.

Our research focuses on determining the most influential of the previously listed attributes which will be accomplished via a conjoint analysis. A conjoint analysis measures how much participants value the different attributes of a single product. Here four different products (cereals, milk, chocolate, and dried fruits) will be tested with regard to their specific attributes. The participants are asked to rank eleven different attribute combinations from one (most favourable) to eleven (most unfavourable). In the end the data from the conjoint analysis will be evaluated with SPSS to answer the hypothesis.

EXPECTED OUTCOME AND DISCUSSION
The conjoint analysis will be held for several weeks allowing us to collect a significant and representative amount of data. After processing the data by our team, we will get a prioritization of the different analysed factors in the four muesli products examined, thus enabling a product-wide comparison. In accordance with the growing consciousness for life-style, we expect to observe a high impact of the bio/fair-trade label and the regionality factors on the decision. Whether this comes from an environmental awareness or increasing social trends is an interesting question to be addressed in future.

Nevertheless, considering the economic status of students in society, we still assume the price to be one of the determining factors which will greatly impact the final decision.

The importance of the factors may vary significantly between different products, as all four analysed components display highly diverse properties and may play different roles in everyday life. Taken together, our results will be an interesting piece in decision making analysis, giving an insight into a part of society that changes rapidly and thus answering our formulated hypothesis.

SUMMARY AND FUTURE GOALS
During the last year, our team has focused on the analysis of students' decision-making about food consumption based on the model foodstuff muesli. In parallel to the planning and implementation of the conjoint analysis, we tried to build up several cooperations with muesli producing companies. Now, after creating and validating the conjoint analysis, we are collecting data for our interpretation. In addition, the resulting ranking of interests and preferences shall be reflected in a TUM specific muesli mixture which shall be available at the TUM-shop. By analysing the consumption behaviour of students, we also expect to create some manner of impact, increasing consciousness and rising education in foodstuff choice.

JUNE 2017

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TUM: Junge Akademie

Poster 3: Evaluation Day II

EatMe. I'm fancy!

TUM

ABSTRACT   Decisions concerning food consumption is an everyday situation and thus a current topic. During a dynamic working process, our group aimed to analyse the importance of different factors for the outcome of such a decision, by performing a conjoint analysis using muesli as a model product. We found out that TUM-students consider factors differently when choosing amongst several ingredients. In addition, we could determine the optimal muesli composition for our fellow students, hereby creating a unique "TUMuesli".

GOALS
Our goal was to find out which conscious and unconscious factors influence the decision-making process of food consumption. We wanted to analyse what attributes of food drives people when it comes to the decision of buying a certain foodstuff. Therefore, we focused on the product muesli by investigating the selection criteria for muesli ingredients of TUM students via conjoint analysis. Using the results of our data acquisition we wanted to establish a muesli which represents the preferences of the TUM community.

HYPOTHESIS
Our overarching goal was to improve decision-making processes concerning food consumption based on a better understanding of the influencing factors that are involved. Our initial research focused on the claim:

TUM students take nutritional value, price, social and environmental factors into account differently when selecting their muesli

TEAM STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

OUTCOME AND DISCUSSION
Asking participants questions about their consumer behaviour helped us to understand the relative importance in their decision-making of our four chosen factors: origin, label/certification, price, and nutritional value per muesli ingredient. The results after the post-processing are shown in the next figure, above right.

In accordance with the growing consciousness for an ethical life-style, we observed a high impact on decisions of the organic/fair-trade label and the origin of ingredients. Moreover, considering the economic status of students in society,

we also noted that the price was one of the determining factors on final decisions and was therefore evaluated as equally important for each ingredient.

Our initial hypothesis was confirmed as the investigated factors are not taken equally into account in the decision-making process of students when selecting muesli. Another interesting finding on the matter of the applicability of a conjoint analysis was that the ranking of products can be a mentally exhausting endeavour (dropout rate ~60%).

By uniting the results, we determined the composition of the "TUMuesli" as follows:

Milk from Bavaria | Oats from Germany | Dark Chocolate with Fair-Trade Label | Dried berries from Germany | Regional almonds and linseeds

These outcomes are not only valuable for the composition of the TUMuesli but also for companies of the food industry, as they are useful for decisions in marketing.

SUMMARY AND FUTURE GOALS
The conjoint analysis allowed us to examine the decision-making process of our fellow students and avoid bias due to self-assessment. Everybody of us has an impact on our world with his or her everyday shopping behaviour. The results of our analysis served as a basis for creating the optimal muesli for TUM students.

This recipe was sent to a cereal company which can market the TUMuesli on a trial basis to judge the success of the product. We decided on a company which helps people with mental illnesses. After this test run, we want our product to be part of the TUM-Shop, enabling all TUM students access to it.

OCTOBER 2017

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Poster 4: Annual Conference 2017