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**Millennials and Healthy Food
Consumption:**

Factors Influencing Intentions and the Intention-Behavior Gap

by
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Abstract

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Thesis Purpose: The current thesis aimed to explore the knowledge in the field of Healthy Eating Behavior with a particular emphasis on the consumers of Millennial generation. The main focus laid on the Millennial consumer healthy eating decision-making process and intention-behavior gap. Moreover, the authors of this thesis strove to understand factors influencing healthy eating intention, as well as the gap between intention and behavior.

Methodology: The qualitative research design followed an ontological paradigm described as social constructionist and an epistemological position described as interpretivist. An abductive approach was adopted to relate the theory to empirical materials, allowing predefined categories to guide the data collection. Moreover, the semi-structured interviews based on convenience sampling helped reveal the underlying reasons for the consumer decision-making process. The empirical data was iteratively analyzed with the use of grounded theory.

Theoretical perspective: To answer the two research questions, this thesis adopted well-established Theory of Planned Behavior as well as additional theories such as internal and external influencers on food consumption to analyze Millennial consumer's healthy food intention formulation and their intention-behavior gap.

Empirical data: 15 semi-structured interviews with Millennial participants from one of the Scandinavian countries (Norway, Sweden, Denmark).

Conclusion: The result of the research confirm the Theory of Planned Behavior can be applied in Scandinavian Millennial food consumption phenomenon, with a note of need for further research on the efficacy between Subjective Norms and behavioral intention. Besides TPB factors, a few internal factors were also identified to form the healthy eating intention. Furthermore, derived from the empirical materials, three sources, namely PBC, Planning and Goal Setting, as well as Conflicting Intentions are considered factors that trigger the intention-behavior gap.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	6
1.1 Background	6
1.1.2 Understanding the Differences Between Generations	7
1.1.3 Distinctive Traits of Millennials.....	8
1.1.4 Healthy Food Phenomenon	9
1.2 Problem Formulation.....	10
1.3 Research Question and Purpose	11
1.4 Intended Contributions	11
1.5 Outline of the Thesis	12
2 Theoretical Framework.....	13
2.1 Understanding the Decision Making.....	13
2.1.1 Rational Decision Making	13
2.1.2 Prospects Theory of Decision Making	13
2.2 Understanding Healthy Eating Phenomenon - Consumer Perspective	14
2.3 Factors that Influence the Eating Behavior	15
2.3.1 Internal Factors	15
2.3.2 External Factors	17
2.4 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)	18
2.4.1 Attitude (towards the Behavior)	19
2.4.2 Subjective Norms	19
2.4.3 Perceive Behavioral Control (of the Behavior)	19
2.4.4 Qualitative Application of TPB.....	20
2.5 An Integrated Conceptual Framework	21
3. Methodology	22
3.1 Research Philosophy	22
3.2 Role of the Theory.....	23
3.3 Research Strategy and Research Design	24
3.4 Data Collection and Process.....	25
3.4.1 Semi-structured interview.....	25
3.5 Data Analysis	28
3.6 Methodological Limitations	29
3.7 Ethical Considerations.....	30
4. Analysis and Discussion.....	32

4.1 Understanding the Healthy Eating Intention Motivators in the Millennial Context.....	32
4.1.1 Attitudes as a Motivator of Healthy Eating Intention.....	32
4.1.2 Subjective Norms as a Motivator of Healthy Eating Intention	33
4.1.3 Perceived Behavioral Control as a Motivator of Healthy Eating Intention.....	35
4.1.4 Other Motivators of Healthy Eating Intention Formation	36
4.2 Exploring the Barriers between Intention and Behavior	40
4.2.1 Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)	40
4.2.2 Planning and Goal Setting	42
4.2.3 Conflicting Intentions.....	43
4.3 Chapter Summary.....	44
5.Conclusions.....	46
5.1 Conclusion.....	46
5.2 Theoretical Contributions.....	48
5.3 Managerial Implications.....	49
5.4 Limitations and Future Research.....	50
References.....	51
Appendices.....	61
Appendix A: The research Onion.....	61
Appendix B: The Interview Guide for the Representatives of Millennial Generation	62

1. Introduction

The first chapter provides an overview of the selected research area by highlighting its relevance and applicability. After the topic introduction, authors of this thesis provide the background information which serves as the point of departure for the problem formulation. Afterwards, two research questions and purpose of the study are introduced. Finally, intended contribution – theoretical as well as managerial is provided. The chapter concludes with the thesis outline.

1.1 Background

The growing research interest of the generation cohort that is called Millennials, Generation Y (the terms that will be used in the paper interchangeably to avoid duplication) from the scholars and practitioners is hard to neglect (Lancaster & Stillman, 2003). Studies of generation segmentation suggest that representatives of different generations have set of unique values, beliefs, and attitudes that result in differing behaviors (Inglehart, & Carballo, 1997). Therefore, it is important to understand the behavior of the future consumer base, especially such a significant one.

Globally, by 2020 Millennials will represent the half of the consumer population (PwC, 2016; Catalyst, 2012). In the United States, Millennials represent 25% -27% of the population and own around one trillion dollars in direct purchasing power. Also, this generation cohort has the substantial impact on the older generations (Millennial Marketing, 2016). Furthermore, Millennials are the biggest generation cohort in the US history – overcoming Baby Boomers (Stokes, 2015). In Europe, Millennials represent 23% of the population (Stokes, 2015) with some differences across the countries. Even though Millennials do not account for the biggest amount of society in Europe, they obtain a significant purchasing power that is expected to grow. Not only this generation has the massive amount of resources at their disposal, but they also have a strong influence on the family purchasing decisions (Morton, 2002). Moreover, in the years to come this generational cohort will become increasingly significant as food consumers (Millennial Marketing, 2016). Indeed, they seem to spend more money on food than previous generations (Peskett, 2006). Furthermore, Millennials show the high level of involvement in everything that is related to food. For this generation, a meal is not merely the mean of saturation, but also an opportunity for self - expression and the ability to obtain new experiences (Food Navigator, 2016; The Caterer, 2016). Furthermore, food is the reason to bring people together in a physical space that is especially vital in the high digitalized era (Pinsker, 2015).

On one hand, it seems that Millennials may become the drivers of a healthy eating trend that is developing lately (Peskett, 2006). On the other hand, these days not all the representatives of mentioned generation are ready to follow a healthy diet (Food Navigator, 2016). Therefore, the study of Millennials' decision making process regarding healthy food emerges as a relevant and practical research object, especially understanding the fact of limited research in this area (Corvi & Bigi, 2007; Schewe & Meredith, 2004).

1.1.2 Understanding the Differences Between Generations

Generational theory was introduced by Strauss and Howe (1991) and since then it has become a useful tool for understanding the differences of people that were born in the particular time (Lancaster & Stillman, 2003). To be formed into the generation, a group of individuals has to be born in the given period (usually 20 – 25 years), grow through the same experiences and becomes of a legal age at the same time (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Moreover, generation gets formed when people live through the same events (assassination, war, economic change, big new technological advancement) in the same time interval (Ryder, 1965). Such life experience and the same age allow forming a distinct set of values, beliefs, and attitudes that differ from one generation to another and are relatively stable over the cohort's lifetime (Mannheim, 1923; Eastman, Iyer & Thomas, 2013; Straus & Howe, 1991). Nevertheless, some scholars convey that generation theory depicts cohorts stereotypically. For instance, scholars argue that even within one generation, it is possible to distinguish consumers with a set of different values, beliefs, and attitudes (Reeves & Oh, 2008). On the other hand, there is still a sufficient amount of evidence showing that the cohort theory serves as solid background when it comes to comparison of people were born during different time spans and experienced similar life events (Straus & Howe, 1991). Consequently, cohort theory scholars argue that there can be differences in values, beliefs and attitudes of generations that live in different regions due to the impact of cultural factors (Scott & Zak, 1993; Schewe, Debevec, Madden, Diamond, Parment & Murphy, 2013). However, there are also evidences that common traits prevail (Corvi & Bigi, 2007).

In recent years, various researchers distinguish five existing generation cohorts and their general traits: Silent Generation (1927-1945) – people who lived during Great Depression and Second World War – conservative, sensitive in relation to food issues as experienced food shortage (Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project, 2010). They are currently between 71 and 89 years old, value ethics, morals, savings and are rational in their choices (Kaylene & Robert, 2011). Baby Boomers (1946- 1964) - those who grew in the period of economic prosperity and development of middle-class. They age between 52 and 70, value optimism, self-expression and individualization. This generation tends to be workaholics and measure their success by the career achievements (Dietz, Kalof & Stern, 2003). Generation X (1965- 1980) whose evolvment was during the energy crisis. People from that generation, are currently between 36 and 51 years old. Representatives of Generation X are notable for being skeptical, cynical and do not trust big companies and institutions (Trends Active – International Trend Interpretation Agency, 2016). Since most people from this generation cohort are well educated, they tend to be pessimistic and disillusioned. For example, they incline to question almost every statement they face (Carpenter & Moore, 2009). Generation X, in general, is conservative and is not ready for new experiences. Lastly, Generation Y, or Millennials (1981-2000), aged between 16 and 35, are the cohort who grew in the era of immense and dynamic changes in the society. During their coming-to-age period they were able to observe the dual-income household's development and the increasing level of equality between genders, virtual employment opportunities (Reeves & Oh, 2008; Valentine & Powers, 2013). Moreover, Howe and Strauss (2000) describe Millennials with seven distinguishing features: confident, achieving, special, sheltered, involved, pressured, enthusiastic. This cohort was brought in the families who

claimed the uniqueness and specialness of their kids. Therefore, Millennials are not afraid of failure, value individuality, and opened for new experiences (Rugimbana, 2007). Finally, Generation Z, or post-Millennials (2000 till now) - the generation is still going through the formation stage and aged 16 years old or less. They are social natives as were born in the era of Internet technology. Along with that, they are concerned about their image and appearance (Howe & Strauss, 2008).

1.1.3 Distinctive Traits of Millennials

The Millennial cohort grew in the period of technological revolution when the Internet and electronic devices became common and easily accessible (Gurau, 2012). Unlike the previous Generation X, who view technology as isolating, Generation Y representatives make a full advantage of the Internet as a means of communication with the surrounding world. Therefore, Millennials cannot imagine their everyday lives without modern technologies, and consider them as important as clothes they wear or food they eat (Huntley, 2006). Moreover, representatives of Generation Y are highly connected, desiring to build strong relations with the online and offline groups which they belong to. It is worth to note that they have the much higher sense of relationship than the previous generations (Nimon, 2007). Scholars define Millennials as highly technologically savvy, well educated, mature and structured, in comparison to the previous generations (Syrett & Lammiman, 2003; Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Millennials pay high attention to the opinions of their reference groups and social media. In particular, they rely heavily on them when making decisions (Morton, 2002). Most importantly, this generation wants to comply with the normative beliefs and values of their reference group (Abraham & Harrington, 2015). For example, 84% of Generation Y representatives tell that social opinions influence their decisions (Ad Age, 2016). Previous studies have conveyed that Millennials' decisions are profoundly influenced by the desire to receive social approval and to fit the stands of the reference group (Greenberg, 2009). Conversely, representatives of the Generation X and Baby Boomers tend to care less about what other people think about them (Twenge, 2010).

Tapscott (2009) together with Twenge, Charles, Hoffman & Campbell (2010), in their studies of Generation Y, discovered that this generation tends to be self-centered, hedonistic, self-confident and less concerned about others, compared to the Generation X and previous generations. Moreover, this statement is also acknowledged by Pew Research Center, in their Social & Demographic Trends Project, (2010). Millennials put self-expression as a critical priority (Twenge et al., 2010). 75% of representatives obtain profiles in social networks, whereas in the case of Generation X and Baby Boomers, these figures are only 50% and 30% respectively (Huntley, 2006). 20% of Millennials post videos of themselves as the starring role. Furthermore, Twenge et al. (2010) convey that Millennials consider personal branding as an essential element of self-promotion. Additionally, Lancaster and Stillman, (2002) noticed that Millennials express the need to make a positive impact on people.

Moreover, Generation Y tends to show a high level of involvement in different aspects of lives (Pinto, Parente & Palmer, 2000; Schewe & Meredith, 2004; Vijay & Arsha, 2013). As Novak (2012) suggests in his study, Millennials strive to obtain more than average from every action they do - more from an employer, a food provider, and their lives. Therefore, if

Millennials are looking for a job – they strive to find the place, where they will not only be able to earn money but also seek fulfillment and meaning (Twenge et al., 2010; One Europe, 2013). To the contrary, their parents, representatives of Generation X, primarily focus on the work and life balance and aim to fulfill their duties, rather than to contribute to the shared goals (Twenge, 2010; Twenge et al., 2010).

When making purchases, Generation Y gives priority to the product rather than the place where it can be bought (Parment, 2013). Thus, they show a low level of loyalty for the retailers. In their purchasing decisions, Millennials are likely to pay attention to convenience, price and the value that retailers create (Hewlett, Sherbin & Sumberg, 2009). At the same time, Baby Boomers and Generation X pay precise attention to the place, trust local dealers and express loyalty to the retailers (Parment, 2013). For instance, Baby Boomers perceive physical stores as the source of information about products and services, and hence they will eagerly ask for assistance in the store, while the Millennials tend to shop around and look for the best offers (Parment, 2013).

Food is a particular phenomenon for Generation Y. They differ from Generation X, who are primarily looking for traditional food, and the Baby Boomers, who seek enjoyment in simple meals rather than variety (Belasco, 1989). Food for Millennials is a complicated matter, since they grew in the era of technological revolution, with a broad range of choices and accesses to foreign cuisines. Consequently, they seek to have new experiences in food (Food Navigator, 2016; The Caterer, 2016). Moreover, the Millennials have a potential to influence the eating habits of previous generations (Millennial Marketing, 2016). Millennial generation is called “the generation that lives to eat” and “the tastemakers in food” (The Caterer, 2016). Furthermore, Turow (2015) suggest that high level of involvement with food of Millennial generation grounds from the opportunity to activate their senses and have new experiences.

Since food consumption is a very particular phenomenon, where culture has a significant impact on the attitudes, norms, beliefs, likes and dislikes of food (Warde, 1997; Asp, 1999) hence it is necessary to take country of origin into consideration when analyzing one generational cohort. Moreover, scholars define 12 distinctive food cultures even within Europe alone (Warde, 1997; Askegaard & Madsen, 1998). For example, in the French, Italian and Swiss clusters sensory pleasure from food is vital (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg, 2006), whereas particular health consciousness characterizes the Germanic cluster. Scandinavian food cluster is considered as homogeneous and comprises of such countries as Denmark, Norway and Sweden (Askegaard & Madsen, 1998). Therefore, authors of this thesis decided to conduct the research work in Copenhagen and Lund, where the authors reside, by interviewing participants originally born in one of the Scandinavian countries.

1.1.4 Healthy Food Phenomenon

Generally speaking, healthy food can be defined as a balanced diet full of proteins, carbohydrates, and fats, moderation and regularity in food consumption and control on the nutrients of the meal (Keane & Willetts, 1996; Paquette, 2005; Krahn, Lengyel & Hawranik, 2011; Bisogni et al., 2012). Moreover, it also entails fruits and vegetables consumption, reduction of high-fat food intake (Keane & Willetts, 1996; Paquette, 2005; Bisogni, Jastran, Seligson & Thompson, 2012). Healthy Eating Behavior (HEB) refers to healthy cooking

habits that mean more stewed and baked a meal, less fried meals, and the absence of additives in food (Povey, Conner, Sparks, James & Shepherd, 1998).

The healthy food consumption trend is evolving during last decade. According to a Global Health and Wellness Survey (AC Nielsen, 2016), which was conducted on 30 000 adults from 60 different countries, half (49%) of respondents believe they are overweight, and the other half (50%) tries to lose weight. At the same time there is the desire to serve the demand for healthy products among big FMCG companies. According to Financial Times (2016), food M&A, within developed economies, are driven primarily by the changing tastes of Millennial consumers, who are shunning processed food and in favor of healthier products. Following this point of view, it can be concluded that more and more consumers are willing to engage in healthy eating behavior and seek to eat healthily. It is seen that Millennials become more and more engaged in fresh, healthy and simple food consumption (Arctic Apples, 2014). This category of consumers places a greater emphasis on the healthy offerings even on fast food chains.

While the awareness of healthy diet is undeviating during last past decades, there are still many adults who are overweight ($BMI \geq 25$ to <30) or obese ($BMI \geq 30$), as reported by the AC Nielsen (2016). And it seems this amount is not going to decrease in the nearest future (Simmons, Mavoa, Bell, De Courten, Schaaf, Schultz & Swinburn, 2009). Consequently, it is also important to acknowledge that despite the interest of the Generation Y towards healthy food is growing; this generation cohort still has poor eating habits that lead to overweight and obesity (Hewlett, Sherbin & Sumberg, 2009; Paquette, 2005).

1.2 Problem Formulation

From the above this thesis suggests that Millennial generation is a cohort that expresses particular interest in the food category. Moreover, the authors of this thesis notice that the Millennials seem to be highly involved in healthy eating behavior. Nevertheless, we are also aware that the gap between healthy eating intention and healthy eating behavior does exist, owing to various factors. In order to solve the paradox, it is critical to acquire understandings about the decision-making process of the Millennials when it comes to healthy food consumption. In order to motivate Millennials to change their eating behavior, it is vital to understand the factors impacting healthy eating intention and the subsequent behavior of this generation cohort. In reality, the weak link between Millennials' healthy diet claims and their healthy eating behavior has raised concerns for marketers and policy makers (The Caterer, 2016). By obtaining such knowledge, this thesis will be able to contribute not only from an academic perspective but also from managerial and social prospects. While the healthy eating phenomenon is expanding, it appears that the area of healthy eating behavior of Millennial consumers remains relatively unstudied. For instance, many studies focused on the elderly or adolescent when exploring healthy food-related behavior (Asp, 1999; Carson, Blake & Saunders, 2014; Conner & Armitage, 1998; Yap, Noor, Marshall & Liew, 2014). When it comes to Generation Y, vast majority of studies was related to them as employees and as users of modern digital technologies (Twenge et al. 2010; Barkin, Heerman, Warren & Rennhoff, 2010; Debevec & Schewe, 2013). To the best knowledge of the authors, there are only a few available studies related to Millennials as consumers of food and beverage

products. For instance, there was a study that investigated engagement of Generation Y with champagne and sparkling wine from a cross – cultural perspective (Velikova, Ritchie, Fountain, Thach et al. (2011). Moreover, Pomarici and Vecchio (2014), focused on the Millennial generation's attitudes to sustainable wine. Additionally, Teagle, Mueller and Lockshin (2010) explored how much values and attitudes of wine and alcoholic beverages differ between consumers. It appears that currently the area of healthy eating behavior of Millennial consumers remains rarely studied.

Therefore, within the present study authors intend to develop knowledge about the factors that influence healthy eating intention and moreover, to develop the insights about the intention–behavior gap from a Scandinavian Millennial perspective. Since this topic is highly interesting and relevant to study, with little research to decode this phenomenon, the originality of this research project becomes even more significant.

1.3 Research Question and Purpose

The previously mentioned considerations (see section 1.2) suggest the research gap and necessity to study the factors influencing the healthy eating intentions and the intention–behavior gap, from the perspectives of the Scandinavian Millennial consumers. To anchor the present thesis, the following research questions were derived to guide the literature review and the empirical study (Bryman & Bell, 2011):

RQ1. What factors motivate the intention of Scandinavian Millennial consumers to eat healthily?

RQ2. When Scandinavian Millennials are motivated to pursue a healthy diet, what are the barriers prevent healthy eating behavior from happening?

Having the questions in mind, researchers aim to contribute to the current decision-making literature with a particular focus on a particular generation cohort, namely the Millennials. Moreover, authors will employ a conceptual framework based on Theory of Planned Behavior to explore the factors influencing healthy eating intentions for insights generation. More importantly, authors aim to gain an in-depth understanding of the factors that trigger the gap between healthy eating intention and healthy eating behavior.

1.4 Intended Contributions

The research aims to provide insights for a better understanding of the factors that influence the intention formulation to eat healthy. More importantly, it also aims to investigate the factors that prevent healthy eating behavior from happening from the Millennial' context. As there is a call for more profound study of the healthy eating behavior of Millennial generation, present thesis will contribute to the understanding of the issue. From the managerial perspective, the research will give the insights about Millennials' motivations of healthy eating intention and also what barriers hinder the intention to transfer into the behavior. Hence, practitioners who work in the industries related to food production may use obtained insights for products development and communication creation. The knowledge

about factors that prevent intention to eat healthy from happening may help working professionals to understand what has to be done or improved to gain new consumers in the healthy products category. For the policy makes present thesis may help to gain a useful information for further health related policies development.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

The first chapter of the thesis provides general background information on the research topic and presents the problem formulation, as well as the research purpose. It further provides reasoning for the relevance and importance of the thesis, from a theoretical, as well as a practical point of view. The second chapter introduces the conceptual framework and discusses literature on the phenomenon of healthy food, decision - making process as well as other relevant theories. To investigate the factors that influence Millennial consumers' healthy eating intention and the intention-behavior gap, the researchers present a conceptual framework that guides the empirical data collection. The third chapter is designed to show the methodological reasoning of the authors. Furthermore, the third chapter describes the data collection process and the in-depth analysis of the empirical data, thereby also considering research limitations and research ethics. Within the fourth chapter, the findings that derived from the empirical study are presented, interpreted and analyzed. This chapter also includes a discussion of the empirical findings and their relationship to the applied theories and concepts. The fifth chapter aims to extend on the developed research question and to draw conclusions. Furthermore, the theoretical contributions, managerial and social implications of this study are discussed. Lastly, the thesis concludes by discussing the limitations of the thesis and, ultimately by suggesting fields and topics of interest for future research.

2 Theoretical Framework

As was mentioned earlier (see section 1.1.3 & 1.1.4), the trend of healthy food consumption is gaining the momentum nowadays. However, not all the Millennials make a decision to eat healthy food, meaning various factors drive consumers to follow the unhealthy food choices. In this chapter, we will provide the views on the decision making that prevailed over the course of history. Also, we will give the explanation of the healthy eating phenomenon from the consumer point of view. Moreover, we will attempt to categorize the internal and external factors influencing food consumption, as well as Theory of Planned Behavior. By doing so, this thesis can explore Millennial food consumption phenomenon systematically. Finally, authors will come up with a conceptual framework that seeks to describe how the factors formulate an intention to eat healthily, and the barriers that prevent Millennial healthy eating behavior from happening, under the condition of healthy eating intention is formed.

2.1 Understanding the Decision Making

In order to obtain the better understanding of what guides the people in the decision making - process, it is inevitable to investigate the existing academic approaches on this matter. Over the course of the history, the view on the human decision making went through several transformations.

2.1.1 Rational Decision Making

Expected Utility Decision Theory, was the first actively used approach to explain the individual's decision making, which later became known as Normative Theory (Richarme, 2005). This theory is based on the assumption that all consumers are rational. Hence, the only factor that they are influenced by is the willingness to maximize the expected utility when making decisions (Klein, Orsanu, Calrerwood & Zsambok, 1993). Normative Theory focused on finding the best possible method to evaluate the optimal decision, in instead of studying the factors influence consumer decision-making process (Klein et al., 1993). In other words, in the normative approach, researches pay attention to the decision event itself, not on the influencers of the decision-making process. Moreover, according to the Normative Theory, individuals have to think and act only in the way as it is suggested by the scientist and not to differ (Klein et al., 1993). Even though the normative approach may be perceived as limited to some extent, it provides value when there is a need to identify the factors from a general perspective. Moreover, such approach can be in use when the optimum has to be found and complex decision has to be made (Richarme, 2005).

2.1.2 Prospects Theory of Decision Making

Right until the late 20th century, the normative approach of consumer decision making was dominating. However, in the second half of the 20th century, Tversky and Kahneman (1986) posed the idea that consumers often violated the basis of the normative or rational theory and made irrational decisions, which were influenced by other factors than just utility aspects. Moreover, scholars also pointed out that normative theory of decision making describes the

behavior of the idealized decision maker, instead of the real person (Tversky & Kahneman, 1986). That is how after conducting an empirical research, scientists came up with the Prospect Theory of Decision Making, which has no normative claims. The theory aimed to explain the way how consumers form preferences, to understand the basic principles of perception and judgment, and to figure out whether they can be rationalized (Tversky & Kahneman, 1986). Furthermore, Tversky and Kahneman, (1986) suggested that consumers make their decisions by taking into consideration of their habits, norms, and expectations. Prospect Theory of Decision Making builds upon the view that consumers seek not to rationalize every possible decision, but rather to maximize the gains and minimize the losses in the process of decision making (Tversky & Kahneman, 1992). Meaning, consumers are guided by the desire of satisfaction rather than optimization (Simon, 1955). For example, a person might be satisfied with just good enough, not perfect solutions and decisions.

Apart from the already mentioned approaches, there is also a general view that individuals use the combination of the decision-making strategies due to unique characteristics of the personas (Hansen, 2005; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). For example, consumers may ignore the products comparison (the core element of the utility approach) due to the belief that the alternative is not worth comparison. Besides, decision makers may choose the products because they evoke positive emotions, which affect the consumers indirectly (Kotler, 1974; Babin & Darden, 1996). From their point of view, positive emotions may also help shorten the amount of alternatives. This approach suggests that among others, consumer decision-making process is influenced by consumer involvement, emotional response, attitude, purchase intention, and the perception of price and quality (Hansen, 2005). When it comes to the decisions regarding food, it seems that individuals use the combination of the rational and irrational approaches, and use them depending on the occasion (Asp, 1999; Charley & Weaver, 1998).

2.2 Understanding Healthy Eating Phenomenon - Consumer Perspective

To understand the way how representatives of Millennial generation make the decisions regarding healthy food consumption, it is vital to know how they define this phenomenon. These days' consumers get overwhelmed with a number of messages regarding benefits of healthy eating and recommendations of how to eat healthily. There are many views on the definition of healthy eating in the contemporary academic literature. However, as this thesis aims to understand healthy eating behavior from the consumer perspective, we will seek to get the notion of the phenomenon from the position of individuals rather than scholars.

In the review of the literature, we see that people have set of complex insights on what healthy eating is and what it entails. Although they may not refer to official nutrition guidelines, still clearly stated understanding is formed. So, individuals perceive healthy eating as the consumption of big amount of fruits and vegetable and control over high – fat food eating (Keane & Willetts, 1996; Paquette, 2005). There is also the view that healthy eating implies moderation in food consumption and balance of the intake (Krahn, Lengyel & Hawranik, 2011). Whereas others understand healthy eating as three meals daily and the variety of food consumed (Krahn, et al., 2011; Falk, Sobal, Bisogni, Connors & Devine,

2001). There is also anecdotal evidence that healthy diet means the absence of processes food in daily intake, healthy cooking habits that mean more stewed and baked a meal, less fried meals and finally, the absence of additives in food (Birch, 1999). Some studies suggest that healthy eating is seen from the perspective of such nutrients like vitamins, fiber, minerals, fat, carbohydrates intake (Bisogni et al., 2012). Moreover, quite often people associate healthy diet with restrictions and control as see that the environment they live is full of unhealthy choices (Smith-Di Julio, Windsor & Anderson, 2010). In this thesis, we will consider the phenomenon of healthy eating, healthy diet and healthy eating behavior as similar concepts, as in the broad range of literature (Krahn et al., 2011; Falk et al., 2001; Bisogni et al., 2012) they are used interchangeably.

From the definitions mentioned above, we can suggest that people are able to define what healthy eating means and comprise. However, it is also interesting that quite often the knowledge does not transfer into healthy eating behavior (Ragaert, Verbeke, Devlieghere & Debevere, 2004). Such paradox exists because knowledge is not sufficient to make the decision to choose a healthy diet (Brug, 2008).

2.3 Factors that Influence the Eating Behavior

The relation towards food consumption gets settled quite early in life and is influenced by the set of various internal and external factors (Hochbaum, 1981). This implies that even though there may be an intention to eat healthy, there can be no action due to internal or external influences that may have an impact on the consumer decision-making process. Even though the full list of factors that have an effect on the consumer relations with food could account for dozens, after conducting the literature review and analyzing over 30 academic articles related to food and factors that have the impact on the food consumption and the behavior (Ferguson et al., 2015; Warde, 1997; Biltekoff, 2010; Swinburn, Egger & Raza, 1999, etc.), we came up with the set of factors that are used in the literature most frequently.

Scholars divide the factors that influence formation of individual's behavior in regards to food into the internal and external (Bruce, Lim, Smith, Cherry, Black, Davis, & Bruce 2015; Asp, 1999, etc.). Therefore, in the presented framework they will be divided accordingly. By internal factors researchers mean factors that get formed inside the person as a result of individual values, whereas external factors are those related to interaction with the environment and society (Bruce et al., 2015; Zhu, Li & Geng, 2013).

2.3.1 Internal Factors

Psychological factors can be defined among the most distinct internal determinants of what food consumer chooses (Asp, 1999). The psychological factors consist of food preferences, food likes and dislikes, and individual response to sensory attributes, and can be defined as irrational (Lyman, Prentice-Dunn & Gabel, 1989). Preferences are the result of experience development and are the indicators of the satisfaction level that consumers get from the consumed food. Scholars suggest that consumers tend to choose food that they like – familiar food that is considered as pleasant (Charley & Weaver, 1998). Finally, food preferences also depend from the such food sensory perception as taste, texture, color, shape (Lyman,

Prentice-Dunn & Gabel, 1989). That may be one of the reasons why consumers may not choose some types of food – because they may decide from the irrational perspective that they do not like either smell, taste or any other attribute.

Personal food identity. The saying “you are what you eat” is not just a metaphor that is used in the promotional campaigns. According to Thomsen & Hansen, (2015) consumers define what persons they are by the food choices they do. Such behavior is possible because people give the symbolic meaning to the food they consume (Belk, 1988). The researchers in the field of social psychology suggest that people want to behave in the way that supports the view they have of themselves (Carson, Blake & Saunders, 2014). Aforesaid means that person may follow healthy diet not only from the health related reasons, but also to be perceived as organized in the society (Povey et.al., 1998). At the same time, those who like to indulge themselves with tasty and pleasurable food may call themselves “food hedonists” (Thomsen & Hansen, 2015). Furthermore, Asp (1999) supports the idea of food as the element of identity and suggests that “[f]ood can be used to show status or prestige, make one feel secure, express feelings and emotions, and to relieve tension, stress or boredom” (p.289).

Emotional factors play an inevitable role in the consumer’s food choices and are among strongest internal factors (French et al., 1994; Conner & Armitage, 2002). The relations between consumers and food are so strong, that people can easily find emotive words to associate with the names of food (Lyman, Prentice-Dunn & Gabel, 1989). According to Lambie & Marcel (2002) and Smith & Ellsworth, (1985) cited in Achar, Agrawal & Duhachek, 2016), emotions are “multidimensional feelings that reflect information about consumers’ relationship to their social and physical surroundings as well as their interpretations regarding these relationships” (p.166). Moreover, Solomon et al., (2006) defines emotions as “...erred judgments about the world, false and destructive ways of seeing life and its misfortunes” (p. 128), that are irrational by nature. Emotions may create the motivation to act in a certain way. For example, as nowadays being slim is perceived as an essential social emotion in European society (Achar et al. 2016), that is promoted through such mental states as pleasure, sense of achievement, enthusiasm, people may start following routines related to weight-loss. Even though the reasons for losing weight may differ – the desire to be physically fit, prevention of chronic diseases, or meeting the current beauty standards, the long term effect on appearance may have great emotional impact (French, 1994).

Involvement is another internal factor that can have a hefty influence on consumer eating decisions (Marshall & Bell, 2011; Dean et al., 2012; Wong et al., 2013). In our case involvement can be interpreted as “personal relevance or importance attached to food and health issues, based on inherited needs, values and interests” (Zaichkowsky, 1985, p.348). Scholars convey that the higher the involvement level between decision maker and the issue, the higher the probability that the product will be purchased, or that the habit will become a part of day to day life (Beatty, Homer & Kahle, 1988; Celsi & Olson, 1988). The degree of involvement, in turn, comprises of four key elements: 1) product or category importance and perceived importance of the result if the action was not taken (product was not purchased, or behavior was not undertaken); 2) the subjective probability of action absence; 3) the hedonic value of the category or product; 4) the individual symbolic value of the category (Beatty et

al, 1988). Furthermore, scholars suggest that high involvement level may reduce perceived complexity of issues related to making decision (Alba & Hutchinson, 1988).

2.3.2 External Factors

The external factors feature the environment, in which consumers makes decisions regarding the food consumption (Asp, 1999). The systematic literature review revealed the existence and wide application of ANGELO framework that was specifically developed to study the external factors that formulate obesity (Swinburn, Egger, & Raza, 1999). After introduction by Swinburn in 1999, the framework was heavily used to develop the action plans for obesity prevention (Simmons et al., 2009; Willows, Dyck Fehderau & Raine, 2015; Mooney, Jepson, Frank & Geddes, 2015) through development the environment favorable for healthy eating and obesity reduction. The framework divides environment into two levels – micro and macro.

Micro environment, is set of settings, with which people interact i.e. schools, work environment, neighborhood, kindergartens (Swinburn, Egger & Raza, 1999. Micro environment, in turn, influenced by macro environment - education and health systems, attitudes and beliefs of the society, food industry pressure (Swinburn, Egger & Raza, 1999). Micro environment, in turn, can be divided into physical, economic, political and socio - cultural (Swinburn, Egger & Raza, 1999). The afore mentioned categories can either play the favorable role for healthy eating behavior formulation, or may also prevent it from happening.

Physical environment refers to whether healthy options available in the sufficient quantity in the food stores including cafes, shops, vending machines, school premises, workplaces, on the social events (Glanz, Hewitt & Rudd, 1992). It also entails the proportion between healthy and unhealthy options availability in store and the level of convenience of buying healthy food. De Vet et al., (2013) and Glanz, Sallis, Saelens & Frank, (2005) in their studies revealed, that in some cases convenience is considered to be even more important factor for food choice then taste and price. This means that if getting healthy food is more difficult than unhealthy one, consumers may highly likely choose unhealthy option. Physical environment also relates to the availability of nutrition information on the labels in the supermarkets and

Economic environment indicates the cost of the food (Swinburn, Egger & Raza, 1999). Healthy choices may be more expensive than unhealthy ones, which will make the opportunity of buying and consuming healthy food less favorable.

Political environment relates to the regulations and norms that have the influence on the food consumption, that have an explicit impact on the behavior of the individuals (Booth & Samdal, 1997). For example, the political environment may have impact on the food rules development for the schools. This implies, that policy may create the favorable or unfavorable conditions for healthy food consumption in the micro environment.

Finally, *socio – cultural environment* refers to the society's' beliefs, values and norms related to food (Swinburn, Egger & Raza, 1999). Social and cultural norms, in turn, influenced by age, gender, traditions, ethnicity and religion of the homogeneous group of people. This

environment in other words can also be named as culture or ethos (Swinburn, Egger & Raza, 1999). Food preferences and habits are highly interdependent with culture and seen as “...culturally standardized set of behaviors regarding food manifested by individuals who have been reared within a given cultural tradition” (Asp, 1999, p. 290). At a micro level, socio – cultural environment forms the understanding what is more/less applicable to eat. At the microenvironment level, mass media has a hefty impact on the attitudes, values and beliefs of the society formation (MacLaren, 1997). Mass media not only reflects the “common culture” but also through advertising and other marketing activities shape it (Billington, Strawbridge, Greensides & Fitzsimmons, 1991).

2.4 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

Besides the earlier discussed internal and external factors (see section 2.3 and 2.4) that influence the decision making of food, in general, this thesis intends to adopt a well-established model within the domain of healthy behavior that is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB; Ajzen 1991). This sound theory, which is well supported by empirical evidence, will be used to gain assumptions on how Millennial consumers form their healthy eating intention, subsequently how the intention-behavior gap is created. As an extension to Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Bagozzi, 1986), TPB was developed to address the limitations in dealing with "incomplete volitional control" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 181) by adding one additional element: perceived behavioral control. Briefly, in the TPB proposed by Ajzen (1991), the behavior in question is determined directly by the intention. And this intention is predetermined by three predictors, namely attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. What calls for special attention is that the three predictors also influence one another in forming the intention. By changing predictors mentioned above, we can increase/decrease the likelihood that the person will intend to perform certain action. Consequently, increase the chance of actual behavior (see Figure 1).

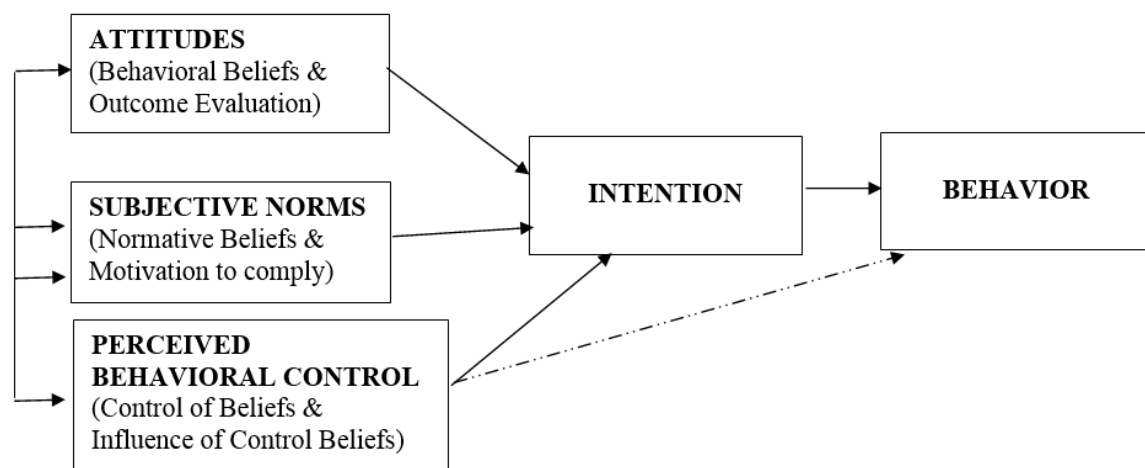


Figure 1 Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991, p. 182)

The Theory of Planned Behavior has been one of the mostly cited and influential model to predict human social behavior since its introduction in the 1980s (Ajzen, 2011). In the academic world, TPB has been applied in a vast amount of health related behaviors prediction, including diet (Fila & Smith 2006; Chan, Ng & Prendergast, 2014), physical

activity (Norman & Smith, 1995), weight loss (Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990), and smoking (Conner, Norman & Bell 1999). Therefore, TPB can be considered as the best suited for the present study in terms of explaining the factors affecting consumers' healthy eating intention since it has considered both the impact of personal, as well as social factors influencing the consumer behavior. Moreover, the respective names mentioned in the model reflect specific psychological constructs. Thus, each predictor has a special meaning within the theory which will be explained shortly.

2.4.1 Attitude (towards the Behavior)

The Attitude in TPB is concerned with individual's overall evaluation of the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In TPB, the attitude towards the behavior consists of two components which work together, namely Behavioral Beliefs (e.g. consumption of healthy food will boost health condition) and Outcome Evaluation (e.g. a better health condition is desirable). Briefly, behavioral belief is a person's subjective assessment of certain attributes within an object, whereas outcome evaluation, in turn, refers to the person's positive/negative attitude toward the behavior, after a subjective evaluation of the attributes (Ajzen, 1991).

2.4.2 Subjective Norms

Subjective norm is a person's evaluation of the socially "accepted mode of conduct" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 199). In another word, it refers to the social pressure to enact the target behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Subjective norm, as reported by Ajzen (1991), is assumed to be formed by normative beliefs weighted by the "motivation to comply" (p. 195). In particular, normative beliefs are related to how other people, who are significant enough to that person, would like the person to behave. For instance, a person can hold a normative belief, such as "I feel the pressure from my husband who would like me to lose weight". Subsequently, the person will start to evaluate and form "normative expectation, or a source needed to perform the behavior" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 199), such as "concerning my future diet, I should avoid junk food and alcohol, so I can achieve my goal in two months".

2.4.3 Perceive Behavioral Control (of the Behavior)

Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC; Ajzen, 1991, p. 183), is the extent to which the person feels capable or incapable of performing target behavior. Ajzen pointed out that there were two dimensions within behavioral control, which are named Actual Behavioral Control and Perceived Behavioral Control. The former describes how much a person has control over the target behavior (e.g. lack of discipline to control over one's diet). While the latter refers to how confident a person feels about he or she can enact the behavior (e.g. lack of nutritional knowledge to practice healthy eating behavior). In theory, actual behavioral control is thus expected to moderate the effect of intention on behavior. Nevertheless, in practice, it would be difficult to identify all the factors that influence actual control over the performance of the behavior. Thus, as Ajzen (1991) conveyed, investigators typically use the measure of perceived behavioral control instead of the actual behavioral control. Such measurement is based on the assumption that actual control can be reasonably inferred by individual's perceptions of control. Moreover, control beliefs produce a certain level of perceived

behavioral control, or "self-efficacy" (Bandura, 1977, cited by Ajzen, 1991, p.184) with regards to behavioral performance.

In general, attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are not independent of each other, for instance, there are cases that the three variables also influence one another (Ajzen, 1991). Furthermore, Ajzen (1991) claims the more favorable the attitude and subjective norm concerning behavior, and the greater the perceived behavioral control is, the stronger chance for an individual to form an intention that will eventually lead to actual behavior performance. Scholar also admits that the relative importance of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control in the prediction of intention is expected to vary, depending on the domain of behavior and contextual situation (Ajzen, 1991). For instance, in some cases, it could be found that the only attitude has a significant impact on intentions. Whereas in other circumstances, attitudes and perceived behavioral control are sufficient to generate behavioral intentions. Moreover, people are not assumed to go through a careful examination of beliefs every time they perform a behavior. With repetition, behavior becomes routine and is performed without much conscious consideration (Ajzen & Dasgupta, 2015). Additionally, TPB assumes that people's intentions and behaviors follow reasonably and consistently from their beliefs no matter how these beliefs were formed (Ajzen, 2011). It is only in this sense that behavior is said to be reasoned or planned. Thus, despite its great success in the academic world, the appealing simplicity of the theory is widely criticized, as skeptics argue that TPB is not taking all plausible factors on behavioral intention into account (Sparks & Shepherd, 1992; Armitage & Conner, 1998; Bagozzi, 1992). As researchers of this thesis, we decided to acknowledge this criticism and explore potential factors later in our empirical data collection phase, to add new elements, which could be applied in the context of Millennials.

2.4.4 Qualitative Application of TPB

In spite of its extensive application in a wide range of behavior prediction in the academic world, there are also critiques from various scholars in recent years. As pointed out by Povey, Conner, James and Shepherd (2000), the majority of TPB studies across all health behaviors are quantitative and cross-sectional in design. Although these quantitative studies illustrate the usefulness of the TPB in predicting behaviors, qualitative studies are also important to better understand the underlying cultural beliefs associated with dietary behaviors. As Ajzen (1991) admitted, "the exact nature of these relations is still uncontained" (p. 179).

Moreover, there are very few known studies using the TPB to explore qualitatively eating behaviors (Brug, Debie, van Assema & Weijts, 1995; Barberia, Attree & Todd, 2008). For instance, a study conducted by Brug et al. (1995), used four focus groups covering 29 participants to pinpoint determinants of fruit and vegetable consumption in adults. Six issues emerged as major influences, namely satisfaction, health consequences, social influences, habit, abilities, barriers, and awareness. Another research conducted by Deskins, Harris, Brandlyn, Cottrell, Coffmann, Olexa and Neal (2006) used the TPB to identify obstacles to cholesterol screenings among 50 adults and 92 fifth-grade students in West Virginia. Concerns with screening outcomes were the primary influence on individuals' resistance to participate in the screenings. Barberia, Attree and Todd (2008) used semi-structured interviews to explore the eating behaviors of 17 Spanish women enrolled in weight-loss

treatments and discovered that the women's evaluation of the outcome of a behavior influenced the positive or negative attitude towards that behavior. Also, the author agreed with Crockett and Sims (1995), who argued that intangible elements such as attitudes and beliefs about food and values cannot be effectively measured and quantified solely with a survey instrument. Thus, qualitative research methods like interviews can provide other valuable data (Morse & Field 1996). The interview allows participants to comment, critique, explain and share their opinions, experiences and attitudes towards the phenomenon. This type of research also allows respondents to qualify, clarify, and in-depth information (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

2.5 An Integrated Conceptual Framework

In the following, authors of the present thesis introduce a conceptual framework. As explained by Miles and Huberman (1994), it "explains, either, either graphically or in narrative form, the main thing to be studied - the key factors, concepts, or variables - and the presumed relationships among them" (p.18). Therefore, the conceptual framework proposed by the authors serves as the overview of pre-understanding before the actual investigation carried out.

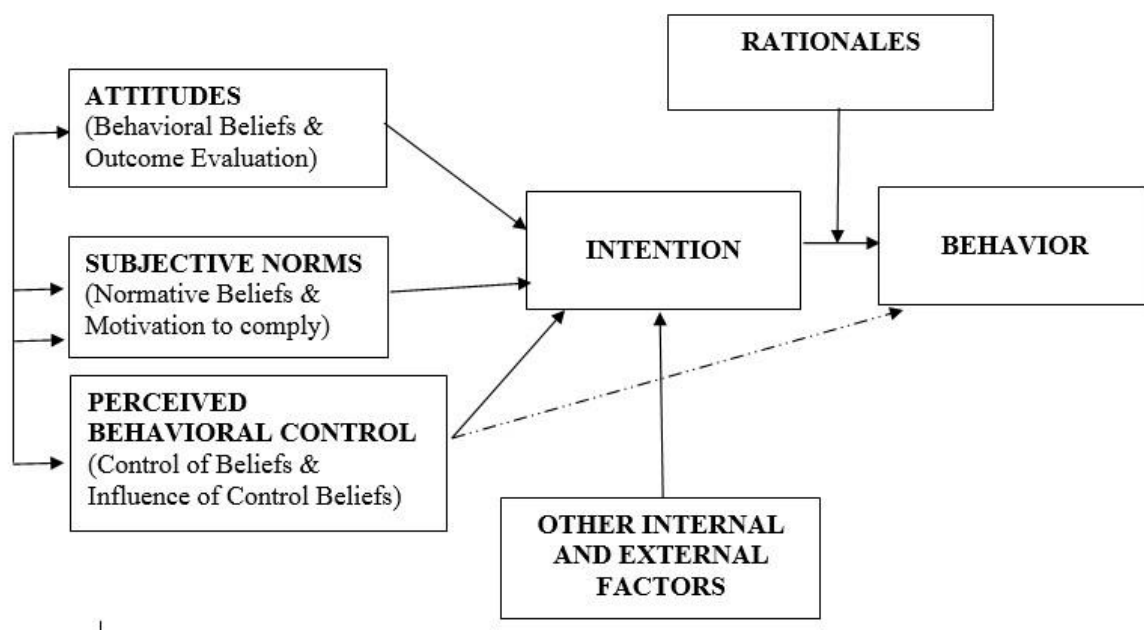


Figure 2 The Conceptual Framework

In the proposed conceptual framework, in line with Ajzen (1991, 2005, 2012), Attitudes, Subjective Norms and Perceived Behavioral Control are considered as important elements in determining intention to perform certain behavior. Moreover, this thesis will add additional factors in relation to food consumption due to the limitation of TPB due to various critiques. When it comes to the intention-behavior gap, authors adopt PBS from the TB and listen to the opinions of the participants.

3 Methodology

The third chapter aims at providing information about the methodological reasoning and substantiating logics behind the present thesis. The authors employ the “research onion” (Saunders et al., 2009) to describe and explain the choices of data collection. In the following sections, authors will discuss and demonstrate how the proposed research approach can help to answer the research question. Also, the data collection and analysis process will be explained in detail. Lastly, the researchers will discuss the research limitations as well as ethical considerations of the present study.

3.1 Research Philosophy

In the present thesis, the authors intend to explore what factors influence the healthy eating intention formulation of the Scandinavian Millennials' and what barriers prevent healthy eating from happening. Consequently, the present study formulated the research questions as follows:

RQ1. What factors motivate the intention of Scandinavian Millennial consumers to eat healthily?

RQ2. When Scandinavian Millennials are motivated to pursue a healthy diet, what are the barriers prevent healthy eating behavior from happening?

To explain the philosophical grounding of the research strategy and methods, it is vital to use a systematic approach so the researchers can reason their choice step by step and in detail. That is why the researchers decided to use “research onion” model (See Appendix A) by Saunders et al. (2009, p.108).

First, according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009), the research philosophy is developed from "the development of knowledge [Epistemology] and the nature of that knowledge[Ontology]" (p.107). Therefore, the choice of stands as mentioned earlier has significant impacts on the assumptions of the world. Consequently, the assumptions will impact the development of research strategy, research design, and research interpretation at a later stage. Therefore, it is important to understand the "relationship between epistemology and ontology to business research" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 23). In the present study, this means how the researchers plan to acquire the knowledge about the factors that formulate the healthy food consumption intention and following behaviors, and what factors prevent the behavior from happening in the context of millennial consumers. In summary, the authors share the view of Saunders et al., (2009) who conveys that “the important issue is not so much whether our research should be philosophically informed, but it is how well we are able to reflect upon our philosophical choices and defend them in relation to the alternatives we could have adopted" (p. 108).

Ontology by nature comes from the position of the objectivism and constructivism (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As all the social phenomena developed based on the people's perception (Bryman & Bell, 2011), considering that there may be the different way of the reality perception (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). The first aspect, objectivism, holds stand that "the position that social entities exist in reality external to social actors" (Saunders et al., 2009, p.129). However, the second aspect, constructionism, maintains that "social phenomena are created from the perceptions and consequent actions of those social actors concerned with their existence" (Saunders et al., 2009, p.110). In summary, the former suggests that the reality is independent of the views of social actors while the latter implies the opposite. Having this paradigm in mind, the authors of this thesis planned to ground the current study based on the assumption that "social actors have subjective perception and understanding of the world" (Easterby-Smith et al. 2012, p.70). Moreover, the authors came from the belief that "that social property are outcomes of the interactions between individuals, rather than phenomena 'out there' and separate from those involved in its construction" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 386). Therefore, the subjects of our study may have different perceptions, attitudes and interpretations of the world and the information and actions they further do (Saunders et al. 2009). For example, even though the information about the healthy food benefits are readily available, and it may be logical to eat healthy, not all the consumers act in a similar way and not all of them eager to endorse healthy eating behavior. Therefore, we tried to "understand and appreciate the different experiences that people have, rather than search for external causes and fundamental laws to explain behavior" (Easterby-Smith et al. 2012, p. 24).

Furthermore, the authors applied the epistemological position named as interpretive. This stand emphasizes "the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 386). In opposition to the epistemological approach of positivism, which focuses on the idea of one single right interpretation of reality, interpretive constructionists' view fits perfectly with researcher's intention in understanding complex reality through "interpretive understanding of social action" (Saunders et al. 2009, p.16). This also points out a qualitative research direction. Since the researchers strive to understand the consumer's perception and the rationales, the researchers also adopt the compassionate way of perception. Aforementioned will help us to approach subjects of the study with an opened mind, understand the deeply rooted reasons behind their food choice and, consequently, allow the researcher to explore further the factors that influence the decision-making process and the intention-behavior gap.

3.2 Role of the Theory

According to Bryman and Bell (2011), there are two streams of approaches used in studying the relationship between theory and research, namely the deductive and inductive methods. In deduction, the theory is developed to guide the research, whereas, in induction, theory emerges after the empirical findings. Nevertheless, Bryman and Bell (2011) also admit that the "inductive process likely entails a modicum of deduction." Moreover, as pointed out Creswell (1994), "a theory may emerge during the data collection and analysis phase or be used relatively late in the research process as a basis for comparison with other theories" (pp. 94-95). Following stands as mentioned earlier, during the study, the researcher adopted a

combination of both inductive and deductive approach. In the present study, we firstly applied the deductive approach when obtaining the theoretical reflection of the research area through an extensive literature review, following the idea of Bryman and Bell (2011), "theory is often used as a background to qualitative investigations" (p. 13). When reviewing the literature, we made use of the contemporary works of literature developed by practitioners and scientists, in order to gain a fresh view on the selected topic. By doing so, we completed the first part of the empirical material collection. After collecting the already existing knowledge, we studied its relevance by the inductive approach through a semi-structured interview with subjects of our study. During the process of primary data collection, additional questions and new categories can emerge further to strengthen the conceptual framework and understanding of the phenomenon. For instance, we examined various consumer generation cohort theories, decision-making models, as well as using a well-established healthy behavior related model: Theory of Planned Behavior, etc. Besides studying existing models, the authors of this thesis also allowed new categories of data to emerge from the obtained data at a later phase.

3.3 Research Strategy and Research Design

As discussed earlier (see Section 3.1) the aim of the research that was not just to quantify data to test existing theory. On the contrary, the authors strove to understand a phenomenon through the eyes of the interviewees. Another ground for this thesis to adopt the qualitative research method was because of the research purpose that is to understand consumer behavior and decision-making process "through the eyes of people being studied" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 402). In other words, the present thesis studied more intangible elements of consumer behavior such as beliefs, values, attitude and perceptions to gain an in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon from the perspective of the Millennial consumers. Additionally, and importantly, the authors would like to point out the recent raising critiques of traditional quantitative application of the model that is used in the thesis - the Theory of Planned Behavior. For example, as noted by Conner et al. (2000), the majority of TPB researchers concerning health behaviors are carried out with a quantitative and cross-sectional design. Despite those extensively applied studies, which have tested the usefulness of the model in predicting behaviors, various scholars (Zoellner, Krzeski, Harden, Cook, Allen & Estabrooks, 2012; Verstraeten, Van Royen, Ochoa-Avilés, Penafiel, Holdsworth, Donoso, Maes & Kolsteren, 2014) hold different stands that a qualitative approach shall be applied to understand the underlying cultural beliefs associated with dietary behaviors better. The authors of the present thesis intended to provide insight beyond merely confirming the efficacy between intention and behavior. Furthermore, this study aimed at unveiling the process of intention formulation of healthy food consumption and how different factors interplay to construct healthy eating behavior. After evaluation, the qualitative research seemed to be the best-suited strategy, because by following a qualitative research approach, the authors were allowed to observe not only the words but also the non-verbal communications of the participants (Easterby-Smith et al. 2012).

Moreover, the authors decided to adopt a cross-sectional research design. As described by Bryman and Bell (2011), "qualitative research often entails a form of cross-sectional design." (p. 57) and cross-sectional design is a design that "entails the collection of data on more than

one case [...] and at a single point in time in order to collect a body of quantitative or quantifiable data" (p.53). In other words, the authors of present study collected data almost simultaneously by taking snapshots across different empirical materials. This design, as also supported by Easterby-Smith et al. (2012), "have undoubted strengths in their ability economically to describe features of a vast number of people or organizations" (p. 100) However, it is worth to note that cross-sectional research design may not provide information to determine a cause-and-effect relationship. This is because such design offers a snapshot at a single point in time, in contrast to longitudinal design, where there is comparison over time. However, this is line with the earlier statement that this thesis is not to test a theory. Instead, the current study was more interested in intangible elements concerning Millennial consumers' views towards healthy eating behavior. In addition, Bryman and Bell (2011) point out that interview and focus group are the typical forms of cross-sectional design in qualitative research. Therefore, the researchers of this thesis chose interview over ethnography and participant observation, which were considered time-consuming and difficult to get rich and deep data from user generated data. Qualitative data coding and analysis, interpretation and presentation of results will be described in detail in the following sections.

3.4 Data Collection and Process

The qualitative strategy of the current research (see section 3.3) has pointed out the direction of using interviews as primary data collection method. Semi-structured interviews, as a type of "guided open interview" (Easterby-Smith et al. 2012, p. 139), were used for the collection of empirical data, as this choice allowed a rich and profound understanding of the phenomenon in the present study. Next, the researchers of the present thesis will discuss both data collection techniques and the process in great details.

3.4.1 Semi-structured interview

Decisions to Adopt Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews, according to Bryman & Bell (2011), typically refers to a situation in which the interviewer has a list of questions that are in the general form of an interview schedule which is subject to change of sequence. Moreover, scholars also point out that the questions are often somewhat more general in their frame of reference than that usually found in a structured interview schedule. Consequently, the interviewer will often ask further questions to replies which considered as significant. And the relevance of such method is profoundly supported by Bryman & Bell (2011), who suggest that "in qualitative interviewing, there is much greater interest in the interviewee's point of view" (p. 466). Thus, the idea to conduct semi-structured interviews comes from the belief that in a qualitative interview going beyond the precisely developed interview guide is highly encouraged (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Interview Guide and Questions

The underlying reason for semi-structured interviews was the necessity to have the set of questions that need to be answered before the beginning of the interview (Bryman & Bell,

2011, p. 502). As further pointed out by Bryman & Bell (2011), unlike a structured interview agenda, an interview guide is more open and general. In fact, the term refers to the brief list of areas to be covered by the interview. In general, researchers may offer to provide a copy of the interview guide or schedule to interested readers. This list of questions helped strengthen the dependability of the present research. It was crucial that the questioning allows interviewers to glean the ways in which research participants view their social world and that there is flexibility in the conduct of the interviews. The latter is as much if not more to do with the conduct of the interview than with the nature of the interview guide as such. The authors of the thesis carried out the semi-structured interviews with participants from Scandinavian countries. The list of interview questions (see Appendix B) was prepared in advance to cover a range of issues, including motivations, emotions, subjective norms, and their personal stories related to performing healthy diet.

Selection of Participants

As mentioned by Bryman & Bell (2011) selection of the participants for the qualitative interviews can be associated with some difficulties when it comes to the transparency of the respondent selection. However, authors decided to apply one of the highly used technique in qualitative studies, which is convenience sampling. According to Bryman & Bell (2011), “a convenience sample is one that is simply available to the researcher by virtue of its accessibility” (p. 190) and, accordingly, is a type of a non-probability sampling. Having said this, we mean that when selecting the participants, we had in mind the purpose of our study to be sure that participants will be able to contribute to the discussion.

The following table (see Table 1) presents the semi-structured interview participants, including anonymized name, age, gender nationality and occupation:

Table 1 Overview of semi-structured interview participants

Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	Occupation
David	35	Male	Danish	IT consultant
Mie	28	Female	Danish	Sales representative
Tonje	27	Male	Norwegian	Graduate Student
Martin	26	Male	Norwegian	Freelancer
Annika	28	Female	Norwegian	Dance teacher
Jan	34	Male	Danish	Manager
Berit	33	Male	Danish	Logistic assistant
Janni	35	Male	Danish	School Teacher

Mariet	24	Female	Swedish	Student
Linnea	24	Female	Swedish	Social Worker
Anne	35	Female	Swedish	Student
Fillippa	22	Female	Swedish	Graduate Student
Nora	26	Female	Swedish	Student
Sofie	22	Female	Swedish	Student
Jenie	20	Female	Swedish	Student

Conducting, recording and transcribing the interviews

Before the actual interview, the researcher carried out three pilot interviews with business school students, and working professionals to make sure that the questions were clear and consistent towards the objectives of the research. The feedback from pilot interviews was further used to improve the questions formulation and to add those questions that were missing and did not allow to answer the research question.

The authors conducted nine semi-structured interviews in person and six via Skype with representatives of Millennial generation who were either student or employees. The need to have both students and working Millennials in the sample was driven due to the need to check the similarity of values, beliefs and attitudes on different life stages. Authors were both present during the interview process to provide support, ask additional questions in case one of the interviewers felt confused or was too engaged in the conversation with the interviewee. Moreover, for not to create confusion during the process, the roles of the interviewers were divided before the beginning of each interview (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Furthermore, all the interviews were audio recorded, as was suggested by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009) and further transcribed via computer. The average duration of each interview was approximately 30 minutes, and the interviewed were informed about the expected length in advance to have the chance allocating their time accordingly.

Moreover, as authors aimed to reveal the behavioral motives of the participants, the romantic approach was employed (Alvesson, 2003). More specifically, romantic approach implies building trustworthy relationships with the participants that allow obtaining more personal and sincere responses and helps to understand respondent's beliefs, values and attitudes (Alvesson, 2003). To build this connection in a given short time frame, we asked interviewed to start the discussion with the brief story about themselves as well as explained the motives of our research. Furthermore, to build even stronger trust connection, we underlined that the replies cannot be neither right nor wrong and that we will value personal thoughts, observations, and ideas. Finally, to make participants feel comfortable and relaxed, we

conducted interviews either in the places where respondents live or in the quiet rooms in the university premises.

Also, as suggested by Alvesson (2003), it was important not to idealize the results of the interview, as the respondents could be biased by social situation of the interview itself and could provide socially desirable answers. Therefore, we carefully listened to the participants, but also kept in mind the theoretical fundamentals of the issues, therefore, could apply the reflexive approach.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of forming and developing meanings out of a set of data. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), in contrary to the analysis of quantitative data, there are well-founded and commonly accepted guides for the analysis of qualitative data. As further supported by Easterby-Smith et al. (2012), there are two widely accepted methods of language analysis: content analysis and grounded analysis. The former refers to an approach, where the researchers cross examine the data for constructs and ideas which have been predetermined prior to data analysis. Whilst the latter method concerning another approach, where the researchers have a tendency to let the "data speak for itself" (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012, p. 307). Such a general strategy is also called iterative, by Bryman and Bell (2011), it entails a waving back and forth between data and the theoretical understandings. In the present study, the author of this thesis agreed to make use of grounded theory as the framework to analyze the data, as Charmaz (2000, cited by Bryman and Bell, 2011) puts it, we coded as the data emerged, using own interpretations. By doing so, the authors were more intuitive in the development of their understanding of the data, thus it is considered "more holistic than content analysis in the cultural and historical dimension" (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012, p.307).

After the interviews transcription, authors used the coding method to structure the findings and understand the strongest influencers for each research question. Each code in the research stands for the word or phrase that captures the meaning of language data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). As pointed out by Bryman and Bell (2011), coding is the "key process in grounded theory" (p.577), and qualitative data is not governed by "codified rules" (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 591) following suit of quantitative data analysis principles. Consequently, this thesis adopted three levels of coding practices proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990), namely open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. This thesis started with an open coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 61), where data was broken down, examined, compared, conceptualized and categorized. By doing so, the process of data analysis strove to maintain a "constant state of potential revision and fluidity" (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 578). For this purpose, the researchers of this thesis listened to the recording at least twice prior to reading the transcripts carefully. Additionally, we went back to the recording materials if necessary to ensure a coherent and clear understanding of the empirical materials. Sometimes, new concepts emerged during the transcripts reading. Furthermore, the coding was carried on as a team work. Specifically, one authors of this thesis was assigned as the "codebook editor" (Saldaña, 2009, p. 27), who was in charge of creating, updating, revising and maintaining of the master list for the group. Since this is collaborative work between the two authors, we endeavored to

question each other provocatively in order to create a sound understanding of the phenomenon and to generate new and rich codes.

Following the open coding process, the authors of the present study began the axial coding process by examining the categorized codes carefully in order to discover their linkages to according transcript contexts, consequences, and pattern of interaction (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 578). For instance, the extent to which factor mentioned in the interview can be defined as influential and meaningful for the respondents was calculated as the frequency of the codes mentioned during the interview. Secondly, the authors further grouped the codes into categories for effective summarization and interpretation.

Lastly, we systematically consolidated the preliminary categories into a few core categories during the process of selective coding. The core categories were considered as the key elements to construct the final analysis of the present study, i.e. the storyline as Strauss and Corbin (1991) put it. In order to tell a great story, the authors strove to understand the relationship among different core categories. Subsequently, we transformed the reality of the data into thematic, conceptual, and theoretical level.

In consideration of data analysis tool, the present study chose Microsoft Word and Excel over advanced Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS; Bryman and Bell, 2011, 594). Since there were only 15 interviews conducted during the limited 10-week timeframe, the authors of this thesis saw it was not necessary for a small project, and it would be time consuming to acquire proper user knowledge of CAQDAS. Therefore, the authors of the present thesis used Microsoft Word to record down the transcripts, and Excel to proceed with coding subsequently.

3.6 Methodological Limitations

For the evaluation of research, the three criteria of reliability, validity and generalization are often used to evaluate the quality of a study, as stated by Bryman and Bell (2011). However, since criteria mentioned above are primarily designed for quantitative research evaluation, thus "there has also been some discussion among qualitative researchers regarding their relevance for qualitative research" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 394). Mason (1996), also argues that reliability, validity, and generalizability "are different kinds of measures of the quality, rigour and wider potential of research, which are achieved according to certain methodological and disciplinary conventions and principles" (p. 21). For that reason, Guba and Lincoln (1994) propose alternative criteria to assess the specific nature of qualitative research. Following their stand, the researchers of this thesis intended to analyze the limitation of present qualitative study by applying the criteria of "authenticity and trustworthiness" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 395).

Trustworthiness consist of four criteria, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Bryman & Bell, 2011): The first element credibility, which parallels internal validity in quantitative research, refers to establishing acceptability of the research findings. As this thesis employed semi-structured interviews, where the participants offered several possible accounts of a social reality, the findings of this thesis thus might not be applicable in another context. To reduce the impact of potential discredit of the findings, the authors of this

thesis analyzed the empirical data by applying a predefined conceptual framework and conducted a "respondent validation or member validation" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 396) to achieve highest possible credibility.

The second element transferability, which parallels external validity in quantitative research, refers to the degree in which the research can be transferred into another context. Taking into consideration that the number of the participants were rather small, this thesis cannot promise "hold in some other context, or even in the same context at some other time" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). Nonetheless, the authors of present study endeavored to provide the description as rich and detailed as possible for other researchers to judge the transferability of this thesis.

The third element dependability, which parallels reliability in quantitative research, refers to "ensuring that complete records are kept of all phases of the research process" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). Authors of this thesis strove to provide a detailed description of all stages of the process and kept the different record of the research, such as interview guide, selection of the participants. However, due to the overwhelming data set generated from the interviews, the complete record of interview transcripts was not kept for review by other researchers.

The fourth element, confirmability, which parallels objectivity in quantitative research, refers to the research findings shall derive from the collected data instead of the researcher's "personal values or theoretical inclinations" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). While refraining from applying personal values to analyze data, the authors of this thesis were also aware that there is no absolute objectivity (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Consequently, the authors of current thesis aimed at demonstrating their thoughts in the course of perspective formulation in detail for the readers to judge with their own eyes.

In addition to trustworthiness, Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest authenticity as an additional criterion, which "raise a wider set of issues concerning the wider political impact of research" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). The pure consumer perspective of this thesis can be seen as a weakness of the study, since the angle of this study did not include "perceptions of other stakeholders" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398), such as nutritionist and policy makers.

Lastly, the convince sampling might result in a homogeneity of the interviewees which could potentially bias the findings. To avoid this kind of homogeneity, the researcher of the current thesis strove to select samples from various nations and age by taking into consideration of their life stages (students v.s. working professionals).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Cooper and Schindler (2008, cited by Saunders et al., 2009) define ethics as the "norms or standards of behavior that guide moral choices about our behavior and our relationships with others". In the context of business research, ethics refers to the appropriateness of your research regarding the rights of the participants "who become the subject of your work, or are affected by it" (Saunders et al., 2009, p.184). Ethical issues cannot be overlooked, because they "relate directly to the integrity of a piece of research and of the disciplines that are

involved" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 122). This thesis took the perspective from Diener and Crandall (1978, cited by Bryman & Bell, 2011) to consider the ethical principles of this thesis using four primary ethical considerations, namely harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy, and deception.

First of all, the authors of present thesis tried to reduce the likelihood to harm participants. Consequently, they adopted AoM Code of Conduct and the university guidelines to access carefully the possibility of causing harm to research participants. Thus, the confidentiality of data and anonymity of participants was negotiated before the interviews, as "particular care has to be taken with regard to the possible identification of persons" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 130). The researchers endeavored to anonymize the participant identities to make sure that they were not identifiable (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Secondly, this thesis followed the principle of informed consent by providing the participants with "as much information as might be needed to make an informed decision about whether or not they wish to participate in a study" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 133). In particular, the authors of current thesis notified the participants about the purpose of the study, confidentiality of data. Besides, we also requested an oral consent to record data from the participants.

Thirdly, the invasion of privacy was taken into ethical consideration (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The authors of this thesis gave the opportunity for the participants to refuse invasion of their privacy, such as the right to stop and withdraw from the interview anytime during the conversation.

Lastly, the current thesis intended to minimize the deception of participants. For this reason, "honesty and transparency in communicating about the research" (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012, p. 95) is key. For instance, detailed and crucial information provided before the beginning of the interview, where the research purpose was communicated clearly and openly to avoid potential deception of participants. Besides the open communication, an oral consent was obtained from the participants as a green light to record the whole conversation.

4 Analysis and Discussion

As pointed out by Saunders et al. (2009), a grounded theory strategy is, especially suitable for researchers to predict and explain behavior, since the emphasis being upon forming and developing theory. Thus authors of this thesis decide to make use of the grounded theory as the point of the departure in the analysis of empirical data. In this chapter, the authors present the empirical findings that were collected as a result of 15 semi-structured interviews. First of all, the different dimensions of intention formulation are explicitly analyzed and discussed after the consolidation. Secondly, this thesis identifies three primary sources, derived from the empirical data to explain the barriers that prevent the healthy eating behavior from happening.

4.1 Understanding the Healthy Eating Intention Motivators in the Millennial Context

4.1.1 Attitudes as a Motivator of Healthy Eating Intention

Attitude, according to Ajzen (1991), is related to the overall evaluation of the behavior, which can be either positive or negative. Below attitudes illustrate overall evaluation and stance of eating healthy. While studying the attitude of healthy eating behavior, the participants are asked to illustrate the meaning of healthy eating in their own terms. By doing so, the interviewers are able to discover the healthy eating concept from a Scandinavian Millennial's perspective.

Interview participants, in general, perceive healthy eating a positive type of behavior. The prevailing view among participants regarding core benefit of healthy eating is the ability to live a *high-quality life*. For example, Jan, and Berit consider the high-quality life, as having the physical ability to be active. According to those participants, being active is possible when one is not overweight and can move effortlessly, spend time actively.

Berit: *"Healthy eating means having the right type of food, since I have stomach issue constantly. I am going through a diet treatment to reduce the poor condition by sticking high fat low carb diet prescribed by the doctors from the hospital. I had a difficult time before I practice the new diet, it affected very much of my life quality so I was not able to perform everyday exercise which I am passionate for".*

Jan: *"Healthy eating means a varied diet, getting the correct nutrition for you, what is necessary for your body, that is kind of it...typically, you will feel better, more energy, less sickness. Generally, better health. It means you are able to do more than you normally do, if you get better food you get better energy, so I assume you will be able to achieve more in your day, better quality".*

In Mariet's case, she considers better concentration can improve her life quality. Mariet also shares the view that a healthy diet affects her ability to concentrate in a positive way, as digestion gets through quickly and does not make her feel sleepy:

Mariet: "I think you get more energy out of it. If you eat healthily, you can concentrate better on what you are doing, which means a better life quality."

Surprisingly, even those who do not call themselves as healthy eaters convey, that healthy eating brings energy and prevents from diseases (e.g. there is less chance to be sick). Respondents suggest that it is merely possible to live a high-quality life if practicing unhealthy diet.

Furthermore, another aspect of attitude formed by the participants is that healthy food grants them opportunities to *avoid unhealthy condition*. For instance, Nora reveals that after eating a healthy meal when she is sick, she feels that she gains more energy to perform other activities than lying in bed.

Nora: "Healthy food can save you from sickness by providing nutrition your body needs. Last winter, I feel sick for two weeks and I was so depressed. You know what, after I had a bowl of home-made soup, I felt immediately relief. Then I realized that I have been eating junk food for weeks before I got sick."

On the other hand, another participant Fillippa provides a vivid example of the bad feeling after eating unhealthy food. She claims that she tends to feel full, sluggish and lazy, after consumption of high fat and high processed food.

Fillippa: "High fat and high processed food can never be healthy. It makes you less productive and you just want to lay or sleep after having a pizza from the shop".

Finally, *weight loss* is often mentioned as a positive outcome of the healthy eating behavior and is an important factor for a healthy diet as many participants say that have overweight issue.

Anne: "Once I had a big event where I wanted to look stunning. So I practiced a healthy diet for several months that included loads of vegetables and fruits, was controlling my calorie intake and eventually managed to lose weight."

Therefore, based on the collected empirical material, authors can affirm that in the case of Millennial consumers, favorable attitude influences the intention formulation, that correlates with the claim that the great intention may be formed if there is a positive attitude (McDermott, Oliver, Svenson, Simnadis, Beck, Coltman, Iverson, Caputi & Sharma, 2015). Therefore, it is important to pay explicit attention to the favorable attitude towards healthy eating creation to motivate individuals form the intention to eat healthily.

4.1.2 Subjective Norms as a Motivator of Healthy Eating Intention

Such factor as *subjective norms*, as suggested by Ajzen (1991), is the following element of the intention formulation, according to the Theory of Planned Behavior. Subjective norms

refer to the estimation of the social pressure that is experienced by the individuals to perform or not to perform the particular behavior. In our case, it is the pressure from the external environment that may either advocate for healthy eating or, in contrary, promote unhealthy eating behavior. Subjective norms, in turn, is formed as a result of normative beliefs – the expectations that set other people (who's opinion is valuable for the person) in respect to one's behavior. Normative beliefs can also be defined as the perception of whether an individual feels the significant others (e.g. Friends and family) think he or she should engage in the behavior (McDermott, et al., 2015).

In Scandinavian countries, according to the reports from the interviewees, Normative Beliefs regarding healthy eating are quite high in general within the society. For example, Sofie mentions, that she notices the growing amount of media pressure that promotes a healthy diet. Moreover, she conveys that there is a larger number of healthy meals being cooked in the culinary shows, more speeches are being made by the medical specialists regarding the benefits of healthy eating, even among their friends more people start getting interested in the healthy diet:

Sofie: "It seems like all the country got obsessed with healthy eating. You only have to put on the TV and will get up to five–seven recommendations right away. This is not to mention the friends, who can't spend the evening, not talking about a new healthy receipt."

However, it seems the power of Subjective Norms is quite limited when it comes to the Scandinavian Millennials. Representatives of Millennial generation convey their expressive skepticism regarding the healthy eating recommendations from others. Especially those provided by the health professionals through the media sources. For instance, Martin tells us that quite often the recommendations provided by experts are funded by respective concerned organization:

Martin: "Professionals can to some extent be biased, professionals are typically hired to do the research by some institutions (supermarket, universities, brands)."

According to the belief of Anne, recommendations can be biased due to lack of information regarding sample size or the method of measurement. This idea is also supported by Linnea and Annika, who notice that the statements, are often provided by health experts or medical professionals who are contradictive to each other. Therefore, those participants express the need to scrutinize thoroughly into details to check the validity of the recommendations and suggestions. Moreover, one of the participants mention that sometimes the recommendations seem to be too radical and extreme:

Anne: "In Sweden recommendations are extreme – it seems like everything is perceived to be unhealthy, except for vegetables."

Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that a couple of participant's express high level of involvement when it comes to the recommendations obtained from the people they know and trust:

David: "I have a colleague who have done that, who have gone through a diet thing, you know he lost lots of weight and (he became) a happier guy, but again he is very restricted to

certain things. But look at him, he is getting happier, I am glad for him. He has given me a thought of going on a diet."

Respondents also express a high level of trust and involvement to a Facebook and Instagram groups where participants share their success stories of eating healthily and practicing a healthy lifestyle. For example, Nora and Jenie mention that follow several groups in the Instagram and Facebook in which one can find suggestions about eating healthy, exercise. They feel confident in advice provided those virtual friends who share their real stories and experience in the group:

Nora: *"I started following one group on the Facebook that provides recommendations about exercises and dietary suggestions, began adhering to them and I see the results. What I like even more, is that this group contains of real people who share their results, and they are amusing! This makes me trust the group!"*

Jenie: *"Online community offers more perspectives for those who want to practice healthy diet."*

Furthermore, Sofie and Fillippa share, that they formed their perception of eating healthy back in the childhood with the help of the family recommendations, lessons at school and because they were reading the articles and books about food. These days, in their twenties they are practicing the healthy diet that they got a feel of in the adolescent phase.

Sofie: *"Back in school, between fourth and eighth grade, we had special lessons, where we were taught how to cook and what affect different food items may have on our bodies"*

Fillippa: *"My mother taught me how to cook and explained the fundamentals of healthy eating. When I grew up, I took interested in the topic and started learning about it. However, I still use a lot of knowledge I got from my mother."*

The above-mentioned findings allow us to conclude that even though the normative beliefs and pressure to engage in the healthy eating behavior is gaining the momentum in the society, Millennials tend to feel rather skeptical regarding the vast majority of recommendations. Moreover, this generational cohort prefers either delve into details individually or adhere to a trust-worthy and verified sources. Not to be neglected that, the respondents seem to have contradicting statements across the group. While some have said that they rely on their personal judgments, when making decisions related to a healthy diet, the others tend to express trust towards the recommendations from the trust-worthy source. Therefore, it can be concluded as, Millennials may not have much faith the recommendations from the mass-media, instead they perceive a higher level of credibility to the people whom they trust, namely their close circle.

4.1.3 Perceived Behavioral Control as a Motivator of Healthy Eating Intention

The *Perceived behavioral control* (PBC) is the third factor, according to the Theory of Planned Behavior, which influences the intention formation (Ajzen, 1991). According to Ajzen (1991), PBC is the extent, to which person feel how capable of executing the particular type of behavior. By capable, the founder of the theory means the level of control over the

behavior and the degree of confidence that person expresses in the relation to behavior achievement (Ajzen, 1991).

To understand the level of PBC over the healthy eating phenomenon among Millennials, we asked them to state how difficult to follow healthy eating principles. It turns out respondents consider adhering to the healthy eating diet is not a simple thing. Despite their previous positive attitude towards such behavior. Some of them even change their mind from agreeing to practice healthy eating to being reluctant to do so. For example, Sofie conveys that adhering to the healthy diet is hard, after expressing her positive attitude regarding healthy eating. The main reason for her is due to the social events and parties that she attends quite often, as lives in a dorm. Sofie suggests that at the parties the unhealthy food options usually prevail, and that is where she drinks alcohol. Linnea, also considers eating healthy as difficult to achieve. The respondent's friends do not adhere to the healthy diet, so when she is in their company, does not want to differentiate herself from others. Tonje mentions that it can be hard to practice healthy diet when she is very busy at work. When she has projects with strict deadlines, she does not have time to do grocery shopping and cook at home, and there are not that many options of healthy food available in the vending machines or the kitchens at work. However, albeit provided replies, respondents still have the intention to eat healthily. For example, Nora notices that even though she considers healthy eating as hard to achieve, she also mentions that if she has a clear goal she will manage to accomplish healthy eating behavior.

Above findings imply that Perceived Behavioral Control might have higher impact on the intention execution phrase than its influence on the intention. Moreover, it is evident that Perceived Behavioral Control, in turn, can influence the attitude. As David illustrate:

David: *"Even though I feel happy for my colleague, however, when I come home and think about my passion for food, I have changed my mind"*.

This type of process of attitude change is also in line with TPB, in which the three elements that form an intention can be interacting with one another. That is to say two contradicting elements will result in lower level of willingness toward healthy eating intention. In our case, the positive attitude and a negative perception of lacking control of external factors can result in a decision as not practicing healthy diet.

4.1.4 Other Motivators of Healthy Eating Intention Formation

As was discussed in Chapter 2.5, the theory of planned behavior is one of the most used models to understand and explain health-related behaviors (Warshaw & Davis, 1984; Conner, Norman & Bell, 1999). However, after the literature review, authors came to the conclusion that theory does not include a set of additional factors that, according to scholars (Asp, 1999; Thomsen & Hansen, 2015; Zaichkowsky, 1985) also have a compelling influence on the intention and behavior in regards to healthy food formation. Therefore, in the following additional factors, derived from the literature review will be analyzed with regard to healthy eating intention formulation.

Emotions

Among others, emotions were mentioned as one of the strongest motivators of healthy eating intention creation. Lambie & Marcel (2002) and Smith & Ellsworth, (1985) define emotions as “multidimensional feelings that reflect information about consumers' relationship to their social and physical surroundings as well as their interpretations regarding these relationships” (cited in Achar et al., 2016, p.166). Moreover, as suggested by Lyman, Prentice-Dunn & Gabel, (1989), relations between individuals and food are so high, that people can easily find emotive words to associate with the names of food.

The respondents convey that emotions correlate with food consumption significantly. For example, Fillippa mentions that for her healthy eating is strongly associated with the sense of control over herself that results in feeling satisfied with the behavior achievement. Annika mentions that eating healthy makes her feel happy, pleased, satisfied with herself. Particularly, Mariet, who once practiced the healthy diet, but gave up at a later stage, also mentions that when she was eating healthy, she felt positive as was able to control herself fully:

Mariet: *“When I eat healthy I feel that I am controlling my life and do good things for my body. I feel proud for myself, as I take care about myself.”*

Due to this emotional satisfaction, Mariet plans to practice the healthy diet in the future as this emotional statement is far better than the joy or pleasure that any sweets or junk food can provide. In contrast to the positive feelings when eating healthy, violation of healthy eating routines brings the different negative emotional state. For example, Jenie discloses that when she eats unhealthy food, she starts feeling guilty and upset that she can't control herself. Moreover, she notices that this feeling is also applicable to her other friends:

Jenie: *When we all sit in the cafe and order pizza, we eat it, and then all together tell that we are weak-willed and were supposed to order salads instead. So we sit all together and discuss how miserable we are.”*

The above-mentioned findings correspond with the concept of French, Blair & Booth, (1994) who confirm that following the regime and making actions that consequently will positively influence the personal physical condition, thus can cause the positive mental state whereas violation of it may lead to the negative one. Scholars suggest that such emotional reactions often lie in the cultural codes that get formed from the childhood (French, Blair & Booth, 1994).

Psychological Factors

Another factor that influences the intention to eat healthy as well helps to form the behavior is psychological. Respondents conveyed that together with emotional factors, psychological factors have also a significant impact on the intention creation. By *psychological factors* Lyman, Prentice-Dunn & Gabel (1989) mean food preferences, food likes and dislikes, and individual response to sensory attributes.

Scholars suggest, that preferences, likes and dislikes and individual responses to sensory attributes get formed during the early years of life, and it is problematic to change them during the adult years (Capaldi, 1996; Birch, 1999). The similar idea can be found in the participants' statements. For example, Sofie mentions that their preferences were formed in the childhood and since then only minor elements have changed:

Sofie: *"These days I am following the same routines my mother taught me. I do also search for some additional inspiration when it comes to healthy eating, but the fundamentals were settled while I was living with my parents."*

However, according to the respondent's feedback not in always food likes and dislikes are unchangeable. For example, Annika specifies that she is capable of changing her food preferences because it was necessary for her job as a chance teacher:

Annika: *"Even though I love chocolate and sweets I managed to quit eating it as I have to be in a good shape for my students as I am a dance teacher."*

Girls suggest that the reason for the change in taste preferences was in the interplay of emotional factors with psychological: when respondents saw that healthy eating (even though it was not very tasty) brought results in the form of better physical condition, energy influx, they felt satisfied, happy and proud. Nora mention that healthy food became their favorite one and it even tastes better than unhealthy food:

Nora: *"I used to love unhealthy food, but I felt so upset when summer was approaching and when trying my summer clothes, I was not in the desired shape. However, after I started to eat healthy, have seen the result – slim body and feeling of satisfaction. So I just began to like healthy food because I have seen what results it can give me."*

That is a case of how individuals managed to change their food preferences and were able to like the food that they did not enjoy in their childhood. Scholars (Capaldi, 1996; Britch, 1999) also suggest that food likes and dislikes can be changed under intervention of internal and external (environmental) factors. As an example, consumption in pleasant company, or eating particular food as a reward, when the individuals see the outcomes of the behavior or other enjoyable circumstances, it may lead to food preferences change. Therefore, we conclude that psychosocial factors are important for respondents, but also deeply interrelated with other factors.

Personal Food Identity

Another factor that authors derived from literature review and later confirmed it's impacts on the intention and behavior formulation was *personal food identity*. As suggested by Thomsen & Hansen, (2015) consumers give symbolic meaning to the food they consume therefore may identify themselves through the food they eat. Moreover, Belk (1988) it his extended self - theory also mentioned that consumption of goods serves the role of self-expression and self-identification.

Our respondents indicate that what they and their friends eat may tell who they are. For example, Martin notices that quite usual, when the person eats healthy, he or she is also

determined, goal – oriented, organized, can be characterized as the achiever and is capable of overcoming difficulties. Moreover, Mariet also suggests that eating healthy can help to form positive perception and make people respect individual:

Mariet: *“I eat healthy because I want people to respect me.”*

At the same time, Sofie also notices that those people who intended to eat healthily but eventually quit, or did not managed to achieve the healthy eating behavior at all, can be characterized as individuals with little will power, feeble, unable to meet the goal, yield by fleeting desires. The girl also conveys, that such perception is widespread among many people of her circle.

However, not for every participant eating is associated with the ability to form the personal identity. For example, David, Jan and Annika, who already finished their studies and started to build their careers have mentioned, that food for them is not the way of self – expression but rather the mean of living. David suggests that in his early age while he was studying at the university, he used to perceive food as something more than just food, and used it as the opportunity to express himself. However, as he got older, he found other means of self – expressions such as his profession and hobby.

David: *“Yes, previously I used food to show that I have strong willpower, I know what-what is. But these days I have fully concentrated on my work achievements and the way, how I am perceived as a professional.”*

Annika extends on this and mentions that have just lost the need for self – expression, as wants to live simple and comfortable live, and, has no reason to prove anything to anyone. At the same time, respondents at their student years, such as Linnea and Mariet conveyed that self – expression an essential element of their lives, and if they have anything to stand off with, food suits an excellent opportunity:

Linnea: *“It is important for me to build the positive impression about myself, so food is a good chance for this.”*

Above mentioned phenomenon can be explained by the life-stage theory proposed by Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson and McKee (1978). According to the scholars, people tend to change their values during different stages of their life. While during the college and university years’ people are driven by the willingness to develop personal self-identity and seek to deliver it to the community they live (Levinson et al., 1978). When entering the labor market, individuals tend to focus more on professional and personal achievements and care less about self – identification, or find more sophisticated forms for self - realization. Moreover, during the period of identity formation, people tend to be more influenced by peer pressure, whereas after moving to the next life stage the importance of perception from other people becomes less sensed.

Involvement

Lastly, involvement was also named as the predictor of intention creation and further behavior implementation during the interviews. By involvement, scholars mean level of

personal relevance and importance that consumer attaches to the particular issue (Marshall & Bell, 2004). Researchers suggest that if the person considers something as relevant and important, this leads increasing amount of interest and attention that can consequently lead to better decisions (Beatty, Kahle, & Homer, 1988). After conducting the interviews, this phenomenon was fully confirmed. It appears that those people who either intend to eat healthily or already follow a healthy diet are highly involved with healthy food issues. For instance, Nora conveys, that dedicate particular attention to the literature related to healthy eating and reads the labels in the supermarket. She also searches the information in the social media and gets inspiration from Facebook and Instagram groups about healthy eating and healthy lifestyle. Furthermore, Annika also mentions that she makes decisions about what to eat thoroughly and tends to think about the consequences:

Annika: "Every time I eat something, do my grocery shopping or cook, I carefully think what this food will give me and how it will influence me. I am approaching this issue thoroughly and believe the food is an essential element of good wellbeing."

Moreover, those who express high involvement level like to experiment with recipes, cook more at home. For example, David mentions that is interested in cooking, therefore always searches for new receipts, likes buying new, unusual ingredients, experiment with food. Moreover, he also tends to spend more time, than his close friends in the supermarket as carefully examines the labels. On a contrary, those who do not have the intention to eat healthy, convey that are not interested in food. As an example, Jan mentioned that when buying food, he is mostly driven by the desire to suffice hunger or to indulge himself, and more importantly, to make it fast. Beatty, Kahle and Homer, (1988) suggest that involvement is "the importance of the product to the individual and the individual's self – concept, values, and ego" (p. 150). Aforementioned means that to be interested in the issue, such as, for example, healthy eating, one should express the relevance for oneself and to coincide with personal values and beliefs.

4.2 Exploring the Barriers between Intention and Behavior

Among many factors that have the impact on the gap formulation between intention to eat healthy and actual behavior, three major categories emerged in the process of analyzing the intention and behavior gap. Furthermore, the empirical findings suggest that remarkably the control issue (PBC), planning and goal setting, as well as conflicting intentions shall be considered as the primary constructs moderating the gap between healthy eating intention and healthy eating behavior.

4.2.1 Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)

As implied by Ajzen (1991), perceived behavioral control is the perception of how easy or difficult to perform a particular behavior. The analysis of PBC suggests, most of the interviewees consider that adhering to the healthy eating diet is not an easy task. Among other reasons, Perceived Behavioral Control emerged as the essential reason of non-performance of healthy eating behavior, despite one's intention to do so. Authors also notice from the empirical materials that the following three elements are the main sources that lead to low level of Perceived Behavioral Control.

Social Setting

Tonje has danced tango and salsa for seven years. As a dancer, she values healthy food in her daily life, since eating healthy provide her with more energy to achieve better concentration and obtain physique to dance well. Nevertheless, she points out that when she goes out with friends, who are more into cakes, Tonje drops her healthy eating principle in order to "enjoy a good meet-up instead of being picky" (Tonje). This is especially the case when Millennials are surrounded by friends and family at social events such as "a Friday bar and New Year's Eve "(Annika). In short "It is hard to control when we were going out" (Tonje).

In a similar manner, the respondents in Sweden suggest that a dominating cultural factor named fika (the Swedish tradition of drinking coffee with sweets over the day period) – as a means of socializing. During the interviews, several respondents claim their healthy eating behavior could not be triggered due to they were surrounded by unhealthy eating people at a social event, where the Millennials feel a need to blend in with others. Specially, in the group of student participants, the authors found that "socializing" was commonly accepted by this group.

However, it is noteworthy that, Jan, Mie, and David states clearly in the interview that they feel no pressure to perform according to others' expectation. Moreover, Mie mentions her 14-year-old younger sister is more subjected to the "group pressure, since she is now going through her teenage period, where blending in is crucial...She does not have a sense of self yet."

Therefore, the authors reach the conclusion that while social setting can be considered as a main source of low PBC, yet we need to consider that for working professional social setting might not be so influential as for the younger Millennials, who are still in school and are more influenced by their peers.

Lack of Knowledge and Inspiration

The authors also identify lack of knowledge and inspiration will also impact the PBC in a negative way, even though they are positive about consuming healthy food. A typical statement is named by David, who wants to eat healthily without scarifying the taste:

David: *"I really would like to eat healthy food, however, I am passionate about cooking. Therefore, I spend hours in the kitchen, trying to make delicious dishes. Unfortunately, I do not have the knowledge on how to combine healthy eating with tasty food, so I can also make healthy dishes at home"*.

David also mentions that lack of inspiration in the supermarket will also impact his confidence in performing healthy eating behavior:

David: *"Another issue is, when you walk into the supermarket in Denmark, it is so boring. They looked almost the same with plain display. Unlike in Asia, they even have staff standing by to prepare food for you, so you are inspired when you are shopping."*

Similar statement is also made by Tonje, who believes that one reason of eating junk food when she is out with friends is due to lack of inspiration:

Tonje: *"I wish we can think of other alternatives when we are going out".*

The authors also notice that despite knowledge on nutrition is available to most of the participants, yet the knowledge of know-how regarding HEB performance is missing, from the participants' perspective.

Personality

As pointed out by Sheeran (2002), personality as a variable concerns general tendency of human beings. Furthermore, its significance has never been "examined in the context of intention-behavior gap" (Sheeran, 2002, p. 21). Nevertheless, Pieters and Verplanken (1995) revealed that individual variations in the tendency to rationalize were related to the amount of reasoning about the behavior, which in turn can lead to greater consistency between intentions and behavior.

In the present study, participants, who were viewed as action oriented (Sheeran, 2002), had a greater tendency to focus on their ultimate goal. For example:

Martin: *"I am conscious of what I eat at home and outside...when I am at friends' place, I simply just need to have more willpower...stick to my routine meals and drink more tea."*

In opposite to Martin, Mie expresses her mind as state oriented (Sheeran, 2002). She has a tendency to focus on her current state rather than consider specific alternatives to achieve healthy eating goal. In other words, she was in favor of a healthy lifestyle, yet she did not wish to go through a change which required higher level of control, such as of choosing particular food categories in her daily life:

Mie: *"I think I am healthy, I eat what I crave for, and I never had a weight problem".*

In general, the authors observed that participants, who are action oriented have a greater tendency to focus on their ultimate goal. This also explains why they perceive behavioral control is stronger in relation to David and Mie, despite various social, situational factors exist. According to the knowledge obtained from the TPB, the greater ability to control one's action, the higher chance to produce stronger intention-behavior relations.

4.2.2 Planning and Goal Setting

Authors have also found the intention type could also impact how well the intention can predict behavior. Meaning, people are likely to perform a behavior when they have a plan or a goal in mind. For example, when the participants are asked to share their healthy eating stories, they often mention their experience of overcoming various obstacles to achieve their goals:

David: *"In my younger days, I was one of the many guys who did lots of sports, like soccer, swimming. I was so passionate about combining food that gave your more energy when you eat at that time, but that has been changed".*

Moreover, Jan, another interview participant further reflects on his 12-month healthy eating experience, which happened a few years back. The reason why he could adhere to the nutritionist's diet plan is he had a goal to achieve, namely a healthier lifestyle:

Jan: *"At that point I had a little more time to plan, I prepared and cooked and packaged it into different amounts and labeled them. Like the salad, if you put it into water and fridge you can gain three more days. You plan them based on how many portions you need every day and label them, so you come home and eat them. It is very structured, and there was no room for spontaneity."*

This goal-oriented nature of the behavior will often trigger motives for giving up existing behavior, overcoming inconveniences to achieve personal goals, as proclaimed by recent studies of Gollwitzer's (1993, 1996, 1999). He raises the concept of implementation intentions, which extend behavioral intention such as "I intend to perform behavior X" to *implementation intention*, which is "I intend to perform behavior X in situation Y". Sheeran (2002) further supports this concept and asserted as follow:

Despite equivalent intentions to perform the behavior, participants who specify the situation for performing an intended action in this manner (form implementation intentions) seem invariably to demonstrate increased likelihood of performance compared to controls. [Sheeran,2002, p.12]

In general, the participants report higher motivation to execute their intention by either having a plan, or planning to achieve certain goal.

4.2.3 Conflicting Intentions

The final category, which influences the intention-behavior gap, emerged during the research is the conflicting intentions. Sheeran et al. (1998) distinguish between Competing Intentions and Conflicting Intentions. Competing Intentions involve behaviors that make it impossible to perform the focal behavior because the intentions both specify the same time (e.g. if a student travels abroad during a particular week, this makes it impossible for her to attend lectures during that week). Conflicting Intentions, on the other hand, are also negatively correlated with the focal intention but involve behaviors that, and if they are performed, are likely to impede the performance of the focal behavior (Sheeran et al., 1998). One example which help elaborate conflicting intention is that, a student' intention to go party during the academic year might be conflicting intentions for her intention to attend all classed. This is because going to party does not make it impossible to attend all her classes)

In the present study, the author notice that participants have tendency to blame different distractive factors moderating their intention-behavior gap. One example can be heard from our participant, Tonje:

Tonje: *"I like to be in the kitchen but when I was living in the dorm, I could not stand the massive kitchen shared with others."*

In Tonje's case, her intention to use kitchen for eating home-made food is hindered by her intention not to clean up the dirty common kitchen.

And a similar viewpoint was also expressed by another participant, David:

David: *"... nowadays, I focus on work, so I am not so relaxed like before. You are more 'lazy' when you are working."*

Later in the interview, David also reveal his genuine passion is cooking, therefore, he choose to follow his conflicting intention of cooking tasty meals instead of following the healthy diet guidance.

It is worth to note that not all participants reveal their genuine conflicting intentions during the interview, when they are asked to discuss more of their underlying conflicting intentions. This could be ascribed to their concern of personal privacy. In general, the authors tend to agree that stronger conflicting intentions made it less likely that the focal behavior to be enacted.

4.3 Chapter Summary

Following the preceding analysis and discussion regarding Scandinavian Millennial consumer healthy eating intention and the intention-behavior gap, it becomes evident that there is room to include additional factors in understanding this generation cohort, in forming their healthy eating intentions, as well as barriers which trigger the intention-behavioral gap.

From the analysis of the healthy eating intention formulation, the authors deduce that Scandinavian Millennial consumers are mainly influenced by internal factors when forming their food choices. Our empirical interviews affirm that TPB is a powerful tool to study human behavioral by considering both personal as well as social influencers Nevertheless, there are a limitation of TPB to be noticed. For instance, Subjective Norms, do not appear to be having substantial impacts on forming healthy eating intention for the Scandinavian Millennials, since they tend to be skeptical towards external recommendation. Yet, some of the participants do claim that they listen more to their inner circle, such as friends and family. The authors would suggest a quantitative study in examining the usefulness in Scandinavian Millennials context. Through the empirical materials collection, the authors also found there is a change of attitude, after the participants are asked how much control they have over the behavior. This thought into practical obstacles seems to have counter effect towards their original positive attitude to eat healthily. Together, Positive attitude and negative PBC has resulted in lower level of willingness at a later stage, as reported by the some of the participants. Hence, authors can also conclude that in the current study of Millennials' food consumption phenomenon, participants' attitude is affected by the PBC, and ultimately affect the intention.

When it comes to analysis of healthy eating intention-behavior gap, there are three main sources of barriers can be derived from the empirical data, namely Perceived Behavioral Control, lack of planning and goal setting, as well as conflicting intentions. First of all, in relation to PBC, our empirical materials suggest that social setting, lack of knowledge and inspiration, as well as personality are three main discoveries which impact the level of PBC. It is noteworthy that in the discussion of the social setting, the authors observed an interesting fact that the younger Millennials, compared to the older Millennials, are more likely be affected by social setting to give up their current healthy food practice. Second of all, lack planning and goal setting are considered being another significant factors that prevent behavior from happening. Lastly, this thesis also discovers that various participants hold conflicting intentions, despite they claim their willingness to eat healthily. This conflicting intentions seem to be non-neglectable to study further, as there are few studies with conflicting intentions applied in the dietary behavior to the best knowledge of the authors.

5. Conclusions

In the last chapter, the authors draw final conclusions as a result of research questions reflation. Moreover, theoretical contributions and managerial implications of the findings are presented. Lastly, the authors discuss limitations of the study and suggest areas for future research.

5.1 Conclusion

The present thesis intended to investigate what factors motivate the healthy eating intention formulation and what factors affect the formulation of the gap between healthy eating intention and healthy eating behavior, within the domain of Scandinavian Millennials. The preceding chapter has provided convincing evidence that the conceptual framework is a useful tool to understand the intention formulation and intention-behavior gap. Here authors provide the acquired knowledge built upon participants' understanding in relation to the healthy eating behavior.

Considering formulation of healthy eating intention, the present research confirms that TPB model is still applicable with a few interesting characteristics from the Millennials' angle. Firstly, attitudes are strongest influencer on the intention formulation for Millennial consumers. Secondly, the empirical study suggest that the subjective norms is rather complicated matter to understand. While respondents conveyed that they did not adhere to the healthy diet recommendations of the professionals, it was also remarkable that recommendation of close friends or people whom they trust still have a large influence on the intention formation. Moreover, authors also noticed that Perceived Behavioral Control has a limited impact on the intention formulation. According to the research results, even though the substantial amount of respondents conveyed that eating healthy is difficult in the execution stage, they did often form healthy eating intention.

Besides TPB elements, there are also other internal, external factors come into play in forming the healthy eating intention. Following internal and external factors are supported by the empirical data. First of all, it seems that emotional factor has a high impact on the intention formulation, as respondents associate food with different emotional statements such as satisfaction and sense of achievement. As was suggested by interviewees, when the person eats healthy, he or she is determined, goal-oriented, organized, can be named as the achiever and can overcome difficulties. Furthermore, we have also noticed that personal food identity has a significant influence intention formulation, as it allows individuals to express themselves through consuming food. However, food identity factor has the different impact on the representatives of one generation cohort. While younger Millennials, who are at the stage of studying in the university, use food as the opportunity to express themselves, individuals who move to the next life stage and are working, show different values and do not find it important to seek for self-expression. Finally, involvement is another significant influencer of healthy eating intention. It appears that the higher the involvement level regarding the issue, the more likely intention gets formed. As a result of the study, the

updated conceptual framework can be drawn in below (Figure 3) to indicate the motivators to form healthy eating intention.

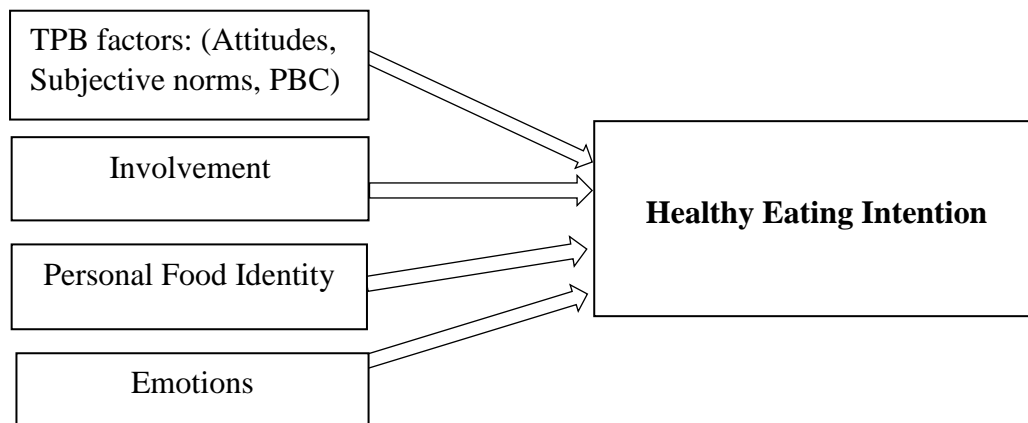


Figure 3 Factors influencing Healthy Eating Intention formation

Further building on the formulation of healthy eating intention from Millennial consumers, the authors discovered that the following three sources can be in use to explain the intention-behavior gap. Firstly, *Perceive Behavioral Control*, as suggested by Ajzen (1991) that it has an indirect impact on the behavior. In the current study, the authors agreed to the TPB model and dug further into factors will could have impacts on PBC. Based on the empirical data gathered from 15 Scandinavian Millennials, the authors found out that *social setting, lack of knowledge and inspiration*, as well as *personality* will impact the level of PBC. Nevertheless, the participants' life stage shall also be taken into account when considering efficacy of social setting element. For instance, the empirical materials suggest that participant in different life stage will have different weighting of social pressure. That is to say, the younger Millennials are more likely to lose control under the social setting, compared with the older ones. Secondly, *planning and goal setting* also play role in creating a gap between healthy eating intention and healthy eating behavior. Participants, who have formed the intention to eat healthily without a concrete plan, or a clear goal, are not likely to perform behavior in question. Thirdly, *conflicting intentions* shall be considered as a moderating factor between the intention-behavior gap. In this study, the author discovered the action-oriented personality had a stronger tendency to perform healthy eating behavior once they believe in the healthy eating benefits. The higher level of conflicting intentions related to healthy eating is, the chance of enacting healthy eating behavior reduced. Following the discussion, another updated framework derived from the empirical data can be found in Figure 4.

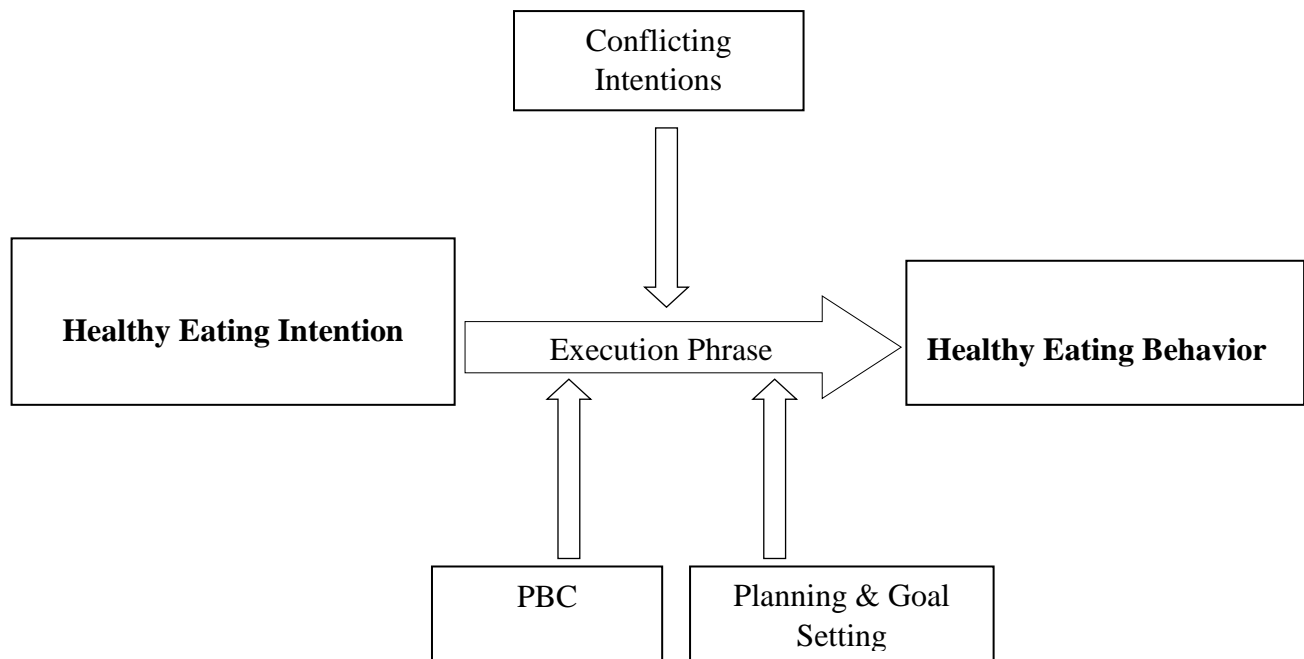


Figure 4 Barriers that prevent Healthy Eating Behavior from Happening

5.2 Theoretical Contributions

The present thesis has made theoretical contributions which are significant in three main aspects:

First, this paper adds to current understanding in relation to the role of TPB. It seems like the subjective norms, or normative beliefs from the external environment do not have a hefty influence on the Millennials' intention to eat healthy, according to the empirical materials. Even though the promotional efforts of eating healthy are high, Millennials tend to trust their own experiences, want to delve into details when it comes to recommendations and make their own decisions. This also apply to receiving recommendations from their close circle. Millennials have a tendency to be skeptical towards external information and check the validity and reliability before accept the health claims.

Second, the author found out from the conversations that besides the existing TPB factors, there are room to include internal factors such as emotional, personal food identity and involvement, when it comes to formulation of the healthy eating behavior.

Third, to the authors' best knowledge, Scandinavian Millennials have been rarely studied within healthy eating domain. Hence, the current study can serve as a stepping stone, potentially lead to further significant discoveries in exploring Scandinavian Millennials healthy food trend.

5.3 Managerial Implications

The findings that were obtained during the research give useful insight for the practitioners who work in the fast moving consumer goods sector and produce products that refer to the category of healthy food. As the Millennial generation expresses precise attention to food as a category, it is vital for practitioners to understand what are the motives of this generation to engage the healthy eating behavior. Even more importantly, it is also essential to comprehend why their intention to eat healthy may not transfer into actual practice. The profound understanding of the motivators of healthy eating as well as knowing what factors make consumers not to eat healthy can help the companies to engage with already existing consumers in a more direct and straightforward way. Moreover, the knowledge may also help businesses to obtain new customers via correct messages delivery in the communication. For example, the knowledge about the attitudes towards healthy eating (eating healthy food allows to feel energetic, helps stay concentrated, feel vitality) of Millennial generation may help practitioners to develop marketing campaigns that will be positively anticipated by potential consumers and will lead to purchase.

Also, the notion of the low level of subjective norms pressure that Millennial consumers express in regards to healthy eating, and their little anticipation of recommendations from media persons and health professionals can also be useful. Understanding the fact mentioned above, together with the knowledge that Millennial consumers want to delve into the details before following any recommendations and insight regarding the high level of trust for their friends may help practitioners in several ways. Firstly, food producers may develop marketing communication stressing rational messages and conveying the information in the comfortable yet simple – to understand way. Secondly, companies may consider communicating with representatives of Generation Y through the opinion leaders – people whom millennials trust. Finally, the knowledge regarding the high level of trust that Millennials express to social media such as Facebook and Instagram groups about success stories of healthy eating may help practitioners to develop media mix in the cost – efficient way, activating the touch points where they can see their target group.

The knowledge of the different impact of the factor (personal food identity) on the food-related behavior among people of one generation cohort that come through various life stages can also serve a substantial help. Firstly, when developing products or communication that has Millennial consumers as a target group, practitioners may consider checking the relevance of the products and messages to the target group. Also, this knowledge may increase the chance that marketing professionals will review the values of consumers on the different life stages and develop several messages, that will be more appealing to the particular target group.

More importantly, knowing what factors prevent the intention to eat healthy to turn into the behavior is also vital for commercial organizations, public, non-profit organizations and government institutions. As unhealthy diet may lead to obesity and increase of chronic diseases, it is vital to understand what prevents representatives of Millennial generation from eating healthy. Knowing that price and availability are among the most often mentioned factors that prevent Millennials from eating healthy may help commercial organizations to

start thinking about the increase of variety of healthy alternatives. On the government level, officials may consider providing the tax discounts for producers of the healthy product to decrease the end price of goods. Moreover, it can also be considered to regulate the proportion of healthy versus unhealthy products on a shelf. Furthermore, as among representatives of Millennial generation many students start living on their own, non-profit or government organizations may develop the set of healthy eating guidelines, or provide with the variety of healthy options in the student premises.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

Although the authors were able to answer the overall research question during the research, there are some limitations besides the methodological limitations discussed earlier in chapter three which need to be acknowledged. Simultaneously, the authors also intend to provide suggestions for future research projects.

First of all, due to the nature of qualitative research, the present study aims to explore factors that could have potential impacts on the intention formulation, as well as intention-behavior relations. That is to say, the present study aims at providing the hypothesis for future quantitative studies instead of testing the conceptual framework. Future researchers are called for testing the efficacy between various factors and respect intention and behavior within the healthy eating domain.

Second of all, another research limitation was that the authors asked the participants to identify the meaning the healthy eating behavior, instead of providing the same identification. It was because, to the best knowledge of the authors, there was no previous research illuminating healthy eating concept in the Millennials domain. Thus, the authors thought it worth to know what healthy eating behavior is standing for in the Millennials context. However, it also introduces the risk of being difficult to distinguish the healthy eating group from non-healthy eating group. For instance, if a participant belonged to a non-healthy eating group but had a lower standard for himself/herself, thus was considered as a healthy eating person. The authors suggest a unique identification should be employed to include the participants into the correct category.

Finally, the present thesis focused on Millennials as the research object, taking into account the distinct traits of this generation, derived from the literature review. However, it could also be suitable to conduct a comparison study between Millennial generation and other generation cohorts, in order to investigate similarities, as well as differences in the eating behavior.

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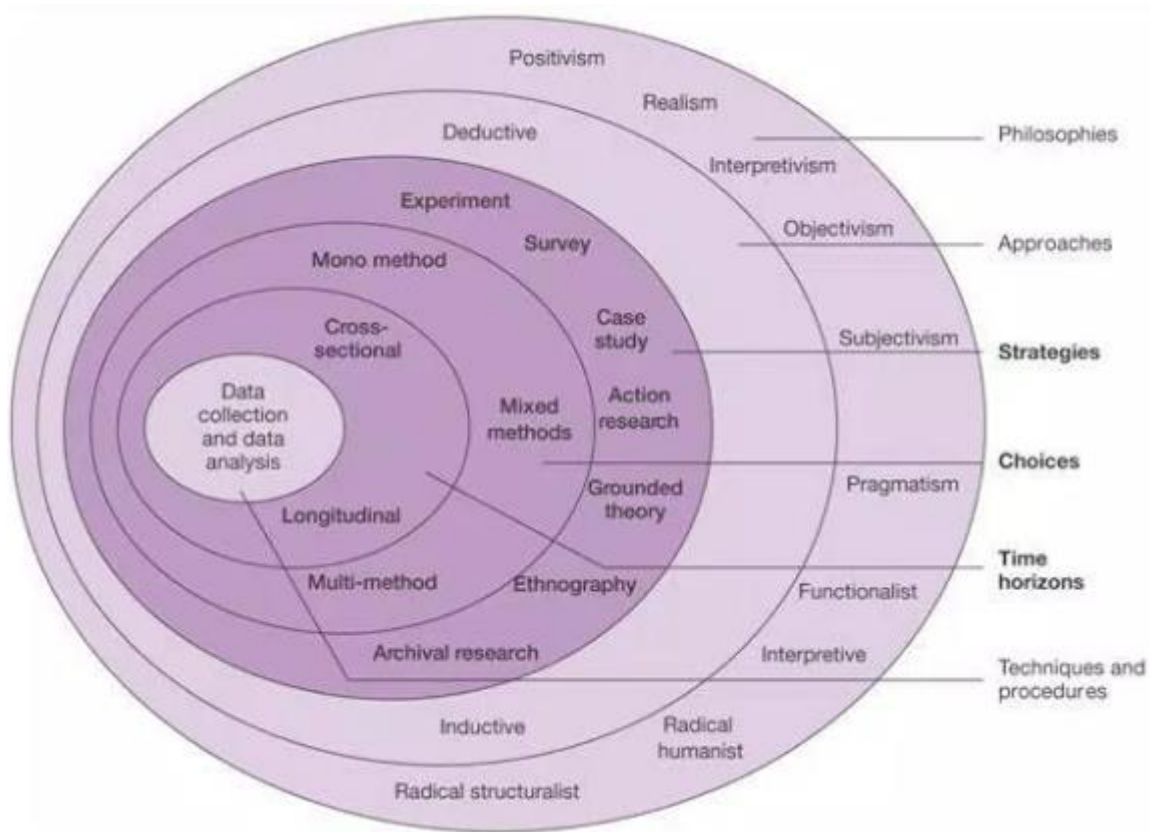
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Appendices

Appendix A: The research Onion



Appendix B: The Interview Guide for the Representatives of Millennial Generation

Introduction of the interview -warm up

1. Purpose of the study and interview in particular
2. Length of the interview
3. There are no right/wrong answers – we want to hear your personal
4. To get started, please tell us about yourself

Opening questions regarding HEB based on TPB	In your opinion, what does healthy eating stands for? Do you associate yourself with healthy eating behavior, why and why not? Extend on the key words
Attitude	What is your perception of healthy eating? Tell me about main consequences of practicing healthy diet? (Advantages and disadvantages)
Subjective norms	Tell me how you feel about the healthy eating recommendation? (For example health professionals, family, friends)
	Did you experience a social pressure to perform a Healthy Eating Behavior? Why?
Behavioral intention	I want you to tell me about your intention healthier eating in the future 1 month
Perceived control behavior	Do you think it is hard/easy to eat healthily? Why?
	What can make it easier for you to eat healthily?

Additional questions based on the theory analysis:

1. What factors have an influence on your healthy eating intention – please share the stories from a real life.
2. What factors prevent healthy eating intention from happening? Please share the most remarkable cases.