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Customer purchase motivations for gourmet food products: a focus on the product origin

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Master in Marketing

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September, 2023

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RESUMO

Esta dissertação investiga a relação entre a origem dos produtos alimentares *gourmet* e o seu impacto nas motivações de compra dos consumidores da Geração Z e nos Millennials. A análise da revisão da literatura evidencia que, apesar do grande número de estudos centrados nas motivações dos clientes, apenas alguns autores abordam as motivações dos clientes relativamente à comida *gourmet* e nenhum explora a relação entre a origem e a perceção de qualidade. O objetivo deste estudo é analisar o impacto da origem do produto *gourmet* na motivação de compra. Consequentemente, foram estabelecidas duas questões de investigação: "Quais são as principais motivações do cliente para comprar produtos alimentares gourmet?" e "O país de origem de um produto alimentar gourmet tem impacto nas motivações de compra do cliente e, em caso afirmativo, como?". É adoptada a filosofia de investigação com base no interpretivismo e é utilizado uma metodologia qualitativa. Utilizando um método de amostragem não probabilístico, foram realizados 3 focos grupos que reuniram 17 participantes. O programa Leximancer foi utilizado para desenvolver um mapa concetual identificando as motivações de compra dos clientes de produtos alimentares gourmet como (1) o prazer sensorial relacionado com qualidades intrínsecas e extrínsecas do produto, tais como como a elevada qualidade e os sabores únicos; e (2) as motivações ligadas a fatores sociais e contextuais, como a influência dos pares ou a celebração de determinadas ocasiões. Os resultados mostram que a origem do produto está ligada a valores pessoais, e com aspetos tais como a exclusividade percebida, apoiando produtores locais e pequenos produtores permitindo um consumo mais sustentável. Em conclusão, este estudo destaca a importância do conhecimento sobre a origem dos produtos na motivação de compra. Esta descoberta acrescenta uma nova dimensão à literatura existente e traça um novo caminho sobre a importância e o impacto da educação nas motivações de compra de produtos *gourmet,* especialmente para a Geração Z e Millennials.

Palavras-chave: Motivações de compra dos clientes, Produtos alimentares gourmet, País de origem, Gen Z, Millennials

Título: Motivações de compra dos clientes de produtos alimentares gourmet: um enfoque na origem do produto.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation reports a study that sought to investigate the relationship between the origin of gourmet food products and its impact on consumers' purchase motivations. A review of the literature review revealed that despite the large number of studies focusing on customers' motivations, only a few address customers' motivations regarding gourmet food, and none explore the relation between origin and quality perception in this field. The purpose of this study is to highlight the impact of the origin of a gourmet food product on consumer's purchasing motivation. To fulfill this research purpose, two research questions have been established: "What are the main customer's motivations to purchase gourmet food products?" and "Does the Country of Origin of a Gourmet Food Product impact customer purchase motivations, and if so, how?". The interpretivism research philosophy is adopted, and a qualitative research design is used. Using a non-probability sampling method, 3 focus groups gathering 17 participants were conducted. The Leximancer program is used to develop a conceptual map and identify customer purchasing motivations for gourmet food products as (1) the sensory enjoyment related to intrinsic and extrinsic qualities such as high quality and unique flavors, and (2) motivations linked to social and contextual factors as the influence of peers or the celebration of certain occasions. The results show product origins are prioritized according to personal values and in alignment with aspects such as perceived exclusivity and supporting local and small producers to enable a more sustainable consumption. Finally, this study highlights the major importance of education about product origins on customer purchase motivation. This finding adds a new dimension to the existing literature and draws a new path on the importance and impact of education on customer purchasing motivations, especially for Generation Z and Millennials.

Keywords: Customers purchase motivations, Gourmet food products, Country of Origin, Gen Z, Millennials

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Glossary of acronyms:

Country Image	CI
Country-of-Origin	CoO
Country-of-Origin Effect	COE
Country of Origin Image	COI
Customer Purchase Motivations	CPM
Generation Z	Gen Z
Social Cognitive Theory	SCT
Total Food Quality Model	TFQM

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Food choice is the process by which individuals decide what and how to produce, acquire, prepare, distribute, and consume food (Blake et al., 2023). Food choice occurs when individuals are in a food environment and involve both conscious and unconscious decision-making (Blake et al., 2021). Schösler et al., (2018) emphasized the importance of studying consumers who are highly involved with food in ways that challenge conventional lifestyles, such as taste and quality-oriented consumers, also known as "*gourmets*" consumers. Meanwhile, gourmet products refer to food and drinks of high quality and often expensive (Oxford, 2023). The term « Gourmet » is often used by marketers on food products to express aspects of luxury, high quality, and taste. Researchers indicate that the use of the term 'luxury' for goods or brands is often associated with high prices, a lifestyle of a privileged elite, enhances positive feelings, uniqueness, excellent quality, and prestige (Brun & Castelli, 2013; Wang & Somogyi, 2020). In that perspective, gourmet food could include products with a high price and excellent quality, while enhancing positive feelings, and embracing some symbolically social and individual values perceived by consumers.

The Country of Origin (hereinafter, CoO) is considered "the country where a product is produced" (Tse & Gorn, 1993, p57); and represents one of the key extrinsic factors' consumers use to choose food products (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009; Bruwer and Buller, 2012; Carneiro & Faria, 2016). Indeed, CoO is a key concept of Marketing because it may have a significant impact on consumer behavior and decision-making process (Walley et al., 2019), especially due to the Country-of-Origin Effect (COE). The COE can be defined as the influence (positive or negative) that the country of origin of a product has on the consumer, during the buying decision-making process (Watson and Wright, 1999; Chicudean et al., 2013).

In the past three years, the gourmet food market has greatly increased. According to a report published by Research and Markets (2023), the American gourmet food industry had a total revenue of $3.3 billion in 2022, and over the past 3 years, the sector has grown at an annual rate of 3.9%. Indeed, the American food supply has faced diversification due to the increase in imports,

and the massive development of international trading enables developed countries to export and import products from other countries (Heakal, 2023). International trading has always existed between countries (Wang et al., 2022), and has massively increased from the second half of the 20th century and especially since the last two decades (Ndraha et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2022). This has been driven by technological progress, liberalization of trade policies, and the rising influence of transnational corporations (Anderson, 2010; Kissinger, 2012; UNCTAD, 2009). In the United States, food imports increased by 342 percent between 1990 and 2015 (Ndraha et al., 2017) and the country is today one of the largest importers of food in the world. According to the USDA, in 2020 the United States imported $149 billion worth of food and agricultural products, with the top categories being fresh fruits, vegetables, and nuts. Most of the imported food comes from Mexico, followed by Canada and China.

1.2. Purpose and research questions

The act of consuming food is a complex topic that has widely been studied (de Morais Sato et al., 2016), and previous research highlighted that food choices are mainly determined by price, convenience, taste, and health (Van Bussel et al., 2022). A large body of literature focuses on the origin of food products, yet, to date, no study focuses on gourmet food products. In addition, although Customer Purchase Motivations (CPM) have widely been studied in the past years, no previous research explored the product origin of CPM for gourmet food products. The problem addressed in this research is the fact that the increase in the offer diversity has changed the customers' purchase decision process. This study aims to assess customer's perception of the importance of the origin of gourmet food products, especially the impact of the product origin on their motivation to purchase the product. The purpose of this study is to analyze customer's motivations to purchase gourmet food products. Based on the aim and objectives of this study, two research questions are built, and will conduct the following sections:

> *RQ1: What are the main customer's motivations to purchase gourmet food products?*
> *RQ2: Does the Country of Origin of a Gourmet Food Product impact customer purchase motivations, and if so, how?*

1.3. Objectives

Two main objectives conduct this dissertation. The first objective is to identify the main customer's motivations to purchase luxury food products. The second objective is to explore the extent to which the product's origin of a gourmet food product impacts customers' motivations. This dissertation has several delimitations. Firstly, this paper does not intend to cover different aspects that influence customer's purchase motivations, such as tribes or history. It has been demonstrated that personal history, emotions, social and economic contexts, and feelings have an impact on how and why a customer decides to purchase or not a product or a service (Palmer, 2010). Indeed, this study aims to focus on the importance of the product origin on the customer purchase motivations.

In the context of mass production and mass consumption, many researchers focused on exploring and analyzing consumers behavior and their purchase decision process in the food industry (de Boer & Schösler, 2016; Bredahl, 2003; Veale & Quester, 2009). Past research was also conducted on why consumers consider the origin of food products important, and how and why it influences consumer choices is fragmented and contradictory (Thøgersen, 2023). However, there seems to be a lack of research on the luxury food market, also defined as the Gourmet food market. This research aims to fill this research gap. The study conducted by Veale & Quester (2009), investigates the influence of price and Country of Origin (COO) as extrinsic cues on consumer evaluations of wine quality when all intrinsic cues are experienced through sensory perceptions (Veale & Quester, 2009). In relation to their study, this research aims to further explore the relationship between product origin and purchase motivations.

1.4. Structure of the dissertation

This paper is structured in 6 sections. The following section is the literature review, which presents a detailed overview of the past research conducted on the topic. Then, the methodology driving this research is explained, following the interpretivism research philosophy and an inductive research approach, group focus interviews are conducted to collect data from the selected sample. Respondents who live in the United States, Millennials, or Generation Z (Gen Z) who already purchased gourmet food products were interviewed. Leximancer software is used to analyze the responses and create a conceptual map that includes themes and concepts for further interpretation (Angus et al., 2013). Then, the results are discussed, and the research questions are answered. Finally, the study limitations are addressed, and future research recommendations are made.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

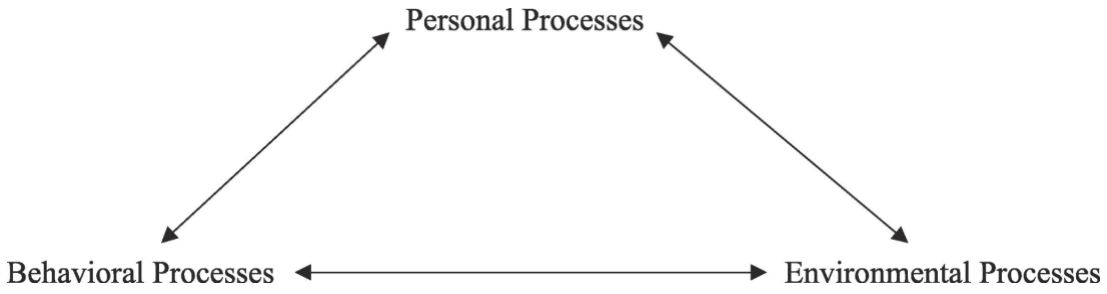
2.1. Customer Purchase Motivations

Eating is indispensable to fulfilling our physiological needs (Maslow, 1954), while it also represents an important space for social relations to occur (de Morais Sato et al., 2016; Fischer & Masson, 2010). The existing literature highlights the complexity of food purchase motivations (Ufer & Ortega, 2023). Much research has centered around the attitudinal and motivational influences on consumption behavior, which helped to have a better understanding of consumers' food buying behavior (Furst et al., 1996; Keane & Williets, 1994; Ashwell, 1990). Recent studies generally focused on particular categories of food such as organic food (Rana & Paul, 2020; Dowd & Burke, 2013; Gauthier et al., 2022), food with specific labels (Ufer & Ortega, 2023), and local food (Birch et al., 2018; Bianchi & Mortimer, 2015).

2.1.1. Social Cognitive Theory

Many researchers focused on understanding why consumers behave a certain way. One of the main theories is the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) developed by Bandura (1986), which emphasizes the dynamic interaction between people (personal factors), their behavior, and their environments. The SCT points out that consumers can be motivated by observing the behaviors and choices of others around them, particularly role models and peers, and take particularly into consideration past experiences, and all these past experiences influence their expectations and behaviors (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). This model also appears as *triadic reciprocality* or *reciprocal interactions in the existing literature (see Figure 1)*. However, SCT presents limitations, as it does not particularly consider the impact of other factors such as emotions or motivations on the decision to engage in behaviors, and assumes that a change in the environment will automatically impact the behavior processes.

Figure 2.1: Model of reciprocal interactions
Source: Schunk & DiBenedetto, (2020)



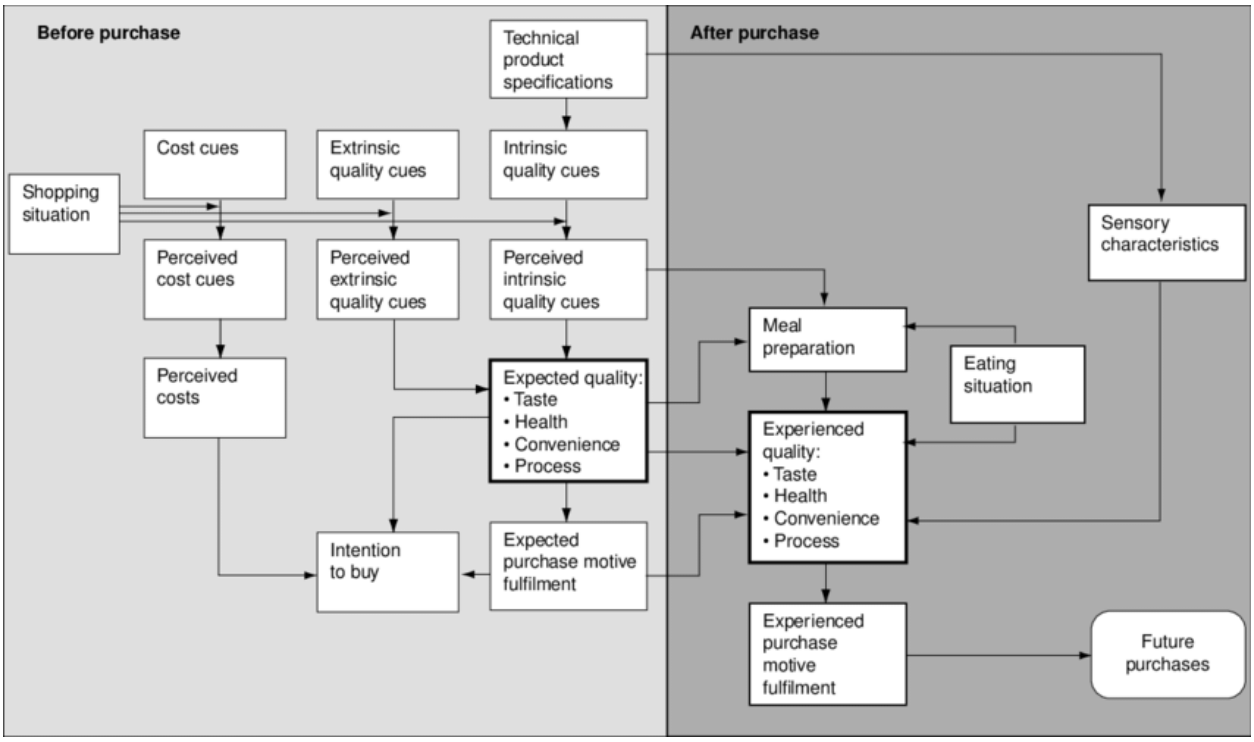
Furthermore, the SCT highlights key factors influencing each process and impacting the final development of motivation. Personal processes can be influenced by goals of self-evaluation of progress, self-efficacy, social comparisons, values, outcome expectations, and attributions. Environmental processes can be influenced by social models, instructions, feedback, standards, rewards, and opportunities for self-evaluations. Behavioral processes can be influenced by choices of activities, effort, persistence, achievements, and environmental regulations (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Furthermore, previous research showed the major impact of parents on children's food choices and developed the concept of *food parenting* (Roys & Balantekin, 2023; Sherrard et al., 2023). Indeed, food parenting is aligned with Bandura's theory and emphasizes the influence of parents (i.e., social models) on certain behaviors.

2.1.2. Intrinsic and extrinsic cues

The existing literature links products' intrinsic and extrinsic cues to customer purchase motivations. Indeed, an intrinsic cue can be defined as a product attribute inherent to the product itself, "such as the grape variety used to produce a type of wine" (Veale & Quester, 2009, p.134). On the opposite, the extrinsic cues "can be altered without changing the objective attributes of the product, and include price, country of origin or retail distributor" (Veale & Quester, 2009, p.134). Indeed, the Total Food Quality Model (TFQM) developed by Grunert et al., (1996), highlights the importance of intrinsic and extrinsic cues in the perception of food quality, and their impact on consumer's intentions to purchase food products. The TFQM identifies four aspects of the expected quality: the taste, the health, the convenience, and the process, and involves the concept of "perception" by linking perceived extrinsic and intrinsic quality cues to the expected product quality.

Figure 2.2: The TFQM

Source: Grunert, et al., (1996).



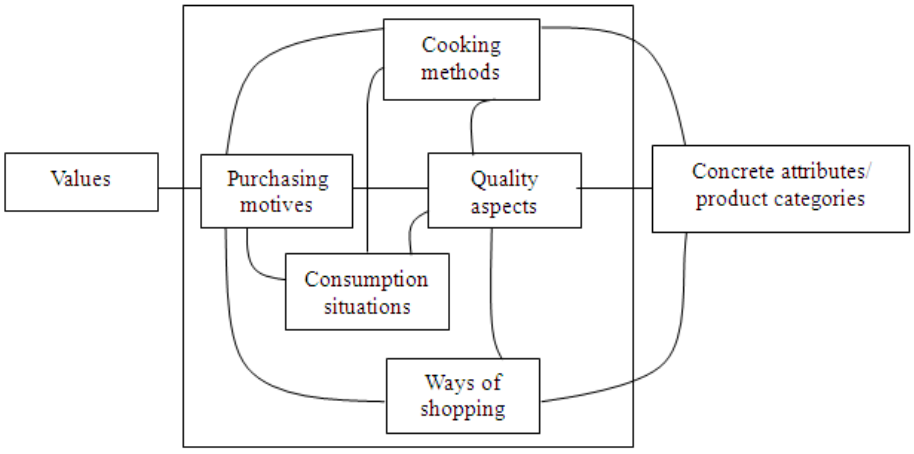
2.1.3. Egoistic and altruistic motivations

Past research analyzed a wide range of values, motivations, and behaviors to characterize consumers' food choices. Birch et al., (2018) characterized two main types of motivations: egoistic and altruistic motivations. Egoistic motivations reflect a self-gratifying individual and indicate the concern for self or the family (Alam et al., 2023), while altruistic motivations can be defined as "the level to which people are aware of their environment and the problems emanating from it while rendering solutions that are self-sacrificing" (Alam et al., 2023, p.3). Indeed, Birch et al., (2018) linked intrinsic and extrinsic cues to egoistic and altruistic motivations. They associated intrinsic qualities such as quality, appearance, freshness, taste, healthiness, or safety with egoistic motivations or self-interest; and selected extrinsic qualities and societal benefits such as supporting local producers, preserving agricultural land, increased food security with altruistic motivations, or doing 'wider good'.

2.1.4. Food-related lifestyles

Brunsø & Grunert, (1995) and Brunsø & Grunert, (1998) proposed a concept called “food-related lifestyle”. The authors defined lifestyle as a system of cognitive categories, scripts, and their associations, which relate a set of values to a set of products (Brunsø & Grunert, 1995). Then, they defined the concept of food-related lifestyle as a “mental construct explaining behavior in relation to the product class "foods," and described the concept as a system of cognitive categories, scripts, and their associations, which relate a set of products to a set of values” (Brunsø and Grunert, 1998, p.146). This definition is consistent with the means–end approach to consumer behavior developed by Olson & Reynolds (1983), in particular with the hierarchical cognitive structure formulation (Brunsø and Grunert, 1998). The basis of their theory was assumptions about how food products (Concrete attributes and product categories in Figure 1) are related to values in consumers' cognitive structure. They identified 5 relevant aspects of cognitive structure: ways of shopping, cooking methods, quality aspects, consumption situations, and purchasing motives.

Figure 2.3: A cognitive structure model for food-related lifestyle
Source: Bruno & Grunert, (1998)



Following this vision, past research has shown that cooking and eating can be identified as forms of “goal-directed behavior with many complementary and competing motivational aspects, such as the need to strive for variation, to make balanced choices, to avoid ‘bad’ food, and to preserve favored combinations of use situations, meals, products, and ingredients” (de Boer & Schösler, 2016, p.96). These motivational aspects can be translated into short self-descriptions, which can help consumers identify how they relate to food (de Boer & Schösler, 2016)

2.2. Gourmet food products

The identification of food categories is complex and research tends to define them according to "a range of tasks in the food life cycle of cultivation, processing, storage, delivery, and consumption" (Zhang et al., 2023, p.1) or according to consumer perception of the nutritional quality of the food items (Garcia et al., 2021). Several types of food exist, and past research has usually focused on one specific type of food without presenting the differences with other types of food. In 2016, de Boer & Schösler studied food and value motivation and linked consumer affinities to different types of food products. They identified four main types of foods: Conventional food, Efficient food, Gourmet food, and Natural food. Examples of conventional foods are potatoes, broccoli, white bread, and instant meat sauce. Efficient food examples can be instant vegetables, instant meat replacers, and crisps. Examples of gourmet food are fresh fish, luxurious chocolate, and baguette. Finally, examples of natural food are pure ingredients such as beans, nuts, pumpkin, and brown bread (de Boer & Schösler, 2016, p.98). In this study, de Boer & Schösler link the term "gourmet" to the aspect of "luxury" and emphasize the high qualitative aspect of each product present in the "Gourmet" category, which is in accordance with the Oxford dictionary definition (2023) that Gourmet (of food, drink, etc.) refers to high quality and are often expensive.

2.2.1. Luxury products

A luxury brand can be defined as a product or service brand that consumers perceive to be of high quality and provides them with both functional and emotional value (Han & Kim, 2020). However, the nature of luxury is constantly changing, making it difficult to formulate a universal definition of luxury brands (Hudders et al., 2013). Christodoulides et al., (2021) define that "luxury consumption has been long associated with qualities of exclusivity, such as rarity, uniqueness, high pricing, and excellent quality" (p.89). Moreover, Shukla et al. (2015) assert that the values of luxury consumption should be classified into three dimensions: functional, symbolic and experiential. Scholars also indicate that luxury consumption has been defined through aspects that transcend intrinsic product features, such as hedonism, aesthetics, and authenticity (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009; Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). However, other research defines aspects of luxury consumption as a lifestyle of a privileged elite or being more comfortable, enjoyable, and fulfilling, enhancing positive feelings, a vehicle for displaying wealth and self-expression, uniqueness, and excellent quality and prestige (Brun & Castelli, 2013). Some experts focused particularly on luxury

food products and highlighted that “food is often seen as high status as soon as it is not available to all social groups” (Otero, 2018). Experts such as Berry (1994) and Van der Veen (2003), contribute to the assessment of luxury foods in a wider social context of exclusivity. This rarity may result from the fact that this type of food is not available in large quantities, or that its supply and circulation are controlled by human actors (Otero, 2018). Van der Veen, (2003, p.405) explained that “the consumption of luxury foods is “used primarily to create or enhance social bonds, in the latter to create or enhance exclusivity and distance”. Consistent with this research vein, Dubois et al. (2020) highlight that the state created by the mere presence of another person amplifies the emotional value of a luxury product.

2.3. Country of Origin and Country Image

Previous research conducted on the impact of the country of origin (CoO) on customers’ choices is fragmented and contradictory (Thørgersen, 2023). CoO can be defined as the country where a product is produced (Tse & Gorn, 1993). The existing literature highlights the multidimensional nature of CoO effects (Chryssochoidis et al., (2007). Indeed, research shows that CoO can confer a positive impact on products, such as perceived quality, and familiarity with the product (Thakor & Lavack, 2003) or transfer a country's perceptions and values as a halo effect (Piron, 2000). In 1998, Lampert & Jaffe linked the concept of CoO to Country Image (CI) and demonstrated that when a CI has a positive connotation it can be perceived as an asset, and when it is associated with negative elements it can be viewed as a liability. Kaynak et al., (2000), identified country-related aspects as the cultural identity, the political climate, the language, the history, the landscape, the economic and technological development, the religion, and the people, impacting the overall CI. Aligned with these results, Chryssochoidis et al., (2007) analyzed that consumers tend to have a positive bias towards products manufactured in developed countries and a negative bias towards those produced in underdeveloped countries. Based on these elements, CI can be viewed as an operational concept: a variable, a holistic network, a complex of beliefs, an attitude construct, and a triple-component attitude construct (Brijs et al., 2011).

However, the concept of CI is controversial. Priyadarsini and Goodwin (2009), explained the pride with which some consumers talk about their Swish watch or French wine, and conversely, their reluctance to acknowledge that their mobile was made in South Korea, highlighting the controversial aspect of the country-of-origin image (COI) and emphasizing the importance of the

product type in the COI. Furthermore, CoO and CI present challenges as they have often led to unsuccessful associations of product images and CI, due to incongruent positions in consumer's minds (Cristea et al., 2014).

Moreover, from a marketing perception, the literature shows that CoO is an important factor in influencing consumers' brand evaluation, perceptions, and purchasing behavior, and can even offer brands a significant competitive advantage if it has a positive CI (Cristea et al., 2014). Jung et al. (2014) explained that CI can even resonate with a brand, and therefore eventually lead to an intense relationship between the consumer and the brand. However, Chuin & Mohamad, (2012) identified limits of CI and explained that these perceptions may change over time due to technological advances, personal lifestyle, or more sophisticated marketing techniques.

2.3.1. Country of origin and product category

In 2002, Piron demonstrated the product/category-specific nature of the CoO effect: CoO had a stronger influence on perceptions of the quality/desirability of a luxury item than of a necessity item. Indeed, previous research highlighted that a match" between country-of-origin and product category associations is needed to avoid negative spillover effects" (Veale & Quester, 2009). Veale & Quester (2009) illustrated the following: "France has a positive image when it comes to wine, fashion or perfumes, while its association with cars and high technology products is less positive". In addition, Walley et al. (2019) emphasized the fact that COO could act as a barrier for consumers or as stimuli for purchasing, and highlighted the fact that COO is stronger when it comes to food products. However, country images may contain contradictory associations, which enhance the importance of relating to a specific product or product category. Veale & Quester (2009) illustrated the following: "Turkey has developed a reputation regarding the product category of carpets but has not yet leveraged this product reputation for creating a strong brand reputation". Therefore, the effects implied by a certain country of origin are both product category specific and country-specific (Lampert & Jaffe, 1998; Veale & Quester, 2009).

2.3.2. Country of origin label

Previous research conducted on country-of-origin labels (COOL) has highlighted that the COOL is used by consumers to make decisions on food purchase and consumption, and that it can be used to infer quality (Kuff et al., 2023; Thøgersen, 2023). Indeed, the COOL of a food product can serve as a sign for predicting food quality when facing increasing uncertainty regarding the safety of the

food and before purchase for consumers with limited experience and knowledge of the food (Insch & Jackson, 2013) (Kuff et al.,2023). These findings were also confirmed by Thøgersen (2023), who emphasized in his research focusing on the influence of origin labeling on food packaging on consumers' evaluation and choice, that it is their duty to support their local or domestic farmers and industry. However, the existing literature also highlights the fact that labels can be misunderstood and lead to misinterpretation from consumers (Todd et al., 2021; Temple & Fraser, 2014). Furthermore, past research specifically focused on labels in the United States and has shown that "most consumers have difficulty understanding the information provided by both front of package and back of package food labels used in the United States" (Todd et al., 2021) and categorized them as "unclear" (Sharib et al., 2023).

2.4 Gen Z and Millennials

Following Mannheim, (1952) Ground Theory about Generations (Timonen & Conlon, 2015), Millennials correspond to the population born between 1980 and 1996, and Gen Z to the population born between 1997 and 2015. In addition, Gen Z was raised in a digital world with the internet and social media and is sometimes referred to as *iGen* or *Centennials* (Gomes et al., 2023). The existing literature gathers much research conducted on Gen Z and Millennials' purchasing habits. This can be attributed to the fact that, on a global scale, the world's population is young, with people aged 24 and under (i.e., Gen Z) accounting for the majority of the population (United Nations DESA, 2020). In addition, Pauliene & Sedneva, (2019) explained that Gen Z and Millennials will represent 75% of the purchasing power in the near future.

2.4.1. Gen Z and Millennials food purchasing habits

Existing research into the food buying habits of Gen Z and Millennials has revealed several interesting insights into the consumption behaviors of these groups. Studies consistently highlight that they prioritize health and wellness, showing a preference for organic (Molinillo et al., 2020; Nafees et al., 2022), sustainable (Coderoni & Perito, 2021; Raimondo et al., 2022), and ethically sourced food products (Alae-Carew et al., 2022). However, the existing literature also highlights the spontaneous and convenient aspect of food choices and food consumption of these generational groups (Chung et al., 2017). Additionally, Millennials and Gen Z have demonstrated a remarkable curiosity for diverse and international cuisines, often seeking unique culinary experiences

(Okumus et al., 2021). Both generations are more likely to embrace online food shopping and food delivery services, leveraging the ease of digital platforms (Yeo et al., 2017). In addition, social media significantly influences their food choices, as they rely on platforms like Instagram and TikTok to discover, evaluate, and share their food experiences (Chu, 2011; Zhou et al., 2023; Zuo et al., 2022).

2.4.2. Gen Z and Millennials luxury consumption

In 2016, around two billion millennials worldwide were luxury consumers (Han & Kim, 2020). Generation Z and Millennials' approach to luxury is characterized by a nuanced blend of aspirational and socially conscious motivations (Wiedmann et al., 2009). De Kerviler and Rodriguez (2019), highlighted self-expansion as a major motivational factor in engaging with a luxury brand for Millennials, while Han and Kim (2020) emphasized that digital transformation has emerged emotion and experience as luxury consumers' important motivations to purchase.

These generations seek luxury items that not only reflect their individuality but also align with their ethical and environmental values (Adiguzel & Donato, 2021). As a result, businesses in the luxury sector are adapting their strategies to cater to these generational preferences by incorporating ethical and sustainable practices into their products and marketing efforts, recognizing that the evolving definition of luxury encompasses both elegance and ethics (Holmqvist & Kowalkowski, 2023).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research philosophy

Research philosophy can be defined as the reflexive process of producing new knowledge by shaping a set of assumptions to answer a research question. (Saunders et al., 2016; Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The author wrote this paper following the interpretivism philosophy style as a guide. Indeed, interpretivism seems for the researcher to best fit the purpose of this study as the interpretivism approach encompasses the analysis and interpretation of both study participants and the author (Saunders et al., 2016).

3.2. Research approach

The author uses the inductive research approach, by exploring the collected data. The inductive research approach aims to explore data in order to develop theories from them that the authors will relate to the literature in the subsequent discussion. Thus, the objective is to collect data to generate a theory (Saunders et al., 2016; Merriam, 2002; Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Finally, Crowther & Lancaster (2009) demonstrated that the inductive research approach is best suited to study human behaviors. Therefore, as this study focuses on customers' motivations to purchase gourmet food products, the inductive approach is used.

3.3. Research design

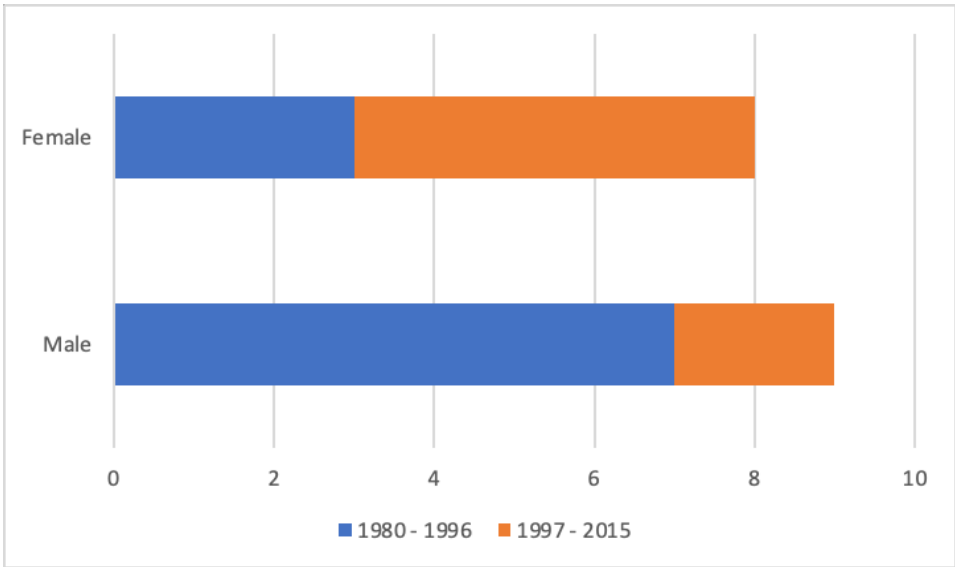
Interpretivism is often associated with a qualitative research design (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Saunders et al., 2016). As introduced in paragraph 3.1, the interpretivism philosophy guides this paper. Therefore, a qualitative research design is adopted. Given the complexity and diversity of customer's purchase motivations, a qualitative research design seems to best fit the research problem, as this study aims to provide in-depth knowledge about a subject.

3.4. Sampling

A selection of a sample in a population "is needed to collect data while excluding the necessity to look at the entire population" (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Following Zikmund et al., (2010) and Ghauri & Grønheug, (2010) sampling selection model, the author started by defining the targeted population: Americans who belong to Millennials or Generation Z and currently live in the United

States. Then, the author selected the sample through a non-probability sampling method and finally determined the sample size. The author follows a non-probability sampling technique as the sampling method for this study, which fits a qualitative research design approach (Saunders et al., 2016). Three focus groups of 5 to 6 respondents were conducted. Studying a rather small sample enables the researcher to capture interviewees' specific responses and individual interpretations (Daymon & Holloway, 2011), and achieve data saturation. Data saturation is reached when new data no longer bring new insights to the researchers (Bryman & Bell, 2016). The author focused on Millennials, and Gen Z. Indeed, Pauliene & Sedneva, (2019) explained that they will represent 75% of the purchasing power in the near future. The author interviewed respondents belonging to Millennials (10 respondents) and Gen Z (7 respondents) (see Figure 1), who currently live in the United States. All the respondents were employed and single.

Figure 3.1: Proportion of female and male respondents according to year of birth



3.5. Data collection process

The author conducted focus group interviews. A group focus interview is an "unstructured, free-flowing interview that gathers a small group of participants" (Zikmund et al., 2010), who, led by a moderator (the author), exchange feelings, ideas, and experiences about a topic (Blumberg et al., 2011). The group-focus interview method is chosen by the researcher for several reasons. Firstly, focus groups enable a very rich and in-depth data collection from the participants (Ghauri & Grønheug, 2010). This allows the author to analyze the respondents' opinions and reactions and

enables the author to directly interact and exchange with the participants and build the discussion (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Secondly, as several respondents are gathered, some divergent points can be expressed, and new insights can emerge from the different contributions of the participants (Blumberg, 2011). Thirdly, Saunders et al. (2016) highlighted their relevance in an exploratory study as they provide important background and contextual information. Finally, previous research has shown that focus groups are useful to collect in-depth, qualitative data regarding food choices and preferences (Deliens et al., 2014). In total, three focus groups were conducted (referred to as "G1", "G2", and "G3" in the following section), with a total of seventeen participants. Ten Participants belonged to the Millennials, and seven participants belonged to Gen Z. All participants were employed when the focus groups were conducted. Each group focus gathered between five to six participants. The focus group lasted between 50 and 75 min. During the focus groups, the participants were not individually interviewed but were invited by the moderator's questions and exercises to share their opinions and interact with the other participants.

3.6. Interview design

Following Ritter et al., (2021) method, the focus groups started with an exercise where each student was given several sticky notes and encouraged to write down three to five words or phrases that reflected their perception of gourmet food products and their motives to purchase them. Then, the respondents had to write down 3 to 5 words that reflect their thoughts and beliefs about the origin of gourmet food products. Finally, following the method used by Walley et al., (2019), the respondents were presented with four gourmet food products with two different origins for each product and were asked to select the one that they would typically purchase, and explain the reasons behind it. The two origins selected for this final question are the countries that exported the most of this product in 2022 (Daunton, 2022; Workman, 2022).

3.7. Data analysis tool

To analyze the collected data the author follows the process recommended by Saunders et al., (2016). Firstly, data is prepared for analysis by being transcribed using the software Otter, using artificial intelligence. Following this process, the author went through the transcription of each sentence to guarantee the accuracy of the transcription. Then, the author used the software Leximancer to analyze the collected data. Leximancer is a powerful tool that analyzes the content

of compilations of texts and transcribes them into visuals (Smith & Humphreys, 2006). By using several algorithms Leximancer performs a quantitative approach to analyze qualitative data. Leximancer is primarily used to analyze human language (Tseng et al., 2015). The software displays a concept map that provides « an overview of the material, representing the main concepts contained within the text and how they are related » (Leximancer, 2021). The analysis relies on three steps: the exact transcripts of the interviewees' responses (description), the identification of the concepts and main themes (analysis), and the process of making sense in the context of the literature review that was conducted (interpretation).

3.8. Ethical considerations

While conducting research, ethical principles are followed. Firstly, according to the literature, research ethics refers to the standards of behaviors that guide the researchers about the rights of those who become the subject of the research project, or are affected by it (Saunders et al., 2016; Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Two levels of protection should be delimited: the research participants and the research community (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). To guarantee the protection of the participants, the author requested their consent by fulfilling a GDPR consent form that ensures privacy protection, anonymity if willing, and total confidentiality while reporting the data (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Secondly, the author aims to avoid deception about the aim and nature of this research and clearly exposes the research purpose and objectives of the study to all the participants. Finally, the author shows honesty and transparency in exposing the findings to ensure accuracy and lack of bias in the research results (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Results analysis

The collected data about customers' motivations to purchase gourmet food products, and their perception of the product origin on their purchase motivations are illustrated in the conceptual map received through Leximancer (see figure 2). The concept map provided by Leximancer includes various rainbow-colored themes, along with gray dots symbolizing matching concepts. The six main themes with their number of hits (in parentheses) are *Gourmet* (273), *Educate* (20), *Country* (16), *France* (12), *Taste* (11), and *Special* (9).

Figure 4.1: Conceptual map of the importance of the product origin on customer's purchase motivations for gourmet food products.

Source: Leximancer outputs



The most critical theme - "*gourmet*" in this study - is presented with the color red. The following theme "*educate*" is in yellow, "*country*" is highlighted in light green, "*france*" is in dark green, "*taste*" is in the color purple, and finally the theme "*special*" is in blue.

Furthermore, the closeness of a concept's semantic relationship to other concepts is related to the location of each color. Table 1 presents the 28 concepts, their counts, and their relevance in percentage.

Table 4.1: Concepts, counts and relevance in percentages.

Concept	Kind	Count	Relevance	Concept	Kind	Count	Relevance
France	NAME GENERAL	12	13	***purchase***	WORD	12	13
buy	WORD	93	100	***place***	WORD	12	13
product	WORD	67	72	***trust***	WORD	12	13
gourmet	WORD	66	71	***wine***	WORD	11	12
gourmet	WORD USER	66	71	***cheaper***	WORD	11	12
quality	WORD	45	48	***expensive***	WORD	11	12
origin	WORD	43	46	***taste***	WORD	11	12
people	WORD	39	42	***store***	WORD	10	11
food	WORD	38	41	***family***	WORD	10	11
specific	WORD	24	26	***label***	WORD	9	10
educate	WORD	20	22	***special***	WORD	9	10
country	WORD	16	17	***making***	WORD	9	10
packaging	WORD	15	16	***aspect***	WORD	8	9
fresh	WORD	13	14	***standard***	WORD	7	8

In addition, the table 2 shares the main themes analyzed by Leximancer and their matching concepts in order of relevance. The number of matching concepts contained related to the importance and deepness of the expressed theme.

Table 4.2 : Themes and Their Matching Concepts

Themes	Matching concepts in order of relevance
Gourmet	gourmet, gourmet, buy, product, food, quality, origin, specific, people, purchase, fresh, wine, cheaper, packaging
Educate	educate, origin, standard, trust, aspect
Country	country, making
France	France, expensive
Taste	taste
Special	special, family

As shown in Figure 4.1 and Table 4.2 the "*gourmet*" theme has the most related concepts, with a count of 66 and a relevance of 71%. However, Table 4.1 reveals that the concept "buy" holds 93 hits and 100% relevance and exceeds the "main" theme. Following this, the term "*product*" arrives in second place according to both the count and relevance. The term "*quality*" also appears in the sixth position as a matching concept for "gourmet" (see Table 2) and has a relevance of 48%, highlighting the importance of product quality in the respondents' motivations to purchase gourmet food products. The "*educate*" theme overlaps "*gourmet*" on the map, demonstrating a high interaction of the themes and their important connection. The "price" theme is also overlapping the "*gourmet*" seed, highlighting a strong relation between the two concepts. The circle of the theme "*special*" is very close to the circle "*gourmet*", emphasizing a close relationship between the two concepts, and suggesting special environmental or product characteristics related to customers' purchase motivations for gourmet food products. The circle "*country*" is surrounded by the circle "*france*" and *educate*", all linked to the "*gourmet*" theme by related concepts. Finally, the circle "taste" is linked to "Gourmet" thereby suggesting that the respondents are likely to purchase gourmet foods for their taste. These results are consistent with the research objective, which is to understand the customers' motivations to purchase gourmet food products and the impact of the country of origin on them.

4.2. Discussion

This section discusses the concepts related to customers' purchase motivations for gourmet food products and the impact of the product origin on their purchase motivations. The discussion presents quotes from the focus group and compares them with the existing literature.

4.2.1. Motivations to purchase gourmet food products

The following subsections discuss the main motivations to purchase gourmet food products, resulting from the interpretations of the concept map and the quotes from the respondents.

4.2.1.1. The sensory enjoyment linked to intrinsic and extrinsic qualities

One of the main themes identified in the conceptual map is "gourmet". *Food, purchase, cheaper, fresh, store, specific, quality* are concepts that are connected to this theme, relating to the respondent's perception and definition of "*Gourmet*". The price associated with gourmet food products has been underlined during focus groups, especially in the context of purchasing. A respondent expressed "I would buy some gourmet food products because it is cheaper than getting them at a restaurant" (G1), and "it is much cheaper to buy the ingredient and cook it yourself" (G2). This vision is aligned with Bruno & Grunert (1998) cognitive structure model for food-related lifestyle, highlighting the importance of cooking methods and consumption situations on consumer's choices and behaviors. However, the word "*expensive*" was quoted 11 times, and respondents connected the dimension of gourmet food products' cost to the idea of "treat" and "gift", as expressed by a respondent "I also buy gourmet food because I want to treat myself, and gift for special occasions". This is aligned with Brun & Castelli, (2013) that luxury consumption is related to "enjoyable and fulfilling" feelings, and with Alam et al., (2023) theory links purchasing motivations to egoistic motivations, reflecting a behavior for self-gratification or concern for self or the family.

In addition, "*quality*" is one of the main concepts related to gourmet that was highlighted by the respondents and quoted 22 times. A respondent from (G2) stated "If we think about gourmet products, they taste better because the quality of the ingredients is better". This aligns with past research developed by Christodoulides et al., (2021), who link the concept of luxury food consumption to excellent quality, and with the vision of de Boer & Schösler (2016), who highlighted the high quality of gourmet ingredients. The dimension of freshness was also highly emphasized by the respondents who quoted 13 times the word fresh. Indeed, fresh is one of the main related concepts of the theme "*Gourmet*" with a relevance of 31%.

Furthermore, respondents highlighted the rarity aspect of gourmet food: "In my mind food is exclusively gourmet if it inherently comes from because of its rarity or price" (G2), in line with Otero's explanations that the rarity may result from the fact that this food is not available in large

quantities or its supply and circulation are controlled (Otero, 2018). The rarity aspect was linked to the curiosity to try new tastes, as respondents from G1 stated "I buy gourmet products because I want to try new tastes and flavors", and "I also want to try new products". Indeed, "*taste"* is a major theme present in the concept map, which is directly related to the co-concepts of gourmet, purchase, food, and origin. This is aligned with Christodoulides et al., (2021) theory that luxury food consumption is linked to rarity and uniqueness. These motivations based on price, quality, and taste, are all related to the sensory enjoyment linked to intrinsic and extrinsic qualities of gourmet food products. Thus, this result confirms the theory developed by Veale & Quester, (2009), who connected intrinsic and extrinsic cues to CPM, as well as the TFQM developed by Grunert et al., (1996) linking perceived extrinsic and intrinsic quality cues to the expected product quality.

4.2.1.2. Social and contextual factors

Furthermore, "*Special*" is also one of the main themes present in the concept map. The special dimension of gourmet food products has been greatly underlined by the respondents, who linked their consumption to special occasions. Indeed, as a respondent explained, "I want to treat my family for celebrations or special occasions" (G2). This result, linking the consumption of luxury products to special situations is aligned with Bruno & Grunert, (1998) cognitive structure for food-related lifestyles.

Another co-concept of the theme "*Special*" is "*family*", with a relevance of 20%. Indeed, the respondents underlined the impact of the presence of their family in their purchasing choices. A participant explained, "If it is for a celebration then I am willing to pay more, especially if it is for family or friends" (G3). This validates Dubois et al. (2020) vision which highlights the state created by the mere presence of another person amplifies the emotional value of a luxury product. Moreover, the respondents expressed that they more easily decide on purchasing gourmet food products if they are recommended by someone close to them, as "I usually buy what I already tried or if a friend or family recommended it to me" (G1). Thus, this result confirms the SCT pointing out that consumers can be motivated by observing and following the behaviors and choices of others, especially role models and peers, with particular attention to past experiences (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020).

Finally, the concept map links "*buy*" and "*place*" inside the seed of the theme "*gourmet*". In fact, the respondents emphasized the importance of their geographical location when purchasing gourmet food products. Indeed, they focus on the desire to try local specialties and are therefore more capable of purchasing gourmet food products when they travel. In fact, a respondent from (G1) stated "When I'm traveling, I want everything I eat to be local, and if it's a local or a specialty dish, it is gourmet". This idea relates to the shopping situations factor of the TFQM developed by Grunert, et al. (1996), and to the consumption situations of Bruno & Grunert, (1998). Moreover, studies in food tourism have concluded that food is a major motivating factor for traveling (McKercher et al., 2008).

4.2.2 The importance of the product origin

The following subsections discuss the importance of the product origin for customers to purchase gourmet food products, resulting from the interpretations of the concept map and the quotes from the respondents.

4.2.2.1. The impact of the country of origin

The "Gourmet" theme presents "product" as a related concept, which is closely linked to concepts such as: *fresh, origin, specific, country, purchase, label, educate, packaging*. The second position of "*origin*" as a related concept to "*product*" shows the important connection between them. Moreover, the third main theme shared in the concept map is "*country*". Indeed, as this research aims to explore the importance of the product origin on consumers' purchase motivations for gourmet food products, the focus group discussion explored the respondent's relationship with CoO. A respondent from G2 highlighted the importance of knowing the CoO of food products "I want to be able to identify and source the origin of all the ingredients when I buy gourmet food products" (G2), to which other participants agreed. Moreover, the concept map connects "*country*" to ten related concepts: *specific, label, making, store, expensive, product, origin, buy, food*, Specific being the first related concept. Indeed, the respondents explained that they tend to prioritize specific countries, depending on both products and situations, as shared by a respondent from (G1) "I prioritize countries who are well-known for the production of the specific product I want to buy". This result resonates with Walley et al. theory's (2019) defining that CoO could act as a stimulus for purchasing food products, but also with Lampert & Jaffe (1998), and Veale &

Quester (2009) findings which share that the effects implied by a certain CoO are specific to the product category and the country.

4.2.2.2. The methods of production in relation to ethical concerns

Moreover, the theme "*country*" is linked to "*making*". The participants expressed a strong attention to the methods used in the production of gourmet food products. Indeed, the respondents highly emphasized the importance of the authenticity and story related to the product origin: "The thing that sticks out to me is the story behind the product and the authenticity related to the origin" (G1). This idea is aligned with Fusté-Forné, (2020) study, which describes that food narratives communicate the practices and meanings attached to food heritages (Fusté-Forné, 2020). In addition, respondents noted that they pay particular attention to supporting local and small-scale producers, and act sustainably when it comes to gourmet food consumption. A participant from G1 expressed that "I would always prioritize products that are produced sustainably", and G2 said "I tend to prioritize sustainable methods of production". These quotes are aligned with the twelfth goal of the seventeen sustainable environment goals, presented by the United Nations in 2015, which is "responsible production and consumption" (United Nations, 2023). These results are consistent with Birch et al. (2018) who connected extrinsic qualities and societal benefits such as supporting local producers to CPM, particularly to altruistic motivations. Furthermore, a link between sustainability and quality was raised during the focus groups, as explained by a participant from G1 "I think that the more sustainable the better the quality". In fact, the concept map creates a connection between the concepts of "making" and "quality". This result relates to Magnier et al. (2016) conclusion that "product naturalness explains the perceptions of product quality" (Magnier et al., 2016, p.132).

Furthermore, "*France"* was mentioned by the interviewees during all the focus groups (12 times), and therefore appears as one of the main themes on the concept map. The participants shared examples of their visions of the relationship between the CoO and the product category, and especially why they tend to prioritize certain origins. A versatility of opinions was raised, as a respondent expressed "I buy champagne from France instead of sparkling wine from another country because they have a better reputation", while another one said, "The certificate of it being from Champagne doesn't necessarily mean to me that it is a greater quality". The participants referred to similar product categories: champagne and sparkling wine and expressed opposite

opinions. Thus, this is related to Yeh et al. (2010) study, which confirmed the influence of product similarity on CI, and emphasized that products from the same country of origin present parallel image patterns. Finally, this result also relates to Jung et al. (2014) who stated that CI can resonate with a brand, as the respondents linked French CI to a specific product category: champagne. In fact, CI was highlighted by the participants. One of them expressed "I would usually prioritize products from France because they have better standards" (G2). Indeed, the concept "*standard*" is part of the seed "e*ducate*" on the concept map. "*standard*" is also linked to words like *special, origin, product, specific, trust, quality*; which describes the different aspects of the respondents' perception of "standards".

4.2.2.3. Education: a major determinant

The second main theme of the concept map is "*educate*". Indeed, with a hit of 20, a relevance of 22%, and overlapping the main theme "*gourmet*" on the concept map, "educate" draws attention to a particular aspect of customer purchase motivations, especially on the importance of education about the product origin. The theme educate has related world-like such as: origin, standard, trust, aspect. Indeed, the education and learning process about the respondent's choices was a major topic during the focus groups, for example, a respondent from (G3) stated "I also want to try new products and educate myself about the origins". In addition, a respondent from (G1) explained "That's very important for me to look at the labels and educate myself about the origin. I want to know where the ingredients come from". Indeed, "*label*" is a co-concept of "*packaging*" on the concept map, and a respondent from (G2) said "I think that being able to see labels and actually trust them is needed". These quotes are aligned with Kuff, et al. (2023) vision which highlights the impact of labels on CPM when they purchase food products. However, respondents also agreed on the fact that labels are unclear and can be misunderstood, as stated "Sometimes labels don't actually mean anything in the U.S., it is real greenwashing", to which another respondent said, "They can be incredibly misleading". This confusion expressed by the respondents echoes Todd et al. (2021) and Sharib et al. (2023) vision of the misleading aspect of food labels and is related to the respondents' desire to learn and understand the different labels to make decisions in possession of all knowledge. Furthermore, this result is coherent with Walters & Long (2012) who conclude through their research on the effect of food label cues on perceptions of quality and

purchase intentions, that consumers' levels of nutrition knowledge influenced their ability to process food labels.

Thus, considering the important aspect of sustainable methods of production emphasized by the theme "*Country*" and the co-related concept "*making*", this result is aligned with Thøgersen's study (2023), which emphasized that consumers consider purchasing products with origin labeling on the packaging that it is their duty to support their local industries. This result also echoes the Goh & Jie, (2019) study which highlighted that Generation Z is generally more environmentally aware than people from previous generations.

Respondents also emphasized the knowledge they have about CoO for particular products "The education is very important, especially about the quality of the product and the origin. I try to learn where that product initially or originally comes from, and then prioritize that particular origin" (G2). Indeed, "*quality*" is close to the "*educate*" circle in the concept map. This resonates with the TFQM developed by Grunert et al. (1996) who linked perceived extrinsic and intrinsic quality cues to the expected product quality and added a new dimension highlighting the importance of knowledge on the perception of quality.

Furthermore, this study collected data from Americans living in the United States and the respondents related to this aspect during the focus group to explain their behaviors toward food choices: "I like to educate myself on the quality and origin because, for years and years, we have been given many bad products and processed food." (G3). The respondents particularly linked sustainability to education and highlighted that they tend to prioritize sustainable methods of production. Indeed, the importance of ethics and methods of production has been raised, and respondents had different knowledge regarding the methods of production of certain gourmet food products that were mentioned during the last part of the focus groups. Products such as foie gras and fresh salmon provoked strong interactions between the participants who did not have the same knowledge about the production methods. For example, a respondent said, "I would never buy salmon from Norway because I know that they are farmed" to which another respondent responded, "At first I would have picked Norwegian salmon, but because you said that it is farmed, I won't buy it". The debate created further discussion about sustainability and the importance of knowing the methods of production generally used in certain countries.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. Main conclusion

To conclude, this research analyzed customer purchase motivations for gourmet food products that can be categorized into two categories: (1) the sensory enjoyment related to intrinsic and extrinsic qualities such as high quality and unique flavors; and (2) motivations linked to social and contextual factors as the influence of peers or the celebration of certain occasions. Moreover, the impact of the product origin has been strongly highlighted in customer's purchasing motivations. The participants of this study emphasized their choices toward the product origins according to their personal values, in alignment with aspects such as perceived exclusivity, and supported local and small producers to enable a more sustainable consumption. Finally, this research has spotlighted the importance of education on CPM and on their decision to prioritize certain product origins. This finding adds a new dimension to the existing literature and draws a new path on the importance and impact of education on CPM, especially for Gen Z and Millennials.

5.2. Theoretical contribution

Understanding the underlying motives and priorities customers hold from product origin can bring greater clarity to their purchase behavior across several gourmet food products. This study explores the impact of the origin on consumer purchasing motivations for gourmet food products and contributes to the progress of knowledge on the influence of product origin on customers' motivations to buy gourmet products, in order to complement existing research on the subject. Indeed, this study aims to fill a research gap, as no existing literature focuses on the impact of the product origin on the CPM in the specific context of gourmet food products. Finally, this study contributed to highlighting the impact of education on CPM in a food choice context and invites further exploration of this aspect in future research.

5.3. Practical contribution

By shedding light on the complex interaction between product origin and customer motivations to purchase gourmet food products, this research contributes to the existing knowledge in consumer behavior, marketing, and the food industry. This study allows food companies to adapt their strategies in highlighting the product's origin. By following the existing research on the CoO of their gourmet food products, in addition to the results of this study, companies should highlight

the CoO on the packaging, if it has a positive connotation in the consumer's mind. The various online and offline communication campaigns must also contribute to educating consumers about the origin of the products sold, the methods used to harvest or manufacture them, and the different people involved in the process. Point-of-sale communication is also essential to guide consumers in their purchasing choices. This research has shown that Gen Z and Millennial consumers tend to prioritize local or authentic products. Companies therefore have an interest in highlighting the narratives of their products. These aspects are likely to continue shaping the food industry for years to come, making it essential for businesses to understand and respond to these changing consumer behaviors.

5.4. Limitations

This research presents several limitations. Firstly, the methodology is based on a qualitative data collection process which presents a subjective nature (Connelly, 2013). Secondly, the focus group was conducted to collect the data gathered a total of 17 participants. This number of respondents is not enough to generalize the results of this study to the entire Gen Z and Millennials and is too small to support claims of having achieved either informational relativity or theoretical redundancy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sandelowski, 1995).

5.5. Future research

This thesis aims to better understand the impact of the product origin on CPM for gourmet food. The data collection and result phase highlight new considerations for future research in this field. The following step would be to research with a quantitative approach regarding CPM for gourmet food products. A quantitative approach would generate and collect a more significant amount of data and help researchers to have a broader understanding of the subject. Moreover, future research should evaluate the extent of the sustainable concerns on CPM for other food categories, such as conventional products, in order to strengthen the knowledge about food choices and sustainable behaviors. Lastly, a future study with participants from Generation Y could help highlight a potential gap with Generation Z' purchasing motivations for gourmet food products, and the attention held toward the product origin, with a particular focus on sustainable concerns.

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Appendix:

A. Focus-group guide

Introduction:

This research focuses on the customer purchase motivations for gourmet food products. This focus group aims to identify the factors that motivate you to purchase gourmet food products, and in particular to what extent the product origin influences your decision to purchase or not a product. You have been selected to contribute to this research because you have purchased once or multiple times a gourmet food product, you belong to Generation Z or Millennials, and you currently live in the US.

Part I: Customer's motivations to purchase luxury food product

Question found in literature	Source	Adapted Question to this study	Purpose of the Question
Write down 3 to 5 words or phrases that reflected what they believed are the "must-haves" for the dairy industry in terms of animal care 20 year from now	Ritter, et al., 2021.	Write down 3 to 5 words of phrases that reflect your perception of gourmet food products and your motives to purchase them	Understand the respondent's definition, perception and motivations of purchasing gourmet food products.

Part II: Country of Origin of Gourmet Foods

Question found in literature	Source	Adapted Question to the study	Purpose of the Question
Write down 3 to 5 words or phrases that reflected what they believed are the "must-haves" for the dairy industry in terms of animal care 20 year from now	Ritter, et al., 2021.	Write down 3 to 5 words of phrases that reflect your thoughts and beliefs about the origin of gourmet food products	Understand the respondent's beliefs about the product origin of gourmet food products

Part III: Country of Origin of Gourmet Foods and Motivation to purchase these foods

Following the method used by Walley, K., Cheng, L. and Liu, T. (2019) of comparing two product origins and asking them to select one and justify their choices.

For the next questions, you will be presented with three gourmet food products with two different origins for each product. Select the one that you will typically purchase and explain why.

Products	Origins
Fresh Salmon	Norway VS Chile
Chocolate	Colombia VS Turkey
Foie gras	France VS Hungary
Fresh Truffles	France VS Spain

Part IV: Demographics & Psychographics

Q: Gender

Q: Age

Q: Work/ Study status

B. Participants demographics

Participants	Gender	Age	Work/study status
1	F	23	work
2	F	24	work
3	M	27	work
4	F	26	work
5	M	26	work
6	F	23	work
7	F	23	work
8	M	24	work
9	F	33	work
10	M	25	work
11	M	26	work
12	M	25	work
13	M	26	work
14	M	26	work
15	F	27	work
16	F	23	work
17	M	23	work

C. Transcripts from focus-group 1 (G1)

Author: So, a bit of context, I'm conducting a research that focuses on the customer purchase motivations for gourmet food products, like fresh fish, quality coffee, chocolate, fresh meat, it could be also champagne, really good wine, truffles, caviar, these kind of products. And so, the aim is to identify why you purchase these products. And how does the product origin actually influence your choices in purchasing or not purchasing a product. You have been selected to participate to this study because you belong to Generation Z or Millennials, you live in the US, and you already purchased gourmet food products. That's it for the greater context.

Participant: Do you want our names on this?

Author: No, just write down three to five words that reflect your perception of gourmet food product and what are your motivations to purchase them. Who wants to start and why you wrote the specific words.

Participant: I've got this. Alright, so I put treating myself. I would actually spend more money on something that I have never tried because I want to treat myself.

Participant: I agree, and also if it is supposed to be different, and if I want to try something new.

Participant: I would also buy gourmet food products because it is cheaper than getting it at a restaurant. Because if you get like a steak from a restaurant, it would be $30, but if you actually buy it and make it yourself it will cost you $9. By making yourself and purchasing the ingredients, you get the same high quality, but it's much more reasonably priced.

Author: Anyone relates to any point that he mentioned?

Participant: I agree, it is much cheaper to buy the ingredient and cook it yourself, it helps to save money. I also buy gourmet food because I want to treat myself and for celebrations.

Participant: Yes, mainly for celebrations and reward.

Participant: For example if I had a good week, very productive, it's nice to treat yourself with a good ice cream, or a nice bottle of wine.

Participant: I also think about family and greeting significant others for celebrations, or even just to treat them.

Participant: I agree, I want to gift and I mean, I guess hopefully if I'm dealing with my family, they are buying the nice things. But I want to treat them for celebrations or special occasions

Participant: Personally it is different. When I think gourmet, I think of a special occasion, and give something to celebrate whether it's a birthday anniversary, graduation, just something that is a happy moments. So except when I celebrate with other people, I don't really relate to treating myself. I just don't think of it. And I don't know if I relate to it now that we talked about it because I don't think of or may as enjoying it alone.

Author: So, do you want to be with other people to enjoy gourmet food?

Participant: Yes, with someone to enjoy it, and celebrate something. I don't know, I could be very proud of myself and be like, I'll just have this super fancy chocolate with truffle and I could do it, but I just didn't I don't relate to it. I've never done it before.

Participant: I think it mainly depends on the price.

Participant: And also, I would try something great maybe if it's a specialty of the place that I'm in, or where I am like for instance, if I'm in shopping in France, If I am in the Champagne region, I would have champagne. Or if it's like the specialty of where I am, the city of where I am I would try it because I feel like it's where I could get the best out of it.

Participant: I agree. Like for instance, I don't eat fresh fish in the city but I would eat fresh fish if I am near the sea.

Author: So it depends of your geographical location?

Participant: Yes it depends of my geographical location.

Participant: If I am in the city where this fish is actually like the best in the world. I would think of trying it because I know that it could never have this fish in another location.

Participant: I relate to this point. My consumption of gourmet food products depends on my geographical location. If I am in a particular area I am more able to spend money on good quality product because I know that they come directly from that particular location.

Participant: I am more capable of spending money on gourmet food if the products are handmade or handcrafted. I think that like when there's a certain intention behind it, and it stands out as a product that may be slightly different than what you normally get. It acts as a bigger

gesture if you're giving it to someone, it looks like you're not just picking up something random. You've thought about it. Usually I prioritize handmade or handcrafted products because there is a story and a meaning behind it. Someone took care of the preparation and made sure that the quality is good.

Author: So, would you also gift gourmet food product?

Participant: Yes, I feel like maybe you're buying like if you're bringing chips to someone's house, it's better to buy fancier chips, some that are maybe locally made or something else than lays.

Participant: To me, what matters is the intention behind sourcing something specifically to show that you actually care a bit more on the occasion.

Participant: I also wrote celebration, which a lot of people touched on, like communion, using it as a way to, like, gather with friends or family like treating yourself.

Participant: I think that for me, I look to purchasing or consuming gourmet things as more of a self indulgent activity, because it's not something I got to do when growing up. So now that I have my disposable income, I can enjoy things and celebrate more often. I didn't have an opportunity to enjoy as much quality food in the past.

Participant: Gourmet foods are enjoyable and delicious. And I think that touches on, like some of what you were saying about, gourmet food is like a reward.

Participant: And then also trying something new. Certain gourmet foods can have a unique taste that you don't get with the other options available, or just have more depth or even a story behind it. The story behind the product itself can be a motive for me to purchase the product.

Author: And, so how would you educate yourself about the story of the product?

Participant: I mean, if I'm buying wine, I don't know anything about wine, so I would go talk to whoever person in the store who's selling it or I would research online. Also because I want to make sure if I'm going to invest in this item, I am getting the best quality possible or that it is the correct thing for what I'm trying to do with it.

Participant: I also think that gourmet foods are cleaner products. They have a better quality and freshness. For example, chocolate or whatever, they usually taste better because the quality of the ingredients inside is better.

Participant: And then sometimes I also buy gourmet food products because of the packaging. Because it can be celebration, and cute packages motivate me to buy it.

Author Do you have any other additional thoughts or comment about this?

Participant: I feel like if you're giving a gift, obviously the price matters but you're willing to pay more for a product that you could get at a cheaper price if it's as a gift, even if it's a gift for yourself. If it's labeled as something special or for a celebration then you're willing to pay more.

Participant: I think I'm more likely to spend more money if it's for someone else, as a gift. Because

Participant: I also don't think that price always equate to quality

Participant: Yes, that's where the education comes in. That's where it is really important to understand what you're buying and why, and so you are less likely to be disappointed.

I guess packaging also rolls in. Like you're saying “it looks nice and that can feel really Gourmet and expensive again”, thanks to the packaging.

Participant: it's like how we bought that big chocolate bar and we were really excited because it had fun labeling and in the end we didn't think it was as good as the other ones.

Participant: We bought it because of the packaging and because we heard of it.

Participant: Also by hearing people talking about it

Author: Could you write down three to five words or phrases that reflect your thoughts and beliefs about the origin of gourmet food products? You can also use examples if you want if it's easier for you same people yes, you can be on the other side or I have other papers if you need to.

Participant: Can you repeat the question?

Author: Could you write down three to five words or phrases that reflect your thoughts and beliefs about the origin of gourmet food products?

Participant: I will start because it kind of goes with what I was talking about. I wrote down historical context of the product. To me when it comes to origin, if I know enough, am I like, is this a product where the ingredients are coming from? Are they native to that area?

And is it ,like, produced sustainably? I would always prioritize products that are produced sustainably, and the native origin of that product. I want to be able to identify and source the origin of all the ingredients when I buy gourmet food products.

Participant: I relate to this point. I also want to make sure that there's not a lot of like travel time or like packaging that's involved. I feel like that's something I think about when thinking about gourmet.

Author: So do you think about sustainability, as a main aspect?

Participant: Yes.

Participant: Yes I definitely.

Participant: The education is very important, especially about the quality of the product and the origins. I try to learn where does that product initially or originally come from, and then prioritize that particular origin.

Participant: Yeah I would want to know if this is an authentic product coming from a place where it makes sense for it to come from. I think that authenticity is related to who created that product, or in what particular environment it was produced. For example, if there's a group of monks that have been making this gourmet product. If there is a lot of of history about that product, then I would buy it. But on a general aspect, I would say it is linked to education, I want to learn about the story behind the product.

Author: Anyone relate to this aspect?

Participant: I guess I kind of connect with that, because I wrote that if they clearly labeled the origins on the package, I'm more likely to think highly of it. Because it seems more “small batch” in a way.

Participant: We'll see where they're from. But it doesn't mean they're small batch. But I agree with you I think that helps.

Participant: And then I also said that if like when I'm traveling, I want everything I eat to be local, like whether it's a local dish or a specialty dish or something, and then suddenly, to me that seems gourmet, even if it's not made with quality ingredients, but if it's a traditional dish. I want to educate myself on the story and the local cuisine.

Participant: So I guess it's authenticity. And then I guess I said where it is sold. So like if something's in Whole Foods, it may be seen as gourmet, but I think I'd rather buy something that is sold at a farmer's market or like, more selectively sold.

Participant: When I travel I also prioritize local products and they appear to me as gourmet because they are locally produced.

Participant: So for example, if the product is naturally like initially sourced in a different country, but you're here in New York would you still buy this product, even though it's imported, imported? Or would you wait, and then be like, I'm waiting for that particular occasion to try the actual product? If it's, like, very expensive?

Participant: I think I think I would still buy it in the US, but it depends on who's selling it. Like if it was Whole Foods selling at $50 bar chocolate, I'm not going to buy it. But if I was at like, an Italian restaurant, and they had lan olive oil or something that they got from Italy, I'd be more enticed by that.

Author: Do you relate to this?

Participant: Something that sticks out to me is what she said about the authenticity of the origin, the sustainability aspect, and I'm just thinking of the story behind the method of production and buying something from a community. It's nice to have something to talk about.

Participant: I think so too. That's a psychological thing. It makes you feel feel like you're a part of something, because your contribute to a certain community. You contribute to making this authenticity last.

Participant: I also think that the more sustainable the better the quality.

Author: Why do you think so?

Participant: I just picture like, something fresher, like without any pesticides, or locally sourced.

Participant: Yes.

Author: If there is, for example, no way for you to buy this product locally produced. So it has to be imported. It cannot grow. For example, in the US, how would you select?

Participant: if you take, I don't know the Kobe beef. It is Japanese. if I knew that the Kobe beef I was eating in New York was imported from Japan, I would be more willing to pay for it.

And if it was, I don't even know if they grow Kobe beef in the US, but let's they do, I would trust the Kobe from Japan more than the one from the US.

Participant: I would like to put an interesting twist on that. So what if the Kobe beef in the US was produced more sustainably than in Japan?

Participant: Japan is where the product is originally from, so I trust it more. But also if they're going to import it from Japan, it must be a better quality. Otherwise why would they import bad quality products for no money?

Participant: So I think that what matters is the certificate of quality. So with like Kobe beef or Wagyu beef there's a very specific rating system that you can follow. So, if you use this as a standard base, I don't think that the actual origin would matter. I would be fine with whatever.

Author: So do you pay attention to the labeling?

Participant: That's very important for me to look at the labels and educate myself about the origins. I want to know where the ingredients come from.

Participant: But it's kind of contradictory to my thoughts for example about champagne. The certificate of it being from Champagne doesn't necessarily mean to me that it is that is a greater quality, right? But then I have a contradictory thought. For example if there is a product origin from a place that I know or that I'm familiar with, I would tend to choose this one. So it's kind of like, taste preference, but also I tend to favorize my personal origins.

Participant: Yes, I also prioritize my personal origins when choosing a gourmet product.

Participant: Yes, like if I have the choice between several origins and I have a personal relationship or background with one of them, I would prioritize my personal origin.

Participant: I'm going to add something else that I just thought of. I am half-Argentinian, and there's something special to me about buying products that are imported products from Argentina, just because, I don't know, I'm Argentinian. It's like an identity cultural thing. So like, I'm more likely to buy something gourmet from Argentina and like, splurge on like, Argentinian product, Argentine wine and Argentine chocolates.

Participant: I agree, It is like a pride event, I am proud of my personal origins.

Participant: I guess trust is a thing because I trust that it's quality. I trust this chocolate from Argentina is really high quality because it is such a big part of the culture. But also, I'm just proud to buy from my personal culture.

Author: So then my third question is about comparing two origins of one product. And you would have to say, if you would choose either the first one or the other one, and quickly we can discuss why you would pick this one. The first product is: would you pick either Salmon from Norway, or from Chile? Each time when I take the product origins, it's because these countries have been in the last year on the top ranking of exporting this product.

Participant: Is there a price difference?

Author: It is based strictly on the origin.

Participant: If they have the same price, but they're probably both from factory farms with the highest export. So, I would probably say none of them. If you're choosing between lots of salmons, I would pick wild salmon and not farmed.

Participant: And Norwegian salmon is known as factory. I don't buy Norwegian because it's factory farms.

Participant: Before knowing that I would have Norway, but now that I know I would say neither.

Participant: I don't know.

Participant: No, I wouldn't buy Norway.

Participant: So, because I know that Norway is famous for its ailment, I would pick Norway. We automatically think it's famous for a reason, like it's good quality salmon from Norway.

Participant: Before I also would have said Norway based off of like, I don't know, I've been researching a lot and like cuisine in the Scandinavian countries and like fish, to fish, whatever has been coming up a lot. And I don't know too much about Chilean cuisine. So I would also just do away based off on information

Participant: I will add a twist. At Russ and daughters, they have a Norwegian salmon, a Scottish salmon and then a couple other things. And it's interesting when a place that's labeled as a gourmet food store, sells something that actually may not be as gourmet as they portray it. Or they allow it to be a fancy store and sell not fancy products, but because your fancy

store, the branding really helps to contribute to the gourmet and quality aspect that you will have to refer to.

Participant: It's kind of related to what we said earlier about psychology and how much you trust the brand

Author: So then the second ingredient is, is about chocolate. So would you buy either Columbian chocolate or Turkish chocolate?

Participant: I will pick Turkish.

Author: Why?

Participant: Because the best chocolate in the world comes from Belgium and Turkey is closer to Belgium

Participant: I also think that you can import some cocoa beans from another country and then use this to make, for example, paste and use that base inside your chocolate. So, the chocolate itself is from Turkey. But in fact, it's not because the beans are not from Turkey.

Participant: This morning, I was listening to a podcast on how the Ivory Coast produces cocoa beans. But they don't actually make chocolate. And some people are starting to know about it, so they import them and make the chocolate from their cocoa beans. But in reality, they should be making the best chocolate because they are the ones making the beans.

Participant: And I think that ties back into sustainability. Like, if there are cacao cocoa beans in South America, I think of how sustainability can also fad what we think of it, like if there is less transportation involved, even just within the production process might affect the air quality, and also think about the distance between where you're located.

Participant: So if you're bringing the beans or cacao, whatever, all the way from one continent to another, and there's still other steps like they're sourcing all these ingredients from across the globe, I think that's not as impressive as somebody that can say like, we grow, process, create all at the same place.

Participant: That is why I think that being able to see labels and actually trust them is needed.

Participant: Well, you can relate that to like Michelin starred restaurants and how French Laundry has their own garden. To say that they talk to their gardeners, and they produce exactly what they know.

Author: And then, if you had to choose between French foie gras and Hungarian foie gras. Which one will you choose?

Participant: It would be be french

Participant: Yes French, because france is the original country of production of foie gras.

Participant: I would look it up, because they're very close countries, and I don't know anything about Hungarian foie gras. But I just think that because there's so close geographically.

Participant: I would take France no doubt, but I'm just saying it's saying could definitely be better because it's the recipe.

Participant: What is it exactly?

Participant: It's the innards of an esophagus I assume. Or a stomach.

Participant: It’s leaver. Geeses are forced to eat their leaver gets really big. And then you can use them, you put seasonings, some alcohol, etc.

Participant: When you eat it, you don't think about what you know.

Participant: I didn't know that France was the main spot to get it from.

Participant: I just don't know too much about foie gras. But if I heard from someone that this one is best, I would probably go with this one.

Author: And the last question is about truffles. Would you rather pick a truffle from Spain or truffle from France?

Participant: I have a bad image of Spanish products because of the very big farms that we all know about.

Participant: And Spain is famous for having these very huge farms and not producing good quality and the people that work in those farms are exploited. They're immigrants coming from other countries and it's just that everything is bad about them.

Participant: I would choose from France because I know that France has very good quality standards.

Participant: Yes I agree.

Participant: I don't know that much about truffles. So, I would relate to the person in-store to teach me about the differences.

Author: This is the end of the focus-group. Thank you very much for your responses.