**"Why are consumers not reducing their meat consumption in Ireland? Establishing the reasoning for this"**

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# ABSTRACT

In the current dynamic world, the consumer food purching behavior is everchanging across different countries and cultures. This have relevant implications in global food produch management and marketing strategies around the world. Giving health concerns on the rise, it has become integral to find the factors that contribute towards the meat consumption patterns and behaviours. The research is carried out to determine the meat consumption pattern of the consumers in Ireland and if there is any change in the meat consumption pattern. The research aims to understand the attitude of consumers towards vegan vs animal food products, identify the factors that affect this buying behaviour of the consumers and to come up with marketing strategies to promote sustainable development which inclines customers towards green consumption. A qualitative approach has been adopted in the study, and interviews and focus group discussion has been carried out in this regard. It is concluded that multiple factors contribute towards consumers not reducing their meat consumption in Ireland.

Moreover, COVID-19 has also played a significant role in the reduction of meat consumption. Health concerns have impacted the consumption patterns of the consumers as they switch to more organic products. In this regard, this research paper is an attempt to contribute to the practical field of food industry marketing so as to provide a direction to the international food giants while dealing with Irish food cultural and their consumers food purchasing trends.

# Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

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# 1    INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive business environment, all e-commerce businesses and retailers have been experiencing a gigantic change to fulfil consumer's demand most efficiently and effectively. An organization's agility to satisfy dynamic consumers' needs and optimum value creation are the most significant factors. It is crucial to assort the product that needs to be offered in a particular market according to the demand keeping sustainable development in mind. Ireland is a significant market for the aminal food industry, and it is essential to understand the food purchasing behaviour of the customers. According to a recent study by Harguess, Crespo, and Hong (2020), the consumption of meat is directly linked to several health issues and adverse environmental outcomes. Therefore, the creation and adoption of sustainable strategies are essential for food processing companies to meet the dynamic demand of consumers.

A significant focus has been given on understanding the elements that overwhelm the green utilization commitment and buying choices which are straightforwardly related to the worldwide worry for environmentally friendly activities and sustainable development (Shiel, do Paço, and Alves, 2020). The ongoing investigation of the Lancet Commission has sketched out the inspiration among buyers to decrease the utilization of meat yet fewer examinations have delineated the systems to diminish meat utilization and request among the regular purchasers. This research paper will analyze the worldwide concern to lower meat utilization and promote green products. i. Under the 17 goals of the UN's Agenda for Sustainable Development, sustainable consumption, and production pattern is the major worldwide concern (United Nations General Assembly, 2015).

There has been a rise in meat demand around the globe, and this is responsible for the degradation of the environment and global warming as well. The freshwater is polluted due to the livestock industry, and research has been carried out to determine to reduce the consumption of animal protein as it is becoming a public health issue. However, it's a challenge to change the behaviour of the consumers in terms of food. Behaviours are impacted by various factors including the social norms, traditions, culture and preferences (Glanz, Rimer, and Viswanth, 2008). Multiple stages of health behaviours have been discussed in the research work of (Glanz et al., 2008). They further

state that a positive attitude is required which is based on motivation and reasons that can trigger a change in behaviour.

In Ireland, the amount of beef consumed is 87,000 tonnes per year, and this turns out to be 19kg/person (Irishtimes, 2019). The consumption of lamb is 3.5kg per capita (Pope, 2019). The meat consumption pattern of Irish meat consumers is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Meat consumption and dietary characteristics of Irish mean consumers (McCarthy, McCarthy, and McGrath, 2017, p. 33)

| | Processed pork indulgers | All things meat | Chicken eaters | Fish eaters | Beef focused | Diverse moderates |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cluster size (%) | 13 | 4 | 20 | 21 | 21 | 21 |
| Age (years) | 45 | 56 | 38 | 50 | 43 | 45 |
| Body mass index | 28 | 28 | 27 | 27 | 27 | 26 |
| Energy from meat (%) | 28 | 26 | 22 | 19 | 19 | 14 |
| Energy from fat (%) | 37 | 36 | 34 | 35 | 34 | 34 |
| Fat from meat (%) | 37 | 38 | 28 | 26 | 25 | 19 |
| Beef (g/day) | 88 | 41 | 43 | 33 | 124 | 30 |
| Chicken (g/day) | 49 | 38 | 138 | 35 | 39 | 46 |
| Fish (g/day) | 8 | 36 | 15 | 79 | 20 | 11 |
| Pork (g/day) | 108 | 24 | 28 | 37 | 30 | 39 |
| Lamb (g/day) | 6 | 66 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 17 |
| Turkey (g/day) | 3 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Game, offal (g/day) | 1 | 22 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 |

## 1.1    Research problem

The research is carried out to determine the meat consumption pattern of the consumers in Ireland and if there is any change in the meat consumption pattern. The factors that determine the change in meat consumption have not been identified before in previous studies, and the topic has not been a keen focus of the research. However, it is integral to understand the patterns and suggest suitable measures to the grocery stores so that they can maintain their sales. Moreover, the pandemic situation has changed many things around the world. Additionally, it has affected the buying pattern of the consumers as well, which further needs to be studied in different contexts.

## 1.2    Significance of research

This study interfaces the significance of research to the market. This investigation helps food producers and various supermarket executives comprehend the issues and challenges of office tasks, which assists with distinguishing factors that add to consumer satisfaction as far as purchasing behaviour towards vegan and animal food products. The research additionally

illustrates on benefits of green consumption on customers attitude and purchasing behaviour. The outcomes of the study are clear and sensible for future purposes and research work. This investigation urges the specialist to comprehend the significance of consumer knowledge to improve its behavioural consumption pattern.

## 1.3    Structure of research

The first chapter of the study focuses on research background, research objectives, research questions and significance of the study. The second chapter discusses the literature review in detail. Previous literature on the same topic and the importance of the problem has been considered. The methodology chapter discusses the research sample, philosophy, approach of the research, data collection, sampling of the study. The analysis chapter carries out the analysis of the data that is collected. Based on the results obtained, the next chapter carries out a detailed discussion of the results obtained. Lastly, the conclusion of the thesis has been discussed in the conclusion chapter.

# 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Meat consumption is very high in many European countries such as the United Kingdom, Finland and Ireland. Therefore, this research aims to establish reasons for excessive meat consumption in Ireland only. The research aim is to understand the attitude of Ireland people towards meat and vegan use. Further, this research is focusing on identifying different factors that are affecting vegan and meat consumption in the country. Likewise, this research is also explaining general factors that are affecting meat and vegan use, this will provide more sense to the research topic. Further, the research is focusing on the role of sustainable green consumption in Ireland and how it can be related to meat consumption. Significant findings of the past studies and concepts have been discussed in this section. The section presents the meat consumption pattern and what factors contribute towards the meat pattern amongst the consumers. The literature review examines the sustainable green consumption pattern, attitude of consumers towards vegan and meat products, health concerns that impact the consumer behaviours, determinants of meat consumptions, risks that are associated with excessive usage of meat, economic well being and meat consumption relation, the impact of COVID-19 on meat consumption behaviour, factors that impact animal food consumption importance of understanding relevant strategies for growth, related theories and concepts, literature gap and shortcomings followed by research objectives and questions based on the literature findings.

In Ireland, the average daily intake of meat for men is 168g, and the average meat intake of women is 107g (Cosgrove, Flynn & Kiely, 2005). Meat tends to be an essential intake of food for many consumers and that to explicitly in the developed countries. The higher consumption of meat is usually explained by the economic status, wealth and level of production of livestock. Other factors are associated with the use of meat as well, and these include gender, religion, age, body mass index and energy intake (Linseisen et al., 2002). The type of meats contains red meat, white meat and processed meat. Red meat includes beef, pork, veal and lamb. White meat includes turkey, game and chicken, and processed meat includes bacon, ham, salami, tinned meat and sausages (Linseisen et al., 2002).

However, on the other hand, meat intake has been associated with several diseases, and one of these is the increased risk of developing colon cancer (Wei et al., 2004). According to research

carried out by WCRF (2007), It was concluded that there is convincing evidence of the relation between the intake of red and processed meat and colon cancer. Moreover, Truswell (2002) carried out a study to find an association between meat intake and development of colorectal cancer and found that 20 out of the 30 cases did not have a significant association to the development of colorectal cancer. Tayolor, Burely, Greenwood and Cade (2007) in their study, found a meaningful relationship between the consumption of red meat and the development of breast cancer in post-menopausal women. On the other hand, no association between red meat intake and breast cancer was found in the research work of Kabat et al. (2009).

Red meat has also been associated with cardiovascular disease in the past researches (Kontogianni et al., 2008). However, inconsistency has been found in previous investigations to determine the relationship between cardiovascular disease and intake of meat. It is also the dietary recommendation to lower the absorption of fats, trans-fatty acids and saturated fatty acids to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Therefore, several conditions are also found to be associated with the intake of meat which means that the consumers need to be careful regarding the diet and meat intake.Therefore, the association between meat intake and cancer is still under argument in different studies. However, the proven fact is that excessive consumption of meat can prove to be harmful to the consumer.

## 2.1    Sustainable green consumption pattern

To understand the meat consumption in Ireland, it is mandatory to understand what sustainable green consumption and sustainable green consumption pattern are? And what why it is compulsory to discuss? Green consumption is associated with consumers consumption and sustainability of green foods such as vegetables. Haws, Winterich and Naylor (2014 ) define green consumption as closely related to the concept of sustainable development and suitable consumer development, and it is related to safeguard the environment for the present and next generation. To understand their definition of sustainable green consumption, two things are very crucial 1) consumer consumption in development and consumer behaviour towards consumption 2) preservation of resources for the present future. Sustainable green consumption relies on how consumers are playing a role in consumption development. The consumers are the primary agents for consuming alter products; therefore, it is essential to understand their consumption behaviour towards certain commodities in general. People cannot merely rely upon resources allocation for consumption because from an

economics perspective, and it has been discussed that every individual is rational, the concept of rationality among consumers is always an enormous challenge for determining consumer behaviour. Another vital factor explained by Haws *et al.* (2014) is sustainability or preservation. Durability is known as the preservation of different resources for the present and the future generation. However, the objective of sustainable green consumption is to provide green food such as vegetables to all the consumers in present times as well as for future generation. Pagiaslis and Krontalis (2014) define sustainable green consumption as consumer behaviour towards use without harming the environment. Their definition is also based on the preservation of the background, along with the consumption of different consumable commodities. However, understanding consumer behaviour is always critical.

Furthermore, in 2015, the United Nation (UN) has highlighted the importance of sustainability in alter elements; they presented 17 different Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with varying indicators for sustainable development. The SDGs provide the world with specific green sustainable patterns for the consumption of various commodities. According to Moser (2015), sustainable green consumption pattern is the use of different goods and services to all the related products which responds to overcome the basic needs and brings the quality of life while diminishing the use of natural resources and green commodities. The definition provides us with very critical information about how green consumption pattern works. It can be argued that sustainable green consumption patterns are the nexus between consumption, production and services. All the three dimensions rely on each other, and each factor contributes to sustainable green consumption of altering resources. Geels *et al.* (2015) have explained that sustainable green consumption pattern is the influence of achieving changes in consumption and production elements. To analyze their view about green consumption pattern, the focus point is the production which is always dependent on consumption as the sustainability among them needs to alter different requisites such as the use of essential commodities inefficient way.

After understanding the sustainable green consumption pattern, the next discussion is the sustainable green consumption pattern in Ireland. Scales (2014) research has stated that in the historical lack of industrialization maintained the environment and the consumption was mostly green. However, the increase in manufacturing in the past 2 to 3 decades has deteriorated the sustainable green consumption pattern. This has put enormous pressure on the country's economic

growth. To analyze Scales (2014), it can be argued that that industrialization is not the only reason that has influenced sustainability in Ireland, the inappropriate food consumption pattern is another primary reason. The food consumption has around 30% impact on sustainable green consumption which results in excessive meat products rather than vegetables (Scales, 2014). Further, this results in the mismanagement of altering food production and processing practices. The mismanagement increases the imbalances amid supply and demand, which resulted in the excessive use of livestock, over-fishing and food miles. The reason behind the consumption is quick and large-scale production because of industrialization.

Hence, it can be argued that the sustainable green consumption pattern in Ireland has been disturbed due to an increase in industrialization and the imbalances between supply and demand. The shortcomings have concerned consumption and production services nexus in Ireland.

## 2.2    Attitude of consumers towards vegan vs animal food products

In the above section, this research discussed sustainable green consumption and green consumption had been influenced in Ireland. In this section, the main focus to critically evaluate the attitude of Irish people towards vegetables and meat.

It has been discussed in many works of literature that the industrialization has brought a paradigm shift in food consumption pattern, but it has also changed the attitude of Irish people towards vegetable consumption. The survey by Ipsos MRBI (2015) on Irish health has concluded that 1 in 4 Irish people (26%) eat vegetables daily and only 10% use fruits and vegetables in juices and other shakes to maintain their health. The survey also reports that the Irish people use altered sauces with different meals, and therefore, the use of vegetables is very minimum (Ipsos, 2015). Likewise, the majority of people in Ireland cook from scratch using fresh meat instead of vegetables. The survey by Ipsos MRBI (2015) on health issues has deductively mentioned the use of vegetables. To carry this research further, it can be argued that one reason of the minimum usage of altered vegetables in meals is that the Irish people are using quick meals to save their time in their busy schedule. The Ipsos MRBI (2015) survey was very limited in the context of diet and nutrition. The study didn't mention any reasons why the Irish people are showing negative attitude towards vegetables. The increase in industrialization and the hectic schedule has made Irish people mostly rely on quick serving foods instead of time-consuming meals. Furthermore, the trend of different fast foods has globally transformed the attitude of the present generation to eat ready

meals instead of a proper meal. The same case is with Ireland; people's opinions have changed because of different fast-food franchises such as KFC, McDonald, Burger King etc. All of these foods have brought severe obesity and cardiac problems in Ireland. According to Özen *et al.* (2014), the Irish consumers have shunned the use of vegetables and it is alarming, the Irish Republic has one of the lowest rates of vegetable consumption in Europe. The decrease in vegetables has brought severe health issues, and the Irish people are now moving back towards vegetables. There is a 65% increase in vegetables growing, and farmers are for a governmental response towards production (Ozen et al., 2014). To critically evaluate Özen *et al.*'s (2014) research, two critical factors can be argued that intersect each other. Firstly, the government response towards farmers and growers decreases the overall fruits and vegetable production, which increases the use of different non-vegetables commodities. Secondly, the attitude of people forced people to change their food policy (availability, accessibility and affordability). This brought a significant decline in vegetable production. For instance, the use of vegan commodities decreases overall meat consumption because people follow the footprints of other people (Wyness, 2016).

Furthermore, the previous paragraph discussed the attitude of Irish people toward vegetables. Now in this paragraph, the study is focusing on the "Irish attitude towards meat". The above finding can provide valuable information about why Irish people are showing negative attitude towards vegetables. However, this paragraph will further clear support of the research question. Ipsos MRBI's (2015) survey has shown that 65% of people are eating fresh meat, fishes and other non-vegetables commodities. This research further reported that around 87,000 tonnes of beef is consumed in Ireland each year, this is equal to 19 kg of meat per person. Furthermore, of the 87,000 tonnes, 45,000 tonnes is pork meat which is equivalent to 10kg per person (Ipsos MRBI, 2015). This research explained that the availability of an excessive amount of meat in the market makes it easy for the Irish people to consume meat instead of vegetables. This research also shows the excessive use of meat in Ireland; however, the reason behind the usage is minimal and inclusive to a single element, i.e. market economy (Ipsos MRBI, 2015). This research explained that the availability of an excessive amount of meat in the market makes it easy for the Irish people to consume meat instead of vegetables. Further, the research has also shown that the excessive use of meat in Ireland; however, the reason behind the usage is minimal and inclusive of singling element, i.e. market economy (Ipsos, 2015). It can be challenging to deny the fact that the availability of meat makes it easy for the Irish people to consume it, but it is very crucial to

understand why the market is selling this commodity in huge quantity. The considerable amount indicates that the Irish people are mostly relying on meat instead of vegetables. As discussed in the above paragraph, time and hectic schedules make it difficult for people to cook vegetables and have a proper meal. Therefore, people rely upon alternative fast-foods and fast-foods are mostly comprised of a variety of meats. Likewise, another reason behind the meat availability in the market is that many franchises purchase the meal to meet public demand. So, blaming the market is not the sole reason behind the meat consumption.

Regan, Henchion, and McIntyre's (2018) research on meat consumption in Ireland have argued that ethical, moral and consumer beliefs are the main reason behind the excessive use of meat in Ireland. They have stated that the people of Ireland believe that meat provides more taste and commodity satisfaction than vegetables. Likewise, the research further explained that Irish people believe that beef gives them more nutrition than plants, and it is more ethical to provide consumers with what they demand. The research of abstract and are based on human traits and attributes. Likewise, it is tough to believe that the Irish people adore eating a meal because of their life condition in the pre-industrial era were very pro-vegetarian. The lifestyle of Irish people has changed after the industrialization because It is the industrialization that brought the transformation (Scales, 2014). Additionally, the research of Regan et al. (2018) has a generalized overall population over his sampling for identifying the role of ethics and beliefs in Ireland. Therefore, the research can partially disagree with their study that beliefs and ethics very from person to person. However, it is acceptable that ethics and expectations are defined by society as a whole and are accepted by few.

Hence, it can be argued that the attitude of Irish people is mostly negative towards vegetables and positive towards non-vegetables such as meat. These identified facts and reasons cannot be denied, but the approach of Irish people has transformed drastically in the past few decades.

## 2.3    Health concerns impacting buying behaviours of consumers

In the above section, this study discussed sustainable green consumption pattern and the attitude of Irish people towards meat and vegetables. Consequently, it is essential to understand how health impacts consumer behaviour in Ireland. Rana and Paul's (2017) research has discussed the relation amid health and consumer behaviour, and they argued that health-conscious consumers show great

concern towards organic food consumption such as vegetables. They further stressed that consumer attitude has always influenced by the rising incidence of modern lifestyle diseases which include cardiac and depression disorders. Their research has accurately pointed out that health does affect consumer behaviour, however, they have presented only one side of the picture. Their research has explicitly pointed out that health does change consumer behaviour. However, they have highlighted only one side of the film. Health issues aren't the only reason behind consumer purchasing behaviour, and food culture shift does contribute. Consumer behaviour in most countries has changed because of altering consumption trends. These trends include countries and regional cuisines that force the consumer to buy something different. The increase in global trend drives the people to adopt different lifestyle and consume various commodities (Merlino, Massaglia, and Borra, 2019). Therefore, consumer behaviour can be influenced by many other elements. However, the fact cannot be denied that health has a significant impact on consumer behaviour. Just and Gabrielyan's (2016) research discussed that health does affect consumer behaviour and changes consumer preferences towards food consumption. They further stressed that aggregate policies of food consumption limit the consumer behaviour that results in health issues and these issues again affect consumer behaviour. It can be argued that their research has discussed an impact cycle among aggregate food policies, consumer behaviour and health issues. It is quite evident from many pieces of literature that ineffective food policies create imbalances and force consumers to purchase unwillingly (Scales, 2014). This severely affects consumer behaviour and consumer health. Further, the effect leads to many health diseases that include cardiac and depression as pointed out by Rana and Paul (2017).

Furthermore, it is essential to understand the health impact on consumer purchasing behaviour in Ireland. Power *et al.*'s (2014) study on nutrition in Ireland has conducted research aimed to identify the poor dietary habits and inadequate food consumption of the Irish population. Their study has concluded that the fat-intake in Ireland is very high, and it has shown severe implications on health status. This has brought an increase in low-fat intakes that can prevent many diseases. Power *et al.* (2014) present clear evidence of how consumer purchasing preferences changes due to health issues. As discussed above around 65% of people in Ireland consume high-fat diets which include 87,000 tonnes of meat (45,000 tonnes pork meat) (Ipsos MRBI, 2015), this high meat consumption has put enormous pressure on the Irish health ministry. It is quite evident from the literature that high fat consumption increases the chances of heart diseases (Rana and Paul, 2017). Furthermore,

health issues can force the government to make strict policies regarding food intake, and these policies can also affect consumer purchasing behaviour in Ireland. Ipsos MRBI (2015) have also highlighted that the inadequate health has forced Irish people to purchase a health-friendly diet. The fact cannot be denied increased health issues such as cardiac diseases has affected the purchasing behaviour of Irish people. However, relying on one sole reason that health has modified consumer behaviour is not a valid argument. Despite the excessive use of meat and different health issues, a large population is still consuming the same amount of meat. Naughton, McCarthy, and McCarthy's (2015) research on health and consumer rationality has argued that healthy eating has been promoted to Irish people including to self-regulate and self-control themselves. Good health motivates people to attain a healthier diet and safeguard themselves from many diseases (McCarthy and McCarthy, 2015). However, 31% of people believed that calorie-dense intake is mandatory because it provides them with extra time to enjoy (Rana and Paul, 2017). However, analyzing the research of MaCathy and McCarthy (2015) on health and its impact on consumer purchasing behaviour, it is arguable that their study has shown a positive side of how health influence consumer purchasing preferences. Understandably, good health can motivate the Irish people to take sensible diet every day, but the primary consideration is that does all the people follow this approach? Surely not, because the rate of cardiac disease in Ireland with other European countries is comparatively high (Scales, 2014). It is acceptable that the margin of people is adopting are taking health-friendly diet but generalizing most of the people can be a fallacy.

Hence, it can be argued that health does affect consumer behaviour in general. Likewise, health also has a significant impact on Irish people purchasing behaviour. One thing is clear that health disturbs consumer behaviour, but it requires a critical evaluation of whether the effect is either positive or negative. In Ireland's case, the primary health diseases have transformed the small number of people to change their food intake. However, a large population is still consuming meat and other non-vegetables commodities.

## 2.4    Meat consumption determinants

The above section has discussed the impact of health over consumer behaviour and consumption, and now this section is focusing on the different dimensions/relationships of meat conception. Below explained are the critically evaluated meat determinants.

### 2.4.1    Health benefits of red meat consumption based on population groups

The study of Wyness (2016) has explained why red meat consumption is very high. The research proposed several health benefits of red meat and argued that red meat is a crucial dietary element in human life since evolution. It is because meat and especially red meat has a rich source of the high biological value of protein and other essential nutrients. To evaluate the research, it can be understood that red meat has many rich nutrients than other dietary commodities. Likewise, the inclusion of amino acids makes it an essential consumption commodity, especially for adults, as it is the protein mandatory for body growth. The meat also contains iron in the form of an iron harem, which is exceptionally compulsory for adults age in (16-30) and older people age (35-40) (Wyness, 2016). People in many European countries such in Ireland consume red meat in different periods. It is argued that red meat is more beneficial for the infants in the time of weaning. However, excessive use can cause fats imbalances in the infant's body. This is the reason why meat consumption is very high in many countries. People in many European countries such in Ireland consume red meat in different ages. It is argued that red meat is more beneficial for the infants in the time of weaning. However, excessive use can cause fats imbalances in the infant's body. This is the reason why meat consumption is very high in many countries. Further, the Wyness (2016) research has identified that meat consumption is altered population groups. The meat consumption in those groups is based on different perception such as salting, curing and sausages. These are different varieties of meat consumption. Likewise, all of these varieties are very common in Ireland, and it justifies the reason for excessive meat consumption in the country.

### 2.4.2    Risks associated with excessive meat consumption

It has been discussed that meat consumption has particular health benefits because of its rich nutrients. However, there are numerous health issues of red meat as well. The probability of health risk depends on the quantity of meat consumption. The excessive use of anything can be harmful to human health, such as the case with meat consumption. McAfee *et al.* (2010) explain the pros and cons of meat consumption. McAfee et al., (2010) demonstrated that most of the people agree that red meat is an essential dietary source of protein and other essential nutrients such as zinc, iron and vitamin B12, however, many reports have also concluded that overconsumption of meat can create specific health issues that include (CVD) Cardiovascular diseases and colon cancer. These are widespread diseases behind excessive meat consumption. To explain McAfee et al.,

(2010) research further, it can be argued that meat consumption requires moderate, balanced consumption, excessive use can be hazardous to health. The two most common diseases, such as colon cancer and cardiac conditions, are very chronic diseases, they are life-destroying diseases. The primary reason behind the occurrence of these diseases is that excessive meat consumption increases fats level in the human body, it also creates imbalances in blood flow because of the rise in iron quantity (Wyness, 2016).

The same problems are in the Irish diet, and it has unsustainable food which creates many heart problems. There is numerous research based on health issues in Ireland, and the reason is that Irish people consume too many proteins, as also discussed by (McAfee et al., 2010). Due to the increased standard of living meat consumption has increased, that caused a decline in health (Wyness, 2016). Their dependency on red meat, cereals, dairy is very high. Further, one of the significant reason behind excessive meat consumption in European countries, especially in Ireland, is the global trend of meat consumption. Most of the countries are merely following the footsteps of other countries in the context of meat-related recipes and other products to stay alive in the modern world. In the rich and industrialized countries, the importance of agriculture food has declined over the last decades. Industrialized countries are more involved in industrial commodities instead of agriculture commodities (Bereżnicka and Pawlonka, 2018).

### 2.4.3   Economic well and meat consumption relationship

Meat consumption is determined by the economic condition of the country as well as the individual. Bereżnicka and Pawlonka (2018) research have concluded that in the many industrialized countries the importance of agriculture, especially vegetable consumption, has consistently decreased the overall share is steadily falling which is now 5% of total food production. On the other hand, Bereznicka and Pawlonka (2018) research also have identified that in the developing countries agriculture usage has increased due to food security reasons. To analyze their research conclusion and link this with the research topic, it can be argued that economic factors do determine meat consumption. Likewise, stable economic conditions can afford the use of sumptuous cuisines made of meat. It is because stable per capita income help people to change their lifestyle and food intake. Conversely, Bereznicka and Pawlonka (2018) research has also explained that in developing countries, food security is a primary concern and has more vegan consumption than meat. Cosgrove, Flynn, and Kiely (2005) research have a similar

explanation, and they argued that Irish people are now consuming more meat than vegetables because of increased industrialization that has downgraded the agriculture sector. Manufacturing has raised the standard of living, and per capita income and this is one of the reasons people in Ireland are consuming more meat.

### 2.4.4    Meat prices

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) (2019) report "price" is another essential factor that determines meat consumption. They explained that meat prices in 2018 were 2.2% lower than in 2017, due to increased production in developed countries. To evaluated their research, it can be argued that prices have a significant impact on meat consumption. Cosgrove *et al.* (2005) has also concluded that a decrease in meat prices has increased meat consumption in Ireland, the daily intake is around 51, 33 and 26g per day. To evaluate their research, it can be argued that decreased meat prices increase meat consumption because the prices are linked with consumer demand. Low meat prices have diminished the use of vegetables, and more people are now consuming meat in Ireland.

## 2.5    Covid-19 impact on meat consumption behaviour

Furthermore, "eat consumption behaviour in Covid-19" is another considering element. Muscogiuri *et al.* (2020) has concluded that ever since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Covid-19 as a global pandemic, people have quarantined themselves in many countries. The WHO has also recommended people to take healthy diet to boost their immunity. The WHO has recommended the different food intakes for the people that are rich in proteins and vitamins (Muscogiuri et al., 2020). To critically evaluate their research, this research topic agrees with the factor because ever since quarantined has affected the work and daily routine of people, it has brought boredom. Likewise, the monotony is associated with different food intakes protein, carbohydrates and fats other rich nutrients to boost their immunities. So, people are consuming more meat than other commodities. Further, the people have also become "food craving" in their behaviour; they have a multidimensional routine in quarantine. Their multifaceted practice includes emotional (intense desire to eat), behavioural (seeking food), cognitive (thoughts about food), and physiological (salivation). These dimensioned has also brought increased meat consumption. Similarly, the behaviour has also played an active role in Ireland. Therefore, the People's consumption behaviour has drastically shifted towards meat (McCarthy, and McCarthy,

2015. However, many pieces of research on Covid-19 have concluded that the pandemic has emerged from the seafood market (white meat), this conclusion has made most of the people curious about meat consumption (Muscogiuri et al., 2020). This global perception and justification have caused a little decline in meat consumption. The same argument is also supported by Xie et al., (2020) research on food intake in Covid-19 has concluded that food intake such as meat consumption has been affected in many countries in Europe due to Covid-19.

Hence, some significant determinants determine meat consumption in Ireland that includes consumer behaviour in Covid-19, meat prices, economic conditions and per capita income. All of these factors are very similar to many other countries' factors—however, the impact of these elements in very drastic in Ireland.

## 2.6    Factors impacting animal food consumption by consumers

After discussing different determinants of meat consumption, this section is focusing on factors that affect meat or animal food consumption by the consumer. Mathijs (2015) has explained two major factors that affect meat consumption.

1. Economic perspective is a significant element that contributes to meat consumption. In the study, Mathijs (2015) explained that income and prices determine meat consumption, and they generalize the impact of meat. More economic factors affect meat consumption such as the price of substitutes, annual depletion, demand overpopulation and customer preferences. Further, the financial perspective is comprehensive affecting factors. There can be exemptions, for instance, some section of the population might have low income, but still, they consume a large quantity of meat. Additionally, the taste and preferences are often underresearched by many economists, but numerous behavioural economists increasingly address it. For instance, the study of Mathijs (2015) has discussed that people become rational when it comes to purchasing any commodities. Likewise, Purslow et al. (2017) research have also determined income as the primary factor that drives meat consumption. They argued that on countries where per capita income is high, excessive meat consumption had been recorded in those countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States and Ireland. It is rightly pointed out by Purslow et al. (2017) that income does affect meat consumption. However, per capita income is not the only economic

element that contributes to meat consumption. The inflation rate, employment and meat stock availability are also the considering factors. The countries with the minimum inflation rate and minimum prices tend to have higher meat consumption than those where the inflation rate is high. Similarly, higher employment can increase the chance of high meat consumption, and the quantity of meat can decreases the prices of meat which increases consumption (Purslow et al., 2017).

2. Social determinants are another effecting factor in meat consumption. The factors include family and pressure groups, beliefs and knowledge. Undoubtedly, these social determinants are affecting meat consumption, but the principal element of consideration is the cultural differences among the different nation. Mathijs (2015) research has missed the most critical factor in "culture". Meat consumption is that many cultures are considering a sin; for instance, in many parts of India, meat consumption is a religious offence. Likewise, numerous Irish tribes in remote areas don't consume meat while there is high consumption in many metropolitan cities such as Dublin.

The above factors are common factors that affect meat consumption in every country. However, it is also important to discuss different factors that affect meat consumption in Ireland.

1. Chong et al. (2019) has explained that beef is an essential diet in many areas of Ireland. Likewise, Irish people consume a high amount of meat despite knowing the fact that it is relatively expensive. Chong et al., (2019) further compared beef consumption in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland, they concluded that the Republic of Ireland consumes more meat than Great Britain due to choices and consumption habits. To analyze Chong et al., (2019) research critically, one crucial element that affects meat consumption is a habit of meat consumption. The Republic of Ireland has comparatively more patterns of meat consumption than Great Britain. One missing considering element in there is the research is culture and geographic location where the meet is treated as a significant consumption commodity. In Ireland, culture has boosted meat consumption because many people are consuming meat-related products in an altered way (Henchion and McIntyre 2018).

2. Mullee et al. (2017) research have concluded that the Irish people have the most massive meat consuming population in Europe. Their research further added that despite the growing heart diseases and an increase in vegetarianism, still, a large portion is consuming a large quantity of meat every day. Their research identified "Lifestyle" as the main factor

of Irish meat consumption. The lifestyle of Irish people tends to consume more meat than vegetables. However, Mullee et al., (2017) research have identified "lifestyle" as a significant element, and they did not explain the link between lifestyle and meat consumption. The fact cannot be denied that lifestyle does contribute to eating patterns, but when it comes to meat consumption, it arises many doubts in the reader mind because Irish people's lifestyle is very busy and hectic when it comes to time consumption. The Irish people lifestyle has changed, and they are consuming more meat vegetables (Merlino, Massaglia, and Borra, 2019). People in many cities perform different duties and responsibilities, and it is tough to manage food consumption and other activities. This busy schedule makes Irish people eat something that saves time. This is the reason why they always prefer to eat food from different food points where most of the time they find meat rather than vegetables. This continuous eating pattern is has become a significant lifestyle element of Irish people. Conversely, lifestyle is a simple reason behind excessive meat consumption in Ireland, but it carries an enormous impact on meat consumption by the consumer in Ireland. The lifestyle has increased the use of different commodities such as meat, vegetables, in Ireland (Santini et al., 2017).

3. Merlino, Massaglia, and Borra (2019) research on perception and animal welfare between Irish people have concluded that geographical demonstration is the primary factor that influences the meat/animal consumption by the consumer in Ireland. To evaluate their research, the one identified factor is demography. Additionally, demography is the primary element that influences how Irish people set their decision making and preferences about meat consumption. However, Merlino et al. (2019) research did not mention any demographic sub-factor. Generalizing the demography as a whole cannot justify the argument because demography is not the only reason. Merlino, Massaglia, and Borra (2019) research discussed that demography partially contributes to meat consumption in Ireland. There are numerous demographic factors such as age, education level, sex, income level, marital status, regional birth, education and death rate. All of these demographic factors have an impact on meat consumption in Ireland. For instance, income level can have its effect on meat consumption because the meat is relatively expensive than vegan products. Education brings awareness, and excessive meat consumption can lead to several diseases such as cardiac diseases. Likewise, the death rate can have an impact because the

date rate can give us information about cardiac arrest deaths. Hence, all these sub-factors affect meat consumption (Wyness, 2016). Furthermore, critical evaluation of Merlino et al., (2019) research does not mean that this study has opposed the impact of demography on meat consumption. However, considering demography as a whole factor can create doubts.

4. Santini et al. (2017) research have argued that meat consumption is high in high-income countries. Many countries in such as Ireland, the United Kingdom are consuming a large quantity of meat that put pressure on livestock. The increase in income has affected overall demand in these three countries. To analyze the Santini et al., (2017) research, it has been noticed that their study has explained a connection between income and meat consumption in the three major meat consumption countries in Europe. However, their research also forgot to mention livestock prices and inflation rate as a compensating element in Ireland. Meat prices in Ireland compared to other countries are low (Ipsos MRBI, 2015). This increases the purchasing power of Ireland people to buy and consume meat in large quantity.

Hence, these two factors such as demography and income level lifestyle which has increased meat consumption in Ireland.

## 2.7    Importance of understanding marketing strategies for growth

In the above sections, this thesis has critically explained the different factors that affect vegan and meat consumption in Ireland. However, in this section, the focus is to explain the importance of marketing strategies which are beneficial for Ireland. Red meat has been an essential part of the human diet throughout human evolution. When included as part of a healthy, varied diet, red meat provides a rich source of high biological value protein and essential nutrients, some of which are more bioavailable than in alternative food sources.

Jamalovna *et al.* (2020) has argued that marketing strategies are a significant source for a country's gross domestic product (GDP). Marketing strategies help countries to identify customer needs and demand in the market. The research by Jamalovna et al. (2010) focuses merely on customer needs. However, marketing strategies work beyond consumer needs. Marketing strategies help a country's economy and increase income as a whole. It helps the market to understand customer

psychology about specific products. Marketing strategies do not only identify customers needs and demand but also gives us alter theories because customer needs are not the same. For instance, the world is diverting towards green consumption and E-commerce in many countries such as Ireland. Therefore, they need to have a strong marketing strategy to fulfil customer needs. Customers needs are determined and fulfilled by practical marketing skills (Klisinski and Melnyk, 2017). Further, the research of Klisinski and Melnyk (2017) have explained that online marketing strategy has changed the way the potential customers perceive a business. According to their explanation, e-marketing is a global trend to access customers online. There are specific theories and concepts in marketing, and the research is focusing on the description of relevant marketing theories. These theories are explained below.

## 2.8   Relevant theory and concepts

Golman and Loewenstein's (2016) research has proposed information gap theory which can play a significant role in sustainable green consumption and provide information to the retail to increase its sales. The information gap theory is based on the 4Us (Urgent, Unique, Ultra and Useful). It helps the market to identify the information gap and act accordingly. The information gap theory is very important for sustainable green consumption because the use of this theory can help the market to propose unique and useful strategies to achieve sustainable green consumption in Ireland. Identifying the information gap will also help the market to transform customers needs and change the meat consumption trend.

Consistency theory is another critical theory for sustainable green consumption in Ireland. This theory is based on altering the assumption about human behaviour, which can assist the Ireland market to understand during the transformation towards sustainable green consumption (Golman and Loewenstein, 2016). The contradiction between mind and behaviour is where the market needs to interfere and satisfy customer needs. Kruglanski et al., (2018) research state that consistency theory is based on assumptions that humans search for the balance between cognition and behaviour, both of these states are always in contradiction with each other.

Network theory is another proposed theory that can help to increase sustainable green consumption in the Irish market. Further, this theory can help the retail market in Ireland to create a link among associated elements which can increase the availability of vegan commodities instead of meat in

the market. Khashanah and Alsulaiman (2016) have also explained that network theory provides a graphical representation of different relations among objects.

## 2.9    Literature gap and shortcomings

The above literature on the research papers was mainly focusing on some prominent factors that have increased meat consumption in Ireland. For instance, the literature has discussed the impact of demography, the lifestyle of Irish people, habits income level and how it has boosted meat consumption in Ireland. Likewise, these research papers have also explained different factors affecting vegan use in Ireland, which includes diet habits, heart diseases, and lack of technology in the farming sector. However, all of this research has missed the two most critical abstract factors, urbanization and cultural impact.

Increased urbanization in Ireland has made it extremely difficult for the farming sector to enhance vegan productivity which increases non-vegan commodities (Rana and Paul, 2017).

The urbanization has provided a podium for non-vegan businesses to establish their business in the Irish market. Further, increased in modernization has brought a trend of meat consumption through altered ways. Many non-vegan franchises are operating in Ireland, which provides different taste to the customer.

Further, culture is another vital element that is contributing a lot to excessive meat consumption in Ireland (Ozen et al., 2014). Irish culture needs to transform its meat consumption culture into vegan consumption culture through altered ways such as offering different vegetarian classes or incorporating different lesson of sustainable green consumption or encouraging cafeterias in schools to serve plan related food for Irish people.

## 2.10    How literature influences instrumentation in methodology

Literature does influence methodology because literature gives the researcher information about which methodology is best to answer the research question. The literature is an essential part of any research paper. It helps the researcher in formulating research background. It also provides meaningful information about the research topic. Talking about instrumentation in methodology, the literature supports the researcher to study and learn relevant methodologies which have been

adopted in previous research papers. It is also called an "abstract image with hidden holes" in the research language.

To conclude, sustainable green consumption in Ireland has been disturbed because of modernization and market imbalances. This results in higher meat consumption in many areas of Ireland due to the absence of vegan commodities. Further, Irish people's attitude is always positive towards meat consumption while negative towards vegan specialities due to their altered human traits and increased industrialization. The positive outlook has increased non-vegan consumption in many areas of Ireland. Besides this, certain factors are affecting vegan and meat consumption in Ireland such as demography, lifestyle, health, mechanical elements and external and internal environment, meat prices and consumer behaviour in Covid-19. All of these factors are playing an essential role in meat consumption. However, in most cases, it has increased meat consumption in Ireland. Further, Ireland market needs specific strategies to enhance sustainable green consumption in the country. The appropriate plan can be network theory, consistency theory and information gap theories. These theories can play a significant role in sustainable green consumption and market equilibrium. Hence, it has been justified and adequately explained: "why meat consumption is not diminishing in Ireland?" The above literature has provided logical reasoning about the research question. Further, the identified outcomes have been proved and are fully supported, and these identified factors have a significant impact on meat consumption in Ireland.

# 3 METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the belief in which the data needs to be used, gathered and analysed. The different kind of philosophies includes pragmatism, positivism, realism and Interpretivism. Pragmatism philosophy is usually used for research works that involve mixed methodologies, and positivism is used generally for quantitative research work, authenticity depends on the subject matter chosen for the methodology, and Interpretivism is used for investigations, i.e. qualitative analysis. Realism is of two main types which include direct realism and critical realism. Direct realism is also alternatively known as naïve realism, and in this philosophy, the world is portrayed through the experiences of human and human senses. Direct realists believe that the world does not tend to change. On the other hand, critical realism argues that the sensations that humans experience in the real world can be deceptive, and they do not tend to reflect the actual world. Positivism philosophy claims that the social world needs to be understood in an objective manner (Hughes and Sharrock, 2016). In positivism, it is believed that the reality is stable and that it can be explained using a viewpoint that is objective. In positivism, the predictions can be made using previous data and facts and the interrelationships between them. However, there has been a debate previously regarding the use of this philosophy in the field of social sciences.

Whereas Interpretivism is the opposite of positivism, and it claims that it is not easy to understand the social world based on some principles. Interpretivist philosophy states that the social world can be interpreted in a subjective manner rather than an objective way. The human interest is integrated into the study of an interpretivist. Interpretivism believes that reality access is provided through social constructions. To reflect the various aspects of issues, multiple methods may be adopted in Interpretivism, and this philosophy tends to focus on the meaning of the study. There are some unique variations in Interpretivism. One exception is of hermeneutics which refers to understanding and interpretation. This variation does not focus on business studies and focuses on the wisdom literature and biblical texts. Another difference is of phenomenology, and in this variation, the world is understood through the experience of the phenomenon. The approach of Interpretivism is based on the belief of relativist ontology and transactional epistemology. Relativist ontology is found on the social understandings and in the experiential levels.

Transactional epistemology believes that that people are not separated from their knowledge and that a link exists between the subject of the research and the researcher. On the other hand, the philosophy of pragmatist deals with facts. Lastly, the basis of realism philosophy is on the assumptions of both Interpretivism and positivism (Hughes and Sharrock, 2016).

Positivism tends to be highly structured, it makes use of large samples, and the measurement is usually quantitative but at times, also uses qualitative. Pragmatism makes use of mixed methodology, i.e. it makes use of both qualitative and quantitative approach. In Interpretivism, the samples tend to be small, and in-depth research is carried out. Investigations are carried out in Interpretivism and the methodology used tends to be qualitative in nature.

Therefore, the philosophy used in the current study is of Interpretivism as it is most relevant to the present study. The methodology is selected based on the research onion (Saunders et al., 2007) and has been discussed accordingly in this section.

*Figure 3. Research onion (Source: Saunders et al., 2007)*
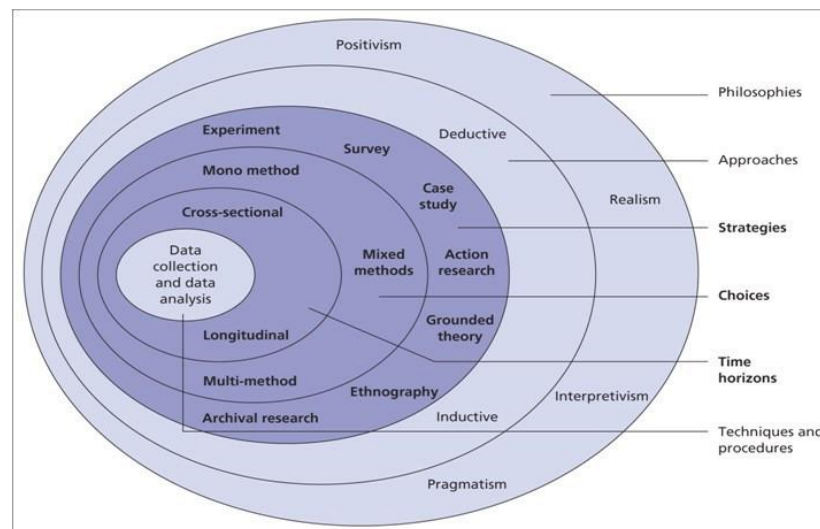


## 3.2    Research approach

A qualitative study has been varied out in the research work. The two research approaches include deductive and inductive approach. In a deductive approach, a hypothesis is tested, whereas research questions are used in an inductive approach to concentrate on the scope of the study. A new phenomenon is explored with the help of an inductive approach, whereas deductive

approaches focus more on the causality. Therefore, an inductive approach has been adopted as the topic under study is subjective, and it supports the qualitative methodology.

The two main research strategies include qualitative and quantitative research strategy. Qualitative research is expressed in words, and quantitative is expressed in number and statistical form. Quantitative research tests theories and hypothesis, whereas qualitative research focuses on exploring various ideas and involves interpretation (Goddard and Melville, 2011). As the current research work consists of exploring different ideas; therefore, qualitative research has been selected. Sanchez-Sabate, Badilla-Briones and Sabate (2019) also recommend qualitative analysis for understanding the meat consumption behaviour. They also adopt an inductive approach. Hartmann and Siegrist (2019) argue that not enough information is provided by quantitative studies regarding their willingness and why there has been a change in the behaviours of individuals.

Furthermore, the time horizon of research can be cross-sectional and longitudinal. Cross-sectional refers to collecting data at one point in time, whereas longitudinal relates to the collection of data over a specific period of intervals (Goddard and Melville, 2011). In the current research work, the data is collected one point in time; therefore, the research is cross-sectional.

## 3.3    Research aim and objectives

The aim of this research is to study the food consumption pattern on customers in Ireland. The objectives of this research are:

- to understand the attitude of consumers towards animal food products in Ireland.
- to identify the factors that affects animal food product purchasing behavior of the consumers in Ireland.
- to built creative marketing strategies that promotes the consumption of green product in order to acheivce sustainable development.

## 3.4    Research question

The questions that this research paper will tackle are as follows:

- What are the impacts of animal food products and plant-based food products on the customer's purchasing behavior?
- How does health concerns amongst people affects the demand of these food products?

- What are the main determinates that affects the consumption of animal food product in Ireland?

- How can retail outlets and e-commerce businesses increase the sale by understanding the market trends?

- How to make agile and creative marketing strategy to promote sustainable green consumption pattern?

- Has there been any impact of COVID-19 on meat consumption in Ireland?

## 3.5    Sample & data collection

There are two types of sampling techniques which include probability sampling and non-probability sampling. In probability sampling, the population gets an equal chance of getting selected, whereas there is not a fair chance of selection in non-probability sampling. Therefore, it tends to be biased (Ardilly and Tille, 2006). Thus, the sampling technique selected for this study is a probability sampling technique. Random sampling is done to collect data as it helps in eliminating any kind of bias. The population of the survey includes all the people who buy vegan and meat food. Interviews of 15 individual customers have been carried out in the study. The stores located in Dublin are selected for data collection due to the convenience of the researcher. The interviews are carried out from customers in the following stores: Tesco College Greens, Tesco Cabra Road, Lidl Cabra East, Aldi Parnell Street, and Lidl Thomas Street. Three customers from each of the stores are randomly selected for interview. An online focus group discussion was organized via zoom application. Convenience sampling was carried out in the study, and those friends and family members were selected who buy vegan and meant food.

## 3.6    Research instrument

Focus group discussion has been carried out to gather the information. One focus group discussion has been carried out for the study. Focus group discussion has been selected; it provides an in-depth understanding regarding meat consumption and consumer behaviours. Moreover, the information required is effectively and efficiently gained through this method. Within the focus group discussion, the researcher can listen as well as observe and helps to determine how a specific group of people think. The focus group discussion consists of 15 members. The total duration of the focus group discussion is 25-30 minutes. The members include people who consume meat, and

they are selected based on the convenience of the researcher. The feelings and experience of the people can be determined in this manner.

Furthermore, interviews are also conducted from regular customers and members of major supermarkets in Ireland like Tesco, Lidl and Aldi. This is done to determine which food items have higher demand and which factors affect the customer attitude and buying behaviour towards the vegan/animal food product. Interviews help in understanding opinions, experience, ethics and phenomenon under study. In-depth information is obtained in this manner. Meetings also allow the researchers to observe the behaviours of the respondents.

## 3.7    Data analysis

The analysis of the collected data is carried out using Nvivo software. The interviews are transcribed, and Nvivo is used to uncover themes and determine the results. The software is correctly applied to analyze any unstructured text. Data analysis has been done both for interviews and focuses on group discussions.

### 3.7.1    Pilot

A pilot study was conducted to enhance the quality of the research work (Gudmundsdottir and Brick-Utne, 2010). Gudmundsdottir and Brick-Utne (2010) emphasize on improving the reliability and validity of the research work. Teijlingen and Hundley (2002) state the pilot studies are necessary to be carried out to ensure that the ideas or methods adopted will work. Four participants have been selected for a pilot study in the research work. Based on the pilot study, the interview questions have been modified as recommended by Kim (2010). An open-ended questionnaire has been designed for research work. The open-ended inquiry has been designed as it helps in obtaining more information and enables them to understand the subject. The researcher is then able to determine the true feelings regarding the issue from the respondent. Moreover, open-ended questions provide the respondents with the freedom to answer in a detailed manner, and the actionable insights are obtained in this manner (Çakır and Cengiz, 2016). The questions before the pilot study and after pilot have been provided in the table:

*Table 2: Questions of pilot study*

| Questions before pilot study | Questions after modification |
|---|---|
| 1) How do you decide to consume meat in your daily diet? | What factors affect the decision on meat consumption in your daily diet? |
| 2) Which food products do you use more? Why? | What kind of animal meat product do you consume more? Why? |
| 3) Do you have any health concerns? | Do you or your family have any health concerns that affect your meat food consumption? |
| 4) How do you tackle the health concerns? | What changes you make in your diet and food consumption to tackle the health concerns? |
| 5) Do you think there is higher health consciousness? | Do you think generally people becoming more health conscious has an impact on their meet consumption? Yes then why? |
| 6) How do you believe the sales of groceries stores can be enhanced? | How do you believe the groceries and retailers can enhance sales by following the trends of meat consumption? |
| 7) What measures you think need to be taken in order to promote sustainable green consumption pattern? | What measures you think need to be taken in order to promote sustainable green consumption pattern and reduce consumption of animal meat? |
| 8) Do you believe there has been any impact on the meat consumption behavior of the consumers due to COVID-19? | Do you believe there has been any impact on the meat consumption behavior of the consumers due to COVID-19? If yes, what impact and how strong is the impact? |
| 9) Which food product is more feasible for daily intake? | What do you think is more feasible and accessible food product for daily life; Animal meat or vegetable products? |

| 10) Does the Irish traditional food promote the consumption of animal meat product? | Does the Irish traditional food promote the consumption of animal meat product? |
|---|---|

## 3.8 Ethical considerations

For ethical considerations, steps recommended by Mohd Arifin (2018) have been taken. The consent of all respondents is obtained before the interview. All the participants are well-informed regarding the research topic, its aims and objectives. After the information is given, then the participants are asked if they would like to participate in the interview/focus group discussed. The agreement was only obtained after a discussion of the research study. Written consent of all the participants has been received. Permission for the recording of the interviews is also taken from the participants.

The confidentiality of the respondents was also maintained in the research study, and none of the names has been revealed. Privacy and privacy have been maintained strictly during group sessions and interview sessions. Furthermore, each of the interviews has been conducted in a private room, and no outsiders were allowed to listen to the conversation.

The transcription of data has also been carried out in a private room to avoid any possibility of the recording being heard by the outsiders. The identity of all the participants has been removed during the process of transcription.

## 3.9 Limitations

The limitation of the current research work is that there is a lack of generalizability due to the qualitative nature of the research. Furthermore, no causal conclusions have been drawn in the research study as interviews are being conducted. Lastly, interviews at times can be time-consuming for the researcher, and the interpretation of the researcher is limited. Observations are made based on personal experience of the researcher, and then conclusions are reached.
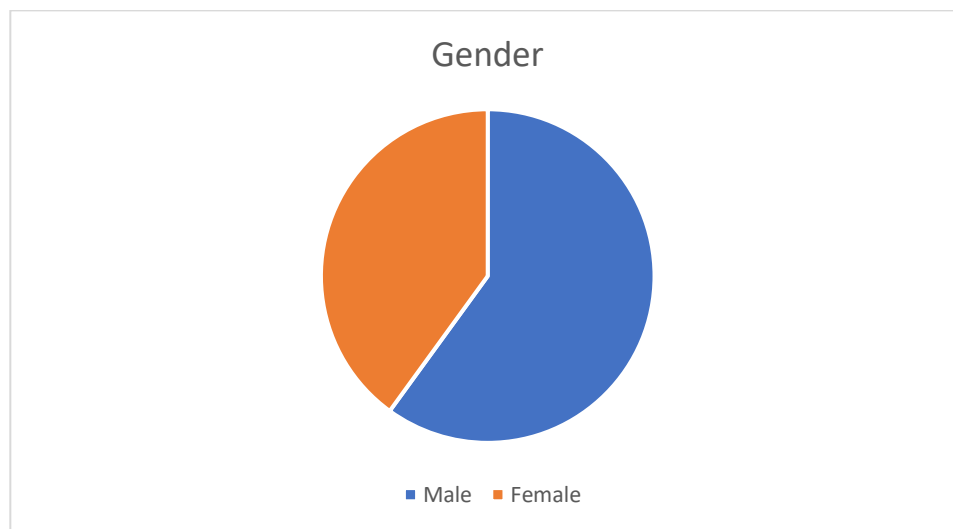
# 4    FINDINGS

This section carries out an analysis of the data collected. The demographics of the respondents are discussed, and then the results obtained from Nvivo software have been presented regarding the themes that emerge and frequency of words from the respondents.

## 4.1    Demographics

*Interview Analysis*

*Table 3. Gender*

| Gender | Percentage (%) |
|--------|----------------|
| Male   | 60             |
| Female | 40             |



It was critical for the study to consider an adequate number of representation of both the genders in the sample. A total of 15 interviews have been carried out in the study. Table 3 shows the breakdown of gender who participated in the interviews. The table represents that there were 60% of males in the research and 40% females.

## Focus group discussion Analysis

*Table 4. FGD*

| Gender | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|
| Male | 66.7 |
| Female | 33.7 |
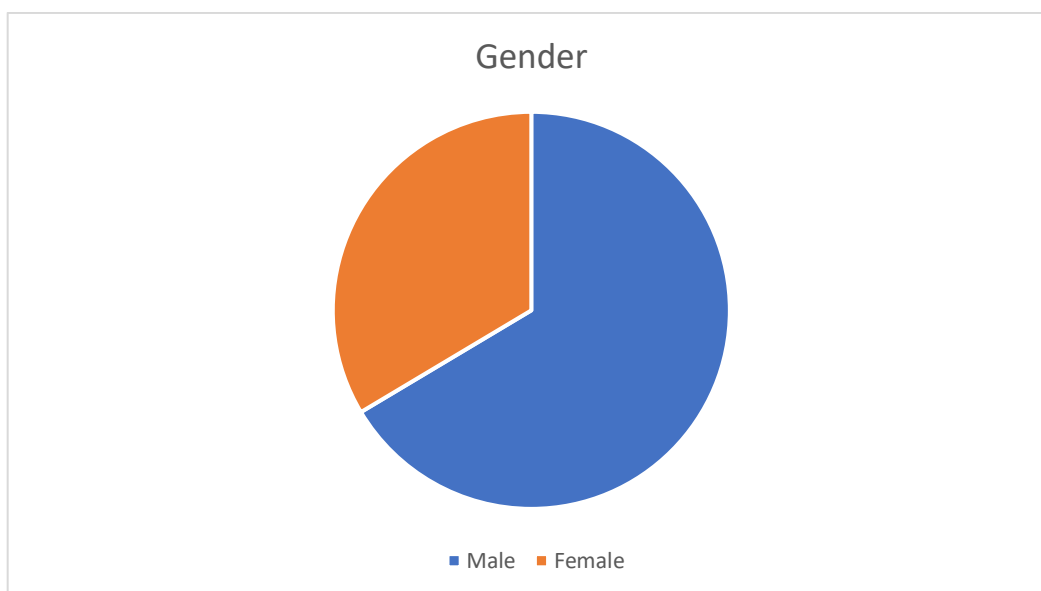


Focus group discussion has also been carried out in the study, and a total of 15 members were present in the focus group discussion. It was made sure that an adequate representation of both the genders is obtained in the focus group discussion. The breakdown of gender is provided in table 4. The table represents that there were 66.7% of males in the focus group interviews and 33.7% females.

## Age group (Interviews)

*Table 5. Age group*

| Age group | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|
| 14-18 | 13.3 |
| 19-25 | 20 |
| 26-33 | 20 |
| 34-42 | 26.7 |
| 43-50 | 13.3 |

| | |
|---|---|
| 50 and above | 6.7 |

Age Group



■ 14-18  ■ 19-25  ■ 26-33  ■ 34-42  ■ 43-50  ■ 50 and above
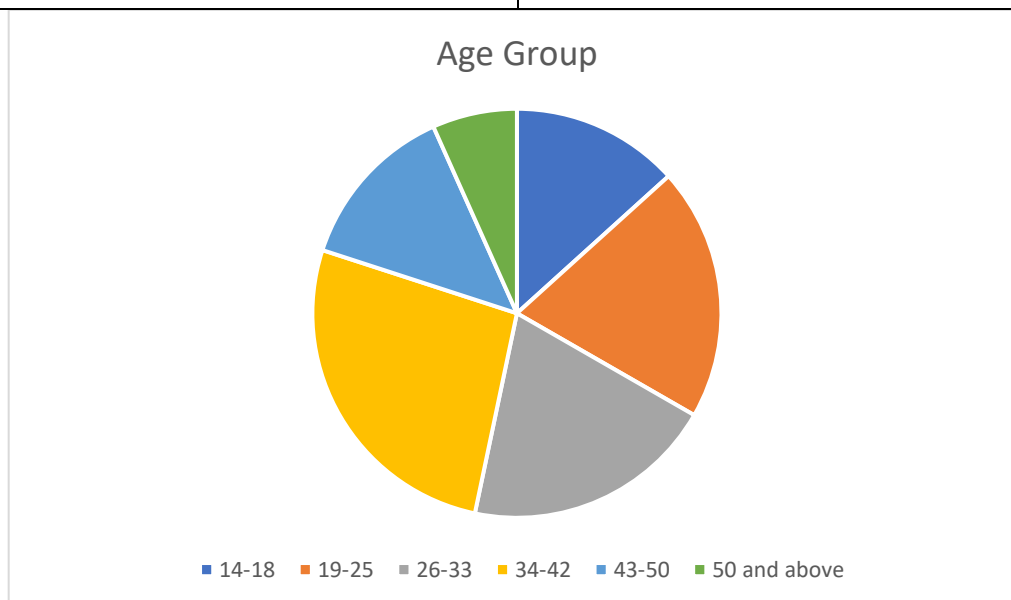
The age group of the respondents in interviews are reflected in table 5. Interviews were taken from people belonging to the different age group to ensure diversity amongst the respondents. In the interviews, 13.3% were aged 14-18, 20% were aged between 19-25, 20% were aged between 26-33, 26.7% were aged between 34-42, 13.3% were aged between 43-50, and 6.7% were aged 50 and above.

### *Age group (Focus group discussion)*

*Table 6. Age group FGD*

| Age group | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|
| 14-18 | 0 |
| 19-25 | 33.3 |
| 26-33 | 33.3 |
| 34-42 | 33.3 |
| 43-50 | 0 |
| 50 and above | 0 |

Age group

■ 14-18  ■ 19-25  ■ 26-33  ■ 34-42  ■ 43-50  ■ 50 and above
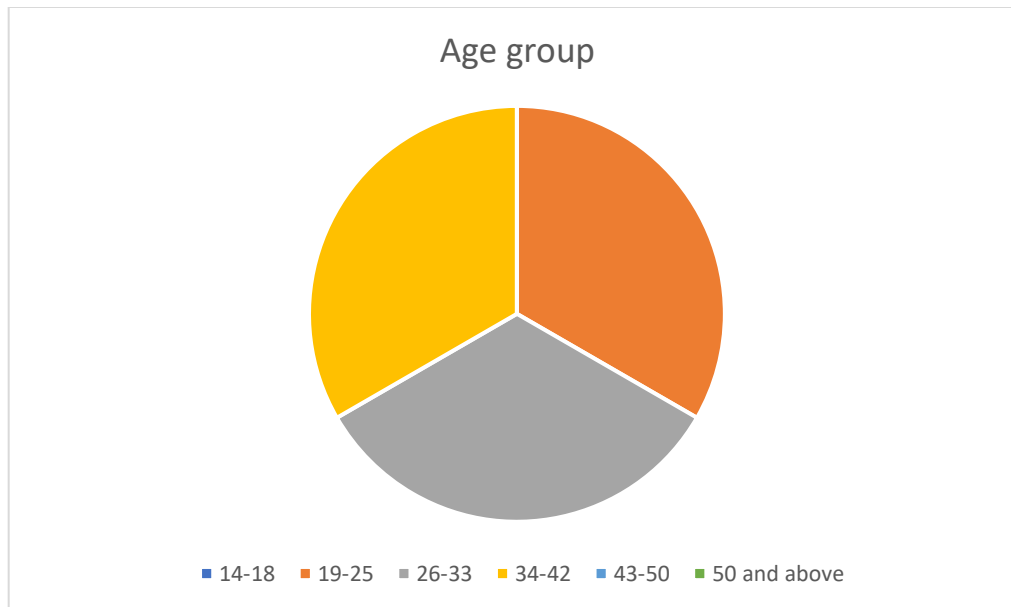
It was ensured that mature and knowledgeable people attend the focus group discussion. Table 6 represents the breakdown of respondents based on their age for the focus group discussion. In the focus group discussions, 0% were aged 14-18, 33.3% were aged between 19-25, 33.3% were aged between 26-33, 33.3% were aged between 34-42, 0% were aged between 43-50 and 0% were aged 50 and above.

*Meat consumption (Interviews)*

*Table 7. Meat consumption*

| Meat consumption | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|
| 0 | 20 |
| 1-2 days | 53.3 |
| 3-4 days | 13.3 |
| 5-6 days | 6.7 |
| 7 days | 0 |
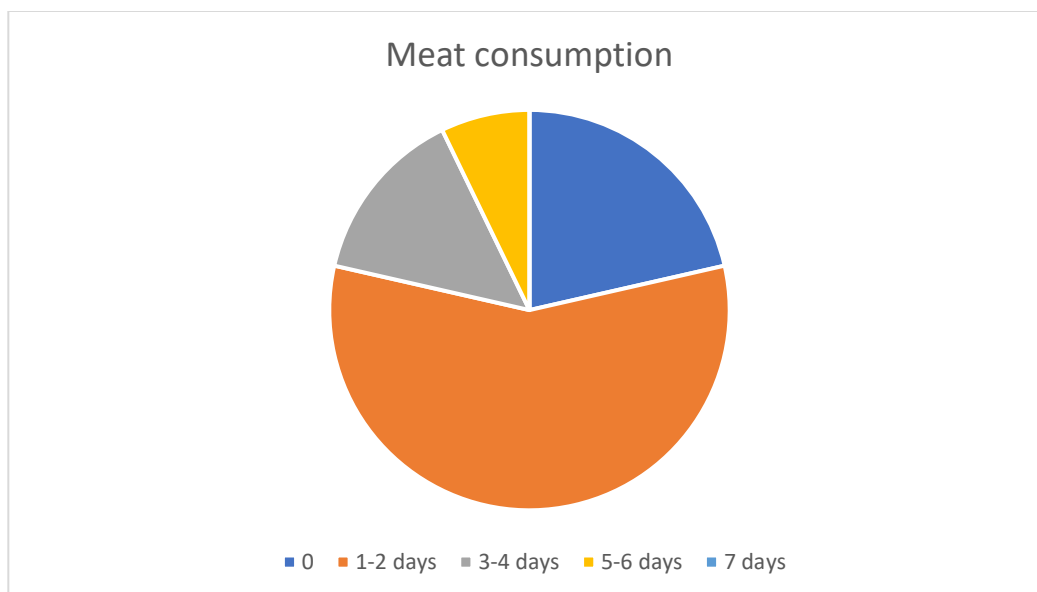
Table 7 represents the meat consumption of the respondents who took part in the interviews. This table describes how frequently the respondents consumed meat. The meat consumed by the respondents is evident from the table. 53.3%  of the respondents consumed meat 1-2 days a week, whereas 13.3% consumed meat 3-4 days a week and 6.7% consumed meat 5-6 days a week.

### *Meat consumption (Focus group discussion)*

*Table 8. Meat consumption FGD*

| Meat consumption | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|
| 0 | 13.3 |
| 1-2 days | 20 |
| 3-4 days | 20 |
| 5-6 days | 26.7 |
| 7 days | 13.3 |

Meat consumption

■ 0   ■ 1-2 days   ■ 3-4 days   ■ 5-6 days   ■ 7 days
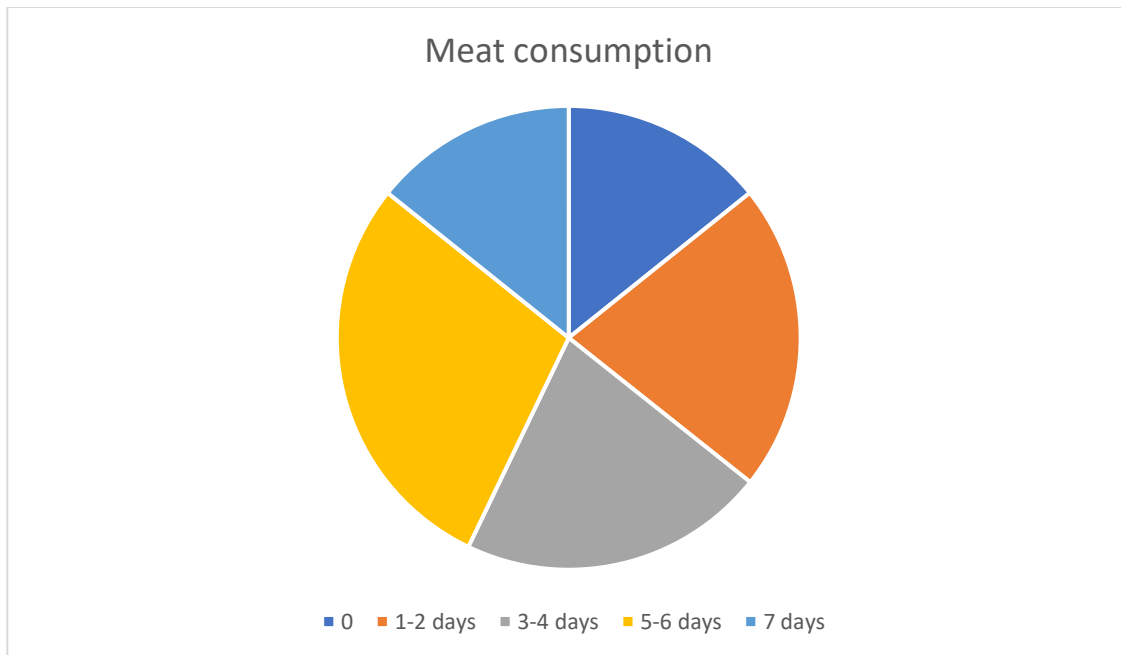
The consumption of meat from the team of focus group discussion was also inquired. Table 8 represents the response from the respondents regarding the consumption of meat. This table reflects that how many days a week was the meat consumed by the respondents. The meat consumed by the respondents is evident from the table for the focus group discussion. 13.3% of the respondents consumed meat for 0 days a week, 20% consumed meat 1-2 days a week whereas 20% consumed meat 3-4 days a week, 26.7% consumed meat 5-6 days a week, whereas 13.3% consumed meat 7 days a week.

## 4.2   Word cloud

The critical words obtained in the study are provided in Table 9. It gives us useful insights regarding which names are used most by the respondents, thereby providing us with information regarding the preferences of the respondent. From the keywords, we can analyze that price impacts the buying of meat by the consumers. The protein intake also matters to the consumers, and they decided regarding the consumption of meat-based on protein intake. The consumers are also associated with health concerns regarding meat. The consumers further recommend reducing prices for vegan products. Some of the consumers also tend to have a meat allergy. The keywords show that different factors impact the consumption of meat amongst the consumer in Ireland. All these factors need to be kept in mind while making decisions for the consumption of meat.

*Table 9. Word cloud*

| Word | Frequency |
|------|-----------|
| Price | 33 |
| Protein Intake | 17 |
| Chicken | 4 |
| Health  Concerns | 14 |
| Meat Allergy | 11 |
| Animal products | 22 |
| Vegetable products | 19 |
| Reducing price | 12 |
| Adding variety | 12 |
| Organic | 27 |

## 4.3    Emerging themes

Collective ideas and patterns are determined with the help of emerging themes. These names have been learned from similar ideas and responses obtained from the respondents. The arguments suggest the most integral outcomes of the current study. The study revolves around the themes that we have received. From the collected data, the following items as presented in Table 10 emerged.

*Table 10. Emerging themes*

| S.No | Theme Name |
|------|-----------|
| 1 | Price |
| 2 | Health concerns |
| 3 | Organic intake |
| 4 | Increase in health consciousness |
| 5 | Variety addition |

| 6 | Pricing strategy |
| 7 | Tradition promotes meat consumption |
| 8 | Protein intake |

Theme price refers to that price impacts the buying of meat, and there are growing health concerns which make the people health consciousness which in turn enables them to increase their organic intake. There has been greater awareness regarding health, and the internet has caused people to understand the impact of excess meat consumption quickly. Therefore, people are now becoming more aware. Moreover, with the change in trends, grocery stores and retail shops need to take measures to enhance their sales, and this involves coming up with a smart pricing strategy and addition of various products in the stores. It will allow the grocery stores and the retail shops to remain competitive in the market and also it will help them to understand the pattern of the consumers and adapt accordingly. Furthermore, the Irish tradition is such that it promotes the consumption of meat. Therefore, it has been harder for the consumers to switch to vegan products since traditions hold great importance for the people, and the consumers tend to like eating meat as well.

## 4.4    Key findings

In this section, the respondents' answers from interviews and focus group discussions have been discussed. The majority of the respondents stated that protein intake and price tend to impact the decision they make regarding their meat consumption in daily diet. Which reflects that if the prices are high, then the meat is consumed less. Moreover, if the protein intake needs to be balanced, increased and decreased according to the requirements of an individual, then an appropriate intake amount is considered. Many of the respondents and their families did not have any significant health concerns associated with their meat consumption while only a few had an allergy to meat. To tackle the health concerns of the consumers, they tend to eat more organic food or opt for vegetables. A vast majority of the respondents thought that people are becoming more and more health-conscious, and such people tend to opt for healthier options for eating. On the other hand, to cater with the needs of the retailers and groceries, they need to offer more variety to the people to maintain their sales and through a reduction in prices of specific products depending on the trends of meat consumption.

A mixed response was obtained regarding the impact of COVID-19 on meat consumption of people as no clear majority was captured in this regard. Some respondents thought that there was no evident impact of the pandemic whereas some thought that that the consumption of meat had increased due to it being readily available and can be cooked quickly. Therefore, it is not evident from the sample if COVID-19 did have any significant impact on meat consumption. Moreover, a consensus was obtained that both animal meat and vegetable products were available quickly for the consumers. An agreement was also gathered that Irish traditions did promote the consumption of the animal meat product. A consensus in the interviews and focus group discussion was gathered that the purchasing behaviour of the consumers for meat depends on the prices, consciousness of health and readiness of availability to eat. Health concerns have impacted the consumption patterns of the consumers as they switch to more organic products. A variety of responses were obtained as to what factors promote sustainable green consumption pattern which includes an increase in taxes, increase in awareness programs for the consumers, offering vegan products at a discounted rate for the masses, promoting the benefits of green products, and creating/developing a more customer-centric policy for green consumption. The results and findings, however, cannot be generalized to a larger population as the research tends to be qualitative in nature. Causality has also not been determined in the process as it is not feasible to decide on the causality in the study of qualitative nature, and the results obtained cannot be represented statistically. This has enabled to understand the attitudes of the people and the specific insights have been gained as human experience has been incorporated in the process.

Therefore, we can conclude that whereas there has been some impact of COVID-19 on the reduction of consumption of meat, still the consumption has not been reduced drastically as the tradition of Ireland incorporates consumption of meat and the rituals are rooted genuinely amongst the masses which are hard to let go. On the other hand, people are slowly and gradually becoming more health-conscious and want to shift towards vegan food and plant-based products to maintain good health. However, the pattern needs to be changed with the held and aid of the government as well, and they need to have intact policies and measures in place to support the people to reduce the consumption of meat as consumers will not be able to do this alone through changes in food intake pattern. This further needs to be encouraged with the help of the government.

# 5    DISCUSSION

This discussion will provide the reader with an extensive and critical evaluation of the excessive use of meat consumption in Ireland. The research thesis has some general findings from the literature, and the discussion section will help the reader to understand this thesis contribution. Further, the discussion is explaining the specific implications of this research in the lights of previous literature. Also, the discussion section aims to explain the limitations of this research work.

## 5.1    Interpretation of the Literature General Findings

The excessive use of meat consumption is based on specific literature findings (Linseisen et al., 2002; Kabat et al., 2009), it provides extensive information about why meat consumption is high in Ireland than other European countries. The thesis has covered different dimension that is associated with the relevant research problem. For instance, the role of sustainable green consumption is not playing an active role in diminishing meat consumption in Ireland. Haws *et al.* (2014) research discussed the issue that green consumption mainly focus is on the safeguard of environment and preservation of specific resources for the consumers, but in Ireland, the importance of sustainable green consumption needs to be addressed more effectively. In the previous study of Pagiaslis and Krontalis (2014) discussed that sustainable development is determined by consumer behaviour to preserve the environment in general. However, this research has carried their investigation and explained that consumer behaviour also has some significant considerations such as culture and social dimensions. In the previous study of Wyness (2016) research has critically evaluated some significant determinants of meat consumption in Ireland that includes certain that are associated with the meat consumption, meat prices and economic well-being of consumers while this research has further elaborated the relationship between the research on why meat consumption is higher in Ireland.

## 5.2 Issues that were common in Literature review and findings

The research analysis has provided extensive information about the excessive meat consumption in Ireland. The primary purpose behind these findings was based on the attitude of consumers towards meat consumption. Therefore, the results have provided reliable conclusions.

- The point of discussion is the impact of animal food products on consumer purchasing behaviour. The research has concluded that meat consumption is effected by consumers behaviour. In their study, Pagiaslis and Krontalis (2014) found that consumer behaviour and meat consumption is a relationship, and individual factors always back them. The consumer's behaviour is determined by the meat prices and economic well-being of the people. Further, in the data analysis, this has been proved that purchasing behaviour has disturbed due to the increase in meat prices and other health issues. To link the finding with the research question, it can be concluded that when the change in consumer behaviour due because of different determinants is one the reason behind the increase in meat consumption in Ireland.

- The data analysis has further shown that health issues do contribute to meat consumption and other food products in Ireland. In the previous study of Rana and Paul (2017) discussed that the relation between heath and meat consumption is harmful, excessive use of meat consumption does affect the health and increase the chances of cardiac diseases. The analysis of this research has also concluded that poor health and other cardiac issues regulate people to use meat as a significant consuming commodity. In the research findings, some of the candidates have shown that they are not consuming meat because of health issues some of the participants have explained that they have meat allergy. To link this with the research question and research topic, the fact cannot be denied that meat consumption in Ireland is affected by health. It has partially affected the use of meat in Ireland, but because of the small ratio of health-related issues, still, most of the people are consuming meat in their houses. Further, in the survey by Ipsos MRBI (2015) where they have mentioned about meat consumption as the primary source of protein is the main reason behind the consumption of meat. This study's findings have also concluded that some of the people in Ireland are using meat because they believe that meat is the rich source of protein, and they are consuming it in several ways such as chicken. So, the question of health and its impact on food products such as meat has been proved from

through data analysis. This is one of the primary reason for the excessive use of meat consumption in Ireland.

- Further, the main focus of the research was also on different factors that affect and contributes to meat consumption in Ireland. Certain factors determine and affect animal food consumption in Ireland, such as the study by Wyness (2016), they discussed that non-vegan consumption is affected by certain factors that include meat prices, economic well-being, health and other social factors, i.e. lifestyle. The literature by Mathijs (2015) has also explained the same factors that are affecting meat consumption in Ireland. The analysis of this study has concluded that health and prices does effects the meat consumption in Ireland while the non of any student has discussed lifestyle. The increase in meat prices decreases the demand for meat in Ireland. Therefore, the decrease in order has reduced animal food consumption. To link this the research topic, the thesis has interpreted that the stable economic well-being and increase in per capita income in Ireland has the use of meat consumption. It is because more people are consuming meat than vegetables. The data analysis has also shown that most of the people have used meat consumption as the main effecting factor than vegetables.

- Further, the research has also aimed to discuss the role of excessive meat consumption on retailing and online grocery. In the previous study by Jamalovna *et al.* (2020) they examined that effective marketing strategy could determine the demand and supply of certain commodities, this also helps the e-marketing to provide online access to the market. The previous study by Klisinski and Melnyk (2017) has also discussed something relevant, and they explained that marketing changes the overall strategy of the business towards its customers and needs. To link this with the analyzed data, it can be argued that the excessive meat consumption and low prices have increased the role online retailing because more people in Ireland are now using e-business as the primary source of purchasing certain commodities. The data has shown that online retailing is providing meat on the minimum price; this is increased the demand for meat in Ireland. Consequently, the different varieties in meat is another reason for effective retailing in Ireland, most of the people are consuming meat in different types. The effective pricing strategy has increased meat consumption in Ireland because the retailers are aware of customers needs and demands.

- Another critical research question is the role of sustainable green consumption in meat consumption in Ireland. The previous study of Haws *et al.* (2014) and Moser (2015) have discussed that sustainable green consumption is the nexus amid consumption and gree production. The data analysis has concluded that sustainable green consumption will increase the use of organic food such as vegetables, the data have recommended that Ireland needs to achieve different indicators which are the part of SDGs goals. This will reduce meat consumption in Ireland because more people will be using vegetables instead of meat.

- The research has also discussed the impact of Covid-19 on meat consumption in Ireland. In the previous literature of Muscogiuri *et al.* (2020) have considered that the world health organization has recommended the use of protein-rich intakes in dietary for active immunization. They also discussed that Covid-19 has made people become "food craving" which has increased meat consumption in the country. However, these research findings have concluded that Covid-19 has no substantial impact on meat consumption in Ireland. However, the purchasing demand for meat showed little fluctuation because of easy availability.

## 5.3 Issues that were different in literature review and findings

In the current study, vegan products have been recommended as alternatives to meat whereas the survey of Elzerman et al. (2013) has recommended food like soup, pasta, wrap as an alternative to the meat products. The study of Elzerman et al. (2013) also concluded that easy preparation of alternative products to meet is also necessary as consumers opt for it, but this was not found in our study through the qualitative analysis conducted.

In the current study, no substantial impact of COVID-19 has been found on the meat consumption whereas the research work of Xie et al. (2020) concluded in their research that the perception and attitude of the respondents towards organic food have been impacted due to COVID-19 and that a change in the diet has been noticed. However, this impact was found to be more evident in the younger generation, and the older generation did not show any substantial difference in food consumption behaviour due to COVID-19.

## 5.4 Other relevant issues

The issue not discussed in the study is that only lousy health risks are not associated with the intake of meat, but in fact, meat intake also comes with plenty of benefits for the consumers. The reduction of food intake is discussed, but how much they need to be reduced has not been found. The study of Richi et al. (2015) suggests that restrictive recommendations for meat should not be applied for the people who are aged above 70 and they require a sufficient amount of protein supply and it is essential in the elderly as well.

## 5.5 High protein products and meat consumption

Boad Bia (2018), in his study, found people nowadays prefer healthy food and millennials tend to believe that a high amount of protein intake has ingredients that are unhealthy. Acosta (2018) conducted a similar study and found that people tend to purchase more fresh products that have an animal origin, and they tend to opt for plant-based alternatives. All-natural products are decided more by the people, especially the millennials. According to the survey of Acosta (2018), 41% of the respondents had been making use of more fresh meat than as compared to the previous year. The same is reflected in figure 2. The study emphasized that raw meat is purchased as it is believed that fresh meat, along with exercise provides a better condition of health and appearance as well. Some of the results are in line without study, i.e. choice of opting for the plant-based products by the people for healthier conditions.

*Figure 4. Result of study of Acosta (2018)*
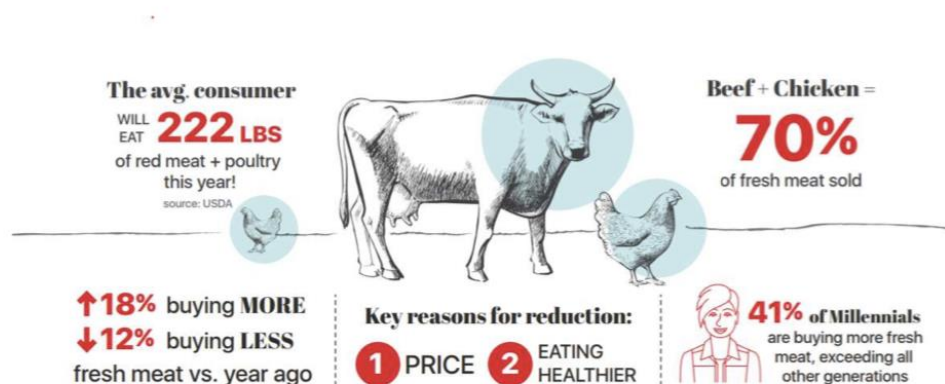


Source: Acosta (2018).

## 5.6    Vegan and Vegatarianism

Smith (2010) argues that people tend to prefer products which are in line with heir ethical and moral values and price of these products does not matter for it. A global campaign was started in Ireland in the year 2015, which was called "Go Vegan World Campaign", and this campaign was launched to promote veganism. To create awareness regarding animal rights in the Irish population, banners, articles, radio talks, and magazines have been used (Go Vegan world, 2019). Go Vegan World (2019) further explained that people tend to consider vegan food as an option for diet in Ireland. It was also stated in the article that in the last four years, the number of vegans around the globe enhanced by 400%.

## 5.7    Recommendations

The recommendations for the study based on the analysis and results obtained are as follows:

- The government of Ireland needs to take measures to ensure that all the grocery stores implement reduced prices for vegan products
- The government of Ireland needs to make sure that the distributors/retailers have easy access to a variety of alternate products that are healthier for the consumer to make them available readily for the people
- Awareness drives should be started in Ireland to make people more aware regarding healthy food consumption
- The retailers and grocery stores should help themselves me well aware regarding changing trends and should research on it thoroughly to ensure they remain competitive in the market and can provide healthy alternatives to the consumers.

# 6   CONCLUSION

Meat consumption, generally, is high in Ireland as the taste of people has developed, also due to animal protein. WHO (2020) stated that rising meat consumption is due to the increase in the income level of the people and also due to more urbanization. Diets around the globe have become more vibrant and diverse, and the high-value protein that meat offers provides people with essential micronutrients. However, on the other hand, meat product is a source of pollution and is one of the main contributing factors for the sixth mass extinction. There are also environmental issues associated with the meat products which include a change in the climate, nature processing and feed sourcing. Furthermore, some meat tends to be high in fat, and this can lead to an increase in the cholesterol level of the blood, which ultimately leads to heart diseases.

It is concluded that multiple factors contribute towards consumers not reducing their meat consumption in Ireland. The tradition of Ireland is one of the factors due to which meat consumption has not been reduced. Moreover, COVID-19 has also not played any significant role in the reduction of meat consumption. People, although, slowly and gradually are becoming more health-conscious and want to switch towards vegan products or plant-based products; however, the change has been a little slow. Vegan products tend to be high in vitamins, and other nutrients and the level of cholesterol tends to be low in such products. Risk of mortality is also reduced through the plant-based vegan diet. Results reflect that consumers do tend to use meat products at least once or twice in a week.

It is evident from the results that the purchasing behaviour of the consumers depends on pricing and their preferences. Health concerns have made the purchasing of vegan products to go higher as they contain lower cholesterol levels and the purchase of meat products comparatively decrease as vegan products tend to be the alternative.

To conclude, the government needs to take action and implement such measures that help people to reduce the consumption of meat. Such policies need to be in a place that promotes vegan products and enables the masses to cut the meat intake. This can be done by offering a variety of alternative products and also through control of prices.

Future research work can focus on conducting a mixed research methodology which includes both qualitative and quantitative methodology as it will help obtain conclusions that can be generalized. Moreover, the variable of slow change towards vegan products from the consumer side can also be analyzed in detail.

## 6.1    Practical implications

The research also has specific implications which are discussed below. These research implications are very critical for Ireland.

- The significant implication of this research will be on livestock farming and agriculture sector, and this research can reduce the use of livestock farming and will increase the role of the agriculture sector to increase vegan production instead of meat. This research provides evident support to the concern institutions.

- The global report had on meat consumption in 2019 has shown that Ireland ranked third-worst country in climate change and worst greenhouse emission ($CO_2$s) in Europe (OECD, 2019). To meet the 2020 targets, Ireland needs to change the entire consumption and production behaviour. Therefore, this dissertation can help the Ireland government to role out the issues.

- This research will provide a vision for future assessment in the relevant field. This research will ensure educational assessment and primary facilitator for identifying meat-related issues in Ireland. The previous study of Haws *et al.* (2014) discussed the implication that their research will help other researchers to dig the problems further. Here, this research implication will provide a piece of extensive information about meat consumption in Ireland.

- Another important implication of this research is that this research provides a podium for the Irish government to make policies that can benefit the Irish people. For instance, this research has highlighted the role of sustainable green consumption in meat consumption as Wyness (2016) has underlined different determinants and the study by Mathijs (2015) discussed certain factors that have a dual effect on meat consumption, all of these can be traced from this research. Both the literature and research findings will give a piece of substantial information to the policymakers.

- The health sector in Ireland needs specific reforms and specified policies to underline health issues such as cardiac diseases, the most of the cardiac diseases are increased because of the excessive meat consumption as was discussed in Naughton *et al.*'s (2015) research. So, this research will help the health sector in Ireland to provide precise recommendations to the government on health sector policies.

- Environment preservation is an essential topic of discussion in the present times, to create sustainable green consumption system in Ireland, this research provides a link between meat consumption and sustainable green consumption. Therefore, to preserve the environment in Ireland, the local government can use this research as a dimensional study to overcome specific issues.

- This research also has specific academic implications, and this research provides future students and researchers to enhance their knowledge in the relevant field. Likewise, this research postulates a platform for the institution to take this research further.

- Further, the implication of the research was the methodology of the study. This research will provide a piece of substantial information about the methodology of the research to other similar research in the future. The researchers can use this methodology to makes their analysis more efficacious.

- One significant implication of this research is that it will provide information to the local people in Ireland to decrease the use of meat in their life. The research literature discussed the factors of the pros and cons of meat consumption in Ireland. Besides this, the research provides reasons for transforming the culture. The implication can make the Irish people change their lifestyle. For instance, the previous study of McAfee *et al.* (2010) has highlighted the pros and cons of meat consumption that helps that defines the consumer behaviour of the Irish people.

## 6.2   Research Limitations

During the thesis, the research has experienced certain limitations which are discussed below.

- One of the significant limitations was associated with sampling selection; the sampling selection was identified after critical assessment. The research aimed to enhance sampling selection, but it was limited due to certain constraints. The sampling selection is based on the research aims and the research topic.

- During the research, another primary consideration was the lack of research information on this study. It was very hectic to accumulate information about this research topic. It was a mammoth task to cover different dimensions, such as factors and significant determinants. The lack of accessed data on the research was a challenging time during the research. The same limitation was experienced by Muscogiuri *et al.* (2020) during their research.

- One significant implication was the access to the specific data on meat consumption, and this research aimed to get access to secondary data, however, due to certain norms and legal policies the research has faced certain limitations with accessing to the specific data.

- The most common research limitation is time; this research experienced the same restriction. Time limitation is put limits on the research to cover specific areas.

- Another significant limitation of the research was financial support. The lack of financial backing held us to tight to make the research more effective. Consequently, the lack of financial aid also affects the sampling pool in the research.

- Another significant limitation in this research was the lack of equipment such as VR devices, the absence of VR devices decreased our sampling because if VR devices help the researchers to collect different data from different peoples in different regions. This was one of the reasons behind the limited focus group discussion and interviews.

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# 8    APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Questionnaire for Interviews

**Name:**

**Gender**

- Male
- Female

**Age group**

- 14-18
- 19-25
- 26-33
- 34-42
- 43-50
- 50 and above

**How many times do you consume meat products in a week?**

- 0
- 1-2 days
- 3-4 days
- 5-6 days
- 7 days

| |
|---|
| What factors affect the decision on meat consumption in your daily diet? |
| What kind of  animal meat product do you consume more? Why? |
| Do you or your family have any health concerns that affect your meat food consumption? |
| What changes you make in your diet and food consumption to tackle the health concerns? |
| Do you think generally people becoming more  health conscious has an impact on their meet consumption? Yes then why? |

| |
|---|
| How do you believe the groceries and retailers can enhance sales by following the trends of meat consumption? |
| What measures you think need to be taken in order to promote sustainable green consumption pattern and reduce consumption of animal meat? |
| Do you believe there has been any impact on the meat consumption behavior of the consumers due to COVID-19? If yes, what impact and how strong is the impact? |
| What do you think is more feasible and accessible food product for daily life; Animal meat or vegetable products? |
| Does the Irish traditional food promote the consumption of animal meat product? |

## Appendix B: Questions for Focus Group Discussions

1) What factors impact the purchasing behavior of the customers in terms of vegan products?
2) What factors impact the purchasing behavior of the customers in terms of meat products?
3) Are the health concerns of consumers on a rise? Why?
4) Have these health concerns impacted the demand of the meat consumption and vegan products?
5) What factors impact the meat consumption of the consumers?
6) Do you believe retailers and grocery stores need to understand these changing trends?
7) How can retailers and grocery stores enhance their sales through understanding the current trends?
8) What measures you think need to be taken in order to promote sustainable green consumption pattern?
9) Has there been any impact on the meat consumption behavior of the consumers due to COVID-19? If yes, what impact and how strong is the impact?