

**Understanding the evolution of customer trust in sustainable products: A
customer journey perspective.**

H. Hassink

Department of Behavior, Management and Social Sciences (BMS), University of Twente

Master thesis

1st supervisor: Dr. Damberg

2nd supervisor: Dr. Alvino

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Abstract

In today's business landscape, the demand for sustainable products is on the rise, driven by increasing environmental awareness among customers. This shift in customer preferences presents both opportunities and challenges for businesses that operate in the sustainable products market. Establishing trust among customers is crucial for the success of sustainable product offerings. Customers seek transparency, reliability, and alignment with their values when considering sustainable purchases. Navigating the complex dynamics of trust development throughout the customer journey of sustainable products requires an understanding of the determinants influencing the dimensions of trust: cognitive, affective, and behavioral.

This research investigates the evolution of customer trust in sustainable products by addressing the main question, *"How does trust develop among customers along the customer journey of sustainable products?"* To gather insights, eight semi-structured interviews were conducted across diverse customer segments within two sustainable businesses and their customer bases.

The results of these interviews show that trust development among customers along the customer journey of sustainable products is a multifaceted and dynamic process influenced by cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, as well as interactions with various determinants across different phases of the customer journey. Cognitive trust is built when customers gather and process information about product attributes, transparency, certifications, and brand reputation to form judgments about the trustworthiness of sustainable products. Affective trust is fostered through exceptional customer experiences, alignment with personal values, and results in customer satisfaction, loyalty, and emotional connections with sustainable brands. Furthermore, all interviewees mentioned that recommendations from others and promotions had an influence on their behavioral trust, which resulted in repeat purchases and fostered long-term relationships with the brands.

Throughout the customer journey, trust development is influenced by various factors, including product information, transparency, pricing, certifications, quality, and customer experiences. By addressing these

factors strategically, businesses can effectively influence trust among customers, driving sustainable consumption and long-term success in the sustainable products market.

Key contributions to establishing and enhancing trust with customers include the importance of transparency, quality assurance, responsiveness to customer feedback, and leveraging positive word-of-mouth. Providing easily accessible and clear information to customers helps build cognitive trust and reinforce brand credibility. Ensuring that customers understand the sustainable aspects of your products positions your business as honest and reliable. Additionally, focusing on delivering outstanding customer experiences throughout their journey ensures consistency and excellence to enhance affective trust and emotional connections with customers. Upholding quality standards and certifications is crucial to creating customer trust. Demonstrating responsiveness to customer concerns and preferences helps build behavioral trust and fosters long-term relationships. Encouraging satisfied customers to share their positive experiences and recommendations with others is crucial, as it turns into positive word-of-mouth marketing for your brand and products.

These insights show how to build and maintain trust, enhance customer loyalty, and drive sustainable consumption. By implementing these trust-building strategies, businesses can position themselves as trusted leaders in the sustainable products market, contributing to long-term sustainability goals and competitive advantage.

1. Introduction

In today's era of rising environmental awareness and growing concern for sustainability, the demand for sustainable products has seen a significant increase (Boyd et al., 2020). Customers are increasingly searching for environmentally friendly alternatives that align with their values, which contribute to a more sustainable future. However, for customers to gain information about and engage with sustainable products, a crucial element comes into play: trust. Trust serves as a key factor in shaping consumer behavior and plays a crucial role in the success of sustainable product offerings (Schiffman, 2013). This surge in interest in sustainability caused businesses and researchers to explore the relationship between trust and sustainable products. The element of trust and its development within the context of sustainable products is a process that evolves throughout the customer's journey (Chang, 2013). While trust has been studied in various domains, there is still a need for research that specifically focuses on trust in the context of sustainable products. This master thesis aims to investigate and understand the trust formation among customers as they navigate through various stages of the customer journey of sustainable products, from initial product awareness to post-purchase experiences (Mugge et al., 2004). Delving into and understanding the dynamics of trust formation offers valuable insights to businesses and marketers. This exploration of the evolution of trust provides businesses and marketers with new insights and perspectives to refine their strategies, focusing on customer trust and enhancing customer engagement with sustainable products.

This research aims to explore the key and influential factors that shape the development of customer trust in sustainable products. The research question guiding this study is: **“How does trust develop among customers along the customer journey of sustainable products?”** This question focuses on the processes, factors, and dynamics that influence trust among customers throughout their interaction and engagement with sustainable products. Investigating this through an empirical framework will help to understand the mechanisms that shape trust, which will enable businesses and marketers to strengthen customer engagement with sustainable products and promote sustainable consumption. The type of approach that will be used during this study to investigate the research question is a qualitative, two-case study approach. This approach will be used to gain in-depth insights into developing customer trust

in sustainable products along the customer journey. The reason for selecting the qualitative two-case study approach, in which the two cases are Donskussen.nl and Vivera, is because this approach is useful to explore and understand the development of trust among customers during their journey with sustainable products (Yin, 2009). By focusing on the trust-building process in the context of sustainable products in different contexts and industries, this approach allows for an inductive exploration of customer behaviors, communication strategies, and how they all fit into the bigger picture of sustainability (Gammelgaard, 2017). Furthermore, qualitative two-case studies will identify relationships, similarities, differences, and patterns with customers who have engaged with sustainable products at different stages of the customer journey and within the trust development process (Pangarkar et al., 2022).

In this research, the three dimensions of trust, cognitive, affective, and behavioral, interact throughout the customer's journey. The development of trust is not linear; instead, it is a dynamic process that evolves as customers progress from initial awareness to post-purchase experiences in the customer journey (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Karimi et al., 2015). The trust felt by the customer is highlighted as a separate component categorized into affective, behavioral, and cognitive trust, effecting the probability of customers' behaviors based on sustainable products. Recognizing the significance of these trust components is crucial for businesses and researchers to understand and influence customer trust in sustainable products in each phase of the customer journey. Each customer journey phase presents unique opportunities and challenges that affect the customer's trust. When investigating the customer journey, this study will use theories and concepts from various fields, such as consumer behavior, psychology, marketing, and sustainability.

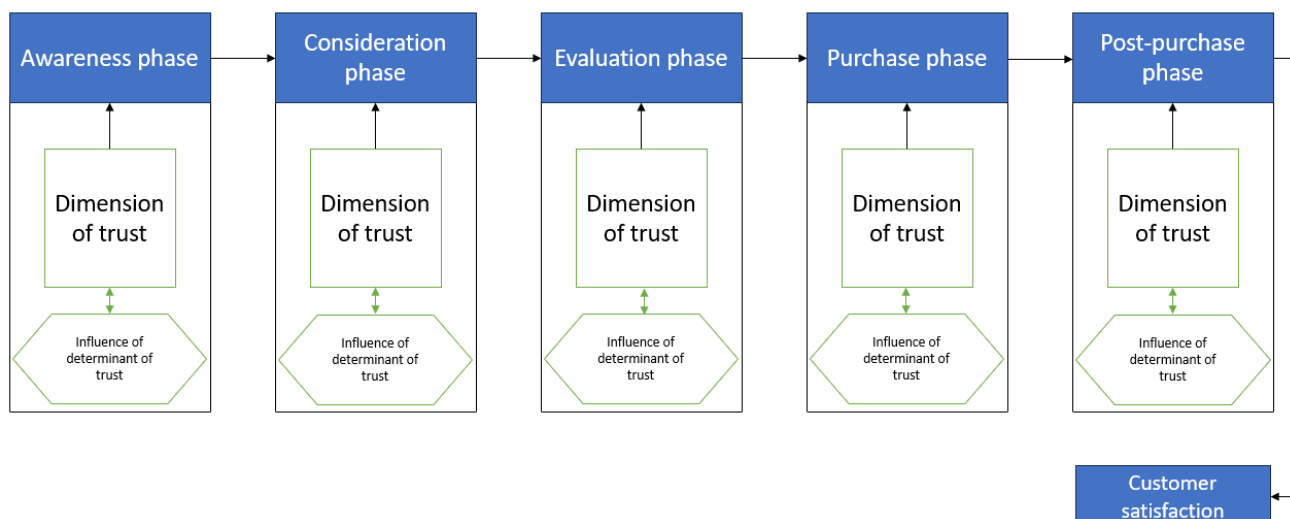


Figure 1. Conceptual model (Solomon et al., 2010; Ozaki, 2008; Kautonen & Karjaluoto, 2008; Gummesson, 2008)

The theoretical framework used in this thesis, based on the data collected from existing research, which is described further in the theoretical background chapter, provides an understanding of how trust develops among customers along the customer journey of sustainable products (Solomon et al., 2010; Ozaki, 2008; Kautonen & Karjaluoto, 2008; Gummesson, 2008). By including different dimensions of trust, determinants, and outcomes, this theoretical framework lays the foundation for this thesis, which aims at the development of customer trust in sustainable products. Following a qualitative two-case study approach for Vivera and Donskussen of how customer trust in sustainable products has evolved along the customer journey, the following process view of trust development should be inferred: *Investigate if higher levels of cognitive, affective, and behavioral trust influence customers' decisions to engage with sustainable products at various stages of the customer journey.* This process of trust development suggests that trust, in its cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, has an impact on customer behavior and their interactions with sustainable products. This will be investigated so that the evolution of customer trust in sustainable products can be understood. The theoretical framework implies that trust plays a crucial role in influencing customers to engage with sustainable products, particularly in the early stages of awareness and consideration, and affects purchase decisions and post-purchase satisfaction. This process of trust development in the customer's journey with sustainable

products will be measured through semi-structured interviews, and multiple models will contribute to the results.

Furthermore, this research addresses a critical research gap, highlighting the need for focused exploration of trust in the context of sustainable products. In the realm of the sustainable consumption theory, this exploration makes a meaningful contribution by identifying key determinants that shape trust. By understanding how trust unfolds, stakeholders gain insights to navigate towards a more sustainable future. So, the academic relevance of this thesis lies in its contribution to consumer behavior theory, promoting sustainable consumption, filling research gaps, and showing the difference between theory and practice.

While examining the trust development along the customer journey of sustainable products, this research addresses an important topic from its time with implications for multiple stakeholders that are involved in the sustainability and marketing domains. The impact of this thesis goes beyond the academic setting, offering businesses a guide to align their sustainable products with customer expectations, strengthen trust-based relationships, and guide strategic decision-making. So, the practical relevance of studying trust development among customers along the customer journey of sustainable products lies in informing and guiding actions among various sectors. By providing insights, this research contributes to a more sustainable and trust-driven consumer view that can benefit consumers, businesses, and the environment. It can be concluded that this research shows the gap between theoretical understanding and practical application by providing insights for businesses, marketers, and researchers. In section four, the findings can guide strategic decision-making and product development processes, helping organizations align their offerings of sustainable products with customer expectations and stimulate trust-based relationships (Zulfikar, 2010).

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows: Section two presents the theoretical background, the constructs of the theoretical model, the dimensions of trust, and the determinants of trust; section three describes the data set and used methodology; section four summarizes the most important findings; section five discusses the findings and suggests future research directions; and section six concludes this thesis.

2. Theoretical background

A theoretical framework is a model that is used to understand a problem or particular phenomenon and that outlines the key variables and relationships (Green, 2015). In the following section, the literature on the key constructs of this thesis will be discussed and analyzed to provide a better understanding of the subjects addressed in this thesis.

2.1. Sustainable products and companies

Sustainable products, within the context of the theoretical framework focused on trust development along the customer's journey, are goods or services that are designed, produced, and distributed in a way that minimizes negative environmental, social, and economic impacts while contributing positively to sustainability goals (Bertolini et al., 2023). Other research, such as Ljungberg (2007), defines a sustainable product as a "product that will have as little impact on the environment as possible during its life cycle." (p. 467) This life cycle includes the extraction of raw materials, production, use, and final recycling (Ljungberg, 2007). These sustainable products aim to address environmental assessment, promote responsible consumption, and support social well-being (Audouin & Wet, 2012). There are some key aspects of sustainable products that differ from normal products.

The first key aspect is environmental-friendly design, in which sustainable products are made with consideration for the environment. Borchardt et al. (2011), defined it as "a set of project practices oriented to the creation of eco-efficient products and processes." (p. 49) This means trying to use materials and processes that use less energy, cause fewer emissions, and produce less waste (Chiarini, 2014). The entire process, from packaging to how the product is made, is planned to minimize its environmental impact.

Economic and social practices are the second key aspect. When it comes to economic and social practices, sustainable products are products in which materials are obtained responsibly without harming ecosystems or exploiting workers (Choi & Ng, 2011). These products often have certifications that guarantee ethical practices, which ensures workers get good working conditions and fair wages (Ferrie, 2006).

The third key aspect is sustainable products that contribute to larger global goals (Khaled et al., 2021). These goals aim to make the world a better place by tackling issues like climate change, poverty, and inequality (Khaled et al., 2021). Buying sustainable products supports these goals.

Putting all these key aspects of sustainable products into a theoretical framework gives a clear overview of a product's eco-friendliness and why people choose to buy it. The main goal is to help build strong trust between people and sustainable products. This trust will lead to people making responsible choices when they purchase products, which is a step towards a more sustainable and environmentally friendly world.

Furthermore, sustainable companies, within the context of trust development, are organizations that prioritize social and environmentally friendly practices in their production and activities (Mio et al., 2022). These companies aim to foster trust among their stakeholders by showing their commitment to sustainable business activities (Hollensbe et al., 2014). Here are some key insights about sustainable companies in relation to trust development.

The first insight is creating trust through transparency. Sustainable companies build trust with their customers by being transparent about their sustainability efforts (Szabo et al., 2021). Companies communicate information about environmental efforts, social initiatives, and progress toward sustainability goals (Szabo et al., 2021; Carlson et al., 2019). This transparency creates credibility and reliability, which creates trust among stakeholders (Goldsmith et al., 2000).

The next insight is stakeholder engagement. Stakeholder engagement is one of the key elements that sustainable companies engage with at multiple levels. These levels range from customers and employees to local communities and investors (Abuzeinab & Arif, 2014). When involving stakeholders in the decision-making process, companies create a sense of empowerment and inclusivity, which can contribute to higher trust development (Green & Hunton-clarke, 2003).

The last insight is consistency and reliability. When sustainable companies show consistency in sustainable practices, it creates trust among customers (Le & Aureliano-Silva, 2021). Sustainable companies show reliability when they consistently deliver on their sustainability commitments (Baca-

Motes, 2013). Stakeholders can rely on this consistency, which improves their confidence in the company's ethical and environmental trust. Sustainable companies create trust among customers by embracing transparency, engagement with stakeholders, and consistent communication. The commitment of sustainable companies to responsible practices creates credibility and trust that extends to customers, employees, investors, and local communities. This trust can form the foundation for long-term relationships and contribute to broader sustainability goals.

2.2. Customer journey phases

The customer journey refers to the entire process that a customer goes through when interacting with a sustainable product (Tueanrat et al., 2021). For sustainable products, this journey takes on added dimensions due to the awareness and decision-making surrounding environmental and social impacts. The customer journey can be broken down into several key phases, each with its own unique opportunities and characteristics for businesses to engage with customers. There are multiple conceptualizations of the customer journey that describe the stages of customer decision-making. Lemon & Verhoef, (2016) categorized the customer journey phases into three purchase phases. The prepurchase phase, in which traditional marketing literature has characterized prepurchase as behaviors such as need recognition, search, and consideration (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Unlike conventional products, where functional attributes may dominate decision-making, sustainable product customers prioritize determinants such as eco-friendliness, ethical sourcing, and corporate sustainability practices (Solomon et al., 2010).

Furthermore, the purchase phase, which is characterized by behaviors such as choice, ordering, and payment (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). During the purchase phase, transparency and authenticity become most important for customers of sustainable products (Solomon et al., 2010). Customers seek assurance that their purchasing decisions align with their values and contribute to positive social and environmental outcomes. This leads to the evaluation of product packaging, production processes, and supply chain practices (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

The third phase, the post-purchase phase for sustainable products, includes behaviors such as usage and consumption, post-purchase engagement, and service requests (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Other

research, such as Følstad & Kvale, (2018), stated that customers' behavior and experiences are analyzed according to a predefined onboarding process, structured in steps such as awareness, consideration, purchase, and loyalty (Court & Vetvik, 2009). Furthermore, in industries characterized by high involvement and extensive decision-making processes, models may include additional stages such as problem recognition, alternative evaluation, and information search (Memeti, 2023). Compared to conventional products, sustainable products evoke more emotions and values (Følstad & Kvale, 2018). Customers get satisfaction and pride from aligning their purchasing behaviors with their environmental and social beliefs.

Based on various models, frameworks, and empirical research, this thesis adopts a customer journey framework in which the five phases of the customer journey are: awareness, consideration, evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase. By integrating these phases into the research framework, the journey of customers and their trust development are investigated as they navigate through the decision-making process and interact with sustainable products.

According to Hoyer et al. (1990), the first phase of the customer journey, the awareness phase, which is also known as the prepurchase stage, refers to “a consumer’s ability to recognize a brand or a product.” (p. 141) Awareness plays an important role in the prepurchase stage because it determines whether a customer realizes the sustainable product as a potential purchase option (Fuller et al., 2022). Brand awareness is an important metric for businesses to measure and track performance when customers become aware of sustainable products and the potential benefits of these sustainable products. According to Ben-Akiva, (1991), awareness consists of a consumer being “aware” and who is believed appropriate for the consumer’s goal or objectives. The goal of investigating the awareness phase is to improve knowledge of how to encourage successful prepurchase customer journeys (Fuller et al., 2022).

The second phase within the customer journey is the consideration phase. This phase of the customer journey is a critical stage where customers explore and evaluate various sustainable options available to them before making a purchasing decision (Schamp et al., 2019). Ben-Akiva (1991), defines the consideration phase as “a set of goal-satisfying alternatives notable or accessible on a particular purchase occasion” where the factors positively or negatively evaluate a brand to become a purchase option. (p.

183) During this phase, customers do more research to assess different brands, sustainable products, and alternatives to fulfil their specific needs and desires (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). By investigating this phase, businesses provide insights into the factors that influence customers' decision-making and preferences for sustainable products. There are multiple key aspects of the consideration phase, according to Lemon & Verhoef (2016). The first key aspect of the consideration phase is information gathering: "Customers use multiple sources to seek information about the sustainable products they are interested in." It is given that the social environment also influences the experience of gathering information (Lin & Liang, 2011). It is likely that sustainable product consumers have their focus on the eco-friendliness, environmental impact, and ethical practices of the products. Furthermore, the evaluation product features: "Customers evaluate the features and specifications of different products." For sustainable products, customers may look for characteristics such as recyclability, environmental friendliness, and ethical friendliness (Dolnicar, 2009). The third key aspect is comparison shopping: "Customers often engage in comparison shopping." They may compare customer reviews, social media, prices, and sustainability claims. While the last key aspect are the sustainable certifications and labels: Eco labels, design, and providing awareness about the sustainability of the environment are some elements customers consider in their consideration, according to Hameed & Waris (2018).

Furthermore, we have the third phase of the customer journey, the evaluation phase. In this phase, customers do research and evaluate sustainable products to make an informed decision (Sirianni et al., 2013). Within this phase, customers may seek expert opinions, compare sustainability claims of different products, and read reviews (Lee & Labroo, 2004). Understanding the factors that influence this evaluation can help businesses address customer needs and get a better view of the overall customer experience (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). By providing information about sustainable products, brands are likely to achieve the fact that the customer purchases its brand or product (Sharp, 2003) over a given period of time to contribute to a more sustainable future (Trinh, 2014; Fuller et al., 2022).

The purchase phase is the fourth phase, which is also called the core stage (Fuller et al., 2022). In this phase, the customer accesses the offerings of sustainable products and fulfils their purchase needs. Lemon & Verhoef (2016), defined the purchase stage as "the stage in which the interactions, when a

consumer accesses the firm's offerings, fulfil the underlying consumer needs." (p. 73)

As the customer decides to purchase a certain sustainable product, it means that the customer is finalizing his decision-making process based on the evaluation and consideration of different sustainable products (Kantola, 2020). During this phase, the consumer acknowledges having a need that must be met (Shankar et al., 2016). For businesses, it is crucial to go to this core phase and to provide value for the customers as it provides insights into the factors that are influencing the final purchase decision (Kahneman & Kne, 1992). Within the purchase stage, multiple considerations play a crucial role in the purchase decision. Steward et al. (2019) defined these considerations that influence decision-making as: price, availability, discounts and promotions, level of trust, societal and environmental impact, shipping options, and level of sustainability. The development of consumer decision-making in the purchase phase can be measured through multiple models, such as the purchase funnel, AIDA, and more (Batra & Keller, 2016). Understanding the dynamics of the purchase phase means that businesses can improve their sales strategies and their customer satisfaction (Schamp et al., 2019). According to Groening et al. (2018), by addressing customer needs and purchase experiences, businesses can increase the impact of sustainable products and hopefully create long-term relationships with consumers who are interested in environmentally friendly products.

The last phase of the customer journey is the post-purchase phase. Teodorescu & Todd (2018) define the post-purchase phase as the phase in which "consumers search to confirm a choice, reduce undesirable emotions, and improve further decisions." (Donnelly & Ivancevich, 1970, p. 399). During the post-purchase phase, customers engage with the sustainable product in their lives. The customer is assessing the performance of the sustainable product and checking if it aligns with their expectations (Pizzutti & Ferreira, 2022). When the customer is satisfied with its purchase, it means he or she is positive about the product's performance, which can contribute to higher customer satisfaction (Meyvis & Schwartz, 2001).

Research such as Ma et al. (2023) has established that the positive confirmation of the customers' expectations results in satisfaction, which leads to post-purchase trust (Kim, 2015). Delivering on promises made during the consideration and evaluation phases creates a higher level of trust that is

developed throughout the customer's journey. A positive post-purchase experience will increase not only trust, but it will also increase the chance of a repeat purchase (Nadeem, 2007). The post-purchase phase can be an opportunity for businesses to increase their relationship with customers and strengthen their commitment to sustainability (Villarroel, 2022).

While these five phases provide a structured framework for understanding the customer journey, it's worth noting that alternative models may emphasize different stages or include additional phases. The customer journey chosen in this thesis plays a crucial role in the process of building trust with customers, particularly in the context of sustainable products. By understanding and leveraging each phase of the customer journey, businesses can effectively engage with customers, address their needs and concerns, and increase trust and loyalty in their product or brand.

2.3. Trust dimensions and determinants

Various definitions of trust can be found in the literature. Email (1998) defines trust as a multidimensional construct that involves cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. (p. 106) While other research defines trust in terms of "feelings that an authority or business made a good-faith effort and treated the customers involved fairly" (Tyler, 1996, p. 331). Another definition that is used is the one by Kramer (1999), who defines trust as "the willingness to make oneself vulnerable to another person or business, despite uncertainty regarding motives, intentions, and prospective actions." (p. 571) The multidimensionality reflects the complex nature of trust and how it develops in various ways because of different aspects of human cognition and emotions (Ng & Chua, 2006). The importance of understanding trust as a multidimensional concept gives a better view of its role in shaping consumer behavior and decision-making, particularly in the context of sustainable products (Luna-Reyes, 2016). There are three key dimensions of trust that are used in this thesis: cognitive, affective, and behavioral trust.

2.3.1. Cognition-based trust

Cognitive trust refers to the rational or cognitive assessments individuals make about a product, brand, or organization (Luna-Reyes, 2016). In the context of sustainable products, cognitive trust shows customers' perceptions of a brand's credibility, reliability, and competence in delivering on sustainability

promises (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2007; Mogaji et al., 2022). These cognitive assessments influence customers' initial awareness and consideration of sustainable products (Wagner, 2003). Cognitive trust is influenced by factors such as transparency, certifications, and product information. Sustainable companies build trust with their customers to increase sustainable consumption by being transparent (Mol, 2015) about their sustainability efforts and the environmental impact of their products (Szabo et al., 2021). By communicating these efforts, social initiatives, and progress toward sustainability goals, customers are more likely to trust a transparent company (Szabo et al., 2021; Carlson et al., 2019). Product information can also boost cognitive trust among customers, as they look for details about the products' environmental impact, ethical practices, and sourcing (Sichtmann, 2007). This transparency and product information create credibility and reliability among customers (Goldsmith et al., 2000). Another determinant that influences sustainable consumption within the aspect of cognitive trust is certifications. Third-party certifications, like organic labels or Fair Trade, can create cognitive trust by providing external validation of a product's sustainability claims (Hameed & Waris, 2018). These claims guarantee ethical practices that ensure that workers have good working conditions and fair wages (Ferrie, 2006).

2.3.2. Affect-based trust

Affect-based trust refers to, according to Mcallister (2014), "the emotional bonds between individuals" that are based upon expressions of "genuine care and concern for the welfare" of the other party (Schaubroeck et al., 2011). It refers to customers' emotions, feelings, and gut instincts about a certain sustainable product or brand. Emotions play an important role in influencing the behavior of the consumer, and affect-based trust in sustainable products can create positive emotions associated with ethical practices or environmental causes (Legood et al., 2023). Looking at affective trust, it delves into the emotional or personal aspects of trust. It involves customers' feelings of comfort, confidence, emotional connection, and feelings toward a certain brand or sustainable product (Schaubroeck et al., 2011). The affective trust component plays a significant role in customers' evaluation and post-purchase experiences with sustainable products. Customers who have a strong affective trust may be more likely to make repeat purchases and recommend a product or brand (Schiffman, 2013). Factors that influence

affective trust include brand image, positive experiences, and emotional appeal (Wu & Wang, 2011). Brand image and reputation play a significant role in affective trust development. Brands that are known for their sustainability efforts and environmental initiatives are more likely to gain the trust of customers who prefer sustainable products (Chen, 2010). Brands that align with sustainable norms and values and show commitment to sustainability and cultural expectations are more likely to be trusted by customers (Yamin et al., 2019). Cultural values may extend to collective beliefs in promoting a more sustainable and responsible consumption culture (Marchand & Walker, 2008). Positive experiences with sustainability, such as excellent customer service, can strengthen affective trust (Legood et al., 2023). The last factor that influences affective trust is emotional appeal, which can foster affective trust. The perception of consumers on social and environmentally friendly marketing and the responsibilities businesses have are crucial in trusting the company's image and reputation (Haery, 2013; Widyastuti et al., 2019). Companies that are actively engaged in sustainability initiatives, support community development, and contribute to environmental causes gain trust.

2.3.3. Behavioral trust

The dimension of behavioral trust is structured on past interactions and experiences with a certain sustainable brand or product (Groote & Bertschi-Michel, 2021). Behavioral trust develops over time because of positive experiences and the consistent delivery of promises. When the expectations of sustainability and environmental impact on customers are met with sustainable products, it will contribute to building behavioral trust (Rousseau, 1998). Behavioral trust creates long-term relationships between customers and sustainable brands or products (Sousa-Lima, 2013). Repeat purchases and brand loyalty are strengthened when customers have positive experiences, trust a brand, and see the brand as reliable (Theng Lau & Lee, 2000; Zehir & Kitapçı, 2011). Behavioral trust moves around customers' observable actions and behaviors, such as purchase decisions and brand loyalty (Groote & Bertschi, 2021). It is influenced by both cognitive and affective trust components and shapes the customer's journey. Behavioral trust creates long-term relationships between customers and sustainable products or brands (Sousa-Lima, 2013). So, customers who have a high level of behavioral trust in a sustainable product are more likely to engage in purchase behaviors and recommend it for sustainability, leading to

post-purchase satisfaction and brand loyalty (Abu-Alsondos et al., 2023). Behavioral trust can be impacted by several factors, like product quality, post-purchase support, and word-of-mouth (Dellarocas, 2003). The consistent quality and performance of sustainable products influence purchase decisions and repeat buying, which contributes to behavioral trust. Multiple dimensions, such as reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness, can be applied to measure the quality and performance of sustainable products and the effect they have on behavioral trust (Wang et al., 2015; Ryan, 1991). Another factor, post-purchase support, such as return policies, can enhance behavioral trust (Oghazi et al., 2018). Sustainable products come with guarantees that assure customers of the product's durability and performance, which contributes to behavioral trust. These guarantees show the commitment of a brand to its sustainable products. Post-purchase support in the form of repair services or replacements can also significantly increase trust. The last factor, word-of-mouth, which refers to the spread of information, recommendations, and opinions about sustainable products or brands through interpersonal communication between customers, can influence customers' behavioral trust and their willingness to recommend sustainable products (Al Rashed & Rabiul, 2022). Positive word-of-mouth, generated by satisfied customers, has a direct impact on building and strengthening behavioral trust in sustainable brands (Al Rashed & Rabiul, 2022).

Understanding the three dimensions of trust can be a guide for businesses and marketers to build and enhance trust among customers for sustainable products. By recognizing the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of trust, businesses can develop better strategies to promote sustainable products and build longer relationships with customers.

2.3.4. Determinants of trust development

The development of trust among customers in the context of sustainable products is influenced by multiple trust determinants that shape the perceptions and actions of customers (Bojang et al., 2017). Trust determinants refer to the variables that influence the development of trust between individuals or entities (Bojang et al., 2017), such as product information and transparency, credibility, product quality, brand reputation, social responsibility, and perceived reliability (Bloch et al., 1986). These determinants play a crucial role in shaping customers' overall trust perceptions and attitudes toward a brand or

product, influencing their willingness to trust and engage (Auger et al., 2008). Importantly, trust determinants impact dimensions of trust, including cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, but certain determinants may have a stronger influence on specific dimensions or phases of the customer journey (Auger et al., 2008). For instance, transparent communication about a brand's sustainability efforts and social practices, which is a trust determinant, can enhance cognitive trust by providing customers with reliable information about the brand's commitment to sustainability, particularly during the awareness phase of the customer journey. Therefore, understanding and addressing these trust determinants adapted to different dimensions and phases of the customer journey gives researchers and businesses insights into how to build trust and credibility with customers to create a positive and sustainable customer-brand relationship (Lee et al., 2020). Here are some key determinants of trust development:

The first key determinant is product information and transparency. Mol (2015), defines transparency as "the disclosure of information that is very prominent in the field of environment and sustainability." (p. 154) Transparent communication of information about sustainable products creates a development of trust for customers as they look for details about the products' environmental impact, ethical practices, and sourcing (Sichtmann, 2007). Brands need to have clear, accurate, and transparent information available about a sustainable product and its sourcing.

Credibility sources are the second key determinant. According to Reilly et al. (2016), credibility sources suggest that the source has the expertise or a certificate that validates a brand's sustainability claims. Examples could include eco-labels or recognition from organizations that enhance the credibility of sustainable products (Horne, 2009). Customers' trust in the brand's commitment to sustainability can be influenced by these organizations.

The next key determinant is a sustainable brand image. Chen & Chen (2010), define a sustainable brand image as "a consumer's mental picture of a brand in the consumer's mind that is linked to an offering that is sustainable." (Cretu & Brodie, 2007, p. 232). Brand image and reputation play a significant role in trust development. Brands that are known for their sustainability efforts and environmental initiatives are more likely to gain the trust of customers who prefer sustainable products (Chen & Chen, 2010).

Social and environmental responsibility is the next key determinant. The perception of customers on social and environmentally friendly marketing and the responsibilities businesses have are crucial in trusting the company's image and reputation (Haery, 2013; Widyastuti et al., 2019). Brands that are actively engaged in sustainability initiatives, support community development, and contribute to environmental causes gain trust. Businesses that sell sustainable products take high care of environmental aspects in their production process and do a lot of research on how to minimize product waste (Widyastuti & Santoso, 2016).

The next key determinant of trust development is social business investment. Brands that show social business investments, such as fair labor standards and responsible sourcing, are seen as trustworthy and responsible, which has an impact on customers' trust in their sustainable products. Spiller (2000), defines ethical business as "doing well while doing good." (p. 149)

The last determinants of trust development are consistency and reliability. According to Pacheco (2021), to establish long-term relations with customers, companies need to show consistency and reliability in delivering sustainable products. This is essential for building trust.

Understanding these determinants of trust development gives a better insight into the trust of customers for sustainable products. By prioritizing transparency, credibility, and reliability, brands can create a trust-based relationship with customers. This leads to an increased adoption of sustainable products.

2.4. Outcomes of trust development

The first outcome of trust development is customer loyalty. Dick (1994), defined customer loyalty as "the strength of the relationship between an individual's relative attitude and repeated patronage." (p. 343) Customer loyalty is described as the relationship between a relative and a brand.

While other research (Oliver, 1999) defined customer loyalty as "a deeply held commitment to rebuy a preferred product or service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same-brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior."

According to Dick (1994), the conceptualization of loyalty is seen as “the relationship between the relative attitude toward a brand and patronage behavior.” (p. 343) Where the relative attitude has two underlying dimensions, which are the degree of attitudinal strength and the degree of attitudinal differentiation. Customer loyalty influences the firm’s performance and is an important source of competitive advantage for multiple companies (Heskett, 1990).

Furthermore, we have another outcome of trust development: word of mouth. Word-of-mouth is a way of communicating information. One of the earliest definitions of word-of-mouth was, according to Huete-Alcocer (2017), “the exchanging of marketing information between consumers in such a way that it plays a fundamental role in shaping their behavior and in changing attitudes toward products and services.” (p. 1) Other researchers (Arndt, 1967), have suggested that word-of-mouth is a person-to-person communication tool between a communicator and receiver. This receiver gets information about a certain brand, product, or service. In the context of this thesis, word-of-mouth refers to the spread of information, recommendations, and opinions about sustainable products or brands through interpersonal communication between customers (Karim & Rabiul, 2022). It plays a significant role in the outcome of trust development among customers for sustainable products. Positive word-of-mouth, generated by satisfied customers, has a direct impact on building and strengthening trust in sustainable brands (Karim & Rabiul, 2022).

Looking at the last outcome of trust development, we have customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction can be seen as the result of a confirmation between the expectation of the customer and the perception of the customer (Lanka, 2015). While other research defines customer satisfaction as the result of a customer’s perception of value that is received in a relationship or transaction, in which value is the perceived service quality in relation to the price and costs to acquire customers (Galloway & Blanchard, 1994) and relative to the value that is expected from those transactions or relationships with competitors (Zeithaml & Berry, 1996). In the context of this thesis, customer satisfaction is about understanding how customers’ perceptions of sustainability are attributed to their satisfaction levels (Luo et al., 2022). It reflects the extent to which customers’ expectations and experiences with sustainable products align. In the context of sustainability, it involves the evaluation of a product’s ethical and environmental

performance, as well as the sustainability preferences and functional needs of the customers (Groening et al., 2018).

2.5. Theoretical framework

Trust is an evolving phenomenon that keeps on transforming as customers navigate through the stages of the customer journey with sustainable products (Green, 2015). Understanding this concept will show multiple key elements that shape how trust evolves over time as a dynamic process. In the realm of sustainable consumer behavior, trust emerges as a crucial factor in shaping customer decisions and fostering enduring relationships between customers and businesses. Building upon existing research in consumer behavior (Solomon et al., 2010), marketing (Gummesson, 2008), environmental studies (Ozaki, 2008), trust (Kautonen & Karjaluo, 2008), and determinants and outcomes of trust (Bloch et al., 1986), this theoretical framework seeks to explain the dynamic evolution of trust throughout the customer journey of sustainable products. The theoretical framework shows which dimensions and determinants of trust are most influential in each stage of the customer journey for the sustainable products of Vivera and Donskussen.

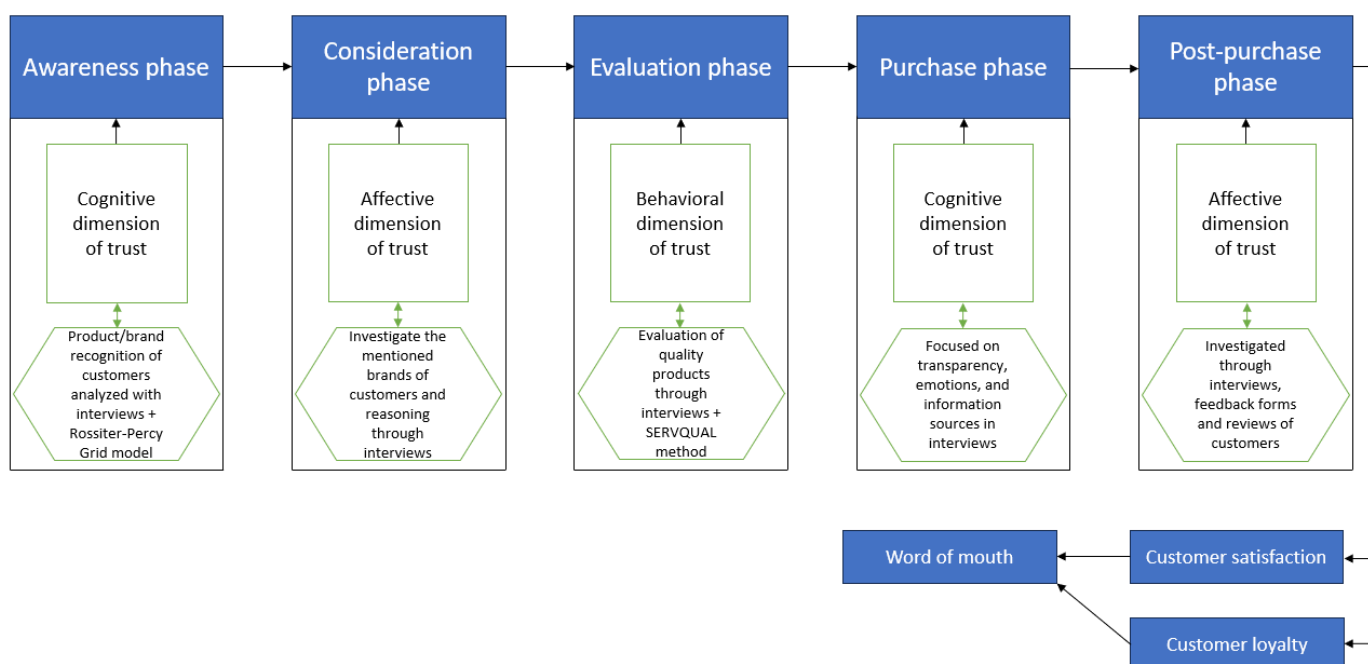


Figure 2. Theoretical framework (Solomon et al., 2010; Ozaki, 2008; Kautonen & Karjaluo, 2008; Gummesson, 2008)

Looking at the theoretical framework, trust formation begins in the early phases of the customer journey, particularly during the awareness and consideration phases (Mugge et al., 2004). When customers become aware of sustainable products and begin to consider them as possible options, customers start to engage in cognitive assessments of brand credibility and reliability (Goldsmith et al., 2000). The conceptualization of consumer behavior, according to Solomon et al., (2010), highlights this pre-purchase phase in which cognitive cues such as marketing communications play a crucial role in shaping customers' initial perceptions of brand credibility and reliability. These first impressions will form the foundation for the development of trust. The nature of trust in these first two phases involves an interplay between cognitive and affective components. In the evaluation phase, Solomon et al., (2010) highlight the behavior of customers as they assess alternatives. Positive evaluations and comparisons to alternatives, such as product quality and fulfilling sustainability promises, can strengthen or weaken trust (Wang et al., 2015). So, positive experiences contribute to trust formation, while negative interactions are a potential threat to trust formation.

As we transition towards the purchase phase, the trust of the customers continues to evolve. This phase is influenced by cognitive and affective trust, where product transparency, emotional connections, and experiences with sustainable products and brands become significant. Ozaki, (2008) its exploration of pro-environmental product marketing sheds light on the crucial role of trust in this phase. Trust acts as a bridge between customers' emotional responses and their willingness to engage with sustainable products and brands. When customers trust a brand's commitment to sustainability, they are more likely to perceive its offerings positively and make the decision to purchase them.

The post-purchase experience phase is where the dynamic nature of trust formation becomes clear. This phase serves as a feedback loop where customers assess whether or not the sustainable product meets their expectations in terms of sustainability and performance (Zulfikar, 2010). According to Kautonen & Karjaluoto, (2008), its analysis of trust within the context of new technologies shows the interplay between cognitive assessments and affective responses, wherein positive experiences reinforce trust, while negative experiences are an opportunity to refine or adjust strategies in response to the feedback and experiences. When acknowledging the dynamic nature of trust, customer feedback needs to be seen

as a crucial component of this feedback loop. Positive feedback serves to strengthen trust, whereas negative feedback presents opportunities for the organization to adjust and improve. It shows that building trust with customers is a dynamic process that involves learning and adapting. Adapting to these experiences of customers influences behavioral trust, which can lead to brand loyalty, word-of-mouth, and repeat purchases.

The dimensions of trust among customers in the context of sustainable products are influenced by multiple trust determinants that shape the perceptions and actions of customers and have the possibility of influencing trust throughout all the phases of the customer's journey. These are based on the theoretical background of the determinants described above (Bloch et al., 1986).

Showing the insights from diverse literature sources, provides a theoretical foundation to investigate the interplay between cognitive assessments, emotional responses, and behavioral interactions in shaping trust perceptions within sustainable consumer behavior contexts. By contextualizing trust as a dynamic process, businesses such as Donskussen and Vivera can navigate the complexities of sustainable product offerings, fostering enduring customer satisfaction (Oliver, 1986), customer loyalty (Reichheld, 2003), and positive word-of-mouth (Anderson & Narus, 1990). Trust is not a one-time achievement but an ongoing and evolving aspect of the customer-business relationship (Bloch et al., 1986).

In conclusion, this framework aims to show the complex nature of trust and how it evolves over the course of the customer journey, especially in the realm of sustainable customer behavior. Recognizing trust as a dynamic phenomenon helps businesses navigate the challenges of selling sustainable products. This, in turn, helps businesses build lasting customer relationships and plays a significant role in promoting sustainable consumption practices in today's society. Understanding the dynamics of trust within sustainable consumption is not just an academic pursuit; it carries practical implications for businesses, marketers, and the broader goal of stimulating sustainability.

3. Methodology

In the next section, the research method is described, and an explanation of how the constructs are measured is provided. The goal of this study is to extend our knowledge on the development of customer trust in sustainable products. This research is conducted by doing a qualitative two-case study for two companies that sell sustainable products to enable the data to investigate the development of customer trust in sustainable products. By focusing on the trust-building process in the context of sustainable products and customers, this approach allows for an inductive exploration of customer behaviors, communication strategies, and how they all fit into the bigger picture of sustainability (Gammelgaard, 2017). By studying two cases, this design tries to create an identification of patterns, combinations, and similarities that contribute to the findings. During this exploratory research, empirical evidence is found for answering the research question by capturing the participants' meanings using a mono method qualitative approach (Saunders et al., 2019). Semi-structured interviews are used to understand the participants opinions and the underlying reasons for their opinions (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.1. Selection and characteristics

For conducting this research, I had the opportunity to collect data from the customers of the two sustainable companies, Vivera and Donskussen.nl. Both companies sell sustainable products and have a broad group of customers. By using the non-probability sampling method, quota sampling, interviewees were selected among the customer groups. By using minimum quotas, key groups are represented, but there is flexibility in composing the final sample (Robinson, 2014a). The following quotas were defined:

At least one interviewee is a decision-making unit at the sustainable company.

At least three interviewees are customers of Donskussen.nl.

At least four interviewees are customers of Vivera.

The sustainable companies that are offering sustainable products are considered our unit of analysis; however, the individuals that are participating in the interviews, including the owner of a sustainable company and the customers, are our unit of observation.

Furthermore, the characteristics. The selection of participants for this thesis will be done through a purposeful sampling strategy that aligns with the qualitative nature of the multiple case study design (Yin, 2009). Purposeful sampling is chosen to ensure that participants have relevant information related to sustainable product consumption and the development of trust along the multiple phases of the customer journey.

The criteria for the selected participants will be based on their engagement with sustainable products across the various phases of the customer journey (Robinson, 2014a). This includes individuals who have considered, evaluated, purchased, and engaged post-purchase with sustainable products from the selected two cases. Additionally, participants should represent a variety of demographic characteristics, ensuring a broad perspective on trust development in sustainable product consumption (Kostadinova, 2022). By investigating participants in the two cases, the evolution of trust-development, the encountered challenges, and the successful practices that contributed to the brand's reputation for sustainability will be shown, collected, and analyzed for the two cases. The customers of the two selected cases are in the Netherlands. Within the Netherlands, the customers are distributed well across the country.

3.2. Conceptualization of trust

3.2.1. Customer trust

Customer trust, a central construct in the investigation of trust development along the customer journey of sustainable products, is a complex task to measure in which various dimensions and determinants related to trust have to be considered. As highlighted in the theoretical chapter, trust includes multiple dimensions, including cognitive, affective, and behavioral components (Mugge et al., 2004; Goldsmith et al., 2000). These dimensions interact dynamically throughout the customer journey, shaping customers' perceptions and behaviors at different phases of their journey with sustainable products (Zulfikar, 2010). The dimensions of customer trust are influenced by determinants of trust development such as product information and transparency, credibility, product quality, brand reputation, social responsibility, and perceived reliability (Bojang et al., 2017). These determinants shape how trust is perceived and influenced throughout the customer journey. To measure customer trust, a multi-faceted

qualitative approach was used, including semi-structured interviews, observational studies, and content analysis.

Semi-structured interviews are provided for customers to discuss their trust-related beliefs, experiences, and preferences (Lee et al., 2020). By engaging customers in open-ended conversations, the determinants that shape trust can be discovered, such as product information or brand reputation. Additionally, semi-structured interviews allow for the exploration of affective dimensions of customer trust as interviewees share their emotional responses or feelings toward sustainable brands and products. Observational studies complement semi-structured interviews by observing non-verbal cues and behaviors that signal trust during real-time or virtual interactions (Flick, 2018). Through careful observation of customers their body language, facial expressions, and gestures, insights can be gained into the affective dimensions of trust that may not be verbally communicated. Furthermore, content analysis of customer reviews will measure the perceptions of trust of customers in sustainable products or brands (Vespestad & Clancy, 2021). Content analysis provides information from qualitative data that gives insights from the interviews and observational studies, that measures a broader perspective of customer trust dynamics in this research. Through the use of these qualitative methods, the interplay between cognitive, affective, and behavioral trust and its determinants will be measured. Insights retrieved from semi-structured interviews provide depth and context to participants' trust perceptions, while observational studies offer observations of trust cues in interactions (Kyngäs, 2008). Additionally, content analysis of customer reviews measures a perspective on customer trust, highlighting the role of recommendations in shaping trust perceptions.

By using these qualitative approaches with the earlier-mentioned trust determinants and dimensions, a better understanding of the complex nature of customer trust will be measured.

3.2.2. Customer journey phases

Measuring the phases of the customer journey in the context of trust development for sustainable products is essential for understanding how trust evolves and develops over different phases of customers' interactions with sustainable products.

Firstly, there is the awareness phase. In the awareness phase, customers become aware of sustainable products and start creating impressions. This phase is characterized by brand recall and recognition, which lay the foundation for interactions and decision-making (Khurram, 2018). Firstly, there is an unaided brand recall. Unaided brand recall is a fundamental construct within the awareness phase, which shows the moment participants recall certain brands associated with a specific sustainable product without external signs (Fischer, 2019). This method reveals the brands that immediately pop into customers' minds, which shows well which brand strategies are working.

Furthermore, there is aided brand recall. In contrast to unaided recall, aided brand recall involves presenting participants with a list of brand names and investigating whether participants recognize them (Fischer, 2019). This method offers a broader understanding of brand awareness in the awareness phase.

The third one is the Rossiter-Percy Grid. The Rossiter-Percy Grid is a tool that extends the evaluation of brand awareness by incorporating various media channels (Wu, 2007). This method helps to figure out which brands are hitting the mark with their advertisements and are getting noticed in different places, which shows the efficiency of different communication strategies in raising the awareness of customers (Wu, 2007). The measurement of the awareness phases helps to understand how customers first start interacting with sustainable products. This offers valuable insights into sustainable brands in the awareness phase of the customer's journey toward sustainable products.

Furthermore, we have the consideration phase. To understand the consideration phase and how to measure it, customers need to be asked to list the sustainable brands they consider (Nedungadi, 1990). By seeing which brands they mention, an insight into the brands that have managed to catch their eye will be gained. Besides only listing the brands, with this method, the reasoning for considering them will be investigated. This helps to discover specific factors that are influencing their choices and trust. It could be the eco-friendly features or the price. By using these methods, a better perspective will be created about how customers are building their consideration phase. This gives insights into how trust, attributes, and preferences are shaping up as customers navigate through the customer journey of sustainable products.

Thirdly, we have the evaluation phase. In the evaluation phase, the perceived quality of trust in the development of sustainable products will be measured. To measure this, the SERVQUAL method will be used. This method focuses on five dimensions, which are reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness (Wang et al., 2015). These dimensions can be applied to measure the quality of sustainable products (Ryan, 1991). By adapting SERVQUAL's dimensions for sustainable product evaluation, a deeper understanding of how customers perceive the quality of sustainable products will be gained (Wang et al., 2015). By creating Likert-scale questions, the perceptions of reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness of customers in relation to sustainable products can be investigated (Kholaf & Xiao, 2023). This way, the factors that influence customers' judgment in the evaluation phase of their journey toward sustainable choices can be explored (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

Furthermore, we have the purchase phase. To measure the purchase phase, in which the cognitive and evaluative processes turn into a definitive purchase decision, an in-depth examination of this phase needs exploration of the purchase intention and the determinants that support the decision-making of the customer. The probability of purchase approach shows the likelihood that a participant is purchasing a sustainable product. By using a structured ordinal scale, participants will range their opinion from "highly unlikely" to "highly likely" to purchase a sustainable product (Donaldson et al., 2010). This approach provides a precise measure of the likelihood of acquiring sustainable products.

Furthermore, there participants will be engaged in narrative interviews where they can describe their decision-making process while considering sustainable products (Stankevich, 2017). By interviewing the participants, the factors they weighed, the information sources they consulted, and the emotions of trust they experienced will be described. This measurement method offers a deep understanding of trust, product characteristics, and communication strategies (Stankevich, 2017). When multiple participants share their decision-making, similarities and differences will be shown in how trust, product attributes, and those communication strategies play a role in their choices (Barratt et al., 2011).

By using these measurement strategies, the development of trust and the interaction with other variables in the decision-making process of sustainable products can be investigated and measured.

3.3. Data collection

To collect data to measure the constructs, in-depth, semi-structured narrative interviews with the selected participants are conducted via video conferencing. To find saturation, a total of 8 interviews were conducted (Yin, 2014; Guest et al., 2006). This research method allows the interviewer to ask focused questions. According to Anderson & Kirkpatrick (2016), narrative interviews provide an opportunity to prioritize the participants' perspectives. The semi-structured narrative interviews are thoughtfully focused on an interview guide and can be found in the appendix a and b (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016; Robinson, 2014b). By diving into the journey of the customer for sustainable products, the experiences, cognitions, and emotional responses within the context of trust development will be investigated. Narrative, semi-structured interviews are audio recorded and put into a data structure. Data saturation will be a key consideration in participant selection as it has an impact on the quality and validity of this thesis (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Once the data saturation is reached and the information of the participants is collected, the participant recruitment will be finalized.

Interviewee	Customer lifetime in years (CLT)	Position	DMU
1	<2	Customer	No
2	<1	Customer	No
3	-	Company owner	Yes
4	<17	Customer	No
5	<9	Customer	No
6	<1	Customer	No
7	<1	Customer	No
8	<2	Customer	No

Table 1. Sample description of interviewees

3.4. Data analyses

Within a multiple-case study design, validity is crucial when exploring the dynamics of trust development in sustainable product consumption (Mezger & Cabanelas, 2020). Given the qualitative research and the two-case study design, the data analysis will follow a systematic and inductive approach to get insights into the development of trust along the customer journey of sustainable products. In this thesis, a thematic analysis (Lochmiller, 2021) will be used to identify themes and patterns related to trust development in the customer journey of sustainable products. A thematic analysis helps to identify,

analyze, and interpret patterns of meaning or themes within qualitative data (Lochmiller, 2021). Qualitative research often lacks scholarly rigor. To bring this rigor, Magnani & Gioia, (2023) summarized a systematic approach to conducting and presenting inductive research, named the Gioia method. To analyze the collected data, the Gioia method is used to develop a data structure that goes from first-order concepts to second-order themes and finally aggregate dimensions. The developed data structure for this thesis can be found in the appendix.

To ensure the validity of the findings in this thesis, a qualitative triangulation approach is used. Qualitative triangulation is a methodological approach used to enhance the validity and reliability of qualitative research findings by cross-verifying information from multiple sources, methods, or theories (Patton, 2002). In the context of this thesis, qualitative triangulation involves using multiple sources of data, such as semi-structured interviews, literature analysis, and observations, to explore the dynamics of trust development in sustainable product consumption. This approach helps to establish the consistency and validity of the findings of this thesis. By using this method, the similarities and differences in how trust evolves within diverse contexts will be identified. Through consistency in the semi-structured interviews, literature analysis, and observations, the reliability of this thesis will be enhanced. Such consistency will ensure that the two cases will be approached with comparable accuracy, which contributes to the reliability of this thesis. During this research, multiple sources and journals were used and analysed. In the appendix d, the relationship between the variables that were investigated can be viewed in figure 3.

3.5. Ethical considerations

For this thesis, while conducting research on trust development in sustainable product consumption, positive advice was given by the Humanities & Social Sciences (HSS) Ethics Committee for ethical standards. This contributes to the guidelines established by the University of Twente, such as transparency, voluntary participation, anonymity, confidentiality, integrity, and participant well-being. By adjusting these guidelines, this will contribute valuable insights to the understanding of trust along the customer's journey with sustainable products.

4. Findings

This thesis aims to answer the following main research question: *“How does trust develop among customers along the customer journey of sustainable products?”* To answer this question, the results are addressed per dimension of trust for the multiple cases and for each phase of the combined customer journey. The findings are presented by zooming in on each of the 2nd-order themes about the trust development of customers along the customer journey of sustainable products: i.e., 1) initial awareness; 2) key moments of awareness; 3) considered attributes; 4) influencing information sources; 5) customer service; 6) reliability; 7) positive and negative emotions; 8) values associated with products; 9) evaluation methods; 10) trustworthy sources; 11) cognitive factors; 12) emotional aspects; 13) behavioral factors; 14) repeated purchases and feedback.

4.1. The evolution of trust: insights from the customer journey with Vivera

During the awareness phase, customers begin to pay attention to sustainable options and begin to consider them as potential choices, which lays the foundation for future interactions and decision-making. Trust begins to evolve as customers become aware of sustainable products and brands such as Vivera through various channels, including word of mouth, personal experiences, and exposure to sustainable eating trends. It is founded that packaging and labelling play a crucial role in catching customers' attention and influencing their initial perceptions of trustworthiness. Additionally, price promotions significantly contribute to raising awareness about Vivera's sustainable products.

"I became aware of Vivera's sustainable product for the first time through word of mouth. I was dining at the parents' house of a friend of mine, and they had vegetarian meat on the table. Because I had it at her parents' house, I came into contact with it for the first time and found it very tasty. So, I didn't think about buying or trying it myself." (Interviewee 1)

"Through word of mouth and by trying them out, I eventually gained more trust in Vivera's sustainable products." (Interviewee 5)

It is noteworthy that, despite various promotional efforts, none of the interviewees became aware of Vivera through advertisements.

"I can't recall any advertisements or similar things from Vivera that have caught my attention."

(Interviewee 4)

This finding suggests that while traditional advertising may not have been impactful in raising awareness, other channels such as word of mouth and personal experiences played a more significant role. Among the observed dimensions of trust in the findings, cognitive trust emerges as the most significant during the awareness phase. Cognitive trust reflects customers' initial perceptions and beliefs about the reliability, credibility, and competence of a sustainable product. As the interviewed customers become aware of Vivera's sustainable products through various channels, and especially through word of mouth and promotional efforts, they begin to form cognitive trust by recognizing the brand's commitment to sustainability, 100% plant-based, no animal cruelty, and the quality of its products. This cognitive dimension of trust lays the foundation for building deeper levels of trust as customers move through the different phases of the customer journey.

During the consideration phase, customers engage in an evaluation of multiple factors to determine the trustworthiness of sustainable products. Pricing, product presentation, ingredient transparency, and certifications like 100% plant-based or the Nutri-Score are among the key elements considered. Emotional connections, taste experiences, and personal values, such as animal welfare and environmental sustainability, also significantly influence customers' trust in Vivera and their products. Cognitive trust evolves as customers gather and analyze information and form judgments about Vivera's trustworthiness. In the consideration phase, cognitive trust involves the rational assessment of information and attributes associated with the product. Factors such as ingredient transparency and certifications like the Nutri-Score and 100% plant-based stickers contribute to cognitive trust among customers as they evaluate the reliability of sustainable products based on factual provided information. Furthermore, affective-based trust is present in the consideration phase. It emerges from emotional connections, taste experiences, and personal values. Customers develop preferences based on their values and experiences. For instance, Interviewee 3 expressed a strong personal value regarding animal cruelty: *"I also choose sustainable meat substitutes because I am not comfortable with animal suffering."* Indicating that this aspect influences their trust in Vivera's products. Taste experiences also play a crucial

role because they create positive feelings about Vivera's products and stimulate affective-based trust. These findings show the complex interplay between cognitive and affective dimensions of trust during the consideration phase.

During the evaluation phase, customers analyze the credibility and reliability of Vivera's sustainable products. This reflects their cognitive trust in their decision-making process. In this phase, factors such as ingredient transparency, certifications, and packaging presentation are evaluated to contribute to customers' perceptions of trustworthiness. Moreover, customers engage in a comparative analysis in the evaluation phase. They compare Vivera products with offerings from competitors such as Vegetarische Slager and sustainable house brands. This comparison includes factors like pricing and quality, which reflect a cognitive evaluation of the multiple available options in the supermarket.

In addition to cognitive trust, behavioral trust emerges as a significant aspect of the evaluation phase. Customers assess whether the quantity of the product meets their expectations, focusing on its product characteristics and performance. This dimension of trust involves observing and experiencing the product, rather than only relying on cognitive judgments. So, the evaluation phase shows that trust is developed through cognitive, comparative, and behavioral dimensions as customers navigate through their decision-making process in evaluating Vivera's sustainable products.

As customers progress into the purchase phase, trust emerges across multiple dimensions, shaping the decisions and brand choices of the customers. Cognitive trust comes into play when customers assess pricing, promotions, and the best-before dates. These factors highlight how customers see Vivera's products as trustworthy and valuable when they are deciding what to purchase. The interviewees mentioned that, when purchasing a sustainable product from Vivera, the affordability and quality of the products are carefully considered.

Furthermore, behavioral trust comes into play in the purchase phase as customers are making decisions influenced by promotions, discounts, and price offers. The strategic placement of sustainable products in the supermarket, along with deals like buy-one-get-one-free, shapes their choices. Trust indicators such as the 100% plant-based sticker and the Nutri-Score also influence their selections. Additionally,

taste experiences and perceived product quality are crucial factors in driving purchases, as they reflect the trust of customers in Vivera's products. As customers finalize their decisions, these dimensions of trust show up and influence future purchasing behaviors.

In the post-purchase phase, emotional dimensions continue to shape trust as customers reflect on their experiences. Affective trust remains influential as customers assess their post-purchase experiences. They find fulfilment in contributing to environmental conservation or animal welfare. These emotional connections give strength to their trust in Vivera.

Furthermore, behavioral trust is shown through repeated purchases of Vivera products that are made because of positive post-purchase experiences. The interviewed customers find satisfaction in their purchases, continue to buy the products, and often recommend the products to others based on their own experiences.

"I have offered the sustainable products from Vivera to family or friends who come over for a meal, and I've cooked Vivera products for them. I recommend them to others!" (Interviewee 2)

"I have recommended Vivera's sustainable products to people in my circle. As a result, several of my friends have started eating meat substitutes more frequently." (Interviewee 5)

"I buy it more often because I find it very tasty." (Interviewee 5)

Recommendations and word-of-mouth from satisfied customers become known as crucial factors in building trust among potential customers. When satisfied customers recommend Vivera's products to others, more people become aware of them, the brand's reputation will be boosted, and potential buyers will trust the products more. In the post-purchase phase, the interplay of emotional satisfaction, repeat purchases, and positive word of mouth contributes to the development of trust in Vivera among both existing and potential customers.

In summary, the evolution of trust in Vivera's sustainable products begins with cognitive trust during the awareness phase, where customers first notice the brand through word of mouth and personal experiences rather than advertisements. In the consideration phase, both cognitive and affective trust

develop as customers consider ingredient transparency, certifications, and personal values such as animal welfare. During the evaluation and purchase phases, cognitive and behavioral trust shape decisions through comparative analysis, product performance, and promotions. In the post-purchase phase, affective and behavioral trust are reinforced through positive experiences and recommendations, leading to repeat purchases and broader awareness through word of mouth.

4.1.1. Cognitive trust: In-depth analysis of the sustainable products of Vivera

In the cognitive dimension of trust, customers engage in a process of information processing and sense-making as they navigate through their journey with sustainable products. The findings underscore that cognitive trust is more developed when customers have a better understanding of the sustainable attributes associated with a product. This understanding extends beyond just awareness to a deeper understanding of how sustainability is manifested in the product's features, and broader environmental impact.

"I choose meat substitutes because I don't want to eat meat, and by doing so, I contribute to a more sustainable planet. I also choose sustainable meat substitutes because I am not comfortable with animal suffering." (Interviewee 2)

On the other hand, more experienced customers are looking for specific details of the sustainable products, such as the origin of the plant-based ingredients, the overall ecological footprint, and extra vitamin B12. A transparent disclosure of this information was seen as essential for building cognitive trust in Vivera's commitment to sustainability.

"I also trust Vivera's sustainable products because I am very sensitive to the information on the packaging, such as added vitamin B12, extra proteins, or added salt." (Interviewee 4)

"To check the reliability of the meat substitutes of Vivera, I read the labels of the products very carefully in the supermarket itself." (Interviewee 5)

"When I encountered the ecological footprint of a product during my studies, I was shocked by the amount of CO2 emissions from a regular burger compared to a plant-based one. Also, the

quantity of water and such, it became much more tangible, and that gave me even more awareness that my choices as a consumer can make a small difference." (Interviewee 4)

Furthermore, recognized certifications significantly contributed to the development of cognitive trust among customers of Vivera. Certifications are shown as evidence of Vivera's commitment to sustainability. Recognized certifications, such as a positive Nutri-Score and the 100% plant-based sticker, were a form of certification that had a significant influence on the cognitive trust development of the customers. The interviewees cited specific certifications as key factors influencing their perception of Vivera's meat substitutes as trustworthy and aligned with their sustainability values.

"When I check the packaging, I am particularly focused on the Nutri-Score of the sustainable product. So, whether it has an A score, or a B, or C, I am inclined to choose the higher/better Nutri-Score." (Interviewee 1)

"I do look at the Nutri-Score of a product, but it doesn't solely determine my purchase. However, it does create a bit of trust." (Interviewee 2)

"The 100% plant-based sticker on Vivera's sustainable products is an additional piece of information for me that makes me trust the product more and likely to choose it. I prefer plant-based over dairy products that are also present in some Vivera products, like cheese, because I know that plant-based is better for the environment." (Interviewee 4)

"The 100% plant-based sticker also catches my attention to trust a Vivera product more quickly because I know that plant-based is very sustainable." (Interviewee 5)

The final founded finding that contributed to the development of cognitive trust among customers of Vivera, is the importance of visual cues. The green labels around prices, the strategic placement of sustainable products in the supermarket, and effective marketing techniques contributed significantly to the perceived reliability and authenticity of Vivera's offerings and had a substantial role in the cognitive trust development of the interviewed customers.

"The green label around the price tag of the sustainable product in the store always catches my attention quickly and is a reason that I trust the product to be sustainable." (Interviewee 1)

"For the actual purchase decision, it is also important in my case where Viverra products are placed, the position in the supermarket. Viverra is located among the house brands, and they are in a different aisle than the products from the vegetarian butcher. That aisle is almost never on my route in the supermarket, so it ensures that I come into contact with Viverra products more often, and I actually put them in my shopping basket." (Interviewee 1)

"I trust the supermarket when it comes to its sustainability claims, especially since the product is placed in the sustainable products section." (Interviewee 2)

"I think that the position of the products in the supermarket also plays a role in influencing your choice because it seems more reliable to me if they positioned it in a certain aisle." (Interviewee 5)

In summary, the cognitive trust in Viverra's sustainable products develops as customers engage in detailed information processing about the products' sustainable attributes, including ingredient origins, ecological footprint, and added nutrients. Recognized certifications, such as the Nutri-Score and 100% plant-based stickers, significantly influence customers' trust by evidencing Viverra's commitment to sustainability. Additionally, visual cues like green labels and strategic product placement in supermarkets enhance the perceived reliability and authenticity of Viverra's offerings. The emphasis on detailed information, certifications, and the visual cues created by the supermarket highlights the multifaceted factors that influence the development of cognitive trust in sustainable products.

4.1.2. Affective trust: In-depth analysis of the sustainable products of Viverra

In the affective-based dimension of trust, customers create emotional or subjective aspects of trust that involve feelings, sentiments, and personal connections related to the sustainable product. The findings underscore that value alignment creates an emotional connection. The interviewed participants highlighted the emotional connection they felt with their own commitment to sustainability, ethical consumption, and the sustainable production of Viverra. It is founded that affective trust in Viverra's

sustainable meat substitutes is created when there is a strong alignment of values between the brand and their personal beliefs.

"I feel good about choosing Vivera because I believe I'm contributing to the environment and avoiding causing harm to animals." (Interviewee 5)

"Overall, it did give me a good feeling that I consciously chose a sustainable product instead of opting for non-sustainable steaks. I also choose sustainable meat substitutes because I am not comfortable with animal suffering." (Interviewee 2)

"I find it inefficient to use a significant portion of the world to cultivate food, then give that food to an animal that also requires land, only to consume the animal later. In my opinion, the most efficient step is to stop eating meat, and if more people do that, it can have a huge impact on the world." (Interviewee 2)

These value alignments contributed significantly to the affective trust the interviewed customers placed in Vivera. Furthermore, interviewees shared stories of positive experiences with Vivera products, such as enjoying the taste and quality of Vivera's meat substitutes. These positive experiences played a crucial role in affection for the products and contributed to affective trust.

"Taste is the most significant factor for me when it comes to building trust in sustainable products." (Interviewee 2)

"I've had Vivera's sustainable products many times before, and the taste is excellent. So, why would I choose another, more expensive brand?" (Interviewee 4)

"The sustainable products from Vivera have impressed me because they taste good, and I have the impression that they continue to improve. In my opinion, this also makes the product much more appealing." (Interviewee 1)

"The delicious taste of Vivera ultimately had a significant impact on my trust in these products. Assurance is also an important factor since I already knew that it tastes good and is of good quality." (Interviewee 5)

The last finding that contributed to the development of affective-based trust among customers of Vivera was the emotional impact of packaging and presentation. The interviewees indicated that the packaging, and overall product presentation influenced affective trust.

"My trust is highly influenced by the packaging; if something looks good and is well-designed with fresh colours, I am more inclined to trust it. For example, I find Garden Gourmet to look very unpleasant, so I wouldn't trust it easily." (Interviewee 2)

"I think the packaging and the way it's presented also play an important role because it can make you think, 'Well, that must be healthier than a regular piece of meat.'" (Interviewee 5)

The interviewees mentioned that the packaging is a crucial factor that contributes to their affective trust in the sustainable products of Vivera. So, attention to these details contributed to an emotional connection and created a higher level of affective trust.

"I trusted the sustainable product from Vivera because it was in the vegetarian section, and I found the packaging to look professionally appealing. If the packaging doesn't look cheap, I am less likely to be suspicious and tend to trust the products more easily." (Interviewee 2)

"The packaging of Vivera looks good too, and the eye wants something pleasing, of course." (Interviewee 4)

These qualitative findings show that affective-based trust in Vivera's sustainable products is built through emotional connections resulting from value alignment with customers' personal beliefs about sustainability and ethical consumption. Positive experiences with the taste and quality of Vivera's sustainable products significantly enhance this trust, as customers feel reassured and satisfied. Additionally, attractive packaging and professional presentation further influence affective trust by creating a positive emotional impact and enhancing the perceived quality of the products. These key factors collectively contribute to a stronger and deeper emotional connection between customers and Vivera's sustainable offerings.

4.1.3. Behavioral trust: In-depth analysis of the sustainable products of Vivera

In the behavioral dimension of trust, customers' observable actions and behaviors, such as repeat purchase decisions and brand loyalty, are influencing factors for the development of behavioral trust. The interviewees consistently engage in repeat purchases of Vivera's sustainable products based on positive taste experiences, the positive brand reputation, and the high product quality. The interviewees actively choose Vivera over more expensive brands because they are driven by a perceived combination of quality and reliability.

"I genuinely find the products from Vivera very tasty, and I buy them more and more often."

(Interviewee 2)

"The Vivera product stood out because it looks like a high-quality product but is not immediately the most expensive sustainable option on the shelf." (Interviewee 2)

"I have the idea that the market for sustainable meat substitutes is quite saturated, and the more expensive brands benefit from this. That is why I choose a simpler, less expensive, yet qualitatively strong option like Vivera. Also, the positive brand reputation is another reason for me to choose Vivera's sustainable products." (Interviewee 4)

Furthermore, a contradiction was found in the use of recommendations. Some of the interviewees frequently recommend Vivera's sustainable products to their social circles. Personal positive experiences serve as a reason for customers to share their trust in Vivera with family and friends. By recommending sustainable products, it is shown as a behavioral demonstration of trust. While others indicated that they do not feel the need to recommend the sustainable products of Vivera to others.

"I have offered the sustainable products from Vivera to family or friends who come over for a meal, and I've cooked Vivera products for them. I recommend them to others!" (Interviewee 2)

"I have recommended Vivera's sustainable products to people in my circle. As a result, several of my friends have started eating meat substitutes more frequently." (Interviewee 5)

"I have also recommended Vivera products to family and friends because I trust them a lot, based on my own positive experiences. Unconsciously, I do think that I recommend Vivera's sustainable products more often." (Interviewee 4)

"I'm not sure if I specifically recommended sustainable products from Vivera to others, I don't think so, because I don't feel the need to bring it up in a conversation" (Interviewee 1)

The last finding that contributed to the development of behavioral trust among customers of Vivera, an often-mentioned variable, is the sensitivity to promotions. The interviewees show behavioral trust by being attracted to promotions and discounts that are offered by Vivera or the supermarket, such as "buy one, get one free." One interviewee did not mention anything about the price promotions, while other interviewees mentioned it as an important influencing factor.

"Another factor that has influenced my consideration of Vivera products, besides being a meat substitute and sustainable, is the promotions. For example, if there are price offers or discounts, it really influences me to choose a particular Vivera product, like a buy one gets one free offer." (Interviewee 1)

"During the finalization of my purchasing decision, promotions also play a significant role. If the sustainable products from Vivera are on a buy one gets one free offer, I am even more inclined to buy them." (Interviewee 2)

"At the beginning, there were few meat substitutes, but I eventually came into contact with Vivera's sustainable products through various price promotions. I think that unconsciously, Vivera's sustainable products caught my attention due to the good prices and promotions, which sparked my interest in Vivera." (Interviewee 4)

"...I'm also very sensitive to promotions from Vivera, like buy one get one free." (Interviewee 4)

So, based on the qualitative findings of Vivera, it can be stated that promotional strategies from Vivera or supermarkets contribute to an increase in behavioral trust, customer engagement, and the impact on

purchasing decisions. These findings show that positive taste experiences, brand reputation, and perceived product quality drive repeat purchases. Additionally, recommendations and sensitivity to promotions emerge as key factors influencing behavioral trust. Together, these elements contribute to the long-term relationship between customers and the sustainable products of Vivera.

4.2. The evolution of trust: insights from the customer journey with Donskussen

In the awareness phase, trust begins to evolve as customers become aware of sustainable products and brands, such as Donskussen, through various channels, including word of mouth, and online channels. It is founded that word of mouth plays a crucial role in catching customers' attention and influencing their initial perceptions of the trustworthiness of sustainable down pillows. Multiple interviewees mentioned word of mouth, often through referrals and recommendations from friends, as the primary reason why they became aware of the sustainable down pillow options from Donskussen.nl.

*"The first time I became aware of the sustainable pillow from Donskussen.nl was two years ago, actually through a referral, so it kind of came to my attention through word of mouth."
(Interviewee 7)*

"Well, I have to be honest and say that I ended up at Donskussen.nl through word of mouth. A friend of mine had ordered here before, and at some point, I also needed new pillows, so that's why." (Interviewee 8)

It is noteworthy that one interviewee became aware of Donskussen through an online advertisement.

"I worked at JYSK for 4 and a half years, so I was already familiar with sustainable down pillows. I came across the Donskussen website through a Facebook advertisement or somewhere else online. I don't remember exactly which platform." (Interviewee 6)

This finding suggests that one interviewee became aware of Donskussen through an online channel, while other channels such as word of mouth played a more significant role in the awareness phase. Personal recommendations from trusted individuals significantly influence the awareness of customers about the sustainable down pillows of Donskussen. Among the observed dimensions of trust, cognitive trust emerges as the most significant during the awareness phase. Through word of mouth, it creates a

cognitive sense of trust, reliability, and credibility around the product based on shared positive experiences. The customers gather information on the website of Donskussen about the sustainable product and its attributes. They begin to form cognitive trust by recognizing the brand's commitment to sustainability and by rationally evaluating the product information.

Looking at the consideration phase, customers compare different options and product attributes, such as transparency of product information, quality, price, and sustainability certifications, to determine the trustworthiness of the sustainable down pillow. During this phase, customers weigh the trade-offs between different offerings and prioritize product attributes that align with their values and preferences. Cognitive trust continues to play a significant role as customers gather the reliability and credibility of the information provided by the website of Donskussen to determine its trustworthiness. One interviewee mentioned that because of the transparency of Donskussen through informational videos, he considered it a potential choice and trusted it more.

"The informational videos also contributed to my trust in the information provided."

(Interviewee 6)

Affective-based trust is present in the consideration phase as it emerges from personal values. Customers develop preferences based on their personal values. For instance, multiple interviewees expressed strong personal values regarding locally produced down pillows. This aspect significantly influenced their trust in Donskussen.

Furthermore, the evaluation phase, in which the customers of Donskussen analyze the credibility and reliability of Donskussen's sustainable down pillows. In this phase, the customers assess the performance, comfort, and durability of the sustainable down pillows, which contribute to their perceptions of trustworthiness. This reflects their cognitive trust in their decision-making process. The interviewees mentioned that the already existing reviews on the website of Donskussen play a significant role in evaluating the sustainable down pillow to process the factual information provided by other customers.

"The reviews, certificates, and photos of the sustainable pillows are factors I assess for the reliability of the website." (Interviewee 8)

Moreover, customers also evaluate the warranties before purchasing the sustainable down pillow. A warranty provides a form of insurance against the risk of product failure and reflects the confidence of Donskussen in the quality and durability of their products. The warranty serves as a crucial factor to be analyzed in the evaluation phase that influences customers' perceptions of the sustainable product's reliability.

"...And I noticed that I had a 5-year warranty, so that was also an important factor for me." (Interviewee 8)

In summary, the evaluation phase represents a critical stage in the customer journey where customers assess their considerations, analyze the credibility and reliability of the sustainable product, look at product specifications, and make reviews.

As customers progress into the purchase phase, trust emerges across multiple dimensions when the customers actively engage in the transactional process. Cognitive trust comes into play when customers assess the ease of the ordering process, the availability of the sustainable pillow, and the flexible delivery options. Customers finalize their choice and proceed to complete the transactional process. By committing to the purchase and buying it, customers demonstrate behavioral trust in Donskussen's ability to deliver on their promises and meet their expectations regarding high quality and service. When trying to complete the purchase, Donskussen tries to influence the behavioral trust of the customer even more by offering a sustainable cotton case variant as well.

"I also have one pillow in my range where customers, during and after the purchase process, have the option to buy that pillow with a sustainable cotton variant case. Approximately 10% of people actually choose the sustainable option." (Interviewee 3)

This trust indicator can increase customers confidence in the sustainability and integrity of the products. It also shows the commitment of Donskussen to sustainability and can create stronger relationships with

environmentally conscious customers. As customers finalize their decisions, these dimensions of trust show up and influence future purchasing behaviors.

In the post-purchase phase, the behavioral dimension of trust is most present. Customers assess whether Donskussen fulfils its promises regarding product quality, delivery, and customer service. The interviewees mentioned a positive post-purchase experience, including timely delivery, which reinforces the customers' behavioral trust in Donskussen and strengthens their confidence in future repeat purchases.

"...Ultimately, it was also delivered the next day, so that was great." (Interviewee 8)

According to the owner of Donskussen, repeat purchases are another factor that shows behavioral trust among customers in the sustainable down pillows because of positive post-purchase experiences. The interviewees did not mention this as applicable to their experiences. This emerges from the fact that they have possessed the sustainable down pillows for only a limited duration, typically one to two years.

Furthermore, in the post-purchase phase, emotional dimensions continue to shape trust as customers reflect on their experiences. Affective trust remains influential as customers assess their post-purchase experiences.

"I look back on my purchase with a positive feeling. I got something I wanted, and a nice bonus is that it's sustainable too." (Interviewee 6)

They find fulfilment in contributing to sustainable down and supporting local businesses that produce their products locally. These emotional connections give strength to their trust in Donskussen.

The final factor that shows behavioral trust are recommendations and reviews from satisfied customers. When satisfied customers recommend Donskussen's products to others, more people become aware of them, the brand's reputation will be boosted, and potential buyers will trust the products more. Although none of the interviewees wrote reviews on the website of Donskussen, it is shown that a substantial number of customers actively engage in the review-writing process. This active participation in reviewing serves as an indicator of behavioral trust. In the post-purchase phase, the interplay of

emotional satisfaction, fulfilment of promises, repeat purchases, recommendations, and reviews contributes to the development of trust in Donskussen among both existing and potential customers.

The qualitative findings highlight the multi-dimensional development of trust in Donskussen's sustainable down pillows across different customer journey phases. In the awareness phase, word of mouth significantly influences initial perceptions, fostering cognitive trust. During the consideration and evaluation phases, customers rely on transparent product information, reviews, and warranties to assess credibility and align with their values, which contribute to cognitive and affective trust. Finally, in the purchase and post-purchase phases, positive transactional experiences, timely delivery, and the option for sustainable variants enhance behavioral trust, leading to repeat purchases and recommendations that reinforce long-term customer loyalty and trust in the brand.

4.2.1. Cognitive trust: In-depth analysis of the sustainable product of Donskussen

Based on the findings, customers trust the sustainability and ethical aspects of Donskussen.nl based on several factors. The first factor that influences the customers cognitive trust is the website and the clear information that is provided on it. This information is about how the pillows are made, which helps customers understand the product better.

"Through the information about the down pillow, I became aware that it is a natural product, but that it can be harvested in an animal-friendly way. The informational videos also contribute to my trust in the information provided." (Interviewee 6)

The presence of information about the product and the promoted reliability of the product are created by the owner through landing pages. This gives the customers clear information and advice about the sustainable pillow, which ultimately contributes to their cognitive trust.

"I try to create an impression for the customer by using landing pages, where I aim to promote the reliability and the product itself through information and advice on sustainable pillows. Through the phone and reviews, I hear and see that people appreciate this information and reliability from the landing pages, which increases their trust." (Interviewee 3)

Furthermore, the presence of certifications like DOWNPASS and partnerships with reputable institutions like TÜV adds credibility to the sustainability claims.

"I also work with a specific German certification institute, TÜV, for certain more expensive down pillows. They check the quality and assess if it is environmentally responsible. In my opinion, and according to the numbers, this certainly contributes to consumer confidence and reliability." (Interviewee 3)

To check how valuable certifications are for the interviewees, I asked them whether they make a difference. Multiple interviewees stated that the certifications significantly contributed to their cognitive trust in the sustainable products of Donskussen.nl. When customers compare the sustainable pillows from Donskussen.nl with other options on the market, they consider reviews and certifications. It helps build trust in Donskussen.nl as a reliable source for sustainable down pillows.

"It is indeed important for me to look at certifications, I don't exactly know their names, but I trust that they ensure ethical sourcing methods. I also look for certain logos or stickers that indicate responsible production." (Interviewee 6)

"The reviews, certificates, and photos of the sustainable pillows are factors I assess for the reliability of the website." (Interviewee 8)

"In addition to the sustainable production methods, the certificates displayed on the website's products also play an important role in considering the down pillow. This provides a sort of evidence that it is of high quality and therefore sustainable. It does create trust for me." (Interviewee 7)

Based on the findings in this thesis, combined with the already founded findings of the company itself through an A/B test, it is stated that certifications contribute to the customers cognitive trust in the sustainable pillows of Donskussen.nl.

"On every page, I provide information about sustainability, DOWNPASS certification, and the longer lifespan and recyclability of the product. This has garnered a lot of customer

appreciation and attention, as I tested this with an A/B test. The A/B test revealed that the variant with sustainability performed significantly better than the version without. In the sustainable version, there was ultimately a 15% increase in sales compared to the other." (Interviewee 3)

"Well, it mainly comes down to comparing the other options. So, I compared various sustainable down pillows from other providers as well. I also checked the reviews from previous customers to ultimately choose a down pillow from donskussen.nl. I think unconsciously, the certificates at Donskussen.nl might have been the deciding factor. That might have been the final push for me." (Interviewee 7)

Furthermore, transparency in the provided information about the sustainable pillow is another factor that contributes to cognitive trust among customers. Multiple interviewees stated that they found the transparent information about the production process being locally produced a crucial element in trusting it.

"I do find it important that the down pillows are locally produced. If someone is from the region and earns their living from it, while it is sustainably produced in the Netherlands instead of some big company from abroad, then I consider that a big plus in that regard. I would give them a bit more preference." (Interviewee 6)

"The fact that the pillow was locally produced wasn't a significant factor for me, but rather an extra bonus. I am purchasing a qualitatively strong pillow while also considering sustainability. This wasn't my original preference, but it's a nice addition." (Interviewee 8)

"Yes, that's right. I generally like local products. Especially after the pandemic, local businesses have had a tough time, so I prefer to support local businesses like Donskussen.nl." (Interviewee 7)

The last two founded factors that influence the cognitive trust of customers are the price of the sustainable down pillows and the quality. Some of the interviewees mentioned that they are willing to pay a higher price when the quality is better and more sustainable. The interviewees evaluated the quality of a down pillow from Donskussen based on factors such as durability, performance, reliability, and

overall trust. While the price of the down pillow influences the cognitive trust of the interviewees by providing them with cues about the perceived value, quality, and affordability of the product. The interviewees mentioned that the down pillows at Donskussen offered good value for their money, so they were willing to pay more. So, there is a clear relationship between the price and quality of a down pillow and the development of cognitive trust among customers.

"For pillows, I prioritize quality over quantity. I often feel that with these kinds of products, buying cheap ends up being expensive in the long run. In my opinion, Donskussen pillows are ones that last longer. So no, I don't mind paying more if I know it's good quality." (Interviewee 7)

"I do expect good quality for a slightly higher price. So, I am definitely willing to pay a bit more for better quality." (Interviewee 8)

"Of course, the price is also a very important factor. For the price I paid, I expect good, animal-friendly quality. Furthermore, you sleep on it every night, so I want to have the best product with good down in it." (Interviewee 6)

"I don't think the final collected information about the sustainable pillow has been decisive in my purchase. I believe the price and what the product entails, such as whether it meets my needs, if the pillow is high and thick enough, and what type of pillow it is, are more influential factors. Ultimately, the sustainable aspect may unconsciously contribute to my final decision in choosing a pillow." (Interviewee 6)

In summary, customers' cognitive trust in Donskussen's sustainable down pillows is significantly influenced by clear and detailed information on the website, credible certifications like DOWNPASS, and transparency in the production process. Word of mouth and positive reviews also play crucial roles in building initial awareness and trust. Additionally, the local production of pillows and a favorable price-to-quality ratio further enhance trust. These factors collectively influence the customers' cognitive trust in Donskussen's sustainable products.

4.2.2. Affective trust: In-depth analysis of the sustainable product of Donskussen.

The findings highlight the complex interplay between emotional responses in online purchases and the importance of reliability and personal values in creating affective trust among customers. While online purchases may limit the visibility of immediate emotional responses, customers still have emotional engagement and attachment to sustainable down pillows. Through various channels, including the filled-in feedback forms that are sent by Donskussen after purchase and written reviews, customers show emotional responses that show their affective trust development.

"Through the phone and reviews, I hear and see that people appreciate this information and reliability from the landing pages, which increases their trust." (Interviewee 3)

"Through telephone contact and reviews, a lot of appreciation is expressed for the information and reliability of the sustainable pillows." (Interviewee 3)

"Every customer receives a questionnaire two weeks after purchase, asking if the product is satisfactory and fits their needs regarding good sleep. They have the opportunity to provide feedback on both positive aspects and areas for improvement. I strive to improve the product and the accompanying information based on the feedback provided by customers." (Interviewee 3)

Besides the reviews, during the interviews, it was shown that the influence of personal values also had a significant impact on the affective trust of the sustainable down pillow of Donskussen. Personal values, such as concerns for animal welfare and being locally produced, play an important role in influencing affective trust among the interviewees in the values of Donskussen.

"I look back on my purchase with a positive feeling. I got something I wanted, and a nice bonus is that it is sustainable too. It was an extra bonus for me that the pillow is also harvested in an animal-friendly way." (Interviewee 6)

"No, I didn't necessarily have a specific emotion when becoming aware of the down pillow. I think that's difficult online anyway, but I did find it a unique concept that it's locally produced, and that consideration is given to the lifestyle of the ducks and geese." (Interviewee 7)

"It sleeps very comfortably, so that gives me a good feeling. But I did not really feel any particular emotion during the purchasing process or the delivery. The gathered information and my friend's recommendation, of course, do give a sense of trust and satisfaction." (Interviewee 8)

Furthermore, positive emotions are triggered by factors such as reassurance from the five-year warranty and 90-night trial period. One interviewee mentioned that he found it very reassuring to know that he has a five-year warranty. Another interviewee, the owner of Donskussen, tries to create affective trust by increasing the factory warranty by three years to create a five-year warranty for the customers.

"The down pillows from me have a 2-year factory warranty, and I personally provide a 5-year guarantee to give the customer some extra trust." (Interviewee 3)

This shows the commitment of Donskussen to customer satisfaction and reassurance. By offering an extended warranty period, Donskussen demonstrates its confidence in the quality of its sustainable products. This creates a development of affective trust among customers in the sustainable down pillow from Donskussen, as the customers feel secure and create positive emotions.

"Furthermore, I found it very reassuring to read that I have a 5-year warranty and that I can return the pillow free of charge within 90 nights of receipt." (Interviewee 6)

"...And I noticed that I had a 5-year warranty, so that was also an important factor for me." (Interviewee 8)

The last finding that contributed to the development of affective-based trust among customers of Donskussen is the emotional impact of a smooth ordering process, fast delivery, and high-quality customer service. One interviewee indicated that he valued the fast delivery of his sustainable down pillow. Another interviewee takes fast delivery for granted and sees it as less valuable because he feels that all web shop delivery services are quick.

"I also found the fast service very pleasant, as everyone nowadays prefers 'order today, delivered yesterday' if possible. And Donskussen delivers very quickly." (Interviewee 7)

"In general, nowadays almost all web shops offer delivery services, so I'm not too concerned about the quality of delivery service." (Interviewee 6)

"The purchasing process on the website went smoothly; I could navigate through the site easily. Ultimately, it was also delivered the next day, so that was great." (Interviewee 8)

In summary, the findings highlight the complex interplay between emotional responses and the importance of reliability and personal values in creating affective trust among customers of Donskussen's sustainable down pillows. Customers develop emotional trust through positive feedback, personal values, and assurances like extended warranties and trial periods. Emotional responses to a smooth ordering process, reliability, and personal values emerge as key factors influencing affective trust. Together, they contribute to a deeper emotional connection and satisfaction with Donskussen's sustainable products.

4.2.3. Behavioral trust: In-depth analysis of the sustainable product of Donskussen.

The interviewees consistently engage in repeat purchases of Donskussen's sustainable down pillows based on positive experiences, trust in Donskussen, and high product quality. The interviewees actively choose Donskussen over other brands, such as Cloudpillo, because they are driven by a perceived combination of quality and reliability.

"I notice that many customers come back, that after 3 or 4 years, they order a new sustainable down pillow again." (Interviewee 3)

The development of behavioral trust, as evidenced by repeat purchases, shows a significant level of trust and satisfaction among customers with Donskussen's sustainable down pillows. Reliability, brand loyalty, and positive experiences are several key aspects that contribute to the repeat purchases made by customers.

"I find the pillow comfortable to sleep on..." (Interviewee 6)

"Yes, indeed, I am very satisfied. I sleep well on it..." (Interviewee 8)

Furthermore, the reviews that are already written on the website of Donskussen and the demonstrated observations of the reviews are seen as a developmental form of behavioral trust. All interviewees mentioned that they actively check the reviews on Donskussen.nl. When reading the reviews and witnessing the positive experiences of others, this contributed to the interviewees' trust in the reliability and performance of Donskussen's sustainable down pillows. This ultimately led to behavioral actions, such as making a purchase.

"If there aren't too many negative reviews, then I trust it more quickly as well and I will decide to buy it." (Interviewee 6)

"I always take a look at the reviews to gain a bit of extra trust, especially with positive ratings." (Interviewee 7)

"I find reviews very important in trusting a product. If a company has bad reviews, for example, about delivery or issues with returns, then I have no desire to make my purchases there." (Interviewee 8)

Reviews serve as a behavioral indicator that customers not only trust the company but are also willing to recommend it to others, thereby influencing potential buyers' decisions. This demonstrates the customer's belief in the quality and reliability of Donskussen's products and services. All interviewees were influenced by the reviews on the website of Donskussen, so it significantly contributed to their behavioral trust.

Furthermore, a contradiction was found in the use of recommendations. Some interviewees do not recommend the sustainable down pillows of Donskussen to others. While others indicated that they do recommend it to their social circles. Personal positive experiences serve as a reason for customers to share their trust in Donskussen with family and friends. By recommending sustainable products, it is shown as a behavioral demonstration of trust.

"I haven't recommended the sustainable down pillows to others since I don't usually engage in conversations with people about pillows." (Interviewee 8)

"I haven't actively recommended it to others. But I don't necessarily see it as something to bring up in conversation with someone since you often order your pillow online." (Interviewee 6)

"Yes, coincidentally, I recommended it to my in-laws who were also considering buying a down pillow. Whether they actually purchased it, I can't say." (Interviewee 7)

In summary, the qualitative findings demonstrate that reliability and positive reviews significantly contribute to behavioral trust and customer engagement with Donskussen's sustainable down pillows. Interviewees consistently choose Donskussen over other brands and engage in repeat purchases due to their positive experiences and trust in the product's quality. Furthermore, reviews play a crucial role in building trust, as customers actively check them before making purchasing decisions. While some customers do not actively recommend the pillows to others, the positive experiences of others still influence their trust and purchasing decisions. So, repeat purchases, reviews, and recommendations emerge as key factors influencing behavioral trust. Together, they contribute to the long-term relationship between customers and the sustainable products of Donskussen.

5. Discussion

This thesis makes a theoretical contribution by delving into the process of trust development among customers along the customer journey of sustainable products. Through an analysis of two cases and multiple phases of the customer journey, this study addresses the central research question: "How does trust develop among customers along the customer journey of sustainable products?" The findings presented in this thesis show the development of trust among customers along the customer journey of sustainable products, specifically focusing on Vivera's sustainable meat substitutes and Donskussen's sustainable down pillows. By analyzing the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of trust through the phases of the customer journey, this thesis provides insights into the multifaceted determinants that influence trust development in sustainable products. In comparison to existing literature, this thesis stands out for its exploration of trust across multiple dimensions. Usually, traditional research is divided and looked at separately into cognitive, affective, or behavioral categories. However, this thesis brings together these dimensions, acknowledging how they're connected and how

they affect each other in shaping perceptions of trust. This approach aligns with foundational works such as Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, which suggests that trust, as a fundamental social need, is closely linked with higher-level cognitive and affective processes. Furthermore, through empirical analysis, this thesis identifies crucial determinants that shape trust development, including transparency, certifications, emotional resonance, and customer experiences. These determinants not only contribute to the improvement of theoretical models that clarify the formation of trust in sustainable product consumption but also provide insights for theoretical frameworks for understanding why customers trust certain sustainable products and offer practical implications for companies aiming to build trust with their customers.

The findings from Vivera's meat substitutes and Donskussen's sustainable down pillows show the multifaceted nature of trust development along the customer journey of sustainable products. Through an analysis of trust dimensions (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) and trust determinants (product information, transparency, pricing, quality, etc.), several key findings were shown. Firstly, within the cognitive dimension of trust, customers engage in information processing to understand the sustainable attributes of products. Jermittiparsert et al. (2019) stated that the role of transparency is crucial in building trust and provided foundational insights into this aspect. However, by extending this literature through interviews conducted in this thesis, it was found that, besides product transparency, factors such as certifications and visual cues play significant roles in building cognitive trust. For Vivera, certifications such as the Nutri-Score and plant-based labels contribute significantly to cognitive trust, indicating the brand's commitment to sustainability and contributing to customers' trust in the product's reliability. Similarly, for Donskussen, certifications like DOWNPASS and partnerships with certificate institutions like TÜV enhance cognitive trust among customers by providing evidence of sustainability claims. Moreover, the transparency of information regarding production processes and origins contributes to the development of customer trust in sustainable products and aligns with the theoretical framework that shows the importance of transparent communication in cognitive trust formation.

Secondly, the exploration of affective trust similarly builds upon established research on emotional connections and value alignment between customers and brands. Building on works by Johnson &

Grayson (2005), this thesis shows how determinants such as customers' personal beliefs regarding sustainability and social consumption influence their affective trust in products. Based on the interviews, it became clear that affective trust is stimulated through emotional connections and personal experiences with products and brands. Vivera customers demonstrate affective trust when their personal values align with the brand's sustainability mission, taste or quality satisfaction, and the emotional impact of packaging. This highlights the role of determinants in building emotional connections. Similarly, Donskussen customers develop affective trust through positive experiences such as smooth ordering processes, fast delivery, and high-quality customer service, which shows the importance of these determinants. So, this thesis delves deeper into the emotional dimensions of sustainable product consumption.

In the behavioral dimension, Lewis & Weigert (1985) emphasize the significance of observable behaviors in building trust, as demonstrated through actions and responses. Building upon this foundation, this thesis contributes to this understanding by showing that observable actions such as repeat purchases, recommendations, and responsiveness to promotions reflect customers' trust in the brand. The findings of this thesis suggest that factors such as positive experiences on the website, reliability, recommendations, and reviews influence behavioral trust and create customer engagement and loyalty. This follows Thakur (2018), who found out that online review intention and satisfaction have a positive effect on customer trust in products. This thesis contributes to this by demonstrating that both Vivera and Donskussen customers show behavioral trust by actively choosing the brands based on positive experiences, brand reputation, and perceived quality. The influence of positive reviews and recommendations and responsiveness to promotions serve as observable expressions of behavioral trust in sustainable products.

Furthermore, the exploration of trust development along the customer journey for sustainable products like Vivera's meat substitutes and Donskussen's sustainable down pillows shows interactions between various dimensions of trust. For Vivera, the awareness phase is characterized by promotional efforts and word of mouth as key drivers of customer awareness. Packaging, labeling, and promotional strategies such as price promotions and strategic product placement in supermarkets contribute to raising

awareness about Vivera's sustainable products. Additionally, word of mouth, formed by positive experiences and recommendations from friends and family, serves as a significant influence in shaping customer trust. For Donskussen, the awareness phase is also influenced by word of mouth combined with the transparency of information on the website. Cognitive trust emerges in this phase as customers gather information from multiple sources, including the Donskussen website, to form judgements about the brand's commitment to sustainability and product reliability.

Moving into the consideration phase, for Vivera, customers engage in a consideration of various factors, including pricing, product presentation, ingredient transparency, and certifications. Cognitive trust evolves as customers gather and analyze information, forming judgements about Vivera's trustworthiness based on factual information provided (Goldsmith et al., 2000). Affective-based trust emerges when customers create a positive feeling when their personal values, such as animal welfare and environmental sustainability, align with the values of Vivera. Looking at the consideration phase for Donskussen, customers engage in a consideration of product attributes, including transparency of information, quality and sustainability certifications, and partnerships. Cognitive trust remains central as customers prioritize attributes aligned with their values and preferences, while affective-based trust emerges from these personal values and emotional connections that align with Donskussen.

Transitioning to the evaluation phase, customers of Vivera and Donskussen assess the credibility and reliability of products through comparative analysis, online reviews, warranties, and certifications. For Vivera, behavioral trust becomes significant as customers observe and experience the products, influencing their purchasing decisions based on product characteristics. While for Donskussen, the availability of warranties serves as a form of assurance to increase customers trust in the product's quality and durability in the evaluation phase.

As customers progress into the purchase phase, cognitive trust guides decisions related to pricing, promotions, and product value. While behavioral trust is shown through influencing decisions based on promotions and discounts to influence the customer. For Donskussen, it is also a combination of cognitive and behavioral trust in the purchase phase. Cognitive trust guides decisions related to the ordering process, product availability, and delivery options, while behavioral trust manifests as

customers complete transactions and put trust in Donskussen's ability to deliver the product and meet their expectations. Additionally, the option of giving a sustainable cotton case variant as well further reinforces behavioral trust by offering sustainable alternatives.

Looking at the last customer journey phase, the post-purchase phase, in both cases, customers reflect on their experiences and continue to shape affective-related trust. For Vivera, affective trust remains influential as customers find joy and fulfilment in contributing to environmental conservation or animal welfare, which strengthens their emotional connection to Vivera (Dick, 1994). Compared to Donskussen, where behavioral trust is also influential as customers assess their experiences regarding product quality, delivery, and customer service. Emotional dimensions continue to shape trust as customers reflect on their experiences, while recommendations and reviews from those satisfied customers contribute to the reputation and trustworthiness of Donskussen.

Furthermore, customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in shaping trust dynamics along the customer journey for sustainable products. Customer satisfaction is not only an outcome of trust but also a contributing factor to its development. When customers are satisfied with their experiences, based on the quality of the product or the transparency of the brand, it reinforces their trust in the brand's commitment to sustainability and social practices. Several studies support the relationship between customer satisfaction and trust. For instance, satisfaction can be seen as a predictor of trust and loyalty, which suggests that positive experiences lead to higher trust and repeat purchases (Oliver, 1999). The positive experiences of the customers with the product quality, eco-friendly packaging, and way of producing enhance their trust in Vivera and Donskussen commitment to sustainability.

Overall, the findings from both cases underscore the complex interplay between trust dimensions, determinants, and customer behaviors in shaping trust along different phases of the customer journey of sustainable products. By aligning with the theoretical framework and empirical evidence, which can be found in figure 4 in appendix e, these insights provide valuable insights for businesses aiming to create trust and long-term relationships with customers. Moreover, customer satisfaction is strongly linked to loyalty and positive word-of-mouth. Satisfied customers are more likely to repeat their purchases at Vivera and Donskussen over competitors. Loyalty is a combination of trust, satisfaction, and perceived

value, where customers feel emotionally connected to the brand and its offerings. In the case of Donskussen and Vivera, loyal customers may recommend them to friends and family. Positive word-of-mouth, which is also influenced by customer satisfaction, serves as a powerful driver of brand reputation. Satisfied customers are more likely to share their positive experiences with others in the form of recommendations. These recommendations, through personal conversations, social media, or online reviews, can significantly influence the purchasing decisions of potential customers. Therefore, within the framework of trust development along the customer journey of sustainable products, customer satisfaction emerges as a crucial outcome factor. It not only reflects the effectiveness of the brand's efforts in meeting customer expectations but also creates trust, satisfaction, loyalty, positive word of mouth, and contributes to the long-term success of sustainable businesses. By creating high levels of customer satisfaction, brands like Vivera and Donskussen can further create trust among customers, driving positive word-of-mouth, repeat purchases, and sustainable growth in the market.

Besides the theoretical contributions, there are the practical contributions to this thesis, which are twofold. Firstly, it provides actionable guidance for sustainable businesses operating in the sustainable products sector. By highlighting the significance of transparent communication, quality assurance, and customer-service approaches, this study offers insights for firms such as Vivera and Donskussen to create trust among their customers and foster brand loyalty. Secondly, this thesis presents strategic differentiation opportunities for practitioners. By understanding the multifaceted nature of trust and its crucial role in customer behavior, businesses can strategically position themselves in the competitive market for sustainable products. By aligning their strategies with customer values, addressing their concerns, and delivering excellent experiences, businesses like Vivera and Donskussen can strengthen their trust with customers, which creates a competitive advantage. Additionally, the insights collected from this thesis can be used for marketing strategies to promote trust and sustainability. Leveraging certifications, transparent communication, emotional resonance, and positive customer experiences can enable businesses to effectively connect with customers' trust-related needs and preferences, thereby enhancing brand credibility and fostering long-term customer relationships.

In summary, this thesis presents theoretical advancements in understanding trust dynamics and offers actionable implications for practitioners seeking to increase trust and thrive in the sustainable products market. This thesis offers insights to drive strategic decision-making and makes it easier for sustainable businesses to grow.

5.1. Limitations

While this thesis tries to understand the evolution of trust development along the customer's journey of sustainable products, several limitations should be acknowledged. These limitations may impact the internal and external validity of this thesis. In this thesis, semi-structured interviews are used to collect data. A limitation of this approach is that it only collects data on the intentions of the customers and not their actual behavior through, for example, experiments or a longitudinal study, which is a direction for future research. Furthermore, the findings of this study may be contextually specific to the cases and industries that are being investigated. The external validity with which findings can be generalized beyond the studied cases may be limited. It is likely that variations may exist in different industries and customer behaviors. Another limitation is that the purposeful sampling method may not fully capture the diversity of sustainable product customers. It is possible that there are aspects of sustainable product consumption that are not covered by the selected cases. Internal validity can be caused by the interpretation of qualitative data that can be seen as subjective, or the perspectives of the researcher may influence the analysis. Despite the efforts to maintain transparency during this thesis, the potential for researcher bias exists.

5.2. Future research directions

To address the identified limitations and to further contribute to the understanding of trust development in sustainable product consumption, future research is necessary and should include the following directions: The first one is exploration in diverse industries. Future research should investigate trust development in sustainable products across different industries to increase external validity.

Another direction that future research should address is quantitative research. By using quantitative methods, the qualitative findings should be validated, which contributes to a better understanding of this thesis. Furthermore, the last future research direction is a longer timeframe. Capturing the evolution of

trust in sustainable products over a longer period, or through experiments, can result in deeper insights, validation of findings, and significant contributions to knowledge.

6. Conclusion

The findings reveal that trust development is a multifaceted and dynamic process influenced by various factors and interactions. Trust emerges as a multifaceted construct shaped by cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. By acknowledging how these cognitive, affective, and behavioral factors interact and influence each other, this thesis adds depth to our understanding of customer behavior and trust dynamics. Within the cognitive dimension, customers gather and process information about product attributes, transparency, certifications, and brand reputation to form judgements about the trustworthiness of sustainable products. Affective trust emerges from emotional connections, personal values, and positive experiences with sustainable products and brands. But an important side note for the affective trust part is that through interviews, it is more difficult to make it more measurable than, for example, through an experiment. Furthermore, behavioral trust is demonstrated through observable actions such as repeat purchases, recommendations, and responsiveness to promotions.

Throughout the customer journey, trust development is influenced by determinants between these dimensions. In the awareness phase, promotional efforts, word of mouth, and product transparency play crucial roles in shaping cognitive trust. In the consideration phase, customers consider various factors, including pricing, product presentation, labelling, and alignment with personal values, which contribute to both cognitive and affective trust. Furthermore, in the evaluation phase, customers assess the credibility and reliability of products through comparative analysis and reviews, which influences both cognitive and behavioral trust. Finally, in the purchase and post-purchase phases, cognitive trust guides decisions related to pricing, quality, and transactional processes, while affective trust is reinforced through emotional connections and positive experiences. Behavioral trust is also demonstrated through repeat purchases, recommendations, and customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction emerges as a crucial outcome factor and is closely linked with trust, loyalty, and positive word of mouth. Satisfied customers are more likely to be loyal to brands, repeat purchases, and share their positive experiences

with others, which contributes to the long-term success of sustainable businesses like Vivera and Donskussen.

In answering the central research question, “How does trust develop among customers along the customer journey of sustainable products?” the findings indicate that trust development is a complex and multifaceted process influenced by cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, as well as interactions with various determinants across different phases of the customer journey. The findings suggest several practical actions for businesses. First, investing in transparent and informative promotional efforts, with marketing campaigns that highlight product transparency, certifications, and sustainable attributes, enhances cognitive trust and increases customer interest and awareness. Second, aligning brand values with customer values and fostering emotional connections by consistently communicating the brand’s sustainability mission and values builds affective trust, connecting with customers on a personal level, and fostering deeper emotional engagement and loyalty. Third, prioritizing product quality and ensuring an exceptional customer experience from product presentation to post-purchase support strengthens behavioral trust by demonstrating reliability and responsiveness, which can lead to repeat purchases and positive word of mouth. Fourth, actively approaching customers for feedback and utilizing customer feedback to continuously improve products and services enhances cognitive and behavioral trust by showing customers that their opinions are valued and acted upon, leading to increased satisfaction and loyalty. Lastly, differentiating the brand through strategic sustainability initiatives and developing unique selling propositions based on sustainability practices positions the brand as a leader in the sustainable products market, attracting environmentally friendly customers and creating a competitive advantage.

In practice, businesses such as Vivera and Donskussen can leverage these insights to align with customer values, address concerns, and deliver great experiences. By doing so, they strengthen their trust and establish long-term relationships with their customers. By understanding the nuanced dynamics of trust formation, businesses can navigate the customer journey more effectively and position themselves as leaders in the increasingly competitive market for sustainable products.

7. References

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8. Appendices

a. Interview guide for customers

- Welcome the participants and thank them for their willingness to participate.
- Tell the participant a little bit about yourself.
- Explain the purpose of the interview, which is to gain insights into how customer trust in sustainable products has evolved over time.
- Inform the participant about confidentiality and that their responses will be used for research purposes only.
- Ask for approval to record the interview.
- Let the participant know the duration of the interview – between 10-15 minutes.
- Ask the participant what they even consider a sustainable product to be.

Table 2. Questions awareness phase for customers

Question	Concept	Phase of the customer journey
• When did you first become aware of sustainable products, and what caught your attention?	Cognitive awareness and cognitive trust of sustainable products	Awareness phase
• How did you perceive sustainable products during the early stages of your awareness?	Cognitive awareness and cognitive trust of sustainable products	Awareness phase
○ Are there specific sources or channels that you trust more for reliability and authenticity of information about sustainable products?	Cognitive awareness and cognitive trust of sustainable products	Awareness phase
▪ If so, why?		
• How did these sustainable products made an impression on you? (Any specific advertisements, promotions, or marketing efforts)	Impact of factors on individuals awareness, and affect-based trust in sustainable products	Awareness phase
○ Can you describe them and explain their impact on your awareness of sustainable options?	Impact of factors on individuals awareness, and affect-based trust in sustainable products	Awareness phase
• Did you have any specific emotional responses when being aware of the sustainable product?	Impact of factors on individuals awareness, and affect-based trust in sustainable products	Awareness phase
○ Can you describe the emotions you felt and explain what triggered them?	Impact of factors on individuals awareness, and affect-based trust in sustainable products	Awareness phase

Table 3. Questions consideration phase for customers

• Can you describe the factors that influenced your decision to consider sustainable products?	Factors influencing consideration of sustainable products and the role of information in building trust	Consideration phase
• Did specific information contribute to your trust in these products during this phase?	Factors influencing consideration of sustainable products and the role of information in building trust	Consideration phase
• What was important in your consideration phase? Where their specific attributes or information sources?	Cognitive and affective factors influencing individuals' consideration	Consideration phase
• What emotions or values are associated with these products for you?	Cognitive and affective factors influencing individuals' consideration	Consideration phase

Table 4. Questions evaluation phase for customers

• When evaluating sustainable products or brands, which service quality aspects did you consider? (such as customer service, reliability, responsiveness, or assurance)	Evaluation of sustainable products through cognitive and affective dimensions	Evaluation phase
• How did these or other factors impact your evaluation of considering sustainable products?	Evaluation of sustainable products through cognitive and affective dimensions	Evaluation phase
○ And did they contribute to your trust in them?	Evaluation of sustainable products through cognitive and affective dimensions	Evaluation phase
• How did you evaluate the reliability and authenticity of information related to a sustainable product?	Evaluation of reliability and authenticity, and affective aspects	Evaluation phase
• Did positive or negative feelings or values play a role in building your trust in sustainable products at this stage?	Evaluation of reliability and authenticity, and affective aspects	Evaluation phase

Table 5. Questions purchase phase for customers

• Can you describe how the information and data you gathered about the sustainable product influenced your final purchase decisions?	Influence of gathered information and data on purchase decision	Purchase phase
• How did your emotions or feelings toward the sustainable product or brand influence your decision to trust and make this purchase?	Influence of emotions or feelings to trust and make a purchase	Purchase phase
• What factors or considerations were most important in finalizing your decision? (ethical pricing, or product information, or transparency)	Influence of behavioral factors to trust sustainable product	Purchase phase
• How did your trust in sustainable products influence this decision?	Influence of behavioral factors to trust sustainable product	Purchase phase

Table 6. Questions post-purchase phase for customers

• Can you reflect on your satisfaction and experience with the sustainable products you have purchased?	Reflections on satisfactions and experiences, and the impact on trust	Post-purchase phase
• How did these experiences shape your trust in sustainable products?	Reflections on satisfactions and experiences, and the impact on trust	Post-purchase phase
○ If yes, what factors contributed to this trust?	Reflections on satisfactions and experiences, and the impact on trust	Post-purchase phase
• Have you recommended sustainable products to friends or family based on your trust in them?	Reflections on satisfactions and experiences, and the impact on trust	Post-purchase phase
○ If yes, what motivated you to make these recommendations?	Reflections on satisfactions and experiences, and the impact on trust	Post-purchase phase

Challenges and concerns:

- What challenges or concerns have you experienced in your journey to trust sustainable products?

Closing:

- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with sustainable products and trust that I have not asked?
 - If not, thank the participant for their time and input.

b. Interview guide for employees

- Thank the employee for participating in the interview.
- Tell the employee a little bit about yourself.
- Explain the purpose of the interview: to gain insights into how trust develops among customers along their journey with sustainable products and understand the role of employees in building and maintaining this trust.
- Ensure confidentiality and inform the employee that their responses will be used for research purposes only.
- Let the employees know the duration of the interview to be 10-15 minutes.

Role and perspectives of the employee:

- Can you describe your role within the company and your involvement in sustainability activities or customer relationships?
- What is your opinion on the importance of building and maintaining customer trust in sustainable products for the company's success and reputation?

Table 7. Questions awareness phase for employees

Question	Concept	Phase of the customer journey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When did you first notice that customers were becoming aware of your sustainable products, and what initially drew their attention? 	Initiation and early stages of customer awareness of sustainable products offered by the company	Awareness phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the early stages of customer awareness, how did you evaluate the reliability and authenticity of information related to your sustainable products? 	Initiation and early stages of customer awareness of sustainable products offered by the company	Awareness phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did you try to make an impression on the customers with your sustainable products? (Through specific advertisements, promotions, or marketing efforts) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could you describe these efforts and explain their impact on customer awareness of your sustainable products? 	Employed strategies by the company to make an impression on customers	Awareness phase
	Employed strategies by the company to make an impression on customers	Awareness phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you observed customers responding to sustainability-related advertisements, did you notice any specific emotional reactions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you describe the emotions customers felt and explain what triggered them? 	Employed strategies by the company to make an impression on customers	Awareness phase
	Employed strategies by the company to make an impression on customers	Awareness phase

Table 8. Questions consideration phase for employees

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From your point of view, what were the factors that influenced customers in considering your sustainable products as a possible option for their needs? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did particular information sources contribute to customer trust in your products during this phase? 	Cognitive factors perceived by employee as influential in customers considering sustainable products as possible option for their needs	Consideration phase
	Cognitive factors perceived by employee as influential in customers considering sustainable products as possible option for their needs	Consideration phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were their specific attributes or information sources that played a role during the consideration phase? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If so, what were these attributes or sources? 	Identification of affect-based elements that played a role in customers' consideration	Consideration phase
	Identification of affect-based elements that played a role in customers' consideration	Consideration phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there examples where employees engage with customers during the consideration phase to address their questions and create trust? 	Identification of affect-based elements that played a role in customers' consideration	Consideration phase

Table 9. Questions evaluation phase for employees

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When customers were evaluating your sustainable products or brand, did they seem to consider aspects related to service quality, such as customer service, reliability, responsiveness, or assurance? 	Influence of customer evaluation and contribution to building customer trust	Evaluation phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did these, or other factors, influence their evaluation of your sustainable products? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> And did they contribute to customer trust? 	Influence of customer evaluation and contribution to building customer trust	Evaluation phase
	Influence of customer evaluation and contribution to building customer trust	Evaluation phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From your observations, how did customers evaluate the reliability and authenticity of information related to your sustainable products? 	Customer evaluation of cognitive and affect-based elements	Evaluation phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did you notice positive or negative emotions or values playing a role in building trust in your sustainable products at this stage? 	Customer evaluation of cognitive and affect-based elements	Evaluation phase

Table 10. Questions purchase phase for employees

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you describe how the information and data customers gathered about your sustainable products influenced their final purchase decisions? 	Examination of how customers were influenced in their final purchase decisions through a cognitive process	Purchase phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From your perspective, how do customers' emotions toward your sustainable products have a big impact on the actual purchase? 	Impact of customers' emotions toward sustainable product on the actual purchase	Purchase phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there practices or approaches that employees do during the purchase phase to ensure that customers feel confident in their choice and trust your products? 	Strategies and actions taken by employees to enhance customer trust	Purchase phase

Table 11. Questions post-purchase phase for employees

• After the purchase, how is customer trust shown? (Do they repeat purchases, provide feedback or write reviews)	Understanding the expressions and social aspects of customer trust after the purchase phase	Post-purchase phase
• Have you noticed customers recommending your sustainable products to friends or family based on their trust in them?	Understanding the expressions and social aspects of customer trust after the purchase phase	Post-purchase phase

Challenges and concerns:

- What challenges or concerns have you faced in the journey to building and maintaining customer trust in sustainable products?

Feedback:

- What role does feedback play in refining your sustainability claims and enhancing trust?

Closing:

- Is there anything else you would like to share about the approach of your company on how to build and maintain customer trust in sustainable products across the customer journey and dimensions of trust?
 - If not, thank the participants for their time and valuable insights.

c. Data structure

Interviewee	Original text	Recurring topics (first order)	Subtopics (second order)	Aggregate dimension
1	"I became aware of Vivera's sustainable product for the first time through word of mouth. I was dining at the parents' house of a friend of mine, and they had vegetarian meat on the table."	Customer awareness	Initial awareness	Customer journey stages
1	Because I had it at her parents' house, I came into contact with it for the first time and found it very tasty. So, I did not think about buying or trying it myself."	Customer awareness	Initial awareness	Customer journey stages
1	"I ended up with Vivera products through word of mouth."	Customer awareness	Initial awareness	Key moments of awareness
1	"And when I consciously considered trying Vivera for myself, it was because I needed it for a recipe, as I wanted to use a meat substitute. In this case, it was the vegetarian chicken pieces from Vivera."	Customer awareness	Initial awareness	Customer journey stages
1	"In the supermarket, you often have a vegetarian section where many sustainable vegetarian products and brands are available. In my mind, I think positively about all of them because they are there, which also sparked my interest."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Trust influencing factors
1	"Furthermore, I check the packaging	Information reliability	Trustworthy sources	Information evaluation

	of sustainable products to see if it's reliable and for information."	and authenticity		
1	"When I check the packaging, I am particularly focused on the Nutri-Score of the sustainable product. So, whether it has an A score, or a B, or C, I am inclined to choose the higher/better Nutri-Score."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
1	"Yes, I try to assess the reliability of the sustainable product by using the Nutri-Score."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Information evaluation
1	"The sustainable products from Vivera have impressed me because they taste good, and I have the impression that they continue to improve. In my opinion, this also makes the product much more appealing."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Feedback and reviews	Post-purchase trust building
1	"Recently, my mother bought a cheese schnitzel from Vivera, which I had never tried before, and I found it very tasty. So, I think that through word of mouth, I get and got a positive impression of Vivera."	Information reliability and authenticity	Evaluation methods	Trust influencing factors
1	"On Instagram, I search for and use a lot of recipes from influencers who cook/prepare vegetarian and sustainable meals. I also use this for myself to get a better idea of the various sustainable products available as meat substitutes."	Customer awareness	Key moments of awareness	Customer journey stages

1	"In terms of marketing efforts, promotions, or advertisements, I haven't really noticed that I became aware of Vivera's sustainable products through them."	Customer awareness	Initial awareness	Customer journey stages
1	"I initially chose to adopt a vegetarian/sustainable diet because it's good for the environment, and I find animal cruelty terrible."	Purchase phase influences	Emotional aspects	Decision-making drivers
1	"Once you're used to eating vegetarian meat, you become more aware of what you're actually eating and whether it is sustainable."	Customer awareness	Initial awareness	Customer journey stages
1	"The ingredients on the packaging of Vivera, whether it's vegan or vegetarian, are all sources of information that contribute to my trust in the sustainable products. And the Nutri-Score as well. Also, the green label around the price tag in the supermarket makes me trust it more."	Information reliability and authenticity	Evaluation methods	Information evaluation
1	"The green label around the price tag of the sustainable product in the store always catches my attention quickly and is a reason that I trust the product to be sustainable."	Information reliability and authenticity	Evaluation methods	Information evaluation
1	"The quantity that is in it is an important aspect of Vivera's service for me."	Service quality evaluation	Customer service	Information evaluation

1	"I do appreciate the information of the product and the recipes it fits into; that's an aspect of the information on sustainable products that I value. It feels like a sort of service to me."	Service quality evaluation	Customer service	Information evaluation
1	"Another factor that has influenced my consideration of Vivera products, besides being a meat substitute and sustainable, is the promotions. For example, if there are price offers or discounts, it really influences me to choose a particular Vivera product, like a buy one gets one free offer."	Purchase phase influences	Behavioral factors	Decision-making drivers
1	"I often opt for a vegetarian house brand from the supermarket instead of Vivera because it is cheaper."	Purchase phase influences	Behavioral factors	Decision-making drivers
1	"I wouldn't be quick to try other products from Vivera myself because I'm not familiar with them. However, if there is a promotion, I am willing to give it a try."	Purchase phase influences	Behavioral factors	Decision-making drivers
1	"For the actual purchase decision, it is also important in my case where Vivera products are placed, the position in the supermarket. Vivera is located among the house brands, and they are in a different aisle than the products from the vegetarian butcher. That aisle is	Purchase phase influences	Behavioral factors	Decision-making drivers

	almost never on my route in the supermarket, so it ensures that I come into contact with Vivera products more often, and I actually put them in my shopping basket."			
1	"My main considerations when finalizing my decision are the price, whether the product is sustainable, whether it is vegetarian or vegan, price promotions, the information on the packaging, and the Nutri-Scores."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
1	"Yes, I can look back with satisfaction on my experience with the sustainable product from Vivera that I purchased."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Customer satisfaction and reflection	Post-purchase trust building
1	"I find the products very tasty, and I appreciate that they are committed to sustainability."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Customer satisfaction and reflection	Post-purchase trust building
1	"Yes, I have developed a lot of trust in Vivera products, which led me to make the definitive decision to become fully vegetarian last year. This is also because the products are very tasty, and besides the environmental and animal welfare aspects, I have come to trust and appreciate them tremendously."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Reflection	Post-purchase trust building
1	"I'm not sure if I specifically recommended sustainable products from Vivera to	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Recommendations	Post-purchase trust building

	others, because I don't feel the need to bring it up in a conversation"			
1	"The prices of sustainable Vivera products, the people in my previous environment, such as housemates, and the fact that it is often sold in smaller quantities, were challenges or concerns for me in building trust in sustainable products."	Emotional responses	Negative emotions	Trust influencing factors
2	"The first attention that I received for sustainable meat substitutes was through a competitor of Vivera, namely through a lecture by the owner of the 'Vegetarische Slager.'"	Customer awareness	Initial awareness	Customer journey stages
2	"At that lecture, he also had a tasting of sustainable plant-based chicken skewers, which is how I first came into contact with sustainable meat substitutes."	Customer awareness	Key moments of awareness	Customer journey stages
2	"I already wanted to eat less meat, so I decided to take a closer look at meat substitutes."	Consideration factors	Attributes considered	Customer journey stages
2	"In the supermarket, I was looking for a meat substitute that is not the most expensive but also not the cheapest."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
2	"I found the sustainable chicken skewers impressively good when I tasted them for the first time."	Emotional responses	Positive emotions	Trust influencing factors

2	"I happened to come across Vivera since I had decided not to choose the cheapest and also not the most expensive meat substitute."	Customer awareness	Initial awareness	Customer journey stages
2	"The Vivera product stood out because it looks like a high-quality product but is not immediately the most expensive sustainable option on the shelf."	Consideration factors	Attributes considered	Customer journey stages
2	"To assess the reliability of Vivera, I am inclined to look at the price and the packaging."	Information reliability and authenticity	Evaluation methods and trustworthy sources	Information evaluation
2	"To be honest, I don't feel that I trust a store brand less in terms of sustainability than a product from Vivera, but I think the store brand tastes less delicious."	Consideration factors	Attributes considered	Trust influencing factors
2	"I trust the supermarket when it comes to its sustainability claims, especially since the product is placed in the sustainable products section."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Information evaluation
2	"Furthermore, I trust the government to ensure that the information on sustainable products is accurate and has been verified by the authorities."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Information evaluation
2	"I choose meat substitutes because I don't want to eat meat, and by doing so, I contribute to a more sustainable planet."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers

2	"I see the Vegetarische Slager as a bit of a pioneer in meat substitutes/sustainable eating, and Vivera is just a step below that."	Customer awareness	Key moments of awareness	Customer journey stages
2	"I unconsciously lean towards the sustainable product that resembles those from the Vegetarische Slager but is more affordable, in this case, Vivera."	Purchase phase influences	Emotional aspects	Trust influencing factors
2	"I can't recall seeing specific advertisements from Vivera, so it hasn't made an impression on me. I have seen advertisements for Valess, a competitor, which seems very similar."	Customer awareness	Key moments of awareness	Customer journey stages
2	"I find Valess to be very similar to Vivera, even in terms of packaging; they both seem to be similar sustainable products."	Consideration factors	Attributes considered	Customer journey stages
2	"I didn't have an emotional reaction to the sustainable products from Vivera. It was a conscious choice, but I did not have a particular feeling about it."	Emotional responses	Values associated with product	Trust influencing factors
2	"Overall, it did give me a good feeling that I consciously chose a sustainable product instead of opting for non-sustainable steaks."	Emotional responses	Positive emotions	Trust influencing factors
2	"I chose sustainable products so that my choices can have a small impact on the climate."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers

2	"I also choose sustainable meat substitutes because I am not comfortable with animal suffering."	Purchase phase influences	Emotional aspects	Decision-making drivers
2	"I find it inefficient to use a significant portion of the world to cultivate food, then give that food to an animal that also requires land, only to consume the animal later."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
2	"In my opinion, the most efficient step is to stop eating meat, and if more people do that, it can have a huge impact on the world."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
2	"I believe the price of meat substitutes is indeed a significant factor. Even if you do not care about the state of the world or the environment, opting for cheaper and tasty meat substitutes can still be a sensible choice due to the cost savings."	Purchase phase influences	Behavioral factors	Decision-making drivers
2	"I trusted the sustainable product from Vivera because it was in the vegetarian section, and I found the packaging to look professionally appealing."	Consideration factors	Attributes considered	Customer journey stages
2	"If the packaging doesn't look cheap, I am less likely to be suspicious and tend to trust the products more easily."	Information reliability and authenticity	Evaluation methods and trustworthy sources	Trust influencing factors
2	"I do look at the Nutri-Score of a product, but it doesn't solely determine my purchase. However, it	Information reliability and authenticity	Evaluation methods	Information evaluation

	does create a bit of trust."			
2	"During the finalization of my purchasing decision, promotions also play a significant role. If the sustainable products from Vivera are on a buy one gets one free offer, I am even more inclined to buy them."	Purchase phase influences	Behavioral factors	Decision-making drivers
2	"The best before date of a product is also an important factor for me. Meat substitutes often have a longer best before date compared to regular meat, so I sometimes buy extra."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
2	"I believe the Nutri-Score is an unconscious influence on my choices. Seeing the image turn green, I unconsciously associate it with a sustainable and good choice, I think."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Trust influencing factors
2	"I genuinely find the products from Vivera very tasty, and I buy them more and more often."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Repeated purchases	Post-purchase trust building
2	"Taste is the most significant factor for me when it comes to building trust in sustainable products."	Emotional responses	Values associated with product	Trust influencing factors
2	"I also believe that if something is slightly more expensive, it often means it's a bit more sustainable and better, so that might also factor into my decision."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers

2	"I have offered the sustainable products from Vivera to family or friends who come over for a meal, and I've cooked Vivera products for them. I recommend them to others!"	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Recommendations	Post-purchase trust building
2	"An initial challenge in my journey towards purchasing a sustainable product from Vivera was the price. I was not ready to completely give up meat, and at that time, meat substitutes were more expensive than regular meat. I noticed that I tended to choose non-sustainable meat more often than the sustainable meat substitutes."	Consideration factors	Attributes considered	Customer journey stages
2	"My trust is highly influenced by the packaging; if something looks good and is well-designed with fresh colors, I am more inclined to trust it."	Purchase phase influences	Emotional aspects	Trust influencing factors
2	"For example, I find Garden Gourmet to look very unpleasant, so I wouldn't trust it easily."	Purchase phase influences	Emotional aspects	Trust influencing factors
3	"I have the impression that, for about 6/7 years now, customers have become more conscious about sustainability and there is demand for it."	Customer awareness	Key moments of awareness	Customer journey stages
3	"Within Donskussen, I often receive questions from customers over the phone about whether the down is	Service quality evaluation	Reliability	Trust influencing factors

	responsible and sustainable."			
3	"I often receive questions about whether the down is sustainable and produced in an animal-friendly manner."	Consideration factors	Attributes considered	Trust influencing factors
3	"Customers consciously indicate that they want a down pillow with "DOWNPASS," which is a separate entity that verifies how animals are treated. It maps the entire chain and ensures that the down is obtained in a sustainable, responsible manner and traces its origin."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Trust influencing factors
3	"I try to create an impression for the customer by using landing pages, where I aim to promote the reliability and the product itself through information and advice on sustainable pillows."	Customer awareness	Influencing information sources	Information evaluation
3	"Through the phone and reviews, I hear and see that people appreciate this information and reliability from the landing pages, which increases their trust."	Information reliability and authenticity	Feedback and reviews	Trust influencing factors
3	"Emotional responses are challenging for me to perceive since it is purchased online through the laptop or computer, and I don't know if someone has an emotional reaction to it."	Emotional responses	Evaluation methods	Information evaluation

3	"Through telephone contact and reviews, a lot of appreciation is expressed for the information and reliability of the sustainable pillows."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Feedback and reviews	Information evaluation
3	"The local aspect also plays a crucial role for customers when considering the products of Donskussen."	Consideration factors	Emotional aspects	Decision-making drivers
3	"The animal-friendly aspect of the down pillows is also an important factor for consumers."	Consideration factors	Emotional aspects	Decision-making drivers
3	"Customers in the down pillow industry do not want down obtained through live plucking."	Consideration factors	Emotional aspects	Decision-making drivers
3	"On every page, I provide information about sustainability, DOWNPASS certification, and the longer lifespan and recyclability of the product. This has garnered a lot of customer appreciation and attention, as I tested this with an A/B test."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Trust influencing factors
3	"The A/B test revealed that the variant with sustainability performed significantly better than the version without. In the sustainable version, there was ultimately a 15% increase in sales compared to the other."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
3	"In my opinion, the information source of sustainable products does play an	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Trust influencing factors

	important role for customers."			
3	"I hardly receive questions about sustainability because customers already orient themselves on the internet about product information."	Customer awareness	Evaluation methods	Information evaluation
3	"I also create YouTube videos that provide information about my sustainable pillows, and they are widely viewed. I believe customers can build a lot of trust from these videos. These videos are available on my website."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Trust influencing factors
3	"I believe that my customers find aspects related to quality very important. I see that my higher-end sustainable products, which are qualitatively stronger and more expensive, sell very well."	Service quality evaluation	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
3	"I try to appeal to the feelings/trust of the customers by mentioning the qualities of the products on my website."	Emotional responses	Emotional aspects	Trust influencing factors
3	"Customers really ask questions about the quality of the sustainable down pillows, probably to see if it is reliable and creates a certain sense of security."	Consideration factors	Attributes considered	Decision-making drivers
3	"I also work with a specific German certification institute, TÜV, for certain more expensive down pillows. They check the quality and assess	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Trust influencing factors

	if it is environmentally responsible. In my opinion, and according to the numbers, this certainly contributes to consumer confidence and reliability."			
3	"I believe that the price and the quality of the down pillows might be the most significant factors that ultimately convince the consumer to choose my products."	Consideration factors	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
3	"I do think that if customers are doubting between different pillows from different stores, sustainability and locally produced are additional motivations for customers to make the final decision."	Consideration factors	Emotional aspects	Decision-making drivers
3	"The down pillows from me have a 2-year factory warranty, and I personally provide a 5-year guarantee to give the customer some extra trust."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Repeated purchases	Post-purchase trust building
3	"I notice that many customers come back, that after 3 or 4 years, they order a new sustainable down pillow again."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Repeated purchases	Post-purchase trust building
3	"Furthermore, I score 4.5 out of 5 stars in the customer reviews of my pillows, which also shows that they have trust in my products."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Feedback and reviews	Post-purchase trust building

3	"I also have one pillow in my range where customers, during and after the purchase process, have the option to buy that pillow with a sustainable cotton variant. Approximately 10% of people actually choose the sustainable option."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
3	"What I find challenging is gaining trust from customers. I always try to do that through transparency, but I do notice that there are certain technical terms in the information I want to give customers, and they sometimes find that a bit difficult."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Trust influencing factors
3	"A challenge is to make it easily known for the general public to distinguish the quality, sustainability, and reliability within the range so that they are well-informed about the choices they make."	Customer awareness	Key moments of awareness	Customer journey stages
3	"Customers appreciate it when I ask for feedback, so I personally think that feedback is an important aspect within the customer journey, and it definitely strengthens consumer trust in my sustainable products."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Feedback and reviews	Post-purchase trust building
3	"Every customer receives a questionnaire two weeks after purchase, asking if the product is satisfactory and fits their needs regarding good sleep. They	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Feedback and reviews	Post-purchase trust building

	have the opportunity to provide feedback on both positive aspects and areas for improvement."			
3	"I strive to improve the product and the accompanying information based on the feedback provided by customers."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Customer satisfaction and reflection	Post-purchase trust building
3	"I personally notice that my automated emails to customers, where I inquire if the down pillow suits them well, are well-received by customers, as they write positive reviews about them."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Customer satisfaction and reflection	Post-purchase trust building
4	"At the beginning, there were few meat substitutes, but I eventually came into contact with Vivera's sustainable products through various price promotions."	Customer awareness	Initial awareness	Customer journey stages
4	"Considering the price and the price ratio, I eventually set my sights on Vivera. In my opinion, it is a premium product, and the price is a significant factor."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
4	"In the beginning, I wanted to eat meat substitutes because I felt very sorry for the animals."	Purchase phase influences	Emotional aspects	Decision-making drivers
4	"As I got older, I also started to become more concerned about the environment and delved deeper into it myself."	Customer awareness	Key moments of awareness	Customer journey stages
4	"I think that unconsciously, Vivera's sustainable products caught my attention due to the	Customer awareness	Initial awareness	Customer journey stages

	good prices and promotions, which sparked my interest in Vivera."			
4	"In my opinion, the more expensive meat substitutes try too hard to resemble regular meat, using many substitutes to make it bleed like normal meat. This is why I trust the 'simpler' meat substitutes like Vivera more, rather than products such as Beyond Burger."	Consideration factors	Attributes considered	Trust influencing factors
4	"I personally have no need for meat substitutes that closely replicate regular meat."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
4	"In terms of information and reliability, I find familiar ingredients very important in sustainable meat substitutes."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Information evaluation
4	"I also trust Vivera's sustainable products because I am very sensitive to the information on the packaging, such as added vitamin B12, extra proteins, or added salt."	Information reliability and authenticity	Evaluation methods	Trust influencing factors
4	"I'm not really convinced by the Nutri-Score; I've heard quite a few critical stories about it."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Information evaluation
4	"The 100% plant-based sticker on Vivera's sustainable products is an additional piece of information for me that makes me trust the product more and likely to choose it."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Trust influencing factors

4	"I prefer plant-based over dairy products that are also present in some Vivera products, like cheese, because I know that plant-based is better for the environment."	Consideration factors	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
4	"I can't recall any advertisements or similar things from Vivera that have caught my attention."	Customer awareness	Key moments of awareness	Customer journey stages
4	"I have the idea that the market for sustainable meat substitutes is quite saturated, and the more expensive brands benefit from this. That is why I choose a simpler, less expensive, yet qualitatively strong option like Vivera."	Purchase phase influences	Behavioral factors	Decision-making drivers
4	"I've had Vivera's sustainable products many times before, and the taste is excellent. So, why would I choose another, more expensive brand?"	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Repeated purchases	Post-purchase trust building
4	"The positive brand reputation is another reason for me to choose Vivera's sustainable products."	Purchase phase influences	Emotional aspects	Decision-making drivers
4	"The packaging of Vivera looks good too, and the eye wants something pleasing, of course."	Purchase phase influences	Positive emotions	Decision-making drivers
4	"The mention of ingredients is also a crucial factor for me to trust sustainable products."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Trust influencing factors
4	"When evaluating Vivera's sustainable products, I feel that positive or negative emotions play a significant role in my decision-making."	Purchase phase influences	Emotional aspects	Decision-making drivers

4	"There are definitely thoughts and emotions behind the choice to choose a sustainable product or not."	Purchase phase influences	Emotional aspects	Decision-making drivers
4	"For the final purchase, the information I've gathered about the ingredients, the plant-based nature, is a crucial decisive factor."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
4	"The quantity of Vivera's sustainable products is also important to me."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
4	"I'm also very sensitive to promotions from Vivera, like buy one get one free."	Purchase phase influences	Behavioral factors	Decision-making drivers
4	"When I encountered the ecological footprint of a product during my studies, I was shocked by the amount of CO2 emissions from a regular burger compared to a plant-based one. Also, the quantity of water and such, it became much more tangible, and that gave me even more awareness that my choices as a consumer can make a small difference."	Customer awareness	Key moments of awareness	Customer journey stages
4	"My study, Sustainable Business and Innovation, ultimately played a significant role in further having trust in sustainable products, which, in my opinion, are genuinely sustainable."	Information reliability and authenticity	Evaluation methods	Trust influencing factors
4	"I trust the 100% plant-based sticker on Vivera's sustainable	Information reliability	Trustworthy sources	Trust influencing factors

	products because they can't just put that on without reason."	and authenticity		
4	"I have also recommended Vivera products to family and friends because I trust them a lot, based on my own positive experiences."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Recommendations	Post-purchase trust building
4	"Unconsciously, I do think that I recommend Vivera's sustainable products more often."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Recommendations	Post-purchase trust building
5	"I started eating sustainably/vegetarian because I initially found it sad for the animals. This was a conscious choice at the time."	Emotional responses	Values associated with product	Decision-making drivers
5	"Vivera was a familiar brand to me because I had tasted it once through someone I knew."	Customer awareness	Initial awareness	Customer journey stages
5	"The sustainable products from Vivera caught my attention in the supermarket. I thought they looked good, and I was looking for meat substitutes."	Customer awareness	Key moments of awareness	Customer journey stages
5	"Because I've been vegetarian for a long time, I felt like there wasn't much variety in meat substitutes before. I had tried Vivera once through someone else, so it was one of the more familiar brands for me."	Customer awareness	Key moments of awareness	Customer journey stages
5	"To check the reliability of the meat substitutes, I read the labels of the products very carefully in the supermarket itself."	Information reliability and authenticity	Evaluation methods	Information evaluation
5	"I can't recall, also because it was a	Customer awareness	Key moments of awareness	Trust influencing factors

	while ago, that I was drawn to Vivera through advertisements. Honestly, I do not think so."			
5	"Secondly, I also became vegetarian because I slowly started to look into sustainability and wanted to contribute to the environment."	Emotional responses	Values associated with product	Decision-making drivers
5	"Through word of mouth and by trying them out, I eventually gained more trust in Vivera's sustainable products."	Customer awareness	Key moments of awareness	Trust influencing factors
5	"I found the information on the packaging to look good and reliable."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Information evaluation
5	"I feel good about choosing Vivera because I believe I'm contributing to the environment and avoiding causing harm to animals."	Purchase phase influences	Emotional aspects	Decision-making drivers
5	"My decision to choose Vivera over a competitor is largely influenced by the price. I find Vivera to be cheaper than other more expensive meat substitutes."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
5	"The positive experiences of other people have also played a role in my choice to choose for Vivera."	Consideration factors	Influencing information sources	Trust influencing factors
5	"Assurance is also an important factor since I already knew that it tastes good and is of good quality."	Service quality evaluation	Reliability	Trust influencing factors
5	"I think the packaging also plays a huge role. The way they produce and	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Information evaluation

	what the ingredients are."			
5	"The 100% plant-based sticker also catches my attention to trust a Vivera product more quickly because I know that plant-based is very sustainable."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
5	"The position of the products in the supermarket also plays a role in influencing your choice because it seems more reliable to me if they positioned it in a certain aisle."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
5	"I think the packaging and the way it's presented also play an important role because it can make you think, 'Well, that must be healthier than a regular piece of meat.'"	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
5	"In terms of emotions or feelings, I do feel that after purchasing, I have a positive feeling that I am making a choice for a vegetarian option."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Reflection	Post-purchase trust building
5	"The delicious taste of Vivera ultimately had a significant impact on my trust in these products."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
5	"I buy it more often because I find it very tasty."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Repeated purchases	Post-purchase trust building
5	"It is true that my trust in sustainable products, especially Vivera, has grown over time. However, there are also negative stories about	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Trust influencing factors

	sustainable products in general. But I do feel that Vivera is generally trustworthy."			
5	"I do believe that many companies engage in greenwashing, but Vivera is not one of them."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Trust influencing factors
5	"I have recommended Vivera's sustainable products to people in my circle. As a result, several of my friends have started eating meat substitutes more frequently."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Recommendations	Post-purchase trust building
5	"I recommended it to my close ones because, firstly, it tastes good, and secondly, choosing sustainable products like Vivera is also great for the environment."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Recommendations	Post-purchase trust building
5	"I believe that due to many companies being negatively highlighted for greenwashing in the news, people are generally more sceptical about sustainable products."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Trust influencing factors
5	"The packaging of Vivera is the primary source of information for me, which ultimately determines whether I trust/want to buy the product."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Trust influencing factors
6	"I worked at JYSK for 4 and a half years, so I was already familiar with sustainable down pillows."	Customer awareness	Key moments of awareness	Customer journey stages
6	"I came across the down pillow website through a Facebook advertisement or somewhere else"	Customer awareness	Initial awareness	Customer journey stages

	online. I do not remember exactly which platform."			
6	"I found the website to be very clear and professional."	Service quality evaluation	Reliability	Trust influencing factors
6	"I was looking for a regular pillow, and eventually, I was convinced by donskussen.nl to choose for a sustainable pillow."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Trust influencing factors
6	"I also found the ordering process on the website to be very smooth and pleasant."	Service quality evaluation	Reliability	Trust influencing factors
6	"Furthermore, I found it very reassuring to read that I have a 5-year warranty and that I can return the pillow free of charge within 90 nights of receipt."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Feedback and reviews	Post-purchase trust building
6	"I do have the impression that the information on the website about the sustainable pillows is reliable."	Information reliability and authenticity	Reliability	Information evaluation
6	"The informational videos also contribute to my trust in the information provided."	Consideration factors	Influencing information sources	Trust influencing factors
6	"Through the information about the down pillow, I became aware that it is a natural product, but that it can be harvested in an animal-friendly way."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Information evaluation
6	"It was an extra bonus for me that the pillow is also harvested in an animal-friendly way."	Consideration factors	Attributes considered	Trust influencing factors
6	"Of course, the price is also a very important factor. For the price I paid, I	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers

	expect good, animal-friendly quality."			
6	"Furthermore, you sleep on it every night, so I want to have the best product with good down in it."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
6	"So, what also gives me more trust are actually the product specifications."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Feedback and reviews	Post-purchase trust building
6	"It is indeed important for me to look at certifications, I don't exactly know their names, but I trust that they ensure ethical sourcing methods."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Trust influencing factors
6	"I also look for certain logos or stickers that indicate responsible production."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Trust influencing factors
6	"To ensure reliability and certainty, I always take a look at the written reviews on the website as well."	Information reliability and authenticity	Evaluation methods	Information evaluation
6	"If there aren't too many negative reviews, then I trust it more quickly as well and I will decide to buy it."	Purchase phase influences	Behavioral factors	Decision-making drivers
6	"I don't think the final collected information about the sustainable pillow has been decisive in my purchase. I believe the price and what the product entails, such as whether it meets my needs, if the pillow is high and thick enough, and what type of pillow it is, are more influential factors. Ultimately,	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers

	the sustainable aspect may unconsciously contribute to my final decision in choosing a pillow."			
6	"In general, nowadays almost all web shops offer delivery services, so I'm not too concerned about the quality of delivery service."	Service quality evaluation	Reliability	Trust influencing factors
6	"Similarly, when I buy clothing, I don't necessarily pay attention to whether there's a sustainable label inside. If it looks good and suits me, then I will buy it. If it happens to be sustainable, that is a nice bonus, but I do not specifically seek out sustainable clothing. I felt the same way about a down pillow. It is more of a nice added feature."	Purchase phase influences	Reflection	Post-purchase trust building
6	"The most important factors are the price, quality, and whether you sleep well with it, of course."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
6	"I find the pillow comfortable to sleep on, and the ordering process was as I expected. The payment process was smooth, and it was delivered quickly and nicely packaged."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Customer satisfaction and reflection	Post-purchase trust building
6	"I look back on my purchase with a positive feeling. I got something I wanted, and a nice bonus is that it is sustainable too."	Emotional responses	Positive emotions	Post-purchase trust building

6	"I haven't actively recommended it to others. But I do not necessarily see it as something to bring up in conversation with someone since you often order your pillow online."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Customer satisfaction and reflection	Post-purchase trust building
6	"The only challenge, I think, is that you order it online, it's not tangible, and you really have to figure out if it feels comfortable to lie on."	Service quality evaluation	Feedback and reviews	Post-purchase trust building
6	"I do find it important that the down pillows are locally produced. If someone is from the region and earns their living from it, while it is sustainably produced in the Netherlands instead of some big company from abroad, then I consider that a big plus in that regard. I would give them a bit more preference."	Emotional responses	Values associated with product	Trust influencing factors
7	"The first time I became aware of the sustainable pillow from Donskussen.nl was two years ago, actually through a referral, so it kind of came to my attention through word of mouth."	Customer awareness	Initial awareness	Customer journey stages
7	"It also triggered me that they produce their down in an animal-friendly manner."	Emotional responses	Values associated with product	Trust influencing factors

7	"Well, my initial reaction was actually that there is quite a large selection of websites selling something related to down pillows or pillows in general. And at first, I was somewhat sceptical, but when I did a bit more research on the Donskussen website, I saw that they disagreed with the way of life of the ducks and geese and wanted to pluck them differently and in an animal-friendly manner."	Information reliability and authenticity	Evaluation methods	Trust influencing factors
7	"When I moved, I needed new bedding, including new pillows."	Customer awareness	Key moments of awareness	Customer journey stages
7	"No, no, specific advertisements didn't leave an impression on me. My impression was actually formed purely through direct search."	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Information evaluation
7	"No, I didn't necessarily have a specific emotion when becoming aware of the down pillow. I think that is difficult online anyway, but I did find it a unique concept that it is locally produced, and that consideration is given to the lifestyle of the ducks and geese."	Emotional responses	Emotional aspects	Trust influencing factors
7	"I do think it's indeed a societal trend to take more consideration for sustainability."	Customer awareness	Initial awareness	Trust influencing factors

7	"In addition to the sustainable production methods, the certificates displayed on the website's products also play an important role in considering the down pillow. This provides a sort of evidence that it is of high quality and therefore sustainable. It does create trust for me."	Information reliability and authenticity	Evaluation methods	Trust influencing factors
7	"I also found the fast service very pleasant, as everyone nowadays prefers 'order today, delivered yesterday' if possible. And Donskussen delivers very quickly."	Service quality evaluation	Customer service	Trust influencing factors
7	"For pillows, I prioritize quality over quantity. I often feel that with these kinds of products, buying cheap ends up being expensive in the long run. In my opinion, Donskussen pillows are ones that last longer. So no, I do not mind paying more if I know it is good quality."	Consideration factors	Attributes considered	Decision-making drivers
7	"Well, it mainly comes down to comparing the other options. So, I compared various sustainable down pillows from other providers as well. I also checked the reviews from previous customers to ultimately choose a down pillow from donsussen.nl. I think unconsciously, the certificates at Donsussen.nl might	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers

	have been the deciding factor. That might have been the final push for me."			
7	"I always take a look at the reviews to gain a bit of extra trust, especially with positive ratings."	Purchase phase influences	Behavioral factors	Decision-making drivers
7	"Yes, coincidentally, I recommended it to my in-laws who were also considering buying a down pillow. Whether they actually purchased it, I can't say."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Recommendations	Post-purchase trust building
7	"Yes, that's right. I generally like local products. Especially after the pandemic, local businesses have had a tough time, so I prefer to support local businesses like Donskussen.nl."	Purchase phase influences	Emotional aspects	Trust influencing factors
8	"Well, I have to be honest and say that I ended up at Donkussen.nl through word of mouth. A friend of mine had ordered here before, and at some point, I also needed new pillows, so that's why."	Customer awareness	Initial awareness	Customer journey stages
8	"I had heard good stories through that friend. He was very enthusiastic, and then I also delved into it."	Customer awareness	Key moments of awareness	Customer journey stages
8	"I'm in online marketing, so I know a bit about what reliable websites are and how to assess them. In the top right corner, there was a	Information reliability and authenticity	Evaluation methods	Trust influencing factors

	<p>high score of the average number of reviews, of which there were also quite a few. Furthermore, I saw multiple certificates displayed, which made it look a lot more trustworthy right away."</p>			
8	<p>"I find reviews very important in trusting a product. If a company has bad reviews, for example, about delivery or issues with returns, then I have no desire to make my purchases there."</p>	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Trust influencing factors
8	<p>"The reviews, certificates, and photos of the sustainable pillows are factors I assess for the reliability of the website."</p>	Information reliability and authenticity	Trustworthy sources	Trust influencing factors
8	<p>"Even though the sustainable down pillow is generally a bit more expensive, I naturally had a reliable source, my friend, which made me consider it more easily. And I noticed that I had a 5-year warranty, so that was also an important factor for me."</p>	Consideration factors	Attributes considered	Decision-making drivers
8	<p>"The fact that the pillow was locally produced wasn't a significant factor for me, but rather an extra bonus. I am purchasing a qualitatively strong pillow while also considering sustainability. This</p>	Consideration factors	Attributes considered	Decision-making drivers

	wasn't my original preference, but it's a nice addition."			
8	"I do expect good quality for a slightly higher price. So, I am definitely willing to pay a bit more for better quality."	Purchase phase influences	Cognitive factors	Decision-making drivers
8	"The purchasing process on the website went smoothly; I could navigate through the site easily. Ultimately, it was also delivered the next day, so that was great."	Service quality evaluation	Customer service	Trust influencing factors
8	"It sleeps very comfortably, so that gives me a good feeling. But I did not really feel any particular emotion during the purchasing process or the delivery. The gathered information and my friend's recommendation, of course, do give a sense of trust and satisfaction."	Emotional responses	Positive emotions	Trust influencing factors
8	"Yes, indeed, I am very satisfied. I sleep well on it; however, I did not leave a review. I actually hardly ever do unless it's a really bad experience. If it is a good experience, as expected, then I do not feel the need to write a review. But if it's a very bad experience, then yes, because I want to feel somewhat heard."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Feedback and reviews	Post-purchase trust building

8	"I haven't recommended the sustainable down pillows to others since I don't usually engage in conversations with people about pillows."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Recommendations	Post-purchase trust building
8	"No, there were no challenges in my journey. I naturally had my friend as a reference, thoroughly went through the website, checked the reviews. This created enough trust for me to eventually place the order."	Post-purchase trust confirmations	Feedback and reviews	Trust influencing factors

d. Relationship between the investigated variables of the literature

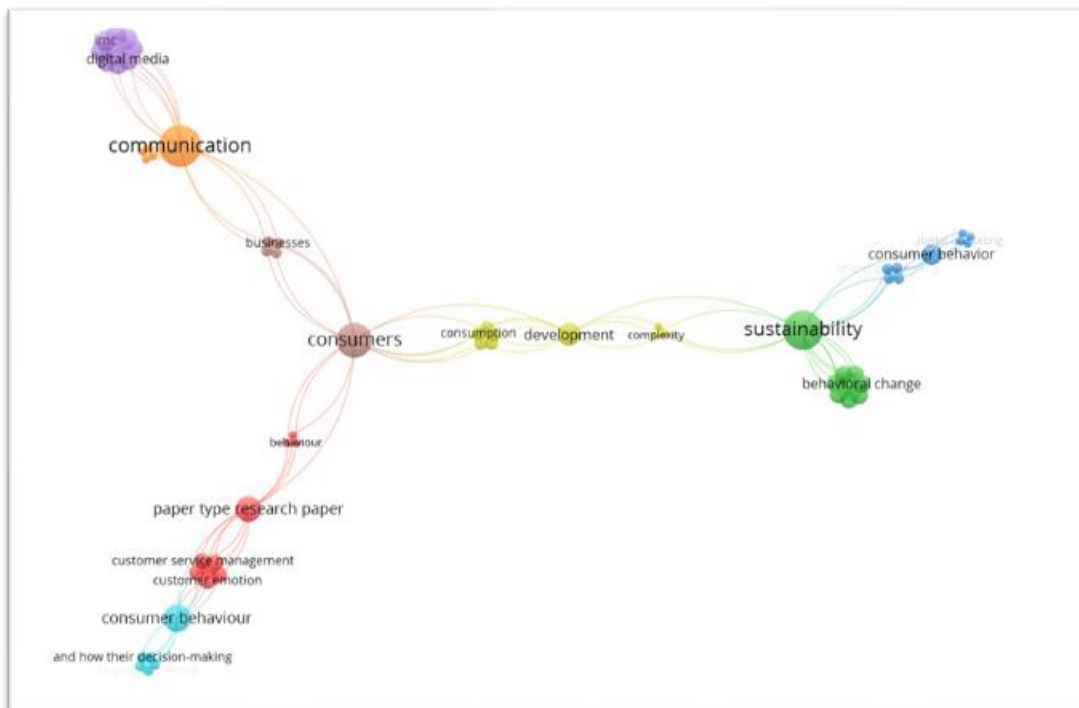


Figure 3. VOS viewer visualization of a relationship network based on Keywords Analysis

e. Framework that shows which determinants of trust significantly influences dimensions of trust in each customer journey phase for Vivera and Donskussen

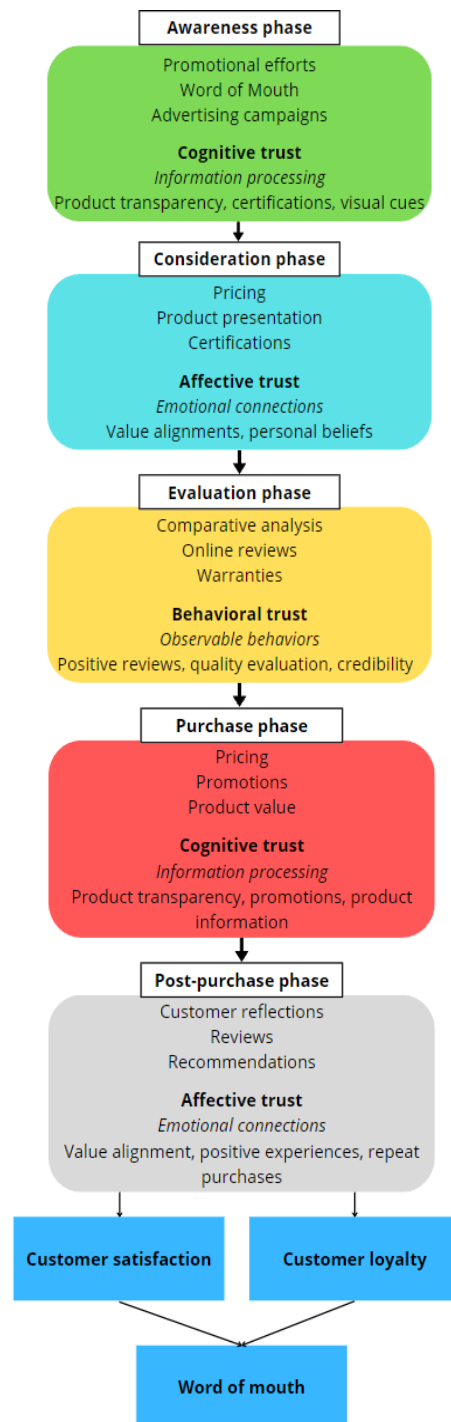


Figure 4. Theoretical framework that shows which determinants of trust significantly influences dimensions of trust for Vivera and Donskussen