



DEGREE PROGRAMME IN MARKETING

MASTER'S THESIS

**MINIMALISTIC CONSUMPTION: STUDY ON FINNISH CONSUMERS WITH THE
CONTEXT OF KITCHENWARE CONSUMPTION**

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>Facing criticisms towards consumerist lifestyle, minimalistic consumption has been proposed and received considerable attention from a significant segment of consumers who want to take another lens of consumption other than indulging in consumerism-oriented attitudes. In recent years, many researchers have started to observe this phenomenon and explain it from different perspectives. Despite the contributions of prior studies, the holistic framework identifying the motivations and goals that consumers aim to achieve through minimalistic consumption practices has been neglected and unstructured in the extant literature. The purpose of this study is to provide insights into the motives and aims of minimalistic consumers and explore the common consumption practices that minimalistic consumers engage in.</p> <p>The qualitative method is used with data collected from seven in-depth interviews. All participants are Finnish consumers who are adopting the minimalistic lifestyle. The chosen context to analyze the customer behavior towards minimalistic consumption is kitchenware consumption.</p> <p>The findings of this study indicate that there are four motivations that encourage Finnish consumers to engage in minimalistic consumption, consisting of self-fulfilling, economic, environmental and social, and personal preference motive. Each motive presents certain goals that consumers want to gain when practicing minimalistic consumption. The results of this study also provide the representative practices of minimalistic consumption and the characteristics of products that minimalistic consumers take into consideration when consuming material goods.</p> <p>The contribution of this study is that it provides a deeper understanding of the minimalistic consumers. Minimalistic consumers should be seen as heterogeneous based on their different motives and aims when engaging in minimalistic consumption. From such an understanding, marketers can design suitable marketing strategies to target this segment.</p>			
Keywords Minimalistic consumption, Finnish customers, kitchenware consumption, consumer motives and aims			
Additional information			

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Since the Second World War ended, personal consumption has been encouraged as a dominant lifestyle contributing considerably to the growth of the national economy in many societies, for example, America, where mass consumption is the most important part of social practices, cultural rituals, leisure activities, and celebration. (Brown & Vergragt, 2016). In the Westernized society, 'consumer culture' has prevailed in the sociological and economic literature. Byrnes (2007) defined 'consumer culture' as a concept that explains one's needs and wants, as well as how to satisfy one's needs and wants. The "consumer culture" approach focuses on persuading customers to spend their time, money, and effort buying continuously new things in pursuit of their happiness and satisfaction. During the 1950s and early 1960s, it was widely believed that the more people have, the more satisfied they are (Inglehart, 2015). It is believed that the level of human satisfaction becomes higher than it was after people get something they desire to have. The number of material goods that an individual possess play a significant role in reflecting the success and happiness of that individual in the society. Many societies even consider affluence as the primary domestic goal and issues arising from consumerism such as ecology, psychology has not been previously mentioned (Etzioni, 1998).

The transition from consumption to overconsumption or excessive consumption seems more likely when societies become more prosperous (Etzioni, 1998). After basic needs are satisfied, the consumers start to seek higher levels of consumption. They emphasize the number of materials they possess in order to gain a higher level of happiness. However, by the late 1960's something was wrong in the relationship between economic indicators and the level of happiness. It was reported that although the real income of Americans increased considerably between 1957 and 1973; however, their levels of happiness dropped slightly (Inglehart, 2015). The same thing happened to the Western public towards material welfare (Inglehart, 2015). The question is that why material wealth has not contributed significantly to the satisfaction and sense of happiness of people in affluent societies. Inglehart (2015) assumed that materials can

provide satisfaction to an individual but it is only in the short term. A person can feel delighted when they find water in an arid desert; however, the water supply may not rise the satisfaction after weeks or months. The available quantity of water may seem valueless to those people who live in an environment with plenty of water. (Inglehart, 2015). Another explanation is that a materialistic mindset has contributed to a stressful lifestyle for materialistic consumers who pursue life goals through consumption. People who approve of the consumerist lifestyle have to spend most of their time working and earning money in order to gain their materialist aspirations. This leads to an imbalance between work life and personal life. Time for rest and personal interests becomes limited, which can cause stress and burnout in the long term. Those who want more than what they can meet face feelings of disappointment and sadness because of the limitation in their possibilities of consumption. Others can be threatened by indebtedness due to their excessive consumption. The feeling of anxiety, stress, and frustration stemming from materialistic lifestyles and short-term satisfactions gaining from materialist values have caused many consumers to question the ‘consumer culture’ that they are pursuing. Some consumers began to be skeptical whether it is still correct that “consumption is to bring happiness to individuals as well as to entire societies” (Golka, 2004 cited in Błoński & Witek, 2019).

In more recent years, criticism of consumerism has grown in a significant amount of consumers who believe that the possession of an excess of goods should not be considered as the most important goal of life. After re-evaluating their perspectives about the goal of human life, instead of trying to be rich, these individuals prioritize “the richness of being” (Błoński & Witek, 2019). A meaningful life, wellbeing, and happiness are new concepts of a good life that people who support alternative trends to consumerism are fighting for. During the past decade, economic development combining with sustainable aspects of wellbeing and happiness has been questioned as a path toward societal flourishing (Brown & Vergragt, 2016). In addition to wellbeing reasons, environmental and social causes play a decisive role in this transition. Ecological costs of pursuing the consumerist lifestyle have been seriously concerned in recent times. Mass acquisition and consumption have led to the growing demand for materials and natural resources such as water, energy served in the process of production. Besides, overconsumption has also created an overwhelming amount of wastage for the environment. The ecological costs of this consumer culture in the

societies have been high (Brown & Vergragt, 2016). Although technological advances today have partly supported in reducing wastage by recycling and reusing materials, one apparent truth is that ecological and environmental issues can not be solved by technological improvements alone. Ecological sustainability requires the transition in consumers' views towards consumerism and changes in consumer behaviors. In the consumer society, consumers are one of the factors that cause adverse effects on the environment through their consumption (Soper, 2007). Therefore, it should be fully recognized that the role of each consumer in promoting the sustainable development of a flourishing society is important.

Facing criticism of unrestrained consumption, minimalistic consumption has been proposed and this approach received considerable attention from a great number of consumers who are seeking the meaning of life by taking another lens of consumption other than indulging in consumerism-oriented attitudes. In many studies, the phenomenon of minimalistic consumption has been discussed in concepts of voluntary simplicity, de-consumption, anti-consumerism, and minimalism. Although these concepts are not totally equivalent when it comes to consumer motives, the practices of these indicated notions have few things in common (Błoński & Witek, 2019). The minimalistic consumers try to minimize their consumption to an appropriate and reasonable limit. They pay attention to more conscious purchases in their consumption practices and they seek the meaning of life and rise level of fulfillment from the non-materialistic sources.

The growing emergence of the phenomenon of minimalistic consumption in the search for alternatives to overconsumption has been bringing light to a significant segment of consumers. The study in the early 1970s of Ronald Inglehart showed that Western publics have seen shifting from a concentration on material well-being towards a great priority in the quality of life (Inglehart, 1977). Many people in most Western European nations, especially most developed countries have been shifting towards an alternative lifestyle of consumerism that limits consumption in order to limit the use of raw materials in production. These consumers seek the meaning of life and their happiness from non-materialistic sources. In the United States, the growing criticism of consumerism and overconsumption was common among anti-materialist individuals in the 19th century (Błoński & Witek, 2019). Philosophers, writers, and poets –

Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, and Melville advocated the non-materialistic lifestyle in their works. Alternative trends to consumerism such as Voluntary simplicity, de-consumption, minimalism, which claims that conscious consumption and reducing the use of resources is the way to achieve balance and better quality of life, emerged as dominant trends in the circle of some wealthy people in the 1990s (Błoński & Witek, 2019). In Asian nations as Japan, minimalist philosophies have inspired all aspects of Japanese culture, art, and lifestyle over thousands of years in people's lives such as architecture, interior design, living, fashion, cooking. This Japanese minimalism movement stemmed from the aesthetic of Japan's traditional Zen Buddhism, which claims a simple happy life with only the essentials (Rebecca, 2021). Japanese minimalism has been popularised in the young generation today by enthusiasts of Marie Kondo, who wrote the bestselling book "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up". Marie Kondo focused on the philosophy "less is more" – this means that fewer possessions equal less stress, which equals more wellbeing (Martin, 2017). This principle "less is more" is also one of the main principles of minimalism that Dopierala (2007) emphasized in his explanation about the minimalism phenomenon – "owning less" to gain more in non-materialistic aspects of life. Minimalistic consumers pursue a simplistic, uncluttered, and congenial life that they can be free from any kinds of tensions or worries and enhance subjective well-being (Pangarkar et al., 2021). The minimalist lifestyle in Japan was also described in many works of other authors such as "*Goodbye, Things: The New Japanese Minimalism*" by Fumio Sasaki and "Declutter: The Japanese art of minimalism" by Phillip Lark.

Minimalistic consumption appeared and has been presenting for a long time under alternative trends to consumerism. In recent years, the world is facing significant climate changes caused in part by the excessive consumption lifestyle. Therefore, it is assumed that the phenomenon of minimalistic consumption will gain more strength in developed countries, as well regions in emerging market economies in the near future, and soon become a global phenomenon. It is timely to examine this phenomenon and gain a deep understanding of motives encouraging consumers to engage in minimalistic consumption and aims minimalistic consumers want to achieve through their consumption practices. Based on this understanding, both researchers and managers can have a closer look at minimalistic consumers and their consumption practices. Further, the brands can provide suitable business strategies to attract this

particular customer segment towards a meaningful consumption that matches with their personal philosophies.

The perception of the phenomenon of minimalistic consumption, as well the practices of consumers towards minimalistic consumption can be remarkably different between countries because of differences in culture, custom, lifestyle, the level of education and wealth, and so on. Therefore, an analysis focusing on a region or a country should be preferable. In this thesis, we will conduct research on the motivations and aims of customers in pursuing minimalistic consumption in one certain country, namely Finland. Finland is one of the developed countries that has been greatly influenced by the minimalistic consumption trend in many different aspects of life. The phenomenon of minimalistic consumption has been reflected in the daily life of Finnish people, in design products for home décor, from furniture to kitchenware called “Scandinavian Design”. The Scandinavian Design characterized by simplicity, minimalism, and functionality has been flourished in domestic items in Nordic countries since the 1950s (Skou & Munch, 2016). The work-life balance and the high awareness about ecological and social responsibility among Finnish consumers are also some of the aspects that Finnish people are well known for their minimalistic approach. Finnish consumers are a good research ground for investigating the motives, needs, and desires of customers in engaging in minimalistic consumption. Besides, another reason why this thesis chooses Finland to study is that the author studies and lives in this country and is concerned about the future of minimalistic consumption practices in Finland.

In recent years, minimalistic consumption has been discussed in many areas of consumption where the condition of excessive consumption has been gaining a high concern, for example, the consumption of clothes, food, furniture, kitchenware, and so on. In order to narrow down the research area, this study mainly focuses on kitchenware consumption - a close subject with most customers. Because of the familiarity of kitchen utensils to most individuals in the household in daily life, kitchenware consumption can be an easy subject for minimalistic consumers to share their opinion and practices with the author. Further, the specific and relevant information about how Finnish customers practice minimalistic consumption towards kitchenware can reflect on the likely paths to similar minimalistic consumption practices in other consumption fields.

1.2. Rationale of the study

There have been many studies about minimalistic consumption in recent years. Prior researchers have taken a different view of minimalistic consumption and suggested several forms that minimalistic consumption can be. Several studies have examined minimalistic consumption through the lens of voluntary simplicity (Etzioni, 1998, Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002, Peyer et al., 2017). The concept of “voluntary simplicity” as choosing “a simple life” or “downshifting” has been received high notice over the past two decades by both scholars and individuals (Dopierała, 2017, Brown & Vergragt, 2016). Etzioni (1998) tried to observe the phenomenon of voluntary simplicity at the different variations, from moderate levels, namely Downshifters (in which people reduce their excessive consumption, but not mandatory to cut down into an extremely low level), to strong levels, namely Strong Simplifiers (in which people who adjust their lives by giving up their high levels of income and consumption in order to gain more free time and lower-stress life), to holistic simplification, namely the Simple Living movement (in which people seriously restructure their lives). Craig-Lees & Hill (2002) approached the perspective of voluntary simplicity by trying to identify the motives and behaviours of individuals pursuing this consumption practice. He sought the essence of Voluntary simplicity lifestyle characteristics by examining and comparing the motives, thoughts, and behaviours of two groups: voluntary simplifiers and nonvoluntary simplifiers. Peyer et al., (2017) strengthen the opinion of Etzioni (1988) that one segment of customers is willing to consume less despite the levels of their income by making empirical research with a large-scale data set of 1458 online survey respondents in Germany – one of the affluent European countries. Besides, the study also examined the role of sustainability-driven behaviours of voluntary simplifiers. The result revealed that voluntary simplifiers tend to consume less and prefer to consume environmentally friendly, organic, and fairtrade products.

Other researchers approach minimalistic consumption through the lens of anti-consumption (Iyer & Muncy, 2009, Kang et al., 2021). They suggest that sustainability, societal welfare, environmental and ecological factors play an important role in the consumption decisions of consumers. From the anti-consumption view, Iyer & Muncy (2009) illustrated four types of anti-consumers based on a two-by-two matrix

namely, the purpose of Anti-Consumption (societal concerns and personal concerns) and object of Anti-consumption (general and specific). In the study, they developed the typology focusing on anti-consumption and its influence on brand preferences, brand loyalty, benefits of society or the planet, and experience. In addition, the study also examined the relationship between anti-consumption to other constructs such as self-consciousness, self-actualization, and assertiveness (Iyer & Muncy, 2009). Kang et al., (2021) proposed minimalistic consumption as an intentional alternative to consumerism in consumer behaviour stemmed from perceptions about sustainability. They developed and tested a structural model to identify behavioral representations of minimalistic consumers from the view of anti-consumption, including clutter removal, self-sufficiency, cautious shopping, and longevity. The impacts of the minimalist lifestyle on customers' positive emotions and negative emotions were also examined in the study. (Kang et al., 2021).

Some prior studies described minimalistic consumption as a form of de-consumption (Bylok, 2017, Kulyk et al., 2017, Pangarkar et al., 2021). They assumed that de-consumption was a new trend in consumption as the solution for the status of excessive consumption in many nations. In the study, Bylok (2017) analysed the concepts and styles of consumerism, then described a gradual increase in the awareness of consumers about an alternative to consumerism. From his perspective, de-consumption encourages consumers to limit their consumption due to different reasons relating to economic, environmental, ethic, or lifestyle. While Kulyk et al., (2017) described economic constraints as one of the main reasons that Polish customers engaged in de-consumption. The economic recession forced consumers to lower their living conditions, limit their expenditure, and only buy bare essentials. From the time of the economic crisis, collaborative consumption was introduced and has gained much attention from many consumers. Their study used both qualitative and quantitative methods to characterize the attitudes of Polish consumers towards de-consumption and collaborative consumption. Pangarkar et al., (2021) considered de-consumption as one of four types of their typology of minimalistic consumption, namely reduced consumption. They proposed that consumers engage in de-consumption because of economic hardships or frugal practices in their lifestyles. Consumers do not totally give up the consumption practices, instead, they still do it in moderation.

Extant research has also examined minimalistic consumption through the lens of minimalism. Dopierała (2017) discussed in his article “minimalism as an example of anti-consumer-oriented social practices”. By research data from minimalism blogs and books, he tried to figure out common practices of the minimalist lifestyle and the relationship between minimalism and dominant overconsumption pattern. From his view, minimalism is a tool that helps consumers to focus on what is important to them. Minimalism emphasizes the importance of quality instead of quantity. Consumers engage in consumption behaviours consciously with the goal to possess material goods that are actually utilized. (Dopierała, 2017). The concept of “minimalism” has also been discussed from the view of aesthetics in blogs and articles on the internet. Steward (2018) described the effects of disciplines of minimalism on the aesthetic in art, architecture, interior design. The “New Nordic design” focusing on minimalist aesthetic, societal models, and the purity of nature was examined and reassessed in the certain study of Skou & Munch. “New Nordic design” was considered as the heritage of “Scandinavian Design” inspired from principles of minimalism from the 1950s in the Nordic region: Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. (Skou & Munch, 2016).

Extant literature has approached minimalistic consumption in a number of forms. Such identification forms have created a high awareness of minimalistic consumption and advanced the literature significantly about this kind of new consumption. However, the information in the studies reflecting the phenomenon of minimalistic consumption is still disparate and not synthesized. This required a comprehensive framework that described the types of minimalistic consumption based on certain conceptual distinctions. To this end, Pangarkar et al., (2021) proposed one comprehensive framework about minimalistic consumption by reviewing and analysing the prior literature. In their study, they suggested a typology built further on the typology developed by Iyer & Muncy (2009) and other studies in the past. The typology identified four types of minimalistic consumers, namely voluntary simplicity, reduced consumption, anti-consumption, and inconspicuous minimalism based firmly on two fundamental constructs: consumption goal orientation and conditional susceptibility. Moreover, they also contributed an addition of inconspicuous minimalism to the current literature of minimalistic consumption. This study provided a holistic framework that describes minimalistic consumption in different forms that would be useful for both researchers and practitioners. However, one of the limitations of this

comprehensive typology is that it was not empirically tested. Therefore, in this thesis, we attempt to address this gap by backing up the proposed typology (Pangarkar et al., 2021) with solid empirical data gathered in one specific market.

In our case country, Finland, the first national programme to promote sustainable consumption and production has gained much attention from the Finnish public since 2005. Therefore, many studies in Finland focused on this topic. They proposed many reasons to limit consumption in order to gain environmental sustainability. Kalaniemi et al., (2020) analysed the carbon footprints based on the level of consumption of individual consumers that corresponds to Universal basic income. Based on this analysis, they suggested that in addition to technology improvements, downscaling of consumption and changes in the overconsumption lifestyle are necessary to achieve the sustainable level. While Lettenmeier et al., (2014) paid much attention to the material footprint. An allocation of the sustainable material footprint to different kinds of household consumption was proposed in their research. From reviewing previous literature, it seems that studies about the minimalistic consumer segment in Finland are very limited. Most extant researches focusing on sustainable consumption in Finland (Honkasalo, 2011, Lettenmeier et al, 2014, Salo et al., 2016, Kalaniemi et al., 2020), which is only one aspect of the minimalism theme.

1.3. Research purpose

The prior studies of minimalistic consumption have been approached from many different perspectives, as well under various definitions, such as voluntary simplicity, de-consumption, anti-consumption, minimalism. The literature available has been received complaints about its scatteredness and lack of synthesis. Although Pangarkar et al., (2020) proposed a holistic typology defining minimalistic consumption and its different types, the success of this framework was not empirically tested. In addition, the reasons and purposes explaining why customers engage in the phenomenon of minimalistic consumption have been neglected in previous studies and were not empirically examined in Pangarkar's research as well. To this end, we address the research gap by empirically analysing the motives and aims of consumers when engaging in minimalistic consumption based on proposed descriptions of minimalistic

consumer groups in the typology of Pangarkar et al., (2020). This thesis aims to study one specific market, Finland, where there is limited availability of extant research about minimalistic consumption.

This study is conducted from the view of customers to gather knowledge and thoughts of consumers that are pursuing minimalistic consumption. Besides, the study also chooses kitchenware consumption – one of the familiar fields in the expenditure of customers as a research object to explore the minimalistic consumption practice of Finnish consumers. The study conducts a detailed minimalistic customer analysis in the Finnish market with the view of answering the two below research questions.

RQ1: How do Finnish consumers practice minimalistic consumption towards kitchenware?

RQ2: What motives and aims encourage Finnish customers to engage in minimalistic consumption?

With this in mind, the study aims to present a deep understanding of the motives and aims of minimalistic consumers on the basis of the analysis of the previous literature and the results emerging from the collected data with minimalistic consumers. Moreover, the second research objective of this study is to seek minimalistic consumption practices that Finnish customers take action in their consumption patterns, specifically for the context of kitchenware consumption. The presented results will help researchers and practitioners to gain a more detailed understanding of this growing segment of consumers. From such explorations, the manager can provide relevant and suitable strategies to engage this targeted customer segment into meaningful consumption.

1.4. Thesis structure

The thesis consists of five chapters and appendices. The first chapter is the introduction part that describes the emergence of the phenomenon of minimalistic consumption as an alternative to consumerism in many areas over the world. This chapter also reviews previous literature about the phenomenon that has been discussed under various forms, then addresses the research gap that prior studies have ignored and have not been tested

empirically, finally presents the research questions and research objectives of the study. In the next chapter, we provide the theoretical background for theories and definitions mentioned in the study based on existing researches. A provision of kitchenware production and consumption in Finland, as well the minimalistic consumption practices towards kitchenware are described at the beginning of the second chapter. Then, the literature part of minimalistic consumption is followed in this chapter. We explain the concepts on consumerism, then present forms of minimalistic consumption that were discussed in prior studies. From this ground, the theoretical framework of the thesis is built on and the propositions of the motives and aims of minimalistic consumers for the study are presented. Chapter 3 addresses the methodology of the research. In this chapter, we present the research philosophy, approaches to theory development, and research design. Further, an explanation of the data collection method and data analysis is illustrated in detail. The results found from the collected data are presented then in the next chapter. In addition, quotations from what participants answer about their kitchen in the interviews are also used as evidence to strengthen the persuasiveness of findings in chapter 4. Chapter 5 provides the conclusions of the study. A discussion of main findings reflecting previous studies is demonstrated in this final chapter, then we mention the theoretical contributions and managerial implications of the study based on our findings, meanwhile, conclude with limitations of this study and ideas for further research. The references and appendixes as the details of interviews are listed at the end of the thesis.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter comprehensively discusses literature relevant to the research topic and also defines the key concepts related to the phenomenon ‘minimalistic consumption’. The chapter is organised in the following way. In the first section, we provide holistic information about kitchenware consumption in Finland. A description of the general situation of kitchenware consumption and production in Finland is presented. Then a portrayal of minimalistic consumption practices towards the kitchenware in Finland is followed. In the second section, we provide a literature review about the definition of consumerism, minimalistic consumption, and the forms of minimalistic consumption. We then propose the motives and aims of consumers when engaging in minimalistic consumption based on previous studies.

2.1. Kitchenware consumption

2.1.1. Kitchenware consumption and production in Finland

In 2020, the total value of the global market for kitchenware was valued at USD 62.01 billion, indicating a growth rate at a CAGR of 5.0% from 2019 to 2025. Europe is the leading region in the kitchenware market with a share of 34% in 2018 and is estimated to grow at a considerable CAGR in a short time (Grand view research, 2019). In our case, the consumer expenditure on kitchenware in Finland was valued at only USD 225 million, ranked fifth among the countries that consume the least kitchenware in the European Union (CBI, 2005). Although the consumption of kitchen utensils in Finland is not large due to its small population of 5.5 million, Finland has been well-known for its design in the field of kitchen utensils. Finnish kitchens have many different shapes and sizes; however, every Finnish household may possess a few common kitchenware coming from domestic brands like Iittala, Arabia, Hackman, Fiskars, or Marimekko cooperating with the famous Moomin design. Many Finnish kitchenware brands have been favoured by Finnish generations and solidified their presence in Finnish homes by their distinctive design and high quality. In addition to favoring local brands, some foreign kitchenware brands such as Ikea, Kenwood, Tefal have also received many positive reviews and are sold in many shops here.

In the past, most of the products of the local kitchenware brands were made in Finland; however, this has changed in recent years. Instead of designing and producing in Finland at a high cost, many brands have chosen countries with cheaper labour costs and the availability of materials to make their products. In order to keep the strong branding with the good image of Finland as one of the Nordic countries, the design for the products continues to be conducted in Finland, while products are manufactured at other places of the world. Iittala products are now made in many Asia countries as Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, and China, only some glassware is still made in Finland (Iittala catalogue, 2017). While all Arabia products today are made in Thailand and Romania after Arabia's ceramic factory in Helsinki was closed in 2016 (Arabia website). Marimekko only designs and develops products in Finland, the rest of the manufacturing process is done in the European Union (Marimekko website). There are exceptions to Hackman and Fiskars brands, the cookware coming from these two brands are still designed and manufactured at their factories in Finland (Hackman website, Fiskars website).

2.1.2. Minimalistic consumption practices towards the kitchenware in Finland

Minimalist design

Finland was not an affluent country in the past, after the Second World War, Finland suffered a huge loss of both people and property. At that time, most Finnish people neither afford to buy the goods on a regular basis nor consume products with luxurious materials. This required designers to come up with products that can do their job well and be long-lasting. Today, Finland has developed and become one of the most successful countries in Europe. Finnish designers can enjoy their creativity with the support of modern technology and consumers can afford to pursue the newest trends. However, the timeless design and practicality of the product are still preferred by many generations of Finns (Design from Finland, 2020). Using timeless kitchenware that can last for a long time and serve well a purpose until the end of the product's life is considered to be one of the minimalistic consumption practices. Błoński & Witek (2019) considered that minimalistic consumption can be viewed from both quantity and quality aspects. From the qualitative perspective, consuming durable items can avoid buying and using many disposable products (Błoński & Witek, 2019). When

consumers acquire a product with high longevity, they can avoid spending money buying the same products several times. The number of broken or damaged products released into the environment is reduced. The use of resources in production is also cut down due to the drop in the need to replace damaged appliances. It seems that the preference to consume the timeless products today in Finland is not purely for economic reasons as in the past, but largely for environmental concerns.

Another feature of Finnish design that reflects well one of the principles of “minimalistic consumption” is simplicity. Finnish customers enjoy the simple beauty and minimalist aesthetic of the product (Skou & Munch, 2016). This preference can be influenced by dominant are emphasized in design trends in Finland as “Scandinavian design” in the 1950s and “New Nordic design” since 2005. Instead of trying to use excessive materials or luxurious materials, Finnish designers try to capture the pure and simple shape of the product. The Norwegian design historian Espen Johnsen explained further by showing the relationship between simple aesthetic and the principle “less turns out to be more”: “Capturing the pure and simple form is regarded as a precondition for luring any viewer or consumer to consider other aspects of the product.” (Skou & Munch, 2016). Pursuing the minimalist design with less used materials and discreet appearance can be considered as one of the minimalistic consumption practices. According to Pangarkar et al., (2020), acquisition and consumption of such designs and patterns can help to reduce the waste and practice minimalism in the aesthetic of the design.

Decluttering

Like people in other countries, Finnish people consider their kitchen to be the heart of the house, where they take care of each family member through meals and entertain their guests. For this purpose, more and more open-plan kitchens that connect to the living room are today built. The kitchen is often filled with natural light from the big window and has cabinets around the tabletop and the sink (YIT, 2015). These cabinets help to store all of the kitchen utensils inside and make the Finnish kitchen have an unclutter look. Such a kitchen design aims to serve the enjoyment of simplistic surroundings and the desire to make the space more functional for Finnish people. Besides the kitchen design, in order to keep the kitchen simple and better utilize space,

one of the common practices that minimalistic customers encourage is decluttering. They sort out unnecessary stuff in the kitchen and try to get rid of them. Besides, they also try to reduce clutter by avoiding hoarding needless kitchen utensils from attractive sales or discount programs. It has been proven that decluttering provides a deeply satisfying experience to minimalistic consumers (Pangarkar et al., 2020). The individual can free up their kitchen space from unwanted or unused kitchenware, utilize the kitchen space more efficiently, and gain joy from donating these unwanted items to other people who can make good use of them.

Consumption with high concern of environment

Finland is one of the countries in Europe that firmly emphasized educating and raising awareness about climate change at all levels and public. Based on environmental education programs supported by the government as The national Long-term Climate and Energy Strategy (2008), The Government Programme (2007), Finnish people can easily access the major source of information about the environment and climate change. (Tilastokeskus & Pipatti, 2010). The climate change topic has become one part of every subject in the Finnish education system (Cord, 2019). This explains why more and more Finnish people take concern about the consumption practices relating to ecology and the environment. Consumers who take the form of anti-consumption argue that overconsumption has been causing irreversible damages to the ecosystem (Iyer & Muncy, 2009). Taking from this view, many Finnish consumers who engage in minimalistic consumption try to limit their consumption by buying only what is needed. On many websites or blogs writing about minimalist kitchenware and how to create a minimalist kitchen, the most common topic discussed is the list of kitchen utensils and appliances that need in the kitchen. Besides, consuming products using recycled materials in production and packaging is also another practice that Finnish people conduct to reduce the negative impacts of consumption on the environment. Recycling is not something unfamiliar to Finnish people. The first recycling programmes for bottles began in the 1950s and have been continuously proceeding until today (Bogdanov, 2021). Nowadays, recycling containers as biowaste, paper, carton, metal, plastic, mixed waste, glass are available in most housing establishments in Finland. Products with recycled materials or recycled packaging are widely sold in

the Finnish market. Recycling and consuming products using recycled materials are encouraged by minimalistic consumers as a way to reduce the consumption of raw materials and lower the amount of waste released into the environment.

2.2. Minimalistic consumption

2.2.1. The concepts on consumerism

The dominance of consumerism in societies after the Second World War has gained enormous attention from scholars. In the extant literature, researchers have approached consumerism from different views and explained it from various aspects.

Firstly, the concept of consumerism is described as a factor of social change because of the importance of consumption in economic growth (Hirschle, 2014, Bylok, 2017). Over the past few decades, the emphasis on the consumption and acquisition of an increasing number of goods and services have been emphasised considerably widespread in many developed capitalist western societies. Constant consumption creates profit for the manufacturers, as well as the government, benefitting from the value-added taxes on consumer goods and services (Bylok, 2017). Secondly, consumerism is defined as a people's life purpose (Bocock, 1993, p.48). It is argued that the best way to achieve happiness is through consumption and possession of goods (Sklair, 2010). When an individual acquires the goods they need or desire to have, he or she experiences the pleasure from these possessions. The eagerness to experience pleasure has been one of the most important aims of individuals in the consumer society, where the consumption is as a way of life accepted by a specific group of people (Bylok, 2017). Thirdly, consumerism is connected with a certain type of social system (Bauman, 2009, cited in Bylok, 2017). The power of consumption not only meets the basic needs of humans such as secure shelter, food, clothing but also reflects the social status of an individual based on material goods that they use. Bylok (2017) showed that most consumers today are searching for goods that meet the needs associated with their social life. This is right for both upper classes and lower classes when more and more people want to stand out socially by trying to purchase luxurious products despite their limited financial resources. In all of its interpretation,

consumerism has become a part of people's lives and was generally accepted as a way of life to satisfy one's needs and wants from the necessities to secondary desires of social life.

Longing, acquisition, use, and waste disposal, then dreaming to consume other new goods is the process that most consumerist individuals have experienced. This kind of behaviour leads to overconsumption and criticisms about the development of excessive consumption and overproduction then. Consumption benefits economic growth; however, the encouragement to the constant acquisition results in environmental risks. Gaining certain goods provides satisfaction to the consumers; however, the satisfaction stemming from materialistic values only lasts in the short term (Inglehart, 2015) and there is an increasing body of evidence that high levels of consumption do not considerably raise human well-being (Assadourian, 2010). Facing criticism of consumerism and overconsumption, an alternative to consumerism and overconsumption has been proposed and become widespread, namely minimalistic consumption.

2.2.2. Minimalistic consumption and forms of minimalistic consumption

Minimalistic consumption

Minimalistic consumption is one of many terms used to define the lifestyle that, according to some researchers, its followers seek the meaning of life by taking another view other than consumerism-oriented approaches (Dopierala, 2017). Minimalistic consumers no longer hold the belief "more is better" of the consumerist lifestyle, instead they argue that owning less can gain more intangible values leading to a meaningful and happy life. Instead of acquiring constant material goods, minimalistic consumers focus on simplifying their lives by limiting their consumption and reducing their dependency on materialistic aspects (Iyer & Muncy, 2016, Dopierala, 2017, Pangarkar, 2020). It is necessary to make clear that minimalistic consumption does not mean that its followers give up totally on consumption and reject all materialistic possessions. This phenomenon should be understood that its followers keep their consumption within proper and reasonable limits (Dopierala, 2017). Each individual

has the different sizes of their appropriate consumption; therefore, it is difficult to measure what is the exact volume that an individual should acquire in their consumption practice. Taking from the view of minimalistic consumption, each individual decides what is 'enough' and what is 'excessive' based on their moderation and balance towards the consumption (Dopierała, 2017).

Minimalistic consumption is introduced as a tool to pursue the goals set by the individuals who take the view of anti-overconsumption. Dopierała (2017) proposed that minimalistic consumption should be not treated as a goal itself, instead it should be a tool in the pursuit of a goal. Minimalistic consumption simply shows what is unnecessary in life, discarding, or limiting the dependence on such things, so we can focus on what is important (Millburn & Nicodemus, 2016, p.26). Pangarkar et al., (2020) assumed that minimalistic consumption plays a role as a paradigm and philosophy to lead people to a simplistic, unclutter, and meaningful life. Millburn & Nicodemus (2016, p.25) pointed out that minimalistic consumption is a tool to help individuals to be free from any tensions, worries, and guilts.

Minimalistic consumption should be seen from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. Minimalistic consumption has been discussed widely in terms of quantity by its followers and several researchers. Paying less attention to collect and acquire materialistic goods, limiting materialistic possessions, decluttering excess things from the used spaces are common behaviours often mentioned about this anti-consumerist lifestyle. In addition, minimalistic consumption can be considered from the qualitative point of view. Błoński & Witek (2019) emphasised that the considerations in choosing high-quality products that can last long from the decade to next in order to avoid the consumption of many disposable products can also be seen as part of minimalistic consumption. In terms of quality, it should be not limited to only materials that help items become more durable, the quality of packaging, workmanship should also be paid attention to (Błoński & Witek, 2019).

Forms of minimalistic consumption

Minimalistic consumption has been presenting for a long time under alternative trends to consumerism. Researchers have taken a different view of minimalistic consumption

and tried to explain the phenomenon from the view of social sciences, as well psychological and sociological theories. Based on its antecedents reviewed in the extant literature, it is suggested that minimalistic consumption can take various forms including voluntary simplicity, de-consumption, anti-consumption, and minimalism.

Voluntary simplicity

Voluntary simplicity has a long history since the 1970s. This concept was introduced by Samuel Alexander, then popularized by Elgin, and received much attention from both customers and researchers. (Dopierała, 2017, Brown & Vergragt, 2016). It is claimed that simple livers try to minimize expenditure on materialistic sources, and spend their time, money, and energy towards fulfilling and pleasure activities (Dopierała, 2017), especially activities that come from non-materialistic sources (Etzioni, 1998). In pursuit of a simplistic lifestyle, the followers can accept a lower income and shorter workweek in order to buy more free time for their hobbies or activities that provide satisfaction, meaning, and happiness.

A personal definition of what is enough is emphasized in the practice of this voluntary simplicity approach. Advocates of voluntary simplicity do not need to live in poverty or reject all materialistic goods, instead, they know sufficiency levels and find the contentment from their level of 'enough' consumption (Alexander, 2011). In order to consume in moderation, defining which values is important in the individual's life is one of the practices that help simple livers understand what kind of meaningful life they aspire to approach and navigate their consumption behaviours. By realizing which values we most value and which things we least value, "we could focus on what's important, so we could focus on life's deeper meaning" (Millburn & Nicodemus, 2016, p.26).

Because of the limited amount of energy, time, and finance that an individual can possess, voluntary simplifiers often try to maximize their consumption utility (Pangarkar et al., 2020). Judicious use of available resources is highly recommended in the consumption practice of its followers. Instead of spending money to acquire more material items and taking time and effort on activities relating to items like ordering, cleaning, looking after them, and then getting rid of them, simple livers

choose to limit their consumption from such materialistic sources. Etzioni (1998) described simple livers as those who limit their expenditures and allocate their energy, money, and time towards non-materialistic sources such as hobbies, pleasure activities in order to cultivate satisfaction, happiness, and the meaning of life. The basic ground of the concept of voluntary simplicity is that by taking less notice of the collection and purchase of material goods, consumers can turn their attention to values that are important and meaningful in their life (Pangarkar et al., 2020).

In defining voluntary simplifiers, Pangarkar et al., (2020) assumed that one of the motives that simplifiers engage in judicious resource allocation is because of potential economic constraints. Such a definition has caused many arguments among researchers. Etzioni (1998) argued that simple livers limit their excessive consumption due to their choice out of free will rather than because of financial constraints. Iyer and Muncy (2009) demonstrated that the followers of the 'voluntary simplicity' trend are not driven by economic constraints. People who modify their consumption behaviours only or mainly due to financial difficulties are not classified as voluntary simplifiers because their change is not voluntary. On the contrary, people who give up high-paying jobs or reduce their workweek in order to gain more leisure time and accept less income leading to less consumption do qualify because they voluntarily choose to simplify rather than other available solutions for their problems, for example asking for help like hiring a maid or technology support. (Etzioni, 1998).

Anti-consumption

Anti-consumption is another form of minimalistic consumption, which consumers try to consciously minimize the negative impacts resulting from their consumption (Błoński & Witek, 2019). Some researchers state that anti-consumption is a special type of non-consumption that exists in cases where consumers have a high awareness of environmental and societal issues and strongly reject overconsumption. Iyer and Muncy (2009) state that one of the reasons for consumers to involve anti-consumption is the desire to fight the negative influences that overconsumption creates. Cambefort & Pecot (2020) argued that most reasons support the anti-consumption approach in consumer research studies relate to progressive concerns such as improving equality, enhancing ethical practices, and protecting the environment. Anti-consumption

focuses on the reasons against consumption and materialism (Lee & Ahn, 2016). The Anti-consumption movement has raised much attention from consumers who choose to intentionally avoid certain types of consumption based on their personal philosophies.

During the last decades of the century, several researchers have studied and defined anti-consumption. Zavestoski (2002) described anti-consumption as “a resistance to, distaste of, or even resentment or rejection of, consumption more generally”. While Zavestoski viewed the concept from a macro perspective that anti-consumption is up against consumption in general, Cherrier et al., (2011) defined anti-consumption from a micro perspective that anti-consumption targets specific acts against consumption as boycotting certain products or brands based on self-interested and socio-environmental motivations of consumers. Craig-Lees (2006) and Pangarkar et al., (2020) suggests that anti-consumption should be viewed from both a general and practical view. They assumed that anti-consumption not only reflects a general limitation in the consumption practices but also strongly avoids certain types of products or brands due to concerns about sustainability, societal welfare, and the environment. (Craig-Lees, 2006, Pangarkar et al., 2020). From the view of anti-consumerism, sustainability, societal welfare, and the environment play an important role in the consumption decisions of consumers. Consumers can actively boycott specific products or brands that have adverse effects on the environment and society, rather than only reduce their overall level of consumption (Iyer and Muncy, 2009).

De-consumption

One of the forms of the phenomenon of minimalistic consumption that was also mentioned in the literature is de-consumption. The concept of “de-consumption” has several definitions in prior studies. De-consumption was understood as a conscious consumption that consumers avoid the excess and consciously consume less than before (Leonard & Conrad, 2011, p. 145). Pangarkar et al., (2020) described de-consumption as the name of ‘reduced consumption’ that consumers engage in only necessity and utility-driven consumption. From the historical perspective, de-consumption was considered as a response to tough economic times.

Unlike the concept of voluntary simplicity that the consumers limit their consumption based on their free choice, the followers of the trend de-consumption are commonly forced to reduce their expenditure due to economic constraints. Economic constraints can be described as a deficiency in financial resources needed to satisfy consumers' needs or desires (Hamilton et al., 2019). When the financial crisis began in 2007, a significant drop in income in many economies leads to a subsequent decline in consumption. The post-Great Recession economy has seen a reduction in the amount of consumption of the individual, especially middle-class people when their personal budget becomes tighter (Brown & Vergragt, 2016). Kyluk et al., (2017) assumed that economic crisis plays a considerable role in shaping customers' attitudes toward de-consumption and changing their consumption practices to fit their limited budget. Dopierała (2017) proposed that "it is not a choice but rather a necessity" to take on a conscious limitation of consumption and search for alternatives when their financial resources are limited.

Each day, many individuals experience financial constraints that force them to lower the level of living they were used to, give up some desired consumption, and control their consumption behaviours. In the temporary state, consumers can view financial difficulties as a negative factor to restrict their consumption. However, in the long term, economic hardship can change the nature of consumer spending (Hamilton et al., 2019). The great Recession or financial crisis gives people a chance to reflect on the consumption practices they were taking before and to recognise that this kind of high consumption they were accustomed to is utterly unsecured in the unpredicted future. The followers of the concept of de-consumption using this moment to search for another path are more rational to satisfy their needs and enhance security for the future. Economic constraints force the advocates to decrease their consumption; however, instead of living in deprivation, they try to use their limited financial resources effectively in order to keep their level of well-being and quality of life. Supporters of the concept of de-consumption consume only necessities or occasion-driven consumptions such as birthdays, anniversaries, or celebrations (Pangarkar et al., 2020). They spend a greater proportion of their limited resources on only purchases according to their needs and requirement. However, this does not mean they give up totally consumptions that provide them the pleasure, instead, they still engage in certain

consumption, but in moderation. By spending resources efficiently, it is the way that customers adapt to their resource scarcity (Hamilton et al., 2019).

People who cope with financial constraints find it difficult to predict what happened in the future. This creates a sense of uncertainty and increases insecurities about the prospect of possible changes in life like loss of employment, serious sickness, divorce (Hamilton et al., 2019, Pangarkar et al., 2020). Taking the perspective of unpredicted life changes, individuals practice frugality to conserve their finance in order to cope with difficulties may happen in the future and gain the feeling of high financial security for their life. Pangarkar et al., (2020) proposed that the basic premise of de-consumption or called 'reduced consumption' is reducing the high consumption, consuming only necessities, and practicing frugality in response to economic limitations.

Minimalism

While the concept of 'voluntary simplicity' reached popularity in the 1970s, minimalism was only presented in the literature as a lifestyle that became popular after the crisis in the capitalist system in 2008 (Dopierała, 2017). Unlike previous forms of minimalistic consumption that focusing on the limitations in the quantity, the concept of 'minimalism' emphasizes quality instead of quantity (Dopierała, 2017, Błoński & Witek, 2019, Kang et al., 2021). Dopierała (2017) considered minimalism as a type of conscious consumption, which means that consumers pay more attention to their structural consumption. Instead of buying products that are cheap, low quality, and easily break after a short time of using, advocates of 'minimalism' encourage to consume products that are good quality and long-lasting. They hold the belief that a higher level of quality can help them to avoid consuming similar items again and again and reduce the waste from disposable items. Minimalism does not reject consumption in general, but it gives the chance and the desire to possess higher-quality products (Dopierała, 2007). Minimalists continue to engage in material consumption but in a different way, they reduce the number of total possessions, consume only an appropriate amount and avoid excesses by acquiring fewer and higher quality products. The durability of the material objects allows consumers to use them for a long time and downside the number of their possessions. (Kang et al., 2021). The prior articles

stated that minimalism is a form of conscious choice (Kramarczyk 2015: 283, cited in Dopierała, 2017) that consumers make their purchases intentionally. "It is not about a revolution nor sacrifices, but rationalizing the state of our assets and the level of consumption" [Mularczyk-Meyer 2014: 64, cited in Dopierała, 2017).

The approach of minimalism not only focuses on the limitations in the quantity and changes in structural consumption relating to the higher level of quality and value towards purchased products but also presented in the view of aesthetics. In the mid-twentieth century, the term 'minimalism' often inspired the fields of aesthetic works as music, visual arts, architecture, design (Botha, 2017, p.4), and later in many practical applications of life as home decor, furniture, fashion, and cooking (Błoński & Witek, 2019). Minimalist aesthetics captures the principles of a minimalist lifestyle about simplicity, natural beauty, transparent and uncomplicated form, and decluttering (Botha, 2017, p.5, Błoński & Witek, 2019). The concept of aesthetic simplicity is also characterized by the individual preference for subtle and neat designs that avoid using unnecessarily costly materials and loud logos (Pangarkar et al., 2020). The aesthetics that minimalist customers are pursuing in designs requires great skills from artists and designers to capture the pure and simple form, but still express the beauty and subtlety from that kind of simple shape.

Minimalism emphasizes on quality of goods instead of quantity and the primacy of minimalist aesthetics in designs. From this standpoint, several authors stated that minimalism is a lifestyle that is applied by individuals from the middle and upper class, who can afford to consume products with high quality and well design (Dopierała, 2017). From this perspective, there are some equivalent points between the term 'minimalism' and 'inconspicuous consumption'. Inconspicuous consumers prefer designs that are high quality, simple style, and discreet signals (Berger & Ward, 2010). They belong to a group of people with high social status, a good level of education, and high income (Berger & Ward, 2010). Being inspired and influenced by the extant research on inconspicuous consumption, Pangarkar et al., (2020) proposed inconspicuous consumption as a form of minimalism called 'inconspicuous minimalism'.

2.2.3. The motives and aims of consumers when engaging in minimalistic consumption

The literature review defined what minimalistic consumption is and described various forms of minimalistic consumption. This process has identified different approaches of each individual towards the term ‘minimalistic consumption’. Minimalistic consumers have their own motives and aims when engaging in minimalistic consumption. This study aims to understand what reasons motivate consumers to pursue minimalistic consumption and what goals they aspire to achieve through this kind of consumption. From the literature, it is revealed that there are four main motives that consumers take when practicing minimalistic consumption.

Table 1. Proposition 1: Self-fulfilling motive

Self-fulfilling motive	Feeling peaceful in mind.
(Proposition 1)	Saving time, money, and energy.
	Increasing the quality of life.
	Achieving satisfaction, happiness, and fulfilment.

Table 1 describes the first motive that consumers engage in minimalistic consumption. It is the self-fulfilling motive. This motive is suggested from the literature ‘voluntary simplicity’ – one of the forms of minimalistic consumption. Consumers who pursue minimalistic consumption due to self-fulfilling motive focus less on the acquisition of material possessions in order to achieve non-materialistic values. From the literature, there are four different goals that minimalistic consumers aspire to gain through their consumption practices.

Extant research states that “voluntary simplicity is a healing mechanism” (Pangarkar et al., 2020) since consumers gain peace of mind when they strip away the unnecessary things and focus on the important aspects of life (Millburn & Nicodemus, 2016 p. 24). In recent years, decluttering the home is widely advocated by minimalistic consumers because of its effectiveness in freeing one’s mind from excessive consumption and using the spaces in the house (Pangarkar et al., 2020). Peace of mind is one of the goals that followers of ‘voluntary simplicity’ aim to achieve through their practices. By eliminating inessential possessions inside the house full of stuff, simplifiers enjoy the

empty space and relieve the stress from taking care of and cleaning those stuff. Besides, paying less attention to collect and acquire materialistic goods helps consumers to redirect their time and energy to create a peaceful personal space to understanding more themselves and intrinsic values that benefit their life (Zavestoski, 2002). No longer worry about possessing things allows individuals more space to appreciate everyday things (Kang, Martinez, & Johnson, 2021) and experience real peace of mind.

Another goal that promotes the ideas of minimalistic consumption in terms of self-fulfilling motive is saving time, money, and energy. By limiting materialistic consumption, consumers can save their time and effort from steps of a consumer buying process as identifying the need, searching information, evaluating alternatives, deciding purchases, and evaluating post-purchase. Besides, less acquisition of material items also allows consumers to free their time and energy from taking care of this stuff, then getting rid of them when the role of these items ends. Simplifiers argue that by reducing the purchase of unnecessary consumer goods, the consumers can save money from buying goods that provide them only temporary satisfaction and redirect their money to activities that are more meaningful to them (Inglehart, 2015, Pangarkar et al., 2020).

Regarding the self-fulfilling motive, some minimalistic consumers aim to increase their quality of life by not indulging in excessive consumption. From the view of the form 'minimalism', the emphasis on quality rather than quantity promotes customers to choose products of higher quality (Dopierała, 2017, Błoński & Witek, 2019, Kang et al., 2021). This style of consumption allows individuals to enjoy great experiences from using high-quality items. Taking the perspective of the form 'voluntary simplicity', some advocates of less dependence on materialistic values embrace the idea of working less, earning less, consuming less, then they have more free time for themselves (Brown & Vergragt, 2016) to relax, to pursue hobbies, to grow, and to nourish relationships. As a result, it is possible to indicate that more leisure time that individuals own reflects their subjective quality of life (Etzioni, 1998).

Voluntary simplifiers argue that pursuing a consumerist lifestyle leads to negative emotions like stress, depression, sadness, and anxiety rather than positive contributions

(Kang et al., 2021). They believe that personal satisfaction, fulfillment, and happiness are the results of non-materialistic values rather than consumerism-oriented values (Zavestoski, 2002). They prefer concentrating on important aspects in life rather than materialistic possessions that are defined as a success in some specific cultures. From the perspective of voluntary simplifiers, their goal orientation is to redirect their time, money, and attention to develop pursuits and gain experiences that provide satisfaction and happiness (Etzioni, 1998, Pangarkar et al., 2020), to invest in relationships with nature and the people around them that they most value (Gregg, 1936). Lessening the attention to the consumer marketplace helps to reduce one's dependence on materialistic values that in the long term can increase life satisfaction (Zavestoski, 2002).

Table 2. Proposition 2: Economic motive

Economic motive	Feeling secure economically
(Proposition 2)	Using financial resources effectively.

Table 2 highlights the limited financial resources as one of the motives that force consumers to take on a limitation-oriented perspective. The literature reveals that individuals who engage in less consumption than before because of economic motives aim to achieve different goals through their changes in consumption. There are two goals proposed from previous studies under the form 'de-consumption' and 'voluntary simplicity'.

It is proven that economic constraints lead to changes in people's psychosocial environments. People who often experience financial hardships find themselves in situations that are more frequent fluctuation as job changes, changes in the lifecycle as divorce, the birth of a child, or sickness. As a result, they feel difficult to predict what happens in the future and create a sense of uncertainty about their surroundings. (Hamilton et al., 2019). Uncertainty about the future alters the way individuals engage in their consumption. Taking the view from 'de-consumption', the negative prospects of financial crisis or pandemic crisis led to a realization that it is reasonable to decrease consumption and practice frugality in order to enhance security for the future (Pangarkar et al., 2020). Financial security is the goal that consumers aim for when they practice using financial resources cautiously and prudently.

Unlike the followers of the form ‘de-consumption’, voluntary simplifiers take a different view of economic hardship. From their point of view, the financial crisis creates the opportunity for consumers to think over their consumption practices and look for alternatives (Kulyk et al., 2017). They voluntarily choose to limit their consumption to a reasonable size, avoid the excess, and only spend money on things that bring value to them. Instead of being forced to reduce consumption, they take a further step towards “conscious consumption” which is defined as a conscious limitation of expenditure and highly control over the consumption practice (Zavestoski, 2002, Pangarkar et al., 2020). Due to a limited personal budget, using the financial resources effectively is another goal that customers aim for when involving in minimalistic consumption (Pangarkar et al., 2020).

Table 3. Proposition 3: Environmental and social motive

	Contributing to the environment and society
Environmental and social motive	Reducing the waste
(Proposition 3)	Matching to consumers’ personal ideologies

Table 3 reveals the third motive that customers engage in minimalistic consumption. Based on the extant study about the form ‘anti-consumption’, it is believed that some minimalistic consumers avoid certain types of consumption because of normative impacts driven by environmental focus and societal welfare (Zavestoski, 2002, Iyer & Muncy, 2009, Pangarkar et al., 2020). In many societies, consumption is increasingly playing a central role in economic development. This causes growing concerns about the downside of overconsumption, materialistic lifestyle on the environment and society. It has long been acknowledged in several studies and policy documents that there is a correlation between consumption and ecological impact (Alexander, 2011). In the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, it was argued that ‘the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in the industrialized countries.’ (Sustainable development). Individuals who engage in minimalistic consumption believe that the current level of consumption and patterns of production and consumption is not sustainable for the environment and society in general. As well as self-fulfilling and financial reasons, there are also environmental and social reasons that promote customers to pursue minimalistic consumption.

According to the literature, consumers who preach minimalistic consumption believe that their actions can make greater environmental and social contributions, reduce waste, or simply these actions are matching their personal philosophies with that of the brand (Pangarkar et al., 2020, Błoński & Witek, 2019, Iyer and Muncy, 2009). Some scholars state that consumers who highly engage in minimalistic consumption due to environmental and social causes are strongly convinced about reducing the level of consumption and refraining from consuming certain products or brands for the sake of the planet (Seegebarth et al., 2016). These deliberate efforts stem from the belief that they are taking a good move to minimise the negatives effects of excessive consumption and contributing positive values to the environment and society through their consumption practices. While other consumers involve in the reduced and more efficient consumption with the aim of reducing waste from consumerist lifestyle and from the excessive exploitation of natural resources as well raw materials in the manufacturing process (Błoński & Witek, 2019, Pangarkar et al., 2020). They called for using recycled materials, avoiding overexploitation of resources, and making the purchasing choices consciously driven by a sustainable mindset. Several studies state that minimalistic consumers make choices in their consumption on the basis of their personal ideologies about social, ecological, and environmental issues (Iyer & Muncy, 2009). They avoid consuming certain products or brands or switch to alternate brands when they feel that the business philosophy of the brand does not align with their personal philosophies of environmental and societal concerns (Pangarkar et al., 2020).

Table 4. Proposition 4: Social pressure and group affiliation motive

Social pressure and group affiliation motive	Affiliating with the group
(Proposition 4)	Maintaining and achieving social status

The last motive that has been discussed in the extant literature is social pressure and group affiliation motive. This motive was proposed as one of defining contributions on the form of ‘minimalism’ in the previous study (Pangarkar et al., 2020). In their study, they assumed that minimalistic consumers who prefer consuming designs and materials that using subtle and quiet signals, having low visual prominence because of normative influences driven by social pressure and group affiliation (Pangarkar et al., 2020). Unlike individuals who engage in minimalistic consumption due to financial

constraints, environmental and social focus, or self-fulfilling reasons, consumers influenced by the social circles are willing to pay more for minimalist designs with more subtle and neat signs because of the distinctive and differential characteristics of these products (Han et al., 2010). From their point of view, soft and muted logos are harder to identify, so only a narrow group of peers can correctly notice (Pangarkar et al., 2020). The desire to be classified correctly by only insiders and communicate with others in the group of the elite is one of the main aims that minimalistic consumers pursue in discreet designs, along with practices towards sustainability and waste reduction.

It has long been discussed that consumers engage in consumption due to not only its functions but also symbol value (Levy, 1959). Material items that an individual possesses can shape inferences about his or her financial capabilities and social class (Błoński & Witek, 2019). Minimalistic consumers are driven by the social pressure motive mainly from the upper class. They are well educated and have stable professions in society. (Dopierała, 201, Pangarkar et al., 2020). They dismiss the idea to be materialists by avoiding traditional status symbols from visible and pretentious designs. This kind of group of consumers focuses on waste reduction by avoiding unnecessary costly materials that only serve to show off the affluence of the owner. (Berger & Ward, 2010, Pangarkar et al., 2020). However, the desire to be distinguished oneself from their own social class and to maintain the status through their consumption is still there. Instead of flaunting their affluence via traditional conspicuous consumption, they focus on the acquisition and possession of discreet designs requiring great attention to detail, high quality, and often associate with the term 'luxury' to achieve and maintain their social status (Pangarkar et al., 2020). Achieving and maintaining the social status is another goal that consumers who pursue in minimalistic consumers due to social pressure motivation aspire to achieve through their consumption practice.

The motives and aims for minimalistic consumption developed from the extant academic literature are used as propositions in this research to study motives and aims in minimalistic consumption and gain an advance in understanding. The propositions are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Motives and aims of minimalistic consumers (Propositions of the study)

Motives of minimalistic customers	Aims of minimalistic consumptions
Self-fulfilling motive (Proposition 1)	Feeling peaceful in mind. Saving time, money, and energy. Increasing the quality of life. Achieving satisfaction, happiness, and fulfilment.
Economic motive (Proposition 2)	Feeling secure economically Using financial resources effectively.
Environmental and social motive (Proposition 3)	Contributing to the environment and society Reducing the waste Matching to consumers' personal ideologies
Social pressure and group affiliation motive (Proposition 4)	Affiliating with the group Maintaining and achieving social status

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology, which consists of research philosophy and approach to theory development, research design, and the chosen method for data collection. Also, in this chapter, a detailed description of the sample and the analysis of data are presented. Figure 1 summarises the research frame and selected research methodology in this study.

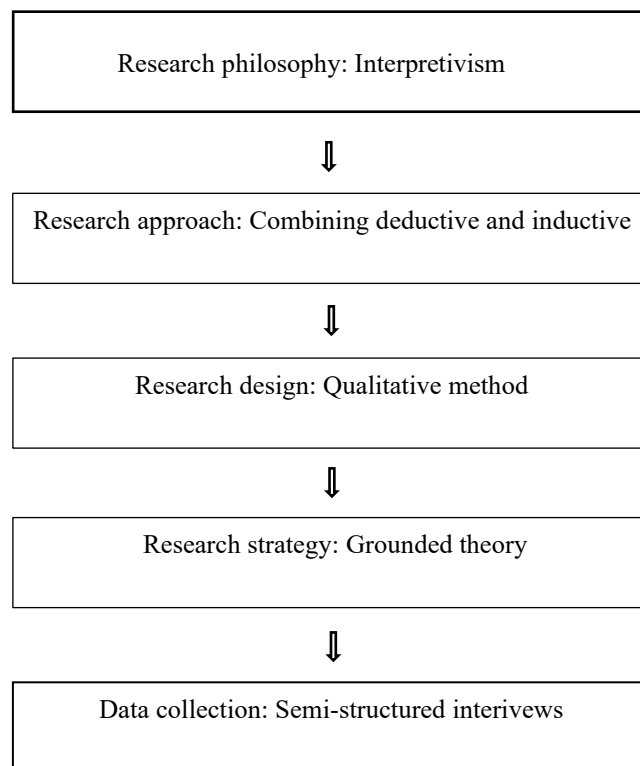


Figure 1. Summary of research frame and selected research methodology

3.1. Research philosophy and approach to theory development

Research philosophy is defined as a system of beliefs and assumptions about the advancement of knowledge. A set of beliefs and assumptions can be formed from two different views of objectivism and subjectivism by researchers. (Lewis et al., 2016, pp. 124-125). In this study, we seek an advance in the understanding of one social phenomenon that is emerging in recent years ‘minimalistic consumption’. We focus on studying this phenomenon in detail to understand the motives and aims of

minimalistic consumers and their minimalistic consumption practices towards kitchenware. Unlike an objectivist researcher who considers the social phenomenon exists independently and analyses it through observable and measurable facts (Lewis et al., 2016, p. 131). Taking the subjectivist viewpoint, in this study we assume that social actors, like customers, can affect the social reality through their social interactions with others. Each individual experiences and interprets the phenomenon 'minimalistic consumption' differently based on their own point of view. This leads to different consequent actions in the way of their consumption. Social actors partially build meanings and social realities (Lewis et al., 2016, p. 130). The subjectivist view in this thesis is that rather than draw law-like generalisations, we are interested in different opinions and interpretations of the consumers about the phenomenon of minimalistic consumption that can help to make sense of and understand their motives, aims, and actions when they engage in minimalistic consumption.

There are five research philosophies that researchers often adopted in business and management: positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism, and pragmatism. *Positivism* taking the view of the natural sciences focuses on discovering observable social phenomena in order to gain law-like generalisations. *Critical realism* emphasises sensations and experiences to understand social reality. The philosophy of *interpretivism* focuses on the different meanings behind physical phenomena and studies these meanings. *Postmodernism* considers that language and power relations play an important role in seeking the question and give voice to the alternative view. Finally, the philosophy of *pragmatism* states that the concepts, theories, or hypotheses are valued when they support carrying out actions. (Lewis et al., 2016, pp. 135 - 143). Because this study concentrates on seeking the meaning for social behaviours behind a phenomenon of 'minimalistic consumption' and gaining richer understandings of the motivations and goals of minimalistic customers, interpretivism is considered as a suitable research philosophy for this study. Interpretivism developed from a subjectivist view focusing on meanings that humans create from physical phenomena (Lewis et al., 2016, p.140). Customers from different social and cultural backgrounds can make different meanings when they engage in minimalistic consumption at different times. Therefore, taking account of these multiple interpretations and understanding the values and beliefs of consumers play a critical role in this research process.

A rational thought about the use of theory at the beginning of the research helps to decide which appropriate approaches to theory development. There are three approaches that are commonly used to develop the theory: deduction, induction, and abduction. (Lewis et al., 2016, p. 145). One of the main aims of this research is to find out the motivations and aims of Finnish customers when they engage in minimalistic consumption, examine motives and purposes produced from collected data at a specific nation with those deduced from existing literature in order to make progress in the understanding of behind reasons why customers pursue in the phenomenon 'minimalistic consumption'. Therefore, the deductive approach is an appropriate choice to test the number of propositions of motives and aims of minimalistic consumers based on previous studies from figure 1. Another purpose of this research is to explore minimalistic consumption practices of Finnish customers towards kitchenware from the analysis of collected data. In order to get the feel of what was going on in the behaviours of minimalistic consumers and a better understanding of the phenomenon, using the inductive approach to generate data and make sense of analysed data will be effective. In this research, we are going to use both deductive and inductive approaches to advance a richer understanding of the phenomenon of minimalistic consumption than already exists in the articles and researches.

3.2. Research design

Research design is the general plan for researchers to shape the methodological choice, research strategy, and data collection methods that fit to research philosophy and approach to theory development in order to answer the research questions (Lewis et al., 2016, p.164). This study aims to find out what are the reasons for encouraging Finnish customers to engage in minimalistic consumption. We are interested in studying minimalistic consumers in detail and collecting their perspectives of motives, aims, and consumption practices. Considering the purpose of the study and there main research questions proposed in the first section of this study, the methodological choice is followed in this study is the qualitative research design. Qualitative research and the philosophy of interpretivism often relate to each other in order to capture the meanings and in-depth understanding of responders (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The qualitative method is a good way to collect the opinions, experiences, beliefs, and values of

respondents towards the phenomenon in the form of transcripts and observational notes (Pope et al., 2000). This research is designed to fulfill an exploratory purpose in order to discover what is happening and gain insights into the motives, goals, and consumption practices of minimalistic consumers. An exploratory study starting with 'What' or 'How' is particularly effective to deepen understandings of a phenomenon or issue (Lewis et al., 2016, pp.175-176).

In a qualitative research design, there are some principal strategies often used, including ethnography, survey, case study research, action research, grounded theory, and narrative research. These strategies share the same root of ontological and epistemological assumptions and typical characteristics; however, each strategy focuses on the particular scope and the specific procedure (Lewis et al., 2016, p.169). The chosen research strategy refers to the relationship between the selected philosophy and data collection techniques and data analysis. This study adopts Grounded theory as a research strategy based on the selected philosophy of interpretivism and the combination of inductive and deductive approaches to theory development. Grounded theory develops interpretations and theoretical explanations of meanings that social actors, like customers, build to gain a clear understanding of the motives behind the minimalistic consumers when they engage in the consumption (Lewis et al., 2016, p.193). The grounded theory allows to analyse data at the time the data are collected. In this way, the grounded theory provides a systematic strategy to conduct qualitative research. (Lewis et al., 2016, p.193). In the grounded theory strategy, we started to collect the data after the research ideas were developed based on existing theory and our understanding of the theoretical background to the phenomenon of minimalistic consumption. As soon as initial participants of the research agreed to participate, we collected data from the interview, then analysed concepts emerging from the provided data before conducting the next one. We concentrated on interpreting meanings in the data to identify the minimalistic consumption practices that Finnish customers involve towards kitchenware, then compared and justified categories developed from the data with pre-existing theoretical propositions in order to gain insights of motives and aims of minimalistic consumers and modify the conceptual framework after examining.

3.3. Data collection

A qualitative research design can use a single data collection method or more than one qualitative data collection technique to gather the data (Lewis et al., 2016, p.168). The study aims to understand the different interpretations of Finnish customers in order to be able to make sense of and gain an advance in the understanding of their motives, goals, and actions when they engage in minimalistic consumption. In order to reach the meaningful findings in the limited time of the thesis, one single data collection technique known as a mono method qualitative study is chosen to use in this study. The interview is one of the most common data collection methods in qualitative research that helps to gather in-depth information for answering research questions. There are three types of interviews relating to the different levels of formality and structure that can be conducted, including structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured or in-depth interviews. In this study, semi-structured interviews are chosen to collect valid and reliable data from Finnish customers who are pursuing minimalistic consumption.

3.3.1. Semi-structured interviews

In an exploratory study, in-depth interviews as semi-structured interviews or unstructured interviews can be more helpful to explore what is going on and to understand the context than a structured and standardised interview. Structured interviews include a set of predetermined questions that interviewers use to ask precisely as written and in the same tone of voice in the interviews with the participants in order to make clear any bias (Lewis et al., 2016, p.391). This kind of interview is more suitable to collect quantifiable data because they provide the answers based on the fixed structure.

Both semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews can provide contextual material to help understand the reasons for the perceptions and opinions of minimalistic customers in the Finnish market; however, unstructured interviews may highly lead to interviewee or response bias. In unstructured reviews, there is no pre-prepared list of questions, the interviewees are right to share freely their experiences,

beliefs, and behaviours in relation to the phenomenon in the research (Lewis et al., 2016, p.391). Therefore, the interviewees can choose not to talk about an aspect of the situation and only share only a fractional 'picture' of the topic research. This leads to the concern about reliability relating to interview bias (Lewis et al., 2016, p.391). The purpose of this study is to deepen the understanding of the research phenomenon in a specific area of research, so a non-directive interview with partial answers will be difficult to gain meaningful insight for this study. Besides, the unstructured interviews also produce a large amount of text that requires a huge amount of time to analyse and explore the meanings behind the phenomenon.

Semi-structured interviews have a list of some key questions to guide the interview; however, the interviewer can invent more questions to gain more detailed data for the research questions and objectives during the interview (Lewis et al., 2016, p.391). This type of interview allows to be more flexible than unstructured interviews and still be able to collect in-depth answers relating to the predetermined themes and key questions. In this study, the interviews consist of two themes, and key questions are prepared based on the previous literature on the research phenomenon. The interview starts with the question relating to the personal information of participants, then followed by two themes, including kitchenware consumption practices and motives and aims of minimalistic consumers. During semi-structured interviews, pre-prepared questions include three types of questions, open questions starting with 'what', 'how', 'which' to encourage the participants to provide a rich and detailed answer, probing questions focus on a particular direction, and closed questions to gain specific information and confirm opinions of interviewees. During the conversation, the interviewer may come up with some questions when the respondent's meaning is not clear to the interviewer or the response of interviewees does not provide the related reasoning.

3.3.2. Sample

This study aims to gain the rich and informative data in order to answer the research question and develop theoretical insights rather than generalise to the target population, so when it came to selecting a suitable sample for the interview, a non-

probability sample is practical and appropriate for this study based on the research objectives, questions, and the choice of research strategy. With purposive sample, selected interviewees are individuals who engage in minimalistic consumption. Besides, the nationality of all interviewees is Finnish to get in a focused look on minimalistic consumption within one culture. Facebook was chosen as the online platform to track down the participants who meet the criteria for the interview. One status was posted in two private groups ‘minimalism’ and ‘minimalism elämäntapana – vähempi parempi’ to reach out to the respondents. In the post, a short description about the purpose of the research, the targeted group of customers, the length of the interview, and the language used in the interview are presented. Six of the interviewees answered a general invitation to take part in the interview and another interviewee was personally asked to take part.

The interviews were conducted in June and July 2021 in Finland. Due to the different challenges caused by the coronavirus pandemic, a total of seven interviews were carried on over Zoom in order to avoid personal contact. We would prefer to have face-to-face discussions in order to read the response and emotions of respondents when they answer the question; however, because the situation at that time did not allow, we asked the respondents to use their camera during the interview. All interviewees were asked the same 21 questions. However, some interviews had one or two more questions because the interviewer came up with during the interview. The day and time of the interviews were decided by the participants in order to avoid sensitive times that they are not comfortable answering the questions. The interviews lasted from 20 to 53 minutes. All participants chose the space where no one around them for example at their house or in the private room to conduct the interview with the interviewer via Zoom. This factor helps to avoid a false response because the respondents may provide incorrect answers when they think that they are being overheard. The interviewer held only one or two interviews per day in order to avoid being tired and misunderstanding the interpretations and meanings of participants. The interviews were conducted in English and asked for permission to record for further analysis. Table 6 below is the detail of the interviewees and interviews. The questions in the interview were presented in the appendices of the study.

Table 6. The detail of interviewees and interviews

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Education	Occupation	Income (euro/month)	Interview duration
Respondent 1	31	Female	Vocational degree	Full-time worker	3000-4000	22 min
Respondent 2	46	Female	Bachelor's degree	Full-time worker	>5000	20 min
Respondent 3	35	Female	Bachelor's degree	Part-time worker	1000-2000	52 min
Respondent 4	28	Female	Master's degree	Student & full-time worker	2000-3000	53 min
Respondent 5	32	Female	Master's degree	Full-time worker	3000-4000	22 min
Respondent 6	44	Female	High school degree	Full-time worker	1000-2000	33 min
Respondent 7	42	Female	Vocational degree	Full-time worker	2000-3000	33 min

3.4. Data analysis

Unlike quantitative research, findings are derived from numbers, in qualitative research words and images provide meanings for researchers to explore and clarify (Lewis et al., 2016, p.568). In this study, all semi-structured interviews are video-recorded. In order to capture what interviewees said in the interview for further analysis and avoid a build-up of recordings, the interview was transcribed within one day after the interview ended. Once the transcript has been done, it was sent to the respondent to check the accuracy of the transcript. The respondent was given then opportunity to correct any factual errors. Transcribing qualitative data is time-consuming; therefore, the aid from the software 'Otter voice meeting notes' was sought. Each transcription of the interview was saved as a word-processed file with

the filename “Respondent 1”, “Respondent 2”, and so on in order to maintain confidentiality and guarantee anonymity of interviewees.

In this interpretivist study, Thematic Analysis was chosen to analyse qualitative data in order to discover different interpretations and meanings of the phenomenon of minimalistic consumption. Thematic Analysis is a systematic that offers the researcher flexible and accessible approach to code the qualitative data, find the themes or patterns, develop and examine theories based on thematic patterns and relationships (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The procedure of Thematic Analysis involves steps in analysing the qualitative data: getting familiar with the data, coding the data, identifying themes and patterns, refining themes and examining propositions (Lewis et al., 2016, p. 580). Following such a set of guidelines, firstly, the data were read and re-read to enhance the familiarity, some summaries were written down during this familiarizing phase in order to serve the further analysis. Secondly, with the aid of Nvivo software, the data were categorised with relevant meanings through the process of coding. According to the deductive approach, a framework of coded coming from existing theoretical propositions was used to direct the analysis of the data. The framework from theoretical background provides certain benefits in linking the study with prior knowledge in the same subject area, commencing the work by an initial analytical framework (Lewis et al., 2016, p. 582). Besides, the inductive approach was also used to avoid inadequate prior codes. Inductive approach allows to code all of the data to explore the meanings of interviewees to guide the direction of the study.

By combining deductive and inductive approach, we derived the codes from existing literature and suggest new ones from the collected data during the analysis process. This way was helpful to find the answer for research questions of this study. Thirdly, after collecting and coding all of the data, we were seeking themes and recognising relationships by trying to make sense of the meanings and interpretations of the respondents. More attention was paid to how created codes might fit together and help to form the main themes and secondary-level themes. Based on the research objectives and questions, the data were categorised into three themes: the minimalistic consumption practices, the motives, and the aims of minimalistic customers. In the final step of Thematic Analysis, refining the themes was followed. In the process of analysis, refining themes and relationships between them are considered as to be an

important step to reorganise the coded data under the relevant themes and sub-themes (Lewis et al., 2016, p. 585). At this stage, the secondary-level themes that were previously devised are reevaluated. Based on the coded data, some earlier themes were combined to form a new theme while others were divided into different themes or were eliminated. During the analysis process, all changes were recorded to enhance the dependability of the study.

4. FINDINGS

Our findings are organized to answer two research questions mentioned at the beginning part of this study. First, we begin to explore the minimalistic consumption practices of Finnish customers towards kitchenware. We focus on the consumption behaviours of the minimalistic consumer when they consume kitchenware and we show the certain characteristics of the product that minimalistic consumers take into consideration when they acquire kitchen utensils. Second, we present the motives and aims of Finnish customers when they pursue minimalistic consumption. The motivational factors and goals found from the data analysis are compared to the propositions that are proposed based on existing literature in order to demonstrate the similarities and differences in motives and aims of Finnish customers when engaging in minimalistic consumption compared to customers in general.

4.1. Minimalistic consumption practices towards kitchenware of Finnish consumers

4.1.1. Kitchenware consumption practices

This study is conducted in the context of kitchenware consumption and the interviewees are Finns who are pursuing minimalistic consumption. From the data collected from in-depth interviews, it is shown that minimalistic consumers approach consumption based on their need, rather than their desire to possess stuff.

Consuming based on the need. This is one of the consumption practices mentioned by six out of seven respondents who engage in minimalistic consumption. As respondent 3 stated: “I usually buy out of necessity and if there is a need”. Each individual can have different kinds of needs that force them to consume kitchenware, for example: “If I really don't have anything that I can cope with, then I buy kitchenware” (Respondent 6) or “Only when something old gets broken, mostly” (Respondent 1). Before making any new kitchenware purchases, minimalists give careful consideration

based on what they really need and what they just need on some occasions. Our respondents' narratives revealed:

I think it's doesn't really make sense to get all of the equipment if it's not that necessary... For example, like cutting something, I can consider if I can use the knife to do it or not. But yeah, if you can do things by hand like with the knife, then I prefer doing that. (Respondent 2)

The need in acquiring kitchen utensils is based mainly on the utilisation of the product. Minimalistic consumers only acquire and possess the necessary kitchenware that is actually utilized, they try to avoid buying items that they use rarely. However, it should be also noted that some items are rarely used but still need every season or occasion will be the exception. Three of the respondents mentioned that they would still own some items they do not use often but they know they will need them every season such as ginger cookie molds for Christmas or ten-liter pot for preserving berry in the summer.

Depending on the occasion, and if it's a reoccurring occasion like every year and then I know that I will need it. For instance, I did buy a 10-liter pot because I do preserve my own vegetables and berries. So I need the big pot every year when I preserve the jams and stuff. (Respondent 6)

Low purchase frequency. The well-considered approach to kitchenware consumption leads to another consumption practice that minimalistic consumers involve. It is a low purchase frequency. With a focus on limiting the number of gathered kitchen utensils and only making new purchases when they really need, the purchase frequency of minimalistic consumers becomes limited. Respondent 5 noted: "maybe once a year" or respondent 6 answered: "That is very seldom, I think. I have bought any items of kitchenware maybe five times in my life". From the data collected from participants, the concept of 'sharing economy' means that the customer accesses owned products by lending, renting, or swapping with others is another reason why the purchase frequency of minimalistic consumers is low. The following extract is an example in the consumption practice of minimalistic consumers towards items that are rarely needed:

I wouldn't buy anything that I only need rarely. So I will try to borrow from a friend. So if it's something that I just need for one time, for example, I would ask if I can just borrow it. But we also have something like a library of tools where you can actually it's almost like a library of items. So you can borrow like so if I needed a certain I don't know, like a mixer for kitchen for one time, I could actually try to get it from this library. So I wouldn't buy it (Respondent 5)

Good self-control. When consumers adopt the view of minimalistic consumption, they tend to be more in control of their consumption. When All respondents were asked about their self-control, confirmed that they have good self-control towards decisions relating to making a new purchase. Each respondent has different ways to seize their control towards kitchenware consumption. One respondent tries to avoid shopping malls or sales programs in order to not get the temptations. Another has the trade between the material item and her favorite interest in her head before she makes the purchase decision, as described in her answer: “I have quite good self-control because I always have this trade in my head. Do I buy stuff or do I travel? And always traveling win... I usually have a very high self-control over buying.” (Respondent 2). The majority of respondents considered their self-control get higher after they adopt minimalistic consumption, as illustrated by the following answers of the respondents:

After I really decided to go actively decided to be minimalistic maybe 10 years ago. I have had even higher self-control. When I was younger, I more easily bought stuff. But the older I get the less I need. (Respondent 2)

Before I might have not been comparing that many options or that much information searching...these days, I consider it quite consciously and I compare these options and I make time to make the purchase.... I don't make these kinds of fast purchases in the shops... I think that it's important to consider before buying. (Respondent 4)

Minimalistic consumers do not retreat totally from their consumption practices in daily life, but they prefer making a conscious choice when it comes to consumption than

making purchases on an impulse. The longer time they have practiced minimalistic consumption, the higher self-control they have.

Decluttering. One of the practices of minimalists mentioned from the answers of participants is decluttering and getting rid of unwanted or unused items like kitchenware. Many participants express the satisfying feeling when they free up spaces in their home and keep their home to be clean and minimalist.

I used to love shopping. When I stayed at home like a mom with four kids, I just used to hang out in shopping centers and buy a lot of things that I could afford to buy...The house was so full. But now my idea is to have only what I need...I like empty space. It feels very calm. (Respondent 7)

In order to utilize spaces in a better way, minimalistic consumers declutter their houses from things that they used to acquire incessantly in their previous frantic consumption lifestyle. Many of the interviewees noted that in terms of unwanted or unused kitchenware, they prefer to donate or sell these items. Throwing away is always the last option they will do. Family members, friends, or people in the neighborhood are the first people they think of when they want to give away things, then flea markets and social media sites are the next choices for them to donate. Donating makes them feel better about themselves and have a greater social contribution. Besides, four of them noted that they don't want to waste time selling used items to get a little money. It is not worth from their opinion. Others who try to sell unused items, want to get back some money to make the bigger purchase later or donate that money to a charity that has a good cause that they like.

Less quantity - higher quality. The majority of interviewees took both quantitative and qualitative views when approaching minimalistic consumption. They limit their consumption to an appropriate and reasonable amount of material possessions and make new purchases based on the need. Besides, they also aim to buy kitchenware with higher quality that can serve them for a longer time. According to interpretations of two interviewees:

I prefer buying quality stuff. So I would say that I still buy less, but I can buy something more quality. (Respondent 1)

I would rather consider the fact that do I need this item? Really? Or would I just wait until I have the resources to buy this kind of long-lasting product? (Respondent 4)

Earlier when I was younger, my financial condition was not that good and then I couldn't perhaps buy the highest quality that I wanted but I still tried to aim to the highest quality I can afford ... My financial condition makes it possible for me to buy what I want. if I don't buy a lot of quantity. (Respondent 2)

Because they just make a purchase for necessary items, they do not worry about the money. Instead, they can handle buying something more expensive but better quality. Concern with the longevity of products was more common among participants who prefer products with higher quality. The explanation for this fact is that they want to avoid making the same purchases several times in order to save their time from looking for the same product, reduce waste, and reduce the excessive exploitation of natural resources.

4.1.2. Characteristics of the product that minimalistic consumers take into consideration.

Minimalistic consumers take a different view of the role of material objects in their life. Unlike consumerist who identify themselves through the high amount of material goods they possess, minimalistic consumers try to seek the meaning of life from non-materialistic sources. They reduce their dependency on the consumption and limit their possessions to a rational size. This means that they still engage in material purchases but the limited amount of items from their quantitative perspective forces them to make purchases based on their preference for certain characteristics of product. When discussing this topic, seven respondents in the interview described specific characteristics of kitchenware they focus on when they make purchases. Table 7 shows characteristics and sample comments from interviewees.

Table 7: Characteristics of the product respondents take into consideration

Characteristics of product	Sample answers of respondents	No. of respondents recorded effect
Minimalist design	<p>‘I like simplicity in all things that I buy, like simple looks and timeless looks. And it just gives me pleasure, like compared to other things. I like to keep things simple’ (Respondent 4)</p> <p>‘The Arabia Koko series I have it's very simple. I mean it's a plates and the bowls. They are like trumpet form them, there is no extra under one colour and the design is very simple...I do like when it's aesthetically pleasing.’ (Respondent 3)</p>	6 out of 7
Durability	<p>‘when I choose a product, I will choose the one that has those properties that would make it last for a longer time. And think about bigger picture, that's if I buy something that would probably break very soon, then I would have to make another purchase. That's not what I hoped for’ (Respondent 4)</p>	6 out of 7
Second-hand product	<p>‘I prefer the used ones... I want to encourage with both donating and buying to keep the recycling flow going... for a flea market to work, you have to both donate and buy. I mean, if you're not buying, you're not recycling.’ (Respondent 3)</p>	6 out of 7
Local product	<p>‘I check that where it is made... if I live in Finland, then I want to buy Finnish. But if I live abroad like I have done before, then I want to buy that local’ (Respondent 6)</p> <p>‘I think I prefer Finnish design... most of my plates are Arabia... and I have several Fiscars kettles... I think the quality is very good.’ (Respondent 1)</p>	5 out of 7
High quality	<p>‘especially if it's about electricity products, it has to have a high quality that will stand for years and years.’ (Respondent 2)</p>	4 out of 7
Price-quality ratio	<p>‘I would not just say necessarily low because I would want something that is good quality. So I understand the quality comes with the price. So it doesn't have to be the cheapest possible but I just take it into account. So for example, I guess if I had two products that I would consider the quality and I was between them, then I might choose the one that it's lower price’ (Respondent 5)</p>	2 out of 7
Functionality	<p>‘the one that matters most is the functionality’ (Respondent 4)</p>	2 out of 7
Recyclable product	<p>‘If there is something that is made from recycled materials or I can put them to sell or sort them easily when I have to get rid of. So of course I prefer that.’ (Respondent 1)</p>	2 out of 7

Environmental-friendly product	‘We had partly like one time use dishes but I didn't want to buy anything plastic. So instead of plastic spoons I bought this big box of wooden stirs like this wooden stick’ (Respondent 6)	2 out of 7
Practicality	‘I will prefer something that is very easy to maintain, very easy to clean, very easy to use and very easy to put away.’ (Respondent 7)	1 out of 7
Continued production	‘I don't like to buy anything from H&M home or Zara home ...that there are just in the stores for a short time and then they disappear. Either you just buy one or two of them or then you just have to at one time buy a lot of them. So it doesn't make sense and you cannot replace them when they break later.’ (Respondent 3)	1 out of 7

Minimalist design. As expected, the majority of respondents preferred minimalistic design when they were asked about this characteristic. For some respondents, the design is considered as one of important factors for them to make choices when they consume kitchenware. There are certain reasons mentioned in the interviews why interviewees who engage in minimalistic consumption enjoy minimalist design. Three of respondents mentioned that it is aesthetically pleasing to possess kitchenware with minimalist design. For them, the simple looking of the product pleases their eyes and creates the feeling of uncluttered kitchen cabinets when they look at. One respondent believed that the simple design is never out of fashion, it presents the timeless beauty that no one can get bored of. Two respondents who like decoration assumed that the design should be simple so that it can be easier to mix and match items with each other and they don't need to store so many different kinds of kitchenware in their kitchen.

Durability. Minimalistic consumers tend to purchase less; therefore, they are likely to consume products that can stand for years and years. Six out of seven interviewees noted that they want the product that can last for a longer time and can serve them until it is done. The consideration for longevity stems from two main reasons. First, from the environmental concerns, one respondent explained that when they buy one that can be long lasting, they can use the whole life of that product. They do not have to buy a lot of stuff, so that more unnecessary stuff does not need to be produced. It is more sustainable for environment and natural resources. Second, from time-consuming perspective, some respondents commented that durable products help them to limit making a same purchase. Because it can last long, they do not have to go back and get

another one often. This save their time from steps of the buying process as searching information, evaluating alternatives, deciding purchases, and evaluating post-purchase.

Second-hand product. Most respondents responded positively to the second-hand consumption. Reuse was considered as one of the consumption practices that participants would be willing to do if they have a chance. Three interviewees preferred getting kitchenware for free from someone they know like family members or neighbors before they buy the new ones in the shop. One respondent mentioned that she would consume more used kitchenware if she would find the easier way to get them from somewhere in her location. Two respondents who were concerned with environmental and social issues have bought almost everything from the second-hand stores. From interpretations of respondents, environment and society are the main reasons to motivate them to consume used products. Economic benefits from getting used kitchenware with lower price are just bonus from their practice.

Local product. Finnish people like Finnish brands. When being asked about their favorite kitchenware brands, many of them mentioned domestic brands such as Fiskar, Iittala, Arabia, Hackman, Marimekko. From the explanations of respondents, the reasons for this preference are the aesthetics of minimalist design and high quality of products from domestic brands, as well as ecological and societal concerns when consuming products locally made. One respondent said that she wants to support the domestic brands because they pay tax to Finland and provide job to local people. Other respondents who care more about the working conditions and what happened in the manufacturing process believe that the origin of the product is very important. So, they prefer products made in Finland rather than other sides of the world. One respondent even switched her favorite Finnish brand when she knew that the products from this brand are no longer made in Finland and only the design is Finnish.

High quality. As found in the consumption practices of minimalistic consumers, when individuals buy less, they are likely to consider to buy products with higher quality. Four out of seven interviewees talked about the high quality as one of important factors that they take into consideration when they consume kitchenware. The joy from enjoying high-quality items and the close link between high quality and durability are

deciding factors explaining why participants are willing to spend more money to get products with better quality.

Price-quality ratio. Most of respondents do not buy the kitchenware often, so the price is not a big deal to them. Only two who want to use their financial resources cautiously and effectively mentioned the price-quality ratio as one of characteristics they take into consideration when they make new purchases. They want to get some thing that is worth with the price they pay. This means that the price they pay for the product should be balance somehow the value they receive from the product.

Functionality. When being asked which characteristics of product are important for them to pay attention to when they buy kitchenware, two respondents mentioned what they hope from the product is that the product just needs to perform well a task that it is made for. One respondent highlighted that in order to avoid consuming many stuff or owning items she may not need often, the product with multi-functionality will be a good choice. Such products can be modified to suit with different purposes in the kitchen.

Recyclable and environmental-friendly product. Those who engage in minimalistic consumption because of environment concerns preferred to consume recyclable products and environmental-friendly products. They prefer buying items that are made from recyclable materials or can be sort out easily in trash bin for recycling purpose when they get rid of them. Two respondents mentioned that they are willing to pay more for products that are eco-friendly and not harmful to environment.

Practicality. One respondent was interested in how easy the product can be taken care of. From her opinion, the practicality of product is important. The items have to be easy to clean, they can fit in the dishwasher and can be washed without fading color after washing. They can fit well in the kitchen cabinet with other stuff in terms of appearance. They can be easy to use, easy to maintain, then easy to sort out when getting rid of. The preference of this practicality results from the self-fulfilling motive, where individuals want to spend their time for what they love and value rather than cleaning and maintaining material items.

Continued production. It is found that some interviewees who want to redirect their time and energy to non-materialistic values are likely to have strong brand loyalty. Because they do not want to waste their time on acquiring and consuming material items, when they have to make new purchases based on their need, they often choose items from the brands they have a great experience before. One respondent who has strong brand loyalty mentioned that she prefers the products that are manufactured and being in the production for a long time so that it is easier to replace or buy more things from the set she already had when some of them get broken.

4.2. The motives and aims of Finnish consumers when engage in minimalistic consumption

This study aspires to gain an advance in the understanding of the motives and aims of Finnish customers in minimalistic consumption. By analyzing the qualitative data gathered from in-depth interviews with individuals who are engaging in minimalistic consumption, the reasons why consumers choose the minimalistic lifestyle are found. The findings of this study are compared to the propositions that are previously presented in the theoretical background part. From such an examination between the findings and propositions of this study, it is found that social pressure and group affiliation motive is not found as one of the motives that encourage respondents to engage in minimalistic consumption. Only three motives from the propositions of the study are confirmed in the answers of respondents, including self-fulfilling motive; economic motive; and environmental and social motive. One motive that was not discussed remarkably in the existing literature is found from this study is the personal preference motive. Two of five respondents mentioned personal preference as one of the motives that they pursue minimalistic consumption. They simply think that this minimalist lifestyle suits their personality and habits. For more detail, we present the findings in the same order as the propositions we proposed before.

4.2.1. Self-fulfilling motive

The first proposition was confirmed by the majority of the respondents when being asked what motives encourage them to engage in minimalistic consumption. Five out of seven interviewees mentioned that self-fulfilment is one of the motives why they

embrace the philosophy of minimalistic consumption. From the answers of participants, consumers who engage in minimalistic consumption due to self-fulfilling motives aspire to achieve certain goals. The goals found in the findings reflect similarly to the four goals proposed in the first proposition based on existing literature.

Feeling peaceful in mind. Respondents who pursue minimalistic consumption because of self-fulfilling concerns quite often mentioned these words ‘visual peace’, ‘mental peace’, and ‘a calm feeling’ they can get when they practice minimalistic consumption. In order to gain more space and provide the visual feeling of peace around their house, they reduce their material consumption by often reflecting their purchases by asking themselves the question: “Do I need this item? Really?” (Respondent 4). They discard items that are unhelpful or rarely used. One respondent commented:

“I had so much clutter and so much stuff I didn't need, so it took space and when we were moving from one apartment to another, we had so many like boxes and it was just painful to own them...I prefer not to have clutter in my cabins. And it's just personally it makes me feel better to live in a clean and simple way...it's just the way how I live nowadays.”
(Respondent 1)

Before starting the journey of minimalistic consumption practice, some of the respondents used to hoarding so much stuff and the excessive amount of unnecessary things not only disturbed them from the visual view but also exhausted them with activities connected with items as running after sales, cleaning, taking care of them, and even getting rid of them. For example, in the case of respondent 3 who describes the mental fatigue for just discarding the items.

“Thinking more about before buying things because it is quite difficult to get rid of this stuff. I mean it's a mental process. Like oh, you have to remember to do it and then put it away and then remember to take the things with you to the flea market to donate them. Some people don't ever do that, so they just pile up the things at home.” (Respondent 3)

A house with less stuff around and more free spaces, calm feelings without longer worries connected with material goods, and the peaceful mind to enjoy life are results that respondents aim to achieve when they voluntarily commit to the non-materialistic lifestyle.

Saving time, money, and energy. The second aim that respondents who involve in minimalistic consumption due to self-fulfilling motive want to gain is using less time, money, and effort for materialistic things. They prefer spending time on non-materialistic things that bring more value to them. Time is the main concern of the majority of respondents when they follow the concept of minimalistic consumption. One respondent recalled her unsatisfied experiences when owning so much stuff.

“My house was always a mess with the kids. If I wanted to clean my house, I would spend one day picking up stuff and maybe I had time to clean it the next day, like, there were so many things around me that that cleaning was very difficult... You know, I felt like I'm just moving stuff around all the time, like winter jackets, I would take to storage. And next winter, I would pick all of them up, and we would try which one fits the kids and which I would need to get rid of and what I need to buy more... So I just felt that I needed to make my life more simple...” (Respondent 7).

By limiting their consumption, individuals use less time and energy for buying new things, they do not need to use much time for cleaning the house because they do not have much stuff there, then their home would be easier to keep clean and tidy. So they can save time and energy on things that they most value. Saving money is an additional benefit when they reduce the material possession, has noted: “It's nice that you save money when you don't buy unnecessary stuff. And that's only a plus” (Respondent 1). From the answers of some respondents, saving money is not the main purpose explaining why they prefer limiting their consumption; however, the money saved from materialistic consumption would be beneficial for them to pursue non-materialistic aspects as hobbies or pleasure-seeking experiences, as illustrated by the comment of respondent 2: “I think minimalistic consumption saves a lot of money, which I can use for traveling and services instead.”

Increasing the quality of life. Through minimalistic consumption practices, respondents limit the number of items they gather, then they have more financial resources to afford products with high quality and aesthetically pleasing, as noted: “My financial condition makes it possible for me to buy what I want... the highest quality I can afford... if I don't buy a lot of quantity” (Respondent 2). Enjoying the great experiences from using high-quality and beautiful design items brings joy to the respondent. One respondent shared that:

“I think aesthetics is very important for me... It's usually the design... it's very nice to look at... And the design is a little bit more expensive sometimes... it's kind of brings joy on some level compared to some other products with the same function.” (Respondent 4)

Besides the pleasures from consuming items with high quality and aesthetic appearance, respondents aim to increase their quality of life by gaining more free time. The following extract shows more depth about this interpretation.

Interviewer: What motives encourage you to engage in minimalistic consumption?

Interviewee: I really want to be more with people. I'm a very social person. So I enjoy being around people. I'm actually hoping to be more at home just to relax... And then I would like to start exercising like going for walks. But I always felt before that I don't have time for it. But then now I really do have time for it. But it takes a little bit of mental change. To understand that actually, now I have time for myself. (Respondent 7)

From the point of view of individuals who pursue a consumerist lifestyle, the quality of life is often defined by how big the house they own, how fancy and expensive the car they drive, how high salary they get, and multiple material stuff they possess. However, the perspective of minimalistic consumers about the quality of life is different. For them, the quality of life is measured by the amount of free time they have for themselves, for friends, family, and for relationships with people around them.

Achieving satisfaction, happiness, and fulfilment. Some respondents who engage in minimalistic consumption due to self-fulfilling motives focus on non-materialistic sources to pursue happiness and satisfaction in life. They hold the belief that experiences are more precious than the existence of material possessions in the house, as illustrated by one respondent:

“I would rather consume experiences than material. About experiences, well, I think pretty much anything like that interests me and would bring me joy. For example, sports, that is one thing I want to spend money on and also things that would be nice, like a day in a climbing park, or going on a trip somewhere or spending time in nature... Because you remember these kinds of things and it has more value, I think experiences have more value than any product and I think one experience does not really lose its value in time.” (Respondent 4)

Minimalistic consumers seek happiness from activities that are more meaningful to them. Three out of seven respondents mentioned they would prefer spending their time and money on experiences, hobbies, and services such as eating in the restaurant, relaxing in the spa than acquiring more material items. Besides, they are likely to devote their time and energy to nourish their relationships or simply for themselves rather than thinking about and looking after possessions.

4.2.2. Economic motive

The economic motive is found from the qualitative data in this study. Five out of seven respondents mentioned financial benefits that they can gain when they have practiced minimalistic consumption. Of these, only two respondents considered the economic factor as one of the motives that encourage them to be minimalists. Others thought that the monetary value they can receive through their minimalistic consumption practices is just the plus in this lifestyle, it is not the central motivation for them to engage in minimalistic consumption, as noted: “About the economic power stuff. It's an extra bonus which comes on top of it. But I don't really think about it.” (Respondent 2). It is nice to save money from unnecessary items and spend that money on things that bring

more value to oneself such as experiences (e.g., travel) and hobbies as mentioned by respondents 1,2, and 4. From the interpretations of two participants who involve in minimalistic consumption due to economic motives, there are two particular aims they aspire to achieve through their consumption. These two aims discovered in the findings of this study are similar to two goals that were proposed in extant literature.

Feeling secure economically. Economic influences in the lives of individuals guide them to use their limited financial resources in different ways. It is found that one of the reasons explains why consumers conserve their finances and make new purchases cautiously and prudently is to gain the security of their economic condition. This exploration is consistent with what was proposed in existing studies. One respondent's narratives provide more depth about this financial security. She recalled:

“Financial freedom...I think things that tie us to material things are a burden to me. So, I aim to be free from the material burdens... I want to have financial security. I want to always know that if I need something, I have the money to buy it. So I always have money saved, and to have money saved, you know, with consuming little then you have the money left.” (Respondent 6)

Unlike minimalistic consumers due to self-fulfilling motive who want to have a free mind from worries related to material possessions in order to focus on what is important to their life, minimalistic consumers motivated by economic incentives pay more attention to financial freedom they can gain through their minimalistic consumption practices.

Using financial resources effectively. Another goal is confirmed by the respondent is to spend their limited financial resources effectively. According to one respondent who pursues minimalistic consumption due to economic incentives:

“I like buying second-hand things because it's ecological. It is cheaper and I like to save my money where I can because it's just smart... Even though I have had more money or I have had a bigger income. That's not the point. It's about using your money well.” (Respondent 3)

Unlike descriptions mentioned in previous researches that minimalistic consumers try to spend their money more efficiently in order to cope with their resource scarcity (Hamilton et al., 2019), the answer of this respondent shows that she is not forced to reduce their consumption due to economic constraints, instead she desires to change her consumption behaviors such as consuming more second-hand products or limiting her consumption with only necessities because she wants to use her financial resources in a smart way from her perspective.

4.2.3. Environmental and social motive

From the data analysis, the most mentioned motive by the majority of respondents was the environmental and social motive. Six out of seven respondents expressed a lot of concerns about issues relating to the environment and society through their consumption practices. The findings show that there are four different goals instead of three mentioned before in the third proposition that respondents aim to achieve through their minimalistic lifestyle.

Contributing to the environment and society. Respondents who try to reduce their possessions in general and avoid making pointless purchases driven by environmental focus and social welfare believe that their actions make a contribution to society and lessen negative effects from their consumption to the environment. Some typical comments were made by participants:

“I think it's environmentally more sustainable if people are living in a minimalistic way.” (Respondent 1)

“I want to feel like I'm doing what I can for the environment. And to be able to, for recycling to work, for a flea market to work, you have to both donate and buy. I mean, if you're not buying, you're not recycling... You have to be part of the flow, the part of the circle. So I want to encourage with both donating and buying to keep the recycling flow going.” (Respondent 3)

In terms of environment, some respondents mentioned that they engage in consuming used products from flea markets to avoid the excessive exploitation of energy and natural resources when producing new products. Others tried to own as little as possible to smaller carbon footprint and lower impact on nature. Regarding social concerns, one respondent shared how guilty she felt about the ‘consumer culture’ that Western countries have encouraged. As she noted:

“I do think that it is crazy when we use a lot of money in the West, and there are people in the world who don't have even food. So I do feel a little bit guilty... So I think that it's better if you don't overuse money for something you don't need...I would feel better in myself for not using the money for stupid things.” (Respondent 7)

Respondents who reduce their consumption to a reasonable and acceptable level for the benefit of the planet believe that the current high level of consumption that individuals, especially those who live in developed countries are making is not good for society from both environmental and social perspectives.

Reducing the waste. The second goal that respondents mentioned in their answers is waste reduction. One respondent argued that “people don't need to produce that much stuff... when you just have one and you use it the whole lifetime of the product, then you don't have to buy that many stuff.” (Respondent 1). The continuous production of new products every year not only causes waste in the exploitation of natural resources but also increases the amount of waste released by a human into the environment. Some respondents also added that in order to reduce the waste, they prefer consuming products that are used or long-lasting, they also try to sell or donate their unused items before ending it up in the area of waste ground.

Matching to consumers' personal ideologies. Some respondents who focus on minimalistic consumption due to sustainability and ecological concerns already have certain personal ideologies that shape their consumption. Therefore, besides they limit the general level of consumption, they also avoid certain types of consumption that do not match their personal philosophy. One respondent described one type of

consumption she encouraged to avoid when taking the environmental perspective. As she recalled:

“I don't want people to like the cheap stuff. Coming from Asia or America. They are sending them by their planes and then you buy some kind of the straw that costs you 30 cents and then it comes with a plane and all the packaging materials and everything.” (Respondent 1)

Other respondents use their consumer power to reject products or brands whose personal ideologies do not match that of the brand from the social perspective.

“I try not to buy the cheapest, cheapest things because they often might come from places where there might have been problems in the workplace.” (Respondent 5)

“These days when I make the purchasing decision, it is important to check that where this product comes from and what kind of working condition employees have and I prefer the local product.” (Respondent 4)

Above mentioned respondents' consumption patterns are shaped by their personal values in relation to environmental and social concerns. Many interviewees prefer to consume local products. Supporting local manufacturing not only reduces the pollution caused by transportation but also prevents supporting businesses that abuse workers from other parts of the world.

Enhancing the positive sense of self. This goal has not been discussed remarkably in the previous studies. From the findings, the positive sense of self was mentioned as one of the aims that respondents driven by environmental and social motives aspire to achieve, as illustrated in the answer of respondent 5: “With environmental being, I feel good about myself, when I live my life this way”. It seems to some respondents that good deeds are done in the name of the environment and society impact positively on their thoughts about the consistency between the ideal self they would like to be and the real self they actually are.

4.2.4. Social pressure and group affiliation motive

Social pressure and group affiliation are other reasons for consumers to adopt minimalistic consumption that were proposed in the previous study (Pangarkar et al., 2020). In their study, they suggested that some individuals prefer minimalist designs with subtle and discreet logos and styles in order to communicate with insiders from their own social class. The desire to construct and maintain the social status through consumption is discreetly gained by consuming products that are luxurious but still minimalistic in appearance. However, from in-depth interviews with Finnish people who have been adopting minimalistic consumption, the social pressure and group affiliation motive is not confirmed in this finding. All respondents commented that the opinions of society do not affect their consumption choices. According to some typical answers:

“I think these choices are very much my own. I'm the one who assesses if I need something because I'm the one who knows what I actually need and what makes sense and what is the right thing to do at this point.”
(Respondent 4)

“My family matters to me but society in general no.” (Respondent 1)

Some of them considered the opinions of family members who live with them or of friends when they make choices in consumption or need the advice for consumption, but the opinions of others, especially society do not weigh heavily in the choice of respondents when they engage in minimalistic consumption. It is not social pressures that guide them to minimalistic consumption practices. Therefore, the luxurious kitchen utensils with soft and muted logos to distinguish them from their own social class are not the main interest for them in the choice of minimalist designs. As one respondent noted:

“I buy them and they have just happened to be a luxurious kitchen brand from Finland... I do like when it's aesthetically pleasing, so I guess that if

you have friends over there, it looks nice what you put down on a table, but it doesn't have much to do with the brand.” (Respondent 3)

“Sometimes connect luxury and quality. But in case the luxurious product has basic quality, I might still go with the normal instead of luxurious.” (Respondent 1)

Unlike the proposition based on prior literature that the preference for luxury consumption with minimalism in the appearance stems from the high awareness of social class and status, Finnish customers engage in luxury consumption because of the aesthetics of design and the high quality of the product. It has nothing to do on with flaunting their wealth.

4.2.5. Personal preference motive

One of the motives that encourage consumers to adopt minimalistic consumption found in this finding is a personal preference. This motive has not been discussed in previous studies. Three out of seven Finnish participants revealed that they engage in minimalistic consumption practices because this lifestyle suits their personality and habits. One respondent conveyed: “I don't want to have too many things around me. I like empty space...I think it is my nature. It is. Because I always was like this.” (Respondent 6). The respondent who adopts a minimalistic lifestyle due to their personal preference motive can express the self through their consumption. It is the main aim that respondents driven by their personal choice want to expose.

Express the self. One respondent who involves in minimalistic consumption taking the view from minimalist design shared:

“I say, it's like, my own personal preferences...I like simplicity in all things that I buy...it just gives me pleasure, compared to other things. I like to keep things simple” (Respondent 4)

Simple looks and timeless beauty from the design of products reflect her preference for a simple life. Such preference for the empty space and the low number of material goods probably stems from the environment where they were raised. As one respondent shared:

“I live in the countryside... and I have a big garden, like one hectare...I let most of the land be natural, you know, we have loads of birds, and insects and, and bees and all those things in my house in my land. And I want to keep it that way...It's kind of moved away from the consumption part to more of the like other parts of my life.” (Respondent 6).

Living close to nature and enjoying the natural beauty has a big impact on her perspective of minimalistic consumption. Besides, Finland's noncomparative culture partly explains why Finnish respondent consumes only what they need when it comes to minimalistic consumption. As she recalled: “I don't see any TV advertisements. I don't compare myself to my friends or to other people who have more. I only kind of start from what I need, and what I can have, and keep, and take care of.” (Respondent 6).

5. CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the conclusion of this study, starting with summarising the main findings of the research and providing a diagram of findings. In this part, we answer the research questions and discuss the findings in detail. The theoretical contribution of the study is followed then. The next part mentions managerial implications based on our findings, meanwhile concluding with the limitations of this study and ideas for further research.

5.1. Discussion main findings of the study

This study investigates minimalistic consumption practices of Finnish customers towards kitchenware and identifies the motives and aims of consumers when engaging in minimalistic consumption. In order to achieve the research objectives, a qualitative study with in-depth interviews was conducted. A total of seven interviews were held. The data from these interviews are collected, analyzed, and presented as findings of this study.

Five representative practices of minimalistic consumption were confirmed, which consist of: consuming based on the need, low purchase frequency, good self-control, decluttering, and less quantity – higher quality. Moreover, the characteristics of the products that minimalistic consumers take into consideration were also identified. As a result, consumers are concerned about different certain characteristics of the product depending on the motivation and purpose when involved in minimalistic consumption. The results drawing from qualitative data in this study partially support propositions. Three propositions including self-fulfilling motive, economic motive, and environmental and social motive were confirmed. Social pressure and group affiliation motive was not found. Personal preference motive that previous literature has not been discussed remarkably was explored. A diagram to capture the main findings of this study was drawn (Figure 2).

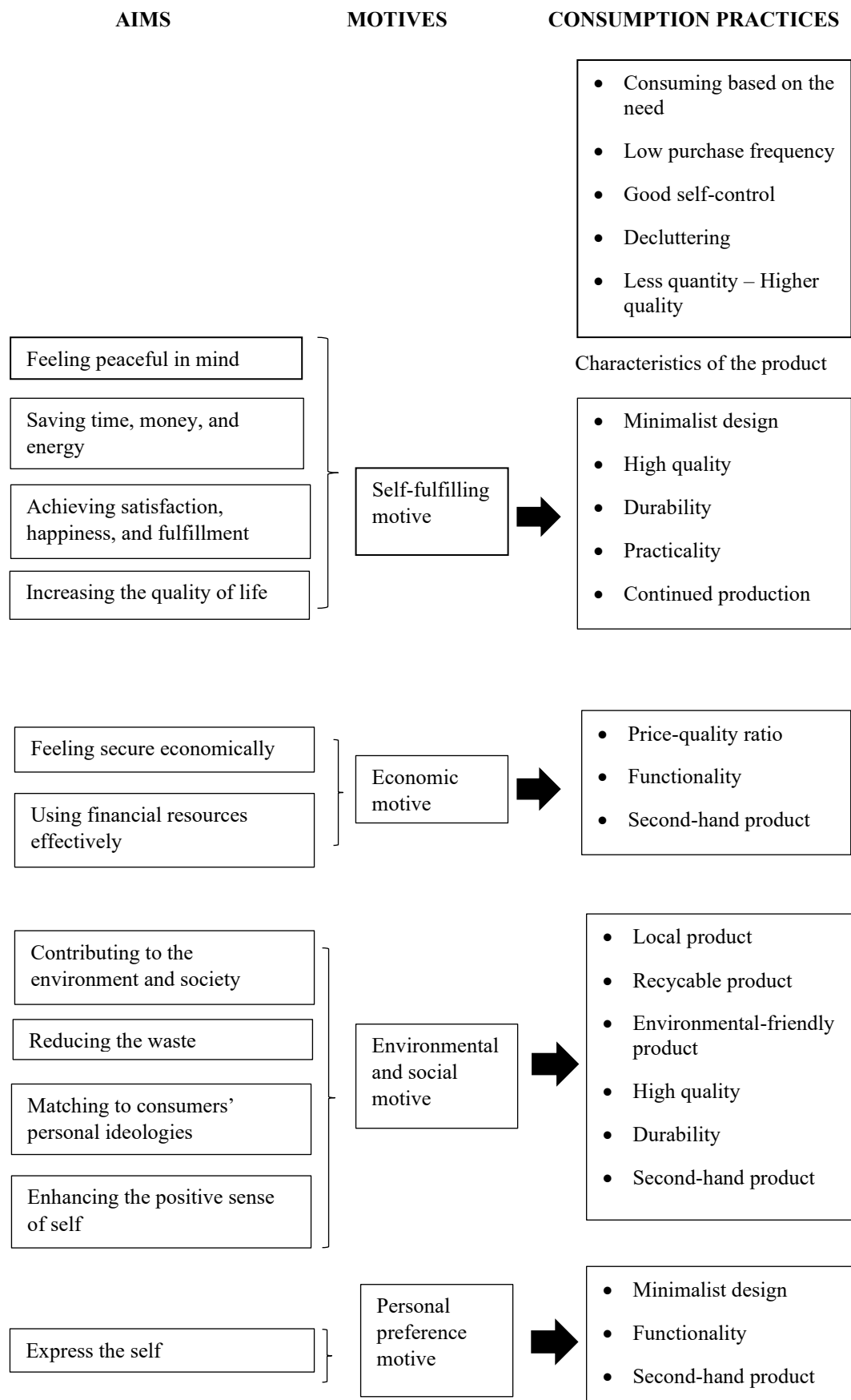


Figure 2. Diagram of findings

For ease of discussing the main findings further, a more detailed discussion has been presented under two research questions of this study.

RQ1: How do Finnish consumers practice minimalistic consumption towards kitchenware?

When it comes to consumption, minimalistic consumers take into consideration the quantity they possess. As predicted, individuals who are adopting a minimalistic consumption lifestyle *consume based on their needs*. This practice can be easily understood from the definition of minimalistic consumption describing that the followers of this phenomenon do not give up totally their materialistic consumption, instead, they keep their possession in a reasonable amount (Dopierała, 2017). Such consumers only buy as per their demands. For example, some people acquire the new item when the old item they own is broken, others acquire when they have a need of something that without it they can not handle, while some pick up the new item because it belongs to one set of kitchenware they possess. The demand of each individual is different, each minimalistic consumer decides what is the appropriate amount in his or her consumption, which occasions he or she should consume material items. However, the main idea still remains that they involve eliminating excessive consumption and only keeping possessions evaluated to be useful and necessary (Kang et al., 2021). From the view of minimalistic advocates, they do not want to have all kitchenware items, that they may not use often. The role of possessions is evaluated based on the necessity and frequency of use.

Dopierała (2017) showed that a reflective approach to purchases is often used by minimalistic consumers in order to achieve the goal of owning only the essentials and things that are actually utilized. From the findings, it was found that before making new purchases, consumers ask themselves the reflective question: “Do I really need this item?” or make a trade in their head: “Use that money for an item or my hobby”. The thoughtful approach to consumption explains why the second practice that minimalistic consumers often take is the low purchase frequency. Minimalistic consumers do not often make new purchases, they take advantage of their networks (e.g., friends, family, neighbors, or services provided from the community as the library) to borrow goods that they use very rarely to avoid making unnecessary

purchases. The notion “access is better than ownership” of a collaborative economy fits into the perspective of minimalistic consumption (Dopierała, 2017). The economy of cooperation allows individuals to share goods and use mutual services on the basis of the networks of individuals and communities (Dopierała, 2017). From an empirical study, Lee (2019) concluded that consumers who intentionally refrain from consumption tend to not only reduce consumption in general but also promote the commercial sharing systems (also known as the collaborative economy).

In order to make cautious and planned consumption decisions, consumers who adopt a minimalistic consumption lifestyle need good self-control. In this study, it was found that each minimalistic consumer has his or her own motives and values when engaging in minimalistic consumption; therefore, his or her consumption choices are specifically tied to values he or she believes. This explains why minimalistic consumers are more conscious when making new purchases and are likely to reduce spontaneous consumption as well impulse shopping they often indulged in the state of consumerist lifestyle they were before. Kang et al., (2021) revealed that conscious shopping is an antidote for minimalistic individuals to excessive, impulsive, and mindless purchases. Most of the respondents in this study have followed minimalistic consumption from five to twenty years, one respondent is minimalist even for a whole life. From the results of this study, consumers have good self-control after adopting minimalistic consumption and their self-control tends to get better after practicing actively this kind of consumption for a long time. People have greater self-control when they are concerned with the long-term consequences before taking any actions (Fujita et al., 2006). Minimalistic consumption is a tool to help followers to consider what matters most, what is important to their life, as well the long-lasting effects of their consumption choice (Millburn & Nicodemus, p.8, 2016, Kang et al., 2021).

As estimated, decluttering has been one of the key practices of minimalistic consumers. In the case of unwanted or unused kitchenware, consumers choose to give these utensils a useful life with someone who needs them rather than ending up in their storage or glass cabinets. From the view of minimalistic consumers, decluttering brings many benefits not only for themselves but also for other people and society. By donating or selling unwanted items, first, they can free up their clutter and have more spaces in their houses. They can keep their house minimalist and free their mind from

cleaning and taking care of these items. It has been proven that decluttering provides a satisfying experience for people when they can get rid of unnecessary items from incessant purchases that they made in their previous consumerist lifestyle (Pangarkar et al., 2020). Second, the consumers can get a feeling of happiness when they donate their unused stuff and other people can make good use of it. Such an action can be valued as a social contribution because it spread joy and happiness to others. Albinsson and Perera (2009) indicated that the perception of doing something good instills a sense of altruism and makes individuals see themselves as more socially responsible. Acting in a socially responsible manner can help to raise well-being and positivity (Pangarkar et al., 2020). Although the desire to clutter removal of minimalistic consumers is high, which way to get rid of unused and unwanted items is also important for them. Interestingly, in the findings of this study, minimalistic consumers make an effort to reach the individuals who need their items rather than throwing them away in the landfills. When they discard possessions that can still be of use to someone, they first ask those who are in their social circle for example family members, friends, neighbors, or acquaintances before donating items to flea markets or charitable organizations. Throwing away is the last option they have to make. The high awareness of the environment may be the reason for this action.

Minimalistic consumers still engage in material consumption but in a different way. Less quantity but higher quality. They do not make new purchases often, purchase only as per needs, and declutter excess things from their possession; however, they pay more attention to the quality of the product. When it comes to material consumption, consumers give a special focus on quality because the high-quality product can stand for a long time, its durability can lower the purchase frequency of consumers (Kang et al., 2021). Błoński & Witek (2019) commented that minimalistic consumption should be viewed from both quantitative and qualitative aspects. When individuals consciously consume less, they save money from unnecessary consumption, they have more free spaces in their houses, and they produce less waste. When they take minimalistic consumption from the qualitative point of view, the acquisition of high-quality products allows them to avoid making the same purchases and less waste from disposable consumptions. Findings in this study showed that there is a relationship between the quantitative and qualitative aspects. When consumers monitor their consumption cautiously, a limit on the number of material objects they

own leads them to the purchasing of high-quality items that can perform their function well and can last as long as possible.

Results in this study showed that minimalistic consumers take into consideration certain characteristics of the product when they make the consumption choice. As Marta Skowrońska described: "The reduction and selection of items in many cases lead to a selection of the most effective, functional, aesthetically pleasing, space-saving and lightest items, which usually denotes high priced products of well-known brands" (Skowrońska 2013: 91, cited in Dopierała, 2017). The consumption choices of minimalistic consumers are made on the basis of certain characteristics of the product they consider to be important, including purchasing aesthetically pleasing products with simple and minimalist design; buying high-quality and durable products; consuming second-hand, local products; using recyclable and environmental-friendly materials with a less negative impact on the environment; requiring the functionality and practicality of products, those that perform well their tasks and easy to use as well maintain; preferring products with continued production; and considering price-quality ratio from the product. Depending on the motives and aims when engaging in minimalistic consumption, each consumer makes different considerations about which product features are more valuable and important to them.

RQ2: What motives and aims encourage Finnish customers to engage in minimalistic consumption?

Each individual takes a different view of minimalistic consumption, their mindset about minimalistic consumption is not the same. Some people may consider something more valued and important than others do. Our findings indicated that Finnish consumers adopt minimalistic consumption for different reasons, consisting of concern for self-fulfilment, financial capability, environment and society, and personal preference. Social pressure and group affiliation that was proposed in the theoretical framework is not the reason that encourages Finnish consumers to engage in minimalistic consumption. It was found that consumers can have more than one motive that influences them to engage in minimalistic consumption. Each motive conveys certain aims that consumers aspire to achieve through the minimalistic lifestyle.

Self-fulfilling motive

Consumers who choose a minimalistic lifestyle due to *self-fulfilling motive* focus more on intrinsic goals. The pursuit of intrinsic values means that consumers seek the satisfaction, happiness, and meaning of life from non-materialistic sources rather than external factors such as material possessions or financial abundance (Lee & Ahn, 2016). This study found that minimalistic consumers express a considerable desire for both visual and mental peace. This craving is put into practice by eliminating unnecessary material goods in order to create a peaceful feeling from more empty spaces and stop worrying intensely about accumulation and possessions. Some researchers state that minimalistic consumption is a healing mechanism (Pangarkar et al., 2020) or a tool that helps consumers to experience the real freedom, freedom from worry, freedom from guilt, freedom from the enslavement that materialism brings about (Millburn & Nicodemus, p.4, 2016).

Some people look for more available resources such as time, money, and effort when choosing to live with fewer material commodities in this study. Less focus on material possessions allows minimalistic consumers to save their time and energy from consuming and managing these items. Additionally, the financial benefit is an extra bonus that consumers receive from limiting the consumption; however, advocates of minimalistic consumption from a self-fulfilling view consider that finance is not the main reason forcing them to decrease material possession. From their point of view, they still spend money but redirect it to non-materialistic activities. Minimalistic consumers try to maximize their limited resources in pursuit of experiential and deeply satisfying activities (Pangarkar et al., 2020). In spite of the strong inclination towards non-materialistic activities that brings more values and meanings to their life, minimalistic consumers do not give up totally material possessions, they still consume but more consciously and selectively. When it comes to material purchases, minimalistic consumers focus on three characteristics of the product, consisting of practicality, durability, and continued production. The practicality concerns how the product can be easy to use, maintain, clean, and put away after that. The durability provides the opportunity to own products that can last for a long time. The continued production allows consumers can easily replace the old or broken one in their set with the same one in the shop without searching for other alternatives. The selection of such

product features allows consumers to decrease time, effort, and money on purchasing and taking care of material goods, then allocate their finite resources to cultivate non-materialistic sources.

Some individuals select a minimalistic lifestyle intended to increase their quality of life. Lowering the amount of material consumption provides an opportunity to possess higher-quality and aesthetically pleasing items (Dopierała, 2017). It was confirmed in this study that the high quality and aesthetics of material products convey joy and pleasure to the owner. The product that contains content of pleasure affects the consumer's subjective sense of satisfaction (Bylok, 2017). From the view of minimalistic consumers, the quality of their life is increased when they invest in less but higher quality and more aesthetically pleasing items. This explains why quality and design are two additional characteristics of the product that minimalistic consumers from the self-fulfilling view take into consideration when making consumption choices. Greatly influenced by Scandinavian design and minimalism philosophy, minimalistic consumers in Finland respond favorably to minimalist and simple design concepts. Skou & Munch (2016) described that the pure and simple shape of the product is considered as an invitation to experience more about the product. This study showed that minimalistic consumers also measure the quality of their life by the amount of free time they have. Millburn & Nicodemus (2016) state that health, relationship, passions, personal growth, and contribution are more important to enhance happiness rather than materialistic values. Consumers shift from consumption to more time for a healthy self, greater involvement in relationships with family, friends, and society.

Other goal orientation of minimalistic consumers was highlighted in this study is subjective well-being and happiness. Consumers lessen their dependence on the materialistic world that only provides them short-term gratification. Instead, they focus on non-materialistic sources to achieve the long-term aim of self-fulfilment, happiness, and life satisfaction. This result reinforces the previous claims of researchers about the achievement of subjective well-being through the pursuits of hobbies, interests, and experiences (Pangarkar et al., 2020, Etzioni, 1999). In this study, consumers who engage in minimalistic consumption due to the self-fulfilling motive prefer spending their money on service (i.e., massage, restaurant), and experiential consumption (i.e.,

travel, sport, outdoor activities). Such non-materialistic consumption provides a greater and more sustainable sense of satisfaction (Tatzel, 2002 cited in Lee & Ahn, 2016).

Economic motive

Unlike minimalistic consumers taking the viewpoint of self-fulfilling motive who redirect their money from materialistic consumption to non-materialistic sources that provide them more value, some consumers devote themselves to limiting their consumption in general and making purchases cautiously because of the economic motive. In this study, it was found that participants who engage in minimalistic consumption due to the economic motive do not have a high income, their income fluctuates around one to two thousand euros. Pangarkar et al., (2020) stated that the prospect of life events, for example, unemployment, divorce, marriage, the birth of a child influence consumers to reduce consumption and control strictly their finances. However, our findings differ from this statement. Finnish consumers showed a positive view about their future when being asked about life changes that can happen in their life. Participants who cope with resource scarcity yearn for financial freedom rather than ease their anxiety about uncertain future events. By consuming less and practicing frugality, they aim to have more money left for themselves. Their attention is drawn to the feeling of being secure economically. A sense of security that if they need something, they are sure they have money to afford it.

Financial constraints force individuals to give up some pleasures they are used to be and limit the level of their consumption. In some cases, it can be a temporary state. Consumers would return to their previous consumption level when their economic hardship is over. (Pangarkar et al., 2020). Our findings showed that minimalistic consumers take a different view of economic constraints. The limited financial resources they own provide an opportunity for them to think over their consumption practices. In the long term, resource scarcity changes the way consumers spend (Hamilton et al., 2019). Instead of being forced to limit consumption, they take a step further in using their financial resources more efficiently and smartly. Participants in this study said that even though they have higher income, they still prefer using their money effectively by consuming the second-hand product, measuring the perceived

value they get from the product against the price they have to pay. For minimalistic consumers due to economic motive, price-quality ratio, second-hand product, and functionality are three characteristics of the product they are concerned about. Consumers encounter resource constraints think more carefully about money and the cost of products (Hamilton et al., 2019); therefore, the products do not need to be attractive, the functionality and price have more weight.

Environmental and social motive

Minimalistic consumers have their own reasons for going against the consumerist lifestyle. In addition to self-fulfilling and economic reasons, concerns about the environment and society have been becoming one of the motives that encourage consumers to take high control over their consumption. The environmental and social motive was mentioned by the majority of respondents in this study when being asked about the reasons that motivate them to minimalistic consumption. Participants from different educational backgrounds from those with only a high school diploma to those with a bachelor's degree or master's degree showed high concern about the relationship between consumption and ecological impact. The explanation for this high awareness of Finns may stem from the focus on teaching about the environment and climate change forms at all levels in the Finnish education system (Cord, 2019). Minimalistic consumers believe that their purchasing choices not only affect themselves but also the surrounding world (Harrison et al., 2005 cited in Cherrier et al., 2011). Therefore, through deliberate purchasing actions, minimalistic consumers who are highly engaged with environmental and social causes believe that their actions can make a contribution to the external world. According to Hutter & Hoffmann (2013), consumers who are strongly influenced by ecological reasons assume they can make a difference in their own lives and those around them. The movement consciously limits the general level of their consumption. When they have to make a purchase of goods, they are willing to pay more money for products that are environmental-friendly and recyclable.

Some consumers who engage in minimalistic consumption driven by environmental causes aim to reduce the waste in the exploitation of natural resources used in manufacturing plants, as well the household waste generated every year to conserve

the environment. This belief is based on the simple relation: “The less I have, and process, the less waste I generate” (Dopierala, 2017). In this study, respondents encourage the recycle circle by using second-hand products and donating used products to second-hand shops. If they must shop, they look for some used products from their social circle as family, friends, or second-hand stores before buying anything new that requires to be manufactured. Then when they must make a new purchase, they check out products that are high quality and durable that can last for a long time to avoid waste.

Consumer movements that promote minimalistic consumption from the social view are aware of the ethical actions relating to the consumption. For example, they pay attention to the working condition of employees at plants manufacturing the product, as well as human rights and labor rights. Craig-Lees (2006) suggests that advocates of anti-consumption not only reduce their general consumer activities but also target specific products or brands that affect negatively society. Consumers have their own personal philosophies when making consumption choices. In this study, it was found that Finnish consumers pay more attention to certain products or brands that match their personal ideologies about social aspects. Finns have a favorable response to local products. Many Finnish respondents mentioned well-known local brands like Iittala, Arabia, Hackman, Fiskar when being asked about their favorite kitchenware brands. They explained that consuming locally produced products can enhance the local economy, avoid supporting brands with the poor working condition in other parts of the world, and reduce the air pollution generated from the transportation of goods between the manufacturing and consuming countries. Ethical choice plays an important role when consumers make a purchase (Bylok, 2017).

Minimalistic consumers who take the environmental and social motive argued that overconsumption leads to many societal problems (Iyer & Muncy, 2009). Besides environmental concerns, material inequity was addressed in this study. Minimalistic consumers feel guilty about a system of distribution of wealth in the world, where wealthier classes engage in excessive levels of consumption and poorer classes are not able to access even some basic things. It is believed that the consumerist lifestyle by wealthier countries is contributing to poverty problems in less developed countries (Iyer & Muncy, 2009). Responding to the unjust distribution of wealth, some of the

participants refuse their previous excessive consumption and voluntarily live a simple and less material-oriented lifestyle. According to Alexander (2011), living simply can be considered as an act of sharing and solidarity by rejecting the high level of consumption that all can not share. Minimalistic consumers assume that this lifestyle allows them to gain a positive sense of self. Minimalistic consumption choices they are making help them to improve a more pleasing and satisfying personal image (Boujbel & d'Astous, 2012). Consumers feel good about themselves when their consumption choices can do good deeds to the planet they are living on. The congruence between the ideal self and actual self is established when individuals feel that they are doing something good (Lee & Ahn, 2016). They tend to continue to do more good things to reap the positive results from those actions (Guillen-Royo, 2019).

Social pressure and group affiliation motive

Normative influences guide consumers to consume the minimalist design with subtle and muted logo due to social pressure and group affiliation that prior literature mentioned has not been found as one of the motives that encourage Finnish consumers to involve in minimalistic consumption in this study. People consume not only because of the function of the product but also due to the symbolic value (Levy, 1959). Pangarkar et al., (2020) argued that although minimalistic consumers adopt a minimalist design with a focus on sustainability and waste reduction, their desire for maintaining the status and distinguishing themselves from others still remains. Consumers engage in unique designs that stand out due to the detail and pure form of the product in order to signify their class in a discreet way and communicate only to the insiders who are from their own social class. (Pangarkar et al., 2020). Minimalistic consumers who are driven by social pressure are concerned much about what other people judge through their consumption. This study reveals that the opinions of others, especially society do not affect significantly the consumption choices of Finnish respondents. Unlike countries with a low score of individualism that people belong to the group and act based on the recognition of the society such as China (a score of 20), South Korea (a score of 18), or Vietnam (a score of 20) (Hofstede insights). Finland is an individualist society with a score of 63 on the dimension of individualism, where people focus on the self and their immediate family only. The consumption choice of Finns is decided mainly by their own core values rather than the social pressures from

the surrounding people. According to Hofstede insights, Finnish people value cooperation, equality, and solidarity (a score of 26 on the dimension of masculinity). This is contrary to a society with a high score of masculinity, where people focus on the competition and success defined by the winner in the field. Finnish culture values collaboration more than the competition. Cooperation and interaction have been the key lesson in educational development in Finland (OECD, 2014). This explains why Finns avoid bragging about their achievement. They avoid comparing themselves with others and flaunting their wealth in the community. It is not social pressures and group affiliation causes that guide Finnish people to engage in minimalistic consumption practices.

Personal preference motive

The present study contributes to the minimalistic consumption literature that personal preference is found as one of the motivations for Finnish consumers to involve in minimalistic consumption. The results show that Finnish respondents practice minimalistic consumption because this lifestyle goes well with their personality and personal values. Personality and personal values play important roles in explaining and understanding the actions of each individual in consumption (Casidy Mulyanegara & Tsarenko, 2009). Personality traits are viewed as largely genetic characteristics while personal values are considered as the results of adaptations to the surrounding environment (Grankvist & Kajonius, 2015). The finding is that Finnish people enjoy empty space with a minimal amount of material possessions and live close to nature. The reason for this may stem from the influences of their living environment. More than 80 percent of Finland is covered with trees, lakes, rivers, and other bodies of water (Finland toolbox, 2020), which means that Finnish people have close contact with nature no matter where they live in the countryside or urban areas. Because of such a close relationship, nature has become uniquely strong important in Finnish culture and society (Finland toolbox, 2020). Engaging in minimalistic consumption practices, Finnish people can express the self about the concern of sustainability and respect for nature. This probably explains why minimalistic consumers in Finland prefer a minimalist design that blends with nature and products that are manufactured with minimal resources. This finding supports certain characteristics of the product that minimalistic consumers due to personal preference motive care for when making

consumption decisions. The functional purpose of the product should be fulfilled, the simple and pure designs are inspired by the nature, and the limitation of excessive using natural resources should be encouraged by consuming more second-hand products.

To summarize, this study provides certain minimalistic consumption practices as representative behaviours that Finnish consumers are adopting in the case of kitchenware consumption. The results in the present study provide a better understanding of the motives and aims of Finnish consumers when engaging in minimalistic consumption. Three motives, including self-fulfilling motive, economic motive, and environmental and social motive confirmed in this study are consistent with propositions in previous literature. The personal preference motive found in the present study extends the prior literature. This study is meaningful for improving the understanding of minimalistic consumption in the specific market of Finland.

5.2. Theoretical contribution of the study

This present study contributes to filling the research gap of prior studies on the phenomenon of minimalistic consumption. Extant literature has only examined minimalistic consumption from several single perspectives, under alternative trends to consumerism such as voluntary simplicity, de-consumption, anti-consumption, and minimalism. The holistic research on this phenomenon has rarely approached and the motives and aims of consumers when engaging in minimalistic lifestyle has been neglected. To date, this research reduces the research gap by collecting and analysing qualitative data to understand about motivations and purposes of consumers when involving in minimalistic consumption. Furthermore, this research contributes to identifying consumption behaviours commonly practiced by minimalistic consumers.

The study of the phenomenon of minimalistic consumption is connected to the different disciplinary roots of marketing. The results in this study have contributed to economic, psychological, sociological, and cultural studies on an understanding of an emerging customer segment – the minimalistic consumer. The first contribution of this study is to the economics field. Economies exist when there is a trade between

individuals (Baker & Saren, 2010, p. 110). Minimalistic consumers do not give up consumption, the exchange of goods and services still exists in their daily lives but in a different way. They focus on non-materialistic sources rather than materialistic possessions, quality rather than quantity. Economics is the study of how market actors make decisions and why they act like they do in economic situations (Baker & Saren, 2010, p. 106, 109). The economic causes were found in this study have contributed to the explanation of actor behaviors in maximizing the utilities and allocating resources efficiently. This study of the minimalistic consumption phenomenon has also approached the non-economic view to explain the consumption practices of the buyers. Minimalistic consumers have made less materialistic consumption because of non-economic influences as self-fulfilment focus, environmental and social concerns, and personal preference. This study has taken the viewpoint of the seller and identified the heterogeneity amongst minimalistic consumers. Consumers have different motives and aims when engaging in minimalistic consumption. Based on different purposes, the characteristics of the product that consumers take into consideration when making consumption decisions would be different.

The second contribution of this study is to the psychological field. The most evident contribution of this study to psychological studies is the insight into minimalistic customer behavior. Psychological constructs study signs of personal behaviours in the marketplace, examining attitudes, motivation, learning, and personality of individuals to provide explanations for their noticed behaviours in the physical and social contexts (Baker & Saren, 2010, p. 106). Using the motivation approach – a psychological construct, this present study has offered four motives of minimalistic customers in the Finnish market and explained the goals that these consumers aim to achieve based on their reasons for engaging in minimalistic consumption. The minimalistic consumption practices found in this study are goal-directed. Goals objects that drive the behaviors' customers reflect the customer wants or needs (Baker & Saren, 2010, p. 124).

The third one that this study has contributed to is sociology. It is one of the major social sciences that concentrates on the internal structure of human life, groups, and societies (Giddens, 1993 cited in Baker & Saren, 2010, p. 148). This study observed minimalistic consumers not only as merely individuals but also the surroundings in

which they are embedded such as families, social classes, culture. The results in this study show that minimalistic consumers in Finland adopt a minimalistic lifestyle because of the high concerns for the environment and society on the planet where they are living. Concepts, for example, ‘status’, ‘social class’ borrowing from sociology to characterize and profile customer groups with similar consumption behaviours and values has not been found in this study. We identified that social pressure and group affiliation were not the reasons that forced Finnish consumers to participate in minimalistic consumption. This finding is distinct from prior research of Pangarkar et al., (2020).

The last contribution of this study is to cultural studies. People in different cultures not only have differences in languages, but they also have different values and norms which lead to different attitudes and needs towards consumption (Baker & Saren, 2010, p.166). Although minimalistic consumption is becoming a global phenomenon, the extent of this phenomenon as well motives and aims, that consumers aspire to achieve through minimalistic consumption can vary depending on the culture of each country. Consumers in Nordic countries are more concerned with environmental and social issues when they pursue the minimalistic style of consumption, especially in Finland, where people have strong feelings for nature. While in Southeast Asia countries, where individuals are highly competitive and eager to express their success in their community, maintaining the social status and communicating with insiders who come from the same social class may be the goals that they care more about when consuming minimalistic designs but luxury. Therefore, social pressure and group affiliation can be found as one of the motives of minimalistic consumers in other cultures. It is important to understand and learn the phenomenon of minimalistic consumption from different cultures.

5.3. Managerial implications of the study

The results of this study provide the managerial implications that benefit both *marketers* and *consumer educators*. Minimalistic consumption should not simply be seen as an economic concern because consuming fewer material products does not necessarily lead to a decrease in total gross output or a general decrease in economic

growth (Kang et al., 2021). The results of this study show that although minimalistic consumers do not promote the possessions and acquisitions of material goods, they still engage in the marketplace. They devote themselves to reducing their material consumption by acquiring only what they need but investing in higher quality products with longer product life. They spend less on material goods but pay more for hobbies, experiences, and personal growth. They reject some kinds of consumption that cause harm to the environment and society but prize ecological and ethical innovations. Minimalistic consumers still consume but in a different way. Their approach to consumption can contribute to economic growth in many aspects as developing the service field, improving human resources, and reducing economic costs for issues related to pollution and the environment.

Based on this research, marketers can consider individuals who adopt minimalistic consumption as their potential consumers. However, it is important for marketers to notice that minimalistic consumers should be treated as heterogeneous and not as one group. Individuals differ in several aspects concerning the living environment, education, financial condition, product characteristics, satisfaction level, and life goals (Pangarkar et al., 2021). Our results show that minimalistic consumers in the Finnish market have different reasons and goals that encourage them to engage in minimalistic consumption. Such different motives and aspirations lead them to pay attention to different perspectives of consumption and product attributes. Therefore, it is necessary for marketers to design suitable strategies for targeted minimalistic consumers according to their motivations regarding pursuing minimalistic consumption.

In the case of consumers who adopt minimalistic consumption due to the self-fulfilling motive, it is noteworthy that these consumers are searching for a more satisfied and fulfilled life from non-materialistic sources. They shift their focus from the acquisition of material possessions to activities that bring more value and directly influence their well-being. Results in this study show that experiences, personal growth, and relationship are things that minimalistic consumers prefer to spend their time, money, and effort on. Some consumers make a trade-off between their expenditure on material shopping and experiential passions such as spa, traveling, and dining restaurant. This suggests that marketers should focus on extending the service fields rather than manufacturing material products in order to tap this kind of consumer. Others make a

great investment in their personal growth through practices relating to continuous learning, hobbies, fitness, and health. They spend more time for themselves by starting to learn new sports, pursuing hobbies, and enjoying nature by going for walks, biking, or hiking. There are many benefits that firms, especially service firms can get from minimalistic consumers who are driven by self-fulfilling influences. Marketers should develop strategies that assign more meaning to intrinsic aspects like passions, personal growth, and health to appeal to this segment. It is also shown in the findings of this study that minimalistic consumers consider interpersonal relationships to be important. They avoid spending their leisure time on unnecessary material shopping, instead, they invest more time and energy in relationships that are important to their lives as family and friends. As such, marketers should offer products and services that consumers can experience with their own family, friends, or teams. Minimalistic consumers decrease their dependency on material consumption and limit their expenditures on consumption. However, this does not mean that minimalistic consumers are completely excluded from the potential customer list of production companies. When it comes to material consumption, minimalistic consumers still consume but in a reasonable and appropriate amount and they pay more attention to product attributes like quality, durability, minimalist design, practicality, and long-term product life. It is thus necessary for firms to ensure these aspects of products when offering to the minimalistic consumer with a self-fulfilling mindset.

Regarding consumers who involve in minimalistic consumption due to economic motives, these consumers get used to thinking about their limited financial resources and opportunity costs (Hamilton et al., 2019). Thus, they are ordinarily price-sensitive when it comes to consumption. Marketers should offer product range towards affordable segments. Besides, it is important for firms to provide a detail of benefits about the perceived values that consumers can get against the price they pay for the product. This study provides that minimalistic consumers who are driven by economic causes focus on the functional characteristics from the product that they pay for, as well as the quality-price ratio of the product. They do not mind consuming used products, as long as these products are still in good condition and offered at a better price. For such consumers, second-hand business and collaborative consumption platforms appear promising. Marketers should emphasize the benefits of sharing,

donating, and reusing, then making it easier for customers to access the second-hand and sharing economy.

Minimalistic consumers, particularly individuals who advocate for environmental and social reasons want to achieve different goals through their minimalistic consumption practices. They care deeply about issues relating to the environment and society, for example, air pollution, waste, unethical consumption, and equality. With such an environmentally and socially conscious, they use their customer power to reduce the general amount of consumption and reject consumption that may affect negatively society. This study provides implications for marketers to understand more the reasons and purposes of such kind of customer segment so that marketers can identify strategies that gravitate towards societal welfare and sustainability. In order to engage this kind of consumer, it is necessary for the firm to demonstrate the ecological benefits that the firm and its customers can create through production and consumption. In addition, firms should invest in technology initiatives towards sustainability and collaborate with non-profit organizations on ecological issues. The findings of this study also provide implications about product attributes that minimalistic consumers due to the environmental and social motive focus on when consuming material goods. Because these individuals are highly aware of their impact through consumption on the environment and society, marketers should provide offerings that are more in line with such a sustainable lifestyle. It is recommended that firms should offer more environmental-friendly products, quality and durability of the product should be prioritized, recycled materials should be used in production and packaging, the product should be designed and manufactured locally, and recycling service of used products should be considered in the business model of firms.

Concerning consumers who engage in minimalistic consumption due to personal preference motive, this study shows that such customers have positive evaluations of the self and do not weigh heavily what other people think of the self and the way of their consumption. They become minimalists because minimalistic consumption practices match with their personality and express the actual self. For such customers, strategies that highlight the role of influencers or celebrities in promoting products to customers may not be effective. Instead, the brands should focus on the fit between the actual self of these targeted customers and the perceived personality of the brand.

In general, minimalistic consumers have different motives, aspirations, approaches, as well as consumption patterns when engaging in minimalistic consumption, our research suggests that firms should approach minimalistic consumers through a different lens and develop different strategies to appeal to these divergent consumers.

Another important implication of this study involves consumer educators. The results suggest that minimalistic consumption is a tool for consumers to achieve their goals. Educators should emphasize the potential benefits of a minimalist lifestyle to not only the consumers themselves but also the environment and society in which they live such as freedom from debt, anxiety, depression, better-utilized spaces in homes, more time for personal growth and worthy relationships, greater financial security, waste reduction, great contributions to environment and society from a nonmaterialistic approach towards consumption. With a better understanding of the motives, aims, and consumption practices of minimalistic consumers, this study could help educators to educate the consumer to consume differently. Consumers learn to identify what is truly important and meaningful to them and what is not necessary to their happiness. Besides, consumer education with a sustainable and ecological focus is also important. On the basis of their knowledge about personal goals, environmental, and social consequences, consumers make their own consumption choices. This could mean that consumers may take time to learn more about various aspects of the products they consume such as the origin of the product, the working condition of employees who produce the product, or the materials used in production.

5.4. Limitations and future research

Although this study has provided empirical supports for explaining the motives and aims of minimalistic consumers and important findings to the minimalistic consumption domain, there are some limitations of this study that should be addressed. First, this study is limited due to its nature of sample and small sample size. This study used the general invitation to ask for the interviewees from two private groups who are pursuing a minimalistic lifestyle and are Finnish. Six individuals voluntarily accepted the invitation to be interviewed and one individual was personally asked to take part. This way of choosing a sample has exposed some limitations of the sample

regard to gender and societal groups. It happened that all participants in this research were women only. It would be possible to draw more accurate conclusions when the phenomenon of this study was viewed from the perspectives of both men and women. According to Pangarkar et al., (2021), consumers who engage in minimalistic consumption due to social pressure and group affiliation, often belong to the elite of society. This research did not have the opportunity to reach the group of people who are upper class, which may affect the results of this study. Because of the limited time and resources, the thesis sample was small in size, with only seven participants. Such a small sample size was noted when analysing the data and exploring the findings. With richer information from more samples, it would be possible to gain more minimalistic customer insights and explore the research questions more precisely. Second, one of the typical limitations of qualitative researches existing in this research is that the willingness to respond to the interview questions of participants might have been limited. Because of the pandemic during the time this thesis was conducted, all interviews were carried out via Zoom with video-recording; however, two of seven participants did not have the camera during the interview due to technical reasons. This may lead to an omission in recognizing whether participants have concealed some information or intentionally failed to mention some hidden reasons for their consumption practices during the interview. Finally, this study is limited because there may be some minimalistic consumption practices that have not been entirely captured, especially practices that may emerge in the post-Covid-19 world. The coronavirus pandemic has been ongoing on a global scale. It has been stated that the pandemic has influenced many different aspects of people's lives. Therefore, it would be possible that there are more other behavioral representations of minimalistic consumption that come out in the future.

In terms of future research, first, further studies should take notice of the limitations that this study faced and overcome these restrictions. Second, these findings from this research provide an in-depth understanding of minimalistic consumers that would be well-grounded for further researches to develop a scale and test these results by quantitative methods. Third, it would be noteworthy to examine the phenomenon of minimalistic consumption in different national cultures in further researches. Because the motives and aims of minimalistic consumers may be different across cultures. Social pressure and group affiliation motive mentioned in the prior literature has not

been found in the context of Finnish customers; however, this motivation may exist in other cultures with a low score of individualism and a high score of masculinity such as China, Korea, or Vietnam. This study provides a deep understanding of motives and aims, as well as consumption practices of minimalistic consumers in only one specific market, Finland. Future research should investigate the impacts of culture on minimalistic consumption by studying the phenomenon with countries that have similar cultural dimensions, as well as different cultural aspects. Fourth, technological development in recent years has allowed more ways for researchers and businesses to examine customer behavior that are more personalized, efficient, and based on the data collected from customers (Rust, 2020). Advances in technology bring along many new possibilities for future research to examine consumption behaviors of minimalistic consumers based on suggested future paradigms in consumer research, such as consumer sensations, sensory experience, and neuropsychology (Achrol & Kotler, 2012), or the role of feelings (Rust, 2021). Finally, the frequent discussion of global warming and climate changes in recent years make environmental concerns become an important area for future research to develop. It is estimated that sustainable development and high awareness of environmental and social issues in marketing would become two of the most dominant geopolitical trends in the future (Rust 2020; Achrol & Kotler, 2012). The environmental and social motive was confirmed in the results of this study has opened the door for further studies to examine the importance of sustainability and the role of environmental and social concerns in minimalistic consumer-oriented marketing strategies.

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7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Questions for the semi-structured interview

Part 1: Personal information of interviewees

Name, Age, Education, Occupation, Income (<1000e, 1000-2000e, 2000-3000e, 3000-4000e, >5000e)

Part 2: Kitchenware consumption practices

1. On which occasion do you buy kitchenware?
2. From where do you buy the kitchenware? From the shop/second-hand stores/ or getting them free from someone.
3. Do you prefer consuming the new or used kitchenware?
4. What characteristics of the products do you take into consideration when buying the kitchenware? For example plate, stockpot, blender
5. Do you prefer kitchenware with the minimalist design and material used? Please explain your reason for your answer?
6. There are some items in the kitchen that you rarely use and only use on certain occasions. Would you buy them?
7. What do you do with your unwanted/ unused kitchenware?
8. What is your favorite kitchenware brands? Please explain why you like those brands.
9. Do you have any kitchenware brands you do not like and avoid consuming products from those brands? If yes, why.

Part 3: Motives and aims

10. How long have you practiced minimalistic consumption?
11. In your opinion, what is minimalistic consumption? What minimalistic consumption means to you?
12. What motives encourage you to engage in minimalistic consumption?
13. What do you aim to achieve through minimalistic consumption?

14. How does your financial condition have an impact on your decision in kitchenware consumption?
15. Do you limit your consumption of kitchenware in order to pursue other interests?
16. Do you limit your kitchenware consumption in order to save up money for financial changes that can happen to you in the future (e.g.: loss of employment, the birth of a child)?
17. How do you think about your self-control over kitchenware temptations such as sales promotions, beautiful and trendy design that you accidentally see them in the shop?
18. Do you feel guilty about your kitchenware consumption habits? If yes, why?
19. Do you think environmental and societal issues have an impact on your decision-making in kitchenware consumption?
20. Do you feel the opinions of your friends/family/society affect your kitchenware consumption choices?
21. Do you like consuming luxurious kitchenware with minimalist design? If yes, please explain your reason.