CUSTOMER GETS A VOICE: USER EXPERIENCE OF LUNCH IN A BOX

Case Saarioinen

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of the study is to describe and analyze user experience of Saarioinen’s meals for lunch. Lunch is a unique consumption situation that this study focuses on. Theoretical framework for the study is formed from a means-end chain model that describes customer perceived value. The means-end chain model combines product attributes, consequences and desired end states. Means are goods or services that are used to achieve desired end states such as goals and values. Emphasis on the means-end chain model is in a customer’s own perception, preferences and evaluation of use of goods and services. This study proceeds from thought that value does not exist before it is experienced and perceived by a customer.

Qualitative research was chosen as a research approach because aim of the study was to understand, describe and interpret unique phenomenon. Focus on a qualitative research is on processes and meanings. Qualitative research seeks capturing feelings, experiences and behavior that are the essence when studying user experience of Saarioinen’s meals for lunch. Case study was used as a research strategy and semi-structured focus group interviews as a data-gathering method. In addition, a projective technique was used. Interviewees were asked to collect pictures of their feelings and attitudes towards Saarioinen and a photograph of lunch facilities. These visuals were utilized during interviews as a way to create discussion and reveal even unconscious feelings and attitudes of the interviewees. Two pilot interviews and three focus group interviews were organized during January and February 2012 and altogether 15 people were interviewed.

Findings show that customers acknowledge both concrete, tangible, visual characteristics and abstract, intangible, subjective characteristics of a product when assessing product attributes. Emphasis was put on usability of products as that has meaningful role in consumption experience. Both positive and negative consequences were found out as a result of using Saarioinen’s meals for lunch. Desired end states of eating Saarioinen’s meals for lunch were found to relate on three complementary aspects: prevailing requirements of lunch food, goals pursued by using Saarioinen’s meals for lunch and general goals of lunch. Lunch situations vary a lot depending on a workplace. Some similarities however exist how people spend their lunch.

User experience was approached through customer perceived value and value was further approached through the means-end chain model in order to capture user experience of Saarioinen’s meals for lunch.
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1 INTRODUCTION

Life is hectic for a lot of people in these days. It appears as longer working hours and as an attempt to spent limited leisure time as efficiently as possible. As well increase of single person households and lack of cooking skills or interest to cook are trends of life. This way of living increases need for new kind of goods and services. What food industry is to offer to satisfy the need is variety of convenience foods that are ready to be consumed. (Geeroms, Verbeke & Kenhove 2008; Olsen, Sijtsema & Hall 2010, 534) Same as concepts of healthiness or sensory quality also convenience is a multidimensional concept that does not only describe attributes of products but also impact of context and consumer (Costa, Schoolmeester, Dekker & Jongen 2007, 77). Level of convenience can be defined as mental and physical effort in all stages of food consumption from planning until disposal (Brunner, van der Horst & Siegrist 2010, 498).

Food is no longer just food. There is a lot discussion going on of food. Increased amount of alternatives makes choosing difficult, trends in food change rapidly (organic as an example), increased emphasis is put on benefits versus negative impacts on health of different nutrient (like omega3, e-codes), industrial manufacturing of foods make people unaware and worried what food includes, food is used as a way of self-expression, and consumer is acting as food expert. These are not ultimate truths but they reflect the spirit of the times. (Mäkelä in Pehkonen & Sevänen 2012, 7)

1.1 User defines value

According to Vargo and Lusch (2004), marketing has evolved to a new logic which they refer as service-dominant logic (later referred to S-D logic). S-D logic is a countermove towards traditional goods-dominant logic (later referred to G-D logic) that has emphasized tangible assets of a company. Goods often hinder complete understanding of value creation as they are given too much attention. According to S-D logic value is created (1) during service process, (2) it consist of intangible assets rather than output of an exchange and (3) customer is involved as a co-creator together with a company instead of value would be distributed by a provider to a passive customer. S-D logic is
not meant to be reinvention of marketing but more as reorientation of marketing thought. (Vargo & Lusch 2004)

Distinction between operant and operand resources is in the core distinction between G-D logic and S-D logic. Traditionally marketing has focused on operant resources that are usually tangible units of exchange such as goods. However, based on S-D logic marketing should be focused on operant resources that are often intangible and invisible in nature – knowledge and skills – types of competences that are in the center of exchange. As stated by Vargo and Lusch (2004, 2), operant resources are typically endless and dynamic. Tangible goods in S-D logic are seen as a platform for service provision. (Vargo & Lusch 2004; 2006) Singular term service is used in S-D logic to highlight that it is not meant to be confused to term services that is a unit of intangible output. Basically, service refers to process whereas services refer units of output. In addition, service is not meant to replace goods as goods are seen as an alternative for service provision. Thus goods are not always involved in the process but service as a core of process is. Whether exchange happens through goods or directly has no difference. In fact all companies are service companies according to S-D logic. (Vargo & Lusch 2006, 47)

Out of ten foundational premises of S-D logic five premises that relate to value creation will be now looked in more detail. Service is the fundamental basis of exchange. S-D logic highlights that what drives for people to exchange are benefits such as skills and knowledge. (Vargo & Lusch 2004, 6–8)

Goods are distribution mechanisms for service provision. Tangible products can be seen as distributors of skills and knowledge that enable service. Reason for people to buy a product is in service it provides and value is thus created through use of a product and thus goods do not have value embedded in themselves instead they transmit service. (Vargo & Lusch 2004, 8–9)

The customer is always a co-creator of value. Efficiency of manufacturing have been earlier explained by distance of an organization and its customers so that manufacturing has not been interfered by customers but as stated by Vargo and Lusch (2004, 10–11), it has negatively influenced to marketing as this distance has made harder for an
organization to interact with customers. In addition, it should be recognized that production is not ending when a tangible product – that is a vehicle of transmitter of a service provision – is ready but continues when a customer makes a purchase and consumes. Along with the continuous process also value is co-created and thus happens in interaction between an organization and a customer. “The firm is fundamentally a value facilitator” (Grönroos 2008, 307-308).

The enterprise cannot deliver value, but only offer value propositions. Value for the user is always created in the mind of a customer and thus a product that has not been sold has no value (Grönroos 2011, 287). Further Vargo and Lusch (2004, 11) state that an organization can make value propositions but customers are ultimately those who define value and co-create it. Thus an organization is not able to alone to create and deliver value instead it can only make a value proposition and try to act accordingly (Vargo & Lusch 2008, 8).

Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by beneficiary. The last premise that has been added to the list of premises in 2008 emphasizes that value is “idiosyncratic, experiential, contextual, and meaning laden”. (Vargo & Lusch 2008, 9)

Some argue that S-D logic would be only a restatement of customer orientation but Vargo and Lusch (2006, 46-47) point out that in fact G-D logic that has put goods in the spotlight of exchange. It is incoherent to focus on goods if the focus should be on customers’ needs and wants. Therefore it can be argued whether intention to be customer oriented has been even possible when looking from a product-centric point of view. S-D logic naturally includes looking things from customer’s perspective and no same kind of incoherence due to that exist. S-D logic is continuously evolving and characterized by work-in-process. It could be though of as a mindset that can enable better understanding of social and economic situations. (Vargo & Lusch 2006, 55; 2008, 9)

In this study customer perceived value is understood as an experience of value perceived by a customer based on use experience. This approach is called value-in-use by Vargo and Lusch (2004) and means that value is not created before a product is being used.
1.2 Purpose of the study and research questions

The purpose of the study is to describe and analyze user experience of Saarioinen’s meals for lunch.

Research questions of the study are:
1. What is customer perceived value?
2. How user experience can be approached via a means-end chain model?
3. How customer perceives convenience food for lunch?

Value is a vague, wide and ambiguous concept in sense that it does not have a unified definition among researchers and a lot of different definitions exist (Woodruff & Flint 2006, 184–186; Graf & Maas 2008). Therefore this thesis will not be about defining ultimate definition of value instead it will be a review of earlier studies of value. Earlier studies will be analysed and discussed based on scope of value suitable for the context.

Customer value can be both understood from a company’s or a customer’s perspective. Value derived by a supplier from a customer is called customer lifetime value and focuses on gains of a company of a relationship. Another point of view is that value is derived by a customer from a supplier. (Woodall 2003) This thesis will focus on the latter – looking value from customer’s perspective – what value customer perceives. In addition, it is wanted to highlight that this study aims to describe experiences of customers but not to prove those opinions either right or wrong. Instead, aim is to be able to describe customer point of view and give information to the case company about lunch eating. This said aim is to let voice of a customer to be heard.

Value can occur in any state from pre-purchase, purchase, post-purchase to all the way until disposal. In other words, value can stem throughout whole product life-cycle. (Vargo & Lusch 2004; Woodruff & Flint 2006) This thesis however focuses on the post-purchase/consumption state of value creation. However, it is acknowledged that other states have an impact on value creation and value can not be solely defined to belong to a certain stage or divide between states. Instead, a customer forms his or her judgment based on and influenced by all states.
Findings of the study should not be generalized. Instead, this thesis will look into detail to a specific unique phenomenon and attempts to describe and analyse it thoroughly.

1.3 Key concepts

User experience: experience of use that stems from use of goods or services and is perceived by a customer. (Woodruff 1997; Vargo & Lusch 2004; Hekkert 2006)

Customer perceived value: Variety of terms such as *customer value, consumer value, value for the customer* or *customer perceived value* is used in the field of value to describe customer point of view. In this thesis customer perceived value is used. When using customer perceived value it is wanted to stress the importance of perception. Customer is always the one who uniquely and through his or her own lenses evaluates and determines value. (Woodruff 1997; Vargo & Lusch 2004; Woodruff & Flint 2006; Graf & Maas 2008)

Convenience food: Convenience food could be also called with such names such as ready-made meals but convenience food was chosen to be used in this study because it is seen to highlight well convenient aspect of the food. Convenience food in this study refers to food that can be eaten after heating up. Heating up takes few minutes on a microwave. Category includes such one person meals as soups, pasta meals and casseroles. (Costa et al. 2007; Kupiainen & Järvinen 2009; Saarioinen 2012) Examples of convenience foods by Saarioinen can be seen in appendix 1.

Means-end chain model: Means are goods or services that are used to achieve desired end states as a result from the use of goods or services. (Woodruff 1997)
2 VALUE AS A SIGN OF USER EXPERIENCE

2.1 Multifaceted value

Concept of value has its foundation in several fields of research such as marketing, psychology, social psychology, management, organizational development and economics. Customer perceived value has essential role in marketing. (Holbrook 1994; Payne & Holt 2001, 177; Graf & Maas 2008; Babin & James 2010, 472) Originally, marketing has strongly relied on a goods-centric mindset. This has been shown as an attempt to create a competitive advantage through unique product characteristics. Companies often focus on what they can offer, thus how they could put more value on a product. (Vargo & Lusch 2004) In this study value is understood as an experience of value perceived by a customer based on use experience. This approach is called value-in-use by Vargo and Lusch (2004) and means that value is created when a product is being used. Customer perceived value can be seen as a sign of user experience.

2.1.1 Value differs from values, quality and satisfaction

Value differs from such terms and concepts such as values, quality and satisfaction.

There is a distinct difference between value and values despite some academics regard them to be the same concept. The distinction between value and values is that whereas value describes the outcome of evaluation or judgment, values are personal beliefs, norms and standards that have impact and affect on evaluation. (Holbrook 1999; Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo 2007) Values influence judgments but value refers to interaction between a product and a customer (Holbrook 1999, 6; Payne & Holt 2001). Simply put, value is something that is perceived and values are personal (Woodruff 1997; Day & Crask 2000; Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo 2007, 429).

Zeithaml (1988) has brought out that value and quality are indistinct concepts that are often mixed together. Perceived quality can be defined as the overall evaluation of a product’s excellence. Perceived quality is not the actual quality of a product as
depending on a person quality might be perceived differently. Product attributes are the sign of quality but still quality is a rather abstract concept based on senses. The difference between perceived value and perceived quality is that value is more personal than quality. Value is also a higher-level concept that is affected by such things as quality. In other words, quality can lead to value but quality is not equal to value. (Zeithaml 1988; Holbrook 1999; Graf & Maas 2008)

Satisfaction is a post-consumption assessment made by the user with the focus mainly on positive aspects whereas value includes both benefits and sacrifices also in other stages of use process and not just post-consumption evaluation. Satisfaction is largely based on evaluation of value and is a reaction to the perceived value after use. (Day & Crask 2000; Sweeney & Soutar 2001; Graf & Maas 2008, 5)

2.1.2 Value as concept

Value is a concept that is difficult to define. Despite customer perceived value has been the interest among many academics over decades, it is still missing a uniform definition that would be widely accepted. Instead, several definitions exist, which makes the concept fragmented and vague. Research on value has mainly focused on definitions and categorizing value types. (Woodruff & Flint 2006, 184–186; Graf & Maas 2008)

The reasons for the lack of the uniform definition can be many but at least 1) the term is widely and extensively used in divergent studies with their own focus in different fields, among them economics 2) there is no clear definition or explanations of what is meant by customer perceived value within each study context, and also 3) value is often described by listing different views but not coming to any conclusion of definition. (Woodall 2003; Gallerza, Gil-Saura & Holbrook 2011)

Customer perceived value has evolved from two dimensions of consumer behavior – an economic dimension and a psychological dimension (cognitive and affective). The earliest definitions and descriptions of customer perceived value have focused on a utilitarian perspective of customer perceived value within cognitive aspects are used to evaluate benefits and costs. Experiences are evaluated by such aspects as convenience, product usefulness, efficiency, simplicity, conformity and whether some task can be
completed. People are being rational and they are constrained by price and choice of goods or services is based on the maximum utility that is possible to gain. For some researchers, customer perceived value has meant a quality-price relationship and the trade-off between them. Price is an extrinsic indicator of both benefits and sacrifice. Price can be perceived as sacrifice but also price is an indicator of quality. (Agarwal & Teas 2000; Monroe 1979 in Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo 2007, 431–432, 440; Babin & James 2010, 473) However, as stated by Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo (2007, 441), this approach assumes that decision-making would be rational in nature. As a countermove, the consumption experience is seen to be much more multifaceted (Sweeney & Soutar 2001). The combination of utilitarian and hedonic aspects gives appreciation to the emotional aspects of customer perceived value. Values are often divided into utilitarian and hedonic values that do not exclude each other but bring into consideration two viewpoints of value. Utilitarian value refers to functional and cognitive dimensions that are related to measurable attributes, usability and performance compared to hedonistic values that are related to feelings and senses and emphasize the affective aspects of experiences. Utilitarian values are instrumental, meaning that they are means to achieve hedonic values that are also called terminal values. Hedonic values thereby are valued for the symbolic and experiential meanings they provide. (Hirschman & Holbrook 1982; Kuusela & Rintamäki 2004, 30; Smith & Colgate 2007; Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg 2010, 181)

One of the most commonly cited and known definitions of customer perceived value is the definition by Zeithaml (1988, 14): “…the consumer’s overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perception of what is received and what is given”. Simply put, value is a trade-off between give and get components – what is sacrificed to gain some benefits. (Zeithaml 1988; Woodruff & Gardial 1996; Woodruff 1997)

Holbrook (1994, 27; 1999) describes value as “an interactive relativistic preference experience”. The interactive aspect of value indicates that customer perceived value is not solely subjective or objective but in fact it is the interaction between them. Customer perceived value always depends on a product’s or more broadly said on an object’s attributes and who evaluates that object. Relativistic refers to the fact that customer perceived value changes according to the situation, time and place, thus it is situational and unique to the context. A change of customer perceived value can occur
from the moment to another and from the place to another. Secondly, customers are individuals and therefore a judgment of value is individual and value is not absolute. Customer perceived value is also based on preferences and comparison. Choosing one product over another is always influenced by an individual’s comparison between options. Something is preferred more than another. Even though a product would not have competing products there is always another alternative. For example, a customer can decide not to go in a restaurant but to prepare his own meal instead of eating in a restaurant. The experience aspect of customer perceived value means that value does not only involve buying goods or services, but the whole user experience from choosing to use of goods or services. It is also highlighted that value is not embedded in a product but in a consumption experience. (Holbrook 1994; 1999; Anderson & Narus 1998, 54; Woodall 2003)

Woodruff and Flint (2006, 187–190) emphasize value being a process instead of a state. Thus customer perceived value is situational and dynamic that Holbook (1994; 1999) also emphasize. What is perceived as valuable can change over time. Something valued once might no longer be valued. Value evaluation is context-dependent and dynamic and constrained by the use situation. Although the same use situation would occur, it might be that the customer perceived value still changes over time because of such things as new knowledge, new experience or satisfaction regarding goods or services. The consumption situation impacts on which cognitive beliefs and affective feelings are activated. People can perceive value differently in the same consumption situation but also a person can change his or her opinion of a product depending on the personal relevance attached to each and different use situations. (Zeithaml 1988; Woodruff & Gardial 1996; Parasuraman 1997, 155–156; Woodruff 1997; Anderson & Narus 1998, 54; Christensen & Olson 2002; Woodall 2003)

2.1.3 Perceived by customer

A company’s or seller’s perspective in value creation is often described as creating and delivering value. The concept value added views value as being embedded in the offering of a seller and is based on what are expected to be the needs of the customer. However, this concept ignores the customer’s importance in the determination of value.
Customer perceived value relates to an interaction with goods or services that differentiates it from the company’s point of view of the value of its customers (Holbrook 1994; Woodruff 1997; Payne & Holt 2001; Huber, Herrmann & Morgan 2001). Customers form an assessment based on a desired value that refers to expectations and what is wanted through the use of a product and a received value that is experienced when a product is actually used. Thereby the value received is evaluated on goodness and badness based on how the received value reflects a goal or desired value that the customer has had in mind before the use. (Woodruff 1997, 141–142) In this study value is understood as an experience of value perceived by a customer based on use experience. This approach is called value-in-use by Vargo and Lusch (2004) and means that value is created when a product is being used. When selecting a product a customer can assess value but value is not experienced before the product is used. Customer interaction with goods or services creates experience of value that is perceived by the customer. (Woodruff 1997, 141; Vargo & Lusch 2004) Value does not occur before someone appreciates something to be valuable (Holbrook 1999, 6; Grönroos 2011, 287). Perhaps the most universally accepted aspect of value is that it is perceptual, perceived by someone (Woodruff 1997; Day & Crask 2000, 54).

When talking about value creation it might give an impression that value would be created consciously. However, as stated by Korkman (2006 in Grönroos 2011, 282), value is often created unconsciously and thereby it should be acknowledged that rather than creating, value appears out of the use of products.

**2.1.4 Synopsis of features of value**

In conclusion it could be said that the common features of value are that it is situational, dynamic, perceptual, preferential, experiential, individual, subjective and characterized by a trade-off between benefits and sacrifices. Most importantly, customer perceived value is looking at value creation from a customer’s point of view. In this study value is understood as consisting of these features that also figure 1 illustrates.
Woodruff (1997, 142) defines customer perceived value: “customer’s perceived preference for and evaluation of those product attributes, attribute performances, and consequences arising from the use that facilitate (or block) achieving the customer’s goals and purposes in use situations.” Referring to the mindset of Vargo and Lusch (2004) about value-in-use, a means-end chain model that captures importance and impact of use in value creation is now described in more detail.

2.2 Means-end chain model

To capture how customer perceived value forms, a customer’s own perception, preferences and evaluation have been emphasized by Woodruff’s (1997) customer means-end chain theory model (later referred to a means-end chain model) (Gutman 1982). The model is derived from means-end theory that has been adapted from psychology into consumer research (Gutman 1982) and it describes the interrelation of a customer’s values and behavior. Even though means-end theory was at first used to
study how customers form information about products, it was later adapted to customer perceived value by Woodruff and Gardial (1996). Figure 2 illustrates connections between attributes, consequences and goals and how consumer uses to connect them as a whole according to the means-end chain model. These connections connect concepts that are more concrete (attributes) to less concrete (goals and values). Means are goods or services that are used to achieve higher levels of hierarchy, also called desired end states, as a result of the use of goods or services. The model also brings to attention both the desired and received value that is important for a full understanding of customer perceived value. That gives attention also to needs and desires. (Olson & Reynolds 2001; Khalifa 2004, 653; Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo 2007, 435; Graf & Maas 2008, 7)

Figure 2. Means-end chain model (adapted from Woodruff, R.B. (1997) Customer value: the next source for competitive advantage. Journal of the academy of marketing science, 25 (2), 142)
A customer forms value based on the hierarchical means-end way of thinking. On the lowest level of hierarchy, a customer pays attention to the attributes and performance of a product. Based on use and trial customer prefers certain attributes because of the consequences the product attributes enable. In other words, a customer learns to want certain attributes that influence the choice of a product over another. (Woodruff 1997, 142) These product attributes can be both tangible and intangible (Costa, Dekker & Jongen 2004, 408).

Consequences describe the relationship between a consumer and a product. A customer can also evaluate products based on what the consequences of use are and whether and how well these consequences help to achieve his or her goals. (Woodruff 1997, 142) Customers can learn to prefer consequences that they think will enable achieving their goals and purposes. In other words, customers avoid actions that would result in undesired effects. (Khalifa 2004, 654; Kuusela & Rintamäki 2004, 19; Graf & Maas 2008)

Customer perceived value can be also looked at from top to bottom of a hierarchy. Based on desirable goals or the end result, a customer can define what the desirable consequences are. Based on the expectation of consequences, the customer can decide the needed attributes of a product in order to be able to achieve the goals. (Woodruff 1997, 142) That also means avoiding products with unwanted consequences that act against achieving the goals (Gutman 1982).

In other words, in the bottom-top route external input such as product attributes activate a hierarchical evaluation process that activates values and goals. The top-bottom route on the other hand relies on an individual’s goals that activate behaviours that are instrumental in achieving the goals. From top the means-end chain model can be seen as motivational process and from down as categorization process. (Brunsø, Scholderer & Grunert 2004, 666) As stated by Solomon et al. (2010, 177, 180), motivation is process that make people behave the way they do. From psychological perspective motivation occurs when person has a need such as he feels hungry. In order to reduce tension need is either tried to reduce or eliminate. The desired end state is consumer’s goal. Goal can be achieved by eating and getting full that eliminates the need for food. Unique way
how need is satisfied depends on individual and his or her history, learning experiences and cultural environment. Way of satisfying need for example choosing between eating pizza or salad is called a want.

A more complex means-end chain of a six level model has been proposed by Olson and Reynolds (1983) that includes: concrete attributes, abstract attributes, functional outcomes, psychosocial outcomes, instrumental values, and terminal values. The three lower levels – concrete attributes, abstract attributes and functional consequences – represent the product knowledge of consumers, while the three higher levels – psychosocial consequence, instrumental value, and terminal value – represent the self-knowledge of consumers. As a result, the model describes the interrelation of product and consumer. Even though self-knowledge of the consumer is rather stable, circumstances always impact on what parts are activated, for example in different social contexts. (Walker & Olson 1991) As stated by Olson and Reynolds (2001, 13), most researchers agree that such complex structure is not required for most theoretical purposes and due to that the most widely used model is formed of four levels: attributes, functional consequences, psychological consequences, and goals and values (figure 3).

![Figure 3. Product knowledge and self-knowledge of consumers (adapted from Walker, B. & Olson, J. (1991) Means-end chains: connecting product with self. Journal of business research, 22 (2), 112)](image)

Means-end approach has been used to study consumption behavior and how product attributes and use outcomes combine user experience and perception of product attributes (Woodall 2003; Baker, Thompson & Engelken 2004). After the use of a
product consequences might become especially crucial criteria for evaluating value (Sweeney & Soutar 2001). As the focus of this study is to describe and analyze user experience and consumption situation the model gathers well both customer perceived value and user experience. Hekkert (2006, 160) defines user experience as:

> the entire set of affects that is elicited by the interaction between a user and a product, including the degree to which all our senses are gratified (aesthetic experience), the meanings we attach to the product (experience of meaning) and the feelings and emotions that are elicited (emotional experience).

This definition of user experience is consistent with the means-end chain model. Experiences can be perceived as good/bad and pleasant/unpleasant. Further user experience is context-dependent, subjective and dynamic (Desmet & Hekkert 2007). The means-end chain model is considered to succeed in describing the dynamic and context-dependent nature of customer perceived value (Khalifa 2004, 654). The model gives insight into how customers evaluate value and what aspects they pay attention to. The chosen criteria consumers attach importance to is seen to be characterized by context and thereby decision-making is dependent on a situation. (Costa et al. 2004, 406) Criteria can be such things as factors related to a time and a place, availability of optional products and individual’s social and cultural environment (Ratneshwar, Mick & Huffman 2003, 13, 24).

However of useful aspects of the means-end chain model, the model has been criticized because it lacks various types of value (Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo 2007, 441). In addition, it is also seen that the model lacks some critical aspects of sacrifices customers might be making when purchasing, using and disposing of goods or services. The trade-off between benefits and sacrifices could be also more thoroughly discussed. On the other hand, the model pays attention to both positive and negative consequences and gives thorough attention to different kinds of forms of consequences and the evaluation process of the perceived benefits. (Khalifa 2004) In addition, as stated by Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo (2007, 435), the model is useful as it does not merely focus on product attributes but gives a broader perspective of customer experience. In order to fulfill limitations of the means-end chain model this study also takes attention characteristics of other models of customer perceived value. There are
three categories of customer perceived value according to Khalifa (2004, 648) that are: value components models, benefits/sacrifices ratio models, and means-ends models. Models are more overlapping than exclusive and thus can support each other in creating more overall picture of customer perceived value. Benefits and sacrifices will be discussed more in detail later on.

2.2.1 Product attributes and attribute performances

Attributes are concrete, tangible, visual characteristics (e.g. colour, labels, package) or abstract, intangible, subjective characteristics (e.g. taste, easy to use) of a product. Abstract attributes cannot be evaluated without consumption or information received of a product from another information source such as a recommendation given by a friend. (Costa et al. 2004, 408)

Quality is linked to product attributes and includes external cues of quality like price, brand name, country of origin and internal cues such as features, performance, reliability, aesthetics and durability (Zeithaml 1988; Graf & Maas 2008). When assessing a product quality expectations have importance on how satisfied people are after using a product. Likewise too high expectations can cause dissatisfaction. Kano-model divides expectations into three: basis, performance and enthusiasm. First are taken-for-granted qualities that are minimum requirements product is expected to fulfil. Second are performance expectations that refer assessment how well a product meets set expectations. Such expectations can vary among customers. Last are enthusiasm expectations that are all surprising and not expected positive outcomes exceeding expectations. (Solomon et al. 2010, 86–87)

Aesthetic experience relates to the human senses – smell, touch, sight, hear and taste. A product can arouse positive emotions when it smells good, it feels soft, it looks appealing and attractive or it has a pleasant sound. (Desmet & Hekkert 2007, 59–60) Sensory specific product attributes are appearance, flavour, odour and texture. Sensory specific liking is a significant element influencing food choice and evaluation. Sensory specific liking influences the overall liking of a meal. Flavour is the strongest characteristic and is the primary factor influencing acceptance or abandoning of the
food. When referring to taste, in fact it is often the odour of the food that people refer to. Other sensory specific likings are important because the visual appearance of the food affects the perception of food and consumers even give a verdict on food before even tasting it, based on the expectations of the visual aspects. For example, if consumers have previous experience of eating pasta with chicken, it gives them a point of reference and expectations of the taste of the food. (Olsen, Menichelli, Sørheim & Næs 2012, 172)

As stated by Desmet and Hekkert (2007, 63), the ability to achieve some goals depends both on the qualities of a product and the skills of a user. The term *usability* stands on the extent whether and how well a user can achieve a goal by using a product. The dimensions of usability are often described in terms of 1) ease of use, 2) effectiveness and 3) efficiency. *Ease of use* refers to the effort and energy needed to perform a task to satisfy a goal. *Effectiveness* describes how well a goal can be satisfied. *Efficiency* then refers to the time spent on satisfying a goal. Product attributes influence the experience of the dimensions of usability. (Desmet & Hekkert 2007, 63)

### 2.2.2 Consequences

Consequences can be desirable or undesirable and both functional and psychosocial. Consequences are any perceived results products deliver to a customer. Consequences stem from and are valued based on the purchase, consumption and disposal of a meal. Consequently, the consequences of different meal alternatives are evaluated. (Costa et al. 2004, 409) Functional consequences can be experienced quite directly and immediately whereas psychosocial consequences might not be that easy to recognize. Functional consequences can be such changes as feeling full after eating and loss of feeling of hunger. Functional consequences can also be other physical changes such as tiredness after eating too much. In turn, functional consequences can lead to more affective and emotional psychosocial consequences. Psychosocial consequences, on the other hand, focus on social (what others think when I eat convenience food) and psychological (I feel guilty and lazy when not making any effort to prepare my food) consequences. Psychological consequences include a consumer’s feelings and thoughts how it feels and has felt when using a product. Reactions and context influence how a
consumer feels that the use influences the social aspects that stem from the use. As stated by Gutman (1982, 61), sometimes consequences have an indirect meaning that when using something others react by looking at the user favorably or unfavorably. (Gutman 1982; Olson & Reynolds 2001, 13–14) In this study psychological and social consequences are combined into psychosocial consequences.

What consequences each product attribute leads or produces is the essence of the evaluation of product attribute (Olson & Reynolds 2001, 13–14). Attributes on their own have no relevance as without the behavior of a consumer no consequences occur. Consumers assess the likely solutions to their problem based on the expected consequences. Consumers for example have to use a product before the consequences can be experienced. For example, before the consequences of a pleasurable taste are experienced, a consumer has to buy an ice cream, open the wrapper and eat the ice cream. Those consequences experienced are partly created by the product attributes but also the consumption behavior of the consumer. As an example of an impact of the consumption behavior stated by Olson and Reynolds (2001, 14), there is a difference in the experience of use whether food is eaten fast or slowly.

Emotional experience refers to a level in which product is seen either beneficial or harmful. Emotions are caused and influenced by the interpretation of events such as using a product instead of experience being looked from neutral perspective. As evaluation is always dependent on the viewer, different emotions may arise between different consumers using the same product. Emotions are often automatic and unconscious process that involves cognition. (Desmet & Hekkert 2007, 61)

### 2.2.3 Desired end states

Value as a belief, general principle reflects desirable end state. Each culture has its set of core values that majority adhere. These values strongly influence on perception of goods and services that should be used or avoided. (Solomon et al. 2010, 198)

Products or their use involve experiences of meaning. Products can have personal or symbolic significance. Use or possession of a product can reflect some metaphor the
consumer regards as meaningful. (Desmet & Hekkert 2007, 60–61) Therefore product attributes alone have little importance or relevance to the customer because what the customer is interested are the consequences those attributes can bring. Value for the customer is therefore an end state that the consumer is striving to achieve that is solving a recognized problem or difference that differs from a desired situation. Aiming towards certain consequences and a meaning given to them is dependent on the consumers’ personal goals and/or values. (Gutman 1982; Olson & Reynolds 2001; Kupiainen & Järvinen 2009, 16)

When studying intention to buy moral attitudes and subjective norms are seen to have impact of consumption of convenience food in Finland. Moral attitudes are internal moral rules or values and subjective norms are external rules and social pressure. Moral attitudes are linked with individualistic values. Subjective norms are linked with societal values. (Olsen et al. 2010, 535, 538) Deeply-held values of an individual possess important role in determining the context and outcome of consumption (Payne & Holt 2001, 163). It is common to divide values into two categories: instrumental and terminal. Instrumental values are ways of reaching terminal values. Instrumental values are a cognitive representation of preferred ways of behaving, such as integrity and compassion. Terminal values, on the other hand, are the preferred end states of being something that a person wants to achieve in his or her life. Examples of terminal values are feeling of safety or self-fulfillment. (Rokeach 1973)

2.3 Dimensions of benefits and sacrifices

As discovered by Woodall (2003, 7), trade-off between benefits and sacrifices has got a lot of interest among academics. How the balance of benefits and sacrifices are estimated has diverged opinions (division, subtraction or something else) but there is consistent agreement that recognition of both sacrifices and benefits is crucial. Where the difference arises is also what benefits and sacrifices are regarded to cover. As stated by Woodall (2003, 20), customer perceived value is not so much about discovering good or bad customer perceived value as post-purchase judgment is not ought to be that rational. Rating value and thus simple trade-off between benefits and sacrifices are too
narrow point of view and in fact customer perceived value is much more complex and consists of several different concepts. (Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo 2007, 428)

Value-in-use concept has been divided into types of value (Woodruff & Flint 2006). Several categorizations of customer perceived value types and dimensions exists (Lai 1995; Holbrook 1994; Sheth, Newman & Gross 1991; Sweeney & Soutar 2001). Sheth et al. (1991) categorized value types into functional, social, emotional, epistemic and conditional. Based on categorization by Sheth et al. (1991) Sweeney and Soutar (2001, 211) identified four value dimensions: emotional, social, quality/performance, price/value. In their study, Sweeney and Soutar (2001, 207–208) did not find conditional and epistemic value to have significance. Conditional value refers to desire for knowledge whereas epistemic value refers to value that is use context dependent. For example, warm clothes are valued on winter because of cold weather but not in summer. Emotional value is related to what kind of emotions a product arouses. Those emotions can be either positive or negative. Social value refers to how possession or use of a product might mirror norms or affect on one’s social image for example raise appreciation of oneself in the eyes of other. Quality/performance value is assessment of perceived quality versus what is expected to be performance of a product. Price/value is level of value received after paying perceived short-term and long-term costs. Two of the later could be also called subcomponents of functional values according to the definition by Sheth et al. (1991) that include product’s ability to perform and function and thus respond to utilitarian aspects of customer perceived value.

Benefits regarding customer perceived value can be also divided into two categories: attributes and outcomes. These two categories are somewhat overlapping. Attributes are 1) quality and 2) features. Outcomes are 1) personal benefits, 2) social benefits, 3) practical benefits and 4) strategic benefits. (Woodall 2003, 10–12) Categorization by Woodall (2003) has similarities with the means-end chain model as it emphasizes consequences of use and attributes of a product.

Value dimensions defined by Sweeney and Soutar (2001) were further developed by Wang, Lo, Chi and Yang (2004) to extent sacrifices other than monetary. Non-monetary sacrifices were seen to include sacrifices concerning time, effort and energy. In addition, potential worries associated with the use of a product can be associated as a
sacrifice made (Woodall 2003, 12, 14). As stated by Day and Crask (2000, 57–58), consumer decision making is risk assessment process within consumers consider the likelihood of risks in nature of functional, physical, social and psychological consequences of use or possession of a product. They further argue that customer perceived value is provided when risks are reduced. That gives central meaning to risks in value creation. Some researchers differentiate sacrifices and risks and further risks into performance risks and financial risks (Agarwal & Teas 2000). Risks are evaluation of future benefits or costs depending on how risky something is assessed based on available extrinsic cues such as price and brand name. Performance risks refer to whether product will perform as it is intended and is linked to quality. Financial risks include uncertainty of what additional costs possession of a product might cause and is linked to sacrifices. Performance risks may be reduced by improving perception of quality and financial risks may be reduced by alleviating customer’s concerns towards performance risks and sacrifices. Perceived risks lead to perception of value and alleviating risks can improve perception of value. (Agarwal & Teas 2000, 2–3, 10)

In contrary to view of Sheth et al. (1991, 12) that value dimensions are independent, Sweeney and Soutar (2001, 206) brought out that hedonic and utilitarian components are interrelated. In conclusion value dimensions are usable explaining attitudes and behavior suitable on post-purchase context (Sweeney and Soutar 2001). This in mind despite aim of this study is not to define dimensions of value they are kept in mind during empirical research in order to capture types of customer perceived value exhaustively. Dimensions are seen more as a guideline because there is no clear consensus of number or nature of dimensions in earlier research. (Gallarza et al. 2011, 183)

2.4 Consumption situation

Values and consumer behavior are linked with consumption situation in a social context. Even though the means-end chain model emphasizes meaning of a use situation Manyiwa and Crawford (2001, 57–62) has extended the means-end chain model by separating consumption situation as a separate part in order to give it significance. Context includes social system within consumption happens such as a workplace. Why
context is then important is that it gives meaning to behavior and choices made refer to a consumption situation. For example, in a hot summer day ice cream might feel refreshing but in a cold winter day you might not feel like having anything cold.

The consumption situation of this study is lunch at work. The use situation is seen to influence food choice and thereby products are more or less appropriate depending on nature of a use situation for example a dinner at home versus lunch at work. In other words, one person can have several roles for example one can be a workmate and a mother. Depending on an eating situation different wishes and expectations on food arise and affect on food selection. (Ahlgren, Gustafsson & Hall 2005, 485) Lunch has been selected as the eating situation as the most of the people eat some sort of lunch at work and this is thought to be interesting topic to find out what and how people actually eat for lunch. It is decided to concentrate only to one use context because it is thought that it could bring more depth insight to the use of convenience food than speaking about it in general level. As well eating lunch at work differs for example quite a lot from eating at home with a family. Therefore it is thought that focusing on one context could bring out findings that are unique for the context. In research of Ahlgren et al. (2005) lunch at work was second most often context within convenience food was consumed and frequency of convenience food eaten often was highest from all consumption situations that clearly shows convenience food is one of the most typical lunch option used.

In addition, social context includes so called reference group that consists of a person or people that have some sort of influence to a consumption situation. Reference groups can be powerful influencers. They possess information power because they can provide information a person is interested at. They have referent power in sense that some qualities of a person are appreciated and admired and those qualities might be tried to copy. Power of word-of-mouth should not be ever underestimated. In this study reference group is an informal group of people that consists of workmates. (Manyiwa & Crawford 2001, 57–62; Solomon et al. 2010, 393, 401)
2.5 Synthesis of theoretical framework

User experience is approached through customer perceived value and value is further approached through the means-end chain model. The means-end chain model combines product attributes, consequences and desired end states. Means-end approach has been used to study consumption behavior and how product attributes and use outcomes combine user experience and perception of product attributes (Woodall 2003; Baker et al. 2004). Especially when the consequences of consumption are taken into consideration the model gives appreciation to the use process of lunch eating. As stated by Olson and Reynolds (2001), the model can bring out better understanding of how consumers think and feel and make their decisions regarding meals. The means-end chain model has been seen to successfully describe customer perceived value in terms how it is experienced and what it includes (Woodruff 1997).

Figure 4. Customer perceived value in a consumption situation (modified from Gutman 1982; Woodruff 1997; Manyiwa & Crawford 2001, 60)
As stated by Costa et al. (2004, 404), food is a relatively low involvement product. The means-end chain model is rooted in rational approach of cognitive structures but gathers also less conscious and emotional aspects of consumption. That is why the means-end chain model is able to provide good findings even from low involvement products. Thus the model is seen to cover both rational and emotional aspects of food consumption. (Costa, Schoolmeester, Dekker & Jongen 2003, 19; Costa et al. 2004, 404)

There is no widely accepted definition of attributes and consequences that make analysis of data complicated (Costa et al. 2004, 408). However, in this study it is seen that the model will bring out valuable points of customer perceived value regardless of this limitation.
3 CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH

This study is a qualitative research that uses case study as a research strategy and semi-structured focus group interviews as a data gathering method. Emphasis will be put also on data analysing and interpretation. Finally factors affecting quality of the study are discussed and evaluated.

3.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research aims providing understanding of a phenomenon whereas quantitative research aims at collecting numerical data in order to be able to do statistical analysis (Malhotra & Birks 2006, 132). In other words, qualitative approaches are dealing with understanding and interpretation whereas quantitative approaches focus on explaining and testing hypotheses (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 5). Qualitative research is more about listening and analysing words than looking into numbers or statistics. Data gathered is in form of words. (Sayre 2001, 21)

Compared to a quantitative research a qualitative research captures detailed information of smaller number of cases or people which makes research results less generalized than those of a quantitative approach (Malhotra & Birks 2006). Gummesson (2006) criticises use of quantitative approach because it lacks of considering unique context that always exists because things are not happening in isolation. He also emphasizes that even though quantitative research has been seen as more scientific it does not handle well complexity of reality and the fact that things are hard to generalize (Gummesson 2006, 173–175). As stated by Gummesson (2005), qualitative research seeks to get in depth knowledge by looking deeper. Qualitative research as its best is a way for a researcher to research phenomena and its complexity within a real-life context (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). Primarily aim of qualitative research is more about getting comprehensive picture of a phenomenon and understanding and describing it than finding out cause and effect relations (Gummesson 2005, 312; Malhotra & Birks 2006, 134–135; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008).
There is always interaction between a phenomenon and a researcher in qualitative research. Distance between researcher and topic been studied is often small. Despite aim should be to minimize impact of a researcher data is always affected by a researcher. (Koskinen, Alasuutari & Peltonen 2005, 31–32) It should be remembered that all research is interpretative as researcher is an individual person who has impact on design and outcome of a research (Gummesson 2006, 173–175).

In conclusion characteristics of a qualitative research are its understanding unique phenomenon within a real-life context via interpretation. As stated by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008, 5), research method should be chosen based on what is wanted to be known and thus what is focus of a research. Many researchers consider qualitative research to be suitable for getting insight of customer perceived value. It is seen that more in depth knowledge about how customers “perceive, think and engage in customer value processes” is needed. (Woodruff & Flint 2006, 191) Qualitative research seeks capturing feelings, experiences and behaviour (Malhotra & Birks 2006, 133). Focus on qualitative research is on processes and meanings (Sayre 2001, 4). Based on these viewpoints qualitative research is chosen as the most suitable research method to study set research questions.

3.1.1 Phases of research

Research will follow structure of the research edifice defined by Gummesson (2005, 313, 316–317) that is formed from three phases. Research plan forms coincide with progress of research (Gummesson 2005, 312). First phase (basement) of a research is researcher’s paradigm and pre-understanding of a topic which defines assumptions and choices concerning selection of a topic and research problems within it. Following that is data generation and analysis/interpretation phase (middle floors). It is referred to use term data generation instead of data collection as in social situation data can not be just collected like an object but it is constructed by a researcher and thereby generated. Analysis phase entails researcher’s subjective interpretation of data, thus researcher and her persona has impact on interpretation. Data generated should be compared to theoretical framework. In the last phase (penthouse) research results, findings and conclusions are presented. Outcome of a research might be providing information that
can be utilized in pre-understanding phase of next research or consulting a case company via giving recommendations to the company based on findings. (Gummesson 2005, 316–317)

![Figure 5. Flow of research process](image)

All the phases have been gone through during this study that can be seen from monthly progress of research illustrated above in figure 5.

### 3.1.2 Case study as research approach

The most common strategies for data gathering in qualitative research are: ethnography, fenomenography, grounded theory, action research and case study (Metsämuuronen 2006, 90). From these case study is chosen as the research strategy of the study.

Instead of being a method case study is more a research approach (Koskinen et al. 2005, 154; Metsämuuronen 2006; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 116). Case study is a research that focuses on few or one specific case that is especially chosen by a researcher.
Focus of this study will be on one case company that is Saarioinen.

Case study according to Yin (2009, 2) is preferred method when “(1) “how” or “why” questions are being proposed, (2) the investigator has little control over events, and (3) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context”. Advantages of a case study are that it enables study of a complex and specific phenomenon and forces understanding of companies holistically in real-life context (Koskinen et al. 2005, 156; Metsämuuronen 2006, 90). As stated by Gummesson (2007, 229), case study enables the study of “complexity, context, ambiguity and chaos”. This is regarded important as the topic of the study gathers many aspects of user experience. Case studies are used to find out patterns from which conclusions can be formed (Gummesson 2007, 245). Forming patterns will be discussed more in detail later on in analysis and interpretation phase.

This research approach is seen suitable and in line with research question and purposes of the study. As stated by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008), research context influences what research methods ought to be use. Aim of case study is interpretation and understanding of the case. Aim of the research is also to describe the phenomenon in detail. On the other hand case study also aims at comparing theoretical findings and how well they can be applied in a real-life context. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 118–119) Case study rarely aims at generalization (Koskinen et al. 2005, 167). Nor does this study.

### 3.2 Data gathering

Interviews are often used to find out how people experience something and thus discovering their point of view. That is information that can not be found in published form. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 81) Interviews are chosen to get better understanding of what are attitudes, opinions, behavior and motivations of people (Sayre 2001). Studying how people experience Saarioinen’s meals during a lunch is about understanding their experiences. Therefore focus is not on facts but instead on experiences, perception, emotions, and viewpoints of lunch eating. This aspect is what
Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008, 79) consider it possible to achieve via using an interview as a data gathering method. As value and experience is something possessed in minds of customers best way to get on hold on those thoughts is through listening customers who use and eat Saarioinen’s meals for lunch.

### 3.2.1 Semi-structured focus group interviews

Interviews are one of the most important methods of case study research (Yin 2009, 106). Interviews based on a theme or on a focus are efficient method of data collection as interviewer can guide course of an interview without having total control (Koskinen et al. 2005, 105).

Interviews enable direct interactions between a researcher and a respondent and are seen to have many benefits. However, there are also some challenges when using an interview as a method. Disadvantage of interviews is that what interviewee says is reconstructed understanding of a phenomenon made by the interviewee but not the phenomenon itself. Thereby it is indirect knowledge. (Koskinen et al. 2005, 106–107)

There also needs to be enough time to prepare researcher for the interview and there might appear possible biases during an interview that are causes either by a respondent or a researcher. Interview is many ways fragile for misinterpretations as respondent might feel obliged to give a respond that it socially acceptable. (Yin 2009) Interviewer can by his or her own behavior alleviate biases by being neutral in sense that interviewer should not interfere in opinions of interviewee but to bring them out. Main purposes of the interviewer is asking questions, give comments to encourage interviewee to continue and give short feedback whether answer has been adequate or more information is needed. (Ruusuvuori & Tiittula 2005, 45)

Advantage of an interview is in its flexible nature. Questions can be repeated, misunderstandings can be corrected and it is possible to have a conversation with an interviewee who is the information giver. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 73)

Semi-structured interview combines structure and freedom. Usually an interview has pre-determined theme around which discussion is flexibly constructed. Compared to a structured interview a semi-structured interview gives space for flexibility in form and
focus of an interview. During an interview order of the pre-planned questions can be changed and additional questions asked to clarify some interesting point that could include some meaningful data from the research point of view. Respondents can freely answer to questions in their own words (Koskinen et al. 2005, 104; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 82). The tone of an interview is informal and relaxed conversational dialogue between a respondent and a researcher but still systematic and comprehensive (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 82).

There is a challenge with flexibility aspect of the semi-structured interviews as the interviewer needs to take care of that important aspects will be handled and nothing is forgotten. Researcher has to also sense and listen carefully in order to be able to get deep insight and be prepared to improvise when required. Interview should not thus be strictly pre-planned so that there is space for unexpected topics that a participant might raise. Challenge might be also analyzing and comparing participants’ responds and spotting patterns might be difficult as responses might vary a lot. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 82)

Compared to one person interviews group interviews have usually five to ten interviewees. Interview resembles conversation within people can change their ideas about a phenomenon. Sometimes group interviews are described as focus groups interviews because interview has a focus around which conversation is kept. (Koskinen et al. 2005, 123–124) In this study the term focus group interview will be used, and to be precise focus group interview and semi-structured interview is joined together into semi-structured focus group interview. Main responsibility of an interviewer in a focus group interview is to encourage people to share their thoughts and leave space for discussion while the interviewer guides interview forward (Valtonen in Ruusuvuori & Tiittula 2005, 223; 226).

It is wanted to be emphasized that in this study focus group interview is referred as synthesis of discussion and interview as questions will be asked by the researcher but giving space for discussion between interviewees is seen as important. In its best focus group interviews can bring out surprising or new ideas and viewpoints because of interaction between participants. When someone shares his opinions it can arise thoughts to someone else that would not be the case in individual interviews.
Interviewees respond not only to researcher’s questions but also comments coming from other interviewees. (Koskinen et al. 2005, 123–124; Valtonen in Ruusuvuori & Tiittula 2005, 226) This can lead to a situation where interviewer’s role is not so important. Other advantage of focus group interview is that it is efficient method as time can be saved when more than one person is interviewed simultaneously (Sayre 2001, 155; Koskinen et al. 2005, 123–124). Some argue that presence of other people might impact on interviewees so that they do not express their genuine feelings and attitudes but in fact possible silence when other people are present is valuable information on its own (Valtonen in Ruusuvuori & Tiittula 2005, 224).

Interview outline has two basic purposes. Firstly it gives a structure to an interview and reminds interviewer what areas need to be covered during the interview and what are crucial questions. It is so called memory backup more than a theoretical question list. Secondly outline gives preliminary structure of what needs to be done next and what needs to be handled in more detail. Outline alleviates such risks as something is forgotten or time booked for an interview would not be adequate because lack of any estimation of duration of an interview. (Koskinen et al 2005, 108–109) Two pilot interviews were kept before focus group interviews to test interview outline. Testing is done in order to avoid questions that will not work for reason or another and bring out new questions (Koskinen et al. 2005, 128). The interview outline can be seen in appendix 3.

Interviews were kept in convenient and quiet surroundings. Two pilot interviews were kept in undersigned home and three focus group interviews at a private meeting room. Interviews were organized between January 24 to February 2. Interviews lasted from 30 minutes to 90 minutes. Interviews were tape recorded. It was emphasized to interviewees that all information is handled confidentially. It has been paid attention to avoid leading questions during interviews that according to Sayre (2001, 45) can improve authenticity of a study when interviewer is as neutral as possible. List of interviewees can be found in appendix 2.
3.2.2 Feelings and attitudes in visual form

As recommended by Gummesson (2007) to be able to gain comprehensive understanding of reality a wide scope of sources should be used in a case study. Many scholars spur on combining multiple methods. Multiple methods can bring more accuracy and richness in data in a case study. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 126) Addition to verbal data also visual data is used as a part of data collection methods (Yin 2003; Koskinen et al. 2005, 158). Projective techniques can improve interviewee’s willingness to talk and express his feelings freely when research questions are asked indirectly via other techniques than asking direct questions (Sayre 2001, 168). Projective collages can be used to find out metaphors and impressions associated to a product or a company (Valtonen in Ruusuvuori & Tiittula 2005, 237).

As stated by Aaker, Kumar and Day (2007, 204; Costa et al. 2003, 19; Zaltman 2003), people are not often willing or able to put their attitudes and motivations into verbal form. They might feel embarrassed to reveal their real feelings or they might not be even conscious of those feelings. The most emotions and cognitive functions (beliefs) that lead behavior and thought are unconscious. Projective techniques can be used to reveal these kinds of feelings and beliefs. Visual form enables consumers to represent their feelings and emotions in a non-verbal form. (Zaltman 1997; Costa et al 2003) Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) is an example of non-verbal consumer research and has demonstrated in revealing how consumers view products (Christensen & Olson 2002; Costa et al. 2003). Common for ZMET is using collages as a self-expression technique by using them as a way for storytelling (Zaltman 1997). These characteristics are also used in this study in order to reveal tacit and hidden knowledge of emotions that influence decision making as Zaltman (1997, 434) explains.

Before focus group interviews, interviewees were asked to find few pictures from magazines, internet or other sources that reflect their feelings and attitudes towards Saarioinen. It was emphasized that pictures should not be ads of Saarioinen but instead pictures that reflect one’s own thoughts towards Saarioinen. Time for collecting pictures was over week so that everyone had enough time to do the task before the interview. It was explained to the interviewees that purpose of pictures was to awaken them to think about the topic and also improve understanding of interviewee’s thoughts. In addition, it
was asked that people would take a photograph of facilities where they eat their lunch. All interviewees brought pictures and photographs of lunch facilities except one interviewee who could not bring a photograph because of printing problems.

During the focus group interviews each interviewee one at a time was asked to tell what is in pictures they had selected and how it reflects their feelings and attitudes towards Saarioinen. Describing what is in a picture is giving an idea what an interviewee has in mind and can be used when meanings of pictures are analyzed (Zaltman 1997; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 93). It was also asked from the interviewees whether there were some pictures they would have wanted to find but they did not. This question was asked in order to find out whether interviewees had thoughts in mind that they just did not find proper picture that would represent that thought. It was also asked which picture represent their feelings best. It was noticed that the interviewees had spent time and thought in selecting picture. Information provided through pictures and stories behind them brought out totally new perspectives and opinions to the topic. It is seen that pictures were important part of data gathering as it is assessed that those opinions would not have been mentioned if only verbal questions would have been asked. As also discovered by Costa et al. (2003, 25) pictures acted as stimulus material for discussion. Photographs of lunch facilities were used similarly as a tool for creating discussion. It was asked to tell what can be seen on a photograph and what facilities are like where each person has his or her lunch.

Other visual materials used during the interviews were product samples of Saarioinen’s meals that can be found from appendix 1. They were used as stimuli for creating discussion and help interviewees to remember how products look like.

### 3.2.3 Judgemental sampling

In a qualitative research it is more important to find people who are willing to share their thoughts about a phenomenon and know about it than the number of participants. As purpose is to be able to interpret and understand and become aware of a phenomenon, number of participants is not the most important factor but willingness of interviewee to participate in the research. As this study also does not aim at making
generalization but describing and understanding and giving theoretical interpretation of the phenomenon, number of participants is less important. (Sayre 2001, 39–40; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 85)

In this study a judgemental sampling method was selected. Judgemental sampling is a non-probability sampling technique and thus a judgemental sample is not based on a statistical sample. More important than being able to describe probability of a sample from the population is to find a sample that is the most informative when thinking research questions. (Koskinen et al. 2005, 273) Selection of a sample is based on appropriateness based on judgment of a researcher. Therefore researcher decides what should be included into a sample based on her expertise and judgment. (Malhotra & Birks 2006, 364) Criteria for choosing certain interviewees are based on assumption that they have variety of opinions and they can maximize amount of information. In other words, they have something to say about the topic. (Koskinen et al. 2005, 123–124) In addition, researcher utilizes knowledge gained during a research process when defining what sort of sample is the most suitable (Koskinen et al. 2005, 274).

A research recruit company was used to find candidates for interviewees. The company was given criteria that interviewees had to fulfill. There were two main criteria for interviews: age between 20–39 and experience of using Saarioinen’s meals for lunch. The research recruit company gathered a list of those interviewees who were willing to participate to an interview. Those who were the most suitable were contacted and invited to interviews by undersigned. Criteria for choosing interviewees were how often they bring their own food to workplace and how often they eat Saarioinen’s meals for lunch. It was selected both those who rarely and those who often eat Saarioinen’s meals for lunch in order to find whether this brings variation in opinions of people. Altogether 15 people were interviewed: 3 men and 12 women. Age of interviewees varied from 27 to 38. List of interviewees can be found in appendix 2.

As mentioned earlier the number of interviewees is not the most important factor in a qualitative research. Gathering data is continued as long as new information is gained. Saturation is seen to be reached when data starts to repeat itself and no new data is expected to appear. (Gummesson 2000, 96; Gummesson 2005, 322; Koskinen et al. 2005, 276; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 87) After two pilot interviews and three focus
group interviews it was seen repetition among responds and among groups. Saturation was reached and it was decided that adequate amount of data was obtained for the purposes of the study as similar responds to questions were given by so many interviewees.

### 3.3 Data analysis and interpretation

Analysis transforms data into findings (Patton 2002, 432). According to Koskinen et al. (2005, 317; Gummesson 2005, 312), data should be in a form that enables easiness in use of it. That is a form that enables browsing, managing and analyzing data. Important for analysis is to be able to condense data into a form within it is easier to analyze. The most often used form of interviews is to transcribe interviews and that was also done in this study. Interviews were transcribed shortly after each interview approximately within few days. It was regarded important to transcribe as soon as possible so that interview still was fresh in undersigned’s memory. In addition, to tape recording also short notes were done during interviews and more extensive notes shortly after each interview including ideas that arouse during each interview and possible modifications on questions. According to Malhotra and Birks (2006, 207), this systematic way to document ideas and thoughts enable more systematic analyses of interviews and thus improves reliability. It is also recognized that without proper notes it might be difficult to recall things later on as memory can easily distort situations.

Strategy for analysis is based on theoretical orientation. As stated by Yin (2009, 130; Gummesson 2000, 60; Koskinen et al. 2005, 43; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 101), theoretical framework can guide in organizing data and facilitate paying attention to the most relevant information and characteristics of a phenomenon from the point of view of set research questions and objectives of the study. The theoretical framework has influenced pre-understanding of the researcher and influenced the interview outline and thereby the study is not solely inductive. Analysis is not separate from concepts and interpretation is not random but both lean on theory. However, data can change previous assumptions. (Patton 2002; Koskinen et al. 2005, 172) Data generation is simultaneous with analysis and interpretation and vice versa (Gummesson 2005, 312). Therefore in
this study undersigned got familiar with analysis methods before interviews were conducted.

It was decided that classifying and categorization of data into patterns or themes would bring out data in a form that easier to understand and interpret. Communication of findings is also easier when data is in summarized form. (Sayre 2001, 212; Malhotra & Birks 2006, 208; Metsämuuronen 2006, 122; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 101) Patton (2002, 453) discusses about content analysis that aims at capturing core meanings and frequent concepts that are called patterns or themes. Patterns are more descriptive in nature were as themes are in labelled form. However, when condensing data it should not lose any significant information and thus summarizing does not mean leaving out data that is not for example typical (Gummesson 2005, 312). Similarities and differences should be brought out from data. Emphasis has to be given also differing aspects because they question researcher’s own perceptions and understanding and might reveal new unexpected points of view of a phenomenon. (Koskinen et al. 2005, 39, 73–74)

3.4 Evaluating the quality of the study

In general quality of the study should be evaluated through out research process and not just in the end of the study (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 290). Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008, 133) determine some common points for evaluating case study research: it must have some significance, it should be interesting and relevant (theoretically or practically), it should be complete (considered and relevant information), results should be convincing, and credible evidence should be shown to support findings. Significance and practical importance of this study is that it brings valuable information to Saarioinen.

In a qualitative research it is usually referred to reliability and validity when estimating creditability and reliability of research. They are used to improve quality of the study and if acknowledged in the very beginning of research process keeping them in mind can enhance quality of the study. (Koskinen et al. 2005, 253) Validity refers whether study manages to describe phenomenon truthfully and it measures what it had meant to
measure. Reliability on the other hand refers to consistency of research and possibility to replicate findings. In certain extent it is possible to get similar findings by another researcher with same data gathering procedures. (Sayre 2001, 12; Koskinen et al. 2005, 254–255; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 292–295; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 136; Yin 2009, 40) For example, one way to improve reliability is to make several interviews and see whether similar findings can be found among groups. As stated by Koskinen et al. (2005, 256–257), in qualitative research validity and reliability are most often just general principals and therefore other ways to evaluate quality of a study ought to be used. However, as these concepts are familiar in qualitative research it is important for a researcher to acknowledge them as they can guide researcher’s thinking.

Lincoln and Guba (1985 in Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 294; Koskinen et al. 2005, 257; Metsämuuronen 2006, 200–201) present four concepts that also make an attempt to capture reliability of a study. Those concepts are creditability, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Creditability aspect focuses on how well a researcher is aware of the topic, whether claims made are realistic and there is data behind them and a reader feels that research findings can be trusted. Use of multiple methods and active search of any distinct cases also improve creditability. Transferability refers to ability to show that there is a linkage or similarities between the research results and previous study. In-depth reporting on how study has been made gives possibility for another researcher to test findings. Dependability on the other hand is the ability to describe in a clear and logical way what has been studied and how it has been studied so that it is easy for a reader to interpret what has been done. Therefore thorough documentation is important as it also increases trustworthiness of a study. Confirmability is ability to link findings and interpretation together so that a reader is able to see data from which interpretation stems from.

Research is evaluated in its entirety and therefore its internal coherence is important (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 140). Therefore emphasis has been put on describing and documenting all the important aspects of the research process as fully and truthfully as possible.

Research is not objective as researchers are influenced by their paradigm, pre-understanding and understanding. Understanding stems from knowledge gained during
a research. (Gummesson 2005, 314) There can be bias by the researcher’s own beliefs and feelings towards research topic as interpretation is made through the researcher (Sayre 2001). Researcher’s thinking is also affected by understanding of earlier studies that might affect on researcher’s attention on focusing aspects that come up from secondary data (Malhotra & Birks 2006, 204). From the beginning undersigned has kept a research diary where ideas, feelings, research process, important dates and important references have been documented during the whole research process. Diary has acted as a good way to reflect and go back on time to see how thinking towards the research has evolved. As emphasized by Malhotra and Birks (2006, 206) making notes facilitate a researcher to see that in fact data analysis is ongoing process and not related to data collection alone. It also gives a researcher possibility to assess oneself and how oneself has impacted on direction of research.

It has to be accepted that research results are always at least partly subjective. As highlighted by Gummesson (2005, 312) it is impossible to make a research fully transparent because of such things as researcher’s pre-understanding, intuition, experience or tacit knowledge but that is the case with all the research and it has to accepted. Research results are not separate but always interrelated with the research method and the researcher. Thus research results are always somewhat subjective. All knowledge is context related. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 20)
5 SUMMARY

User defines value. In this study customer perceived value has been understood as an experience of value perceived by a customer based on use experience. This approach is called value-in-use and means that value is created not before a product is being used. Embracing S-D logic is looking marketing from a new perspective. It gives importance and an active role to a customer in creation of value. Companies should strive for listening more carefully voice of customers and respond to that voice.

The purpose of the study was to describe and analyze user experience of Saarioinen’s meals for lunch. The purpose was approached through three research questions:

1. What is customer perceived value?
2. How user experience can be approached via a means-end chain model?
3. How customer perceives convenience food for lunch?

It has been found out that value is a concept that is difficult to define. Instead, several definitions exist, which makes the concept fragmented and vague. Common features of value are that it is situational, dynamic, perceptual, preferential, experiential, individual, subjective and characterized by a trade-off between benefits and sacrifices. Most importantly customer perceived value is looking at value creation from the customer’s point of view. Customer perceived value was approached via the means-end chain model. The means-end chain model combines product attributes, consequences and desired end states. Means are goods or services that are used to achieve desired end states such as goals and values.

Qualitative research was chosen as a research approach because aim of the study was to understand, describe and interpret a unique phenomenon. Focus on a qualitative research is on processes and meanings. Qualitative research seeks capturing feelings, experiences and behavior that are the essence when studying user experience of Saarioinen’s meals for lunch. Case study was used as a research strategy and semi-structured focus group interviews as a data gathering method. In addition, a projective technique was used. Interviewees were asked to collect pictures of their feelings and
attitudes towards Saarioinen and a photograph of lunch facilities. These visuals were utilized during an interview as a way to create discussion and reveal even unconscious feelings and attitudes of the interviewees. Two pilot interviews and three focus group interviews were organized during January and February 2012 and altogether 15 people were interviewed. Strategy for analysis was based on theoretical orientation. It was decided that classifying and categorization of data into themes would bring out data in a form that is easier to understand and interpret. As well it was considered that communication of findings is easier when data is in a summarized form. Quality of the study was evaluated through out research process by such methods as getting familiar what quality of study means, taking notes of whole research process and evaluating impact and role of the researcher as a communicator and an analyzer of findings as objectively as possible.

Findings show that consumers acknowledge both concrete, tangible, visual characteristics and abstract, intangible, subjective characteristics of a product when assessing product attributes. Sensory specific product attributes of appearance, flavour, odour and texture are used to evaluate product attributes. Special attention was given to product performance. Usability of convenience food is especially crucial as convenience food is mostly related to saving time and both mental and physical effort. Usability also has important role in user experience because it determines how ease, effective and efficient something is to use. Expectations of the product attributes among interviewees were rather realistic that can be due to fact that all the interviewees were familiar with products and have used products so they have previous experience of use. Visual materials were used to discover feelings and attitudes towards Saarioinen being the manufacturer of products as brand is something that has an impact on perception of quality. In addition, several desired product attributes came up from the data and therefore it was decided that they were also discussed in detail as they can provide ways to improve product offering.

Consequences can be desirable or undesirable and both functional and psychosocial. Both positive and negative consequences were found out as a result of using Saarioinen’s meals for lunch. Within those consequences both functional and psychosocial consequences were included. As well both negative and positive
consequences of different meal alternatives were compared as there are several lunch options from which consumers choose from.

Aiming towards certain consequences and end states and meaning given to them is dependent on customers’ personal goals and values. Desired end states of eating Saarioinen’s meals for lunch were found to relate on three aspects: prevailing requirements of lunch food, goals pursued by using Saarioinen’s meals for lunch and general goals of lunch eating. It was decided to divide desired end states into three aspects in order to highlight diverse viewpoints of goals and values customers possess. Desired end states are not solely connected to one value or one goal that is wanted to be emphasized by division into three complementary aspects.

Lunch was chosen as a consumption situation in this study. It was decided to focus on lunch in order to get in in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and its unique nature. Why context is then important is that it gives meaning to behavior. Lunch situations vary a lot depending on a workplace. Some similarities however exist how people spend their lunch. Lunch as a consumption situation clearly provides unique setting for use of convenience food. Reference groups can have powerful influence. In this study reference group was workmates. For example, they possess information power because they can provide information about products such as convenience food. Thus power of word-of-mouth should not be ever underestimated.

Findings show that there can be found linkages between product attributes, consequences, and desired end states as it is assumed according to the means-end chain model. Linkages are overlapping. For example, one product attribute can result in several consequences and desired end states. Likewise a desired end state can be achieved as a result of consequences of a sum of several product attributes.

In conclusion user experience was approached through customer perceived value and value was further approached through the means-end chain model in order to capture user experience of Saarioinen’s meals for lunch.
REFERENCES

Literature


**Electronic sources**

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. Products by Saarioinen
### APPENDIX 2. List of interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of interview</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age and sex</th>
<th>How often*</th>
<th>Convenience food**</th>
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<td>Interviewee 1</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>26/1/12</td>
<td>Interviewee 2</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Interviewee 5</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>Interviewee 15</td>
<td>38 female</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All interviews were organized in Tampere.

* How often do you eat packed lunch?
  1=daily
  2=several days per week
  3=once a week

** How often do you eat Saarioinen's meals for lunch?
  1= daily
  2= several times per week
  3= once a week
  4= every other week
  5= once a month
  6= couple of times per year
APPENDIX 3. Interview outline in English

Structure of a semi-structured focus group interview:

**Product attributes**
How product looks and feels? Usability (warm up, eat, dispose)? What are good product attributes? What are negative product attributes? Is there any desired product attributes? What kind of food is opposite to convenience food?

**Pictures of feelings and attitudes towards Saarioinen**
Describe pictures and why they are selected.
How each picture reflects feelings and attitudes? Are there some missing pictures? What picture describes feelings and attitudes best?

**Picture of lunch facilities**
Describe what you can see in a picture.
How facilities are perceived? What is done during lunch, with whom?

**Consequences of eating Saarioinen meals for lunch**
Benefits/sacrifices? Benefits/sacrifices compared to choosing other lunch options?

**Goals and purposes of eating Saarioinen’s meals for lunch?**
Goals and purposes.
APPENDIX 4. Pictures reflecting feelings and attitudes towards Saarioinen
JOSKUS
Vaivattomasti valmista,
"Hyvinvointi näkyy entistä hyväntuulisempina äiteinä.

Apua arkeen

Kiireisen

Kotiruokaa

helpo

ideoita

Väsnyt
Aiotko ottaa iisimmin vasta eläkkeellä?
APPENDIX 5. Pictures of lunch facilities