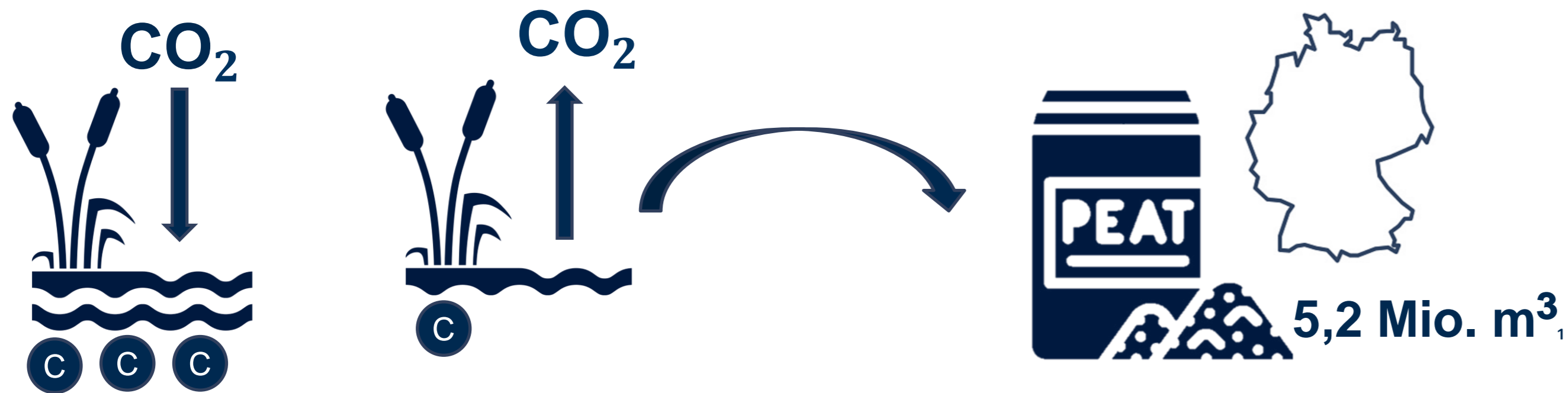


What is important? What is perceived? What is seen? – consumer decision making on potting soils

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Motivation



Peatlands are one of the most important natural carbon sinks in the fight against climate change

Peat extraction for gardening substrates is a major factor for peatland degradation. Germany is the main producer and one of the largest consumers of peat-based substrates.

Reducing peat consumption in hobby gardening through renewable alternatives is a substantial contribution to climate protection

Theoretical approach

RQ1: Which packaging and display cues are viewed by the consumers?
RQ2: How does this influence their perception of the products?

Theoretically, we drew on a combination of the theory of visual attention and the cue utilization model

subjective ↔ objective

Comparing subjective logics of consumers with their objective behavior

Methods

• Three steps mixed-method approach:

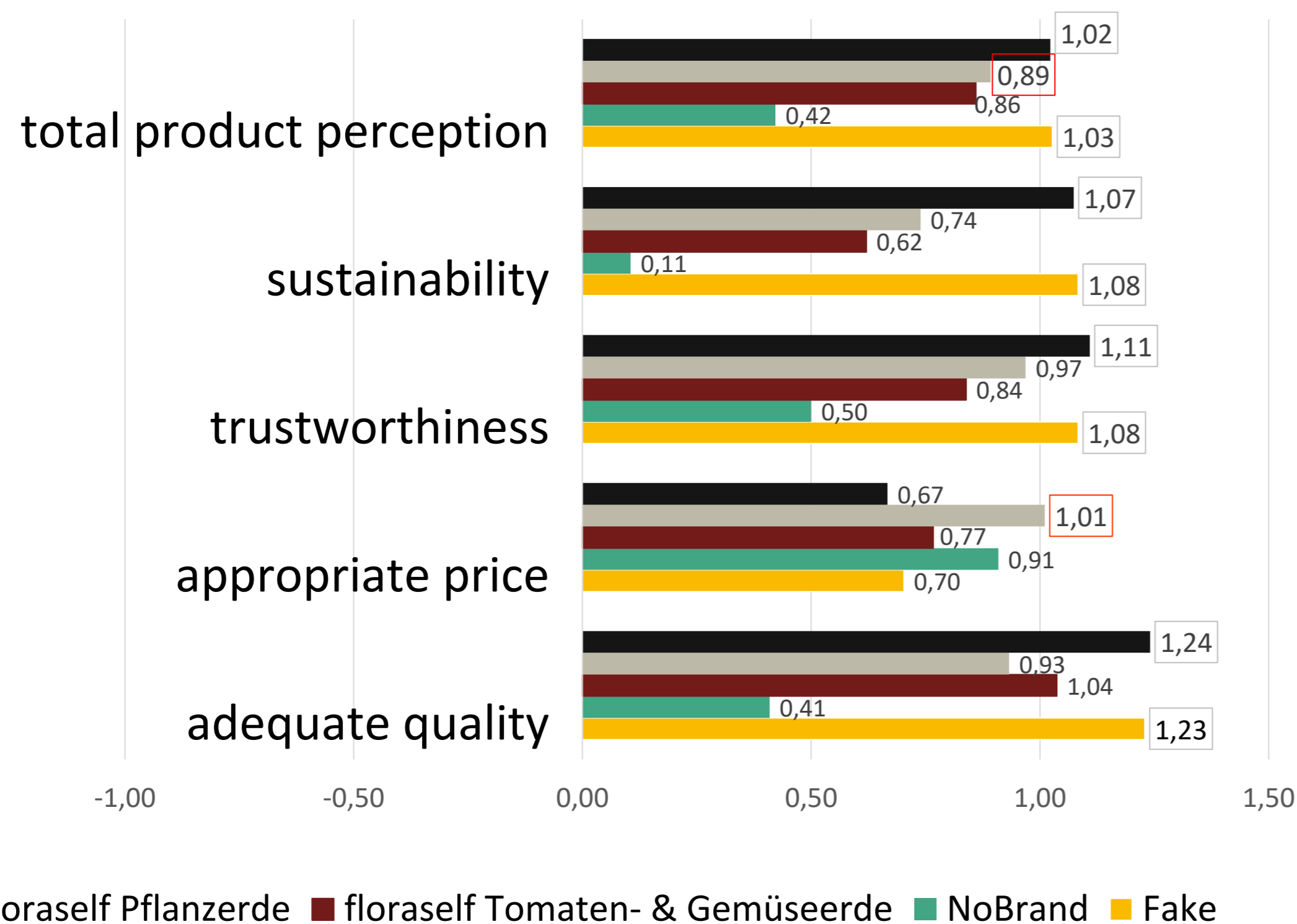


- 16 survey days at five gardening fairs in a quasi laboratory setting
- Data collection between May and October 2024
- Testing five packaged potting soils in total - containing a fake product
- 278 complete data sets



Findings & Discussion

Perception of the selected product



Choice rates: 20% 36% 15% 11% 17%

RQ1:

- **Visual attention is unequally spread** among the products
- Specific attributes are viewed more intensely than others: plant type, packaging design, absolute prices are viewed intensely; while prices per litre and volumina are viewed rarely
- Products are rarely turned over

RQ2:

- **No significant relationship** between the visual behavior and information processing
- Subjectively, participants state the recognition of information without the necessary objective behaviour (e.g. turning over a product)
- **No determinant and significant influence of visual attention on product perception**
- Perception of a product is not only based on its cues

Conclusion

- Certain attributes dominate the purchase decision
- Especially product **price is crucial** when choosing a product
- Packaging design can influence the purchase decision (e.g. labeling)

- **Implications for policy makers:** - consider a standardized peat-labeling requirement on the front of the package
- **Implications for marketers:**
- **Balanced packaging design** and pricing is crucial to compete with established branded products
- Price should also be considered in product placement, as it's a component of quality perception
- **Focus on the front** for packaging design

1) (Industrieverband Garten (IVG) e.V., 2024)
2) (Hirschler et al., 2022; Hirschler & Osterburg, 2019)

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