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“GREEN CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR AS A SOCIAL PROCESS”

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Researched by: Stephanie Hooper - 301025641

ABSTRACT

In recent years, environmental concern, sustainability and climate change have become widespread political and social issues. The prevalence of environmental issues in the social environment has encouraged the majority of consumers to develop concern for environmental issues, pro-environmental attitudes and an intention to purchase green products and practice green behaviour. However, future growth of green consumerism is threatened by an “attitude-behaviour gap”. Sustainable consumption behaviour is limited to a niche market of “green” consumers, and must expand into more mainstream consumer markets. This study is aimed at exploring how individual perceptions, personal relationships and social experiences shape green consumption behaviour. Its objectives were (1) to achieve a greater understanding of how the social environment influences the green consumption behaviour of individual consumers; and (2) to explore how pro-environmental behaviour change takes place. This study used qualitative methods and adopted an adapted case study methodology. The primary data was collected from semi-structured depth interviews with two participants from seven household cases.

Four key insights of this research were: (1) “Green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers positively influence the green consumption behaviour of other consumers via social observations, comparisons and “greening strategies”, resulting in pro-environmental behaviour change; (2) “Mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers view “green” consumers as people who adopt “alternative” green consumption behaviour. A “green syndrome” has developed whereby “green” is viewed as an unattainable goal, limiting mainstream participation in green consumption behaviour; (3) “Green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers cope with their non-environmental actions with tradeoff and neutralisation arguments which reinforce the “attitude-behaviour gap” in green consumerism and (4) Personal relationships and household dynamics (i.e., household roles, lifecycle and structure) can affect the adoption and effectiveness of green consumption behaviour practiced within households. Pro-environmental behaviour can be encouraged by explicit green social norms in the social environment, as this reduces the efficacy of neutralisation techniques. Furthermore, the “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) population will adopt green products and practices when they are effective, convenient and cost-efficient.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The prevalence of environmental issues in the media and social environment has encouraged a large majority of consumers to develop environmental concerns, pro-environmental attitudes and an intention to purchase green products and perform green behaviour (Bergin-Seers & Mair, 2009; Peattie, 2010). However, quantitative studies have shown that pro-environmental attitudes rarely translate into actual green consumption behaviour (Carrington, Neville, & Whitwell, 2010; Chatzidakis, Hibbert, & Smith, 2007; Sparks & Shepard, 1992; Yam-Tang & Chan, 1998; Young, Hwang, McDonald, & Oates, 2010). This phenomenon coined the “attitude-behaviour gap,” represents a significant challenge, threatening continued growth of the green industry.

The continued growth of the green industry is in jeopardy, as green product purchase remains limited to a niche market of “green” consumers (Ozcaglar-Toulouse, Shiu, & Shaw, 2006). In order for the green industry to continue to prosper it must expand into mainstream consumer markets. By increasing knowledge of the “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumer, we will have a better understanding of how negative perceptions, associations and experiences with “green” act as a barrier to pro-environmental behaviour change, in addition to what motivates greener consumption behaviour among consumers.

Considerable research has been devoted to green consumerism and the “attitude-behaviour gap” over the past three decades (Peattie, 2010). However, the dominant discourse of green literature has focused on the individual reasons for attitudinally incongruent behaviour (Peattie, 2010), rather than how wider social factors may influence green consumption behaviour. Furthermore, a quantitative focus has examined the cognitive aspects of green consumption behaviour, as opposed to exploring the subjective meanings and socially constructed realities of individual consumers (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Caruana, 2007; Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002; Szmigin, Carrigan, & McEachem, 2009).

It is worthwhile to develop a broader theoretical understanding of green consumerism by considering how individual perceptions, personal relationships and social experiences influence and shape green consumption behaviour. Insight into household dynamics and social interaction will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the “attitude-behaviour gap” and how it can be reduced through pro-environmental behaviour change.

1.2. Problem orientation

Despite a growing concern for environmental and sustainability issues (i.e., global warming, depletion of the ozone layer, pollution, over-use of non-renewable and natural resources), empirical evidence suggests that while increasing numbers of consumers are motivated to purchase based on environmental values, a significant change in consumer behaviour is much less apparent (Peattie, 2010). There has been substantial research into the “attitude-behaviour gap” in green consumerism however, limited understanding of this challenging phenomenon remains.

Research has consistently shown that many individuals claim to be concerned for the environment, yet have difficulty translating their pro-environmental and ethical attitudes into actual behaviour at the decisive moment (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Connolly & Prothero, 2008; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). This is a corporate and social dilemma, whereby environmentally-conscious and aware consumers choose to reward unethical behaviour, and in turn punish ethical behaviour, by not purchasing from responsible organisations (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Carrington, et al., 2010). Consumers' continued reluctance to act on pro-environmental attitudes has created strong incentives for organisations to abandon pro-environmental principles due to the associated cost increases of providing greener products (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001).

Green consumption behaviour is prone to inconsistencies, compromises and contradictions (Kennedy, Beckley, McFarlane, & Nadeau, 2009; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Several studies have tried to understand the “attitude-behaviour gap” of green consumerism by exploring the practical and motivational complexity that consumers face (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Moisander, 2007; Pettit &

Sheppard, 1992; Wall, 1995a). Price, product performance and convenience issues with green products, have led consumers to make personal concessions to pro-environmental attitudes in favour of conventional (i.e., not-so-green) products. It is clear that most consumers have pro-environmental attitudes, yet only a niche segment of consumers actually translate their attitudes into purchases (Ozcaglar-Toulouse, et al., 2006). There remains an insufficient understanding of how consumers cope with and rationalise non-environmental behaviour that is inconsistent with their pro-environmental attitudes.

A proposed reason for inadequate understanding of the “attitude-behaviour gap” is the focus on individual consumers and purchases, isolated from social and historical context (Peattie, 2010). Ethical consumers act in a social setting where they have to justify purchase choices and make concessions to their green values for others (Shaw & Clarke, 1999). Furthermore, research has found that individuals in personal relationships with people who are green consumers, also make concessions to their own conventional consumption behaviour (Gronhoj, 2006). Studies have reported the negative and inhibiting role that other people can have in preventing green consumption behaviour (Gronhoj, 2006; Kennedy, et al., 2009). It is clear that conflicting values and motives within the household and the wider social environment may prevent consumers from translating their pro-environmental attitudes into purchases. However, the type and nature of social influence is yet to be ascertained.

While some green consumption behaviour is becoming a socially accepted and desirable norm (i.e., regular recycling, using reusable supermarket bags) (Carrington, et al., 2010; Haanpaa, 2007), the contrasting capitalist norm encouraging materialism and high levels of consumption remains prevalent in society (Autio, Heiskanen, & Heinonen, 2009; Peattie, 2010), and is contradictory to environmental and social interests. There is only limited research into how the social environment may facilitate and impede green consumption behaviour (Gronhoj & Olander, 2007; Oskamp et al., 1991). Research needs to focus on increasing knowledge of green consumption behaviour, the “attitude-behaviour gap”, and pro-environmental behaviour change by considering the individual, household and societal variables that underlie and influence green consumption behaviour.

1.3. Research gaps

In recent years there has been significant research into understanding green consumers (Autio, et al., 2009; Elkington, Hailes, & Makower, 1990), green consumption behaviour (Connolly & Prothero, 2008; Gilg, Barr, & Ford, 2005; Peattie, 2010) and the “attitude-behaviour gap” of green and ethical consumerism (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Carrington, et al., 2010; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). While there has been significant research attention given to “attitude-behaviour gap” of green consumerism, a narrow understanding of this phenomenon persists (Peattie, 2010).

As most research in the green and ethical literature has been quantitative-based, there has been limited research into how the thoughts, feelings and perceptions of individual consumers affect green consumption behaviour (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Caruana, 2007; Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002; Szmigin, et al., 2009). Consumers' experiences with green consumption behaviour include the post-processes of decision-making (i.e., purchase, use, post-use and disposal), yet all of these processes have been overlooked by present research streams (Peattie, 2010). Understanding “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers' “green” perceptions and how these perceptions shape, and are shaped by, individual experiences and the social environment is a critical area in need of further research.

Green literature has widely reported that the consumption behaviour of consumers is sometimes inconsistent with their pro-environmental attitudes (Carrington, et al., 2010; Connolly & Prothero, 2008; Kennedy, et al., 2009; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Surprisingly, there is limited understanding of how consumers neutralise the feelings of guilt that can arise from behaving in an attitudinally incongruent manner. Through understanding consumer rationalisations for non-environmental behaviour, we may comprehend how individuals cope when they behave in ways inconsistent with their pro-environmental attitudes.

While quantitative research has inferred that social factors are important drivers of green consumption behaviour (Easterling, Miller, & Weinberger, 1995; Griskevicius,

Tybur, & Van den Bergh, 2010; Lee, 2008; Young, et al., 2010), it has not shown the influence, power and control strategies that consumers can exert to shape the behaviour of other consumers. By exploring the type and nature of social influence, new insight may be revealed about how the social environment can encourage pro-environmental behaviour change and reduce the “attitude-behaviour gap”.

Finally, research in green consumerism has so far focused on individual, as opposed to wider external factors and influences (Dolan, 2002; Moraes, Szigin, & Carrigan, 2011; Weigel, 1983). Through understanding social and household dynamics, we will gain a better understanding of the “context” of green consumption and the role the social environment (i.e., society, organisations and the government) in facilitating and inhibiting green consumption behaviour.

1.4. Research contribution

This study contributes to existing knowledge of green consumerism, by providing a greater understanding of “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers, the “attitude-behaviour gap” and pro-environmental behaviour change. Understanding the gap between what “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers intend to do, what they actually do at the point of purchase and understanding how to close this gap, is an important academic, managerial and social objective. This research aims to address these issues by exploring how the wider social environment affects individual green consumption behaviour.

First, this study endeavours to understand how an individuals “green” perceptions shape, and are shaped by, consumption behaviour and the social environment. This contributes to a better understanding of the tradeoffs, sacrifices, pre-conceptions, positive and negative experiences that “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers encounter in relation to green consumerism, and how they can positively and negatively affect pro-environmental behaviour change and the adoption of greener consumption habits.

Secondly, this research demonstrates how consumers have learnt to cope with divergences from green principles and consumption behaviour. Consumers use neutralisation techniques to justify their non-environmental consumption behaviour in order to maintain their self-esteem and a positive self-image. The findings reveal that “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers have different “latitudes of acceptance” with regard to “green” consistency and inconsistency. The acceptability of attitudinally incongruent behaviour is influenced by the personal relevance of environmental issues and the importance of “green” to one’s identity and self-image.

Thirdly, this study highlights the importance of the social environment in shaping the “green” perceptions and consumption behaviour of individual consumers. It reveals how interaction with other consumers can influence one’s own consumption behaviour, based on normative expectations of socially appropriate consumption behaviour. Individuals may also be subject to “greening strategies”, which are techniques employed to make people more accountable for their “green” and “not-so-green” consumption behaviour.

Finally, this study explores household dynamics and demonstrates how the green consumption behaviour is affected by household roles, household lifecycle and living situation. Exploring the multiple perspectives of individuals within households, reveals how green consumption behaviour is negotiated within personal relationships. From a managerial perspective, the findings of this study provide new information of “green consumption behaviour as a social process” by means of examining the socially constructed reality of green consumerism.

1.5. Research objectives

This study views green consumerism as a socially constructed concept – in terms of what is perceived as “green” and the responsibilities and roles assigned to consumers by the social environment. The primary objective of this research is to understand how an individual’s social environment influences green consumption behaviour. Furthermore, the study will focus on how pro-environmental behaviour change is

facilitated and inhibited by individual knowledge, personal relationships and social experiences. More specifically, the research objectives of this study are:

1. To achieve a greater understanding of how the social environment influences the green consumption behaviour of individual consumers.
2. To explore how pro-environmental behaviour change takes place.

1.6. Research methodology

An interpretive perspective guides the methodological approach and methods used in this study and an adapted case study methodology was employed. Seven household cases of two participants were selected for this research. The primary data collection method was depth interviews, with each of the 14 participants taking part, one individual and one joint interview. The first interview was an individual interview and the second interview included both the participant and a person with whom they have a close relationship (i.e., reside in the same household). In accordance with case study principles, thematic analysis was used to identify themes and patterns between the household cases and participants.

1.7. Operational definitions

The operational definitions of key terms are presented in this section, to provide the reader with a context for the study. More operational definitions are provided in the methodology section.

Green: According to McDougal (2002) the term “green” describes people, products or activities that are environmentally-responsible. Environmentally-responsible activities are activities that minimise ecological impact (McDougall, 1990).

Not-so-green: “Not-so-green” often referred to as “mainstream” is a term used to describe the majority of people, products and activities that are environmentally-

responsible. The term refers to people and consumption behaviour that do not minimise their ecological impact.

Green consumption behaviour: The following examples are regularly referred to as examples of green consumption behaviour (Barr, 2003):

Examples of green behaviour in the household include

- Recycling;
- Using reusable supermarket/shopping bags;
- Energy saving;
- Waste management; and
- Water conservation.

Examples of green consumption in the household include:

- Purchasing products – such as detergents, that have reduced environmental impact;
- Avoiding products with aerosols;
- Purchasing recycled paper products;
- Buying organic produce;
- Buying locally produced products and produce;
- Purchasing from a local store;
- Buy fair-trade products (i.e. products with “fair-trade” certification); and
- Looking for products using less packaging.

Pro-environmental: Defined by Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002) as behaviour that consciously seeks to minimise the negative impact of a person's actions on the natural and built world (e.g., minimise resource and energy consumption, use of non-toxic substances, reduce waste production). An individual can have “pro-environmental” attitudes, however they may not always practice pro-environmental consumption behaviour. The terms “green”, “pro-environmental” and “environmentally-friendly” are used interchangeably in this thesis.

Household dynamics: Encompasses ideas related to the characteristics of the household (i.e., living arrangement, household lifecycle, household roles, gender

roles, types of relationships and length of cohabitation) and how this affects interaction among household members (Marshall, 1998).

Social environment: Refers to the social setting in which people live, and within which attitudes develop and consumption behaviour is learned and practiced. It also considers the culture that governs consumer behaviour and the people and institutions (i.e., government, organisations, media and marketing communications) that influence people. As other research has inferred, consumers do not live in a social vacuum and therefore consumption behaviour is shaped by a range of factors and actors in the social environment (Andreason & Tyson, 1994; Solomon, 1983).

Personal relationships: Kelley (1979) describes personal relationships as a long-lasting affiliation, whereby persons may share objects and experiences together and may share living quarters. The everyday use of the term generally refers to lovers, marriage partners, friends and colleagues (Kelley, 1979, p. 1).

1.8. Thesis outline

This thesis has been divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 has introduced the study and outlined the aim and importance of this research. Chapter 2 provides a detailed review of the literature related to this research topic and draws from a wide range of disciplines including marketing, sociology, psychology and environmental psychology. Chapter 3 outlines the philosophical and methodological perspectives that support this study. Chapter 4 presents the findings of this study and discusses the results in light of the relevant literature. Finally, Chapter 5 delivers the study's conclusions, theoretical, methodological and managerial implications and limitations, in addition to outlining potential avenues for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This literature review outlines the conceptual framework, which contains the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that support and inform this research. In constructing the conceptual framework, the literature review is not only descriptive, but also critical, to illustrate the need for more information about green consumerism and the notorious “attitude-behaviour gap”. The review identifies issues with previous research, theory and identifies critical questions that have not been sufficiently answered with past literature. It constructs an argument of how this study will make an original and valuable contribution to knowledge of green consumerism in a social context.

This literature review begins with a description of green consumerism and the underlying motivations for engaging in green consumption behaviour. This is followed by an examination of the “attitude-behaviour gap” inherent in green consumerism, the personal concessions involved, and how attitudinally incongruent consumption behaviour is neutralised through rationalisations. An analysis of household decision-making explores how roles and the household lifecycle or structure can affect the outcome of green consumption behaviour. Furthermore, social learning and socialisation theories outline how consumption behaviour is influenced and shaped by the social environment.

2.2. Green consumerism

In recent years, environmental concern, sustainability and climate change have become widespread political and social issues of global interest (Bergin-Seers & Mair, 2009). There is universal agreement that consumption levels cannot continue at their current rate without exceeding the earth's capacity (Hawken, 1994; as cited in Huneke, 2005, p. 548). The world's producers and consumers are consuming the world's resources at a faster rate than its ability to regenerate. Encouraging citizens to adopt greener consumption habits is an important issue facing government agencies

and policy-makers. Accordingly, Burgess Harrison and Filius (1998, p. 1446) argue that:

“Sustainability is predicated on the belief that individuals and institutions can be persuaded to accept responsibility for the production of environmental problems and change their everyday practices to alleviate future impacts.”

Government agencies and other pressure groups aim to educate and inform consumers about environmental issues, by emphasising the need to reduce consumption to a sustainable level (Peattie & Peattie, 2008). Meanwhile, other marketing and profit-driven organisations continue to promote a materialistic, self-oriented and unsustainable lifestyle and culture, whereby possessions symbolise status, achievement and power (Miles & Covin, 2000). A culture of over-consumption and materialism has a negative impact on the environment and its resources (Fontenelle, 2010). Widespread awareness of how consumption contributes to environmental issues has given rise to a post-modern movement, whereby some consumers attempt to reduce consumption altogether and make more responsible decisions out of a sense of moral obligation to the environment (Fontenelle, 2010; Shah et al., 2007; Shaw, Newholm, & Dickinson, 2006).

Environmental issues such as global warming, deforestation, disposal of toxic waste, ozone depletion and the reduction of natural and non-renewable resources have become a regular discourse of everyday life (McGrew, 1993). A diffusion of ecological values and heightened awareness of the environmental and social impact of purchase decisions and consumption behaviour has led to the emergence of organised consumer activist groups and the increasing availability of green products (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Elkington, 1994). The rise of green consumerism encourages even mainstream consumers to be socially conscious and attempt to “make a difference” through their consumption and behavioural practices (Carrigan, Szmigin, & Wright, 2004; Elkington, 1994; Shaw, et al., 2006).

Academics have defined “green consumerism” in a number of ways, but the activities and consumption practices of consumers are highly heterogeneous and vary

significantly between individuals (Autio, et al., 2009; Connolly & Prothero, 2008; Haanpaa, 2007; Prothero, McDonagh, & Dobscha, 2010). It is evident that the ecological consequences of consumer behaviour are present throughout the process of decision-making, consumption and disposal of products and services (Peattie, 2010). However, it is assumed that green consumption and behavioural decisions are adopted by individuals aspiring to maintain a greener lifestyle (Haanpaa, 2007). It is also regarded as a decision to act in a morally and/or socially responsible manner to protect the environment, society and the self (Moisander & Pesonen, 2002).

The phenomenon of “green consumerism” is subsumed within the wider category of “ethical consumerism” (Carrington, et al., 2010). The term “green” relates to environmental issues, but is also intertwined with the social and economic aspects of sustainable development (Peattie, 2010). The distinction between “green” and “ethical” literature is ambiguous, as there is an apparent overlap between green and ethical issues. For instance, Elkington (1994, pp. 90-98) stated that those who practice green consumption behaviour aim to:

“Avoid products that are likely to endanger the health of the consumer or others; cause significant damage to the environment during manufacture, use or disposal; consume a disproportionate amount of energy; cause unnecessary waste; use materials derived from threatened species or environments; involve unnecessary use of or cruelty to animals; or adversely affect other countries.”

Meanwhile, Shaw and Newholm (2002, p. 168) declare that:

“The inextricable link between consumption and ethical problems, such as environmental degeneration and fairness in world trade, has resulted in the emergence of a group of consumers commonly referred to as ethical consumers.”

These statements display the diverse concerns and interconnectivity of issues that surround green and ethical consumerism, demonstrating ambiguity in the distinction between the terms “green” and “ethical”. As ethical issues encompass green issues

and as green issues include ethical considerations, ethical and green literature form the foundation for this research. While public interest has grown substantially in recent years, the term “green consumerism” is not new to marketing. It has taken many different forms and labels including, ecological marketing (Henion & Kinnear, 1976), environmental marketing (Coddington, 1993), enviropreneurial marketing (Menon, 1997), sustainability marketing (Belz & Peattie, 2009) and green marketing (Charter & Polonsky, 1999).

2.2.1. The green consumer

To date, there is no universally accepted definition of a “green consumer” (Kilbourne, Bechmann, & Thelen, 2002). Although the central theme running through the range of definitions and terms is of consumers who consider the environment as important, and thus evaluate purchase decisions and behaviour taking this into account (Connolly & Shaw, 2006, p. 356). Shrum, McCarty and Lowrey (1995, p. 72) conceptualise “green consumers” as people who indicate concern with the physical environment, and hence purchase behaviour is influenced by environmental claims. In their empirical study which sought to psycho-graphically profile the characteristics of the green consumer, they determined that he or she is typically an opinion leader and careful shopper who seeks information on products including information from advertising, but who is also rather sceptical of advertising (Shrum, et al., 1995, p. 71).

According to Banerjee and McKeage (1994), “green consumers” strongly believe that current environmental conditions are deteriorating and represent serious problems facing the security of the world. Conversely, consumers who do not engage in pro-environmental behaviour perceive that ecological problems are not within their control or responsibilities (Banerjee & McKeage, 1994). Autio et al. (2009) explored the identities that young consumers construct for themselves in relation to green consumption behaviour. The “anti-hero” is a consumer who rejects green consumerism and the ability to make a difference. The “environmental hero” embraces aspects of green consumerism and the “anarchist” views green consumption as a reaction against the prevailing consumerist culture (Autio, et al., 2009, pp. 43-47). Previous literature has not adequately explored how an individual's perception

about the severity of ecological problems and the importance of their role in reducing environmental issues, will influence his or her willingness to engage in green consumption behaviour.

Past research into green consumerism has focused extensively on identifying the “green consumer”. McDonalds, et al. (2006) proposed that consumers range from “dark green” (i.e., green consumer) to “light green or grey” (i.e., mainstream/not-so-green consumer) (see Figure 1). As a result of this research, three distinct groups, “translators”, “exceptors” and “selectors” were identified (McDonald, et al., 2006). A “translator” is consciously aware of green issues and translates this into consistent action (McDonald, et al., 2006). These consumers are prepared to make sacrifices due to an awareness of the adverse environmental impact of certain types of consumption behaviour. Even “translators” encounter practical and social constraints, which can result in certain concessions to their green consumption behaviour (McDonald, et al., 2006). Meanwhile, an “exceptor” prioritises sustainability issues, however also makes exceptions for conventional consumption behaviour, despite its environmental consequences (McDonald, et al., 2006). A “selector” is also familiar with the environmental and social impact of consumption, but chooses to support a particular issue that they perceive to be important. This research assumes that a “translator” is generally a “green” consumer, whereas a “mainstream” (i.e. not-so-green) consumer would typically be described as an “exceptor” or “selector”.

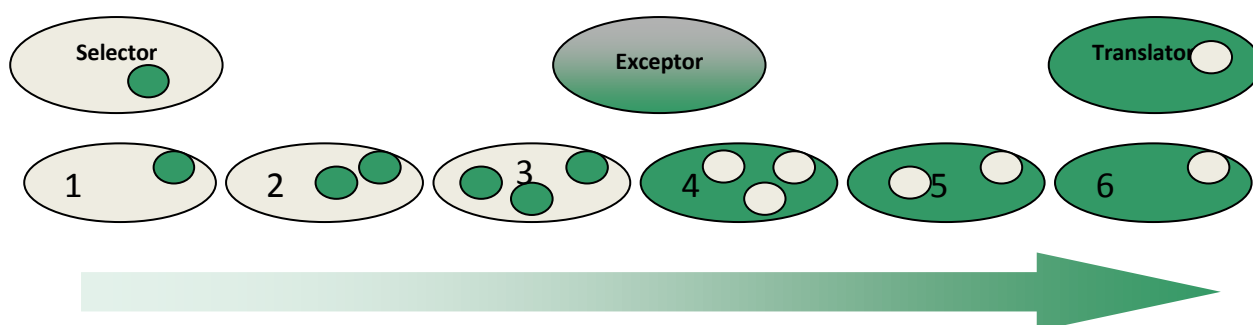


Figure 1: The Green scale

There are divergent views, objectives and strategies of ecologically responsible consumption and consumers. One view proposes that to truly care for the environment, an individual must drastically reduce the number of purchases and increase the number of green product purchases and behaviour (Elkington, et al., 1990, p. 5). A “green” consumer who refuses to buy anything unless strictly necessary is generally deemed “alternative” or “radical” (Elkington, et al., 1990). “Green” consumers have strong pro-environmental attitudes and practice extensive green consumption behaviour throughout their lives and lifestyle.

Meanwhile, an alternative view is to acknowledge that such a radical environmentalist approach to consumption is not easy to adopt in our increasingly convenience-driven and consumption-oriented society (Elkington, et al., 1990; Moisander, 2007). As a result, green consumerism is being viewed more liberally, with some consumers carefully selecting products and services that are the least destructive to the environment. The liberal view of green consumerism makes it possible to have a positive environmental impact without significantly compromising one's way of life (Moisander, 2007). Environmentally significant pro-environmental behaviour change is much less apparent among “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers.

The types of consumers outlined by Moisander (2007), help to distinguish “green” (i.e., radical) and “mainstream/not-so-green” (i.e., liberal) consumers. This terminology illustrates how the two consumer groups have different perceptions about acceptable levels of green consumption behaviour. It is somewhat surprising, that the literature has extensively investigated the “green consumer,” but has overlooked how the “green” perceptions and experiences of “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers might affect the adoption of green consumption behaviour by this consumer segment. There is also an insufficient understanding of how “green” perceptions and consumption behaviour are shaped by other “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers in the social environment. These deficiencies in current research and literature are surprising, considering the importance of the “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumer market to the continued growth of the green industry.

2.2.3. Green motivation

Many factors drive consumers to engage in green consumerism. The motives behind green consumption behaviour have been the focus of substantial research, as researchers seek to understand which individuals are more likely to engage in pro-environmental behaviour and why. Significant attention has been devoted to analysing the demographic elements of a person's background as an explanation for environmentally-conscious behaviour (Pettit & Sheppard, 1992). Several studies have indicated that especially in Western societies, females are more pro-environmental than males (Agarwal, 2000; Autio, et al., 2009; Lee, 2009), because females are generally more concerned for future generations and play a nurturing role in society (Autio, et al., 2009). However, there has been limited success in explaining environmental concern in terms of demographic variables (i.e., age, occupation, social class, residence, political association) aside from gender.

Several studies have noted that demographic variables are poor indicators of green consumption behaviour (Agarwal, 2000; Davidson & Freudenburg, 1996). Research has generally concluded that the underlying determinants of pro-environmental behaviour are quite unrelated to demographic traits (Pettit & Sheppard, 1992). This has led researchers to identify other motivational drivers that are not mutually exclusive, as a consumer may experience multiple motivations for engaging in green consumption behaviour. The green literature has not examined how the underlying motivations of consumers might affect commitment to green values, efficacy of green consumption behaviour, and distinguish between different types of consumers. In general, altruistic motives, deep-rooted beliefs, self-oriented motives and social motives are the primary drivers of consumption behaviour.

2.2.2.1. Altruistic motives

Altruistic concern is the self-less concern for the welfare of others (Shaw, Grehan, Shiu, Hassan, & Thomson, 2005). Consumers with altruistic motives consider the impact that shopping purchases have upon other people and the environment. An exploratory study by Shaw and Clarke (1999) found that ethical consumers hold

strong feelings of obligation for others that impact on their purchase choices. Furthermore, research by Stern, Dietz and Kalof (1993) examined the role that social-altruism and egotism played in influencing green consumption behaviour. More specifically, it explored whether social-altruism is a sole driver of environmentally-friendly market behaviour. It also examined biosphere-altruism a concern for the non-human elements of the environment. The findings showed that social-altruism and biosphere-altruism influence a consumer's willingness to take political action by avoiding certain market behaviour and products that are environmentally or socially harmful (Stern, et al., 1993).

2.2.2.2. Deep-rooted beliefs

Deep-rooted beliefs are driven by personal norms and internal ethics (Shaw, Grehan, Shiu, Hassan, & Thomson, 2005). Consumers motivated by these beliefs are guided by ethical values that have become their way of life. Consumers with deep-rooted beliefs about green consumerism are generally anti-capitalist and reject a high-consumption and materialistic lifestyle by reducing their consumption (Shaw, et al., 2005). Several studies have indicated that these consumers avoid products, brands and practices that are inconsistent with their core values or identity (Connolly & Prothero, 2008; Elkington & Hailes, 1988; Moisander & Pesonen, 2004). Environmental problems can psychologically induce individuals by way of guilt and shame to contribute to environmental protection. Carrus, Passafaro and Bonnes (2008, p. 58) found that anticipated emotions and past behaviour can be a significant internal driver of an individual's desire and intention to perform pro-environmental actions. These findings illustrate that both affective connection and identification with the natural environment can contribute significantly toward pro-environmental intentions.

2.2.2.3. Self-centred motives

For some consumers, their level of satisfaction is determined by the personal benefit derived from using a product or brand (Carrigan & Pelsmacker, 2009). Shaw et al. (2005) found that consumption decisions were strongly influenced by the desire to

maintain good health through the purchase of healthy foods. Participants linked the term “healthy” with other issues such as organic produce, animal welfare and non-genetically modified foods (Shaw, et al., 2005). Furthermore, in some cases the purchase of environmentally-friendly products is cheaper or saves consumers money. Some green products may involve higher initial or up-front costs but are more energy efficient and therefore cost-efficient in the long-term (Griskevicius, et al., 2010). Consequently, some consumers can financially benefit from having energy-efficient household systems by using greener products and technologies (Griskevicius, et al., 2010).

2.2.2.4. Social motives

The sociological force of society creates a positive social phenomenon that motivates individuals to contribute to environmental protection (Buttle, 1987). “Green” is associated with positive images and symbols and membership to an environmental organisation is considered socially desirable (Pettit & Sheppard, 1992). Research by Lee (2008) into Hong Kong adolescent green purchasing behaviour, showed that social influence was the strongest and most significant predictor of green consumption behaviour, followed by environmental concern, concern for self-image, and finally perceived environmental responsibility. A reason for this, is that social norms are enforced by threat of guilt or shame and promote conformity through social approval and acceptance (Argyle, 1969, pp. 87-88). The social influence and underlying subjective norms in society reflect the impact of directly felt expectations from other people, based largely on the need for approval from others (Bagozzi & Lee, 2002). In fact, Sexton and Sexton (2011, p. 1) propose that “costly private contributions to environmental protection increasingly confer status once afforded only through ostentatious displays of wastefulness”. This illustrates how society’s previous positive perception of consumption and waste is now viewed negatively.

2.2.3. Green norms

Norms are the shared beliefs about how we “ought” to act and they are enforced by the threat of punishments or the promise of rewards (Thogerson & Olander, 2006). Consumers may exhibit pro-environmental behaviour for personal reasons, or for social normative reasons. The type of norm and whether it is personal or social, depends on how internalised they are. As defined by Schwartz (1977), a personal norm is a self-expectation of a specific action in a particular situation, experienced as a feeling of moral obligation. Meanwhile, the qualifying term “social” is used to express the idea that the norm is based on group expectations and that rewards (i.e., pride) or punishments (i.e., guilt) are externally defined and likely to be self-administered (Schwartz & Howard, 1982).

Internalised personal norms encourage consumers to consider the environmental consequences of consumption throughout private and public consumption activities. Sparks and Sheppard (2002) examined how identification with green consumerism affected an individual's intention to purchase and consume organic vegetables. The results revealed that although the purchase and consumption of organic vegetables is not typically performed in the presence of other green consumers, it still guides the appropriate consumption behaviour because explicit social norms are internalised (Sparks & Shepard, 1992). Individuals behave in accordance with perceived norms in order to gain a favourable reaction from others (i.e., social approval, liking, praise) and deter from unfavourable reactions from others (i.e., rejection, disapproval, displeasure) in their social environment (Bagozzi & Lee, 2002).

Meanwhile, if social norms are not internalised to the point where they become personal norms, they may only guide appropriate consumption behaviour for public, but not private consumption situations. Consumers may display pro-environmental attitudes and behaviour when in social situations but may not maintain green consumption behaviour for private and inconspicuous consumption behaviour. The purchase of environmentally-friendly products is a socially desirable trait to exhibit in today's society, and the positive social consequences can induce pro-environmental behaviour (Pettit & Sheppard, 1992). Whitmarsh and O'Neill (2010) found that

behaviour spillover was highest for shopping and eating because this behaviour is conspicuously consumed and is therefore an expression of one's "green" identity (Whitmarsh & O'Neill, 2010). While many consumers express a desire to follow the green trend, they may not effectively perform green consumerism throughout their consumption behaviour (Pettit & Sheppard, 1992).

Many quantitative studies have found that environmentally-responsible behaviour is correlated with both social and personal norms (Bamberg & Schmidt, 2003; Schwartz, 1977; Thogerson, 2006). Stern and colleagues (1999) found that consumers pro-environmental norms were critically important in preceding both environmentally significant private consumption behaviour and a sense of "environmental citizenship" (Seyfang, 2003; Stern, et al., 1999). However, Meill and Dallos (1996, p.28) propose that:

"Not all norms are shared, and that people see norms as requiring different degrees of adherence. It is evident that some norms prescribe what should be done while others are merely descriptive of what people 'generally do' in given situations."

Consumption is a social process that requires a deep understanding of individual, social, cultural and physical perspectives in order to be viewed holistically. Consumption is deeply intertwined in social relations and norms, making individual behaviour change toward sustainability a matter of changing norms and social relations (Jackson, 2005). Therefore, enhancing our knowledge and understanding of the "green social norms" consumers' perceive in society is clearly an important area for research.

2.2.4. Political consumerism

Environmentally concerned consumers have developed a desire to express political concerns, by selecting products based on social, political or ethical considerations (Shah, et al., 2007). The term "green" encapsulates different expressions, concerns and issues for an individual (Carrington, et al., 2010). Some consumers use their

consumption as “votes” in favour of more environmentally and socially responsible products through “buy-cotting” (i.e., purchasing environmentally-friendly and socially responsible products and brands) (Friedman, 1996). Meanwhile, other consumers engage in behaviour against environmentally and socially harmful products and brands by proactive action known as “boycotting” (i.e., avoiding the purchase of environmentally and socially harmful products and brands) (Smith, 1990). Furthermore, avoiding, aversion and boycotting have become a viable and meaningful alternative to conventional forms of political activism (i.e., protests) (Shah, et al., 2007). Consumers make calculated decisions to avoid and reject products and brands with objectionable or environmentally-adverse business practices. The goal is to force change with the “power of consumer dollars” (Lyer & Muncy, 2009, p.161). A British study by Mason (2000) reported that 44% of randomly selected respondents from the general population had boycotted products or brands in the previous 12 months.

The broad range of environmental issues within green consumerism has created complex decision-making processes for ethically-minded consumers (Carrington, et al., 2010; Freestone & McGoldrick, 2007). Individuals concerned for the environment may decide to engage in political consumerism by strategically avoiding particular products and brands that contribute to negative social behaviour and environmental degradation (Lyer & Muncy, 2009). Politically motivated brand rejection can be driven by negative reference group avoidance and the drive to distance oneself from undesired and incongruent images and associations (Sandikci & Ekici, 2008). Often the actions of these consumers are guided by media and publications that inform them of the brands and companies that they should avoid (Miles & Covin, 2000). Interestingly, Carrigan and Attalla (2001) found that negative information influences consumer attitudes and behaviour more than positive information, meaning that consumers rarely reward ethical behaviour, but are more prepared to punish unethical behaviour.

2.2.4.1. Corporate green practices

Large multinationals have frequently been subject to public scrutiny and boycotts for unethical and/or immoral behaviour. There have been several boycotts in recent years especially of large multinationals including McDonalds, Cadbury, BP and Shell. Not only are these scandals detrimental to brand image and reputation, they also cost the company millions of dollars in lost sales and reparation costs. The recent BP boycott in 2010, instigated by global outrage in relation to a severe oil-spill in the Mexican Gulf, cost the company \$41 billion (Gosden, 2012). While some companies are under pressure from consumers to change their business practices, others have successfully adapted to green and ethical standards demanded by consumers and consumer activist groups.

The trend toward ethical purchasing and consumption behaviour has enabled some organisations to tap into potentially profitable ethical segments, promoting the ethical and environmental credentials of their products and brands (Carrington, et al., 2010). Since the late 1990's, society has become increasingly environmentally and socially aware and has started to demand social and environmental responsibility from organisations (Lee, Motion, & Conroy, 2008; D. Shaw, Shiu, & Clarke, 2000). In recent years, some organisations have implemented environmental programs throughout organisational processes; often cooperating with environmental organisations (e.g. Greenpeace) to reduce or eliminate the negative environmental externalities caused by commercial operations (Miles & Covin, 2000).

Businesses that seriously consider and act on environmental issues may develop a sustainable competitive advantage. Those companies that integrate environmental considerations into their business practices (e.g. 3M's "3 P's program" (preventing pollution pays), DuPont Corporation's commitment to 70% waste reduction by the year 2000 and McDonald's effort to eliminate polystyrene clamshell packaging) have been commended for their progressive and exemplary steps to incorporate pro-environmental practices (Menon, Chowdhury, & Jankovich, 1999). Environmental performance is becoming an increasingly important component of an organisation's reputation, which has the potential to deliver a competitive advantage and enhance

financial performance by reducing the environmental risks perceived by consumers (Miles & Covin, 2000). The rise of green consumerism has forced marketers and businesses alike, to rethink their practices and business philosophy (Prothero, et al., 2010). Some businesses are considering their products in conjunction with other processes, resulting in green integration, meanwhile promoting and enabling greener lifestyles for consumers (Prothero, et al., 2010).

However, some academics argue that environmental performance does not deliver a sustainable competitive advantage. The industry for green products continues to grow with estimates of over \$200 billion in 2006 (Ozcaglar-Toulouse, et al., 2006) and it is expected to grow to over \$1 trillion by 2050 (Sexton & Sexton, 2011). However, despite reports of steady growth in green product sales, it remains limited to a niche market of “green” consumers (Ozcaglar-Toulouse, et al., 2006). Surveys show that as many as one third of consumers are prepared to pay a higher price for products with green characteristics. Yet virtually all evidence of positive willingness to pay for environmental benefits is obtained from self-reported surveys and hence are subject to “cheap talk” critiques (Sexton & Sexton, 2011, pp. 4-5). It is clear that while many people show concern for the environment, most people are unwilling to pay a higher price at the point of purchase (Gupta & Odgen, 2009). In addition, lack of demand in the marketplace is thought to be caused by consumer cynicism, due to misleading green claims that report conflicting and contradictory information (Moisander, 2007). Consumers are only prepared to change their consumption behaviour if the negative environmental implications or social issues affect their lives directly (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001).

The majority of consumers continue to ignore environmental issues, as the most important purchase criteria for consumers’ remains price, value, quality and brand familiarity (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). In general, consumers purchase for personal rather than environmental and societal reasons (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). This is a corporate and social dilemma, whereby even today’s environmentally-conscious and aware consumers are effectively rewarding unethical behaviour and punishing ethical behaviour by not choosing to purchase products from responsible organisation if there is a perceived quality, cost or value compromise (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). While

consumers remain reluctant to act on their environmental attitudes, it creates strong incentives for organisations to abandon environmental principles, due to the associated cost increases (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001).

There are several explanations for why consumers do not significantly change their behaviour in the face of environmental concerns. This study maintains that the “attitude-behaviour gap” in green consumerism may be partially explained by the flaws in quantitative research design often used to provide evidence of this gap. A better understanding of “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers, green motivations and social norms may provide new insight into factors that affect the “attitude-behaviour gap” and pro-environmental behaviour change. The following section explores how situational, social and even practical considerations can lead consumers to tradeoff and compromise on green product or brand alternatives.

2.3. The “attitude-behaviour gap”

Every consumer purchase has ethical, resource, waste and community implications (McDonald, et al., 2006, p. 275). While it is clear that ethical considerations are entering consumers’ purchase decisions, a disconnect between the issues that consumers claim to care about and their purchasing behaviour is evident (Belk, Devinney, & Eckhardt, 2005, p. 276). The major challenge of research in this domain, is the discrepancy between green attitudes and actual behaviour, as consumers do not always “walk their talk” in the case of green consumerism as well as in other areas (Carrington, et al., 2010).

Despite growing concern for environmental and sustainability issues (i.e., global warming, depletion of the ozone layer, pollution, overuse of non-renewable and natural resources), research shows that many ethical and green consumers are struggling to translate their attitudes into purchases (Carrington, et al., 2010; Chatzidakis, et al., 2007; Sparks & Shepard, 1992; Strong, 1996; Yam-Tang & Chan, 1998; Young, et al., 2010). Gaining insight into this gap is of critical importance in understanding, interpreting, predicting and influencing green consumption behaviour. The phenomenon coined the “attitude-behaviour gap” of ethical consumerism is

widely documented in consumer research, but there is only a limited understanding of how and why it occurs (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Carrington, et al., 2010; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006).

2.3.1. Theory of reasoned action/planned behaviour

The “attitude-intention-behaviour” models “theory of reasoned action” (Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) and “theory of planned behaviour” (Ajzen, 1991) are frequently used to measure the level of correlation between attitude, intention and behaviour. In consumer behaviour research, the measurement of attitudes is deemed an accurate indication of actual environmental behaviour (Weigel, 1983). An attitude is defined as “an enduring set of beliefs about an object that predisposes a person to behave in a particular way toward the object” (Weigel, 1983, p. 267). However, a study by Folkes and Kamins (1999) found that although consumers had environmentally-responsible attitudes, only 20% actually purchased a product or service in the past year that had contributed to a good cause. Furthermore, even intentions have been found to be inadequate predictors of actual behaviour. A study by Funterra (2005, p. 92) found that while 30% of consumers stated they would purchase ethically, only 3% actually did. This suggests that models which predict ethical attitudes and intentions to be directly representative of ethical behaviour, will be wrong 90% of the time. There are two proposed reasons for the discrepancy between attitude, intention and actual buying behaviour.

1. Survey/quantitative methodology

One stream is concerned with the limitations of self-reported survey methodological approaches, commonly used to assess consumer purchase intentions and subsequent behaviour (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). Critics argue that the self-reporting scales result in responses that appear to be similar, but are underpinned by a variety of concerns and meanings (i.e., environmental issues, fair trade, animal welfare), that cannot be adequately examined by quantitative inquiry (Szmigin, et al., 2009). While quantitative research has made a significant contribution to ethical consumerism literature, its limitations have given cause for qualitative forms of inquiry in empirical

research of ethical and green consumerism (Connolly & Prothero, 2008; Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002).

2. Social desirability of responses

The second stream proposes that a social desirability bias is prominent in research with ethical considerations (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). Respondents may answer questions according to what is socially desirable by overstating the importance of ethical or green considerations in buying behaviour. However, Carrington et al. (2010, p. 41) states that social desirability and flawed research design only partially explain the gap between intention and behaviour of the ethically minded consumer.

It is the fundamental flaws in quantitative research design that have led to an insufficient understanding of green consumerism and the related “attitude-behaviour gap”. Furthermore, by exploring the social context of consumption, new insight and understanding can be obtained. The following sub-sections discuss the more fundamental assumptions of “attitude-intention-behaviour” models outline the deficiencies in previous research of green and ethical consumerism. This study suggests the need for a deeper understanding of the social processes and influences, on individual perceptions and consumption behaviour.

2.3.2 Rational decision-making models

Quantitative research with a focus on rational decision-making processes have limited understanding of ethical and green consumption behaviour (Carrington, et al., 2010). Ozaglas-Toulouse et al. (2006, p. 504) suggest that “behaviour is deemed to be a direct function of an individual’s intention to conduct that behaviour”. Other authors suggest that using intention as a proxy for actual behaviour must be used with caution (Ajzen, Brown, & Carvajal, 2004, p. 1119). This is because during the translation between purchase intention and actual buying behaviour, the individual interacts with the physical and social environment. Attitude-intention-behaviour models of consumer choice, artificially isolate decision-making by ignoring the external effect of context on purchase behaviour (Fukukawa, 2003).

Meanwhile, Carrington et al. (2010) suggests that based on the “theory of reasoned action”, there are in fact two gaps. There is a gap between attitudes and intention, and intention and actual behaviour, the latter gap is much less understood. The attitude-intention gap in ethical consumerism is over-researched with quantitative methods (Carrington, et al., 2010; Caruana, 2007). Caruana (2007) argues that the emphasis on positivist perspectives across green and ethical literature has led to significant bias toward research examining the cognitive aspects of consumption behaviour. Positivist research views consumers as rational decision makers, when in fact, many consumers tradeoff green consumption behaviour for personal and social reasons (Caruana, 2007).

Many empirical studies have noted a discrepancy between an individuals stated and actual commitment to the environment (Carrington, et al., 2010; Chatzidakis, et al., 2007; Sparks & Shepard, 1992; Strong, 1996; Yam-Tang & Chan, 1998; Young, et al., 2010). Some researchers believe that improving our understanding of how concern does or does not translate into behaviour is more important than documenting either the level of concern or the level of engagement in green consumerism (Wall, 1995b). The underlying dynamics of green consumption behaviour cannot be completely understood with quantitative data collection because it does not account for the context of consumption behaviour. There must be more research into external factors within the wider social environment, which encourage and discourage green consumption behaviour of individual consumers and households.

2.3.3. The importance of social context

Despite acknowledging that individual consumers frequently act unethically, few studies have examined the social processes that are involved in decision-making, which may prevent consumers from following through on their green and ethical beliefs. Because of this, the green literature has been widely criticised for its focus on individual decision-making and agency, and for addressing consumers as rational beings, who are somewhat disconnected from wider socio-cultural processes (Dolan, 2002). Consumers should be viewed as people engaged in meaningful and socially-embedded everyday practices, green or otherwise, which involve symbolic

consumption (purchase, use, and/or disposal) of material goods (Moraes, et al., 2011, p. 3). Research has focused on the cognitive processes of consumer behaviour and has neglected the social processes that are embedded in behavioural inconsistencies.

It appears that researchers have oversimplified the complex translation from attitudes and intention to action. Weigel (1983) argues that examining personal and situational characteristics would offer more accurate insight into the “attitude-behaviour gap” in environmental consumerism. Hajer (1995) convincingly argues that individual environmental discourse is rooted in local and contextual discourse narratives that frame environmental issues in everyday life. For this reason, Burningham and O’Brien (1994, p. 16) also emphasise that “frameworks for environmental understanding and action cannot be imposed from outside such contexts”. Previous research has not sufficiently explored the social context of green consumption. The dominant use of positivist research methodologies has limited our understanding of green consumerism to individual preferences for particular products and services (Peattie, 2010). Meanwhile, the infrequently used method of interpretivist inquiry is able to reveal the actual consumption behaviour of consumers in a social context (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Peattie, 2010; Shove, 2003). Therefore, research using interpretivist inquiry with qualitative techniques is necessary to provide a realistic and comprehensive view of green consumerism.

2.3.4. Self-image and identity

An important assumption of underlying research on the self and identity, is that the self-concept is a primary motivator of pro-environmental behaviour (Stets & Burke, 2002). Indeed many studies have identified an “identity-behaviour link” (Burke, 1991; Burke & Hoelter, 1988; Burke & Reitzes, 1981; Stets & Burke, 2002). Shaw, Shiu and Clarke (2000) suggest that consumers make ethical consumption choices, because ethical values become an important part of their identity and they identify with a range of ethical issues. Using the “theory of planned behaviour” model, the results revealed that ethical obligation and self-identity each had an independent effect on intention, although only 7% of the variance in intention was explained by the model (Shaw, et al., 2000). Generally, research has shown that an individual’s

self-image and identity are important guides of behaviour (Burke & Reitzes, 1981), and that the influence of self-image and identity is independent to the effects of attitudes on behaviour (Biddle, Bank, & Slavings, 1987; Sparks & Shepard, 1992).

Research has illustrated that “self-identity” is one of the strongest predictors of intention to perform pro-environmental behaviour as opposed to other “theory of planned behaviour” variables (i.e., subjective norms, ethical obligation) (Shaw, et al., 2000; Sparks & Shepard, 1992; Whitmarsh & O'Neill, 2010). Due to the importance of identity, environmental sociologists have incorporated morality and values into environmental behaviour research by utilising Schwartz's (1977) norm-activation theory of altruism. Stern and colleagues (1999) built upon Schwartz's theory by developing a “value-belief-norm theory of environmentalism”. This theory links “value-theory” with “moral norm activation theory” by maintaining that personal and moral norms will be activated and guide action when individuals see that what they value is threatened (Stets & Biga, 2003). When self-image and identity are implicated in decision-making and consumption behaviour, it guides behaviour in a manner distinct from attitudes. In order to predict how consumers will behave, we need to examine the identities (i.e., green or mainstream/not-so-green) that individuals adopt in relation green consumption behaviour.

2.3.5. Personal concessions

Personal concessions to pro-environmental attitudes are widely acknowledged in the green literature (Moisander, 2007; Peattie, 2010). Inconsistency and unpredictability in green consumption behaviour is widely reported (Connolly & Prothero, 2008). Theoretically, in order to be an effective green consumer, the consumer should make the optimal purchase, use and dispose of the product in the most environmentally-friendly manner (Grunert, 1988). However, this definitions are idealistic, as many consumers make concessions to their green values for practical reasons, constrained by situational and social variables. Research into green consumerism has been based on the premise that consumers behave rationally (Azjen, 1991; Carrus, et al., 2008; Ozcaglar-Toulouse, et al., 2006), when in fact, consumers are influenced by their perceptions, experiences and interactions within the social environment.

2.3.5.1. Tradeoff

In some instances, tradeoffs and the constraint of practicalities, prevent consumers from adopting green consumption behaviour (Bergin-Seers & Mair, 2009). The notion of “individual responsibility” within green consumerism can be disempowering (Autio, et al., 2009). It is important to understand the capacity of an individual to perform green consumption behaviour, and the extent to which the behaviour is under their internal abilities (Carrington, et al., 2010). The term “action control” refers to “an individual’s ability to exert control over the enactment of an intention in a particular situation” (Hunt & Vitell, 1986, p. 146). “Action control” is related to an individual’s “self-efficacy” (Bandura, 1982) and “locus of control” (Lefcourt, 1991). Environmentally-conscious consumers may feel disheartened when problems appear to be beyond their control and resources or require a greater amount of energy and effort to continue practising green behaviour (Shaw & Clarke, 1999). These external and practical constraints to participation in green consumption behaviour can be highly discouraging and de-motivating (Moisander, 2007).

As discussed earlier, quantitative research is an inadequate predictor of actual buying behaviour in green and ethical consumerism (Carrington, et al., 2010; Caruana, 2007). Szmigin et al. (2009, p. 226) proposed that the rationale for purchasing may be in a state of transition or flux. Underlying tensions and competing values may not always be resolved and consumption behaviour may be unpredictable and heavily context dependent (Szmigin, et al., 2009). Indeed studies reveal attitude behaviour inconsistencies among those who do consume ethically (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; De Pelsmacker, Driesen, & Rayp, 2005; Schroder & McEachern, 2004). The most frequent tradeoffs consumers experience are often used as rationalisations for non-purchase or non-practice, they include: cost/expense, product performance and inconvenience. Each of these tradeoffs are discussed separately in the following sections.

2.3.5.1.1. Cost/expense

Several studies have reported that the price of green products is a considerable barrier to green consumption behaviour for some consumers (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Sexton & Sexton, 2011; Shaw & Clarke, 1999; Wall, 1995a), as green products are usually premium priced (Pettit & Sheppard, 1992). Producers charge higher prices for green products because quantitative studies have suggested that consumers are willing to pay premium prices for environmentally-friendly products (Gupta & Odgen, 2009; Pettit & Sheppard, 1992; Sexton & Sexton, 2011). Accordingly, when price and ethical concerns are in conflict, consumers may restrict the number of ethical products purchased (Shaw & Clarke, 1999), thus trading off between cost and environmental values.

2.3.5.1.2. Product performance

A perception of inferior product performance is a significant barrier to green product selection according to several studies (Ottman, 1998; Pettit & Sheppard, 1992; Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008). Research by Ottman (1998) showed that 41 per cent of consumers do not buy green products because of perceived inferiority, citing observable and product-specific information. Pickett-Baker and Ozaki (2008) found that consumers evaluate a product by comparing attributes such as functionality, expense and performance. Other studies describe that it “is not easy being green”, as environmentally-friendly goods may be imperfect substitutes for conventional products, due to reduced functionality or effectiveness (Pettit & Sheppard, 1992, pp. 330-331). However, it should be noted that these studies have used quantitative, self-reported surveys to measure consumers’ attitudes and intentions toward purchasing green products. A deeper understanding of the “product performance versus environment” tradeoff could be achieved through qualitative research.

2.3.5.1.3. Inconvenience

Some consumers view being green as “inconvenient” due to the cognitive effort required in researching, deciding, finding green products/organisations and practising green consumption behaviour (Young, et al., 2010). Young et al. (2010) developed a

model to illustrate the green consumers' purchasing process and found that a major barrier to green consumption was a lack of available information on the environment and the socially responsible performance of organisations. The green purchase intentions of the consumers may be competing against long-term habitual "not-so-green" or "not-so-ethical" shopping behaviours (Carrington, et al., 2010). As individuals lead increasingly busy lives, consumers are less willing to engage in green consumerism (Young, et al., 2010).

2.3.6. Neutralisation techniques

Neutralisation techniques are used by consumers to justify and rationalise non-environmental behaviour, and may help to explain why consumers continue to behave in ways that are inconsistent with their pro-environmental attitudes (Chatzidakis, Hibbert, Mittusis, & Smith, 2004; Chatzidakis, et al., 2007). In general, neutralisation techniques allow consumers tolerate compromises to their pro-environmental values by balancing good (i.e., green) and bad (i.e., not-so-green) consumption behaviour (Harris & Dumas, 2009). However, as discussed above, in some situations tradeoffs among alternatives, conflicting individual interests and the constraint of practicalities prevent consumers from adopting greener consumption habits (Bergin-Seers & Mair, 2009).

"Techniques of neutralisation" developed by Sykes and Matza (1957) were used to understand the deviant behaviour of adolescent delinquency. According to Sykes and Matza (1957), the techniques are rationalisations used to "protect the individual from self-blame and the blame of others after the act" (Sykes & Matza, 1957, p. 666). Based on their findings, Sykes and Matza (1957) proposed five techniques of neutralisation. These techniques entail the "denial of responsibility" (i.e., one does not feel responsible for the outcome of the behaviour), "denial of injury" (i.e., denial that someone actually suffered as a result of the behaviour), "denial of victim" (i.e., a view that suffering parties deserved what they got), "condemning the condemners" (i.e., the belief that those who condemn engage in similar behaviour or contribute to the behaviour), and "appeal to higher loyalties" (i.e., the behaviour is justified based on a higher goal or priority) (Sykes & Matza, 1957).

Chatzidakis et al. (2004) also proposed that these neutralisation techniques represent five rationalisations that help consumers to alleviate the impact of unethical consumption behaviour on their social relationships and self-concept. The study used these techniques to help explain how individuals cope with the “attitude-behaviour gap” prevalent in ethical and green consumerism. It is clear that neutralisation techniques enable consumers to conduct and rationalise non-environmental behaviour, justifying behaviour inconsistent with their core ethical values and beliefs (Chatzidakis, et al., 2004). Other research also identified neutralising arguments to rationalise the lack of translation of fair-trade attitudes into fair-trade purchases at the supermarket (Chatzidakis, et al., 2007). The analysis revealed that neutralisation techniques have some capacity to mitigate the impact of non-environmental behaviour to the individual's self-image.

While neutralisation theory has been applied in contexts where the consumer is misbehaving (i.e., behaviour that is inconsistent with personal/moral/social norms). The effects of neutralisation techniques have not been applied to a “green consumerism” context. It is important for research to examine how consumers with pro-environmental attitudes cope when they behave in a non-environmental manner and maintain their self-image and self-esteem. Neutralisation of non-environmental behaviour is a critical area for research because of its relationship to the prevalent “attitude-behaviour gap”. The personal concessions in green consumption behaviour are well researched however, the green literature has not acknowledged how the social environment can affect individual consumption behaviour. Personal relationships and social experiences can also affect individual action and may influence the translation of pro-environmental attitudes into green consumption behaviour.

2.4. Household decision-making

The green consumption literature has focused on the nature of consumers and their actions as individuals. For this reason, it has been criticised for overlooking and downplaying the importance of social context and conditions of consumers' lives and lifestyle (Moisander, 2007; Shove, 2003). The term "individual" is misleading because it summons the idea of isolation from a social and historical setting. Wheelock and Oughton (1996, p. 143) suggest that most individuals live in households, and therefore analysis should be at the level of the household and the individuals within it. It is apparent that there are a number of competing motivations and goals within households, with most actions and consumption activities based on reciprocity or cooperation between individuals (Wheelock & Oughton, 1996). Therefore, the behaviour of others shapes our interpretations of, and our responses to the situations we find ourselves in, especially for novel, ambiguous and uncertain situations like green consumerism (Griskevicius, Goldstein, Mortensen, Cialdini, & Kendrick, 2006).

For most household consumption decisions, it is the household rather than the individual that is the critical decision-making and consumption unit (Spiro, 1983). Family decision-making has been the focus of significant research in the past, although present interest in family research is declining (Communri & Gentry, 2000). Despite its importance, academics have noted that "family decision making is one of the most under-researched and difficult areas to study within all of consumer behaviour" (Wilkie, Moore-Shay, & Assar, 1992). The term "family" generally constitutes a group of related and/or married people who live together (Communri & Gentry, 2000). Meanwhile a "household" refers to an individual or group of individuals who live in the same dwelling, with each member fulfilling an individual role in the households organisation and management (Wheelock & Oughton, 1996).

Households represent an important target group, as major contributors to the emission of green-house gases and consequently, global warming (Abrahamse, Steg, Vlek, & Rothengatter, 2005). The term "household metabolism" describes the flow of energy and materials through the household (Peattie, 2010). Domestic product types, food

and drink, housing and transport contribute to 70-80% of the total impacts from domestic consumption (Tukker, 2006). The environmental impact of domestic consumption includes pollution, human and environmental health risks and greenhouse gas emissions (Tukker, 2006). A greater understanding of how green consumption decisions are made within households may provide new insight into how other household members prevent and facilitate greener consumption behaviour.

Household decisions involve several potential decision makers and influencers (Norgaard, Bruns, Christensen, & Mikkelsen, 2007) and purchase decisions differ across types of products and decisions as well as family or household characteristics (Mangleburg, 1990). For these reasons, it is important to study and understand different household lifecycles and structures as this may affect consumption behaviour practiced by household members. Marketers must realise that any decision seemingly made by an individual residing within a household structure, may be at least influenced by other members of the household (Lackman & Lanasa, 1993). The lack of present qualitative research into the dynamics of household decision-making is a substantial shortcoming of marketing literature. It is important to investigate a range of different household structures and lifecycles to examine the nature of interaction and communication about green consumption behaviour.

2.4.1. Household conflict

Joint decision-making involves different individuals with contrasting needs and wants (Kwai-Choi Lee & Collins, 2000; Qualls, 1988). As a result of this, at least some degree of conflict should be anticipated. Conflict can occur at various levels and stages in the decision-making process (Qualls, 1988). Blood (1960) and Sheth (1974) suggest that conflicts arise from two sources: the buying motives of a product and the evaluation of alternative choices. Blood (1960) proposed that conflict over buying motives was the source of more severe conflict. Household members may disagree about the desirability of alternatives and implement various tactics and strategies to influence the decision toward their preferred option (Norgaard, et al., 2007).

The social context of decisions is a source of conflict in green and ethical consumerism. Szmigin et al. (2009) found that the social context of ethical decisions affected the level of flexibility in the decision process. Some participants negotiate with partners and children as to the choice of ethical products, while others succumbed and discontinued the ethical practice due to pressure from others. Furthermore, other research has reported that interaction about green consumption issues involved peaceful communicative acts as well as conflict-ridden discussions (Gronhoj, 2006). Members within a household may hold different views of consumption, and some may hold green consumption views that lead to disagreements and conflict. Observing the interactions of individuals within personal relationships, may reveal the strategies and tactics used to influence the “green” or “not-so-green” consumption behaviour practiced by household members.

2.4.2. Social coordination and support

There is evidence to suggest that a relationship context has the potential to influence an array of cognitive, emotional and behavioural processes within individuals (Reis & Collins, 2004). People are actively involved in coordinating with others and the relative success or failure of such coordination is the principle determinant to productivity and well-being (Reis & Collins, 2004). However, the effect of social coordination and support in green consumption behaviour has been somewhat overlooked in the green and ethical literature. Individuals use multiple systems for regulating social relations and responding to social circumstances (Reis & Collins, 2004). For example, these processes include: cooperation, competition, adherence to social norms, coalition formation, attachment, social inclusion and exclusion (Reis & Collins, 2004, pp. 233-234). Individuals in relationships are interdependent in the way with which they alter their behaviour to coordinate with relevant others' actions and preferences. Therefore, Reis and Collins (2004, p. 234) state that people in relationships decide to respond (or not) to each other's wishes, concerns, abilities, and emotional expressions.

Research has reported that especially in groups, green consumption requires commitment from other group members in order to be adopted and continued

(Gronhoj, 2006). In addition, the complexity of green consumerism means that some consumers desire support from relevant others (Gronhoj, 2006). Studies have shown that the type of personal relationship, will affect the level of support received (Antonucci & Israel, 1986). Antonucci and Israel (1986) investigated different types of personal relationships and the extent to which there was agreement between two related respondents. The results showed that social support by relationship was the highest for spouses (86%), relatively high for other family members (81%) and lowest amongst friends (55%). When the person “closest” was considered, the level of social support was highest (Antonucci & Israel, 1986). Therefore, it is important to investigate a range of different personal relationships within households, as this may affect the outcome of green consumption behaviour and the level of social support that is received.

“Households” is a broad term that includes individuals who share housing, as many students and young couples or singles do. While some studies have shown that other household members may support green consumption behaviour (Gronhoj, 2006), other studies suggest that individuals may compromise on their pro-environmental values in order to accommodate other household members (Kennedy, et al., 2009). In research by Kennedy and colleagues (2009) “lack of support” from other household members constrained participation in environmentally supportive behaviour. “Lack of support” from other household members refers to a situation where one or several household members may have strong values that go against environmentally supportive action (Kennedy, et al., 2009). In some cases, the majority or more powerful member of the household may assert their position in such a way that an individual may feel that they have no choice but to subvert their own priorities to the environment (Kennedy, et al., 2009).

2.5. Consumption lifestyle & social identity

As previously mentioned, consumption is often social rather than a purely individual experience (Caru & Cova, 2003). Haanpaa (2007, p. 479) state that:

“Green attitudes and consumption styles can be regarded as a lifestyle based expression of an individual’s concern for the state of the environment.”

The study by Haanpaa (2007) concluded that the favourability of green products is guided by social influence and consumption decisions are governed by what individuals “should do” in society given their social roles and responsibilities. Jackson (2005) also views consumption as a collection of social practices that impact, and are impacted by, lifestyle choices, social norms, societal structures and institutions.

Green consumption links consumers to family members, friends and the state of the market, therefore a consumers degree of involvement in environmental issues, depends not only on their particular aims and desired identity but also their cultural background, personal history, commitment to others’ needs and overall social context (Cherrier, 2007). Szmigin et al. (2009) proposes that flexibility in green consumerism helps consumers to manage the difficulties and problems of accommodating their own families’ tastes, budgets and ethical concerns. As green consumers have commitments to their partner, children, colleagues and neighbours, they may negotiate their values and at times compromise their sense of identity (Connolly & Prothero, 2008).

The ability to choose a green consumption lifestyle and identity is not purely a result of self-inquiry as it is constructed because of internal (self-identity) and external (collective/social identity) influences. The concept of identity is both individually and socially constructed, as through the interaction process, an individual develops the ability to assess the environment in which they live and their role within it (Mclucci & Micr, 1989). There is a need for further insight into the social and behavioural dynamics of personal relationships to challenge the dominant focus on the individual

“green” consumer within the literature. Further research needs to explore what it means to be a “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumer, not just as an individual but also as a consumer operating within personal relationships and social experiences. Therefore, it is important to understand how consumption behaviour is shaped by a consumer’s knowledge and awareness of social norms, roles and society’s expectations of appropriate or desirable consumption behaviour.

2.5.1. Social learning and influence

Social learning and influence explains how green consumption behaviour is shaped by others in the social environment. Consumers learn appropriate consumption behaviour as children through a process called “socialisation”. The process of socialisation can have a direct effect on a consumers consumption decisions later in life (Hogg, Banister, & Stephenson, 2009). Parents or caregivers instil values, emotions and attitudes that can stimulate consumers to approach, avoid and reject specific products, brands and practices (Hogg, et al., 2009). However, socialisation occurs throughout a consumer’s life, as they continue to learn and develop cognitively (Moschis & Churchill, 1978).

“Social learning theory” (Bandura, 1969; Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963a, 1963b), is based on the idea that we learn behaviour through observing others perform those behaviours and subsequently imitating them. Oskamp et al. (1991) found that their respondents own recycling habits were predicted by whether their friends and neighbours recycled. Therefore, social influence is an effective stimulus to recruit other consumers to recycle. Social influence and the underlying subjective norms reflect the impact of directly felt expectations from other people, based largely on the need for approval (Bagozzi & Lee, 2002).

These findings reaffirm that consumption decisions are often shaped by the people an individual associates with, or by a particular group that an individual desires to belong to (Hogg, 1998; Hogg, et al., 2009). A person learns what social categories they are associated with and they learn to evaluate their performance relative to others in that social category. This is also referred to as a “looking-glass-self” (Robboy & Clark,

1983). Theoretically, individuals act in ways that are consistent with the images of themselves and the social categories and standards they use for evaluation are internalised (Robboy & Clark, 1983, p. 85). In other words,

“The individual becomes less reliant on the input of others to reward or punish them and instead is afflicted with feelings of guilt, pride, or shame for behaving according to the rules of the culture” (Robboy & Clark, 1983, p. 85).

Consumers learn about green consumption behaviour through social interaction, and generally conform to behaviour deemed appropriate or desirable (Easterling, et al., 1995; Griskevicius, et al., 2006; Oskamp, et al., 1991). Self-evaluation and a desire to be evaluated positively by others has led to adults “learning” purchasing and consumption habits from others through “reverse-socialisation” or “re-socialisation” (Watne & Brennan, 2009). This influence is understood as a “socialisation influence” that is passed from one adult to another. As Gronhoj (2006) reported, a green consumer practice initiated by one spouse, is often subsequently adopted by the other. Studies have shown that adults re-socialise each other toward pro-environmental behaviour by informing others about environmental issues and related consumption behaviour (Easterling, et al., 1995; Gronhoj, 2006). Therefore, other consumers in the social environment play a critical role in shaping the green consumption behaviour of individual consumers.

2.6. Research gaps

In recent years there has been significant research into understanding green consumers (Autio, et al., 2009; Elkington, et al., 1990), green consumption behaviour (Connolly & Prothero, 2008; Gilg, et al., 2005; Peattie, 2010) and the “attitude-behaviour gap” of green and ethical consumerism (Carrington, et al., 2010; Connolly & Prothero, 2008; Kennedy, et al., 2009; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). While research into the “attitude-behaviour gap” exists, an inadequate understanding of this phenomenon remains (Peattie, 2010). This review has identified issues with previous research, theory and questions that have not been sufficiently answered with previous

research and literature. This study will make an original and valuable contribution by exploring “green consumption behaviour as a social process”.

First, as most research in the green and ethical literature has been quantitative-based, there has been limited research into the thoughts, feelings and perceptions of consumers (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Caruana, 2007; Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002; Szmigin, et al., 2009). Consumers' experiences with green consumption behaviour, which include the post-processes of decision-making (i.e., purchase, use, post-use and disposal), are overlooked by present research streams (Peattie, 2010). Understanding “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers' “green” perceptions and how perceptions shape, and are shaped by, consumption behaviour and the social environment is a critical area for research. Consumer perceptions may reveal the underlying factors that facilitate and impede pro-environmental behaviour change and the adoption of green consumption behaviour.

Secondly, it has been widely reported that consumption behaviour is sometimes inconsistent with environmental attitudes (Carrington, et al., 2010; Connolly & Prothero, 2008; Kennedy, et al., 2009; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). However, there is limited understanding of how consumers avoid negative ramifications to their self-concept and identity when they behave in an attitudinally incongruent manner. Several studies have applied the neutralisation techniques developed by Sykes and Matza (1957) in an ethical consumerism context (Chatzidakis, et al., 2004; Chatzidakis, et al., 2007) but not a green consumerism context. Through understanding the techniques of neutralisation, we can comprehend how individuals learn to cope with behaviour that is inconsistent to their pro-environmental attitudes.

Thirdly, while quantitative research has inferred that social factors are important (Easterling, et al., 1995; Griskevicius, et al., 2010; Lee, 2008; Young, et al., 2010), it has not shown the influence and power strategies that consumers exert over others. An enhanced understanding of social norms, pressure and societal expectations will provide new insight of how the social environment shapes the perceptions and consumption behaviour of individual consumers. By exploring the type and nature of

social influence, a greater comprehension of pro-environmental behaviour change and the “attitude-behaviour gap” in green consumerism can be achieved.

Finally, research in green consumerism has focused on individual, as opposed to wider social factors and influences (Dolan, 2002; Moraes, et al., 2011; Weigel, 1983). It is important to investigate a range of different household structures and lifecycles to examine the nature of interaction and communication about green consumption behaviour. Through exploring the social environment and household dynamics, we will attain a better understanding of the “context” of consumption and the role of other people and institutions (i.e., government, organisations, media, marketing communications) in facilitating and inhibiting greener consumption behaviour. By exploring multiple perspectives including individual, household and societal variables, new information may be gained as to how the “attitude-behaviour gap” can be reduced and pro-environmental behaviour change increased amongst “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers.

2.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature on green consumerism and the “attitude-behaviour gap”, with a focus on the social environment and household decision-making. The literature review has emphasised the lack of social context in green research and literature because of the attention that has been dedicated to individual decision-making processes. The literature review acknowledges the motivational and practical complexity of green consumerism and highlights the use of neutralisation techniques to rationalise non-environmental behaviour. The household decision-making literature reiterates the importance of understanding the factors beyond individual agency. In addition, learning literature, including social learning and socialisation theories have been examined in order to explain how consumption behaviour is learnt, influenced and shaped by others. It is clear from the literature review that a number of gaps and research questions exist. The following chapter will address the methodology that has been adopted by this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This section provides an analysis and justification for the philosophical perspective, methodological approach and methods employed by this research. The methodology section is a documented process for the management of research projects and contains the procedures, definitions and explanations of techniques used to collect, store, analyse and present information as part of a research process. This chapter describes the research methodology used in this study and includes discussion and justification in relation to the following areas: operational definitions, research objectives and questions, rationale for research approach, overview of methodological approach and research design, description of the sample and screening criteria, analysis and synthesis of the data, evaluation criteria and ethical considerations.

3.2. Operational definitions

The operational definitions described below represent some of the most frequently applied and important terms used in this research. In order to prevent misunderstanding or misinterpretation by the reader, these terms are defined in detail and in context below.

Green: According to McDougal (2002) the term “green” describes people, products or activities that are environmentally-responsible. Environmentally-responsible activities are activities that minimise ecological impact (McDougall, 1990).

Not-so-green: “Not-so-green” often referred to as “mainstream” is a term used to describe the majority of people, products and activities that are environmentally-responsible. The term refers to people and consumption behaviour that do not minimise their ecological impact.

Green consumption behaviour: The following examples are regularly referred to as examples of green consumption behaviour (Barr, 2003):

Examples of green behaviour in the household include

- Recycling;
- Using reusable supermarket/shopping bags;
- Energy saving;
- Waste management; and
- Water conservation.

Examples of green consumption in the household include:

- Purchasing products – such as detergents, that have reduced environmental impact;
- Avoiding products with aerosols;
- Purchasing recycled paper products;
- Buying organic produce;
- Buying locally produced products and produce;
- Purchasing from a local store;
- Buy fair-trade products (i.e. products with “fair-trade” certification); and
- Looking for products using less packaging.

Pro-environmental: Defined by Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002) as behaviour that consciously seeks to minimise the negative impact of a person's actions on the natural and built world (e.g., minimise resource and energy consumption, use of non-toxic substances, reduce waste production). An individual can have “pro-environmental” attitudes, however they may not always practice pro-environmental consumption behaviour. The terms “green”, “pro-environmental” and “environmentally-friendly” are used interchangeably in this thesis.

Green consumer: Is a consumer that attempts to minimise the negative environmental effects caused by production, distribution, use and/or disposal of the products they purchase (Gilg, Barr, & Ford, 2005, pp. 485-486). Green consumers, sometimes referred to as “environmentally-conscious” or “environmentally-friendly”, are people whose behaviour exhibits and reflects a consistent and conscious concern for the environmental consequences related to their consumption behaviour (Grunert, 1988). Moreover, as a socially conscious consumer, the green consumer characteristically

takes into account the public consequences of consumption and attempts to use purchasing power to bring about social change (Henion, 1976).

However, as noted by McDonald et al. (2006) there are varying degrees of “green” consumers. The difference is related to their level of commitment to green values and efficacy of green consumption behaviour as demonstrated in Figure 2. Consumers range from “dark green” (i.e., green consumer – “6”) to “light green or grey” (i.e., mainstream/not-so-green consumer – “1”) in terms of their green consumption behaviour. The diagram (see Figure 2) below illustrates a scale upon which consumers can be positioned.

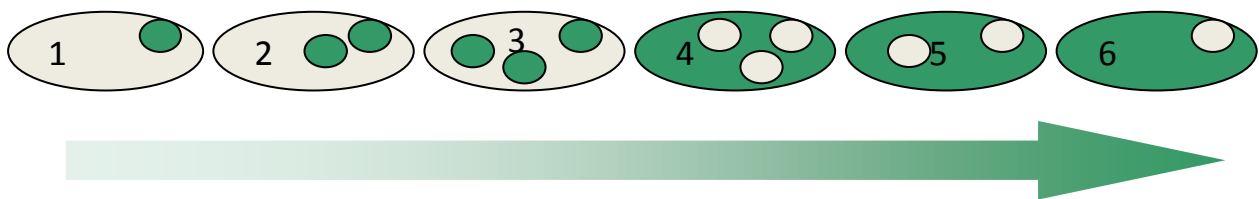


Figure 2: The green scale (Source: McDonald, et al., 2006)

Household: Refers to an individual or groups of individuals who live in the same dwelling. Each member fulfils an individual role in the organisation and management of the household (McDonald, et al., 2006).

Household dynamics: Encompasses ideas related to the characteristics of the household (i.e., living arrangement, household lifecycle, household roles, gender roles, types of relationships and length of cohabitation) and how this affects interaction among household members (Marshall, 1998).

Social environment: Refers to the social setting in which people live, and within which attitudes develop and consumption behaviour is learned and practiced. It also considers the culture that governs consumer behaviour and the people and institutions (i.e., government, organisations, media and marketing communications) that influence people. As other research has inferred, consumers do not live in a social vacuum and

therefore consumption behaviour is shaped by a range of factors and actors in the social environment (Andreason & Tyson, 1994; Solomon, 1983).

Personal relationships: Kelley (1979) describes personal relationships as a long-lasting affiliation, whereby persons may share objects and experiences together and may share living quarters. The everyday use of the term generally refers to lovers, marriage partners, friends and colleagues (Kelley, 1979, p. 1).

3.3. Research objectives

This study views green consumerism as a socially constructed concept in terms of what is perceived as “green” and what responsibilities and roles are assigned to consumers by the social environment. The literature review has identified that current gaps in knowledge are related to a research focus on cognitive and individual aspects of green consumption behaviour, rather than the subjective meanings and socially constructed realities of individual consumers (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Caruana, 2007; Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002; Szmigin, et al., 2009). The primary objective of this research is to develop a broader theoretical understanding by exploring how an individual's social environment can influence and shape green consumption behaviour. The study will also focus on how pro-environmental behaviour change is facilitated and inhibited by individual knowledge, personal relationships and social experiences. More specifically, the research objectives of this study are:

1. To achieve a greater understanding of how the social environment influences the green consumption behaviour of individual consumers.
2. To explore how pro-environmental behaviour change takes place.

3.4. Research questions

This study examines the individual, household and societal variables that create the context for green consumption behaviour. Consumption behaviour is generally social and is shaped by personal interactions and media communications in the social environment (Banister & Hogg, 2004; Moschis & Churchill, 1978; Robboy & Clark, 1983). This research focuses on how the social environment may affect an individual's commitment to green values and the efficacy of green consumption behaviour.

The quantitative focus of green consumerism research and literature has artificially isolated the individual, household and societal variables critically important to the outcome of consumption behaviour (Carrington, et al., 2010; Caruana, 2007). Current research has overlooked consumers' experiences with green consumption behaviour (i.e., purchase, use, post-use and disposal) (Peattie, 2010). Furthermore, it is not known how consumers develop perceptions about appropriate or desirable consumption behaviour, in addition to undesirable and inappropriate consumption behaviour (Easterling, et al., 1995; Gronhoj, 2006). Understanding consumers' "green" perceptions and how they are shaped by the social environment is critical to understanding the "attitude-behaviour gap" in green consumerism.

Examining the "green" perceptions held by "green" and "mainstream" (i.e., not-so-green) consumers may help to explain what personal and social factors and norms influence green consumption behaviour. Furthermore, the underlying motivations, meanings and observations of "green" may contribute to our knowledge of how to reduce the "attitude-behaviour gap". The following research question will explore:

→ RQ1a: What are consumers' "green" perceptions and how does the social environment shape them?

Another important component of this study is to understand how "green" perceptions are formed, and how they shape consumption behaviour. Positive and negative associations and experiences with "green" products and practices may shape future

consumption behaviour (Peattie, 2010). There are in fact two alternatives of how perceptions may affect consumption behaviour: a) perceptions shape consumption behaviour, and/or b) the experience of consumption behaviour shapes future attitudes and behaviour (Azjen, 1988, 1991). Understanding how perceptions are created may offer new insight into how attitudes, intentions and behaviour are determined. It is important to recognise that while attitudes (or perceptions) shape behaviour, the experience of the behaviour itself will shape future attitudes (or perceptions) toward repeating that behaviour (Azjen, 1988, 1991).

It is apparent that consumers manage to cope when they behave in ways inconsistent with their pro-environmental values, attitudes and identity. As yet we do not understand how consumers' "green" perceptions allow them to justify and rationalise non-environmental behaviour without serious negative implications to their self-image and identity. By researching these areas, we can explore how green consumption behaviour is encouraged and discouraged by perceptions and the social environment. The following research question will explore:

→ RQ1b: How do "green" perceptions shape consumption behaviour (and why)?

While green consumerism research and literature has previously focused on the nature of consumers and their actions as individuals (Peattie, 2010), quantitative research has identified social norms as an important motivator of environmental consumption behaviour (Allcott, 2009; Biel & Thorgersen, 2007; Ewing, 2001; Goldstein, Cialdini, & Griskevicius, 2008; Lindbeck, 1997; Varman & Costa, 2008). Surprisingly, there is limited investigation into how relationships and social interaction with others affects green consumption behaviour of individual consumers. This research will explore how green social norms are practiced and encouraged by society and its citizens. More specifically, this study will address the influence and power strategies employed by individuals to shape the consumption behaviour of other consumers and promote pro-environmental behaviour change.

As individuals within households, consumers accommodate the needs, values, tastes and preferences of relevant others (Henryks & Pearson, 2010). It is apparent that consumers take the needs of others into account, which in turn can influence whether or not certain green consumption behaviour is adopted (Henryks & Pearson, 2010; Moisander, 2007). The influence of others may lead some consumers to compromise on their green ideals in order to accommodate others (Stern, et al., 1993). Therefore green consumption behaviour can be negatively impacted by the social environment, and individual roles and obligations.

While research of green consumerism has focused on “families” consisting of parents and children (Gronhoj, 2006; Henryks & Pearson, 2010), there are a diverse range of household structures and lifecycles that have not yet been investigated. The underlying dynamics of various living arrangements and lifecycles may affect the adoption and practice of green consumption behaviour within households. As research by Antonucci and Israel (1986) found that the level of social support of individual actions was affected by the nature of personal relationships. An inquiry into the social context of green consumption behaviour will reveal broader and more relevant insight into how behaviour is negotiated, compromised and practiced within personal relationships and social experiences. Insight into household dynamics and social interaction will provide further understanding of the “attitude-behaviour gap”, in addition to how this discrepancy can be reduced through pro-environmental behaviour change. The following research question will explore:

→RQ 2: How do personal relationships and social experiences shape individual green consumption behaviour (and why)?

An enhanced understanding of “green consumption behaviour as a social process” is central in the pursuit for more sustainable consumption from the consumer’s perspective. An understanding of the social context of green consumerism allows for a holistic view of what factors drive and inhibit green consumption behaviour. This research will explore what it means to be a “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumer, not just as an individual, but also within personal relationships and social experiences. The following section discusses the philosophical and

methodological perspective that underlies this study in order to achieve the objectives and answer the research questions of this research.

3.5. Research paradigm

Whenever research is undertaken, individual researchers must consider the processes by which they gain knowledge. More specifically, the approach adopted reflects a stance taken in relation to the philosophical issues of ontology and epistemology. The two predominant paradigms to gaining knowledge in marketing are the positivist and interpretivist approaches (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). The research approach includes theories and methods based on different goals and underlying assumptions (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). Positivism and interpretivism differ due to their underlying philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality, of social beings and what constitutes knowledge (Anderson, 1983; Geertz, 1973). While the positivists' primary goal is to explain behaviour, which in turn implies an element of prediction (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988), the overriding goal for interpretivists is to achieve an understanding of the behaviour (Anderson, 1983). Given that the interpretivist paradigm underlies this research, an examination of the differences between the two paradigms will justify why this paradigm has been chosen to support the philosophical and methodological framework of this research.

3.5.1. Ontology

Ontology refers to the nature of reality (Denzin, 1984). It is possible to view the world as a composition of objective, generalisable information from a single reality, or as a culmination of multiple meaningful realities generated through interactions among people (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988, p. 509). The positivist ontology holds that "the world is external and objective" (Crotty, 1998) or that a "single objective reality exists independently of what individuals perceive" (Carson, Gilmore, Perry, & Gronhang, 2001, p. 5). It assumes that,

“Individuals have direct, unmediated access to the real world, subscribes to the theory that it is possible to obtain hard, secure, objective knowledge about this single external reality” (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988, p. 509).

The researcher is independent of the phenomena. The phenomena is unchanging and can be explained by obtaining facts about causal relationships (Carson, et al., 2001, p. 4).

In contrast, interpretivism exists on the opposite end of the paradigm continuum compared to positivism. Interpretivism assumes that “individuals do not have direct access to the real world but that their knowledge of this perceived world is meaningful in its own terms” (Carson, et al., 2001; Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). It considers multiple realities, the context of phenomena and the contextual influences deemed necessary to understand and interpret information (Carson, et al., 2001, p. 4). The interpretivist approach maintains that multiple socially constructed realities exist, which are equally “truthful”, yet are in a constant state of change (Carson, et al., 2001). This study views the nature and reality of social interaction as constructed in relation to the thoughts, perceptions and interpretations of each individual. Therefore, it is crucial for the researcher to know the context of behaviour, as these social beings construct their reality and give it meaning based on context (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). This research views each person's reality as meaningful and valuable, developed in a social context and not isolated from external variables.

3.5.2. Epistemology

Epistemology focuses on the nature of knowledge and what it deems to be true (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). It is also concerned with the relationship between reality and the researcher which is fundamentally important to the process of generating knowledge (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). Epistemology is a philosophical basis for evaluating the potential use of certain kinds of information and established methods to ensure the information obtained during research is both sufficient and valid (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988, p. 511). The two extremes, interpretivism and positivism are

positioned on opposite ends of the paradigm continuum due to their distinct and fundamental differences about the nature of knowledge.

Positivist epistemology takes a generalising approach to research as it seeks out general, abstract laws that ideally can be applied to an infinitely large number of phenomena, people, settings and times (Maynard, 1994). It views individuals as rational information processors, who behave reactively in a response-reinforcement fashion to external reality (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988, p. 511). By viewing individuals as rational beings, the positivist perspective does not account for contextual and situational influences. Consequently, the positivist philosophy does not acknowledge the real-life experiences of individuals (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988, p. 510).

Meanwhile, the interpretivist epistemology seeks “to determine motives, meanings, reasons and other subjective experiences that are time and context-bound” (Crotty, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The multiplicity of realities means that “different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomena” (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988, p. 511). While positivists attempt to explain, predict and generalise causal relationships, interpretivists aim to understand and interpret the subjective experiences of individuals (Crotty, 1998, p. 9). An interpretive epistemology assumes that individuals will have different perceptions and interpretations of “green”. Furthermore, this study intends to develop theoretical generalisations by exploring the underlying motives, perceptions and experiences of individuals involved in green consumption behaviour instead of predicting behaviour and identifying causal relationships.

3.5.3. Social constructionism

A research paradigm implies certain assumptions about what the researcher will learn during the inquiry and how the researcher obtains knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). There are a range of perspectives that are used to categorise various philosophical and theoretical concepts that influence and differentiate different forms of qualitative inquiry (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Carson et al. (2001) provides a continuum ranging from interpretivism/relativism to more positivism/post-positivism

lines of inquiry. The continuum includes: critical theory, realism, constructivism, hermeneutics, humanism, natural inquiry and phenomenology (Carson, et al., 2001).. Interpretivism/relativism implies that there are few truly universal standards for scientific adequacy. Meanwhile, positivism/post-positivism implies that there are certain standards for scientific adequacy (Carson, et al., 2001, p. 8). Schwandt (2000) conceptualised three epistemological stances for qualitative lines of inquiry, which are: interpretivism, hermeneutics and social constructionism. Meanwhile, Crotty (2000) conceptualises three primary epistemological influences: objectivism, constructionism and subjectivism. Each influence focuses on how knowledge is gained through research.

The philosophical stance of constructionism informs the methodology of this research. Crotty's (1998) typology of epistemological influences shows the diverse influence objectivism, constructionism and subjectivism have on the nature of knowledge obtained during research. The term objectivism, commonly used in positivist lines of inquiry, maintains that "meaning, and therefore meaningful reality, exist as such apart from the operation of any consciousness" (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). Meanwhile, interpretivism is divided into two distinct epistemological perspectives, namely, constructionism and subjectivism. A subjectivist epistemological position maintains that meaning is an outcome of interaction between the object (phenomena/researcher) and the subject but is not influenced by other variables during the process of interaction (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). On the other hand, constructionists maintain that the meaning of knowledge "is not discovered but constructed" (Crotty, 1998, p. 9). Therefore there is no objective truth, as meaning is formed through interaction between the object (phenomena/researcher) and subject (Crotty, 1998, p. 9). Constructionism is further divided into two distinct subsets, constructivism and social constructionism.

Constructivism and social constructionism are sociological theories of knowledge that consider how social phenomena or objects of consciousness develop in social contexts (Crotty, 1998). The terms constructivism and social constructionism are used interchangeably within the literature, yet they are fundamentally different. Essentially,

“Constructivism for epistemological stances focuses exclusively on the meaning-making of the individual mind, while constructionism focuses on the collective generation [and transmission] of meaning” (Crotty, 1998, p. 58).

The constructivist perspective assumes that each individual has a unique experience of the world, which is equally as “truthful” and “meaningful” as another’s (Crotty, 1998, p. 58). Meanwhile, social constructionism views social interaction as a critical component in shaping one’s interpretation of the world (Crotty, 1998, p. 58). Therefore, inquiry is viewed as value-bound rather than value-free, meaning that the process of inquiry is influenced by the researcher and the context under study (Schwandt, 2000).

Social constructionism focuses on revealing the ways in which individuals and groups participate in the construction of their own perceived social reality. It involves understanding how social phenomenon is created and reproduced by people acting on their own interpretations and knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Accordingly, this study explores how the green consumption behaviour of individuals is influenced by personal relationships and experiences in the social environment. “Green consumerism” is a socially constructed phenomenon, reproduced through social interactions. Social constructionism allows the researcher to obtain relevant and useful information grounded in social context.

3.6. Methodology

The methodological perspective guides the researcher’s choice and use of methods (Crotty, 1998). An adapted case study methodology informs the design of this study. The term “adapted” or “quasi” generally means “having some but not all of the features” (Jackson, 2009) of a case study methodology. Therefore, while this research design may resemble a “case study”, it does not follow all of the fundamental principles of case study methodology. Case study methodology is an intensive and detailed description and analysis of a phenomenon, social unit or system bounded by context time or place (Crotty, 1998). Its aim is to provide an analysis of the context

and processes which illuminate the theoretical issues being studied (Hartley, 2004; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). In case studies, Hartley (2004) suggests that because phenomena are not isolated from their context, researchers can understand how behaviour and processes are influenced, and are influenced by, context. It is anticipated that the adapted case study methodology will provide useful and reliable insight into green consumerism, and richer understanding of “green consumption behaviour as a social process”.

3.6.1. Justification of the case study methodology

For the purpose of this research, a case study methodology was selected using interpretive techniques in order to create thick descriptions and a rich understanding of the phenomena under study. In general, the interpretive case-study approach aims to reflect the structures of meanings created in the particular social environment (Hartley, 2004, p. 232). A case study approach underpins the methodological perspective of this study, as the purpose of this research is to explore how individuals negotiate green consumption and behavioural decisions. Case studies enable the collection of information from one or more individuals and are therefore able to provide a greater understanding of “green consumption behaviour as a social process”. The context of consumption is deliberately part of the research design, as there are too many variables for standard experimental or survey design.

While case study methodology has been largely set in the critical realist paradigm (Macpherson, Brooker, & Ainsworth, 2000), it has also been successfully implemented within social constructionist research (Perry, 1998). Jarvensivu and Tornroos (2010) even argue that moderate constructionism is epistemologically and methodologically close to critical realism, yet it takes account of the multiple constructed realities that all case studies inevitably encounter. They argue that while critical realist studies have primarily used case studies, they often fail to take into account the multiple perspectives of each individual as effectively as the constructionist approach (Jarvensivu & Tornroos, 2010, p. 100).

Case study methodology is the recommended methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed as it brings out the details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data (Jarvensivu & Tornroos, 2010, p. 100). Case study theory building tends to be mainly inductive although it is also partly deductive (Hollis, 1994). This research builds theory based on the information obtained during data collection, although the researcher also uses some form of prior knowledge and literature to guide the research (Stake, 1995). Moreover, case studies can investigate a real-life situation and as a result, strengthen the emerged findings with a real-world anchoring (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991). This contributes significant value to the managerial implications of this research. Additionally, while case study research has been primarily used in the areas of network systems and international business-to-business related marketing (Yin, 1994). Riege (2003) asserts that it may also be suitable for research into consumer decision-making. Based on this research, it was clear that case study design was an appropriate methodology for understanding and interpreting the complex and dynamic interactions of personal relationships and social experiences within green consumerism.

Case study theory building tends to be mainly inductive, although it is also partly deductive (Hollis, 1994). This research builds theory based on the information obtained during data collection, although the researcher also uses some form of prior knowledge and literature to guide the research (Stake, 1995). Selected case studies may be intrinsic or instrumental cases (Riege, 2003, p. 75). The aim of intrinsic cases is to understand the case by exploring relationships and probing relevant issues (Stake, 1995). With instrumental cases, the case serves to help us understand phenomena or relationships within it (Stake, 1995, p. 77). Instrumental cases were selected by this study, as a number of cases may be studied jointly in order to investigate a phenomenon - this is coined multiple or collective case study (Stake, 1995, p. 77). The focus of interpretivist research is to gather data from actors in a social setting in order to reflect the structures of meaning created in the particular social environment (in single or multiple sites) (Stake, 2005, p. 445). In other words, this research aims to develop an understanding of meaning, process of motivation and the social rules and norms that guide interaction, practices and aspirations of individual consumers in their purchasing decisions.

3.6.2. Conducting case study research

The objective of case study research is to extend our understanding of a complex issue or phenomena (Stake, 1995). Stake (1995, pp. 71-85) proposed that the key elements involved in conducting case study research include:

- Systemic data collection and analysis: to ensure theory emerges throughout the study, and alternate lines of inquiry can be explored;
- Reflexivity: the researcher is committed to careful consideration of impressions, and deliberating on recollections and records, without following pre-conceived conceptions or conceptualisation of previous theorists, actors or audiences;
- Triangulation: of various sources of data including descriptions and interpretations of the participants; and
- Subjectivity: the researcher acknowledges the subjective nature of the research and of their interpretations.

3.6.3. Case study principles

Stake (2005, pp. 71-85) identifies several theoretical concepts which underlie case study research:

- Interpretation: researchers must exercise subjective judgement in analysing and synthesising the information and therefore no matter how descriptive the report, the researcher will always provide a personal view;
- Thick description: complexities are objectively described, as researchers try to establish an empathetic understanding for the reader, to convey what the experience itself would convey;
- Particularisation: researchers come to know and understand the particularity of individual cases; and
- Naturalistic generalisations: while quantitative researchers treat the uniqueness of cases as “errors”, qualitative researchers treat the uniqueness of cases and context as important to understanding the phenomenon (Stake, 1995, pp. 39-41).

3.6.4. Justification of the adapted case study methodology

An adapted case study methodology was applied in this research because it was most appropriate for investigating of the phenomena and philosophical assumptions that underpin this study. The adapted case study allowed for flexibility in research design by examining the individuals within and between household cases, as well as the cases themselves. The individuals within a household case were rarely treated as a single case, as the individual perceptions and experiences of each participant were explored. The researcher maintains that to focus on a single case would have limited the findings and value obtained, but acknowledges that it is a limitation of this research.

While an adapted case study methodology was most suitable for this research, there are several viewpoints regarding the acceptability of “adapted” methodologies. Yin (1994) believed that it is necessary to conduct case study methodology precisely in order to generate reliable theories grounded in research. Meanwhile, Stake (1995) infers that flexibility in research design is necessary to maximise opportunity for learning and emergent theory. Moreover, Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) support Stakes proposition, by suggesting that sometimes it is not best to focus entirely on a single case, but to explore factors within and around a case in order for insight and findings to be meaningful, valuable and grounded in context. For these reasons, this study explores individuals within household cases in detail in order to understand how each person's reality and experience with green consumption behaviour is socially constructed.

3.7. Methods

3.7.1. Qualitative inquiry

Within case study research it is possible to employ both qualitative and quantitative lines of inquiry (Stake, 2005; Stake & Trumbull, 1982). However, it was the researcher's contention that quantitative methods were unlikely to address the rich data necessary to address the research purpose. Stake (1995) explains that to sharpen

the search for explanation, quantitative researchers perceive information in terms of descriptive variables, which represent data in scales and measurements. Meanwhile, qualitative researchers perceive information through direct interpretation and stories from research participants, optimising the opportunity for the reader to gain an experiential understanding of the case (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Maxwell, 2005; Stake, 2005).

A shift away from a “cause-and-effect” orientation, leads to a qualitative line of inquiry concerned with personal interpretation and holistic treatment of phenomena (Stake, 1995, p. 40). Qualitative data offers detailed and comprehensive insight into complexities and idiosyncrasies of green consumption behaviour within personal relationships (Schwandt, 1995; Stake, 1995), it is the type of information that quantitative data cannot reveal. In the researcher's view, the fundamental assumptions and key features of qualitative inquiry justify its implementation in this research. These features include: understanding the processes developed by which events and actions take place, developing a contextual understanding, facilitating interaction between the researcher and participants, adopting an interpretive stance and maintaining design flexibility (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Stake, 1995).

3.7.2. Data collection

An adapted case study approach was used to collect data in this study. According to case researchers (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 26), multiple methods of data collection is a principle component of case study research. In this study, brief observation of participant interaction, individual and joint depth interviews, and archival data (see Appendix 1) were collected. For this research, seven household cases of two participants from each household, thus fourteen participants' in total were selected. The participant socio-demographic characteristics illustrate the diversity of the participants and households and this information is displayed in Table 1.

Participant name	Age	Gender	Household composition	Marital status	Household /personal income	Employment status	Home ownership	Home type	Level of education
1. Greta	51+	Female	2 adults	Married	\$90,000+	Full-time	Own	Detached house	High school
1. Gordon	51+	Male				Part-time			High school
2. Fiona	Under 29	Female	4 adults	Living together	50,000-69,000	Full-time	Rent	Apartment	Undergraduate degree
2. Fred	Under 29 years	Male			\$90,000+	Full-time			Post-graduate degree
3. Edwina	30-39 years	Female	2 adults; 2 children	Living together	\$50,000-69,000	Home-maker	Rent	Detached house	High school
3. Eddy	30-39 years	Male				Full-time			High school
4. Deborah	30-39	Female	2 adults; 1 child	Married	\$70,000-89,000	Home-maker	Own	Detached house	Post-graduate degree
4. Darryl	30-39	Male				Full-time			Professional qualification
5. Candice	40-49	Female	3 adults	Single	Under 29,000	Unemployed	Rent	Detached house	Graduate degree
5. Cameron	Under 29 years	Male		Single	Under 29,000	Part-time			Professional qualification
6. Bridget	39-39 years	Female	2 adults; 1 child	Married	\$90,000+	Full-time	Own	Detached house	Professional qualification
6. Bruce	51+	Male				Full-time			High school
7. Annette	40-49 years	Female	2 adults	Living together	\$70,000-89,000	Full-time	Own	Detached house	Undergraduate degree
7. Anton	40-49 years	Male				Full-time			Undergraduate degree

Table 1: Profile of household case studies

3.7.2.1. Depth interviews

Depth interviewing emphasises the building of relationships and exploration of ideas with the individuals being studied (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). Depth interviewing is a flexible, dynamic method, which allows researchers to understand the participants' perspective on their own lives and experiences (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). Rather than observing and participating in an experience, a researcher conducts interviews to hear how people in the research setting make sense of their lives, work and relationships (Taylor & Borgan, 1984, p. 77). Personal accounts provide information on individual

actions and feelings and allow for the participants personal interpretation or account of what they experience (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011). Interviewing is a legitimate way to interact with participants (i.e., talk and listen to them), thereby capturing the meaning of their experience in their own words. As a result, depth interviews are frequently applied to case study methodology (Walliman, 2006, p. 97).

3.7.2.2. Interview structure

A depth interview can either be formally structured, informal and unstructured or a combination of the two - semi-structured (Stake, 1995). Structured interviews follow a previously constructed interview guide strictly and there is little room for variation in questions, in addition to the participants responses (Fontana & Frey, 2000). The unstructured interview is usually open-ended and conversational in nature, and does not impose constraints on those being interviewed in terms of their responses. Meanwhile, the semi-structured interview allows exploration of prior theoretical issues, but has a flexible and relaxed structure (Fontana & Frey, 2000). In case study research, interviews are generally guided by discussions rather than structured queries to ensure that the interview process is more fluid rather than rigid (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In line with this recommendation, the primary data collection method consisted of semi-structured, face-to-face interviews (refer to Appendix 4).

3.7.2.3. Interview process

The interview process consisted of two consecutive individual interviews with each participant from a household followed by a joint interview with both participants from a household. The systemic nature of the interview process makes it possible to compare responses to the same questions and examine any similarities and divergences between responses. These methods can also identify the process of influence that can be difficult to uncover when interviewing just one member of a relationship (King, 1994, p. 15). Observation of participant interaction especially during the joint interview, was of critical importance.

3.7.2.4. Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted to test the interview guide and refine the data collection procedures to prevent any errors from occurring during actual data collection and also to provide conceptual clarification of some main concepts that emerged in the literature review (Hertz, 1995).

3.7.2.5. Justification for the number of cases and participants selected

Qualitative research is strongly shaped by the choice of research subjects and sites; as information is usually obtained from a small number of cases (Carson, et al., 2001; Patton, 2002; Yin, 1994). The difference between the numbers of cases is not important, rather truthfulness of a particular case's portrayal is paramount (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011). Multiple cases, rather than a single case, typically precede a stronger base for theory-building (Eisenhardt, 1989). One of the central arguments of "Building theories from case study research" by Eisenhardt (1989) was that multiple cases are a powerful means to create theory because they permit replication and extension among individual cases. By piecing together the individual patterns within and between cases, the researcher can draw a complete theoretical picture (Eisenhardt, 1989, 1991). Particularly relevant to this research is the use of multiple cases to compare and contrast individual accounts and experiences and distinguish patterns from one-off or infrequent events.

3.7.2.6. Selection of cases

A purposive sampling procedure was used to select the participants of this study. To obtain the most information about the phenomena under study, purposive sampling is a method typical employed by case study methodology (Eisenhardt, 1991, p. 620). Seven household cases were selected, with two participants from each household. The researcher sought to locate individuals in personal relationships that engage in green consumption decisions. Thus, a snowballing sampling strategy, sometimes referred to as network or chain sampling (Patton, 1990; Silverman, 2010) was employed, whereby participants were asked to refer other individuals whom they

perceived to be “green” consumers. As a result multiple starting points were used to avoid selection bias (Patton, 1990; Silverman, 2010).

In qualitative research, researchers must determine which information is useful in the course of the investigation and then become selective as additional knowledge about each case is gained (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Balance and variety are essential, although the opportunity to learn is also of primary importance (Eisenhardt, 1989). For this reason, a diverse range of cases were selected to ensure an accurate representation of how green consumption behaviour is negotiated within a range of household structures and lifecycles. Each case was chosen to represent a different type of household setting, so that cases could be compared and contrasted. The cases were chosen to extend emergent theory by illustrating different types of households in order to compare and contrast household cases and individual consumers.

3.7.2.7. The participants

The participants for each household case were two individuals who reside in the same household. A significant proportion of research has focused on the environmental impact of individual consumption (Wheelock & Oughton, 1996). However, this study proposes that by understanding the consumption behaviour of more than one individual within a household, a more representative assessment of environmental impact can be ascertained.

Based on this, at least one participant from each case must identify himself or herself as a “green” consumer. A “green” consumer was defined as a person who regularly purchases pro-environmental products or who practices pro-environmental behaviour. The household and participants’ “greenness” was assessed using a criteria that considered green product purchases and behaviour, household activities and level of commitment to green values. The researcher looked for variation in the “greenness” of cases to contribute new insights into green consumerism from a broad range of consumers.

It should be noted that in order to participate in this research, the participants had to reside permanently in New Zealand. New Zealand's national identity is often epitomized by the brands "clean and green" and "100% pure" (Frame & Newton, 2007). However, the perception of New Zealand as "clean and green" is in stark contrast to the everyday experiences of its citizens, therefore it is another important area for research.

3.7.2.7.1 Archival data

Throughout this study, observation of participant interaction and archival data (see Appendix 1) were collected. Brief field notes were taken to record any observations during the individual and joint interviews. These notes were collected for later analysis of participant interaction and dynamics. During the interview process, the participants completed a "green continuum exercise" and "green-screening questionnaire" (refer to Appendix 5). The green-continuum exercise required participants to rate their "greenness" by providing an "actual" and "ideal" greenscore ranging from 1 (i.e., not-so-green) to 6 (i.e., very green). This exercise was completed during the individual and joint interview, and the differences in responses were recorded and analysed. Meanwhile, the green-screening questionnaire assessed the green consumption behaviour practiced by individual participants in addition to those products and practices that were not adopted. The information for each household case and participant is presented in Appendix 1.

3.7.2.8. The researcher

In this study, the case researcher is the interviewer, data collector and interpreter. According to Stake (1995), of all the roles a case researcher can adopt, the role of interpreter and gatherer of interpretations is critically important. Contemporary constructionist researchers maintain the idea that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered (Stake, 1995, p. 99). Therefore, reproducing the participants' meaning in a way that accurately conveys reality and knowledge is essential to successful case study research (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). Semi-structured interviews were used to collect

information relating to participant's value-laden narrative descriptions of their own consumption behaviour and that of others.

The researcher is a "passionate participant" and is reflexive, with a commitment to pondering impressions, deliberating on recollections and records but not necessarily following the previous conceptualisations of theorists (Stake, 1995). Active interviewing treats the interview as a social encounter in which knowledge is jointly constructed by the interviewer and the participant (Stake, 2005). The interview is not regarded as "merely a neutral conduit or source of distortion but is instead a site of, and occasion for, producing reportable knowledge itself" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997, p. 114). In this style of interviewing, both parties are active, and knowledge is constructed collaboratively. Therefore, researchers take a pro-active role in shaping the interactions that affect social environments to understand the norms and values that direct social practices (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997).

Interpretivist researchers acknowledge the subjective nature of researchers' interpretations of the participants' realities (Macpherson, et al., 2000), as there is an unclear distinction between reported facts and value judgements (Stake, 1995). The positivist perspective would therefore deem this research inaccurate and bias, however, social constructionists would argue that the research clearly illustrates reality. That is that the world and our knowledge of things is directly influenced by our social interactions with others (Carson, et al., 2001). While the subjective nature of qualitative research and interpretations is acknowledged, there are measures implemented to ensure that qualitative research is trustworthy, credible and rigorous (Stake, 1995) and this is discussed further in section 3.9. pages 68-70.

3.7.2.9. Data collection procedure

From each of the seven household cases, the two participants participated in one individual (i.e., participant with interviewer) and one joint (i.e., both participants' with interviewer) face-to-face interview. In total, fourteen individual interviews, and seven joint interviews were conducted. The interviews were conducted at a time and a place that was most convenient for the participants. The duration ranged from one

to one and a half hours for each interview. At the start of the interviews, participants were advised both verbally and in writing that they could withdraw from the study at any time, no questions asked and that their names would be kept strictly confidential, with names excluded from all analysis. This information was contained on both the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form (refer to Appendix 2 and 3).

3.8. Data analysis

3.8.1. Analytical method

In accordance with case study principles, data was analysed using the thematic analysis technique, where through pattern recognition, the researcher attempts to construct an “interpretation of interpretations” by constructing a representation of meanings and themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 499). According to Spiggle (1994), thematic analysis involves systematic reading, interpreting and categorising pieces of linguistic data and verbal interaction into theme based patterns.

The analytical procedures of thematic and discourse analysis, are often used interchangeably in the literature. While thematic analysis applies similar techniques to discourse analysis, it differs in relation to its treatment and comment of social relations (1993). Thematic analysis is interested in “discourse” or “talk” because of what it suggests about the social relations within which the discourse is embedded and the identities involved, not just in the interview context, but also within everyday life (Braun & Clark, 2006; Dittmar & Drury, 2000). While discourse analysis treats language as a class of action and aims to look at the functional usage of discourse, thematic analysis seeks to assess a subject’s feelings, perceptions and understanding of themselves and social relations (Dittmar & Drury, 2000)

In the past, research with a social constructionist perspective has successfully used thematic analysis to explore how socially produced meanings are reproduced (Dittmar & Drury, 2000, p. 119). Braun and Clark (2006) propose that thematic analysis can seek to theorise the socio-cultural contexts and structural conditions of the social

environment, which construct individual accounts. Accordingly, thematic analysis is deemed an appropriate method of data analysis for social constructionist research.

In qualitative analysis, there is constant interplay between collection and analysis, which produces a gradual growth of understanding. Researchers collect information, review it, collect more, and analyse the information again (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 14). Identifying inconsistencies and dissimilarities between different individual's perspectives of knowledge and reality, can offer new and valuable new insight (Davis & Fitchett, 2004). Case study design is therefore flexible and able to adapt to and probe areas of planned and emergent theories.

3.8.2. Analytical process

Unlike positivist approaches which use statistical analysis to ensure accurate results, the outcome of the interpretivist research depends on rigorous empirical thinking and sufficient presentation of evidence along with careful consideration of competing interpretations (Eisenhardt, 1989; Stake, 1995). The process of data analysis and interpretation is consistent with the procedure proposed by Spiggle (1994). During the early stages of the data collection and analysis process, codes and coding were used to organise and synthesise the collected data from each case, which included observations, individual interviews, joint interviews and archival data (Spiggle, 1994). Codes and coding are an interpretive technique for organising and analysing large quantities of complex and description-rich information obtained from the research participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Each identified theme is labelled with a "code", which is usually a word or short phrase that is descriptive of a particular data theme that informs the research objectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Following organisation and categorisation, the data was examined for patterns of behaviour and responses within and between cases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The similarities and differences in codes among participants within and between cases are used to compare, contrast and analyse information (Eisenhardt, 1989). This process is known as "pattern matching", which compares patterns within and between cases to evaluate the extent to which they coincide (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The

interpretations are synthesised across participants and household cases to produce naturalistic generalisations.

The data analysis process is iterative, which involved moving through data collection and analysis in such a way that “preceding operations shape subsequent ones” (Spiggle, 1994, p. 495). According to Eisenhardt (1989, p. 342), this process:

“Allows the unique pattern of each case to emerge before investigators push to generalise patterns across cases. In addition it gives investigators a rich familiarity with each case, which in turn, accelerates cross-case comparison.”

Comparison enables researchers to go beyond initial impressions and is therefore more likely to develop accurate and reliable theory with a close fit to actual data (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 342). The interpretations of the research are developed systematically, which allows for theory development that is grounded in empirical evidence (Eisenhardt, 1989).

3.9. Checks

In qualitative research, trustworthiness features are evaluated to address the more quantitative issues of validity (the degree to which something measures what it purports to measure) and reliability (the consistency with which it measures over time). In seeking to establish the trustworthiness of a qualitative study Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that qualitative or naturalistic inquiry demands different criteria from those inherited from traditional social science and positivist research. Lincoln and Guba (1985, pp. 76-77) suggest that:

“Credibility as an analogue to internal validity, transferability as an analogue to external validity, dependability as an analogue to reliability and confirmability as an analogue to objectivity. In combination the criterion of credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability are viewed as “trustworthiness.”

This framework developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) has set the standard for validating a researcher's interpretations and to judge the value and integrity of qualitative studies. Researchers must seek to control potential biases throughout the design, implementation, and analysis of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.9.1. Credibility

The criterion of credibility (or validity) assesses whether the researcher has “represented multiple constructions accurately” (Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility is evaluated based on whether the findings are accurate and are not based on bias or predispositions of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296). This study triangulated data by combining multiple observers, theories, methods and data sources to overcome the inherent bias that is often a result of single-resource research (Maxwell, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The experiences and perceptions of participants can be used to validate and cross-check findings, by collecting data from multiple starting points to prevent bias, interviewing more than one participant from each case, and observing participant interactions (Patton, 2002, p. 555). The triangulation of data is an appropriate method to ensure that the reality, experiences and perceptions of participants are accurately represented in the findings of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By applying the theoretical concepts of the “hermeneutic circle”, the research was interpreted in parts and as a whole, so that a credible representation of reality could be achieved (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). The researchers own personal assumptions, worldview and theoretical orientation were also considered to prevent biased interpretations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

3.9.2. Dependability

Reliability in the traditional sense, refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated by other similar studies and remain stable over time. The criterion of dependability is satisfied if the inquiry has been replicated with the same or similar respondents in the same (or similar) context and produced the same or similar findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As opposed to positivist methodologies, which

isolate phenomena from its context, interpretivist researchers ensure that the complexity and context of phenomena is explored thoroughly. Even so, the research must be reliable, in terms of its consistency, predictability and accuracy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While only the researcher was involved in the data collection and analysis process, the transcripts of the interviews were available for anyone to review. Additionally, the researcher maintained thorough documentation of the procedures implemented and can demonstrate that coding schemes and categories have been used consistently throughout analysis.

3.9.3. Confirmability

The concept of “confirmability” corresponds to the notion of objectivity in quantitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). The implication is that the inquiry is judged in terms of the degree to which its findings are the product of the focus of its inquiry and not the result of subjectivity and biases of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). The criterion is satisfied if:

“Data (constructions, assertions, facts) can be tracked back to their sources, and that the logic used to assemble the interpretations into structurally coherent and corroborating wholes is both explicit and implicit” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290).

The data collection process has been discussed in-depth above to enable the objectivity of the researcher to be observed and confirmed by other readers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 243). In addition, the triangulation of sources and data contributed to the conformability and reliability of this research.

3.9.4. Transferability

Traditionally, transferability refers to assessing the external validity of positivist research based on its ability to generalise results to a wider population (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, qualitative research is not concerned with generalisation, but rather the transferability of phenomena among similar participants, contexts and

settings. This research ensured “thick description” of cases and its participants, to ensure sufficient detail and precision to allow for judgements and naturalistic generalisations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Cross-case and within-case analysis was performed so that data could be compared and contrasted (Erlandson, et al., 1993). In addition, a purposive sampling procedure maximises the range of information that can be obtained about the participant and their particular context (King, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

3.10. Ethical considerations

In any study, ethical issues relating to the protection of the participants, the researcher, the integrity of the study and the reputation of the academic institution, are of central concern. For this reason, the specific issues of confidentiality, privacy and informed consent have been addressed thoroughly before the study took place.

3.10.1. Confidentiality

Participants were informed both verbally and in writing that they could withdraw from the study at any time and that both their answers to the questions and their names would be kept strictly confidential. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study and the participants names were changed before the interviews were transcribed in order to protect their identity.

3.10.2. Privacy

The implications of privacy were also carefully considered and participants were informed both verbally and in writing that the information provided to them would be held for a period of three years, as requested by the researcher's tertiary institution, at which point all data would be destroyed. The participants were also informed that the data is kept in a secure place for the duration of that time.

3.10.3. Informed consent

In order to protect both the participant and the researcher, consent forms were signed prior to beginning the study. Furthermore, a discussion between the participant and the interviewer occurred before the form was signed, whereby the participants were informed of their rights and given the opportunity to ask any questions about the study.

3.10.4. Risks

There were no significant ethical or privacy risks to the participants because the conversations were informal and conversational in nature. The participants could request to stop the interview process and withdraw from the study at any time from two weeks after the interviews were conducted.

3.11. Chapter summary

In summary, this chapter provided a detailed description of this study's research methodology. Interpretive adapted case study methodology was employed to explore the influence of the social environment on the green consumption and behavioural decisions of individual consumers. The participant sample consisted of 14 purposively selected individuals, from seven household cases. Four data collection methods were employed, including: field observations, the collection of archival data, individual and joint interviews. The data was reviewed against the literature as well as emergent themes. The data was evaluated in terms of its credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability by means of research process transparency, source and method triangulation. This study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the interactions within personal relationships, with regard to the practice of green consumption behaviour. Moreover, this research will provide new information with regard to the influence strategies consumers use to persuade others toward their desired consumption behaviour outcome. It will also identify the neutralisation techniques that individuals use to deal with negative emotions that may arise from

attitudinally incongruent behaviour and behavioural concessions they undertake for the benefit of others.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter analyses and interprets data gathered through depth interviews with participants from seven household cases. Thematic analysis was used to identify and categorise themes and patterns that were revealed during the analysis process. This chapter will outline the key themes in relation to the overriding research objectives of this study:

1. To achieve a greater understanding of how the social environment influences the green consumption behaviour of individual consumers.
2. To explore how pro-environmental behaviour change takes place.

Furthermore, the key findings obtained from a total of 21 face-to-face interviews with participants from seven household cases have been analysed, coded and presented with the purpose of answering the following research questions:

- RQ1a. What are consumers' "green" perceptions and how does the social environment shape them?
- RQ1b. How do "green" perceptions shape consumption behaviour (and why)?
- RQ2. How do personal relationships and social experiences shape individual green consumption behaviour (and why)?

The following sections address the above research questions, subsequent themes and sub-themes that emerged during the analysis process. This chapter explores these research questions in detail by considering the individual, household and societal variables that shape an individual's disposition toward green consumption behaviour. Additionally, this chapter outlines how pro-environmental behaviour change is influenced by individual knowledge, personal relationships and social experiences.

The findings and discussion chapter will first introduce the household cases analysed in this study and describe each case and its participants based on information obtained about the household's green habits. Following this, the participants' perceptions of "green" and "mainstream" (i.e., not-so-green) consumers are examined. The next section seeks to understand how consumers' perceptions shape green consumption behaviour and how green consumption behaviour itself shapes perceptions. The subsequent section examines how an individual's perceptions and consumption behaviour are shaped through interaction with others in the social environment. The final section seeks to understand how consumption behaviour is determined by the household and its members (refer to Figure 3).

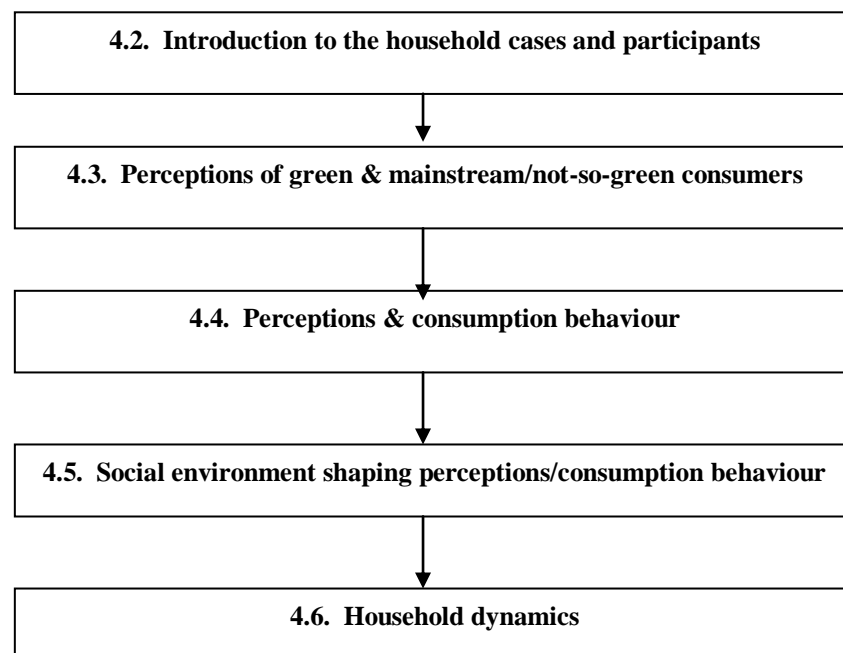


Figure 3: Roadmap of findings and discussion

4.2. Introduction to the household cases and participants

After completing the interview process, the household cases were positioned on the "green-continuum" developed by McDonald et al. (2006) (see Figure 4), based on information obtained about the green consumption habits of the household. The green-continuum ranges from one to six, with one being "not-so-green" with very few examples of "green" consumption behaviour, to six being very "green" with some

“not-so-green” consumption behaviour. The cases’ position on the green-continuum was judged by the researcher. The household’s “greenness” was assessed using a criteria that considered green product purchases, green household activities, the level of commitment to green values and efficacy of green consumption behaviour. For more information on the participants, household cases and their green consumption habits please refer to Appendix 1 and pullout card at the back of the thesis.

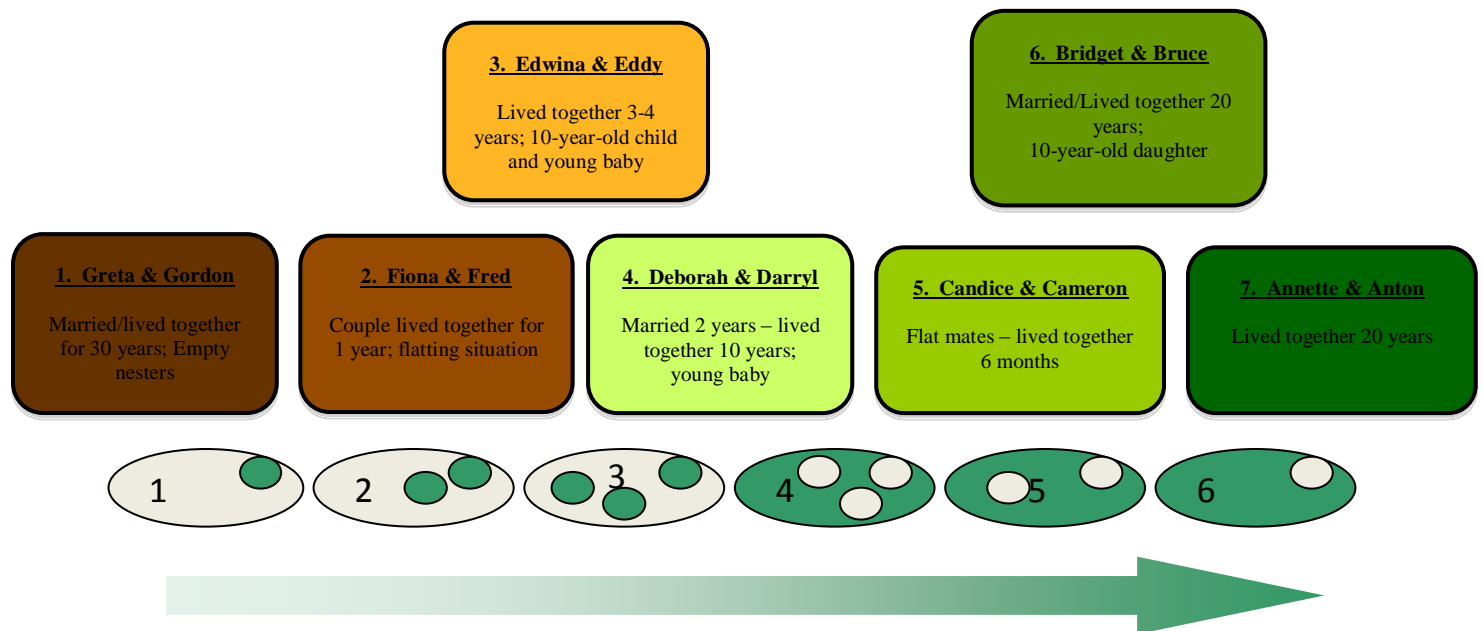


Figure 4: Cases positioned on the Green-continuum

The green-continuum – in an individual context

The participants completed the green-continuum exercise during their individual and joint interview. Each participant provided an “actual greenscore” of where they thought they were currently positioned on the green-continuum and an “ideal greenscore” of how “green” they would ideally like to be (see Figure 5 & Figure 6).

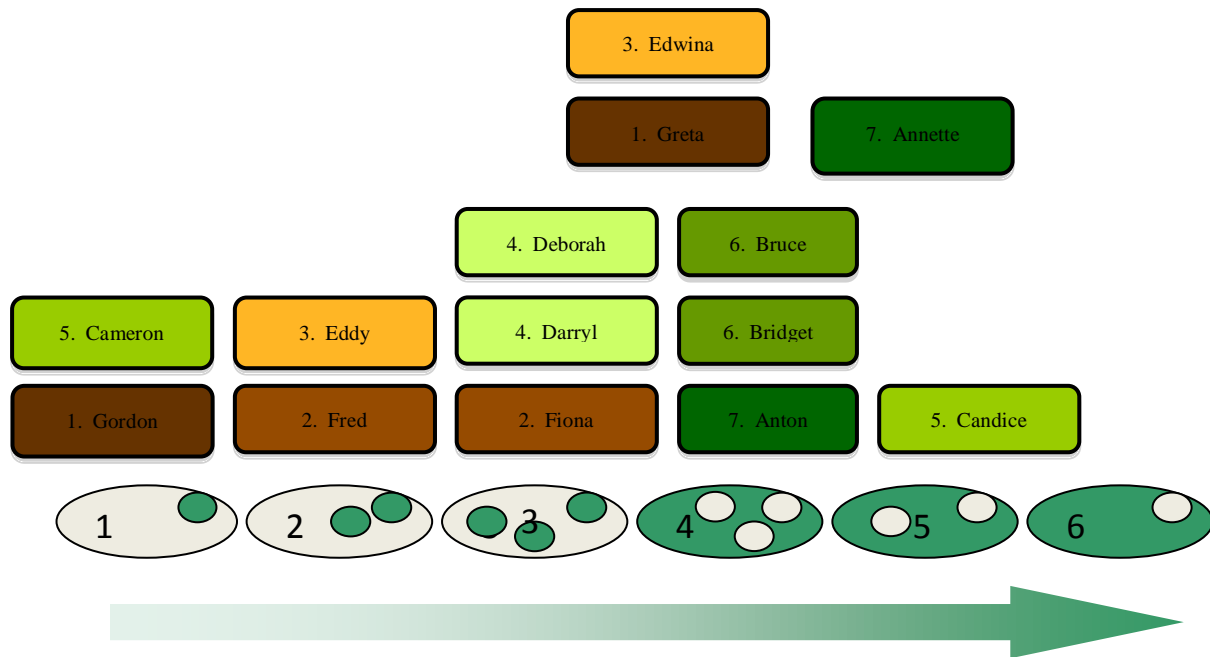


Figure 5: The participant's "actual greenscore" during the individual interview (i.e., alone with the interviewer)

While this diagram is very subjective, it demonstrates that participants have different perceptions of what "green" is and how "green" they are. This exercise focused more on individual perceptions of their own consumption behaviour, rather than the participant's perception of a relevant others' consumption behaviour. From the diagram, it is clear that participants within the same cases have different perceptions with regard to their own "greenness" (i.e., represented by a "greenscore"). It indicates that usually one member is "greener" within a household. Three key findings were revealed during this exercise.

1) While "Case 5" is positioned at a high level on the green-continuum, Cameron does not view himself as a "green" consumer (Actual greenscore = 1). In this household case, Candice (Actual greenscore = 5) is a "green" consumer, who is very committed to environmental and ethical values. In a sense, Candice upholds environmental values in this household, highlighting how individuals can influence others in their social environment.

2) Greta (Case 1) (Actual greenscore = 3-4) perceives herself as moderately green, although compared with the other participants and cases Greta is not very green. A possible explanation is a “researcher bias” that may have encouraged Greta to inflate her “actual greenscore” in order to maintain a positive impression in front on the interviewer as a “good person” or an “environmentally-responsible citizen”. Alternatively, perhaps Greta is a moderately green consumer when compared against other people that she interacts with in her social environment. If this is the case, the finding emphasises how consumption behaviour is relative and is meaningful only in social context.

3) Greta scored herself between “three” and “four” on the green scale, and a similar “greenscore” was provided by some of the greenest participants. Bruce (Case 6), one of the greenest participants, suggests that most people in society, regardless of how “green” or “not-so-green” they would position themselves at around “three” on the green-continuum. Bruce proposes that people need to see themselves in a positive light and not significantly different from others.

Bruce: “If you weren’t able to provide a positive assessment of yourself you wouldn’t be sane. You couldn’t live from day to day. We all need to be able to see ourselves as being okay.”

This observable phenomenon identified by Bruce, relates to self-perception theory, which is subsumed under the more general attribution theory (Bern, 1972). These theories show how individuals make causal inferences about their own and others’ behaviour (Crano & Prislin, 2006). In general, people and thus these participants, interpret their environment in such a way, as to maintain a positive self-image (Bern, 1972; Kelley & Michela, 1980) in order to maintain a sense of consistency or enhance self-esteem (Bern, 1972; Sirgy, 1982, 1985). An “actual greenscore” of “three” is acceptable because it is “middle-range” and is therefore considered “normal” behaviour. This finding supports other research which have described a self-reporting bias in survey research with ethical considerations (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). This bias occurs due to the social desirability of pro-environmental responses and contributes to the supposed “attitude-behaviour gap” in green consumerism.

Following their “actual greenscore”, the participants rated their “ideal greenscore” on the green-continuum below (see Figure 6).

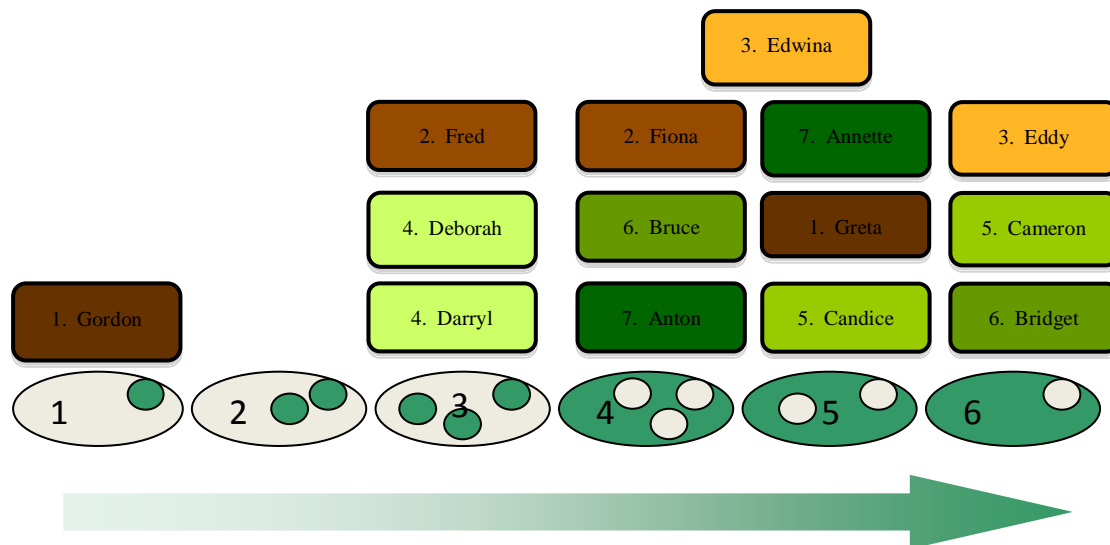


Figure 6: The participant’s “ideal greenscore” during the individual interview (i.e., alone with the interviewer)

An increase in the “greenscore” is identified by a rightward shift along the green-continuum. The diagram demonstrates that while some participants are comfortable with their “actual greenscore”, most participants would ideally like to be greener. However, as an exception to this rule, Gordon (Case 1) was the only participant who had no desire to be “green”, remaining at level one on the green-continuum. Gordon justified his reluctance to be greener by stating:

Gordon: “I would like to be in a position that was comfortable for me to perform; I wouldn’t want to go out of my way to be green, because I’m not convinced that being overly green or going out of your way is going to benefit anybody in the long-run.”

Gordon views “green” as having to sacrifice important attributes and place additional pressure and constraints on his life for inconsequential environmental results. Gordon neutralises his position on green issues by denying the environmental and social consequences of his consumption behaviour by stating, “going out of your way isn’t going to help anybody in the long-run”. By rationalising his behaviour with this argument, Gordon can continue with his current consumption behaviour without

feelings of guilt; thus maintaining his self-esteem and self-concept (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967; Sirgy, 1982).

Gordon may be described by the term “anti-hero”; a consumer who welcomes all the pleasures of the material world and denies the relevance of environmental consequences (Autio, et al., 2009, p. 49). “Green” is generally regarded as socially desirable (Griskevicius, et al., 2010), and therefore Gordon’s “anti-hero” consumer status is not particularly fashionable in society. Gordon is aware of the social desirability of “green”, but views it as a conspiracy, and he deliberately chooses to ignore green social norms and related consumption behaviour. Rebelling against social norms, is related to the “forbidden-fruit reaction” (Peachmann & Shih, 1999); whereby the social desirability of an action, encourages or promotes prohibited or socially undesirable actions. It may explain why Gordon is the only participant satisfied with his position on the green-continuum, when most other participants would like to view themselves as moderately green.

Gordon: “I am happy with what I’m doing, I don’t want to have to go out of my way to be ‘green’ if it doesn’t suit me. But by the same token I’m not going to go and just be wasteful because it’s not necessary. That is not going to make me ‘green’ but more because if it’s wasteful it’s going to cost me money. I think they go hand-in-hand really don’t they?...”

While Gordon scores himself at “one” on the green-continuum, he still participates in some green consumption behaviour. Clearly, Gordon’s green consumption behaviour is not motivated by green issues but rather the financial implications of waste and being wasteful. Based on Gordon’s statement, he is only willing to change his behaviour toward “green”, if the benefits can be observed and accounted for in terms of financial or personal rewards.

In an “ideal world”, most participants would like to be greener but are unlikely to change their behaviour. Some participants view “green” as an unattainable lifestyle. This study has identified a syndrome associated with being “green” that has led many “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers to feel that being green is an unrealistic

goal. This “green syndrome” means that consumers are reluctant to significantly change their behaviour in the face of environmental issues. For example, Cameron acknowledges that ideally, he would like to be “green” but in reality, he is unlikely to change his current consumption behaviour.

Cameron: “I’m realistically at ‘one’ on the green-continuum; I would want to be at ‘six’ as long as it doesn’t totally get in the way of me living my life. The normal excuses.”

This quote shows that Cameron (Case 5) encounters similar barriers to change, expressed by Gordon. Both Gordon and Cameron do not want to be “green” if it means it will significantly affect their lives and lifestyle. Cameron recognises that this explanation for his behaviour is a “normal excuse”, meaning that it is commonly used by people to provide justification for failing to adopt a greener lifestyle. It is clear from the statements of these participants that “green” is sometimes perceived as an unrealistic and idealistic goal that is not attainable by a typical person without significantly compromising one’s current way of life.

In general, “green” consumers (Anton and Annette - Case 7; Bruce - Case 6; Candice – Case 5) are either happy where they are on the continuum or they would like to move up the continuum slightly. However, Bridget (Case 6) who was one of the greenest participants in this study stated:

Bridget: “If we were graded by greenness - A B C D or F. I would give us a C minus. We probably think we are greener than we actually are. If someone was actually to go through with a checklist and say ‘How many days do you use the car? What chemicals do you have in the house?’...”

Although Bridget admits that she is a “green” consumer, she also feels that much of her present consumption behaviour could be greener. As “green” has become part of her social identity, Bridget desires to behave consistently with her environmental attitudes and adopts green consumption behaviour that will lead to self-esteem enhancement and associate her with favourable reference groups (Grubb &

Grathwohl, 1967; Sirgy, 1982, 1985). This finding infers that as consumers move along the green-continuum they compare themselves against even greener consumers. Therefore, when Bridget compares herself against the people she associates with or looks up to, she does not perceive her consumption habits as especially “green”. However, when compared with other participants in this study, she is one of the greenest participants. This example highlights how normative factors influence present consumption behaviour but comparisons with other consumers in the social environment activate further pro-environmental behaviour change, and the adoption of other green consumption behaviour.

4.3. Green & mainstream/not-so-green consumers

In order to understand green consumerism in greater depth, we need to explore how consumers perceive “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers in society, in addition to how consumers feel they are perceived by society. Understanding perceptions may provide further insight into the “attitude-behaviour gap” as it may help to explain why consumers are reluctant to practice certain green consumption behaviour. Figure 7 illustrates the sub-themes identified during the interviews, which include “negative perceptions of ‘green’ consumers”, “negative perceptions of ‘mainstream/not-so-green’ consumers” and “doing nothing ‘green’ vs. doing something ‘green’”.

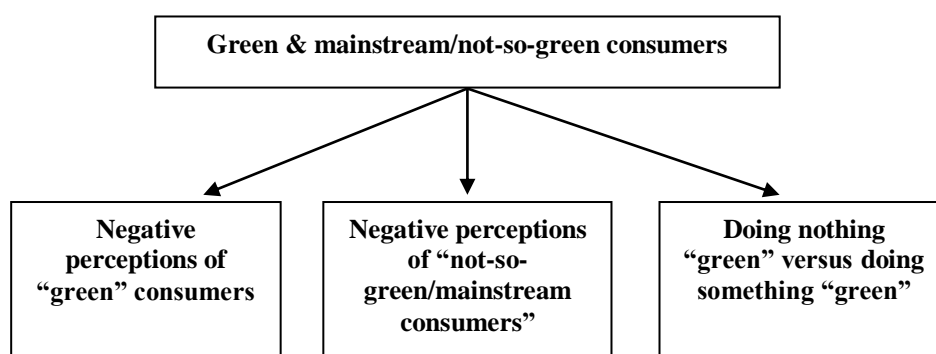


Figure 7: “Green” & “mainstream/not-so-green” consumer themes

4.3.1. Negative perceptions of “green” consumers

While “green” is often associated with positive images, symbols and associations, it can also be perceived negatively. It is clear from the findings that there are two polarising perspectives of consumers in society. Bridget (Case 6), a very green participant, feels that “green” consumers are perceived negatively or viewed differently because of their opinions on environmental issues and the green consumption behaviour they practice.

Bridget: “If you listen to the media or politicians they’ll still call environmentally-friendly people – ‘tree-huggers’, as if they are a bunch of idiots. But if you actually look at say the Green party; they are all wearing suits and are very rational but they like to portray them as tree-hugging hippies. So I think there are a few negative connotations with it, like being seen as a ‘hippie’ or a ‘bible basher’ or that kind of thing.”

It is perceptible from this quote, that Bridget is personally offended by the negative connotations of “green”, especially as she relates to this group of people and the values they hold. Bridget describes how “green” or “environmentally-friendly people” are perceived in society, by using terms with negative connotations such as “tree-huggers”, “hippies” and “bible-bashers”. The terms are linked to ideas of idiocy, foolishness and forcing ideas and opinions on others. Bridget feels that she and other “green” consumers are ostracised by politicians and the media in the social environment because of their green values and consumption behaviour. These findings are consistent with other studies that have also reported that ethical consumers feel marginalised in society (Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002; Moisander & Pesonen, 2002). Moisander and Pesonen (2002, p. 334) reported that people with more radical approaches to being green were generally perceived as ridiculous, naïve, unrealistic, “tree-hugging” nature enthusiasts.

On the other hand, Greta (Case 1) views “green” consumers negatively. Greta belongs to a household that is “mainstream/not-so-green”, yet she perceives herself as a moderately “green” consumer (see Figure 5 & Figure 6 p. 77-79). Greta feels that

green consumers are people who seek recognition and validation for their environmental efforts from others.

Greta: "I think there's a group of people who are probably very green, and like everyone to know that they're very green. But individuals like ourselves who do our own little green things, without the acknowledgement and you know, we don't wear a badge on our shoulder saying, 'We're green.' But I would say there are a group of people who think they're very green and are proud of it, and think that they're a little bit better than other people who aren't quite so green. That's my view."

This example illustrates how Greta's observation of, and interaction with, "green" consumers in her social environment encouraged the formation of negative perceptions. Greta links "green" consumers to ideas of arrogance and egotism because she believes they are "very green and proud of it" and "like everyone to know they're green". In addition, she believes that consumers who are very green, have a sense of superiority and "think that they're a little bit better than other people who aren't quite so green". Greta does not view the behaviour of "green" consumers as genuinely altruistic and therefore she evaluates her behaviour as somewhat superior, because she does her "own little green things, without acknowledgement". These findings relate to similar results reported by Moisander and Pesonen (2002, pp. 332-333) who found that generally the "socially acceptable green consumer", is one who practices green consumption behaviour but keeps a "low-profile" doing small but significant good deeds. Greta is a "mainstream" (i.e., not-so-green) consumer, yet by finding flaws in the behaviour of "green" consumers, Greta legitimises her limited green consumption behaviour and maintains her self-esteem.

Green consumption behaviour is sometimes considered an altruistic act, as it carries symbolic functions that are used for self-identity formation and self-presentation to others as a "green" consumer (Hopper & Nielsen, 1991). Within certain groups, the symbolic associations of a "green" consumer are deemed positive, while in other groups they are perceived negatively. Some consumers dislike the stereotypes of being "too green". It is conceivable that some "mainstream" (i.e., not-so-green)

participants feel threatened by “green” consumers, to the point where they feel social pressure to be “green” and therefore become defensive because they feel their sense of freedom and choice is at risk.

4.3.2. Negative perceptions of “mainstream/not-so-green” consumers

It is evident that a degree of tension exists between “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers. “Green” consumers can be very dismissive of the green consumption behaviour practiced by “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers. Two very green participants, Bridget (Case 6) and Anton (Case 7) observe people in their community practising green consumption behaviour that has minimal environmental impact, while continuing to practice other behaviour with a much greater environmental impact.

Bridget: “I think some people do make token efforts. I think on average if you take society, there are many people who just do nothing. They just have the green bins and stick whatever in it and there are some people who would just do the recycling but they won’t think about what they buy or if they are using plastic bags from the supermarkets.”

Anton: “An awful lot of people will buy those green shopping bags and that’s great in reducing, it is really important. But there are these people who do these tiny things like replacing light bulbs and avoiding using plastic shopping bags. Those people that walk away and think they are saving the planet probably haven’t thought about the other things in their lives, like driving to work each day.”

It is clear that even these two “green” participants differ in their views of what types of green consumption behaviour are important, in particular, with regard to the use of reusable supermarket bags. The statements illustrate that most “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers are more comfortable performing “token” green actions because it does not significantly affect their lives and lifestyle. While the “green” participants recognise that “token” behaviour is important, they believe there are

much larger environmental impacts of consumption, which people are either unaware of, or unwilling to change. The participants explain that the “token efforts” of “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers will not significantly reduce the environmental impact of consumption, as more fundamental pro-environmental behaviour change that is necessary.

4.3.3. Doing nothing “green” versus doing something “green”

Research has found that the motivational and practical complexity of green consumerism can result in attitude behaviour inconsistencies (Moisander, 2007). Interestingly, the findings reveal new insights relating to how consumers differ in their opinion of whether attitude-behaviour inconsistency is acceptable. Cameron (Case 5) has an “all or nothing” outlook to green consumerism, whereby he feels that “green” consumers should practice green consumption behaviour consistently and comprehensively. An “all of nothing” attitude validates his non-environmental actions, as Cameron maintains a stance that you cannot make a tangible difference unless you commit to “green” 100 percent.

Cameron: “If you’re green you should be better than everyone else, you should be totally legit with everything. Looking at your whole input – what you are doing. Not just ‘oh sweet I eat really organic food’, or ‘I vote green’. It needs to be everything. I wouldn’t be able to do it half-assed.”

Cameron feels that in order to be legitimately “green”, a person must be green across their entire consumption behaviour. Cameron has high expectations of green consumers, yet he does not buy any green products because he “wouldn’t be able to do it half-assed”. Many consumers share Cameron’s view of being “green” - that it is an unrealistic goal and not within the reach of a typical person (discussed earlier in section 4.2. p. 79-81). This outlook represents the “green syndrome” that drives an “all or nothing” attitude and results in a lack of commitment to green consumption behaviour.

Meanwhile Bruce (Case 6), a participant who is particularly green, dislikes the idea of prescribing people into boxes and labelling people as “green” or “mainstream/not-so-green” based on their consumption behaviour. Bruce proposes that being “green” is a positive act that should be encouraged, and that “doing something ‘green’ is better than doing nothing ‘green’”.

Bruce: “We are all individuals. I don’t believe you can prescribe a particular way people should act in order to be ‘green’. It’s more the case of in a general sense, that being ‘green’ in society is a positive thing, so people want to try to be green.”

A comparison could be made between green consumption behaviour and other activities that are not deemed enjoyable. The challenge is changing consumer perceptions such in the way that people make vegetables more appealing to children and make exercise fun. If vegetables are not appealing and exercise is not fun people would not eat/do it. Bruce explains how the social desirability of “green” is encouraged by society and citizens have started to view being “green” as a “positive thing” that we should be doing. Bruce also felt that it was important to find being “green” enjoyable, even if this means compromising on green values for certain situations.

Bruce: “If being green is not enjoyable, you can’t live in a way that brings you joy - then you won’t do it. You will not carry on doing it. So you can’t be a monk about it.”

Bruce is a realist, who explains that being “green” all of the time is unrealistic and even if it were possible, it would not be enjoyable. If something is not enjoyable, then an individual may become de-motivated and discontinue practising the green behaviour. Making green consumption behaviour fun, enjoyable or socially desirable can alter perceptions, as well as ensuring individuals “feel good” as a result. Bruce suggests that sometimes you must break the rules in order to be happy, and therefore people need to allow for “green” attitude-behaviour inconsistencies. Justifications

such as this, act to neutralise feelings of guilt and allow consumers to maintain their self-concept and self-esteem (Chatzidakis, et al., 2004; Chatzidakis, et al., 2007).

Bruce: "There is no such thing as perfection. You're aiming for the 'perfect green' but you accept that you have days where things clash and coincide and you have good days and bad days and days where it just is too bloody hard! But for me the important thing it's like trying to say to somebody who is trying to stop smoking – 'Oh you've had a cigarette might as well just carry on.' No. Of course you don't, you say 'No it was just a cigarette. Don't worry about it. Continue on your quest, you can stop.' So it's continuous striving and being easy on yourself."

The comparison between "green consumption behaviour" and "smoking" reveals a new concept termed "consumption addiction". To view consumption as an addiction is one way of looking at overconsumption and materialism, as this could be deemed addictive in a way similar to smoking. In today's mainstream culture, there is a compulsion to consume and over-consume products which harm the environment yet bring consumers satisfaction, joy and happiness. When a consumer adopts greener consumption behaviour, a period of behaviour adjustment is required. Adjusting from "mainstream" (i.e., not-so-green) consumption behaviour to "green" consumption behaviour is associated with certain disadvantages, including time, effort and added stress spent learning and adapting to different behaviour (Pettit & Sheppard, 1992). When breaking any addiction or habit, a person may encounter barriers and obstacles that make it difficult to change behaviour (Pettit & Sheppard, 1992). Bruce proposes that people should continuously strive to be greener but accept that attitude-behaviour inconsistencies are inevitable.

The contrasting views of Cameron and Bruce illustrate how different participants feel about consistency and inconsistency in green consumption behaviour. While Cameron acknowledges that he is not "green", he expects "green" consumers to be consistent throughout their consumption behaviour. It is possible that Cameron represents a large group of "mainstream" (i.e., not-so-green) consumers who view "green" as an unachievable goal and have developed an "all or nothing" attitude,

which acts as a justification for not practising green consumption behaviour. Meanwhile, as a “green” consumer, Bruce allows for inconsistencies in his consumption principles in order to find being “green” enjoyable. Again, these examples reiterate the idea that different consumer groups in society perceive “green” differently, especially with regard to an acceptable level of consistency and inconsistency in green consumerism.

4.3.4. Section summary

This section has explored the various views adopted in relation to “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumption behaviour. The findings demonstrate the underlying tensions that surround “green” and the polarising views that participants hold about “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers. “Green” consumers feel they are perceived as “tree-huggers” and “bible-bashers” and develop negative attitudes towards the “token efforts” of “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers. Meanwhile, some “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers dislike the superior demeanour of “green” consumers, generating unfavourable attitudes toward certain types of green consumption behaviour. The perceived difficulty of being “green” has also led some “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers to develop a “green syndrome” whereby they avoid “green” altogether due to an “all or nothing” attitude. The findings highlight the varied perceptions of acceptable levels of consistency and inconsistency in green consumption behaviour. Within the social environment there are contrasting, competing and distinctive views of green consumption behaviour, “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers and these often negative perceptions influence and shape consumption behaviour.

4.4. Perceptions and green consumption behaviour (GCB)

There are calls from the world's producers and suppliers for more understanding into the factors that motivate and de-motivate consumers to engage in green consumerism (Connolly & Prothero, 2008; Peattie, 2010). This section seeks to understand how consumers' perceptions shape consumption behaviour, by exploring how perceptions shape green consumption behaviour (GCB) and how green consumption behaviour itself shapes perceptions (see Figure 8 & Figure 9).

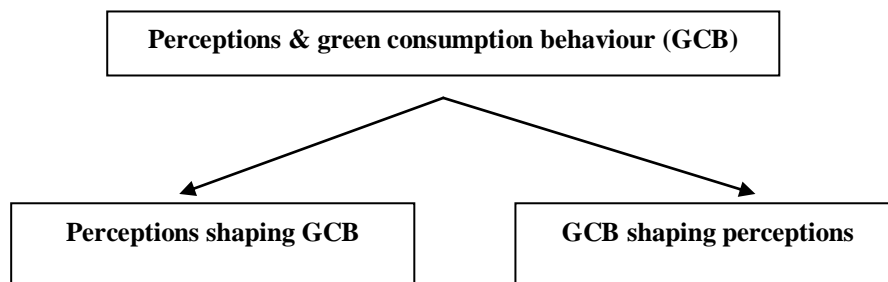


Figure 8: Perceptions & green consumption behaviour (GCB) themes

By examining participants' perceptions, we can better understand their awareness and understanding of the concept "green" based on information obtained through their own experience and their interaction with others. The focus of this section is to understand "green" perceptions and its relationship to important environmental issues in society.

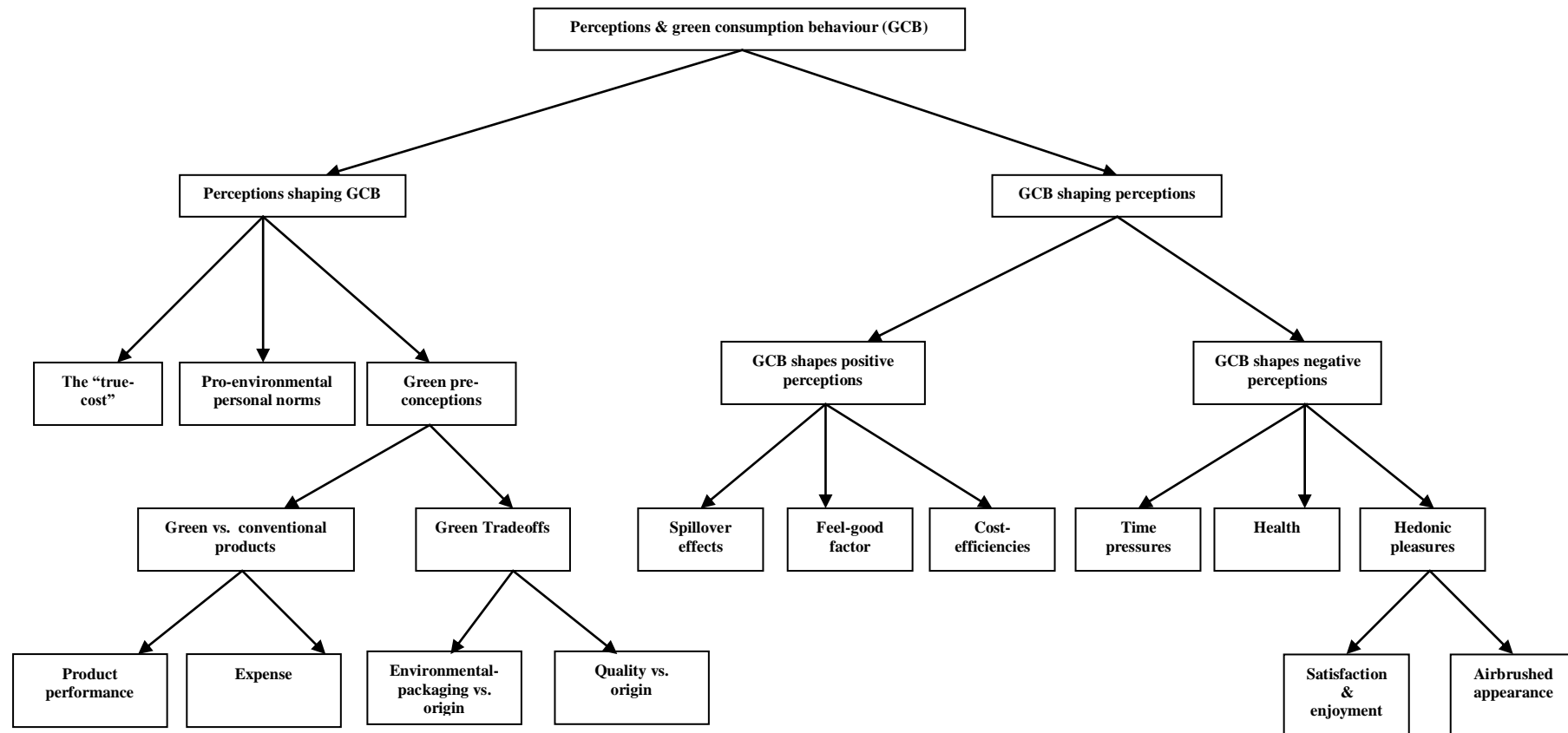


Figure 9: Perceptions & green consumption behaviour sub-themes

4.4.1. Perceptions shaping green consumption behaviour

This sub-section explores how consumers' "green" perceptions shape their attitudes towards behaviour and how this may encourage and discourage green consumption behaviour (see Figure 10). The drivers of green consumption behaviour include perceptions of "the true-cost" and "what one ought to do", however, "green pre-conceptions" can prevent selection of the greenest alternative in a purchasing decision.

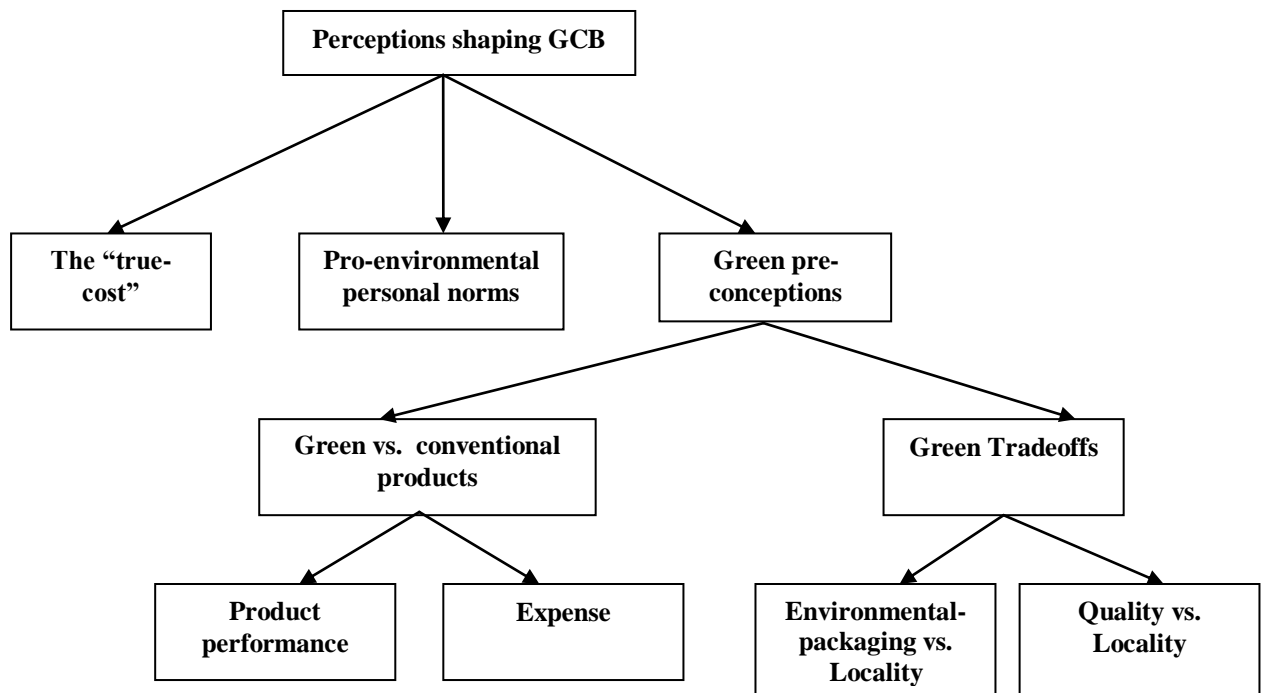


Figure 10: Perceptions of consumption behaviour sub-themes

4.4.1.1. *The "true-cost"*

The findings show that some consumers are motivated to be green due to a selfless concern for the welfare of others and the environment, stemming from deep-rooted environmental beliefs. It is clear that one participant considered the impact of product purchases on other people and the environment. Bridget (Case 6) was very aware and concerned for the adverse environmental consequences of her consumption behaviour.

Bridget: "It's to do with the environment – if you're using poisons, the poisons are going somewhere. If you are creating rubbish, the rubbish is going somewhere. If there's a lot of pollution being created in the making of a product, that pollution whether you believe in global warming or not, it can't be good for the environment."

Bridget is very aware of the environmental impact (i.e., waste and pollution) consumption can generate. Bridget states that regardless of whether environmental issues such as global warming actually exist, certain types of consumption have an adverse impact on the environment. Moreover, Bridget explains the social and ethical implications of consumption behaviour which introduces the idea of "true-cost".

Bridget: "Somewhere along the line some costs are not being paid for. Either the environment or the people who are making the stuff – you know corners are being cut and somebody's 'true-cost' of making these things is not represented in the price that we're paying, just so we can have too much stuff! Its quite horrible, it's ugly."

The term used by Bridget "true cost" is related to the concept of "real cost" developed by Michael Polonsky (2011). The "real cost" of production and consumption takes into consideration the cost to nature and society in the pursuit of growth and prosperity (Kilbourne & Polonsky, 2005; Polonsky, 2011). Polonsky (2011) explains that while industry and organisations are partly responsible for environmental degradation, it is the consumers who choose to buy, use and dispose of products in ways which damage the environment who are also at fault (Polonsky, 2011). Unfortunately, it is unusual for consumers to consider the real environmental cost of their consumption behaviour because it cannot be readily perceived. Bridget was the only participant to acknowledge and evaluate purchase decisions based on the "true-cost" of the product. The "true-cost" was not represented in the decisions of any other participants as most were oblivious to, or in denial of, this consideration. Furthermore, Bridget discusses how awareness of environmental issues has led her to adopt other green consumption behaviour.

Bridget: "Once you've decided that it's immoral to be degrading the environment then everything you do that's degrading the environment becomes an immoral act in a sense and I think that would be quite hard to live with. Once you start it's hard to stop – as every other act becomes unethical."

Bridget's unique awareness of the social and environmental implications of her consumption has motivated her to translate environmental attitudes into actual purchases and behaviour with consistency and commitment. This phenomenon relates to the concept of "spillover effects" whereby involvement in one form of pro-environmental behaviour increases the propensity to engage in another (Thogerson, 2006). This has also been identified in research by Thogerson and Olander (2003) and Whitmarsh (2009), as their findings showed that consumers were driven to exhibit behaviour consistent with their environmental values and identity. An identity (i.e., as a green consumer) motivates Bridget to engage in role-appropriate behaviour (i.e., green consumption behaviour) (Callero, 1985). If the motivation to behave consistently with environmental values is not satisfied, it may create a state of internal tension due to conflict between identity and actions (Callero, 1985). In contrast, engaging in role-appropriate behaviour validates an individual's role and therefore, self-identity (Callero, 1985) as a green consumer, this is evident in Bridget's behaviour.

4.4.1.2. Pro-environmental personal norms

Pro-environmental personal norms held by an individual encourage them to consider the environmental impact of their consumption. Personal norms also portray the attributes some participants believe that a person "should" or "ought" to possess (Higgins, Klein, & Strauman, 1985). Pro-environmental personal norms, are social norms that have been internalised to have a direct affect on pro-environmental behaviour and an indirect effect on pro-environmental attitudes (Hinds & Sparks, 2008; Stets & Biga, 2003). As an example, Deborah (Case 4) discussed her use of reusable nappies as opposed to disposable nappies on her daughter:

Deborah: "I'm not really sure why I use reusable nappies. Maybe it is something inside me that said 'You should do that because that is better for the

environment.' Also because with disposable nappies even when we used them for the first eight weeks, with the amount of disposables we were using, you could probably fill a rubbish bag full of disposables in 3-4 days. So going from the amount of rubbish that we threw out before to suddenly that - it was quite a shock. So effectively, if you use reusable nappies you can probably recoup your money as well as saving the landfill I guess. Because even though I'm not a huge eco-warrior, I don't like putting out a lot of rubbish because I try and recycle all of our food scraps, I don't like putting them in the bin because if there's another way of getting rid of them well why shouldn't you? So I'm quite conscious of what goes in the rubbish bin."

Deborah feels a sense of moral obligation to use reusable nappies, as her conscience guides her toward a pro-environmental disposition (Stern, 2000). It is clear that Deborah became more conscious of her rubbish after the birth of her first child when she noticed that their household waste increased dramatically. Other studies have also shown that motherhood increases green consumption behaviour (Sandilands, 1993). This study reveals that significant life-events can cause consumption or waste to rise to an undesirable level, and some consumers may be driven to take action and reduce their waste by adopting green practices or products. This finding provides a new angle by demonstrating how a significant life event can change consumption behaviour. This finding highlights the importance of household lifecycles to green consumerism research.

Bridget (Case 6) feels that certain behaviour is important to her sense of identity and her own internal self-perception or "moral sensibility". Some participants make "ethical judgements" about what one "ought to" or "ought not to do" in certain situations (Bohm, 2003).

Bridget: "Sometimes we'll just buy token organic things so that they keep stocking them in the supermarket. I think it's really important – so yeah there's part of me making a statement and there's part satisfying your own moral sensibility as well."

This example shows that green identity and values are important drivers of engagement in green consumption behaviour. Bridget purchases green and organic products in an attempt to influence change by encouraging organic supply through consciously creating demand. Bridget also hopes that her purchases will increase the selection and availability of green products stocked in supermarkets. Bridget makes a “statement” by purchasing “token organic things” showing her support for organic producers to herself and to others. Although by using the word “token” Bridget admits that her organic purchases are irregular and inconsistent. Bridget feels morally compelled to purchase green and some organic products in order to behave in accordance with her green identity. This example shows how subtle displays of consumer activism, are encouraged through consumer empowerment (Bekin, Carrigan, & Szmigin, 2006) and the view that product choice is a “vote” for or against environmental values (Shaw et al., 2006) (this is discussed further in section 4.5.4.2.1. pp. 143-145).

Several quantitative studies have reported that a green or ethical self-identity contributes to the intention to perform pro-environmental behaviour over and above other “theory of planned behaviour” variables (i.e., subjective norms and ethical obligation) (Shaw, et al., 2000; Sparks & Shepard, 1992; Whitmarsh & O'Neill, 2010). Therefore, the findings of this study reaffirm previous research but also provide new insight into how environmental personal norms are embedded in an individual's identity and can have a significant impact on environmental attitudes and actual purchase behaviour.

4.4.1.3. “Green” pre-conceptions

The findings reveal that consumers have several preconceived ideas about green products, behaviour and environmental issues. These pre-conceptions form the basis for consumers' “green” perceptions and thus they have significant influence on actual consumption behaviour. In addition, when faced with difficult decisions between two green alternatives, consumers base their purchase decisions on environmental issues or product attributes that can be observed or readily perceived.

4.4.1.3.1. Green products versus conventional products

Product performance

Some participants have pre-conceptions about the effectiveness of green products compared with conventional products, which in turn affects their willingness to buy and trial greener alternatives. A few participants were reluctant to trial green products or certain categories of green products due to uncertainty over product effectiveness. Greta (Case 1) was hesitant to buy greener products because she purchases familiar and reliable brands, which she views as more effective compared to greener products.

Greta: "I haven't had an opportunity to explore the greener products. I have three basic cleaning products. I don't have a cupboard full of cleaning products. I have Jiff, Janola and Handy Andy. Because I've got products that I know work, maybe it's time for a change."

Greta claims that she has not "had an opportunity to explore the greener products", because her current products do not need to be replaced. Greta has developed "brand relationships" (Fournier, 1998) with "Jiff, Janola and Handy Andy" because they are reliable and effective. However, at the end of this quote Greta implies that she may trial green products in the future, although this is probably due to a social desirability or researcher bias, rather than a genuine motivation to change behaviour. This finding is similar to other research which has found that consumers are more likely to purchase familiar, as opposed to unfamiliar, products and brands (Gan, Wee, Ozanne, & Kao, 2008). In addition, D'Soula, Tangihan, Lamb, and Peretiakos (2006) suggest that consumers' perception of green products as expensive and of inferior quality, are the main reasons that cause reluctance in consumers to switch brands. This finding shows that some consumers may associate functional and even financial risks with greener household cleaning products. This behaviour is unusual considering the relatively small cost at risk by purchasing a potentially poor green product. Therefore, other factors, such as brand relationships, trust and loyalty must affect the outcome of purchase decisions and switching behaviour.

As a rule, Fiona (Case 2) does not purchase green products if she believes that the “overall result” may be adversely affected. This rule is normally applied to certain product categories where hygiene and cleanliness are of primary importance. Fiona’s perception of a products ability to deliver on these attributes is often a barrier to purchasing a greener version of a conventional product.

Fiona: “I purchase when I don’t think its going to affect the overall result. For example with kitchen sprays and bathroom sprays and cleaners. Whereas if it was something like laundry powder or toilet cleaner. To be honest I haven’t actually looked that hard into it, but I feel like my justification for not purchasing them to date, is that I don’t think they’d be as effective as traditional cleaners.”

As demonstrated by the previous examples, when the consumer’s perceptions of important attributes do not satisfy needs or expectations, pro-environmental values do not translate into behaviour. In addition, if a green product fails, this may negatively affect perceptions of all green products in a product category. The examples show that in order for green products to be successful, the product must function as effectively, if not more effectively, than conventional products in order to avoid the “quality versus cost” tradeoff (Alston & Roberts, 1999). Several studies on environmentally-friendly products have demonstrated that perceived product performance is a significant barrier to their selection (Pettit & Sheppard, 1992; Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008). This research reveals that participants perceive certain categories of green products to be ineffective or less effective compared to conventional products without even trialling these products. The following section explores further, how pre-conceptions about cost and expense create barriers to pro-environmental change.

Expense

Several participants express a desire to be environmentally-friendly, yet are somewhat constrained by the cost or expense of green products. It is widely acknowledged that sometimes being environmentally-friendly can cost more or is of greater expense to the consumer (Gupta & Odgen, 2009; Pettit & Sheppard, 1992; Sexton & Sexton,

2011). It is apparent that consumers may use green product cost or expense as a justification for not purchasing the product. For example, Greta's (Case 1) perception of green product expense reduces her willingness to buy and trial green products.

Greta: "I think it's a lot more expensive to buy green products. And I guess because it's more expensive, I've been a bit reluctant to try it."

The need to compromise on green products because of cost is accompanied with feelings of guilt. The participants neutralise negative emotions or guilt by rationalising non-environmental consumption behaviour. Greta (Case 1) describes the use of disposable nappies on her grandchild and the negative environmental impact of disposable nappies. Greta neutralises this act by inferring that washing reusable nappies also has a negative environmental consequence.

Greta: "I feel really guilty about the nappies we use on Greg [i.e., grandchild]. But the new nappies that are out are so expensive and plus your using the washing machine to wash them which is also endangering the environment, so its sits on one half, does half on the other. I do feel really guilty about that."

Greta acknowledges that there are often tradeoffs between two alternatives, where both options have at least some degree of adverse environmental impact. By saying it "sits on one half, does half on the other", Greta implies that neither alternative is environmentally neutral, maintaining a positive view of herself through rationalising her actions (Kelley & Michela, 1980). This enables Greta to rationalise a non-environmental act and choose the option that is more convenient but has more severe implications for the environment (i.e., use of disposable nappies as opposed to reusable nappies). Edwina (Case 3) also argues that because she cannot afford reusable nappies, she has no choice but to use disposable nappies, thus somewhat denying responsibility for her non-environmental actions. The perceived cost of reusable nappies compared with disposable is deemed a reasonable justification, even though disposable nappies are more expensive long-term.

Edwina: "Disposable nappies are expensive, but it wasn't as expensive as having that initial outlay. The reusable ones that I'd looked at were about \$600

but still when I go and do the shopping it's maybe an extra \$40 to buy a box of disposable nappies. I mean they say it works out cheaper to buy the reusable ones but then, I do a load of washing every day as it is, and that's you know, washing powder and stuff is quite expensive too. Doing a lot of washing is quite wasteful of resources as well. With my daughter I used cloth nappies, and that was when it was just the big squares and they are really cheap but they're not as effective as the new ones – and they're not as easy to use. But yeah I think you are sort of trading off a little bit."

Edwina views the environmental attributes versus the “cost” or “expense” of reusable nappies as a tradeoff, which justifies her non-environmental actions and conceals her desire for the convenience of disposable nappies. Compared to disposable nappies, reusable nappies require washing and thus more time and effort from the caregiver. Similar to the quote above from Greta, both participants use the justification of increased washing and water usage to diminish the perceived environmental impact of using disposable nappies. The participants deny injury to the environment by implying that the alternative (i.e., increased washing) is also bad for the environment (Sykes & Matza, 1957). These examples illustrate how pre-conceptions about the expense of green products, combined with product performance and convenience issues, act as a barrier toward green consumption behaviour.

4.4.1.3.2. Green tradeoffs

The findings reveal the idea of “green tradeoffs”, which is related to perceptions about the relative importance of environmental issues. Some participants’ tradeoff green attributes due to pre-conceived ideas in the social environment about the importance of environmental issues and pro-environmental attributes. Several participants noted purchase and consumption situations whereby they faced conflicting motivations and thus confusion over which green alternative to purchase.

Environmental packaging versus origin

Some participants encounter dilemmas where they are torn between environmental packaging and the origin of a product. In general, when faced with the two alternatives, Bridget (Case 6) and Annette (Case 7) prioritised environmental packaging over where the product was produced (i.e., origin). The following two examples demonstrate the thought processes of the two participants.

Bridget: "I used to buy an organic soup which I liked that came from America and I would be like – 'Do I buy the organic soup which is in a tin which can be recycled but it comes from America or the NZ organic soup which is in a plastic bag thing which is not recyclable?' So I went for the organic American thing because for some reason I prefer that to the plastic bags."

Annette: "I had the option of NZ-made pasta but it had twice as much plastic packaging and it was a couple cents more expensive versus Italian pasta which had absolutely minimal packaging. I ended up getting the Italian. At the time I was sick of rubbish bags getting filled with rubbish so at the time the priority was let's reduce the rubbish but at another time if we have minimal rubbish bags we might go - 'oh the distance that product has travelled is more important'."

It is clear that both participants carefully consider the options, weighing up the positive and negative product attributes. It is also apparent that both participants' perceive environmentally-friendly packaging of products to be more important than its origin. Annette explains that the outcome of a "green tradeoff" decision is easily swayed by the environmental issues she encounters on a daily basis or issues that are prevalent in the social environment and community.

Annette: "Yeah well I don't know that I have figured out how I prioritise it. If I have just been doing my recycling and thinking 'oh this is terrible' then what is in my head is the packaging. Whereas if I have been thinking about the climate change and less fuel needed to be used, I will be thinking of the transport issue."

Packaging is an environmental implication that is tangible and affects Annette's own contribution to waste, compared with the intangible and imperceptible carbon emissions of food transportation. The above quote illustrates the importance of heuristics and product appearance during decision-making. It is evident that Annette and Bridget struggle to separate environmental impact from the physical appearance of product packaging. These findings confirm research by Hormuth (1999) who found that certain ecological aspects (i.e., recyclability and protection of natural resources) are more clearly perceived in products than other ecological attributes, and are therefore more easily activated in shopping decisions. This study contributes to the literature by showing that consumers are more affected by environmental issues that affect their consumption or waste levels directly.

Quality versus origin

Some participants experience conflicting values when investing in large cost, long-lasting durable items for their home. Annette and Anton (Case 7) are interested in environmental attributes but also want high quality products. The following example explains how Annette and Anton decided against the purchase of New Zealand made solar panels and instead bought solar panels manufactured in Germany, because the brand was perceived as better quality and more durable.

Annette: "A couple of years ago we put solar panels on our house and we had the choice of a NZ-made brand or a German brand and we definitely went quite easily for the German brand. We thought about the NZ-made brand and we wished we could buy the NZ-made brand but it was very clear to us when we looked at the research and the reviews that the German brand was going to be more reliable and more efficient."

Annette conducted significant research in the social environment and concluded that the German brand would be more reliable and efficient compared with the New Zealand brand of solar panels. While the couple were concerned about product cost, they also considered the waste implications if the solar panels were to breakdown.

Annette: “Solar panels were a big cost item and in that sense maybe because of the cost it was easy for us to say ‘We are going to go with the German company’. Maybe cost and the size. So the fact that it was quite a big thing and if it malfunctioned, we had to remove it then there was a very big tangible object that was going to be waste.”

It is evident that the participants were prepared to forego the environmental impact of overseas transportation for what they perceived to be a higher quality, more durable product. While the German brand may have been the greener option in the long-run, this example shows how perceptions of quality and environmental costs are evaluated. It also illustrates how green consumers are motivated by a multitude of environmental concerns, which involve numerous partly incompatible ends. The participants encounter difficult value judgements, whereby they have to accept adverse environmental consequences even within green consumerism.

4.4.1.4. Sub-section summary

This section has discussed how participants’ “green” perceptions shape their consumption behaviour. A heightened awareness of the environmental and social implications of consumption in society encouraged one participant to consider the “true-cost” of her consumption. Societal expectations and social norms regarding acceptable standards of behaviour lead some consumers to internalise pro-environmental norms. As a result, some participants are motivated by internal moral sensibilities that guide green consumption behaviour.

In other instances, consumers’ “green” pre-conceptions prevent greener consumption behaviour. There is a general pre-conception amongst “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers that green products are more expensive and less effective when compared with conventional products and brands, hence consumers are reluctant to switch to greener alternatives. Meanwhile, “green” consumers tradeoff even among green alternatives based on information in their social environment regarding the importance of environmental issues (i.e., recyclability of product packaging versus purchasing locally-produced products), and the quality of various green products and

brands. The findings highlight how “green” perceptions and pre-conceptions are shaped by the social environment and influence attitudes and consumption behaviour.

4.4.2. Green consumption behaviour shaping perceptions

This sub-section illustrates how the experience of green consumption behaviour can shape perceptions and thus future attitudes towards performing green consumption behaviour (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Peattie, 2010) (see Figure 11). As proposed by Peattie (2010), a significant short-coming of current research in green consumerism is the limited understanding of use, post-use and disposal of green products. Equally important to attitude formation is the experience of behaviour (i.e., use, post-use and disposal) which shapes future attitudes toward a particular product or behaviour. Therefore, a positive or negative experience with green consumption behaviour moderates the relationship between future attitudes, intention and behaviour. It is important to note, that negative experiences with green consumption behaviour, include those where the conventional alternative is perceived as better.

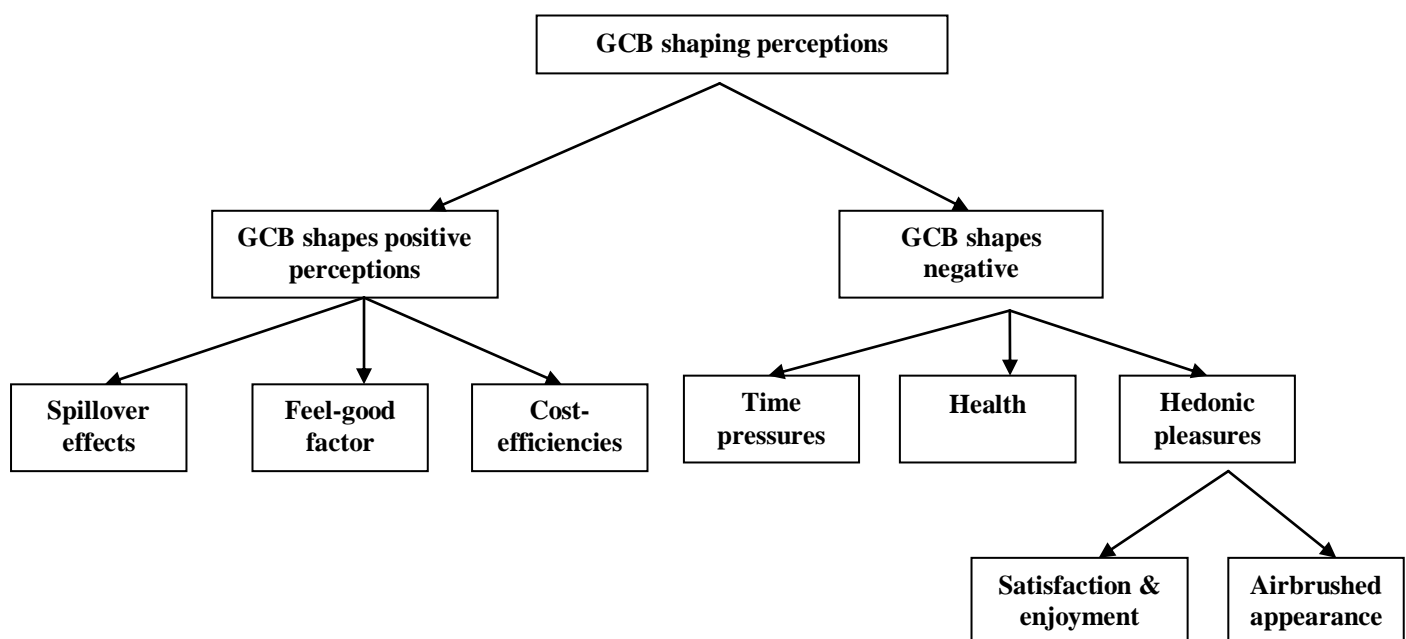


Figure 11: Green consumption behaviour (GCB) shaping perceptions sub-themes

4.4.2.1. Green consumption behaviour shapes positive perceptions

Research has found that when pro-environmental behaviour aligns with self-interest, individuals are more likely to comply with green consumption behaviour (Crano & Prislin, 2006). It shows that consumers are more inclined to trial and continue purchasing green products which offer additional benefits aside from being environmentally-friendly. In this sense, green products and behaviour may need to align with a consumers needs and values (i.e., saving money, health benefits, convenience, hedonic pleasure and sensory stimulation), in order for a product to be repeatedly purchased.

4.4.2.1.1. Spillover effects

In general, the findings show that positive experiences with green products can lead to additional green product purchases. As discussed earlier (in section 4.4.1.3.1. p. 98), Fiona (Case 2) purchases green products over conventional products, when it does not affect the “overall result”. For Fiona to purchase green products, the performance and effectiveness must be the same, if not better, than conventional products. Fiona trialled natural skin-care, and was impressed with the products performance. This positive experience with a green product encouraged the trial of other green products.

Fiona: “It started off with trilogy and I started off using the rose-hip oil and I discovered that that product was actually really effective - as effective as whatever else I was buying. Now I’ve actually moved on to Antipodes and that’s my new favourite thing. Antipodes is a very environmentally-conscious and aware company and it uses all natural plant-based products and their products are amazing! I highly rate them and they’re cheaper than Dermalogica so yeah as soon as my Dermalogica stuff is finished I’m changing all of my skin-care to Antipodes.”

This example shows how a positive experience with a “green” product led Fiona to buy and trial others as she found it to be more effective and less expensive than conventional skin-care products. Unlike many other green products (i.e., household cleaning products), natural skincare has a direct impact and a positive outcome can be

observed by the consumer. Fiona values the environmental credentials of “Antipodes”, and is very enthusiastic about the brand and its products. Fiona’s experience with natural skin-care has changed her perception of other products within this product category in a way that means she is more likely to purchase green products of this nature in the future.

4.4.2.1.2. Feel-good-factor

For some participants, practising green consumption behaviour is associated with a “feel-good-factor”, which can result in self-esteem maintenance and enhancement, as the following example by Greta (Case 1) illustrates:

Greta: “I feel good that we recycle and compost, and do all those things. It does make you feel better. I don’t particularly want to see a reward for it. I know that I’m doing my little part.”

Greta uses certain phrases such as “I feel good”, “feel better” and “doing my little part” to describe the personal satisfaction that she receives when she recycles and composts household waste. Altruistic behaviours such as recycling and composting are often linked with a “feel-good-factor”. This has led some academics to argue that no environmental action is purely altruistic, as there is always some personal reward to the individual performing the act (Griskevicius, et al., 2010). According to Pettit and Sheppard (1992, p. 336), a consumer does not typically adopt environmentally-friendly consumption behaviour because it makes a tangible contribution to the environment, but rather because it makes them “feel better” or feel like they are contributing to environmental interests. This example corresponds with self-consistency theories (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967; Sirgy, 1982, 1985), because Greta recycles in order to remain consistent with her pro-environmental views and values. While Greta does not want a reward for recycling, she gains personal satisfaction that enables her to maintain her self-esteem and self-concept, which in turn promotes continued practice of the behaviour.

4.4.2.1.3. Cost efficiencies

The findings suggest that most consumers decide to engage in some form of green consumption behaviour due to economic reasons. In some cases, the purchase of environmentally-friendly or green products is cheaper or saves money. Some participants expressed the incurred financial benefits from reusing products and having effective waste management and energy-efficient systems in the household, as explained in Table 2.

Reusing products	Waste management systems	Energy-efficient systems
<i>Deborah (Case 4): "Yeah it's probably more the cost-saving thing and in addition we'd end up not using another plastic container or another glass container. So it's probably the cost thing more than the environmentally-friendly thing is the added kind of bonus."</i>	<i>Gordon (Case 1): "If it's wasteful it's going to cost me money. I think they go hand-in-hand really don't they. We have a lot of garden waste. I try to keep rubbish down to one bag a week and if you throw out all of your compost and food scraps, you wouldn't be able to do it. So that's part of the reason to be honest. Plus I throw the compost on the plants and that sort of thing. Composting and that sort of thing, its having a couple of benefits."</i>	<i>Fiona (Case 2): "We're actually a really energy efficient household, our power bills are real cheap. Normally \$150, for four people as well. So we are actually quite energy-efficient with heating. Activities are mainly cost saving and convenience. But also being good for the environment."</i>
	<i>Eddy (Case 3): "I reckon in the way of recycling and composting and stuff like that – that is cost-efficient. Then on the other side of the coin are the things that are healthier for you but cost more and that's just the way the markets work. Your health and cost. So I think those are two really big pay-offs that you can do."</i>	<i>Fred (Case 2): "Probably cost saving, with the added benefit. You can be cheaper and be environmentally-friendly. Refillable products and cutting down on heating costs etc."</i>
		<i>Eddy (Case 3): "With electricity and stuff cost does come into it because as I say it comes into everything whether you like it or not. People are fooling themselves if they say its not, their just lying. It's all about the cost at the end of the day. A lot of things it can be cheaper to be green in a lot of ways."</i>

Table 2: "Cost-efficiency" statements

Based on these statements, it is evident that "value for money" and "cost-efficiency" are important product attributes in the social environment. Several participants view "green" as an additional benefit, rather than the principal reason for adopting green consumption behaviour. Primary reasons for adopting green consumption behaviour are generally due to cost-efficiency. Gruskevicius, Tybur, and Van den Bergh (2010, p. 393) looked into the conspicuous nature of green consumerism and suggest that the decision to adopt green practices or products is often driven by self-oriented motives. While research has shown that consumers are mainly driven to be "green" for self-

oriented and economic reasons, qualitative research is able to provide deeper understanding and insight of this phenomenon.

While discussing the advantages of implementing green systems and purchasing green products, the participants use words like “bonus”, “additional benefit” and “pay-off” to describe the benefits of certain green consumption behaviour. Through analysing this data, it is clear that cost savings are a key motivation for many participants and the environmental benefits are supplementary to this. It is interesting that the participants who were more motivated by the additional benefits (i.e., cost-savings and efficiency), were participants on the lower end of the green-continuum including, Gordon (Case 1), Fiona (Case 2), Fred (Case 2), Eddy (Case 3) and Deborah (Case 4) represented in Figure 12.

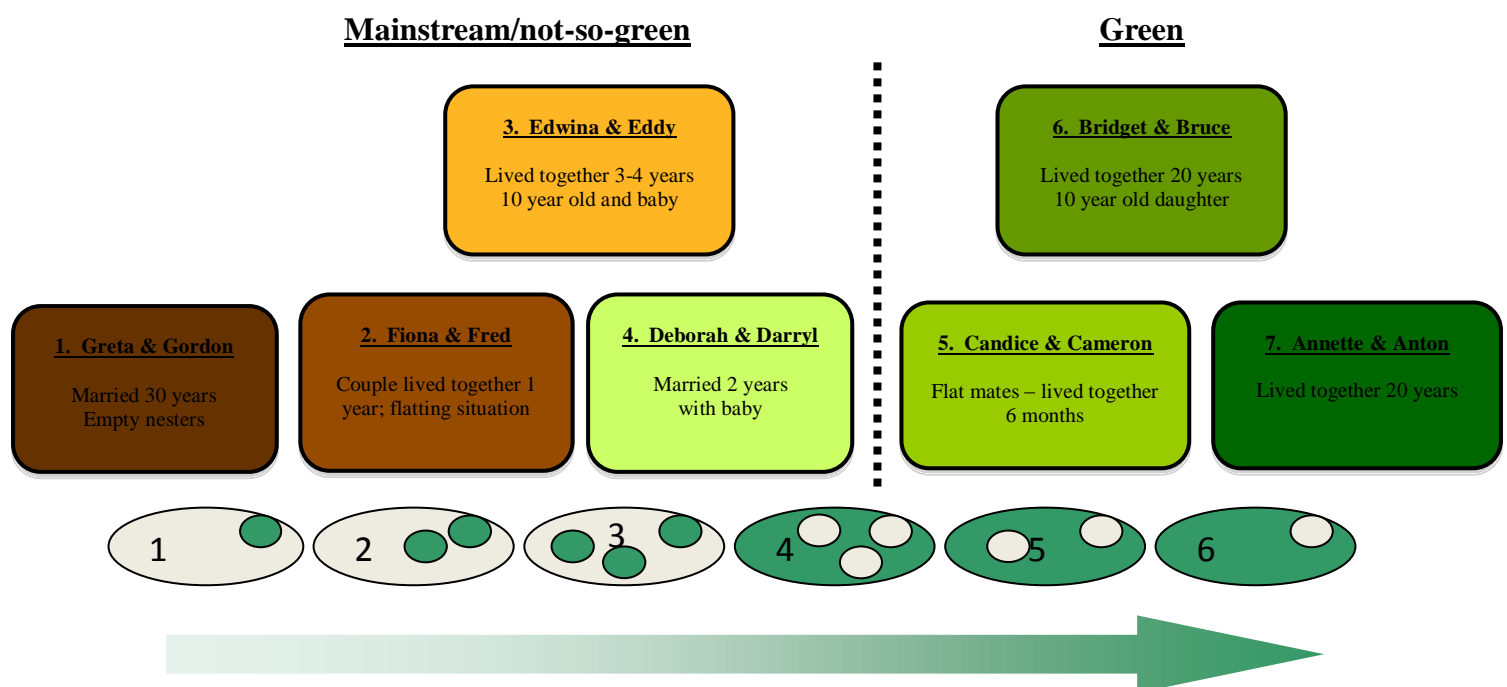


Figure 12: Household cases positioned on the green-continuum

The diagram above highlights the difference between “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers. The household cases’ position on the green scale, was judged by the researcher, according to a criteria that considered green product purchases and behaviour, household activities and level of commitment to green values. Cases 1-4 are categorised as “mainstream” or “not-so-green” because their green consumption behaviour is primarily driven by self-oriented motives. Cases 5-7

are deemed “green” because most of their consumption behaviour is motivated by environmental interests. At the midway point on the green-continuum, motivations shift from self-interest (i.e., perception of cost/efficiency benefits), to internalised pro-environmental personal norms (as discussed in section 4.4.1.2. pp. 94-96), as guides for green consumption behaviour. Only very environmentally-conscious participants buy purely for environmental benefits. As social norms are internalised to become pro-environmental personal norms, consumption behaviour is dictated by their environmental or “green” identity.

4.4.2.2. Green consumption behaviour shapes negative perceptions

At times, being “green” requires an individual to compromise their self-interest values. As a result of this, green consumption behaviour sometimes leads to negative perceptions or a perception that conventional products are better. When environmental values and related green consumption behaviour are incompatible with self-interest, an “attitude-behaviour gap” may result (Crano & Prislin, 2006). Some common tradeoffs include green attributes being traded-off against convenience, availability, cost, quality, taste and appearance. Often “green” is at the expense of other products, values or desires. The compromises involved in some types of green consumption behaviour may result in a reluctance to continue practising the behaviour.

4.4.2.2.1. Time pressures

Some participants have a perception that green consumption behaviour requires more time and effort than conventional behaviour. Bridget (Case 6) feels that she cannot afford the additional time and effort required to be “green”.

Bridget: “If you really want to be green you have to be organised. Like if I scrub all the grouting in the shower regularly then I wouldn’t have to use Janola to get rid of the mould in the shower. Or if I was more organised in the morning and knew what the time was and when the buses went then I probably wouldn’t end up taking my car as often - because I’m running late and it’s really important to get to work on time.”

Bridget's busy lifestyle and disorganisation limits her ability to perform green consumption behaviour effectively. Other studies have also shown that lack of time can constrain commitment to green behaviour (Tindall, Daives, & Mauboules, 2003; Young, et al., 2010). This is a reflection of the limited time some women have to spend on activities, beyond commitments at work and in the home (Tindall, et al., 2003). In some situations, Bridget excuses her non-environmental behaviour because she prioritises other interests above environmental concerns.

It is apparent that even very environmentally concerned people, such as Bridget, do not prioritise environmental considerations in all areas of their life. Bridget experiences "green" dilemmas which conflict with personal desires and self-gratification (Chatzidakis, et al., 2004; Sykes & Matza, 1957). Bridget experiences conflict between personal, work and green interests. Through "appealing to higher loyalties" (Sykes & Matza, 1957) or interests prioritised above environmental issues Bridget neutralises her non-environmental behaviour and mitigates negative effects to her self-image.

Bridget: "There are some things we don't do. Like we do use Janola. And you try to find ways to justify that. You think, 'oh I'm so good in all these other ways it won't matter if I do this little thing', or 'I don't do it very often'."

With regard to Bridget's use of Janola she uses another neutralisation technique to rationalise her use of chemical-based products which goes against her environmental principles. With justifications such as "it won't matter if I do this little thing" and "I don't do it very often", Bridget denies severe environmental consequences of her non-environmental behaviour due to the small impact perceived. Neutralisation techniques including, "appealing to higher loyalties" and "denial of injury" (Sykes & Matza, 1957), allow consumers to rationalise non-environmental practices.

4.4.2.2.2. Health

Health and environmentally-conscious packaging are conflicting values at play for some purchase decisions. Annette (Case 7) found that while “margarine” is regarded as better for her health it is packaged in a plastic container. Alternatively, “butter” is packaged in paper, which is more environmentally-friendly than plastic as it can be easily recycled.

Annette: “We often have that dilemma so we sort of go in waves of going ‘oh no we need to be healthier, we shouldn’t have so much fat we will get the rice bran oil spread’ and then we sort of get sick of having all these containers in the rubbish so we go back to ‘no, no lets do butter. Butter’s okay for you we just need to eat less butter and have less packaging’.”

This example illustrates the ambiguity that exists within green consumerism. The term “green” is usually associated with natural health-benefits and well-being. However, Annette encounters a situation where the product with recyclable packaging is not good for her health and the healthy product does not have recyclable packaging. Marketing communications claim that margarine is healthier than butter, however the social environment also views recycling and reducing plastic waste as important. This example demonstrates switching behaviour and the internal conflicts experienced by Annette as she cannot fully commit to being green when it may adversely affect her health. The tradeoff between “butter” and “margarine” is unresolved and remains an issue that Annette and her partner Anton, continue to negotiate.

4.4.2.2.3. Hedonic pleasures

Satisfaction and enjoyment

Several participants feel that they have to compromise on product satisfaction or pleasure in order to be environmentally-friendly. Dissatisfaction with environmentally-friendly alternatives leads some participants to violate environmental interests in favour of a more enjoyable product. The following example illustrates the tradeoff Anton (Case 7) experiences when deciding whether to purchase vegetarian

sausages made in Australia or New Zealand. Anton considers the taste, where the product is made, the amount of packaging and its recyclability.

Anton: "Vegetarian sausages - you can get NZ-made ones that have one wrapping over them or you can get Australian ones that have two wrappings over them. The NZ-made ones don't taste very good at all so in that situation we are more likely to buy the Australian one. I don't like the fact that they have two lots of wrapping over them but I recognise that they do taste better so it's difficult sometimes to do the things that you want to do when there are conflicting factors at play."

While the greener option would be to purchase the New Zealand vegetarian sausages, Anton does not enjoy their taste. Furthermore, he also acknowledges that the Australian sausages have excessive plastic wrapping but is prepared to concede these environmental factors in favour of a better tasting vegetarian sausage. Anton's partner Annette (Case 7), enjoys eating fish although she also feels guilty and personally responsible for the depletion of fish-stocks.

Annette: "When I buy a tin of tuna, I feel terribly guilty. I think 'oh god here is the whole fish industry going under and the fish are dying and it is because of me!' But again that's where I apply the reverse psychology and go 'oh well I'm only one person this is just once that I'm doing this – once or twice'."

It is interesting that Annette neutralises her sense of guilt by applying "reverse psychology" to deny significant environmental damage by saying that she is "only one person" and "I'm only doing this once or twice". According to the "denial of injury" neutralisation technique (Sykes & Matza, 1957), the relatively insignificant environmental impact justifies the non-environmental act (Chatzidakis, et al., 2004). Annette feels that she "shouldn't be eating fish" because it goes against her personal pro-environmental norms and values, illustrating the internal conflict experienced.

Annette: "So we shouldn't be eating fish really. There is not enough fish population in the world to be sustainable the way that humans are eating it. So

*we should not be eating fish. But we are weak and sometimes we do eat fish.
We have a long life ahead of us and fish is really nice!"*

Annette implies that there is time to rectify her non-environmental actions by stating that she has a "long life ahead". If other consumers adopt a similar neutralisation strategy, fundamental pro-environmental behaviour change may never occur. Annette acknowledges that her consumption of fish is related to a personal flaw and weakness due to her enjoyment of fish. Moreover, Fiona (Case 2), is aware of the negative environmental impact of conventional skin and hair care yet she is unable to compromise on these products because her appearance is valued highly thus "appealing to higher loyalties" (Sykes & Matza, 1957).

Fiona: "I couldn't be completely green because I would have to compromise on other things that I care about, which I know is selfish but I can't help it."

In addition to other neutralisation techniques, both Fiona and Annette, use a "no-one's perfect" justification for their attitude-behaviour inconsistencies. Justifications like "I'm weak" and "I can't help it" allow consumers to attribute inconsistencies to personal flaws, which are deemed acceptable because "no-one is perfect". This justification has been used in several other examples, Bridget's use of Janola is due to a "lack of organisation" (see section: 4.4.2.2.1. pp. 109-110), and her partner Bruce, believes "there is no such thing as perfection" in green consumerism (see section: 4.3.3. pp. 86-89). The examples above demonstrate how consumers justify and rationalise non-environmental behaviour and mitigate effects to their self-image and social identity.

Airbrushed food

Throughout the findings, it is evident that the appearance of green products must be aesthetically pleasing in order to be purchased and consumed. The attitude that most consumers have toward appearance is developed due to socialisation and classical conditioning by the social environment. Consumers have been conditioned to view aesthetics as part of the hedonic experience of consumption (Hutchings, 1999; Meiselman & MacFie, 1996). Therefore, consumers often assess their perception of

food acceptability on appearance (Meiselman & MacFie, 1996), as they value, expect and have become accustomed to the “manufactured” and “airbrushed” appearance of products, and in particular food produce. Product appearance significantly affects Bridget’s (Case 6) willingness to purchase and she claims that her experience as a buyer of organic produce is not enjoyable due to the poor appearance of organic fruit and vegetables.

Bridget: “From the position as a buyer, organic vegetables are smaller and grittier looking and therefore buying organic isn’t such a positive purchasing thing for me.”

Bridget develops a perception of “quality” and “taste” based on the appearance of a produce. An unpleasant product appearance indicates poor quality and contradicts the general perception of organic produce. The term “organic” is used to describe untreated, naturally produced products that are healthier than treated products (Blair, 2012). Organic produce is generally viewed as superior to conventional food produce in terms of food quality and safety (Blair, 2012, p. 7), although the physical appearance of organic produce sometimes belies this imagery. This reflects how individuals in society have been socialised and conditioned to expect “perfect-looking” fruit and vegetables. It is a reflection of society and our production processes as people can no longer recognise what “normal” or “healthy” fruit and vegetables should look like.

Bridget: “The whole organic thing is a bit of a challenge to us, it is a habit that is hard to get out of, or to get used to. Getting away from the airbrushed food. That’s a big challenge for us. We expect our food to look a little bit like those airbrushed models. You know we kind of have airbrushed food because it’s beautiful and been treated with chemicals and things. It is very hard to break away from the visual appeal of stuff that has been sprayed or put in a cold store so they don’t have brown bits on them. So there’s a lot of stuff, which we perceive as ‘normal’, which is probably not normal - is not natural at all.”

Bridget makes impulsive decisions about which products to purchase and not purchase based on visual cues such as appearance and aesthetics, as opposed to

environmental and organic credentials. If organic produce does not look appealing, she will purchase non-organic produce, due to the hedonic pleasure and sensory stimulation of purchasing and consuming attractive-looking food. Bridget acknowledges that it is unrealistic to expect food to look and taste perfect, but finds it difficult to break the cycle of buying what she considers to be “airbrushed food”. In relation to this idea, Bruce (Case 6), Bridget’s partner, suggests that in order for “green” producers to attract and retain customers, they must provide high-quality produce that looks and tastes appealing.

Bruce: “I think that people who expect the market to adapt and deliberately buy apples that have obviously been affected by disease and insects and stuff like that - still edible, but essentially there is a requirement for people producing produce to do it well. Obviously not quite as well as with chemicals - but you know nice stuff. We were able to grow nice food before chemicals. It may be that society and the way it responds to things, that provides us with the ability to be green without us having to change so much.”

Bruce implies that organisations and producers need to adapt so that consumers do not have to sacrifice important attributes, such as appearance and taste. Bruce justifies consumers behavioural indiscretions through “condemning the condemners”¹ (Sykes & Matza, 1957), ascribing accountability for the “attitude-behaviour gap” in green consumerism to the producers for not delivering acceptable levels of food quality. If producers supply products which satisfy desired attributes, consumers can be green without significantly changing their values and lifestyle.

A consumer’s consumption behaviour is guided by visual cues that allow them to navigate complex choices. With regard to perceived product attributes, other research has also found that:

“Consumers will make accurate judgments about the functional product value, for it is not enough to bury quality in a product, it must be seen and experienced to be recognised and believed” (Dickson, 1994, p.264).

¹ “Condemning the condemners” describes a belief that those who condemn others engage in similar behaviour, or contribute to the behaviour (Sykes & Matza, 1957).

It is apparent that while environmental credentials are important, the product must also appeal to the sensory senses and societal expectations of how “normal” and “healthy” food should look.

4.4.2.3. Sub-section summary

This section explored the positive and negative experiences consumers encounter with green consumption behaviour and how these experiences form perceptions and thus future attitudes toward repeating the behaviour. Positive experiences with green consumption behaviour include, positive spillover effects, feel-good-factor and cost-efficiencies. “Mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) participants’ tend to associate the positive aspects of green consumption behaviour with additional benefits (i.e. cost-efficiencies), aside from being environmentally-friendly.

However, participants were also confronted with various dilemmas of what to do and which options to take. The process of green decision-making and green consumption behaviour can shape negative perceptions, as participants found that being “green” has adverse implications in terms of time and effort required, health and hedonic pleasures of consumption. As a result, there were certain situations where participants are unwilling to accept the adverse consequences of choosing an environmentally-friendly alternative. The participants rationalised these concessions, enabling them to continue practising attitudinally incongruent behaviour (non-environmental consumption behaviour), without serious ramifications to their identity and self-image.

4.5. Social environment shaping perceptions & consumption behaviour

As a person attempts to carry-out personally motivated behaviour, he or she is inevitably affected by others in the social environment (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Because of continuous interaction with the social environment, an individual's consumption behaviour is somewhat shaped by these relations (see Figure 13). Insight into the socially constructed motivations of consumers will reveal how social groups and collective goals affect individual consumption behaviour. Meanwhile, it appears individuals' judge other consumers based on perceptions of green social norms in the social environment. Furthermore, an understanding of "greening strategies" reveals the ways participants attempt to shape the consumption behaviour of other consumers and organisations. Each of these sub-themes will deliver a richer understanding of how the social environment influences green consumption behaviour.

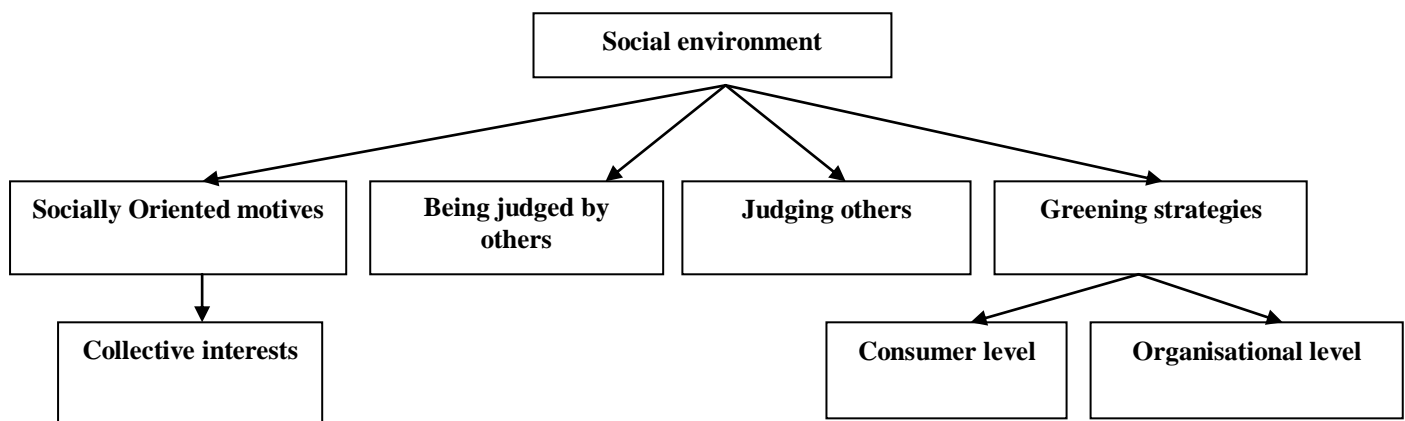


Figure 13: Social environment (shaping perceptions & consumption behaviour) themes and sub-themes

The green-continuum exercise – in a social context

The green-continuum exercise completed during the individual interviews was repeated for the joint-interview, with both participants from a case present. The differences in their responses are shown on the diagrams below (see Figure 14 & Figure 15). It is evident for most participants, when in the presence of another person his or her "actual greenscore" increased.

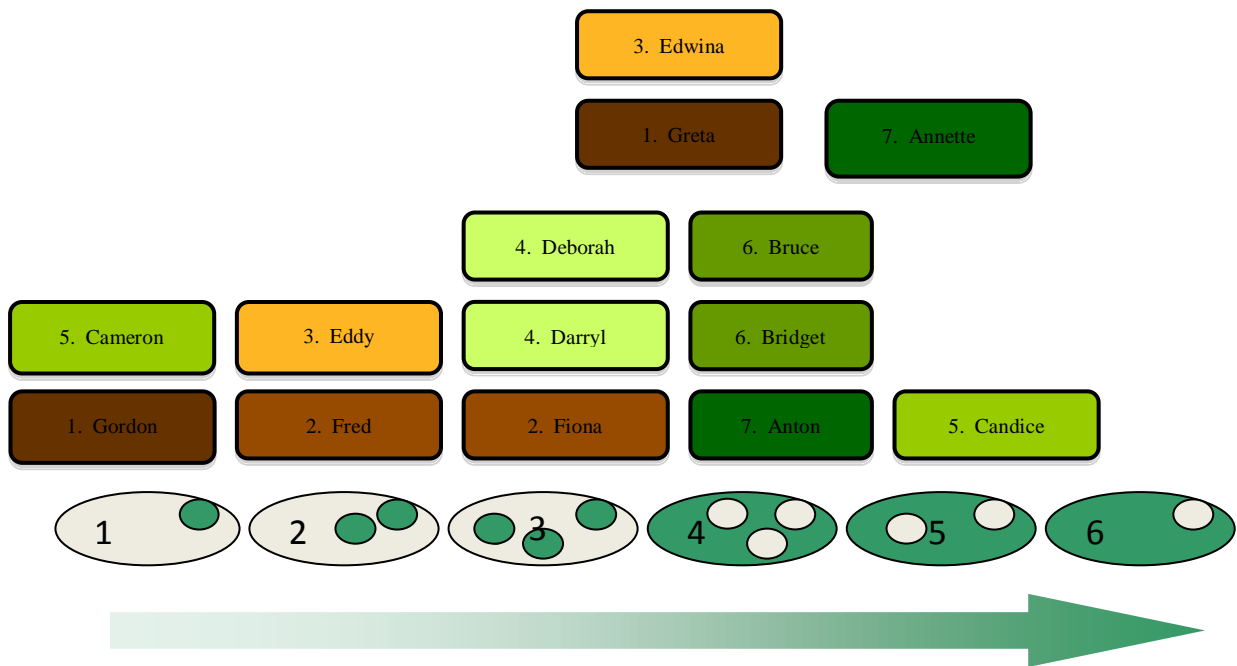


Figure 14: The participant's "actual greenscore" during the individual interview (i.e., alone with the interviewer)

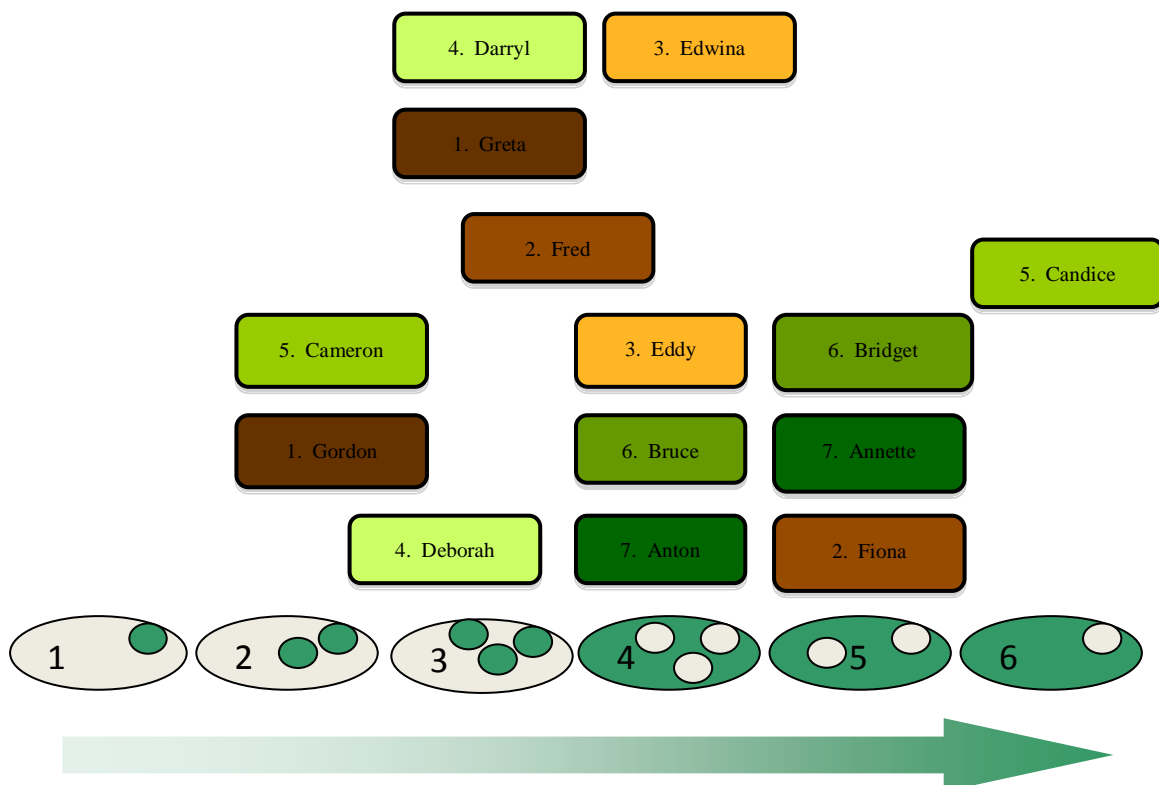


Figure 15: The participant's "actual greenscore" during the joint interview (i.e., with the interviewer and the other participant)

During this exercise, several participants changed their original “actual greenscore” when in the presence of another person. An interesting shift was that of Gordon (Case 1), who moved from a relentless “actual greenscore” of “one”, to between “two” and “three” when in the presence of his partner Greta (Case 1). Interestingly, Greta slightly reduced her “actual greenscore” compared with previously, in order to be closer to Gordon’s rating. In another case, Cameron (Case 5) increased his “actual greenscore” from “one” to “two” while in the presence of Candice (Case 5), a “green” consumer. It appears that some participants desire to increase and even decrease their “greenscore” in order to feel comparable to those closest them.

Most participants increased from their original “greenscore” while in the presence of others, because “green” is socially desirable. It illustrates how easily consumers are willing to inflate their “greenscore” in order to maintain a positive presentation in front of others, even those whom they live with. While it is evident that in the presence of others, individuals may change their “green” perceptions, personal relationships and social experiences can also affect the consumption behaviour of individuals and households.

4.5.1. Socially-oriented motives

The findings show that green consumption behaviour has become a popular trend in society to the extent that the social value of “green” induces environmentally-friendly purchases and consumption behaviour, as suggested by Bruce (Case 6):

Bruce: “We are being manipulated in a positive sense you see - into perceiving that ‘green choice’ is a good way of showing our virility and success.”

“Green choice” is associated with positive imagery and symbols, such as “virility” and “success” as proposed by Bruce. These are socially desirable traits that are encouraged and reinforced by society. While Bruce perceives this in his own society, one must acknowledge that this perception may vary across societies and social contexts. The sociological forces in society act as selective incentives motivating individuals to contribute to environmental protection (Buttle, 1987). Other participants view green consumption behaviour more sceptically. Cameron (Case 5)

feels that society views being “green” as “the cool thing to do”, rather than a genuine concern for environmental issues.

Cameron: “For some people, being green has become the cool thing to do – it has become the way to tick the box of ‘I’m environmentally-friendly’.”

Cameron is very sceptical of consumers practising green consumption behaviour and suspects that many, if not the majority, are being green for the wrong reasons. The movement toward green consumerism is generally perceived as a positive social phenomenon, associated with favourable images and symbols (Pettit & Sheppard, 1992), such as “cool” as described by Cameron. Practising green behaviour in social situations enables consumers to establish and maintain a green or pro-environmental identity, enhancing self-esteem (Whitmarsh & O'Neill, 2010). Self-esteem enhancement cannot be achieved in private. Therefore, it is not necessary to practice green consumption behaviour that is not conspicuously observed.

This finding reiterates the difference between “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumer groups. “Green” consumers with internalised pro-environmental norms are committed to practice green behaviour in public and private consumption situations, in order to remain consistent with their environmental identity (Whitmarsh & O'Neill, 2010). Meanwhile, because most “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers do not have an environmental identity, they are less likely to translate pro-environmental values throughout public and private consumption situations.

4.5.1.1. Collective interests

Collective interests relate to concepts of “collective identity²” and “social action³”, as commitment to group goals and affiliation with group members guides appropriate consumption behaviour. The findings reveal that participants enhance their self-

² Collective identity is a statement about categorical membership; an identity shared with a group of others who have (or are believed to have) some characteristics in common (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004, p. 81).

³ Social action “sees group consumer desires through efforts to differentiate one’s group from other groups, to affiliate with others in the group and in general “fit in” and to achieve self-enhancement through group action and achievement of group goals” (Bagozzi, 2000, p. 395).

esteem from intergroup comparisons, as the following quote from Greta (Case 7) shows.

Greta: "I suppose people like myself are recycling, trying to be conscious - having reusable shopping bags, just being a little bit more aware of what you are doing with your rubbish."

Even though Greta is considered a "mainstream" (i.e., not-so-green) consumer, her quote reflects that others in the social environment influence her toward greener consumption behaviour. Greta relates her behaviour to others with the phrase "people like myself" and regards her behaviour as a symbol of her membership of environmentally-responsible consumer group, who choose to recycle and use reusable supermarket bags. "Mainstream" (i.e., not-so-green) consumers appear to be more concerned about how their consumption behaviour is perceived by others, whereas "green" consumers did not identify similar experiences. The quote from Greta reflects the influence of others in her social environment and how they can encourage and discourage certain types of consumption behaviour. Green consumption behaviour is associated with a social category of environmentally-responsible citizens and consumers who have mutual environmental interests and work collectively to reduce the environmental impact of consumption behaviour.

The social pressure to be environmentally-friendly induces some participants to perform green consumption behaviour. Deborah (Case 4) tries to reduce her negative impact on the environment by using reusable nappies on her daughter. Deborah states that reusable nappies display to others "I can do it" resulting in social recognition and approval.

Deborah: "I think to a certain extent reusable nappies are kind of fashionable - which shows - 'I can do it'. There are quite a few of us - about 2-3 out of 10 in our anti-natal group use reusable nappies."

This is an example of how consumption practices reveal an individual's identity in social contexts (Belk, 1988). Reusable nappies are symbolic stimuli, which enable Deborah to identify and associate with environmentally-responsible mothers when in

conspicuous situations with her child, such as the anti-natal group. Solomon (1983, p. 319) proposed that many products contribute to the consumers social reality, self-concept and behaviour, as the social meanings inherent in products guide appropriate consumption behaviour for certain social roles. Deborah's use of reusable nappies on her daughter indicates membership to favourable reference groups (i.e., environmentally-responsible mothers). Meanwhile, the use of reusable nappies also disassociates her from an avoidance reference group of mothers who use disposable nappies on their children (Hogg, et al., 2009). Deborah admits that reusable nappies are "fashionable" as it shows to others that she is an environmentally-responsible mother and contributes to the green movement.

Green products are symbols which transfer meaning to the user and are important mediators of social roles, self-concept maintenance and enhancement (McCracken, 1983, 1990). The following example illustrates the in-group versus out-group comparison process as Bridget expresses her view and her social groups' view of SUV vehicles.

Bridget: "I think there is a general acceptance among my friends now that most of them wouldn't buy an SUV. I find generally among people I know, to have an SUV is embarrassing or you have to find a really good reason and excuse for it. I don't think many of my friends would buy one as their first car, as a thing to drive around town. They wouldn't buy an SUV."

The quote demonstrates the idea of "collective self", where an individual may seek to satisfy the goals of important favourable reference groups, meanwhile also evading the goals of avoidance reference groups. The purchase of an SUV vehicle would associate Bridget (Case 6) with avoidance reference groups that are deemed negative by Bridget's social group, due to incompatible interests with the environment. This finding supports other research which has found that consumers define their social reference groups based on the products and brands they consume (Banister & Hogg, 2004). Products and brands are a powerful symbol which transfer meaning through associations and indicate membership of particular social categories (McCracken, 1983, 1990).

However, the findings also reveal that green behaviour is an equally important symbol of group membership. The following quote explores the phenomenon of associating with others who share similar consumption and environmental values while disassociating with those who do not.

Bridget: "When we go to people's places - I mean a lot of our friends are 'green' anyway but if I go to someone's house and they've got a lot of pre-packaged food or you go to someone's house and I say 'do you compost?' And they say 'no I just chuck everything in the bin.' Essentially a lot of people we associate with at the moment are not like that. But you notice straight away. You do notice it, but you don't say anything. I've tried to learn not to say anything."

As this example illustrates, Bridget, a "green" consumer, generally associates with people who convey similar consumption values to her own. Affiliation with people who do not share these consumption values, would somewhat contribute to the undesired-self and would associate Bridget with avoidance reference groups. Therefore, Bridget may distance herself from people who buy a lot of pre-packaged food or who do not compost or recycle their waste. Consumers who uphold strong pro-environmental values may willingly disassociate from any person or group whose actions are opposed to their pro-environmental interests.

4.5.2. Being judged by others

This section is concerned with how participants judge themselves based on perceptions of how they feel others in the social environment judge their own consumption behaviour. The examples reflect "reference group theory" (Kelley, 1952), as participants tradeoff decisions between self and collective interests. The level of tradeoff depends on group pressure to comply with the expectations and behaviour of significant reference groups (Gupta & Odgen, 2009). Jackson (2005) also found that consumers are influenced by social and group norms, which reprimand or encourage certain behavioural choices. It is evident that how we view others shapes our view of ourselves. Therefore Spencer, Fein and Lomore (2001, p. 42) argue that this dynamic interplay with others, is a fundamental part of self-image

maintenance. The findings of this study illustrate that a participant's green consumption behaviour is heavily influenced by their perception of green social norms.

Some participants feel compelled to adjust their consumption behaviour in order to receive social approval. For example, Fiona (Case 2) bought a Keep-cup for her coffee, although she stopped using it for some time due to inconvenience. A "Keep-cup", is a reusable coffee-cup purchased from a café, you must wash it yourself and then take it back to the café for your next coffee. Fiona was encouraged to resume using her Keep-cup despite its inconvenience, are a result of behaviour reinforcement from the barista at the café.

Fiona: "I have a Keep-cup for my coffee. I've gone back to using it again. I was really good at using it at the start but then I got quite lazy because it's actually harder to have a Keep-cup because you've got to rinse it out and wash it yourself each time, and then remember to take it with you when you go out for coffee. There was a period of time when I got quite lazy and I'd go into the coffee store and the guy would be like 'oh you didn't bring your Keep-cup' and I'd be like 'oh yeah I forgot it... I forgot it today as well.' I guess I did feel guilty and that was obviously why I switched back to using it again because I became consciously aware of it, and realised that I don't like not doing it. Josh was just affirming that I should be using a Keep-cup. And now that I've gone back to using the Keep-cup, I'm always like 'Josh [the barista], I bought the Keep-cup this morning'."

Initially, Fiona was able to neutralise her non-use of the Keep-cup, by describing the inconvenience and hassle of using it. However following this, Fiona de-neutralises the behaviour, by continuing to use the Keep-cup to avoid negative effects to her self-image and diminish feelings of guilt. The example illustrates the effects of impression management (Schlenker, 1980), public self-image and identity (Shavitt, 1990). Fiona wishes to maintain a certain impression in front of others which requires practising certain consumption behaviour consistent with her desired self-image and identity (Markus & Wurf, 1987; Schlenker, 1980). Fiona's Keep-cup is conspicuously used and therefore non-use can induce negative evaluations from

people in her social environment, which may negatively affect “public-self-image” (Shavitt, 1990). Public awareness of environmental issues and related consumption behaviour encourages consumers to be “consciously aware” of their own consumption habits. Therefore, members of the public and even commercial friendships are contributors to green consumption behaviour and pro-environmental behaviour change, as they instil a sense of accountability and responsibility within individuals.

Most participants are aware of other's consumption habits, especially with regard to recycling and waste. Greta (Case 1) was somewhat distressed by the use of plastic bags at the supermarket, when there are greener alternatives available. Meanwhile, Greta also acknowledges that sometimes she forgets to bring her own reusable bags and may use plastic supermarket bags on certain occasions.

Greta: “I see at the supermarket the bags that are being given out. There are a lot of reusable bags available now and you might see one or two people and others just have trolleys full of plastic bags and that's just one aspect of it. I just think to myself ‘why aren't more people using recyclable bags? Is it a hassle to use them? Are they like me sometimes and leave them in the car? Or at home?’ If I do a big shop and I have like 10-12 New World bags I feel a bit guilty cause I've got my recycle bags in the car at home. I feel like wearing a badge saying my recycle bags are in the car!”

There is a stigma attached to the use of plastic bags, which correlates to environmental irresponsibility, while reusable bags are a symbol of environmental responsibility. As a result, Greta tries to comprehend why some people continue to use plastic bags, when reusable bags have become widely available and are used by the majority of shoppers. Reusable bags are becoming a social norm and symbol of acceptable consumption behaviour. When Greta forgets her reusable bags, she feels that others may disapprove, or view her negatively - the way she views others when they use plastic bags at the supermarket.

Some forms of green consumption behaviour are becoming more public, as people start to observe and evaluate the green consumption behaviour of other people. The findings also reveal that some participants are encouraged to make their private

consumption public. Some people even discuss their private environmental practices or products, to enhance self-esteem through social approval. By making private consumption of rubbish bags public, Annette and Anton's (Case 7) friends encouraged them to reconsider their own levels of waste. Awareness of the consumption and waste levels of others can influence individual and household consumption behaviour. Annette and Anton are especially concerned about the environmental cost of their waste compared with other households.

Annette: "We have just out of our own interest been trying to get the number of rubbish bags we put out down – and we've got it down to 3 a year. But we have known friends who had one bag a year."

Anton: "So certainly we have a neighbour who puts out one bag a month and she is pretty proud of that, we haven't told her how many we put out. Most people I guess put out a bag a week. It's hard to get the number of bags down."

Annette and Anton both feel somewhat insecure about their amount of rubbish compared to their neighbours and friends. As a result, Annette and Anton have come to view the process of reducing their waste, as a game or challenge, to minimise waste. This example relates to the theories of "signalling" and "competitive altruism", that infer conspicuous displays of altruism can function to build and maintain a pro-social reputation (Griskevicius, et al., 2010). Green practices, such as reducing waste and rubbish bags can demonstrate to others that they are willing and able to incur the cost and potential inconvenience of practising behaviour that benefits the environment and society. When households are involved in comparative feedback, a sense of social competition, comparison and pressure is evoked (Abrahamse, et al., 2005). This has led to waste practices, including recycling and reducing the number of rubbish bags, being socially observed judged and evaluated and consequently part of the construction and maintenance of a pro-environmental social identity.

4.5.3. Judging others

Several participants identified violations of green social norms by other consumers. The findings show how social norms regarding appropriate green consumption behaviour have become engrained in society and its citizens. It also demonstrates how the participants disapprove of those who breach these unspoken social rules about acceptable consumption behaviour. The undesirable consumption habits observed by the participants are synonymous to avoidance or negative reference groups. Avoidance groups function as negative anchors for consumers (Englis & Solomon, 1995), helping the participants to identify “what not to do”.

It was clear throughout the interviews that participants observe and criticise the consumption habits of other consumers including family, friends, neighbours, colleagues and the public. The responses of participants reveal that recycling, reusable supermarket bags, and waste reduction have become prevalent green social norms in New Zealand society. These norms shape behaviour by creating an expectation of what “should” or “ought” to be done. This is reinforced by Bruce (Case 6) who feels that certain consumption behaviour is perceived negatively in society.

Bruce: “I think a general lack of respect has grown for deliberate overuse, just reckless overuse that once upon a time people would’ve laughed at. Wastage, deliberate wastage I think people do respond more negatively to that now.”

The reduced tolerance for environmentally irresponsible actions has led some participants to review and critique the consumption habits of other consumers. The following quotes reveal that some participants readily criticise the consumption habits of others either directly in public or discreetly in private. Bridget (Case 6) is prepared to publically reprimand others for non-environmental consumption habits.

Bridget: "I was talking to a guy at work about this and it was quite interesting. He said, 'nah the Council doesn't recycle. I used to have one of those green bins and I just used to chuck everything in together'. And I said "that's like giving your children heroin'. It [what other people do] can be quite shocking - work's really bad."

Green consumption behaviour such as recycling is obviously extremely important to Bridget and in this instance, she feels compelled to condemn the behaviour of her work colleague. Bridget makes a rather extreme comparison between incorrect recycling and "giving your children heroine". Bridget's intense comments are in contrast to statements discussed in a later section (section 4.5.4.1.3. pp. 137-138), whereby she acknowledges that a direct somewhat aggressive approach such as this is ineffective. Meanwhile, Annette (Case 7) has a more subtle approach to reviewing other peoples' consumption behaviour.

Annette: "Once every month or two, somebody will come around and bring something and we will look at the packaging of it and critique it once they are gone."

Other researchers have identified that while a persons own "personal consumption, be it for environmental reasons or otherwise is meaningful to them, there is a failure to view other peoples' consumption in the same light" (Connolly & Prothero, 2008, p. 128). The following excerpts outline how Darryl (Case 4) experiences this phenomenon through his own observation and judgment of his neighbours recycling habits.

Darryl: "You know when you walk past and you see the rubbish bags and you can see newspapers and all that sort of crap in the rubbish bags. That sort of stuff just makes me wild because its such minimal effort to do your minor part, but that minor part when you times it by four million people it's such a huge difference."

Following this statement, Darryl reflects on his own recycling habits.

Darryl: "I mean I would've just thrown it in the rubbish bin because its just there, it would be a case of throw that there and go and do something else. So sometimes it is an inconvenience thing, but then I also think that if I'm going to call other people sort of lazy for not making any effort what-so-ever then I can't be a hypocritical individual."

These excerpts reveal strong contradictions and dichotomy in Darryl's behaviour. As illustrated by Darryl's statements, when his neighbour's poor recycling habits concerned, he becomes angry and upset. Meanwhile, Darryl acknowledges that sometimes his recycling habits are inconsistent, especially when he puts items in the rubbish instead of recycling or composting due to inconvenience. The negative emotions experienced by Darryl imply that he believes the responsibility for the environmental damage of unnecessary waste is ascribed to other people.

It is apparent that Darryl seeks to position his consumption habits as "better" than other citizens in mainstream society due to a desire to maintain a particular sense of difference or distinction from others (Connolly & Prothero, 2005, p. 129). This incident may be described as "defensive projection" (Freud, 1939). According to this view, when people are motivated to avoid seeing certain faults in themselves they contrive instead to see those same faults in others (Newman, Duff, & Baumeister, 1997, p. 980). Newman et al. (1997, p. 982) suggests that the self-concept can affect how we perceive others and judgements reflecting this bias may in fact serve a defensive purpose. Attributing blame to other people can serve as a self-protective function to reduce potential blame for socially undesirable behaviour (Newman, et al., 1997, p. 982).

It is clear that some participants appeal to social norms as justification for what they do or for what others should do. There were examples where the non-environmental consumption behaviours of other people caused a negative reaction from the participants. Lewiski (1983 as cited in Newman, et al., 1997, p. 319) demonstrates that people choose to judge others on dimensions that are personally relevant, which enhances the probability that one will be seen as superior to another. Some

participants make judgements on other people's behaviour so that they maintain or enhance their self-evaluations through selective comparisons.

4.5.4. Greening strategies

A significant finding of this research is that several participants have deliberately influenced others at a consumer and organisational level to adopt greener consumption behaviour and practices. Several participants use influence and power strategies to encourage others to consume and behave green, or at least think about green issues at a consumer level. At an organisational level, participants use voting and public coordination strategies to influence organisations toward greener or more environmentally-responsible business practices. Participants who prioritise green issues may use these strategies to promote greener behaviour in other consumers or organisations.

4.5.4.1. *Consumer level*

Greening strategies used at the consumer level are related to social learning and socialisation theories. These strategies pre-empt pro-environmental behaviour change and green consumption behaviour. The findings illustrate the deliberate strategies consumers use to influence green consumption behaviour through stimulating, controlling, facilitating, observing and modelling green consumption behaviour (see Figure 16).

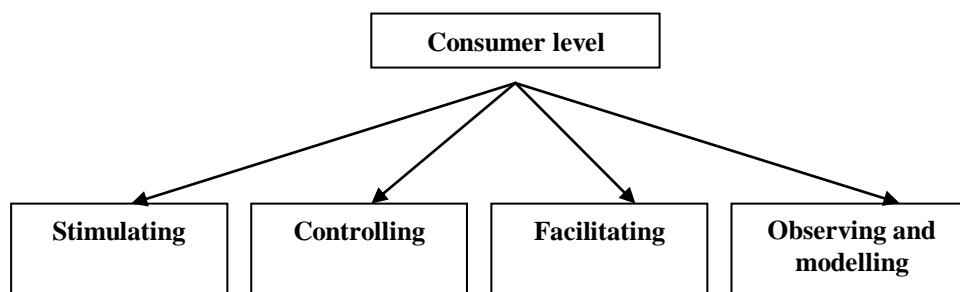


Figure 16: Consumer-level greening strategies

4.5.4.1.1. Stimulating green consumption behaviour

This sub-section reviews how participants stimulate green consumption behaviour in others through informing, reminding and motivating others to uptake greener consumption habits (see Figure 17).

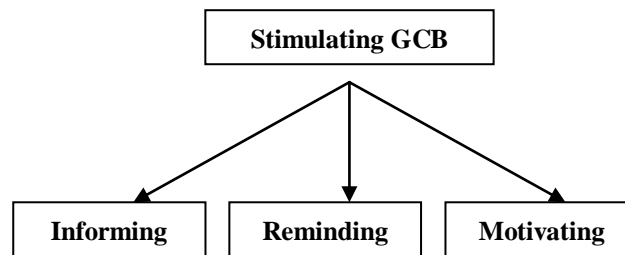


Figure 17: Stimulating techniques

Some participants intentionally inform others about green consumption behaviour. These participants encourage friends and family members to participate in pro-environmental behaviour through education.

Greta: “My mum used to have a wheelie-bin, and she would put everything in it. Until I told her that she was harming the environment and said ‘why aren’t you recycling?’ And so she does that now which is good - and it’s cheaper for her too.”

Greta (Case 1) encourages her mother to recycle by explaining the adverse environmental consequences of recycling incorrectly and incentivises pro-environmental action by informing of cost savings. Advising of the additional benefits to being “green” increases other people’s motivation to adopt green behaviour, as has been shown in other examples (see section 4.4.2.1.3. pp. 107-109). These findings support other studies, which reveal that adults re-socialise each other by informing others about environmental issues and related consumption behaviour (Gronhoj, 2006).

Meanwhile, Greta’s partner, Gordon (Case 1) describes how Greta also introduced him to the concept of recycling and therefore changed his waste habits.

Gordon: "Well I guess she was doing things like recycling and that before I sort of got into it. She probably got me doing it. Whereas initially I was quite happy just to throw everything out. But I guess she was aware of supposed issues of the environment before I was."

Gordon admits that he is not as environmentally aware or concerned as his wife, Greta. This quote from Gordon, also suggests that he is sceptical of "supposed issues" concerned with the environment. Other literature has identified that generally females are more pro-environmental than males (Diamantopoulos, Schlegelmilch, Sinkovics, & Bohlen, 2003; Gronhoj, 2006). While Greta has re-socialised Gordon to adopt greener consumption behaviour through recycling, it is evident that sometimes Gordon encourages Greta to perform green behaviour correctly.

Greta: [Gordon] "might pick up when I might put something in the bin and he will say 'ah that should be in the recycling or compost. You know it can go in the compost'."

Gordon: "With the vegetable waste that could go into the compost I think maybe I was more keen to do that than Greta was, I think that she was quite happy to throw everything out in the rubbish, but I had to persuade her to put food scraps into a separate container so that I could throw it out on the compost bin."

These statements reveal that in Greta and Gordon's relationship, at times the tables are turned, and the greener household member is reminded by another household member to practice green consumption behaviour. There has been minimal research into male and female roles with regard to green consumption behaviour. However, research by Gronhoj (2006, p. 499) revealed that in households where the practice of composting had been firmly established, was largely due to the effort of the husband. A subsequent study by Gronhoj and Olander (2007, p. 218) also suggested that there is gender-based inside-outside division of household responsibilities with regard to green consumption behaviour, supposedly due to the distribution of household and consumption roles. In conjunction with an earlier statement from Gordon (see section 4.2. pp. 79-81), the findings of this research contribute to further understanding by

showing the potential cost motivations that drive males to participate in green consumption behaviour, such as recycling and composting of household waste.

Meanwhile, another case describes the motivational influence of household members who stimulate the uptake of green behaviour in another person. Annette (Case 7) has a motivational influence over Anton (Case 7), introducing environmental initiatives to their household. While Anton was interested in these initiatives, Annette is the key driver of their subsequent implementation.

Anton: "I guess one difference might be with the big things that we do, you're [Annette] more of a motivator there. I would be less motivated to make the changes that we make, although I am really happy with them once they happen. So things like the skylight, the skylight might have happened a year or two later if it had of been left up to me. Whereas Annette pushed that along - the same with the solar panels, Annette has also influenced my behaviour in terms of refilling bottles at Common Sense Organic. I think I am much more likely to do it now than I would have been five or ten years ago."

Annette and Anton are both passionate about environmental issues. However, Anton acknowledges that if he had control over what green practices and products were adopted in the household, then they would not be implemented as quickly or effectively. The findings support research by Gronhoj (2006) who also inferred that the wives or females in the household were generally the initiators of green consumption practices, although spousal agreement on the issue was necessary for the entire household to adopt and continue with the practice. In this case, Annette encourages Anton to adopt greener household systems and practice green behaviour more efficiently and Anton is supportive of these environmental initiatives.

4.5.4.1.2. Controlling green consumption behaviour

The participants acknowledge that they influence and are influenced by other household members toward greener consumption behaviour and habits. In some cases, the participants exert control over others with influence strategies and use of power (see Figure 18).

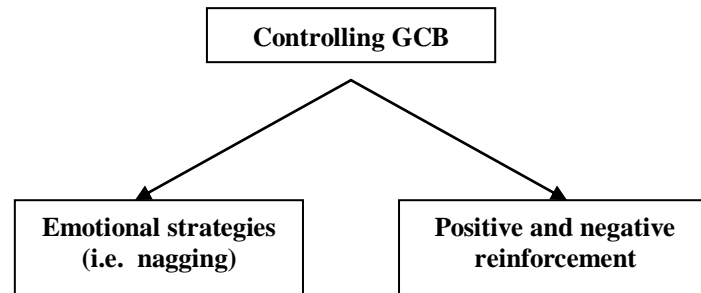


Figure 18: Controlling techniques

Fiona (Case 2) often uses emotional strategies to exercise control over what is purchased, especially in terms of green products. While consumption is at times purely individual, it is often a collective experience and therefore the adoption of some green consumption behaviour requires commitment, support and cooperation from other household members (Gronhoj, 2006; Kennedy, et al., 2009). As Fiona holds strong environmental and ethical values (i.e., sustainability and animal welfare), through previous experience she has learnt that Fred is more likely to compromise for her because of these values.

Fiona: [Fred] “more compromises for me I think. So he would compromise for things like woodland eggs and green household products and toilet paper and stuff more than what I would compromise for him. Because he doesn’t really care, whereas I care - so I normally win.”

In general, Fred is more cost-driven and often compromises on the cost of products for greener attributes, in order to avoid negative reactions, as evidenced in the following example:

Fred: "Nagging, general fuss, just giving in to avoid a scene. It's like that ad with the 2-year old who has a tantrum. It's kind of like that with Fiona."

Fiona uses emotionally-laden reactions to influence Fred's behaviour, defined as an "emotional influence strategy" (Davis, 1976; Spiro, 1983). Fiona feels that she has legitimate reasons for purchasing green products and therefore Fred should compromise for her. Whereas, Fred generally concedes to Fiona's demands in order to avoid tantrums and public emotional confrontations. Therefore, Fiona can "normally win" purchase disputes through using persuasive techniques and emotional influence strategies to maintain relative control over green product purchases. As these disagreements about product purchases often occur when Fiona and Fred are shopping together, Fiona has the ability to secure "future purchase commitment" (Davis, 1976) from Fred. When Fred agrees to purchase certain green products on one occasion, it is more difficult for him to retract and purchase a different product at a later stage.

Meanwhile, Deborah (Case 4) deliberately comments on her spouse's recycling and waste habits in order to encourage greener behaviour in the household.

Deborah: "Probably just telling him every time he goes to put it in the rubbish bin. I've actually actively come and said 'no it doesn't go in there.' And then some of the time if he's not at home I just take the plastic out and put it in the right place and then make a passing comment."

Sheth (1974) found that persuasive techniques embrace emotive forms of gaining influence such as "nagging". Therefore, "nagging" is an emotional strategy employed by Fiona and Deborah, to "persuade or dominate their partner by using emotive appeals and non-verbal techniques to gain control over the purchase outcome" (Davis, 1976, pp. 255-256).

With power and influence strategies, other household members are manipulated into performing green consumption behaviour with a greater level of consistency. Alternatively, household members may be motivated by "not-so-green" reasons, such as practising green consumption behaviour in order to avoid being nagged. Overtime,

and over the course of the relationship, Fiona's control over Fred's purchases and Deborah's control over Darryl's recycling habits may result in permanent behaviour change, as the male household members adapt to their partner's "green" requirements. Decision history can create carry-over effects in the case of decision conflicts (Hoyer, 1984), as green purchases and practices become a habitual part of household consumption behaviour.

Some participants use positive and negative reinforcement as a mechanism to control consumption behaviour. Positive reinforcement is considered a reward that is likely to increase the practice of pro-environmental behaviour (Bandura, 1969). Based on this idea, Bruce (Case 6) subtly encourages his brother to practice green behaviour and disincentives non-environmental behaviour.

Bruce: "Because of course we are pushing people into corners they don't want to be in, so what I tend to do with my brother is encourage him. I treat him like a kid, he doesn't see me doing it but to me I'm treating him like a child. By encouraging him when I see him do positive things. Just being less impressed. So when he buys the flash BMW I am like 'oh poor you!' You know?"

Bruce describes the discrete use of positive and negative reinforcement to manipulate his brother toward greener consumption behaviour. It should be noted, that in addition to BMW's, this household case does not view SUV's as an acceptable vehicle (as highlighted by Bridget's statement in section: 4.5.1.1. pp. 120-123). Despite Bruce's distaste for certain types of consumption behaviour, he has found that generally people do not appreciate or respond well to being told what to do. Therefore, Bruce uses social power, rewards and punishments to influence behaviour by controlling the positive and negative feedback his brother receives. According to Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002, p. 246), a person must receive positive reinforcement to continue with certain ecological behaviour. For this reason, Bruce ensures that his brother's green behaviour is rewarded with both social approval and recognition while his brother receives the opposite reaction for non-environmental behaviour.

4.5.4.1.3. Facilitating green consumption behaviour

Some participants facilitate the green behaviour of other people by providing the tools and knowledge to perform pro-environmental processes. Bridget (Case 6) supplies family members with the tools and materials to compost their own organic waste.

Bridget: "I bought my parents a worm-farm and I bought them a bicashi bucket so they do all of that. But I think people have to come to it themselves you can't force it."

While Bridget may provide the tools for greener behaviour, she also acknowledges that people must adopt pro-environmental behaviour without pressure from other people. Both Bridget and Bruce realise that forcing green consumption behaviour upon others, is an ineffective strategy for promoting pro-environmental behaviour change. For altruistic reasons, both Bridget and Bruce (Case 6) make concessions for others based on their own personal pro-environmental values. Both of these participants try to enable green consumption behaviour in other people. Bridget and Bruce have been known to recycle their colleagues' plastic containers and compost coffee grounds from work, at their home. Bridget and Bruce compensate for the lack of green consumption behaviour in others by enabling and sometimes performing green consumption behaviour on the behalf of other people.

Bridget: "There is always a drawer of containers at work, and if I find them I take them out of the rubbish because I can't believe that people at work throw them out."

Bruce: "We [Bruce and Bridget] have both become very green and I know Bridget does things at work, like she brings home coffee grounds from work and things like that. We both do that when people bring containers from buying their lunch and go into the lunchroom, have their lunch and then put their containers in the rubbish bin. I get them out, wash them, and take them home. My wife has been guilty of that a few times too I think."

Bridget and Bruce are among the greenest participants in this study and they both acknowledge that they are “very green” in terms of their values and consumption behaviour. These pro-environmental values have led them to look beyond their own consumption habits and to that of others. They are both very action-oriented and have a sense of duty and even obligation to facilitate greener consumption behaviour in other people, as well as themselves. While they recognise it is better if people “come to it themselves”, it is also clear that both Bridget and Bruce find it difficult to refrain from imposing their pro-environmental values upon others.

4.5.4.1.4. Observing and modelling green consumption behaviour

The findings show that participants observe, model and role model green consumption behaviour (see Figure 19). Observational learning (also known as vicarious learning, social learning or modelling) is a type of learning that occurs as a function of observing, retaining and replicating novel behaviour performed by others (Bandura, 1969, 1971; Bandura, et al., 1963a, 1963b). According to research by Bandura and colleagues, social learning theory is based on the idea that we often learn behaviour through observing and subsequently imitating others who perform certain behaviours.

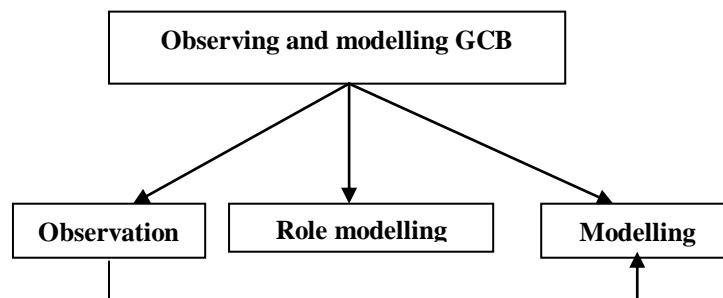


Figure 19: Observing and modelling techniques

It is evident throughout the findings that consumers are aware of the observational learning process and perform behaviour in the hope that others would observe and subsequently adopt the green consumption behaviour they practice.

Candice: "I think you do whatever you can, and you're dealing with human nature and so what I'd just try to do is focus on myself, but I think – it could spillover to other people. The flatmates see me trying to recycle and all this sort of stuff."

While Candice (Case 5) is very focussed on her own individual behaviour, she anticipates that her behaviour may "spillover to other people". Moreover, Bridget (Case 6) believes that other people's observation of her green consumption behaviour will have a greater influence on behaviour rather than telling others what to do.

Bridget: "I'm just learning to keep my mouth shut because it actually doesn't help. People observing you is more likely to influence people than telling people what to do - I think it can have the opposite effect."

This quote from Bridget is in contrast to other instances where she has been very vocal about educating and informing others of appropriate pro-environmental action (as discussed in section 4.5.3. p. 128). Bridget's statement, "I'm learning to keep my mouth shut", suggests that she has found "telling people what to do" is a less-effective strategy. A significant finding of this research is that several participants deliberately perform green consumption behaviour in anticipation that other people will imitate their behaviour.

Modelling, based on Bandura's learning theory (Bandura, 1977), entails providing examples of recommended behaviour. A role model is generally a person who serves as an example and whose behaviour is generally emulated by others (Bandura, 1977). The participants recognise the important role they play in modelling green consumption behaviour to other consumers. Annette (Case 7) advocates environmental issues and related consumption behaviour, leading by example.

Annette: "So I have since then really taken it on that if I believe in something I should do it and even though I am one person and some people may argue it's not going to have an effect, I think it does have an effect. Because a) it makes me feel like I have done the best I can and b) other people can see me and follow my example. It's a drop in the bucket - it does something."

Annette believes that while her contribution to behaviour change may be small, it might have some impact. Participating in green consumption behaviour also makes Annette “feel like I have done the best I can” and is therefore important to her self-esteem maintenance. Meanwhile, Bruce (Case 6) is a role model for behaviour change, involved in challenging social norms about “normal” or “acceptable” forms of green behaviour.

Bruce: “One of the things I do and I do it deliberately, is I wear a suit most days, I deliberately dress well because I want people to notice me when I pick up rubbish. One of the things I like to do is pick up rubbish in the street. I am deliberately doing it because what I’m thinking. I think it stops people - it’s a form of residual embarrassment, they just don’t want to be seen doing things like that. So if they see somebody else doing it then in some way it normalises it they go ‘oh I saw that guy doing that’. It makes them think about it too. You tend to after a while switch off to things like rubbish in the street. Especially if it’s not the cleaner - ‘some guy in a suit, did you see that!?’ So I am my own little social experiment.”

The contradictory combination of wearing a suit and collecting rubbish means that people are more likely to notice Bruce’s behaviour, because it is unusual and not the behaviour expected of a typical businessperson. Bruce feels that people have become immune to rubbish on the street and he attempts to make people consciously aware of litter through his actions. Bruce further explains that genuine acts, such as altruistic rubbish collecting, may have a much greater influence on people’s behaviour, because the behaviour is deemed more authentic or genuine.

Bruce: “If you’re going to have in some ways a much smaller influence because people don’t notice as much initially then in other ways it is a lot larger influence because it is seen as a much more genuine thing that you are doing.”

Bruce provides an interesting juxtaposition between stereotypical images and societal expectations of appropriate behaviour and roles. Bruce attempts to normalise rubbish collecting, an act, which most people would consider embarrassing to perform.

Rubbish collecting while wearing a business suit, is not common practice and may even be considered “alternative” or “extreme” behaviour. Other studies have found that radical approaches to being a “green” consumer, such as Bruce’s example, are marginalised in society (Moisander & Pesonen, 2002). Therefore, Bruce’s behaviour may not achieve the result intended (i.e., to encourage others to perform similar behaviour), due to principles of cognitive consistency (McGuire, 1990; Norman, 1975). Alternatively, because Bruce wears a business suit whilst collecting rubbish, his appearance is considered more “mainstream”. As a result, Bruce’s actions may normalise the behaviour, whereas someone dressed alternatively (i.e., as a hippie) may be viewed as “radical” or “extreme”.

Barr (2007) found that most consumers identify with the majority and are more likely to adopt behaviours practiced by others. Social categorisation and social identity theories (Sherif, 1963; Tajfel, 1978, 1981) help to explain why consumers prefer to identify with the majority in society who practice consumption behaviour deemed “normal”, rather the minority who practice “alternative” consumption behaviour. When behaviour is viewed as “alterative” or “extreme”, it is generally associated with avoidance reference groups. While this perception of “normal” versus “alternative” remains, some consumers may resist pro-environmental behaviour change.

While observation and role modelling are important predecessors to behaviour change, there is an important distinction between observation, role modelling and modelling (Bandura, 1969). While other consumers may notice green consumption behaviour practiced by others, it does not imply simultaneous behaviour change. However, when a person models or imitates green consumption behaviour, the observations are internalised and pro-environmental behaviour change has occurred (Bandura, 1971, 1977). Bandura’s (1977) theory of modelling behaviour, also assumes that the examples set by role-models will be followed when they are understandable, relevant, meaningful and rewarding to people. For example, through observing Annette cycling, one of her friends started to cycle instead of driving or using public transport.

Annette: “A friend actually said to me once ‘oh you know I never used to bike anywhere but you two have taught me to bike’. I had a feeling of almost shock

because I didn't realise that we had that affect on her. So I tend to have this feeling of we are living our lives and if we influence people then that is amazing!"

Annette also expressed that she observed and eventually modelled green consumption behaviour practiced by a previous flatmate.

Annette: "We lived together with other people in a flat for a while and so we just looked at him [other flatmate] and thought 'wow that's amazing that he can do that'. But we didn't really apply it to our own situation until we got our own home."

Annette did not immediately apply observations of her flatmate's behaviour to her own habits until she owned her own home. Annette only internalised her observations when it was personally relevant and when she had the opportunity to somewhat control the consumption habits of the household. This example reiterates the idea that the adoption of green consumption behaviour may take time and certain conditions (i.e., self-efficacy and locus of control) before permanent pro-environmental behaviour change can take place.

Through experience, some participants' have realised that the most effective way of influencing others, is through other people observing their own actions. Other studies have also found that conspicuous pro-environmental acts such as curb-side recycling programmes, increase the influence of peer participation and modelling (Oskamp, et al., 1991). The findings of this research are unique because they demonstrate how consumers observe and model green consumption behaviour of others. Some consumers even contribute to pro-environmental behaviour change, by being role models to others.

4.5.4.2. Organisational level

Some participants attempt to encourage green behaviour at an organisational level (see Figure 20). This involves supporting environmentally responsible organisations through purchases, meanwhile avoiding environmentally irresponsible organisations through non-purchase. Some participants are also involved in political action and boycotts of products and brands with environmentally-damaging business practices and operations.

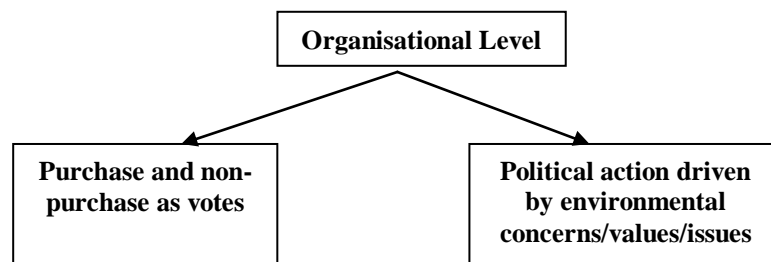


Figure 20: Organisational-level greening strategies

4.5.4.2.1. Purchase and non-purchase as “votes”

Throughout the research, it is clear that some participants view purchase and non-purchase as “votes”. The concept of purchase votes is used in a similar sense to votes in the political system - a purchase vote can influence which product will fail or survive and succeed (Shaw, et al., 2006). Using purchases as votes empowers consumers as they become instrumental to organisational change. The participants believe that as more consumers adopt a product, and demand for that product increases, more producers and suppliers enter the market. The originally high price of the product gradually becomes more affordable to the wider population. Bruce and Bridget (Case 6) feel empowered to use consumption as a medium of organisation and social change by using purchase “votes” to influence market-based mechanisms and encourage other people to do the same.

Bruce: “For those kinds of reasons you’re kind of reducing the carbon thing a bit, and know that your purchasing decision is influencing things. Encourage those people - you know, show them - be part of the market because essentially

the market supplies to demand. I consciously try to create that demand in my decisions.”

Bridget: “Free-range eggs used to be really expensive but they no longer are because people started buying them, if more people come into the market they become cheaper. Like I said with the chickens and the eggs, we knew that if it catches on then the prices will come down that’s hopefully the same with pork and other things – which is why we should be doing it with buying organic. Sometimes we’ll just buy token organic things so that they keep stocking them in the supermarket.”

Bridget uses her purchases as votes for most environmental and ethical products but she regrets that her household does not apply the same principles for organic products. Bridget also states that she buys “token organic things” to show her support for organic producers but this is not as consistent as her regular purchase of free-range products. Meanwhile, some participants also discuss how “non-purchase” is just as important as what they do purchase. Participants deliberately avoid certain products they believe to be environmentally harmful or organisations that are perceived to be environmentally irresponsible.

Bridget: “I think if consumers demanded things that were better packaged or didn’t have various poisons and things like that, they would stop making them if that’s what people wanted – because you’re voting with your money. I always look for reduced packaging, if things are over-packaged I won’t buy them, but I also look at whether the packaging is recyclable.”

Bruce: “If they blew it on the packaging they would lose me straight away. For me personally at the moment, packaging is a big deal. I will deliberately not buy something that is delivered in plastic.”

Bridget and Bruce consider the environmental credentials of products based on physical appearance (i.e., packaging). Other participants (i.e., Annette) also base their purchase decisions on product appearance and packaging (refer to section 4.4.1.3.2. pp. 101-103). The amount of packaging, excessive packaging and the type of plastic

are important signals of environmental impact. Consumers are empowered to choose between “green” and “conventional” alternatives. Ethical and green consumption goes beyond the individual act in the marketplace (Cherrier, 2007) and expresses the idea that each individual action can influence the world we live in. The findings illustrate that some participants use their consumption as “votes” (Connolly & Prothero, 2008; Shaw, et al., 2006) in favour of more environmentally and socially responsible products through “buy-cotting” (buying environmentally and socially-responsible products) and against others through “boycotting” (avoiding environmentally-harmful products) (Friedman, 1996).

As consumption behaviour is linked to social and collective identity, an individual's identity is reflected in the products and brands they choose to purchase and not purchase, which in turn affects self identity (Sirgy, 1982). Hurmoth (1999, p. 281) suggests that packaging serves psychological functions, as it mediates and symbolises social content, it can construct and express an individual's environmental identity. Therefore, in order to maintain a pro-environmental identity, these participants make purchase decisions in accordance with their pro-environmental values. The findings show that the participants enact certain consumption behaviour, purchase and non-purchase of products in an attempt to improve environmental quality and reduce environmental damage.

4.5.2.2.2. Political action driven by environmental values

Political action is closely aligned with the concept of “purchase voting” but involves much more than purchase or non-purchase. One participant undertakes a form of individual civic action by attempting to change organisational processes. Anton (Case 7), is actively involved in encouraging environmental responsibility within organisations and promoting sustainable business practices and packaging. Anton has even written several letters to companies in an attempt to influence them toward environmentally-responsible business operations.

Anton: “As a consumer I recognise that I have a part to play in making those items more financially sustainable because it takes thousands of people to influence a company. I have actually written to a few companies about their

packaging. One example would be Griffins about six or seven years ago. Ginger nuts are an unbreakable biscuit, they can be packaged with one outer shell of packaging as they were for decades with no problems at all - they won't break. Griffins were introducing trays for all of their biscuits and they did that for Ginger nuts - and that was sort of just too much for me. So I wrote to them and complained about the fact that they had made trays as well as the outer wrapping. There was also a time where I was given a polypropylene sports-top and it was packaged ridiculously - as if it was going to be couriered around the world and back again. I wrote them a letter and they actually wrote back and said 'we agree, and we are going to change the packaging'. I noticed a few months later they had changed their packaging. So sometimes you can have an influence and sometimes you can't."

Anton recognises that consumers influence market-based mechanisms, and are part of making environmental products more financially sustainable and viable. He also acknowledges that it takes thousands of people to influence change. However, Anton has approached some companies directly with his concerns and successfully influenced one organisation to change the packaging of a polypropylene sports-top. Furthermore, Anton discusses the use of purchase and non-purchase as a form of voting.

Anton: "They [purchase/non-purchase] are in a way a vote, but the way that I think it works, is that it is a weak vote - if you are purely voting by purchasing something when it's not a campaign or you don't back it up with a letter."

For Anton, writing letters to organisations and retailers is a way to bring environmental awareness to the marketplace. The desire to create, diffuse and educate environmental and social awareness is a primary goal of political consumption (Cherrier, 2009). Anton also discusses cooperative civic action (e.g. protests and boycotts), which facilitate community empowerment by creating links between community members (Rissel, 1994).

Anton: "There is no doubt about it, I mean Cadburys tried to do a dodgy thing for the environment last year by getting their cocoa from an unsustainable source, and the public influenced Cadbury to make a change."

Cooperative civic action requires a group of consumers with the same concerns to collectively work together to enforce behaviour or organisational change (Rissel, 1994), as was the case with the Cadbury example outlined by Anton. According to Wakefield et al. (2006) these civic actions promote individual empowerment and can potentially lead to significant organisational change toward greener consumption behaviour. Cooperative civic action ensures that organisations are held accountable for environmentally irresponsible practices through the reputational damage caused by negative publicity.

4.5.5. Section summary

This section has illustrated how the social environment can shape green consumption behaviour through the perception of social rewards and punishments. At present, social pressure to be "green" is mainly with regard to recycling and waste practices, it has not yet crossed over to green product purchases. The social desirability of "green" encourages most participants to behave in accordance with green social norms for fear of others observing and critiquing their consumption behaviour. Public awareness of environmental issues and the conspicuous nature of some green consumption behaviour have made consumers more accountable for their non-environmental behaviour. For these reasons, "mainstream" (i.e., not-so-green) consumers may practice green consumption behaviour in public but not in private consumption situations. Meanwhile, because "green" consumers have internalised pro-environmental personal norms they are more likely to translate pro-environmental values regardless of the consumption situation.

Throughout the findings, several participants were involved in shaping the consumption behaviour of family, friends, neighbours and work colleagues. The approaches implemented by participants vary from very subtle manipulation of behaviour, to obvious and action-oriented approaches. The greening strategies employed by some participants include stimulating, controlling, facilitating, observing

and modelling green consumption behaviour using tactics of influence, power and persuasion. The findings highlight the personal effort some participants expend in order to encourage pro-environmental behaviour in other people.

Furthermore, some participants were involved in shaping the operations and business practices of organisations. The findings illustrate how consumers use purchase and non-purchase as votes and how they attempt to influence market-based mechanisms to deliver greener alternatives to the marketplace. Some participants are involved in civic action through writing letters and boycotting organisations with environmentally-irresponsible business practices. This section has emphasised how consumers themselves are consciously involved in supporting and encouraging other citizens and organisations to practice environmentally-responsible behaviour and contribute to social and organisational pro-environmental behaviour change.

4.6. Household dynamics

The view that consumption is fundamentally embedded in social relations has been widely acknowledged (Connolly & Prothero, 2008; Douglas, 2001). Therefore, this research has focussed on how green consumption behaviour is addressed within different personal relationships and social experiences. Often being “green” is one aspect of an individual’s identity alongside many other roles and obligations (i.e., mother, breadwinner and/or carer). An individual’s roles and obligations can result in compromise and negotiation within social relations, especially with regard to consumption behaviour. The following sections reveal how personal relationships within households can facilitate and at times inhibit green consumption behaviour of the household and individual consumer.

Using a typology developed by Thompson and Tuden (1959), there are two representations of how a household makes a purchase decision. If decision-making is “consensual” there is either unanimity about what value or desired outcome relevant in the decision and there is no conflict among group members. In contrast, “accommodative” decision-making occurs when there are incompatible consumption priorities and preferences among group members, which may result in conflict, negotiation and compromise. The following sections seek to understand how

household members accommodate the values of others, make decisions and resolve disagreements.

This examines the various drivers and inhibitors of green consumption behaviour within personal relationships. Household dynamics explores how the nature personal relationships (i.e., living arrangement, household lifecycle, household roles, gender roles, types of relationships and length of cohabitation), affects green consumption behaviour. From “household dynamics” stems two sub-themes namely, “adapting to the norms of the household” and “value conflicts within the household” (see Figure 21). Each of these factors affect the consumption behaviour practiced and adopted by the household and household members.

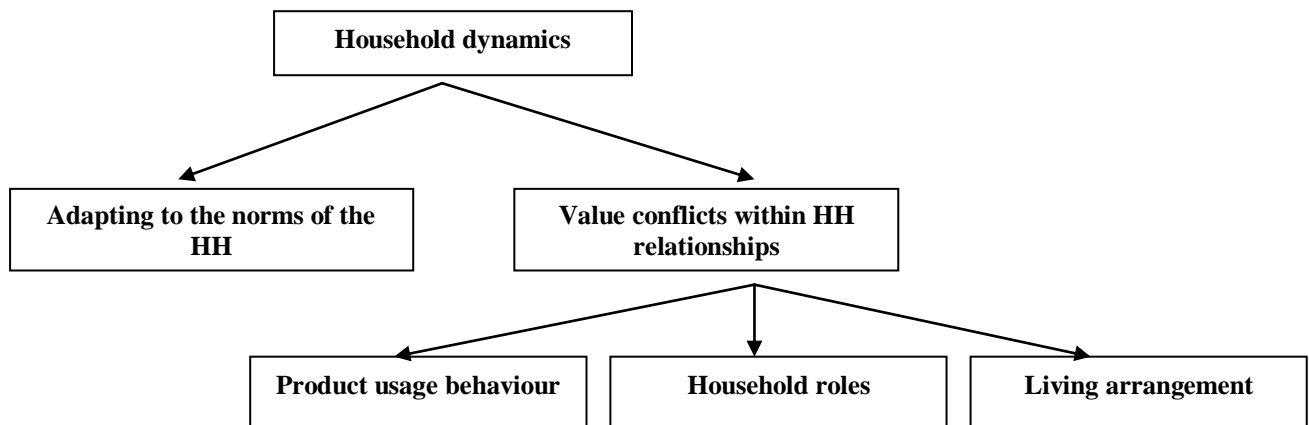


Figure 21: Household (HH) dynamics themes & sub-themes

4.6.1. Adapting to the norms of the household

The findings illustrate how new household members adapt to the practices of a household in order to facilitate smooth social interactions. Within one case in particular, a new member to the household adjusted their consumption behaviour in order to fit in with other household members. In the case of Candice and Cameron (Case 5), Cameron adapted to the composting habits of the household when he moved into Candice's flat.

Cameron: “I put scraps in the scrap thing, put the organic rubbish out in the garden up there - because it was the way to do it so I was like sweet that's what

you do with the rubbish. She [Candice] sort of said that you take the scraps and dig them in the garden.”

Cameron, as a new flatmate was told by Candice about the organic waste processes of the household. Ironically, Candice states:

Candice: [Cameron] “did it even when I wasn’t, so that was really good – because I got a bit slack.”

While Candice “got a bit slack” for a time, Cameron was unaware and continued to compost because he was under the impression that the whole household participated in composting. Cameron is aware of Candice’s environmental and ethical values, and therefore he buys green and ethical products for Candice out of a sign of respect.

Cameron: “Washing powder had to be that eco-store stuff, just taking into account Candice as well. I don’t really know much about it, but I just got told which one to get. I think it’s just a respect thing it doesn’t really matter to myself or Mark, it doesn’t hurt us whereas she has a view on it.”

Candice has genuine reasons based on ethical and environmental values to purchase particular products and practice certain consumption behaviour. This is sufficient justification for Cameron to accommodate the pro-environmental values of the existing flatmate, Candice. The participants cooperated with one another by supporting the important values of the other person. Moreover, new members generally adapt to the rules and values of existing household members, as existing members have legitimate power and influence. As these examples illustrate, some green consumption behaviour is a consequence of residing with certain people and the activities that they practice in the household. Existing household members may re-socialise new members toward certain types of consumption behaviour.

The example above resembles the concept of “situational loyalty” (Dubois & Laurent, 1999; Oliver, 1999), developed in a marketing context to describe how certain situations or conditions encourage or promote loyalty (Bandyopadhyay & Martell, 2007; Rundle-Thiele, 2005). However, the case example in this study illustrates this

concept in a different context, as the social environment encourages green consumption behaviour and commitment to purchasing green products and practising green behaviour. Especially for short-term living situations, this social adaption phenomenon may represent “situational-loyalty” or the adapted term “social-loyalty”, as household members adopt certain consumption behaviour due to individuals in their social environment. However, whether a consumer is “re-socialised” or is being “socially loyal” is unknown and therefore, whether permanent behaviour change has occurred cannot be ascertained.

It was also evident from the findings that when individuals live together for long periods, they develop similar consumption behaviour and habits. Deborah and Darryl (Case 4) have lived together for over ten years and the findings suggest that through their time living together, their green household practices have become more compatible.

Deborah: “I guess because we use the compost and because we recycle things we just both do it now. That’s just kind of how it is. And I don’t know if that’s just happened through time living together and kind of influencing each other, and say ‘no that doesn’t go in the bin it goes in the glass recycling’ or whatever it is. But yeah we both tend to do the same things.”

Darryl also reaffirms Deborah’s statement and suggests that they both encourage each other towards greener consumption behaviour.

Darryl: “That’s the other thing though we keep each other in balance so if one’s waxing the other’s waning.”

These examples demonstrate how household members adapt to the environmental norms of other household members, which may require the adoption of green consumption behaviour. The findings also suggest that as people live together for longer periods they become accustomed to these household norms, which become engrained in their behaviour. Household members may continue to remind other household members to practice pro-environmental activities with greater levels of commitment.

“Social adaption theory” describes how awareness of other’s “values” facilitates adaption in a social environment (Kahle, 1983). Richmond et al. (1972 as cited in Callen-Marchione & Ownbey, 2008, p. 367) emphasise the importance of understanding others by stating that it is “not only urgent but a necessity for human survival, that we learn how to live effectively with others”. Understanding other peoples’ philosophies and values may help to increase tolerance of diverse people and lead to fulfilling relationships with others (Callen-Marchione & Ownbey, 2008). In this study, most cases experienced at least some degree of social adaption by accommodating the pro-environmental values of other household members.

4.6.2. Value conflicts within household relationships

The findings reveal that at times participants are torn between their own beliefs, values and their commitment to maintain personal relationships. Buss and Schaniger (1983, p. 441) suggest that husbands and wives may have different lifestyle values and norms and therefore contrasting consumption priorities and purchase-process preferences. Because households consist of different individuals with contrasting needs and wants, conflict within decision-making is highly probable (Kwai-Choi Lee & Collins, 2000; Qualls, 1987). The participants regularly encounter several value conflicts over a range of products, which sometimes prevent green consumption behaviour. There appears to be more conflict over green purchases as opposed to green behaviour because cost and performance issues are involved.

4.6.2.1. Product use

The findings show that some household members have conflicting values over products purchased and behaviour practiced within the household. Darryl and Deborah (Case 4) encounter a difference of opinion over product use, with regard to disposable nappies, instead of reusable nappies. Deborah becomes annoyed when Darryl uses disposable nappies, partly because disposables are more expensive than reusable nappies, in addition to environmental concerns with waste.

Deborah: "My husband sometimes goes 'oh I put a disposable one on because it's just easier and we're going out', and I'm like 'but there's no reason to'."

Reusable nappies are also important to Deborah because they are a symbolic stimulus and the use of disposable nappies negatively affects her self-image and self-esteem (refer to section 4.4.1.2. pp. 94-96). The negative implication of Darryl's behaviour to Deborah's self-image relates to "symbolic contamination" discussed in section 4.6.2.3. Pages 162-163. When Darryl uses disposable nappies, it negatively affects Deborah's self-image and associates her with avoidance reference groups. Meanwhile Darryl states:

Darryl: "She pushes me more for using the reusable nappies. Whereas if we're going out to say - the markets are a perfect example, we're going to be out for a couple of hours. So I'll put a disposable on her – she [Deborah] doesn't like it. That is probably one of those compromises too. There is sometimes a convenience thing, especially when it comes to her [Deborah and Darryl's daughter]."

Deborah wants to maximise the use of reusable nappies and reduce the use of disposables, for cost-efficiency, environmental and identity related reasons. Meanwhile, Darryl prioritises convenience above these values. The issues relating to disposable versus reusable nappy use remain unresolved, therefore Deborah and Darryl continue to discuss and negotiate this issue within the household. This example may represent other households, who experience similar consumption situations, whereby another household member may prevent the consistent practice of green consumption behaviour.

4.6.2.2. Household roles

Consumption is often embedded in relationships of obligation as most individuals consume, behave and make decisions as members of households, families, social networks and communities (Barnett, 2007). As a result, decisions are not often purely individual and involve the input of other household members. Based on this, it is assumed that relational roles within personal relationships can affect the outcome of

green consumption behaviour. In some cases, the female participants become frustrated and annoyed with males in the household for negatively influencing the outcome of green consumption and behavioural decisions. Greta and Gordon (Case 1) are “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers but Greta was interested in purchasing a steam-mop to clean the wooden floorboards.

Gordon: “Greta was quite convinced that she needed one of these [steam-mops], because the floor looked a bit grubby. It’s because it needs repair or replacement, go over it with a bit of Jiff or Janola and it will be as clean or as hygienic as it would be with a steam-mop. But hey, Greta does the cleaning generally speaking, I don’t so I can’t say to her no you’re not having that.”

Decisions are increasingly the outcome of joint-decision-making, as often they involve several family members (Burns, 1992). Family members tend to perform certain roles (e.g., gatekeeper; influencer, decision-maker, buyer and/or user), these roles are not permanent or mutually exclusive and they change over time and between decisions (Lackman & Lanasa, 1993). Therefore, despite Gordon saying that he could not explicitly say, “you’re not having that” because cleaning is not his household role, Greta chose not to go ahead with the purchase because of Gordon’s opposing opinion.

Greta: “We decided against the steam-mop, I feel it would have been a good green product. Because I wouldn’t be using chemicals on the floor and tossing it down the sink.”

The example of the steam-mop illustrates two instances of household roles from the perspective of both Greta and Gordon. It shows that household members have certain roles, which are a “set of behavioural expectations associated with given positions in a social structure” (Ebaugh, 1988, p. 18). This can result in decisions that may please one member and displease another, as this example demonstrates. The disagreement over the steam-mop purchase meant Greta felt she had to compromise on her green values in order to accommodate Gordon. Meanwhile, Gordon expresses that while he thought that the steam-mop purchase was wasteful, he is unable to make the final decision on domestic household products. Despite not being involved in the final decision, Gordon was very influential in the choice not to purchase the steam-mop.

Other research has also identified that women experience stressful daily social roles (i.e., marital, household and occupational), with strains and stresses in different directions, leading to inter-role and interpersonal conflict (Kandel, Davies, & Raveis, 1985).

This example also highlights conflicting elements of legitimate influence, which recognise the importance of role stereotypes in influencing decision outcomes (Davis, 1976). Gordon admits that Greta deals with the cleaning of the house and therefore theoretically she should dominate the decision. However, Gordon assumes a legitimate leadership role as head of the household, breadwinner and financial controller. Therefore, Gordon generally takes charge during the decision-making process in a stereotypical manner.

Bridget and Bruce (Case 6) experience similar issues with regard to organic product purchase. Within most household cases, it is apparent that one person from a household generally performs the majority of the household shopping. This role structure can legitimise the use of power (Davis, 1976), and as a result, the household shopper has substantial control over what is purchased. As the household shopping is not performed by Bridget herself, she has less control over what is bought, especially with regard to organic produce.

Bridget: "We buy some organic things but not all. Where Bruce and I differ is on the organic. But he would say, 'you want to take responsibility for shopping? Then you can buy organic'. So we haven't really talked about it a lot. I haven't really pushed the organics issue."

While Bridget wants more control over the purchase of organic produce and products, she also wants to maintain harmonious social relations with her husband, Bruce. Bridget also does not have the time to shop herself, so she does not want to push the "organics issue". This value conflict experienced by Bridget is an unresolved issue as she continues to feel uncomfortable about non-organic purchases, yet is reluctant to approach the subject with Bruce, for fear of upsetting or offending him.

These examples illustrate how personal relationships can inhibit consumers from adopting greener consumption behaviour. Several studies indicate that females are generally more likely to display “greener shopping habits” than their male counterparts (Diamantopoulos, Schlegelmilch, Sinkovics, & Bohlen, 2003). A lack of support from other household members refers to a situation where one or several other household members may have a strong value that goes against environmentally supportive action (Kennedy, et al., 2009). In these cases, Gordon and Bruce exert legitimate influence over their spouses Greta and Bridget. Legitimate influence refers to the spousal influence over another based on their position in the household, as evidenced by Gordon as the breadwinner and head of the household, and Bruce being the household shopper.

4.6.2.3. *Living situation*

In general, value conflicts arise as the nature of household roles change depending on the living situation. This study reveals that in a flatting situation, the “green” person in the household does not always have control over what is purchased and consumed. People in flatting situations tend to have more disagreements over consumption decisions because the household products and shopping duties are shared. Fiona (Case 2) lives with her boyfriend Fred (Case 2) in a flatting environment with other flatmates. Fiona suggests that the nature of their relationship and living situation affects their consumption and purchase decisions. Fiona views the fact that her and Fred have individual bank accounts as reason for less conflict.

Fiona: “We’re kind of different from a married couple because our money’s really separate, like we’ve still got individual accounts.”

However, despite Fiona’s statement, the findings show that Fiona and Fred experience more disagreements over product purchases than other household cases. Therefore, shopping together is a potential source of conflict and in most other cases household shopping was performed by one household member. When Fiona’s boyfriend Fred has control of the flat account and eftpos card, he buys cheap products in bulk because he views value for money being the most important. Fred’s purchasing behaviour annoys Fiona when products are not green or when products are bought in bulk and

expire without being consumed. Fiona describes how she sometimes “lets him get away with purchases like that”, compared with other instances where Fiona “normally wins” (see section 4.5.4.1.2. pp. 134-136). While this behaviour is inconsistent to her environmental attitudes, in some purchase situations, Fiona lacks control or relinquishes control over the outcome of a decision conflict.

Fiona: “Every now and then I let him get away with stuff that I might not otherwise. If we’re at the supermarket, if we’re choosing toilet paper, I like the ‘Earth-care’ but every now and then he’ll buy something like the ‘Kiwi’ ones which are real cheap and thin and they’re bulk like 18 rolls or something. I’ll let him get away with purchases like that and not say anything. So I guess in some ways he influences me, because I’m like, ‘I can’t be bothered, you can just have this one’.”

Fiona views Fred’s consumption values as driven by cost rather than environmental reasons, which demonstrates how their values are fundamentally different. The principles of self-efficacy (Sanna, 1992) is also applicable, as Fiona feels that she sometimes lacks control over what is purchased and used in the household. In this instance, the strategy used by Fiona relates to “bargaining” (Davis, 1976), which involves tradeoffs. This is where Fiona gains influence in the decision-making process by exchanging value somewhere else and letting Fred “get away” with certain purchases. Fiona acknowledges that conflict exists and waits for the next purchase for re-distributive justice. This means that Fiona will remember instances where she has compromised on her values for Fred and she will use this to her advantage in the future. Scanzoni (1977) found higher proportions of younger, less traditional couples used bargaining strategies. These findings show that conflict and influence strategies may change and evolve over the lifecycle of a household and the nature of personal relationships.

Candice (Case 5) is also affected by her flatmates’ purchases. When flatmates purchase chemical-based cleaning products or toilet paper that is not as environmentally-friendly as the toilet paper that she would usually purchase.

Candice: "Sometimes my flatmate will just go and buy the full-on hard stuff from somewhere else but sometimes there's this other guy Mark who will buy the product that I like. Well I just don't use it, if it's a cleaning product that I don't like - I won't use it anyway. I will get the recycled toilet paper and sometimes my flatmate will get the New Zealand supermarket version of recycled which isn't nearly as ethical but it's still better than I guess not recycled and the other times we just get whatever."

In this instance, Candice refuses to use non-environmental products purchased by her flatmates, which allows her to maintain her self-concept and self-esteem. As both Candice and Fiona have experienced, the purchase of certain products are important to consumers and if something or someone internally or externally impedes that purchase the consumer may feel vulnerable (Baker, Gentry, & Rittenburg, 2005). Vulnerability arises from:

"The interaction of personal states, personal characteristics and external conditions within a context where consumption goals may be hindered and the experience affects personal and social perceptions of the self" (Baker, et al., 2005, p. 7).

"Symbolic contamination" of the extended self occurs when individuals experience involuntary or unwelcome attacks on the self or its extensions which may occur when concessions are made for others (Baker, et al., 2005). The findings contribute new insight into this phenomenon, and the findings help to explain why compromise takes place and how compromise affects consumers differently. For example using cheap (i.e., mainstream/not-so-green) toilet paper may not seriously affect product use by some consumers (i.e., Fiona), but may affect product use for others (i.e., Candice). The level of "contamination" may be affected by product conspicuousness, the more conspicuous, the higher the degree of contamination. Moreover, the level of contamination is influenced by how important "green" is to one's identity and how strongly they identify with being a "green" consumer. "Symbolic contamination" might also be category specific where product attributes are personally relevant and important to an individual's identity.

4.6.3. Section summary

This section has discussed how purchase decisions of other household members affect individual consumption behaviour. The results show that new household members are inclined to adapt to the norms of existing household members because they hold legitimate power and influence. The findings also reveal that participants' who have been co-habiting for a long period, are more likely to have compatible value systems or are more willing to accommodate other household members. Those who have been residing together for a shorter period are more likely to experience incompatible value systems and therefore negotiation and conflict may arise. Conflicting values relate to cost, convenience and the environment and lead participants to compromise on their green values in order to accommodate others. When values are incompatible, it can result in disagreements and often the non-use, non-purchase or non-practice of environmentally-friendly alternatives. However, when a product or practice is cost-efficient, convenient and environmentally-friendly, a purchase is usually made or a practice adopted.

4.7. Chapter summary

This chapter has examined the interpretations of the findings that can be drawn from this study. Four main themes were identified, namely, "perceptions of green and mainstream/not-so-green consumers", "perceptions and consumption behaviour", "social environment shaping perceptions and consumption behaviour" and "household dynamics". The findings show that consumers develop perceptions of "green" from interaction in the social environment, in addition to their own previous positive or negative experiences with green consumption behaviour. The social environment encourages green consumption behaviour especially in "mainstream" (i.e., not-so-green) consumers via social rewards and punishments and most consumers are motivated to behave in accordance with green social norms. Consumers themselves may also deliberately influence people toward greener consumption behaviour through a variety of "greening strategies". Finally, personal relationships can facilitate or inhibit green consumption behaviour, although this depends on household roles, lifecycle and living arrangement.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Introduction

Increasingly, consumers are developing pro-environmental attitudes as a result of the prevalence of environmental issues in the media and social environment (Bergin-Seers & Mair, 2009; Peattie, 2010). However, quantitative studies show that pro-environmental attitudes rarely translate into actual green consumption behaviour (Carrington, et al., 2010; Chatzidakis, et al., 2007; Sparks & Shepard, 1992; Yam-Tang & Chan, 1998; Young, et al., 2010). This phenomenon coined the “attitude-behaviour gap”, represents a significant challenge as green product purchase remains limited to a niche market of “green” consumers (Ozcaglar-Toulouse, Shiu, & Shaw, 2006). In order for the green industry to continue to prosper it must expand into mainstream consumer markets.

The dominant focus of green research has centred on the individual reasons for non-environmental and attitudinally incongruent behaviour (Peattie, 2010), rather than examining the subjective meanings and socially constructed realities of individual consumers. This research adds to marketing literature and knowledge by considering the individual, household and societal variables that create the context for green consumerism. This study explores the factors contributing and detracting from green consumption behaviour and the personal and social influences that affect the “attitude-behaviour gap” and pro-environmental behaviour change. Overall, this study has contributed new insight to marketing and green consumerism literature. It has accomplished the research objectives and comprehensively answered the research questions established earlier. This chapter outlines the main conclusions from the findings and discussion section, particularly the research implications and its contribution to marketing literature. The study's limitations and directions for future research are also discussed.

5.2. Conclusion of the findings

The following section will discuss the central conclusions of this study with regard to two key research objectives and research questions. In general, the findings reveal the importance of social context when observing the “attitude-behaviour gap” of green consumerism, because numerous social variables are integral to green decision-making and consumption behaviour. First, the findings explore consumers “green” perceptions, and how these perceptions shape, and are shaped by, consumption behaviour and the social environment. Following this, the effects of personal relationships and social experiences on green consumption behaviour are investigated. Secondly, the findings demonstrate how pro-environmental behaviour change occurs and how individual consumers themselves are instrumental to the adoption of green consumption behaviour in other consumers. Finally, the findings show the importance of other household members in facilitating and sometimes inhibiting greener consumption behaviour.

Objective 1: To achieve a greater understanding of how the social environment influences the green consumption behaviour of individual consumers.

The primary objective of this research is to understand how an individual’s social environment influences green consumption behaviour. Accordingly, this involves exploring individual, household and societal variables that may affect interaction among individuals and consumption behaviour. Through exploring green consumerism as a socially constructed concept, we have a better understanding of how consumers perceive the various meanings and associations of “green”. We understand not only how perceptions and consumption behaviour are influenced by individual knowledge, but also through personal relationships and experiences in an individual’s social environment.

RQ1: a) What are consumers’ “green” perceptions and how does the social environment shape them? & b) how do “green” perceptions shape consumption behaviour (and why)?

5.2.1. “Green” versus “mainstream/not-so-green” consumers

An individual's perceptions of, and attitude toward “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers, is significantly influenced by their interaction with, and observation of, other consumers within their social environment. Perceptions are strongly linked to attitudes (Azjen, 1988, 1991), which play an important role in maintaining and protecting self-esteem and encouraging consumers to distance themselves from unfavourable consumption behaviour and habits (Shavitt, 1990; Sirgy, 1982, 1985). The position of each case on the green continuum reveals that “green” perceptions and consumption behaviour of individuals vary significantly, even among individuals who reside in the same household. This implies that because perceptions and attitudes are different, different individuals also practice diverse consumption behaviour.

A clear distinction between “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers is evident. “Green” consumers take being “green” more seriously than “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers, practising green consumption behaviour with a high level of efficacy and commitment. Most of the participants in this study identify with the majority or “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers and were more likely to adopt green consumption behaviours practiced by others. For example “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers tend to practice green consumption behaviour deemed “normal” and generally accepted in society (i.e., recycling, composting and buying energy-efficient products). Whereas “green” consumers go beyond what is viewed as “normal” and may adopt consumption behaviour considered “alternative” (i.e., purchasing green products, having an organic or vegetarian diet and non-use or infrequent use of a vehicle). While the behaviour of a minority is generally perceived as “alternative”, these people are often the mediators for social change (Crano & Prislin, 2006).

The findings clearly reveal that within certain groups, the symbolic associations of “green” are judged positively, while within other groups they are perceived negatively. There are different types of “green” consumers ranging from “normal” to “alternative” to “extreme”. However, the stigmas and stereotypes of “extreme” green consumers as “tree-hugging hippies” and “bible-bashers” have tainted the

perception of “green” consumers and green consumption behaviour in general. Negative perceptions are related to the undesired self-image (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967; Sirgy, 1982, 1985) and therefore some “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers deliberately disassociate or distance themselves from “green” consumers because of negative associations and connotations. It is also evident that some “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers (i.e., Greta - see section 4.3.1. pp. 83-85) have become defensive and critical of “green” consumers because the social pressure to be “green” threatens their current consumption lifestyle.

The participants who were reluctant to be greener were those who viewed “green” as having to significantly change their lifestyle and compromise on important attributes such as cost, convenience or functionality. A “green syndrome” exists, whereby many “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers view being “green” as “too hard” or “too inconvenient” and therefore unattainable. Consumers develop a “green syndrome” over time via media and marketing communications and through observing the green consumption behaviour of others in their social environment. The activities of “green” extreme minority groups in the social environment create a perception that being “green” requires “extreme” types of green consumption behaviour, and a high level of commitment to green values and consumption behaviour. Consumers witness the sacrifices extreme “green” consumers make to their lives and lifestyle and cannot conceive making the same commitment to being “green”. These unattainable “green” perceptions have led “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers to define being “green” as an unrealistic goal, and many are reluctant to change their behaviour even in the face of environmental issues.

The distinct motivations of these two consumer groups (i.e., green and mainstream/not-so-green), will in turn affect what types of green consumption behaviour are adopted and avoided due to associated cost evaluations. Western society views “value for money” and “cost-efficiency” as important product attributes (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Carrigan & De Pelsmacker, 2009). These attributes have a normative influence on consumption behaviour, meaning that most “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers are encouraged to look for “good deals” and “save money”. “Mainstream (i.e., not-so-green) consumers are motivated by the additional benefits of being “green” (i.e., cost efficiency, superior/more effective product, feel-

good-factor and health benefits), as opposed to the pro-environmental benefits (i.e., reduce carbon emissions and pollution) sought by “green” consumers.

The desire to maintain behaviour consistent with pro-environmental beliefs and attitudes is inexplicably tied to theories of “self-regulation” (Bandura, 1991). Consumers are motivated and regulated by ongoing monitoring of one’s behaviour (Bandura, 1991, p. 248). This finding suggests that different types of consumers (i.e., green and mainstream/not-so-green) regulate their behaviour based on opposed values (self-interest vs. environmental-interest) and therefore their “green” perceptions and consumption habits are fundamentally different. “Green” consumers will adopt green products (i.e., solar panels and green household products) that contribute to environmental interests. Meanwhile, “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers will only buy green products or practice green behaviour (i.e., reusable/refillable products and recycling) that satisfy their own self-interest (i.e., save money through cost-efficiency).

5.2.2. Commitment to green consumption behaviour

Consumers have diverse ideas about acceptable levels of attitude-behaviour consistency and commitment to green consumption behaviour. There are certain situational and social variables that affect green consumption behaviour, pro-environmental behaviour change, levels of efficacy and commitment to green principles. Some of the greener participants (i.e., Anton & Bridget) observe the green consumption behaviour of other “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers and view their pro-environmental actions for example using reusable shopping bags, as “token efforts”. Anton and Bridget imply that these consumers (i.e., mainstream/not-so-green) change small, insignificant aspects of their consumption behaviour in ways that do not affect their lifestyle and do very little to reduce their environmental impact. The statements by these individuals raise the question: “is doing something green, better than doing nothing green?” (refer to section 4.3.3. pp. 86-89). The findings of this study suggest that even small, insignificant pro-environmental behaviour should be encouraged, as this may spillover to other areas of green consumption behaviour.

An ironic finding of this research was that some “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) participant (i.e., Cameron) had very high expectations of “green” consumers. Some consumers may expect “green” consumers to behave in accordance with their pro-environmental attitudes across consumption situations, even though they do not participate in green consumption behaviour themselves. This “all-or-nothing” outlook to green consumerism reinforces the “green syndrome” that inhibits the adoption of green consumption behaviour by some “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers discussed previously in section 5.2.1 page 163.

Meanwhile, another participant (i.e., Bruce) feels that it is important for people to make occasional concessions to green consumption behaviour and for society to view this as acceptable. This study identifies a concept termed “consumption addiction”, which describes how some “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers are addicted to high-consumption and materialistic lifestyles, which have become the norm in Western society and culture. When “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers adapt to green consumerism, it is similar to breaking an addiction or habit. Bruce relates consumerism to an addiction, proposing that people must be realistic about an acceptable level of attitude-behaviour consistency in green consumerism in addition to an acceptable level of pro-environmental behaviour change.

5.2.3. Feel-good-factor

A heightened awareness of the environmental and social implications of consumption in society encouraged one participant to consider the “true-cost” of her consumption (as evidenced by Bridget in section 4.4.1.1. pp. 92-94). Societal expectations and social norms regarding acceptable standards of behaviour lead some consumers to internalise pro-environmental norms. As a result, some participants are motivated by internal moral sensibilities that guide green consumption behaviour. Internal drivers of consumption behaviour (true-cost, intuition and moral sensibilities) are important guides toward identity and role-appropriate behaviour. As other studies have also shown (Dono, Webb, & Richardson, 2010; Hinds & Sparks, 2008; Sparks & Shepard, 1992; Whitmarsh & O'Neill, 2010) pro-environmental actions are prompted by a desire for self-consistency with a pro-environmental identity. The findings show that

identification with environmental issues, values and identity are important indicators of a consumer's likelihood to engage in green consumption behaviour.

A “feel-good-factor” encourages consumers to remain loyal to a product as was the case for when Fiona uses of organic skincare and Deborah uses of reusable nappies. Alternatively some consumers may continue practising green behaviour as with Greta and her recycling of waste. If a consumer were to defect from buying a green product or from practising a green behaviour, they may experience a sense of inconsistency, identity incongruity and lowered self-esteem. Humans are social beings and the social identity aspect of being “green”, strengthens societal influences and the social environment's influence over consumption behaviour. When some consumers do not practice green consumption behaviour they may “feel bad” or guilty meanwhile, when they do practice the green behaviour they experience a “feel-good-factor” through the perceived environmental benefits of their actions. It is also comprehensible that a “feel-good-factor” can be enhanced further with participation in additional green consumption behaviour.

5.2.4. Green product performance

Some consumers have positive experiences with green consumption behaviour, which promotes continued practice of the behaviour. When a consumer has a positive experience with green products or behaviour, this may spillover to other areas of consumption. Fiona experienced organic skincare and found it to be more effective and less expensive compared with conventional high-end products. This encourages the trial of other products in the same product category. For some consumers the “social good” of buying “green” is not the driving force behind purchases. In order for green products to be purchased repeatedly, they must be effective and successfully deliver important functional attributes (i.e., performance and effectiveness). While “green” is not the most important attribute pursued by most consumers, it is an added bonus. Green attributes sometimes provide a “feel-good-factor”, which can encourage consumers to remain loyal to a particular green product or brand, instead of switching back to a conventional or familiar product or brand.

It is also apparent that some consumers develop pre-conceptions about green products without even trialling them, especially among certain product categories. Fiona was reluctant to purchase any green products where the “overall result” is adversely affected, especially in terms of cleaning products and hygiene. Consumers are exposed to media that has conditioned consumers to view bacteria as dangerous and harmful. In addition, marketing communications reinforce the notion that only chemical-based cleaning products can destroy bacteria. Furthermore, effectiveness or lack of effectiveness cannot always be readily perceived (i.e., bacteria cannot be seen). Therefore, a psychological barrier to change exists for some consumers purchasing products within certain categories.

It appears that some green products or product categories are more effective in terms of initiating pro-environmental behaviour change. When green products or categories have a direct impact (i.e., organic or natural cosmetics and skincare used on the skin or body), they are more easily adopted because product performance can be observed by the consumer. Other research has also shown that consumers are more willing to change consumption behaviour if the negative environmental or social issues affect their lives directly (Boulstridge & Carrigan, 2000; Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). This study has shown that green consumption behaviour is more likely to be adopted when it has a direct impact on important self-interest values such as health and wellbeing. This finding raises the importance of internalising green consumption behaviour by making it personal to the consumer.

5.2.5. Premium price pre-conception

The adverse environmental impact of conventional products is generally perceived and understood by the majority of the population. However, consumers state that “expense” and “cost” are significant factors preventing the purchase of greener alternatives. In general, green products are more expensive or costly because producers charge higher prices (Gupta & Odgen, 2009; Pettit & Sheppard, 1992; Sexton & Sexton, 2011). This pricing strategy is based on research that has reported that consumers are willing to pay premium prices for environmentally-friendly products (Gupta & Odgen, 2009; Pettit & Sheppard, 1992; Sexton & Sexton, 2011). However, this evidence is based on self-reported quantitative surveys, whereby

consumers have been known to inflate their pro-environmental attitudes and their willingness to pay for green attributes. Consumers may inflate their pro-environmental attitudes due to the social desirability of “green” and their desire to be perceived as a “good person” (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Gupta & Odgen, 2009; Sexton & Sexton, 2011) or an “environmental citizen” (Seyfang, 2003; Stern, et al., 1999).

Fundamental flaws in quantitative research design have contributed to pre-conceived notions about the cost of green products. The perception that green product producers charge premium prices has led to a widespread pre-conception that “green” is more expensive than conventional products. Some green products (e.g., solar panels and reusable nappies) are often more cost-effective than conventional products in the long-term but require a comparatively large upfront cost. The large up-front cost or premium price of green products prevents many “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers from buying green. Only a niche group of “green” consumers are prepared to pay high up-front costs and premium prices for green products.

This pre-conception of green product prices relates to “temporal discounting theory” (Green, Fristoe, & Myerson, 1994; Zauberman, Kim, Malkoc, & Bettman, 2008), which suggests that when the value of green products cannot be judged because the attributes are not tangible or observable (i.e., green attributes), people tend to focus on short-term gains (i.e., conventional attributes). Western consumer culture is driven by materialism (McCracken, 1983, 1990), impulsivity and instant gratification (Kacen & Lee, 2002). As a result, most “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers do not conceive the long-term environmental implications and the “true-cost” of their consumption behaviour. These perceptions lead many “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers to disregard green products in the decision-making process, regardless of whether or not they are premium priced, once again limiting the potential growth and expansion of the green industry.

5.2.6. Green tradeoffs

The findings reveal “green tradeoffs” - a new concept developed by this study, which relates to the idea of green product alternatives being traded off against one another. Perceptions about the importance of various environmental issues has led some consumers to practice certain types of green consumption behaviour that inadvertently contribute to other environmental issues. In addition, sometimes the personal relevance or prevalence of certain environmental issues in the media and social environment, may guide consumers to choose a product alternative with more severe environmental consequences. In these cases, a consumer may select a product where the environmental cost can be readily perceived, compared to the alternative where the environmental impact is much greater but cannot be observed in the product.

The media, social interactions and experiences shape consumers' perceptions about the importance of various green attributes. In this study, consumers who encountered green tradeoff decisions were torn between the environmental packaging of a product and its origin. Annette and Bridget experienced two very similar situations, with regard to purchasing food. In both situations, the participants prioritised environmental packaging over origin. It is evident that green tradeoffs are especially common in the food and produce category, as green characteristics are more observable and there are often several green attributes that compete for preference in a purchase decision.

It is also evident that “origin” or “locality” is not prioritised highly by consumers, and is generally not perceived as an important green attribute. While non-recyclable packaging is wasteful, rationally the origin of the product should be perceived as equally if not more important because food transport contributes to food-miles and global warming (Edward-Jones, Canals, Hounsome, Truninger, & Koerber, 2008; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). From an exporting perspective, this finding is favourable and indicates that overseas consumers are willing to purchase a product if it satisfies other green attributes. However, local producers need to deliver other green attributes in addition to locality, which are truly valued and readily perceived by consumers.

Other quantitative studies have shown that consumers are more likely to base decisions on environmental costs that can be readily perceived (Hormuth, 1999). The emphasis placed on certain green consumption behaviour (i.e., recycling, composting and environmental packaging) in the social environment and media, persuades consumers to prioritise these environmental issues and related green consumption behaviour. For example the prevalence of waste and the negative implications of plastic in the media and social environment, promote the adoption of effective recycling and composting systems. Because of this, consumers in this study tended to minimise rubbish waste through increased recycling and reduce the purchase of over-packaged and non-recyclable packaging, and overlook other environmental issues not directly related to their own lives.

5.2.7. Neutralisation of non-environmental behaviour

There is ambivalence surrounding participation in some green consumption behaviour, which stands in sharp contrast to the green principles and other green practices with which consumers strongly adhere (e.g. recycling and composting). Some consumers are reluctant to switch from conventional to green consumption behaviour because of time constraints, perceived health risks and a reduction in the hedonic pleasures of consumption (e.g., satisfaction/enjoyment and airbrushed appearance) (see section 4.4.2.2. pp. 109-116). To ease the sense of guilt, consumers neutralise non-environmental consumption behaviour to avoid negative effects to their self-esteem and self-image (Sykes & Matza, 1957).

In situations where neither action is environmentally neutral, some consumers rationalise the non-environmental act and choose the option that is more convenient but may have more severe environmental implications than the less-convenient alternative. For example, participants traded off between the waste and pollution caused by disposable nappies and the increased washing and water usage due to reusable nappies. The participants (i.e., Greta & Edwina) justified their use of disposable nappies because both alternative have adverse environmental consequences. Several other participants also use “no-one is perfect” justifications, which include “I’m weak”, “I can’t help it”, “I’m too disorganised” and “there’s no such thing as perfection”. By attributing inconsistencies to personal flaws and

weaknesses, non-environmental behaviour of even “green” consumers is deemed acceptable because “no-one is perfect”.

The social norms that surround appropriate green consumption behaviour lead some consumers to feel guilty about some of their non-environmental practices. However, most participants accept that compromises are inevitable in green consumption and hence their behaviour can be rationalised and a positive self-image and identity maintained. “Green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers have varying “latitudes of acceptance” (Atkins, Deaux, & Bieri, 1967; Sherif, 1963) with regard to attitudinally incongruent consumption behaviour and green concessions. Other studies have shown that different social categories may have different “latitudes of acceptance” and this in turn will affect attitude change (Atkins, et al., 1967; Sherif, 1963). In this sense, some consumers may be able to cope with a certain level of attitude-behaviour inconsistency where others cannot. This study identified that when non-environmental consumption behaviour rises to an undesirable level, some consumers are driven to take action and reduce their waste (i.e., Deborah). In other words, consumers “de-neutralise” attitudinally incongruent behaviour. Therefore, the acceptability of green concessions is affected by how “green” an individual is and how important “green” is to their self-image and identity.

RQ2: How do personal relationships and social experiences influence individual green consumption behaviour (and why)?

While the individualistic and independent model of the self is important, it fails to describe the individual views of all people. As individuals interact within personal relationships and social experiences, their consumption behaviour is somewhat influenced by their social environment. Social norms have been found to be an important motivator of environmental consumption behaviour (Allcott, 2009; Biel & Thorgersen, 2007; Ewing, 2001; Goldstein, et al., 2008; Lindbeck, 1997; Varman & Costa, 2008). However, the strength of social influence is generally stronger depending on the characteristics of the consumption behaviour (i.e., public and conspicuous versus private and inconspicuous) and the coercive power of the group to which an individual belongs (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2004). Thus environmental social norms are practiced and reinforced by society and its citizens.

5.2.8. Socially desirable green consumption behaviour

Based on the insights obtained during the interview process, it is clear that some consumers may inflate their “greenscore” in order to maintain a positive impression in front of others. Being “green” is a socially desirable trait to exhibit in society and certain types of green consumption behaviour are associated with positive imagery and fashionable symbols (Pettit & Sheppard, 1992). The adoption of fashionable green consumption behaviour is generally regarded as more superficial, as it does not require a fundamental change to a person’s behaviour or lifestyle.

This study found that “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers are more likely to practice green consumption behaviour in public as opposed to private consumption situations. Meanwhile, because “green” consumers have internalised pro-environmental norms, they are more likely to translate pro-environmental values into green consumption behaviour regardless of the consumption situation. Other studies have inferred that public and conspicuous displays of green consumption behaviour activate a higher level of commitment, compared to private and inconspicuous behaviour because it is less likely to be observed and evaluated by other consumers (Griskevicius, et al., 2010; Pettit & Sheppard, 1992). The “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers were more concerned than “green” consumers about how they were viewed by others in the social environment.

The findings illustrate that a participant’s public green consumption behaviour is heavily influenced by his or her perception of social norms and social pressure to conform to green consumption behaviour. The social norms relating to green consumption behaviour have encouraged some consumers to behave in accordance with collective interests that are associated with protection of the environment. For example, there is a stigma attached to the use of plastic as opposed to reusable supermarket bags. Plastic supermarket bags correlate to environmental irresponsibility, whereas reusable bags are a symbol of environmental responsibility. This example highlights how appropriate forms of green consumption behaviour have become engrained in society and its citizen’s behaviour.

For some consumers, green consumption behaviour such as recycling (i.e., Greta), using reusable nappies (i.e., Deborah) and Keep-cup's (i.e., Fiona) symbolically associates individuals with a group of environmentally-conscious citizens (Sparks & Shepard, 1992). Social pressure encourages consumers to behave in accordance with green social norms and avoid violation of these norms. As green consumption behaviour becomes identified with concepts of "environmental citizenship" (Seyfang, 2003; Stern, et al., 1999) and being a "good person" (Pettit & Sheppard, 1992), consumers are more aware when their behaviour is inconsistent with these concepts. The desire to maintain an impression as a "good citizen" is especially important to consumers who value their public self-image and social identity.

Group identification and social norms influence behavioural decisions (Feilding, 2008). However, McGarty and Turner (1992) even propose that social groups and categories are implicit social norms. The findings reveal that as some participants adopt green consumption behaviour, they compare their behaviour with even greener consumers and the subjective norms within their social environment. Consumers regularly make judgments about their ability to relate to and be accepted by others and therefore negative evaluations of oneself can diminish self-perceptions (Baker, et al., 2005). One of the greenest participants in the research was not completely satisfied with her current green consumption behaviour, as she felt that there was more she could be doing (i.e., Bridget). This highlights how normative (i.e., personal norm) factors influence a person's present consumption behaviour. However, when a person makes social comparisons, it may prompt further pro-environmental behaviour change and the adoption of other more environmentally-friendly consumption behaviour.

Previous research in this field has produced conflicting, contradictory and ambiguous findings about whether social or normative factors are more influential over consumption behaviour (Azjen, 1991; Bagozzi & Lee, 2002; Hopper & Nielsen, 1991). This research proposes that over time, some consumers move along the green continuum because of associating with, and comparing themselves against, even greener consumers. In addition, the more a consumer associates with a social group such as "green" consumers, the greater their influence over that person's consumption behaviour. Therefore, the influence of certain factors (social or normative) may

depend on an individual's position on the green continuum or their overall "greenness".

At the same time, some consumption behaviour associates people with negative reference groups and some participants avoided associating with others that have incompatible interests in relation to the environment. For example, Bridget has a negative perception of those who own SUV vehicles or who do not recycle or compost correctly. Other research has found that consumers define their social reference groups based on the products and brands that they consume (Banister & Hogg, 2004). Products and brands are powerful symbols that transfer meaning through associations and indicate membership of particular social categories (McCracken, 1983, 1990). The findings of this research reveal that "behaviour" is also an important symbol of group membership. The in-group versus out-group comparison process shows that symbolic consumption and associations motivate consumers to disassociate with certain products, practices and even people that are not considered "green" or "environmentally-friendly".

5.2.9. Social observations and judgments

Public awareness of environmental issues has made consumers more conscious and aware of their own and other people's consumption behaviour. Consumers have been socialised to accept some green consumption behaviour as the norm and a signal of environmental and social responsibility. Public consumption practices such as rubbish bags, recycling and using recyclable or reusable bags at the supermarket are witnessed by other people. Therefore public consumption practices are symbols which communicate and translate meaning (i.e., that a person is green) (McCracken, 1983, 1990). In general, public consumption practices are socially observed and evaluated and are consequently part of the construction and maintenance of a green or pro-environmental social identity. As this study reveals, many participants practice green consumption behaviour in order to maintain a certain impression and identity, associate with favourable reference groups and disassociate with unfavourable reference groups.

The findings of this study are comparable to other studies that have also shown that the consumer's sense of social identity has a significant impact on green consumption behaviour (Allcott, 2009; Fekadu & Kraft, 2001; Goldstein, et al., 2008; Lee, 2008; Mannetti, Pierro, & Livi, 2004; Sparks & Shepard, 1992). This in turn, has led some consumers to desire public affirmation and approval for their consumption behaviour and avoid disapproval and negative evaluations. For example, Fiona resumed using her Keep-cup to maintain her public pro-environmental identity, while, Greta tried to use reusable bags at the supermarket to avoid the social stigma and negative connotations of using plastic bags. Indeed, the findings of this study demonstrate that what consumers perceive as "acceptable" and "unacceptable" in society, will influence the consumption behaviour in which they engage. An awareness of green issues and the rise of green social norms have made people more accountable for their consumption behaviour. Therefore, people judge themselves and others based on perceived "green social norms" in society.

The social observations and evaluations of green consumption behaviour have led some consumers to critically judge the consumption behaviour of others. This study found that participants directly and indirectly critique the behaviour of other consumers. It is also apparent that participants enhance their self-evaluations through selective social comparisons. Social comparisons allow people to evaluate oneself through comparisons with the abilities, achievements and opinions of others (Festinger, 1945). Lewiski (1983 as cited in Newman, et al., 1997, p. 319) demonstrates that people choose to judge others on dimensions that are personally relevant, which enhances the probability that one will be seen as superior to the other. Some participants compare themselves against other consumers in the social environment, judging their green consumption behaviour as inadequate, unacceptable or inferior when contrasted with their own behaviour. Social judgements allow consumers to enhance their view of themselves based on these dimensions.

5.2.10. Greening strategies

Overall, the findings reveal that consumers use a range of strategies to encourage greener consumption behaviour in others (i.e., consumers and organisations). These strategies are the deliberate and intentional use of influence and power strategies to

manipulate green consumption behaviour and pro-environmental behaviour change. Individuals use several influence strategies to shape the consumption behaviour of other people; including stimulating, controlling, facilitating, observing and modelling green consumption behaviour (each of these strategies are explained further below). An examination of social interaction and relationship dynamics reveals how these influence strategies are used by individuals to encourage greener consumption behaviour in other consumers.

The findings show that some consumers stimulate greener consumption habits in others by informing, motivating and reinforcing green consumption behaviour. Generally, females use this strategy to encourage their male partners to practice greener consumption behaviour. Several other studies have identified that females are generally the initiators of green consumption practices in households (Diamantopoulos, et al., 2003; Gronhoj, 2006). Although, spousal agreement on the issue was usually necessary for the entire household to adopt and continue the green practice (Gronhoj, 2006). Interestingly, this study illustrated how female participants exert control over the decision-making process through emotional strategies, such as nagging and the use of legitimate power and influence (i.e., Fiona & Deborah). Other participants were more deceptive and attempted to manipulate and control behaviour by means of positive and negative reinforcement (i.e., Bruce). These strategies may result in permanent pro-environmental behaviour change if these individuals are re-socialised toward greener consumption behaviour.

Some consumers feel empowered to facilitate greener consumption behaviour in other consumers by providing the tools and knowledge to perform the behaviour (i.e., Bridget & Bruce). Some participants were motivated to encourage others toward green consumption behaviour based on their own personal pro-environmental values. Although generally, these participants admit that imposing their own personal values on others can have the opposite effect and that observing and modelling behaviour is a more effective strategy for pro-environmental behaviour change. A significant finding of this research is that several participants deliberately perform green consumption behaviour, in anticipation that others will observe and subsequently imitate their behaviour and positive pro-environmental “spillovers” may occur. However, in order for consumption behaviour to be modelled, it may require certain

conditions (i.e., personal relevance, locus of control and self-efficacy) before it is applied to their own lives and lifestyle. For example, an individual is more likely to implement green systems into the household when they own their own home, as opposed to flatting situations, because they have more control over the behaviour of the entire household and its members.

In terms of influencing organisational change, different strategies were employed. A few participants regularly use purchase and non-purchase as votes, although they may show greater commitment for certain product categories (i.e., animal welfare rather than organic). Non-purchase is usually based on non-environmental attributes or signals that can be readily perceived, such as non-environmental packaging. However, compared with other strategies of organisational change, one participant views purchase and non-purchase as a “weak vote” and an ineffective method of pro-environmental behaviour change. The findings of this research challenge this perception by illustrating that over time, social observations have an indirect but long-term impact on consumer choice, attitudes and behaviour toward being “green”. It is usually “very green” and value-driven consumers who engage in forms of political or civic action, such as public boycotts, writing letters of complaint and protests. When consumers make a public stand on certain issues, organisations are more likely to recognise and acknowledge their errors or operational indiscretions and take steps to change their behaviour and rectify their mistakes (Rissel, 1994; Wakefield, et al., 2006).

5.2.11. Role and value conflict

The nature of restrictions or catalysts of green consumption behaviour, depend on household roles and living situations. It is clear that roles change depending on household lifecycle and structure. Household dynamics affect pro-environmental behaviour change, levels of efficacy and commitment to green consumption behaviour. Theories of self-efficacy and locus of control are evident throughout these examples, as participants are less likely to participate in green consumption behaviour if other household members do not support pro-environmental behaviour. In households, decision-making is often “accommodative” meaning that household

members encounter incompatible priorities and preferences among group members, which result in conflict, negotiation and compromise (Thompson & Tuden, 1959).

In general, when new members enter a household they must adapt to the norms of existing household members (i.e., Cameron & Candice). In some instances, existing household members may have green norms in their household, which must be upheld by other household members. Existing members have legitimate influence and power because they have lived in the household for a longer period of time. New members adapt to the household environment in order to maintain peaceful and harmonious relationships and interactions with existing household members. Especially for short-term living situations, this social adaption phenomenon may represent “situational-loyalty” or one could refer to this as “social-loyalty” because a person is loyal to the person rather than the situation. Therefore, individuals are encouraged and sometimes pressured to adopt certain consumption behaviour due to their social environment. Individuals are influenced by what their friends or favourable reference groups are doing and this may affect their consumption behaviour due to “social loyalty”. As household members adapt to another individual’s “green” requirements, decision history can create “carry-over effects” (Hoyer, 1984), as green purchases and practices become a habitual part of household consumption behaviour.

There were several instances whereby “not-so-green” household members prevented green consumption behaviour on some occasions. Value conflicts arise within households when household members have different lifestyle values and norms, and therefore, contrasting consumption priorities and preferences exist among household members (Buss & Schaniger, 1983). In general, household roles have a major influence on the outcome of green consumption decisions and are a source of value conflict within relationships. In this study, “homemaker versus breadwinner” (i.e., Greta and Gordon) and “household shopper versus home-maker/breadwinner” (i.e., Bridget and Bruce) role conflicts were identified. As both participants in the personal relationship have legitimate power, the more powerful household member, or the household member with more power over the outcome of the decision “wins”.

Household roles and living arrangements (i.e., singles flatting, cohabiting or married couples) will affect the nature of decision making, consumption behaviour and

conflict resolution in a household. Household roles and lifecycle affect how the practice of shopping is carried out and whether shopping funds are separate or shared. For example, in a flatting situation, household members are more likely to experience incompatible consumption priorities and values (i.e. Fiona & Fred; Candice & Cameron), whereas in households where members have lived together long-term, household norms are developed and consumption values grow to be more compatible in accordance with social adaption theories (i.e., Darryl & Deborah) (Callen-Marchione & Ownbey, 2008; Kahle, 1983). These findings show that conflict and influence strategies may change and evolve over the lifecycle of a household and the nature of personal relationships.

There appeared to be more value conflicts in terms of green product purchases, as opposed to the adoption of green behaviour. Because money and performance issues are involved in green product purchase, more conflict is predicted compared to other green activities where there is no money exchange or financial investment involved. The findings reveal that males were generally more sceptical and less willing to go out of their way or pay more for a greener alternative. This confirms other studies which also suggest that females are more pro-environmental than males (Agarwal, 2000; Autio, et al., 2009; Gronhoj, 2006; Lee, 2009) and are more likely to have “greener shopping habits” (Diamantopoulos, et al., 2003). It is clear from these findings that the perceived value of conventional and green attributes, may differ significantly among household members, resulting in value conflict.

These findings contribute further understanding of household dynamics and how this phenomenon makes it challenging for some household members to introduce greener consumption behaviour into the household. Males are generally more cost and convenience focused, with an emphasis on short-term gratification and gains. Meanwhile, females appear to show a greater concern for environmental issues, the long-term gains and social good that can be achieved through the purchase of environmental or sustainable alternatives. Based on the information gained by this study, it appears that role conflicts also arise due to conflicting purchase motivations and purchase preference priorities.

5.2.12. Symbolic contamination

For greener household members, the prevention of green consumption behaviour by others may contribute to symbolic contaminations of the extended-self. “Symbolic contamination” occurs when people associated with a “green” consumer practice “not-so-green” consumption behaviour. Consumption behaviour is associated with self-concept consistency and enhancement (Sirgy, 1982), therefore incongruent consumption behaviour, even because of other people can lead to cognitive dissonance, guilt and lowered self-esteem (Baker, et al., 2005). The concept of social norms emphasises the interconnectivity of the social environment and encourages individuals to behave in similar ways and view relationships in terms of what people have in common (Miell & Dallos, 1996, p. 28).

However, it is quite apparent that household members may differ in terms of what green consumption behaviour is expected and therefore individuals may make exceptions to their green values and consumption behaviour. Symbolic contamination and “latitudes of acceptance” (Atkins, et al., 1967; Sherif, 1963) illustrate how compromise (for others) may affect individual consumers differently. For example using cheap (i.e., mainstream/not-so-green) toilet paper bought by another household member, may not seriously affect whether a product is used by some consumers (i.e., Fiona – Case 2 – “mainstream/not-so-green” consumer), but will affect product use for other consumers (i.e., Candice – Case 5 – “green” consumer) (see section 4.6.2.3. pp. 156-158). Therefore, the level of “symbolic contamination” is affected by the conspicuousness of the product, the personal relevance and the importance of “green” attributes and consumption behaviour to one’s identity and social relationships.

Objective 2: To explore how pro-environmental behaviour change takes place.

This research has significantly contributed to our understanding of how the social environment influences green consumption behaviour. While there has been substantial research into the existence of an “attitude-behaviour gap” in green consumerism (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Carrington, et al., 2010; Chatzidakis, et al., 2007; Connolly & Prothero, 2008; Sparks & Shepard, 1992; Strong, 1996; Yam-Tang & Chan, 1998; Young, et al., 2010), there is limited understanding of how and why it

occurs. This research has identified that “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) and even “green” consumers neutralise attitudinally-incongruent consumption behaviour to avoid feelings of guilt and cognitive dissonance, without significantly changing their behaviour. In addition, the findings reveal that certain situational and social variables affect pro-environmental behaviour change, levels of efficacy and commitment to green consumption behaviour.

This research extends these insights to provide recommendations of how pro-environmental behaviour change can be achieved and how the “attitude-behaviour gap” in green consumerism narrowed. The “green” habits practiced by individuals are influenced by the social environment in which the individual lives. Therefore, in the pursuit of more sustainable consumption practices, it is important to explore how the negative perceptions and associations of being “green” can be transformed and how more “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers can be encouraged to buy green products. Managerial implications are related to how pro-environmental behaviour change can take place, and it is discussed in the following section.

5.3. Managerial implications

The conclusions illustrate that there are many internal and external factors that shape our daily decisions and actions with regard to green consumption behaviour. An enhanced understanding of consumers’ “green” perceptions, social influences and household dynamics enable organisations to develop successful green products and technologies. It will also assist marketers to create effective advertising campaigns that engage consumers in green products and consumption behaviour. Because of this research, we know that negative perceptions of “green” are a substantial barrier to pro-environmental behaviour change. The social environment and norms facilitate, but also prevent the adoption of green consumption behaviour. Furthermore, the sometimes justified perception of green product inadequacy and expense is often used as a rationalisation by consumers for non-purchase. By increasing our knowledge of “green consumption behaviour as a social process”, we are better equipped to encourage pro-environmental behaviour change and reduce the “attitude-behaviour gap”.

As mentioned previously, the findings reveal two broad consumers groups, named “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) and “green”. Based on these findings, it is proposed that segmentation strategies should be applied in order to target products to different segments of the market. For “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers, cost-efficiency significantly motivates green product purchase (i.e., adopt a cost-focus strategy). Meanwhile, green attributes are important to “green” consumers (i.e., adopt a differentiation strategy). Moreover, “green” consumers are willing to pay premium prices for products with green attributes. Therefore, generic products and advertising campaigns will not be effective in a green consumerism context, and calls for marketing programs and campaigns to be tailored to these two distinct market segments.

When green consumption behaviour aligns with self-interest, individuals are more likely to comply with behaviour. Conversely, an “attitude-behaviour gap” may arise if green consumption behaviour is incompatible with self-interest. It is apparent that “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers are motivated to purchase products that offer personally relevant values (i.e., save money, enhanced performance, convenience and health benefits). As has been observed in other research, the type of green products that are adopted quickly and continue to be purchased are those that have significant pay-offs in other areas, besides simply being green (Griskevicius, et al., 2010). From these findings, it is clear that in order for all members within the household to agree and to support green purchases, certain conditions need to be satisfied. In general, in order for green products to be purchased and adopted, it must be functional and deliver a financial benefit to fulfil the values of all household members. This research indicates that green products adopted by the “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) population when they are effective, cost-efficient and/or save on other costs.

Moreover, some “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers are affected by a “green syndrome”, which is a perception that “green” is unattainable. These consumers feel that being “green” requires radical compromises and the sacrifice of conventional attributes and values that consumers deem important. Creating green products that effectively satisfy important attributes and values may change this perception. Furthermore, advertising campaigns should communicate how green products align

with personally relevant values (i.e., save money, enhance performance, convenience and health benefits). Marketing communications need to show how “green” can be enjoyable, satisfying and offer a “feel-good-factor” by contributing to environmental protection. By changing people’s perceptions about the “un-attainability” of being “green”, consumers will be more willing to change their behaviour and adopt greener product alternatives.

Green research to date has focused on identifying the “attitude-behaviour gap” in green consumerism. However, the findings of this study highlight that consumers and other institutions (i.e., society, organisations, government and the media) must be realistic about what level of pro-environmental behaviour change is achievable and accept that inconsistencies in green consumerism are inevitable. As marketers, we must seek to understand how we can make it easier for consumers to adapt to “green”, without significantly compromising their lives and lifestyle. In this sense, greener products or brands need to offer superior, convenient, effective and cost-effective solutions that do not require consumers to compromise on important attributes delivered by conventional products and brands. Organisations need to invest in green product development and design in order to attract and retain consumers who trial or purchase their product.

It is apparent that consumers have difficulty identifying what is “green” and therefore rely on the environmentally relevant and perceptible aspects of products as guides of actual buying behaviour. Even a “green” consumer’s decisions are not purely based on environmental credentials or performance but rather on the observable “green” attributes or characteristics of a product. A consumer needs to observe and identify with the environmental issues a product claims to protect in order to be influenced to purchase it. The study has shown that when the environmental benefits of products cannot be readily perceived, consumers have difficulty judging product value and pro-environmental contribution. This insight may affect the success of certain green products, services and even such concepts as the “carbon emissions trading scheme”. When environmental credentials cannot be perceived or observed, organisations must explicitly state how their product contributes to environmental interests or reduces environmental impact. The environmental credentials of packaging are signals that help consumers to make conscious decisions based on their pro-environmental values.

Therefore, it is important for organisations to ensure their product packaging and other marketing elements are consistent with the environmental values of the organisation.

The social desirability of “green” and green social norms are an effective means of achieving pro-environmental behaviour change. A proposed reason for this is that social norms limit the efficacy of rationalisations that are intended to neutralise the attitudinally incongruent or non-environmental behaviour of consumers. Therefore, if consumers consider it socially desirable to meet environmental objectives, it would be more achievable to shift consumption from conventional products to greener products. Consumers are motivated to behave in accordance with green social norms, and as the public have become more aware of environmental issues, consumers have become more accountable for their non-environmental actions. Some critics might say, “why bother incorporating green attributes into products, if “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers do not buy based on these attributes?” In response, this study proposes that developing “green” or “greener” products is worthwhile because the “feel-good-factor” and “social desirability” associated with “green” will encourage consumers to remain loyal and refrain from switching to conventional (i.e., not-so-green) alternatives. This study and other research (Thogerson & Olander, 2003; Whitmarsh & O'Neill, 2010) have shown that there are positive spillovers in green consumption behaviour, and this may lead consumers to adopt other environmentally-friendly products and practices.

The “green” message is shaped by interactions with actors in the social environment, which include society, organisations, government and the media. Therefore, this study also offers government and policy implications for encouraging more sustainable consumption practices of society and its citizens. Consumers need to detach themselves from a “them and us” mentality, which has created a division between “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers and is a key contributor to the formation of negative perceptions and associations directed at both consumer groups. Michael Polonsky (2011) explains that while industry and organisations are partly responsible for environmental degradation, it is the consumers who choose to buy, use and dispose of products in ways which damage the environment who are also at fault. Therefore, until “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green)

consumers change their attitude toward green consumption behaviour and “green” consumers, it will be difficult for organisations to achieve a green marketing revolution.

Public messages and social marketing need to promote the idea that being “green” is a social good that benefits everybody. It should also emphasise that environmental protection and sustainability require everyone to do his or her part, no matter how small the action is. Studies have shown that public policy and government regulations can influence consumer choice by inducing social norms toward socially favourable alternatives and reminding consumers of appropriate consumption behaviour (Nyborg, 2003; Nyborg & Rege, 2003). Public policy and government regulations may help consumers transition to the “right” or “environmentally-responsible” path. By emphasising “green consumption behaviour as a social process”, green social norms and social pressure to adopt green consumption behaviour are reinforced and pro-environmental behaviour change can take place.

5.4. Theoretical contributions

This study has contributed to existing green literature by providing a greater understanding of “green” and “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers, the “attitude-behaviour gap” and pro-environmental behaviour change. This research draws from a wide range of disciplines including marketing, sociology, psychology and environmental psychology in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of green consumerism. Understanding how to close the gap between what “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) and “green” consumers intend to do, what they actually do at the point of purchase and behaviour is clearly an important academic, managerial and social objective. This research has explored these issues by showing how social influence affects individual green consumption behaviour. In particular, this study provides four key contributions to green consumerism literature.

First, as most research in the green and ethical literature has been quantitative-based, there has been limited research into the thoughts, feelings and perceptions of consumers (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Caruana, 2007; Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002; Szmigin, et al., 2009). This research reveals consumers’ perceptions of “green” and

how perceptions shape, and are shaped by, consumption behaviour and the social environment. Through this, we have gained a better understanding of the tradeoffs, sacrifices, pre-conceptions, positive and negative experiences that consumers encounter within green consumerism and how these factors facilitate and inhibit pro-environmental behaviour change and the adoption of green consumption behaviour.

Three key concepts were revealed during the “green” perception analysis process, these include, “consumption addiction”, “green syndrome” and “green tradeoffs”. It is clear that some “mainstream” (i.e., not-so-green) consumers may be affected by “consumption addiction” which is driven by over-consumption and materialism inherent in Western society and culture. An addiction to consuming means that the adaption to a greener lifestyle is prone to behavioural inconsistencies and compromises. The difficulties and complexities involved in green consumerism have led some “mainstream” (i.e. not-so-green) consumers to develop a “green syndrome”, whereby they view “green” as an unattainable lifestyle limiting pro-environmental behaviour change. Moreover, behavioural inconsistencies even exist among “green” consumers, who experience tradeoffs among green product alternatives. The term “green tradeoffs” describes the ambiguity and confusion involved even in green product decisions. These concepts provide a rich understanding of “green” perceptions and illustrate the critical importance of these perceptions to green consumption behaviour and pro-environmental behaviour change.

Secondly, the green literature has widely reported that the consumption behaviour of consumers is sometimes inconsistent with their environmental attitudes (Carrington, et al., 2010; Connolly & Prothero, 2008; Kennedy, et al., 2009; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). By applying neutralisation techniques developed by Sykes and Matza (1957), we have gained a greater understanding of how and why consumers rationalise their non-environmental behaviour. The findings reveal how consumers neutralise feelings of guilt and cognitive dissonance and avoid negative ramifications to their self-concept and identity when they behave in ways that are inconsistent with their pro-environmental values. The findings also show that consumers have different “latitudes of acceptance” with regard to the tolerability of non-environmental behaviour. The level of acceptance is affected by the personal relevance of environmental issues, personal perceptions and experiences with “green”

consumption behaviour. An understanding of non-environmental behaviour rationalisations provides marketers with a better understanding of how consumers continue to behave in ways inconsistent to their pro-environmental attitudes.

Thirdly, while quantitative research has inferred that social factors are important (Easterling, et al., 1995; Griskevicius, et al., 2010; Lee, 2008; Young, et al., 2010), it has not shown the influence and power strategies that consumers exert over others. This study highlights the important role of the social environment in shaping perceptions and consumption behaviour of individual consumers. It reveals how interaction with other consumers influences consumption behaviour, by way of observations, evaluations and social judgements based on their perception of green social norms. In addition, this study has found that individuals attempt to influence others through “greening strategies”. Relevant others are sometimes subject to these “greening strategies”, which make people more accountable for their “green” and “not-so-green” consumption behaviour. Based on these findings, it is clear that consumers are themselves instrumental to pro-environmental behaviour change and the reduction of the “attitude-behaviour gap”.

Finally, research into green consumerism has focused on individual factors, as opposed to wider external factors and influences (Dolan, 2002; Moraes, et al., 2011; Weigel, 1983). By exploring the social environment and household dynamics, we have a better understanding of the context of consumption and the role of other people and institutions (i.e., organisations, government and the media), in facilitating and inhibiting greener consumption behaviour. The findings highlight how “not-so-green” consumers are persuaded or pressured to adopt green consumption behaviour because of their social environment, due to a phenomenon termed “social-loyalty”. Alternatively “symbolic contamination” can occur when “not-so-green” relevant others impose non-environmental consumption behaviour on a consumer with “green” values. The level of “symbolic contamination” is mediated by product category and the personal relevance of environmental issues and product attributes. This study has demonstrated that the adoption of green consumption behaviour within households depends on the nature of household roles, lifecycle and structure. By exploring multiple perspectives within households, an understanding of how green consumption behaviour is negotiated and compromised is achieved. Managerially, the findings of

this study offer a new understanding of “green consumption behaviour as a social process”, by exploring the individual, household and societal context of green consumerism.

5.5. Methodological contributions

This study employed methodological techniques not commonly used in green consumerism studies and literature. Current research is dominated by the use of quantitative as opposed to qualitative methods of inquiry (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Caruana, 2007; Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002; Szmigin, et al., 2009). This study successfully utilised qualitative methods and an adapted case study methodology to understand green consumption behaviour in a social context. This methodology allowed for flexibility in research design and examined the individuals within and between cases, as well as the cases themselves. The study selected seven household cases, with two participants from each case. By conducting individual and joint interviews, the responses of participants within and between household cases could be compared and contrasted. Semi-structured depth interviews were able to explore the research questions in addition to other topics and issues that were revealed during the interviews. In addition, archival data recorded the consumption habits of the participants through surveys and exercises (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 5).

By using an adapted case study methodology and semi-structured depth interviews, the researcher had the opportunity to build rapport and trust with the participants and observe participant interactions during the joint interview. This process and style of interviewing allowed the researcher to obtain a rich contextual understanding of green consumption behaviour. However, there are some limitations with this approach, which future researchers should be aware of in order to improve the quality of research.

- Firstly, the adapted case study methodology did not treat the individuals within a case as a single case, as the individual perceptions and experiences of each participant were explored. This is not typical of case study research and some academics view it necessary to conduct case study methodology precisely in order to generate reliable theories grounded in research (Yin, 1994). The researcher

maintains that to focus on a single case would have limited the findings and value obtained from this research.

- Secondly, the information provided by participants was only in relation to their subjective memories and experiences. Important green decisions and conflict situations may have occurred between household members but the participants may have subsequently forgotten these discussions. Alternatively, participants may have deliberately omitted decision conflicts from the interview discussions due to impression management. Other research has also found that the primary issue when trying to study conflict in decision-making is the tendency for respondents to deny conflict or disagreements in their relationship due to a desire to maintain an impression as a “happy couple” (Communri & Gentry, 2000; Davis, 1976; Spiro, 1983). An ethnographic or observational study may be able to resolve the issues related to household decision conflict and the accuracy of relaying past experiences.

5.6. Limitations

This study applied an adapted case study methodology with seven cases and 14 participants. This approach enabled this research to explore the dynamics within households by conducting individual and joint interviews with two participants from each household case. As discussed above, the adapted case study methodology is a limitation of this research but it allowed for analysis of the individuals within and between household cases in order to generate findings that were meaningful, valuable and grounded in context. The findings were exploratory in nature, with the purpose of making theoretical generalisations to provide a rich understanding of green consumerism in a social context.

While an adapted case study methodology provided an interesting basis for this study, the main difficulty with case research is in selecting suitable cases that maximise the opportunity for new information to be obtained (Stake, 2005). This study selected a broad range of household cases, however cases and subjects with wider socio-demographic characteristics may offer a more holistic view of green consumerism in social context. The cases and hence participants selected, were all of New Zealand

European ethnicity. It would be useful to explore different cultures and ethnicities, as this may offer new insights. In addition, only two individuals from the household were selected, as opposed to studying the entire household. Studying the entire household would provide a more comprehensive perspective of household dynamics.

This research may have been subject to a social desirability and researcher bias, prominent in research with ethical considerations (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Participants may have answered questions according to what is socially desirable, overstating the importance of green considerations in their buying behaviour. A researcher bias may also exist, as participants may have responded to questions in accordance with what they thought the researcher wanted to hear or to create/maintain an impression as a “good citizen” or “happy couple” in front of the interviewer. Participants may have felt uncomfortable discussing opinions and relationship conflicts and they could have answered questions in a way that is inconsistent with their actual experiences and feelings.

5.7. Future directions

While this research has successfully explored the research objectives and questions formulated by this research, the findings highlight the need for further research in this area. As discussed above, one of the main limitations of this study were the types of household cases and participants selected. Future research should consider a more diverse spectrum of household lifecycles and structures, in addition to a broader range of ethnic and socio-demographic groups. It would also be worthwhile to investigate how other social influences in the work place and public arena affect green consumption behaviour through observational or ethnographic research. This research has shown that the consumption behaviour and environmental attitudes of individuals and households is vastly diverse. Therefore, different personal relationships and social experiences can significantly affect green consumption behaviour and it is a valuable area for further research.

As this study was cross-sectional in nature, further research calls for observational or ethnographic/field research. A cross-sectional study cannot fully explain the social

context of green consumption behaviour due to limited observations. Moreover, the information provided by participants was only in relation to their memories and experiences. An observational or ethnographic study would provide a comprehensive understanding of green consumption behaviour through real-time observations of household and social interactions. In reality, consumption and purchase decisions can involve several potential influencers and decision-makers. An observational or ethnographic study can effectively explore the experiences of multiple individual consumers involved in green consumption practices.

5.8. Chapter summary

This study has addressed an important gap in marketing knowledge by illustrating how an individual's social environment can affect green consumption behaviour and pro-environmental behaviour change. Four key insights of this research were: (1) "Green" and "mainstream" (i.e., not-so-green) consumers can positively influence the green consumption behaviour of other consumers by means of social observations, comparisons and "greening strategies", resulting in pro-environmental behaviour change; (2) Some "mainstream" (i.e., not-so-green) consumers view "green" consumers as people who adopt "alternative" forms of green consumption behaviour. A "green syndrome" has developed whereby "green" is viewed as an unattainable goal, limiting mainstream participation in green consumption behaviour; (3) "Green" and "mainstream" (i.e., not-so-green) consumers rationalise their non-environmental behaviour with tradeoff and neutralisation arguments which reinforce the "attitude-behaviour gap" in green consumerism, and (4) Personal relationships and household dynamics (i.e., household roles, lifecycle and structure) can affect the adoption and effectiveness of green consumption behaviour practiced within households.

By understanding the individual, household and societal factors that affect green consumption behaviour and pro-environmental behaviour change, organisations and marketers are better prepared to serve customers and deliver effective green solutions. We also have a greater understanding of green consumption behaviour within a social context rather than isolating external variables and focusing on the individual consumer. The adapted case study methodology employed by this research has rarely been used to investigate green consumption behaviour, however it successfully

delivers new insight and improves our knowledge of “green consumption behaviour as a social process”. Although limitations exist, this study has contributed to the literature, methodologically, theoretically and managerially.

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APPENDIX 1: ARCHIVAL DATA: HOUSEHOLD CASES & PARTICIPANTS

1. Greta and Gordon

Greta and Gordon have been married for over 30 years and are “empty-nesters” who regularly care for their two-year-old grandchild, Greg. Greta and Gordon both regularly recycle, compost their waste and use reusable shopping bags, however they are reluctant to buy green products, and Gordon is especially sceptical of green products and marketing.

Participant name	Age	Gender	Household size	Marital status	Household /personal income	Employment status	Home ownership	Home type	Level of education
1. Greta	51+	Female	2 adults	Married	\$90,000+	Full-time	Own	Detached house	High school
1. Gordon	51+	Male				Part-time			High school

Green consumption practices	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Recycling/Composting					✓✓
Organic food consumption	✓✓				
Local food consumption	✓✓				
Animal welfare	✓			✓	
Green household products	✓✓				
Packaging		✓✓			
Reduce use of vehicle	✓✓				
Reduce energy consumption				✓✓	

2. Fiona and Fred

Fred and Fiona are a couple, living together while flatting with others. They have limited recycling habits and do not compost their organic waste due to lack of access, because they live in an apartment in town. Fiona enjoys buying green products from environmentally-responsible organisations. As a rule, Fiona will purchase green products when they are as effective, if not more effective than conventional products. Fiona also uses reusable shopping bags and views it as a significant contribution to reducing her environmental impact. Fred is very cost-conscious and tends to buy in bulk and he values cost over green attributes.

Participant name	Age	Gender	Household size	Marital status	Household /personal income	Employment status	Home ownership	Home type	Level of education
2. Fiona	Under 29	Female	4 adults	Living together	50,000-69,000	Full-time	Rent	Apartment	Undergraduate degree
2. Fred	Under 29 years	Male		Living together	\$90,000+	Full-time			Post-graduate degree

Green consumption practices	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Recycling/Composting			✓✓		
Organic food consumption	✓✓				
Local food consumption			✓✓		
Animal welfare			✓	✓	
Green household products	✓		✓		
Packaging		✓✓			
Reduce use of vehicle					✓✓
Reduce energy consumption				✓✓	

3. Edwina and Eddy

Edwina and Eddy have been living together for approximately 8 years, and have a young child. Edwina also has a daughter from a previous relationship aged 10 years old. Edwina is very environmentally-conscious because she has previously worked at the store “Common-sense organics”, She recycles often, and makes her own baby food. Eddy is also environmentally aware and interested in growing his own vegetables and composting organic waste. Due to inconvenience and cost, they use disposable nappies on their child; in addition, as a result of budget constraints the purchase of green products has also been reduced.

Participant name	Age	Gender	Household size	Marital status	Household /personal income	Employment status	Home ownership	Home type	Level of education
3. Edwina	30-39 years	Female	2 adults; 2 children	Living together	\$50,000-69,000	Home-maker	Rent	Detached house	High school
3. Eddy	30-39 years	Male			\$50,000-69,000	Full-time			High school

Green consumption practices	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Recycling/Composting					✓✓
Organic food consumption		✓	✓		
Local food consumption			✓✓		
Animal welfare			✓✓		
Green household products			✓✓		
Packaging				✓✓	
Reduce use of vehicle		✓✓			
Reduce energy consumption				✓✓	

4. Deborah and Darryl

Deborah and Darryl have lived together for approximately 10 years, and have a young baby, aged 6 months old. Deborah is both environmentally and cost conscious; she uses reusable nappies on her daughter and makes her own baby food. The household is involved in recycling and composting their waste. Darryl works for the Navy and has a strong interest in the health of New Zealand's waterways, and the conservation of endangered species and marine environments.

Participant name	Age	Gender	Household size	Marital status	Household /personal income	Employment status	Home ownership	Home type	Level of education
4. Deborah	30-39	Female	2 adults; 1 child	Married	\$70,000-89,000	Home-maker	Own	Detached house	Post-graduate degree
4. Darryl	30-39	Male				Full-time			Technical qualification

Green consumption practices	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Recycling/Composting				✓	✓✓
Organic food consumption		✓	✓		
Local food consumption				✓✓	
Animal welfare			✓✓		
Green household products	✓		✓		
Packaging				✓✓	
Reduce use of vehicle			✓✓		
Reduce energy consumption			✓✓		

5. Candice and Cameron

Candice and Cameron are flatmates who have lived together for approximately six months. Candice is very health-conscious and has a strict organic and vegetarian diet, often shopping at “Common-sense Organics”. Candice is very aware of the environmental and social impact of her consumption habits. Candice is an ethical and green consumer, and is very committed to using public transport and recycling; however, her commitment to composting varies at times. Cameron is environmentally aware but he does not try to minimise his environmental impact. Cameron composts his food-waste, and sometimes uses green products that Candice has purchased, but he does not voluntarily participate in any other green consumption.

Participant name	Age	Gender	Household size	Marital status	Household /personal income	Employment status	Home ownership	Home type	Level of education
5. Candice	40-49	Female	3 adults	Single	Under 29,000	Unemployed	Rent	Detached house	Graduate degree
5. Cameron	Under 29 years	Male		Single	Under 29,000	Part-time			Technical qualification

Green consumption practices	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Recycling/Composting	✓				✓
Organic food consumption	✓			✓	
Local food consumption				✓	
Animal welfare	✓				✓
Green household products		✓		✓	
Packaging		✓		✓	
Reduce use of vehicle	✓				✓
Reduce energy consumption			✓	✓	

6. Bridget and Bruce

Bridget and Bruce have lived together for over 20 years and have a daughter aged 10 years old. They are both very environmentally aware and are committed to recycling, reducing and reusing. When shopping, Bridget and Bruce make very conscious decisions, they buy products with reduced packaging or recyclable packaging, and try to support, encourage and promote local environmentally-responsible businesses. The couple are also interested in reducing their use of chemicals in the home, and avoid products, which have been heavily chemically treated (e.g., organic cotton). While Bridget and Bruce are concerned for the environmental impact of their consumption they are not vegetarian, and they do not consistently purchase organic products.

Participant name	Age	Gender	Household size	Marital status	Household /personal income	Employment status	Home ownership	Home type	Level of education
6. Bridget	39-39 years	Female	2 adults; 1 child	Married	\$90,000+	Full-time	Own	Detached house	Technical/ professional qualification
6. Bruce	51+	Male		Married		Full-time			High school

Green consumption practices	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Recycling/Composting					✓✓
Organic food consumption			✓✓		
Local food consumption			✓✓		
Animal welfare					✓✓
Green household products				✓✓	
Packaging					✓✓
Reduce use of vehicle				✓✓	
Reduce energy consumption				✓✓	

7. Annette and Anton

Annette and Anton have been together for over 20 years and do not have children. Annette and Anton are very committed to reducing their environmental impact by cycling as a form of transportation, recycling, reusing and reducing their waste and by making conscious and considered purchases. Annette and Anton are both vegetarians, and often buy organic produce from “Common-sense Organics”. They are both very concerned about their carbon footprint, and bought land in Nelson to act as a carbon-sink to offset the carbon emissions of their consumption behaviour. In addition, they have installed solar panel and they do not own a car.

Participant name	Age	Gender	Household size	Marital status	Household /personal income	Employment status	Home ownership	Home type	Level of education
7. Annette	40-49 years	Female	2 adults	Living together	\$70,000-89,000	Full-time	Own	Detached house	Undergraduate degree
7. Anton	40-49 years	Male			\$70-89,000	Full-time			Undergraduate degree

Green consumption practices	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Recycling/Composting					✓✓
Organic food consumption				✓✓	
Local food consumption				✓✓	
Animal welfare					✓✓
Green household products				✓✓	
Packaging				✓	✓
Reduce use of vehicle					✓✓
Reduce energy consumption					✓✓

APPENDIX 2: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui



School of Marketing and International Business

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Research: Household decision-making

This is an invitation to participate in a research study, undertaken as part of a Master's Thesis at Victoria University of Wellington conducted by Stephanie Hooper. Before you decide whether or not you want to take part in this research, you should understand what is involved. This form will provide detailed information about the study. Once you understand the study, you will need to sign the form if you wish to participate. Please take your time to make this decision.

WHAT IS THIS FORM?

Victoria University of Wellington requires ethics approval to be obtained before any form of research is carried out; this approval has been granted. This form is to respect and acknowledge your rights, and to let you know what is involved.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The purpose of this study is to achieve a greater understanding of how personal relationships affect household decision-making.

WHAT WILL YOUR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES BE IF YOU TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?

You will be invited to participate in two interviews. The first interview is an individual interview, and the second interview includes both you and a person with whom you live with. After both you and the other person, with whom you live with, have completed the individual interview, the joint interview will take place approximately one week later. The individual interview will last between 60-90 minutes and the joint interview will take approximately 60 minutes. It will be tape-recorded for later analysis, and will take place at the Pipitea Campus of Victoria University in Wellington. Participants will be required to sign a confidentiality form.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE INFORMATION YOU GIVE?

The research is completely confidential. Your name will not be used in the study and any information attributable to you will not be included in any analysis. The tape recordings will be reviewed by the researcher, supervisors and transcriber for the sole purpose of this research and will be securely stored in a locked cabinet and password protected computer.

The interview will only begin with your consent, which you will indicate by signing the consent form.

Any raw data will be securely stored for two years upon completion of the study before it will be destroyed. The results may be published in academic journals or conference papers, however your name will have been changed and any information traceable to you will not be included. If you would like a written summary of the project at the end of the study, please provide your contact details on the consent form. You can be reassured that the written summary will not contain any information that is traceable to you or any of the other participants.

You will receive a \$40 supermarket voucher upon completion of the joint interview.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS, WHOM CAN YOU CONTACT?

Researcher

Stephanie Hooper
Masters student
School of Marketing and International Business
Victoria University of Wellington
P.O Box 600
Wellington 6140
hooperstep@myvuw.ac.nz

Supervisor

Dr. Micael-Lee Johnstone
Lecturer
School of Marketing and International Business
Victoria University of Wellington
P.O Box 600
Wellington 6140
(04) 4636933
micael-lee.johnstone@vuw.ac.nz

APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui



School of Marketing and International Business

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERVIEW

Study: Household decision-making

I have been provided with adequate information relating to the nature and objectives of this research project.

I have understood this information and have been given the opportunity to seek further clarification or explanations.

I understand that I will be participating in an audio-recorded interview.

I understand I may withdraw from the project at any time during the interview, or within two weeks of the interview taking place, without providing a reason; and all related data will be destroyed.

I understand that the researcher, supervisors and the transcriber will have access to the audio recordings.

I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential and reported only in an aggregated/non-attributable form.

I understand that the results may be published in academic journals, and/or conference papers but my name will have been changed, and no identifiable information that is traceable to me will be included.

I understand the information will be used only for the purpose indicated, and any other use would require my written consent.

I understand that when this research is completed the raw data obtained will be destroyed after two years.

Name of participant: _____

Signature of participant: _____

Date:

☐ Please tick the box if you would like a written summary of the results at the end of the project, and provide your contact details below.

Postal Address: _____

APPENDIX 4: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Individual Interview Guide

1 Introduction (5 minutes)

Discuss

- Purpose of the study
- Information that is contained on the participant information sheet
- Recording equipment
- Consent and confidentiality forms
- Remind participants to switch off their cell phones

2 Warm-up discussion (10 minutes)

Introductions

- Find out some general information about the participant
- The following topics will be explored:
- *The main focus will be on household decision-making.*
 - Tell me what is important to you when shopping for products and services for yourself and for the household?
 - *What features/attributes/benefits do you look for? (e.g., price, preference, style)*
 - *Where do you shop?*
 - *Why do you shop there?*
 - *How often do you shop?*
 - *What product categories do you shop for most often?*
 - *Why do you choose these categories?*
 - *Who generally does the household shopping in your household?*

3 Discussion of how a “relevant other” affects household consumption (10 minutes)

- The following topics will be explored:
 - What is your relationship to the “relevant other?”

- How long have you known one-another?
- How long have you lived together?
- In your opinion, what is important to the “relevant other” when they shop for products and services for themselves and for the household?
 - *What features/attributes/benefits do they look for? (e.g., price, preference, style)*
 - *Where do they prefer to shop?*
 - *Why do they shop there?*
 - *How often does your “relevant other” shop?*
 - *What product categories do they shop for most often?*
 - *Why do they choose these categories?*
- In what way do the features/benefits/attributes important to your “relevant other”, affect your own in addition to household consumption behaviour?

4 Discussion about green consumption behaviour (15 minutes)

- The following topics will be explored:
 - *What does the term “green” or “environmentally-friendly” mean to you?*
 - *What green activities are you involved in?*
 - *Do you buy green products? What is the frequency?*
 - *What types of products do they buy and why?*

5 Perceptions of a “relevant other” and their green consumption (10-15 minutes)

- The following topics will be explored:
 - Based on the participant's own opinion -
 - *In your opinion what does the term “green” or “environmentally-friendly” mean to your relevant other?*
 - *What green activities are they involved in?*
 - *Do they buy green products? What is the frequency?*
 - *What types of products do they buy and why?*

6 Making concessions for a “relevant other” (10-15 minutes)

- The following topics will be explored:

- What do you think about the green/non-green consumption behaviour of the “relevant other”? How does this make you feel?
- Do you make concessions to your own consumption behaviour for the “relevant other”? (e.g., buy “green/not-so-green” products) How does this make you feel?
 - *Do you want to compromise?*

8 Discussion of influence and influence strategies (10-15 minutes)

- The following topics will be explored:
 - How do you influence your relevant other toward your own desired alternative?
 - How do you feel the relevant other influences your own consumption decisions and behaviour?

9 Discussion of coping (10-15 minutes)

- The following topics will be explored:
 - How do you justify/rationalise/cope with your own non-environmental actions or the non-environmental actions of your relevant other?
 - *Coping strategies*
 - *Neutralisation techniques*
 - *Defence mechanisms*

Joint Interview Guide

1 Introduction (5 minutes)

Discuss

- Purpose of the study
- Information that is contained on the participant information sheet
- Recording equipment
- Consent and confidentiality forms
- Remind participants to switch off their cell phones

2 Discussion about green consumption behaviour (10-15 minutes)

- The following topics will be explored:
 - What types of products do members in the household buy and why?
 - What green activities is the household involved in?
 - Does the household buy green products? What is the frequency?

3 Discussion of consumption differences (10-15 minutes)

- The following topics will be explored:
 - How is consumption behaviour within the household different (or similar)?
 - Are there any disagreements over consumption behaviour?
 - Does conflict arise? In what context? (e.g. product areas)

4 Discussion of negotiation (10-15 minutes)

- The following topics will be explored:
 - How do the participants' negotiate consumption behaviour?
 - How are issues resolved?

5 Discussion of outcome (10 minutes)

- The following topics will be explored:
 - What is the outcome of negotiations?
 - Which participant compromises or makes concessions to their consumption behaviour?

APPENDIX 5: GREEN-SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

Purchase Decisions	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Usually (4)	Always (5)
High efficiency light bulbs	1	2	3	4	5
Energy efficient appliances	1	2	3	4	5
Buy organic	1	2	3	4	5
Buy fair-trade	1	2	3	4	5
Avoid aerosols	1	2	3	4	5
Compost garden waste	1	2	3	4	5
Compost kitchen waste	1	2	3	4	5
Avoid toxic detergents	1	2	3	4	5
Reuse glass	1	2	3	4	5
Reuse paper	1	2	3	4	5
Buy recycled writing paper	1	2	3	4	5
Buy recycled toilet paper	1	2	3	4	5
Buy locally produced foods	1	2	3	4	5
Buy from a local store	1	2	3	4	5
Use own bag when shopping	1	2	3	4	5
Less packaging	1	2	3	4	5
Use plants that need less water	1	2	3	4	5
Read labels to see if contents are environmentally safe	1	2	3	4	5
Habits	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Usually (4)	Always (5)
Turn of the tap when soaping up	1	2	3	4	5
Reduce the number of baths/showers	1	2	3	4	5

Reduce toilet flushes	1	2	3	4	5
Turn off tap when cleaning teeth	1	2	3	4	5
Turn of tap when washing dishes	1	2	3	4	5
Reduce heat in unused rooms	1	2	3	4	5
Reduce hot water temperature	1	2	3	4	5
Keep heating low to save energy	1	2	3	4	5
Use a shower rather than a bath	1	2	3	4	5
Wait until there's a full load of washing	1	2	3	4	5
Put on more clothes instead of more heating	1	2	3	4	5
Lights off in unused rooms	1	2	3	4	5
Use sprinkler less in the garden	1	2	3	4	5
Reduce use of automobiles	1	2	3	4	5
Use public transport instead of an automobile	1	2	3	4	5
Recycling	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Usually (4)	Always (5)
Sort recyclable material out of trash	1	2	3	4	5
Recycle glass	1	2	3	4	5
Recycle newspaper	1	2	3	4	5
Recycle cans	1	2	3	4	5
Recycle plastic bottles	1	2	3	4	5
Donate furniture to charity	1	2	3	4	5
Donate clothes to charity	1	2	3	4	5

