CrossMark

Exploring the Gap Between Consumers' Green Rhetoric and Purchasing Behaviour

Micael-Lee Johnstone · Lay Peng Tan

Abstract Why do consumers who profess to be concerned about the environment choose not to buy greener products more regularly or even at all? This study explores how consumers' perceptions towards green products, consumers and consumption practices (termed *green perceptions*) contribute to our understanding of the discrepancy between green attitudes and behaviour. This study identified several barriers to ethical consumption behaviour within a green consumption context. Three key themes emerged from the study, 'it is too hard to be green', 'green stigma' and 'green reservations'. There is currently a perception, based on a number of factors, that it is too hard to be green, which creates a barrier to purchasing green products. Furthermore, some consumers were reluctant or resistant to participate in green consumption practices due to their unfavourable perceptions of green consumers and green messages. This article suggests that green perceptions may influence consumers' intention to purchase green products. Accordingly, it discusses the implications, and suggests avenues for future research.

Key words Green attitude–behaviour gap · Green perceptions · Environmentally conscious behaviour · Theory of planned behaviour

M.-L. Johnstone (✉)
School of Marketing & International Business, Victoria University of Wellington, PO Box 600, Wellington 6140, New Zealand
e-mail: micael-lee.johnstone@vuw.ac.nz

L. P. Tan
Department of Marketing and Management, Faculty of Business and Economics, Macquarie University, Sydney, NSW 2109, Australia
e-mail: laypeng.tan@mq.edu.au

Introduction

Environmental concern is indisputably an important topic for both marketing practitioners and policy makers today. Not only because there are heightened concerns about the impact consumers' buying and consumption behaviours are having on the environment (Johnson et al. 2008), but because businesses are facing increased pressure to incorporate environmental and social responsibilities into their corporate strategies. In fact, corporate social responsibility is deemed to be "a base requirement of operating in the 21st century and is not an option" (Charter et al. 2002, p. 8). As Nielsen's (2014) Global Online Environment and Sustainability study revealed (it surveyed 30,000 respondents in 60 countries), 55 % of their respondents stated that they would be "willing to pay more for products and services provided from companies that are committed to positive social and environmental impact". Therefore, it is not surprising with statistics such as these that many companies have begun offering environmentally friendly product options. However, consumers' uptake of green products has not kept pace with their growing concerns for the environment. For instance, in a recent survey a quarter of UK consumers said they would be willing to pay more for ethical, organic and greener cleaning products (Butler 2013). Yet, the home care market in the UK continued to be dominated by conventional brands (brands that are not promoted as environmentally friendly) between 2008 and 2013 (Euromonitor International 2013). Likewise in Australia, Nature's Organics, the first and largest local player to market its home care products based on green image held only a 3 % value share in the overall Australian home care market in 2011 (Euromonitor International 2012b, c). Therefore, despite consumers' positive attitudes about the environment, and their growing environmental

consciousness (e.g. CEAP 2007; Eurobarometer 2011), several studies have revealed an inconsistency between green attitudes and behaviour (e.g. Carrigan and Attalla 2001; Chatzidakis et al. 2004; Pickett-Baker and Ozaki 2008). As Carrington et al. (2010) note, it is apparent that many consumers do not always "walk their talk". For instance, some consumers continue to buy environmentally hazardous products regardless of their concern for greener alternatives (e.g. Strong 1996).

Over the past few decades, numerous theoretical frameworks have been developed to explain this attitude–behaviour discrepancy but no definitive explanation has yet been found (Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002). The gap between consumers' positive attitudes towards green issues and their inconsistent and often conflicting consumption behaviour remains a concern for social marketers and policymakers (Moraes et al. 2012) because the current levels of consumption and consumers' consumption choices are not environmentally sustainable. Research, such as the 2006 European Environmental Impact of Products (EIPRO) project, highlights the impact that consumers can have on the environment, as it revealed that housing, transport and food are responsible for 70 % of the environmental impacts in most categories (Tukker and Jansen 2006). Although as Lebel and Lorek (2008, p. 242) stress, the pursuit of sustainability in a location, sector, or life can often unravel at the edges because efforts to tackle environmental problems in one place can shift somewhere else. Hence, one needs to look at the issue of sustainability from a production–consumption systems perspective, i.e. look at production and consumption jointly (Lebel and Lorek 2008). Likewise, as Moraes et al. (2012, p. 124) state, "if we are to succeed in promoting sustainability, we need to recognise that sustainable development is a social proposition".

Whilst past research reveals that factors such as price, perceived performance and trust are some of the reasons why consumers choose not to buy greener products (e.g. Gleim et al. 2013; Gupta and Ogden 2009; Pickett-Baker and Ozaki 2008), we still have an incomplete understanding of the gap between consumers' green rhetoric and purchasing behaviour. Why do consumers who profess to be concerned about the environment choose not to buy greener products regularly or at all? This study proposes that exploring consumers' perceptions towards green consumption practices, green products, green consumers and green communications (termed *green perceptions*) may offer new insights into the green attitude–behaviour gap because at the heart of consumer perceptions are perceptual interpretations and perceptual judgements; and this is what shapes consumers' attitudes and behaviours. In doing so, our study aims to gain further insights into why there is a green attitude–behaviour gap.

For the purpose of this study, green products are products that consumers perceive to be environmentally friendly, whether it is due to the production process, the types of materials or ingredients used to manufacture the product, packaging, marketing communications and so on. Green consumption behaviour refers to consumption behaviours that are perceived by people to have either a nil, minimal or reduced impact on the environment, such as purchasing environmentally friendly products, recycling, protecting waterways and so on. Green consumption has been viewed as a subset of ethical consumption (Carrington et al. 2010). The key difference between the two is that green consumption focuses on the environment and green issues only, whereas ethical consumption also includes society at large, such as workers' rights, arms trade and fair trade (Shaw and Shiu 2002), which is expressed through one's consumption or purchase behaviour.

Our article begins with a brief overview of the green attitude–behaviour literature. We then discuss the qualitative methods that were used to explore this phenomenon, followed by a discussion of the key findings. We conclude the article with suggestions for future research.

How Predictable is Green Consumption Behaviour?

Demographic and Motivational Factors

To gain a greater understanding of green consumption practices many researchers in the past have tried to define the green consumer. Indeed, a substantial amount of effort has gone into defining and profiling green consumer segments, primarily in socio-demographic terms (e.g. Kinnear et al. 1974; Laroche et al. 2001; Robert and James 1999; van Liere and Dunlap 1981), and psychographic terms (e.g. Shrum et al. 1995). However, these approaches have generated inconsistent thus inconclusive results, prompting several researchers to conclude that there is limited utility in the use of socio-demographics characteristics when trying to understand green consumption behaviour (Diamantopoulos et al. 2003; Roberts 1996). Evidently, green consumption behaviour is not determined by the characteristics of the consumer alone (Rex and Baumann 2007). Accordingly, some studies have identified other ways to segment green consumers and understand green consumption behaviours. For example, research focusing on motivational drivers found that factors such as ecological affect (e.g. Chan 2001); personal circumstances (e.g. Solér 1996), e.g. allergies; one's level of involvement, for example, living close to nature or being dependent on the natural environment (e.g. Solér 1996); and one's emotional affinity towards nature (e.g. Kals et al. 1999) can affect green consumption behaviour. At the same time, other

studies have revealed that some people use ethics to align themselves to a cause, such as adopting green consumption practices, e.g. recycling, purchasing green products and so on (e.g. McDonald et al. 2012; Newholm and Shaw 2007).

Environmental Knowledge and Awareness

Researchers have also looked at environmental knowledge when exploring green attitudes and behaviour. This is because environmental knowledge is frequently assumed to drive green consumption behaviour (e.g. Bartkus et al. 1999; Schlegelmilch et al. 1996) based on a linear progression model that knowledge leads to environmental awareness and concern, which in turn is thought to contribute to pro-environmental behaviour (Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002). However, the empirical evidence for this relationship is far from clear (Chan 2001). A meta-analysis of 128 studies by Hines and colleagues (1987) found that there was only an average correlation of $r = 0.299$ between environmental knowledge and behaviour amongst the 17 studies that dealt with cognitive variables. As Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002, p. 241) stressed, "environmental knowledge per se is not a prerequisite for pro-environmental behaviour", as most people have insufficient knowledge about environmental issues to act environmentally responsibly. And yet, as Kollmuss and Agyeman's (2002) review also revealed, consumers' pro-environmental behaviours did not necessarily increase when they were provided with very detailed technical information; as they discussed, early rationalist models assumed people would engage in more pro-environmental behaviours if they were educated about environmental issues. This perspective, which was proven wrong, surprised Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002, p. 241) because "common sense tells us that changing behaviour is very difficult". Perhaps, the biggest assumption underpinning the role of environmental knowledge is that consumers are objective and always rational in their consumption choices and behaviour (Peattie 2010). This assumption may not hold in practice. For example, as Chan (2001) found, intuitive and emotional factors can exert a greater influence on attitudes towards green purchases. These mixed results may also suggest a more complex relationship between environmental knowledge and behaviour (Chan 1999).

Green Attitude and Behaviour

Attitudes are recognised in cognitive psychology as being one of the major factors that guides human behaviour (Bredahl 2001). In multi-attribute models, such as the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975) and theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen 1985, 1991), attitude is theorised to affect intentions to perform behaviour, and their intentions in turn impact behaviour (Petty et al. 1991). TRA and TPB have been the most influential and widely used attitude–behaviour models in social psychology because of their clarity and simplicity (Regis 1990 as cited in Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002).

However, the relationship between green attitudes and behaviour has been a contentious one. In a recent global survey by Euromonitor, 53 % of the total 15,933 respondents from eight markets (Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, UK and US) cited "green/environmentally" to be an important consideration when purchasing a product or service (Euromonitor International 2012a). With such high levels of environmental concern, one would expect environmentally friendly products to be highly sought after. But they are not. That is, consumers' positive attitudes about the environment do not necessarily translate into actual purchase behaviour (e.g. Carrigan and Attalla 2001; Chatzidakis et al. 2004; Gupta and Ogden 2009; Pickett-Baker and Ozaki 2008). This phenomenon is generally known as the "attitude–behaviour gap" or the "green gap".

Given the documented weak linkages between attitudes and behaviour in the ethical consumption, environmental and social marketing literature (e.g. Bray et al. 2011; Moraes et al. 2012; Pickett-Baker and Ozaki 2008), the discrepancy between pro-environmental attitudes and actual purchase behaviour is not necessarily surprising. Perhaps, this is because consumers are not as ethically minded as we would like to believe. As Carrigan and Attalla's (2001) study revealed, ethical considerations are not necessarily factored into purchase decisions.

Conversely, other researchers, such as Auger and Devinney (2007), suggest that traditional survey methods used in ethical consumption studies have overstated the importance of ethical issues and its influence on purchase intention. Likewise, consumers may have also over reported their attitudinal preferences and purchase intentions towards socially responsible behaviour when responding to environmental issues (McGougall 1983 as cited in Chan 2001). This is because social desirability bias to some degree distorts the findings. Alternatively, maximising self-interest has also been found to outweigh the cost of cooperating (e.g. there is uncertainty with collective social gains), regardless of how positive many consumers' attitudes are towards the environment (Gupta and Ogden 2009). Still, whilst Carrington et al. (2010) accept these arguments, they also think consumers are hampered by other constraints and competing demands, such as the physical surroundings of a store, consumers' moods, the time of day, and so on. Whereas, Bray et al. (2011) suggest that other factors such as quality perceptions, a lack of information and cynicism can also affect ethical consumption decisions.

In sum, whilst green consumption behaviour to a limited extent can be predicted using demographic and psychographic profiles, motivational factors, environmental knowledge, and attitudes, many other factors can also influence green consumption behaviour. For example, there are situational factors such as economic constraints, lack of choice and availability (e.g. Gleim et al. 2013; Tanner and Wölfing Kast 2003) that can create barriers to green consumption practices, as well as consumers' internal obstacles such as one's sense of responsibility, ethical standards and social pressures (e.g. Chan et al. 2008; Koller et al. 2011; Welsch and Kühling 2009). In view of this, there is much complexity surrounding green consumption behaviour. As Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002, p. 239) state, pro-environmental behaviour is such a complex issue, one cannot expect to explore it using one single framework.

Consumers' attitude and behaviours, for instance, are often shaped by their perceptual interpretations and perceptual judgments. Accordingly, a number of studies have looked at perceptions and its influence on consumer behaviour, from price perceptions (e.g. Lowe and Alpert 2010; Shiv et al. 2005); to quality perceptions (e.g. Bridges 1993); risk perceptions (e.g. Eggert 2006); consumers' perceptions of sales promotions (e.g. Lowe and Barnes 2012), and so on. Within green marketing, perceptions of trust, perceived risk, perceived performance, perceived price, perceived quality and pro-social status perceptions have also been explored (e.g. Borin et al. 2013; Chen and Chang 2013b; Zabkar and Hosta 2013) to understand green consumption behaviour. However, a gap remains in our knowledge with regards to consumers' *green perceptions.* What are consumers' perceptions of green products, marketing messages, consumers and consumption practices? Do these perceptions influence their green consumption behaviour? We suggest that even though consumers may have pro-environmental attitudes, their *green perceptions* may influence their green consumption behaviour.

Method

This study aims to understand why consumers who profess to be concerned about the environment choose not to buy greener products regularly, or at all. It suggests that one needs to explore consumers' green perceptions in order to gain a greater understanding of the green gap. An interpretive approach is therefore appropriate for this study as it is interested in "culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world" (Crotty 1998, p. 67).

Since this study was interested in how individuals interpret their own actions and construct meaning, qualitative methods were adopted. The advantage of using qualitative methods is that they enable one to focus on ordinary events that happen in "real life settings"; the emphasis being on the subjects' "lived experience" (Miles and Huberman 1994, p. 10), and they enable one to understand how "the everyday, intersubjective world is constituted" (Schwandt 1994, p. 192). Within the context of our study, we were interested in understanding what consumers' perceptions of green consumption behaviour were and what shaped these perceptions.

We conducted seven focus groups, which were audio and video recorded. In total, 57 participants were recruited but six dropped out so a total of 51 people, aged between 19 and 70 years, participated in the study (Appendix 1). There were 7–8 participants in each focus group, and female participants outnumbered the male participants; this will be discussed in the limitations section. Each focus group lasted between 1.5 and 2 h. The advantage of using focus groups is the method's ability to explore complex behaviours and motivations due to its explicit use of group interactions (Carson et al. 2001). As this was an exploratory study, we were interested in gaining new insights which can often arise via group discussion (Morgan 1988 cited in Hartman 2004, p. 402) because the spontaneous interactions between focus group members can generate new perspectives (Stewart et al. 2007). As Lederman (1990, p. 119) states, the group potentially provides "a context in which the synergy can generate more than the sum of individual inputs". Seven focus groups were deemed to be a sufficient number as we felt we had reached "theoretical saturation", i.e. since new insights were not being gained it was not necessary to conduct more focus groups (Strauss and Corbin 1998). The purpose of the focus group discussions was to increase our understanding of this phenomenon.

Advertisements were placed in the local newspaper, and for focus group seven, posters were distributed around the university. Participants were screened on the basis of their green consumption practices, and positive attitudes towards the environment. We were particularly interested in consumers who were not overtly 'green' with regards to their green consumption practices but who expressed that they were concerned about the environment. To minimise self-reporting bias, we made it very clear at the start of the screening process (a brief telephone interview) that we were interested in consumers who purchased environmentally friendly household products as well as those who *did not.* As past research has shown, consumers may over report their attitudinal preferences and purchase intentions towards socially responsible behaviour when responding to environmental issues (McDougall 1993 as cited in Chan 2001). Thus, social desirability bias to some degree can distort findings, which helps to explain the inflated discrepancy between professed pro-environmental attitudes

and actual behaviour. Within quantitative research, social desirability bias has been particularly challenging (de Jong et al. 2010; Randall and Fernandes 1991; Wouters et al. 2014), but it can also be problematic in interview situations when researching consumer ethics (Hiller 2010). Since we stressed that we were also interested in recruiting people who *did not* purchase green products, we were confident that our participants reflected the typical consumer who states that he or she is concerned about the environment (attitudes) but does not necessarily behave accordingly (behaviour). Throughout the focus group discussions, we reinforced our neutral stance on green consumption practices so participants felt comfortable discussing their consumption behaviours. At the start of each focus group, we also reminded participants that we were interested in understanding why consumers did not purchase green products, and why they did. Some projective techniques were used to help participants respond more openly. For example, we would ask questions such as 'why do you think some consumers choose not to buy green products?' This tactic was useful because projection techniques "provides participants with the facility to project their thoughts and feelings on to another person or object…[and] can enable research participants to express feelings and thoughts they would otherwise find difficult to articulate" (Ramsey et al. 2006, p. 554), or in this case, share with others.

The screening process used behavioural and attitudinal-based questions and items from established scales that measured ecological concern (Bohlen et al. 1993). We asked questions such as, "the media focuses too much on the environment" and "personally, I cannot help to slow down environmental deterioration" as well as "Do you recycle?", "What types of household cleaning brands do you purchase/use?", "What kinds of environmentally friendly products do you buy?", "How often do you take your own reusable bags to the store when you shop?". We also asked a qualifying question, "Do you participate in the household shopping activities?" because we were interested in why consumers did or did not purchase green household products, thus participants needed to be household shoppers. Demographic information was also collected. During the screening process, we did not discuss compensation. However, once we selected a participant, they were informed that they would receive a $40 supermarket voucher at the end of the focus group.

Respondent homogeneity, in terms of social-demographics, was a key consideration when compiling the focus groups because participants are more likely to open up to people they identify with (Krueger 1994). Hence, we grouped people from similar demographic backgrounds in each focus group, using age and occupation as a starting point.

A structured moderator's guide was used (Appendix 2), which included discussion-based questions, and exercises ranging from whiteboard activities to discussions about product packaging. Environmentally friendly (EF) and conventional (i.e. brands that make no claims about being environmentally friendly, referred to as non-EF) laundry products, dishwashing detergents and soaps were used. The objectives of the activities were to explore consumers' perceptions of EF products and green consumption behaviour.

NVivo was used to store and analyse the verbatim transcripts, and data was analysed using thematic analysis, which involves systematic reading, interpreting and categorising pieces of data into theme-based patterns (Braun and Clarke 2006; Spiggle 1994). The strength of thematic analysis is that it is an iterative approach, whereby initial categorisation may be changed and moved in relation to other texts (Dittmar and Drury 2000). As Kellehear (1993) writes, thematic analysis is about discovering themes that appear in the text and looking for commonalties across texts. More importantly, it differs from other analytical tools that analyse texts because it "seeks to assess subjects' feelings, perceptions and understandings of themselves and social relations" (Dittmar and Drury 2000, p. 119).

Utilising Morse's (1994) approach to analysing texts, three steps took place: comprehension, synthesising and theorising. First, *comprehension*, or having some understanding of the phenomenon in question, is vital if the researcher is to understand the participants' texts. Next is *synthesising*, or "merging" texts. This involves applying thematic analysis in order to identify common structures of individuals' experiences (Morse 1994, p. 36). Finally, *theorising* takes place upon the completion of the analysis.

Whilst applying these techniques, the synthesising stage initially involved reading each transcript individually, and identifying themes within each focus group. The second phase of this process involved comparing each focus group and looking for commonalities and differences between the focus groups, and categorising each theme accordingly. Once these themes were identified, the third phase involved looking for further similarities and/or differences, re-coding themes where necessary, and creating fewer categories.

Using an adapted hermeneutics framework, there was a continuous part-to-whole, and whole-to-part process. This iterative approach enabled the researchers to understand the consumption meanings as conveyed by the participants, as well as the patterns and differences, which became apparent across the focus groups (Thompson 1997).

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. Hence, a variety of techniques were used, such as

"descriptive validity" (Wolcott 1990), "interpretative validity" (Maxwell 1992) and "credibility" (Patton 2002). Descriptive validity is concerned with whether or not the researcher accurately recorded what was seen or heard. This is important because one cannot properly begin to analyse the texts if the interviews themselves do not accurately represent what was said; "description is the foundation upon which qualitative research is built" (Wolcott 1990, p. 27). To address this problem, the researchers compared the recordings with the transcripts to ensure each transcript was accurately transcribed.

Interpretive validity, as Maxwell (1992, p. 290) states, "is inherently a matter of inference from the words and accounts of participants in the situations studied". In other words, did the researcher interpret the transcripts accurately? We adopted a continuous part-to-whole, and whole-to-part process (the hermeneutic circle) to ensure that the consumption meanings were not interpreted out of context, and adopted a systematic process of coding as outlined earlier.

Finally, to ensure that the findings were "credible" and "trustworthy" (Patton 2002), we made sure consistency was maintained across the focus groups by asking the same questions, using a structured moderator's guide. In addition, two coders were used to ensure the findings and conclusions were reasonable and logical. Each coder independently coded the data. They then compared their analysis with each other, and only accepted interpretations that they both agreed upon.

Findings and Discussion: Consumers' Current Green Perceptions

The purpose of our study was to understand why consumers who claim they are concerned about the environment choose not to buy green products regularly or at all. Whilst, research has revealed that price, perceived performance and trust are some of the reasons why this occurs (Gleim et al. 2013; Gupta and Ogden 2009; Pickett-Baker and Ozaki 2008), we were interested in exploring consumers' *green perceptions*. What are consumers' perceptions of green products, marketing messages, consumers and consumption practices? More importantly, how does this contribute to our understanding of the green attitude–behaviour gap? Many studies have explored perceptions from price (e.g. Lowe and Alpert 2010; Shiv et al. 2005); to quality (e.g. Bridges 1993); risk (e.g. Eggert 2006); sales promotions (e.g. Lowe and Barnes 2012), and so on. However, we have limited knowledge with regards to consumers' *green perceptions* (e.g. Borin et al. 2013; Chen and Chang 2013b; Zabkar and Hosta 2013), and how this may directly or indirectly influence consumers' green

consumption behaviour. A discussion of the findings will be presented, followed by a diagrammatic summary of the key points.

The key themes to emerge from this study are: 'it is too hard to be green', 'the green stigma', and 'green reservations'. 'It is too hard to be green' focuses on consumers' perceptions of external factors, which they believe hinders consumers' ability to adopt greener consumption practices. In contrast, 'the green stigma' focuses on consumers' negative or unfavourable perceptions of 'green' consumers and 'green' messages, and how this may negatively influence one's desire to participate in green consumption behaviours. Finally, 'green reservations' reflects consumers' uncertainty or ambivalence towards green consumption practices, i.e. that participating in green consumption practices will not make a difference to the environment. The terms 'green' and 'environmentally friendly' will be used interchangeably throughout the remainder of this article as the participants perceived no difference between the terms.

It is Too Hard to be Green

Essentially, one of the strongest themes to emerge is the perception that 'it is too hard to be green', which can ultimately lead to inaction. This is best summed up by the following quote:

> I think at the end of the day people are inherently lazy. And if it's too hard they're not going to do it (F40s, FG1F4).

According to the participants, being environmentally friendly takes time, effort, and money; these findings mirror Bray et al.'s (2011) study, which explored factors that impede ethical consumption. As our participants noted, one also needs to be knowledgeable, live in the right place, have self-discipline and be prepared to make personal sacrifices if one wants to be green. Therefore, there is a perception that it is very hard to be environmentally friendly. Under the 'It is too hard to be green' theme, we identified two sub-themes: 'I'm not ready to be green' and 'Others are not making green easy for me'.

'I'm Not Ready to be Green'

The participants in this study stated that they were concerned for the environment but that it was not easy to be green. Income, environmental and product knowledge, time and self-discipline were viewed by the participants as obstacles to being green; a condition, which participants said, only some *green* consumers can regularly participate in. Therefore, *green is not for everyone but only for those who are ready*. When we explored the characteristics of

green consumers, each focus group identified similar traits. Green consumers are not age or gender specific. Instead, they tend to be people who are "reasonably price insensitive…would go to the trouble and have more time, or use their time differently" (F40s, FG1F7); they recycle, carpool, walk or ride to work; have more money; read a lot and they tend to "make an informed decision about which product [they] are going to compromise on" (F50s, FG4F3). These perceptions of *green consumers* support prior research that has focused on green consumers' consumption behaviour (e.g. Peattie 2010; Young et al. 2010).

Interestingly, some participants stated that *where one lived* made it difficult to be green. For instance the sentiment, "I think urban living is kind of a big barrier [to being green]" (F20s, FG7F3), may give some consumers a reason not to participate in green consumption practices. Living close to nature has been found to be a motivational driver to engaging in green consumption behaviour (e.g. Solér 1996). Our finding shows that, urban living might be a de-motivating factor instead. This is because some participants did not view 'cities' as green zones.

Equally important, was the perception that green consumption activities are unattainable. That is, there is a perception that participating in green activities is something that is beyond some people's reach due to time and money. Convenience and cost is certainly a recurring theme in the literature (e.g. Bray et al. 2011; Gleim et al. 2013).

> Well if you're struggling to pay the bills you're not going to worry about it [buying green products] (F40s, FG6F4).

> Alternative products are quite expensive. My children have grown up…But there was a time where I had four little children…I couldn't afford those things. We were saving for a house (F50–54, FG6F5).

> Depending on how and where you are, it takes a whole lot more effort. Even if you look around for fair trade coffee, and green products…, it takes more effort than just grabbing what you can see on the shelf (M20s, FG6M).

We suggest that when green is perceived as something that is unattainable, some consumers may feel a sense of powerlessness, thus reinforcing the idea that it is too hard to be green. As a result, they may opt to do nothing and/or they ignore green communications. As the self-efficacy literature states, if people do not believe they have the ability to perform a behaviour, they are less likely to attempt it (Bandura 1991). Likewise, if consumers do not believe in the power of individuals they are less likely to participate in green consumption behaviour (e.g. Balderjahn 1988).

Participants also perceived a difference between themselves, the 'everyday' consumer, and the 'green' consumer—it was a 'them' versus 'us' mind-set—those who regularly participate in green consumption practices and those who do not (or cannot). Of course, the typical activities and behaviours often associated with *being green* have been used by marketers in their hunt for the green consumer (e.g. Connolly and Prothero 2008; Robert and James 1999; Samdahl and Robertson 1989; Shrum et al. 1995). Perhaps in marketers' quest to promote greener consumption activities, as well as their tactic to target the elusive green consumer, a strategic mistake has been made because some consumers perceive green as something that is *elusive* and/or *exclusive*. The analogy *green is haute couture, not ready-to-wear* aptly highlights this sentiment because there is a perception that (1) it is too hard to be green and (2) only some people can be truly green. Hence, even though consumers may have positive attitudes about the environment, they may not believe they can fully participate in green consumption behaviours.

> …you can make token gestures but it's not until you can afford to be paying for all the products that's when you can really be environmentally-friendly (F20s, FG7F3).

Being green for some consumers also appears to be synonymous with money. So whilst consumers are mindful of what it means to be environmentally friendly, some are not convinced that they can be *wholly environmentally friendly*. As a result, some consumers believe green is something one can only commit to once they are 'ready to be green', that is, when they have the ability to be green. This reinforces the perception that it is too hard to be green.

For some consumers, the relationship between green attitudes and green behaviour is a dichotomous one, i.e. some consumers have an 'all or nothing approach', as illustrated below.

> I feel like kind of almost, if you are going to be environmentally-friendly you have to go the whole way, you can't just like do half environmentally-friendly you kind of have to commit yourself to it. And I don't feel like I can do that as a student, but I feel like when I'm older and got a bit money I will like commit myself really more to the cause kind of thing (M20s, FG7M1).

Following the framework proposed by McDonalds et al. (2006, 2012), the consumer above could be classified as a "grey consumer". However, the 'all or nothing' approach contradicts their framework in that, to these consumers, there is not a *continuum* of "greenness" but only a dichotomy between "grey" (nothing) and "dark green" (all). That is, until they can fully commit to being green,

some believe there is no point in trying. We agree that this view is somewhat extreme and certainly alarming. It would definitely be worthwhile to investigate the extent of this view to see how widespread it is.

'Others Are Not Making Green Easy For Me'

Some participants found that it was too hard to be green because of others, that is, *others are not making green easy for them*. 'Others' refers to external factors, such as people that consumers live with, marketers, and the government. For instance, some participants commented that it was hard to be green because of one's living circumstances. As one participant describes, "I think it's a bit of a battle sometimes, especially if you are living with someone else, or flatting" (F30s, FG3F2). In this case, the participant will use the non-green products her partner buys. That is, her partner, an external factor, has made it harder for her to be green.

> In my flat I flick off the lights and only fill up the kettle about half way and my flatmates they'll be like, what are you doing that for? They're throwing out bottles and things like this and you're just making this sort of effort and you just think, what's the point?! (M20s, FG7M1).

The quote above also ties in with the concept of perceived self-efficacy, which refers to "people's beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over their own level of functioning and other events that affect their lives" (Bandura 1991, p. 257). Within this context, if individuals believe they cannot control their environment because of *others*, their commitment to perform green-related behaviours may be weak. It may then lead to a situation where the individual blames others for their inaction, that is, 'if no one else bothers why should I?' It also reinforces the perception that it is too hard to be green because of others. As studies have shown, people are more willing to cooperate if they think other people are cooperating (e.g. Wiener and Doescher 1994) because *concern*, alone, may be insufficient to encourage pro-environmental behaviour. If people do not believe that others are also making an effort, they are less likely to make an effort. Similarly, if consumers do not believe, or stop believing that they as 'individuals' can make a difference, it may become difficult to encourage them to participate in green consumption practices.

Likewise, confusing information also contributes towards the perception that it is too hard to be green, as the quotes below indicate.

> One of the issues with a lot of this packaging is, it's not always easy to read, and you can't always understand what they're saying (F55–59, FG3F4).

Well it's supposed to be environmentally-friendly. But I don't know. And one of you asked did I read the label. And if I read the label I wouldn't know which things were okay and which weren't (F41–54, FG4F2).

Other studies have also revealed that poorly communicated marketing messages can create barriers to green product adoption and ethical consumption (e.g. Bray et al. 2011; Gleim et al. 2013). However, whilst many of the participants in our study appear to blame marketers for poor packaging information, they also state that the government should take more responsibility when it comes to the environment by providing regulations or standards. As one participant said "If the Ministry for the Environment has given out awards, then maybe they need to do a little bit about educating people about what's okay and what's not okay. What's environmentally sustainable" (F50s, FG4F3). Essentially, consumers need reassurances that environmentally friendly products are legitimate. This is especially important as consumers often found the product information confusing, as the quote below suggests.

> Because I would prefer to be able to use green products…with food, I'm quite good at label reading and I do always read labels with that. But to be honest, with all this stuff [household cleaning products] I really don't understand what the labels mean. So perhaps the people who are putting these things out, need to find a way like a green tick set up, or something like that, that actually will tell people who aren't of a scientific bent, exactly what's going on. Because those words like ionic… (F55–59, FG4F5)

We would suggest that due to some consumers' past experiences, whether it was a direct experience or an indirect experience, there is a perception that one must give up things, *sacrifice things*, if one wants to be green as illustrated by the quote below. Direct experience can be defined as consumers who have participated in green consumption behaviours, and indirect experiences include observing other consumers, reading media reports, word-of-mouth (WOM) communication and so on.

> No, I don't see myself as one [green] I think I'm far too self-indulgent…I'd like to be but I really don't have the moral discipline to be one (F70+, FG2F5).

Within the marketing literature, perceived sacrifice has been defined in terms of what a consumer feels they have to give up when they purchase a product or service (e.g. Shukla 2010; Zeithaml 1988). It has been explored from a variety of perspectives from price, convenience, time and effort, and performance (e.g. Murphy and Enis 1986; Pura 2005). Our study reveals that there is another aspect to perceived sacrifice and that is comfort. That is, to be green,

one must be ready to give up some of life's *comforts*. As the participant above states, "I'm far too self-indulgent", hence the perception that 'being green' requires one to forgo life's comforts may further hinder green adoption. Seemingly, for others, there is a perception that one has to do more, i.e. participate in many green activities, if one wants to make a difference because some consumers believe small actions alone do not make a difference.

What makes the 'perceived sacrifice' finding particularly interesting is the fact that some of these perceptions appear to be shaped by indirect experiences, as we can infer that many of our participants do not regularly participate in many different types of green consumption behaviours. Within consumer research, studies have explored consumers' indirect (e.g. reads product reviews, media reports, listens to hearsay) and direct experiences (e.g. uses the product) with regards to products, decision-making, product appeals and satisfaction (e.g. Hamilton and Thompson 2007; Kardes et al. 2006; Spassova and Lee 2013). As research has found, product evaluations can differ whether it is based on direct or indirect experience, although direct experience was more effective.

We suggest that direct/indirect experience is also relevant within other contexts, such as the adoption of green consumption behaviour. If one wants to change consumers' perceptions of green, one may need to provide opportunities for more direct experiences. As Hamilton and Thompson (2007) found, providing more product information before purchase did not lead to more concrete mental representations of the product; instead providing opportunities for more experiential contact with the product did.

Construal level theory (CLT) may offer some insights into this phenomenon as CLT's main premise is the idea that "the more psychologically distant an event is, the more it will be represented at higher levels of abstraction" (Trope et al. 2007, p. 84). Construal is how people interpret the world around them, and guides how one thinks, feels and acts (Oishi 2014). So when we experience something directly, we tend to think of it in concrete and contextualised terms, whereas when we experience something indirectly, we may think of it in more abstract terms (Hamilton and Thompson 2007), especially when the psychological distance is great. Psychological distance includes temporal, spatial, hypothetical or social distance; the more distant the object or event appears to be the more abstract consumers' thinking might be in relation to that object or event. For example, within the context of this study, it is difficult for consumers to understand what the negative impact of using non-EF products might be. Likewise, objects or events situated in the future, for example environmental benefits, tend to be thought of in abstract terms, whereas those situated in the near future, for example perceived costs and sacrifices, are thought of in more concrete, contextualised

terms (Spassova and Lee 2013). In this case, the perception that 'it is too hard to be green', and that some form of personal sacrifice would be required, highlights how indirect experiences and psychological distance can shape consumers' perceptions.

This also highlights one of the problems marketers encounter. Green marketers are continually faced with the task of convincing consumers to sacrifice favoured behaviours for the greater good of the community, or a common goal, and often for the future. But as Wiener (1993) observes, one of the keys to achieving cooperation in a social dilemma (such as protecting the environment) involves either individuals making an individual sacrifice, or individuals supporting a collective sacrifice. But for this to be effective, people need to believe that others are willing to 'buy-in' to this common goal.

One could even suggest that it may be easier for some consumers to put individual goals ahead of collective goals because they are not prepared to make personal sacrifices for something that they cannot see due to psychological distance. People may act on smaller/shorter gains, i.e. enjoy immediate gratification, rather than wait for larger/later gains (Arbuthnott 2010), especially if it is difficult to see the long-term gains, which relies on delayed gratification (Green and Myerson 2004). This typically holds true for environmental gains due to uncertainty and time frames (Gattig and Hendrickx 2007).

In sum, the first key theme to emerge from the findings is the perception that 'it is too hard to be green'. This perception creates various physical and perceptual barriers towards green consumption behaviour. One may even suggest that the perception 'it is too hard to be green' provides consumers with a platform from which to justify and rationalise their non-green behaviour; behaviour that contradicts their expressed positive attitude. As a result, it may further impede the adoption of green behaviour, and contribute to the green attitude–behaviour gap.

The Green Stigma

Interestingly, our findings reveal that there is a stigma attached to 'being green'. Green messages and consumers were not always perceived in a favourable light, which inevitably shaped how some consumers viewed green consumption behaviour.

> I don't mind doing the odd thing and helping out the environment…but I don't want to get grouped into that big "we're hippies and we dance and we clap our hands around XX Street and stuff" (M20s, FG7M2).

> Another barrier could be the social stigma. Like you might not want to be seen as a green… (F20s, FG7F2).

I wouldn't want people to think I'm like preachy (F20s, FG7F2).

A little bit of a nutcase sometimes (F65+, FG2F3).

This unfavourable perception is important to acknowledge because individuals purposely strive to maintain a positive social identity (Tajfel and Turner 1986). For example, in order to avoid a negative self-concept, individuals will distance themselves from people or products that might threaten their self-esteem and self-identity (Banister and Hogg 2004). Thus, a green stereotype may create additional barriers to participating in green consumption practices, and in some situations it may even generate resistance towards some green consumption behaviours. As one participant comments, "Green consumers inherently think that they are better than everyone else because of what they do" (M20s, FG7M2). Likewise, other participants also perceive green consumers to be serious individuals who are out to do a bit of *policing* (F50s, FG6F5) and *green recruiting* (F20s, FG7F3). Consequently, one could argue that some consumers will use these unfavourable perceptions to rationalise their non-green consumption behaviours because they either want to avoid being 'preached to', or they want to avoid feeling guilty for not participating in green consumption practices. They will, therefore, protect or maintain their self-esteem by distancing themselves from people or messages that might threaten their self-concept due to the unfavourable perceptions that they have of these groups or messages.

Likewise, one may avoid participating in green consumption activities if they feel they are being pressured to do so. This may be particularly prevalent amongst individuals who have strong attitudes about freedom, as research has shown that consumers with strong attitudes are more resistant to attitude change (e.g. Ahluwalia 2000; Petty et al. 1991). As Silvia (2005, p. 277) reports, when people feel their sense of freedom is under threat, they may try to restore their freedom; and they may experience *reactance*. Reactance theory states that individuals believe they have behavioural freedoms but when that freedom is threatened, reactance is aroused; it is "a motivational state that is directed towards the restoration of whatever freedom has been threatened or eliminated" (Brehm and Mann 1975, p. 816). Within consumer research, reactance theory has explored promotional influence, product unavailability, pricing strategies, political behaviour, loyalty programs and environmental protection (cf. Clee and Wicklund 1980; Lessne and Venkatesan 1989; Wendlandt and Schrader 2007); although, environmental protection research has been somewhat limited.

Within the context of green consumption behaviour, reactance theory is something that should be explored further. Consumers may be concerned about the environment but they may not respond positively to the message because they believe their individual liberties are at risk, due to their negative perceptions of the source or the message.

…when someone says environmentally-friendly I automatically feel like someone is going to try and shove something down my throat and I do not like that feeling…I'm a little bit resistant towards it (M20s, FG7M2).

These negative perceptions may influence consumers' receptiveness to green marketing communications, and thus slow down the green adoption process. So the green message needs to be communicated with care. As two participants suggest, green communications should use "normal looking people" (F20s, FG7F1), "people that you can relate to, as opposed to someone who's got just everything in their house" (M20s, FG7M2). This may certainly help to reduce the green stigma.

Green Reservations

Another theme to emerge from the study is the notion that some consumers do not perceive 'green' as a pressing matter because they either cannot see the negative effects of using products that are not promoted as environmentally friendly, have not experienced first-hand the negative consequences of using non-EF products, or do not perceive a significant difference between products that are promoted as green and those that are not.

They haven't actually ever proven that anyone's died from using Brand X [a well-known laundry powder that is not marketed as an environmentally-friendly product] (F60s, FG5F6).

I guess a laundry detergent is a laundry detergent at the end of the day. And I think if they put XXX [a well-known brand that is not marketed as environmentally-friendly] in that box [an environmentally-friendly brand] I probably still wouldn't be able to tell the difference at the end of the day. And that's the reality I hate to say it (F30s, FG6F3).

In view of this, if an individual cannot see how their actions might harm others, or see how a product may benefit the environment, it may be difficult to encourage behavioural change. As Polonsky (2011) suggests, consumers have difficulty identifying future outcomes and consequences. As a result, it becomes very easy for consumers not to adopt green consumption behaviours on the basis that they cannot see the negative effects of their actions. It may also be difficult for consumers to comprehend what the long-term effects are, when they are likely to

occur, or how their actions could negatively impact the environment.

> You don't actually feel the effects if you buy… [products that do not use environmentally-friendly processes], you don't feel the effects on a daily basis (F41–54, FG1F7).

At the same time, there is a perception of cynicism and resistance that exists in the market place towards various marketing activities (e.g. Carlson et al. 1993; Shrum et al. 1995).

> I just don't trust something that says rainforest I just don't believe that (F40s, FG6F4).

> I think this is a faux green anyway. That always worries me about, oh they're faking it (F40s, FG5F3).

Consumers have become more cynical in recent years due to the growth of greenwashing (Delmas and Burbano 2011; Lyon and Montgomery 2013; Polonsky et al. 2010). Greenwashing occurs when consumers are misled to believe that a company is participating in green practices, or that the product has environmental benefits (Crane 2000; Gillespie 2008). Hence, one could suggest that greenwashing is contributing to these negative perceptions, because greenwashing makes it difficult for consumers to identify legitimate green products. Therefore, consumers may have reservations towards green products and practices because they are cynical about the 'green' message. As one participant states, (F50s, FG1F5): "I don't trust people who are using the word…everything is organic and green in this and that. It's just a marketing ploy". As Chen and Chang (2013a) found, greenwash is negatively related to green trust. If companies continue to participate in greenwash activities, they will erode consumer trust in green products, and hinder sustainability progress. As our findings reveal, due to a lack of regulation and recognisable green accreditation schemes, as well as some companies jumping onto the 'green' bandwagon, consumer mistrust of green marketing highlights why some consumers avoid purchasing green products. As one participant states, "green is sort of slightly suspect now" (F70+, FG6F7).

One could also suggest 'being green' is not yet perceived as a social norm. As Peattie (2010, p. 211) suggests, social norms can play a large role in influencing green consumption practices because social norms are what we perceive to be common practice and what "behaviours we perceive to be morally right or what ought to be done". Hence, if the green social norm is not strong enough, consumers will probably experience minimal to no dissonance if there is a discrepancy between their attitudes and behaviour. This also reflects the concept of social normalisation. As Rettie et al. (2014, p. 13) discovered, when certain green behaviours were not perceived as normal or mainstream, consumers were less likely to consider adopting it. Hence, even though some consumers may state that they are concerned about the environment, they may avoid participating in behaviours that are not considered mainstream.

Summary of Key Findings

A central issue in this study is the concept that consumers' green perceptions shape consumers' green consumption behaviours. As Fig. 1 illustrates, consumers' perceptions are shaped by consumers' characteristics, such as age, income, gender, ethnicity, values and so on. However, the findings can be divided into three areas: (1) 'It is too hard to be green'—consumers' perceptions of external factors makes it difficult for some consumers to adopt greener consumption practices; (2) 'Green stigma'—this reflects some consumers' less than favourable perceptions of 'green' consumers and 'green' messages; and (3) 'Green reservations' reflect some consumers' ambivalence or uncertainty that greener consumption practices will make a difference to the environment. The overlapping clusters indicate that consumers' green perceptions are not mutually exclusive. For instance, some consumers may have negative perceptions of green consumers but also blame marketers for confusing marketing communications. Finally, the overall premise of this study is that consumers' green perceptions may influence consumers' green consumption behaviour.

Conclusions, Contribution and Future Research Directions

Notwithstanding its limitations, this study revealed that consumers' green perceptions may influence their green consumption behaviours. Whilst they may be concerned about the environment, and agree that something needs to be done, consumers' unfavourable or less favourable perceptions of green consumers, green consumption behaviours, green products, and/or green communications helps to explain the green attitude–behaviour gap.

As the findings revealed, there is a perception that 'it is too hard to be green' due to a lack of time, money, knowledge and perceived sacrifice. Therefore, green is not something everyone can commit to, it is something that one must be ready for, e.g. one must have time, money, etc. Accordingly, we have coined the phrase *green is haute couture, not ready-to-wear* because green products, and other green consumer practices are viewed by some consumers as exclusive, and/or exclusive for only those who
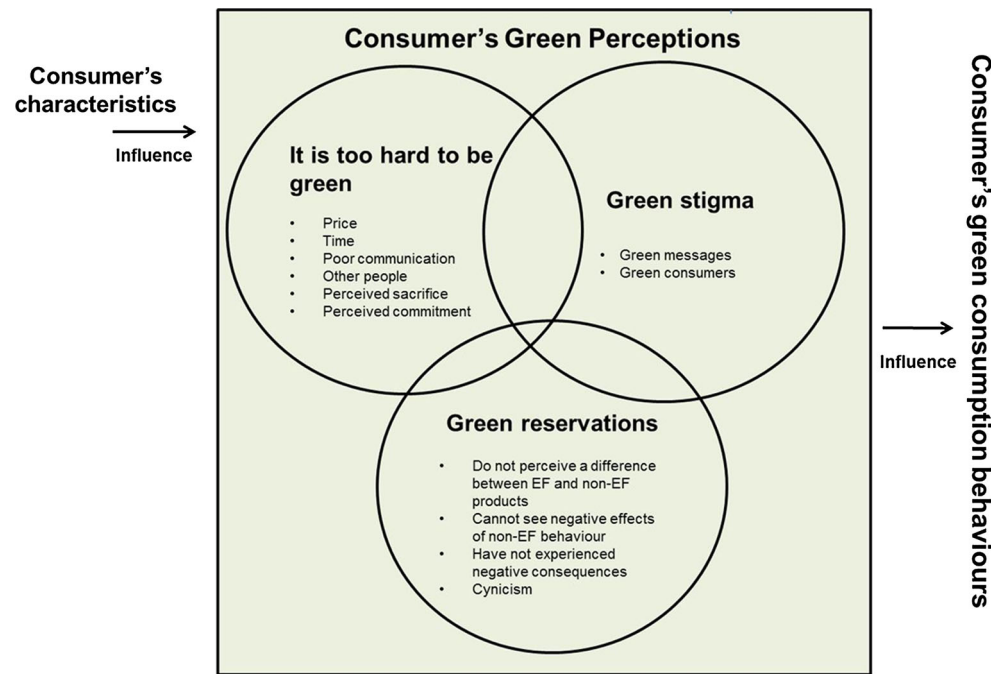
can truly be green. At the same time, some participants stated that external factors made it difficult to be green such as where they live, the people they live with, confusing packaging information, and the lack of easy-to-understand regulatory or green accreditation schemes, which has further heightened the perception that it is too hard to be green.

Furthermore, for some consumers the relationship between green attitudes and behaviour was a dichotomous one. Until one can fully commit to being green, which in part is driven by the perception that it is too hard to be green, there is a sense of powerlessness. Some believed that there was no point in making an effort to participate in green consumption behaviours because their small actions would not make a difference to the environment.

Another contribution that this study makes is the recognition that some consumers may not be open to adopting greener consumption practices due to their unfavourable perceptions of green consumers. Some green consumers were viewed as serious individuals, who like to monitor people's green consumption habits, and impose their beliefs onto others. Consequently, some consumers may avoid adopting greener consumption behaviours because they want to avoid being 'preached to' or controlled, or because they want to maintain their self-identity and a positive self-esteem. This is an interesting finding but it needs to be explored further due to the exploratory nature of this study. However, if a small percentage of the population are deterred from participating in certain green consumption practices because of their perceptions of green consumers, this is something that marketers would need to address.

A growing cynicism towards green marketing initiatives can also hinder the adoption of green products and contribute to negative green perceptions. This study highlights the difficulties marketers face in terms of communicating the value of their green products. For instance, some consumers did not perceive a significant difference between the products that were promoted as environmentally friendly and those products that were not, as there was no visible evidence that non-EF products were more harmful compared with environmentally friendly products. Not being able to see the immediate impact of one's actions enabled some consumers to ignore the long-term problem. So, one of the challenges marketers and policy makers face, is making long-term social dilemmas, such as the environment, meaningful to consumers *today*. As this study highlights, green social norms are weak. Likewise, some consumers have difficulty identifying how and why it is necessary to take action today since they cannot see the effects of their actions.

The mounting interest in pro-environmental behaviour but the intriguing phenomenon of 'Why do consumers who profess to be concerned about the environment choose not to buy greener products at all or more regularly?' have heightened the need for alternative frameworks to explain this attitude–behaviour discrepancy. As our study highlights, there is a need to explore green perceptions more extensively in order to address the barriers to green-purchase behaviour. We therefore propose that it might be a fruitful avenue to include a green perceptions construct in frameworks such as the TPB. In particular, we propose that consumers' current green perceptions of green products, consumers, consumption practices and green marketing

communication, termed 'green perceptions', may influence consumers' intentions to purchase green products. That is, consumers' green perceptions may influence one's attitudes towards green products, as well as whether one believes they can perform that behaviour, i.e. purchase green products. For instance, if consumers perceive green products to be too expensive, too time-consuming (in terms of acquiring knowledge or locating the products), or too difficult to acquire, e.g. due to their living arrangements, this will influence whether they believe they can perform the behaviour. Alternatively, if a person holds unfavourable perceptions of consumers who typically consume green products, and/or are cynical about green marketing communications, this may also influence their green-purchase behaviour regardless of whether they are concerned for the environment. Alternatively, if one believes small actions alone will not make a difference to the environment unless everyone one commits to it, one may not participate in green consumption practices, e.g. in this case, avoid purchasing green products even if one believes he or she can perform the behaviour. Or if one believes that green consumption behaviours are only performed by minority groups, green norms may take time to change, and thus the adoption of green consumption practices may be slow.

Implications & Limitations

It is important to understand how and why unfavourable green perceptions are formed in order to identify ways to overcome these obstacles. This study identifies several key obstacles that practitioners need to be aware of. Since consumers' perceptions are formed on the basis of how they interpret the stimuli that they are exposed to, it is thus fair to argue that the extant green perceptions held by consumers are to some extent shaped by the information that has been disseminated by marketers, the government, green activists, and the media. We therefore suggest that the 'green hard sell' approach has created a barrier to being green, and contributed to some consumers' unfavourable perceptions of green products and other green consumption practices because the concept of 'green' has either been placed on a pedestal, or has negative connotations. As a result, some consumers may opt to do nothing, become resistant, or they may start to justify their non-green consumption behaviours and blame others for their inaction. Likewise, if people do not believe they have the ability to perform an action, they are less likely to attempt it.

There is currently a perception that 'it is too hard to be green'. These perceived barriers were to some extent created by marketers. It is perhaps time for practitioners to consider an alternative course of action. Efforts should be concerted to making green appear easy, attainable, and non-exclusive. As two participants suggested, green communications should use "normal looking people" (F20s, FG7F1), "people that you can relate to" (M20s, FG7M2). Further work needs to explore this more closely. Marketing efforts should also focus on making green *normal*, i.e. mainstream or "what most people generally do", as consumers are more likely to adopt behaviours and products that they think are normal (Rettie et al. 2014).

What is particularly interesting is the fact that some consumers' perceptions appear to be shaped by their indirect experiences, e.g. observing others, reading product labels, talking to people, following the media. And yet, this may result in unfavourable, biased, and inaccurate evaluations of green consumption practices. For instance, studies that have looked at product evaluations suggest that providing more product information prior to purchase does not lead to more concrete mental representations of the product, instead a firm should provide more opportunities for direct experience, such as product trials (Hamilton and Thompson 2007). If consumers could experience the product, this may help the spread of green product adoption. Likewise, reinforcing good behaviour may encourage consumers to trial or continue practicing green consumption behaviours.

To date, it would seem that the marketers of green products have focused heavily on the environmental benefits of these products, e.g. it reduces carbon footprints, provides cleaner waterways, and so on when promoting these products. However, it would appear that promoting green products based on their environmental benefits alone has not been overly fruitful as evidenced by the slow uptake of these products. We suggest that this is because environmental benefits are hard to comprehend, involve uncertainty, and require delayed gratification, e.g. consumers do not immediately see any environmental benefits. And whilst using an environmentally friendly product may deliver a social good benefit (environmental gains), it is a benefit that is hard to grasp because it does not immediately benefit the consumer. What is more, cynicism, confusion and a lack of knowledge contributes to this uncertainty. Thus, we support the findings from Grimmer and Woolley's (2014) experiment that suggests that promotion should focus on personal benefits, e.g. emotional gratification (such as focusing on family well-being or personal well-being) if marketers want to see a greater uptake of green products. As Grimmer and Woolley (2014) found, consumers with a lower level of environmental affect responded better to green appeals that focused on personal benefits rather than pure environmental appeals.

Likewise, marketers need to focus on reducing consumers' cynicism, which goes hand in hand with the implementation of some form of government regulation or green accreditation scheme, as consumers want reassurances that environmentally friendly product claims are valid.

From a policy making perspective, we suggest that more regulation is required, i.e. companies need to comply with more stringent green standards, because perceptions take time to change. And as the findings from this exploratory study reveals, green reservations, cynicism and a sense of powerlessness influences green consumption behaviour. Therefore, the role of policy makers becomes more critical if one wants to see change in the immediate future. As Nyborg (2003, p. 273) suggests, "social norms and motivation are important determinants of everyday behaviour", which can over time can be shaped by government intervention. For instance, past research has shown that public policy, such as banning smoking in public places can reduce smoking in the home (Nyborg 2003).

Finally, there are several issues that need to be borne in mind when reading the results of this study. First, our study took place in a metropolitan city hence the views of our participants may be very different from those who live in rural centres. Second, we would like to point out that low-income earners were underrepresented in this study. Thus, it would be worthwhile to explore whether consumers' perceptions of green products, green consumers, green consumption practices and green communications differ according to one's socio-economic background. In addition, more male participants would have been desirable. Out of the 51 respondents, only seven were male. Though, the strong female presence in our focus groups was expected as women have generally demonstrated a greater conscience than men in relation to environmental issues (Euromonitor International 2012a). Furthermore, since the advertisement stated that we were interested in household products (such as detergents), it may have discouraged males from applying. Finally, this study was primarily concerned with household products, which can typically be classified as a low-involvement purchase decision. So, it would be desirable to research other product categories in order to identify consumers' perceptions of products that require more involvement during the decision-making process.

Appendix 1

Focus Group Participants

Code	Gender	Age	Occupation
Focus group one			
FG1F1	F	23–30	Homemaker
FG1F2	F	30–34	Engineer
FG1F3	F	40–54	Public policy analyst
FG1F4	F	40–54	Artist
FG1F5	F	40–54	Medical anthropologist
FG1F6	F	40–54	Self-employed
FG1F7	F	40–54	Housewife
FG1M	M	40–49	Trade union organiser
Focus group two			
FG2F1	F	40–54	Early childhood relief teacher
FG2F2	F	45–49	Homemaker
FG2F3	F	65+	Retired scientist
FG2F4	F	70+	Retired
FG2F5	F	70+	Retired
FG2M1	M	55–59	House painter
FG2M2	M	55–64	IT
Focus group three			
FG3F1	F	23–29	Policy analyst
FG3F2	F	30–39	Accountant
FG3F3	F	55–64	Unemployed—previously vet nurse
FG3F4	F	55–59	Administrator
FG3F5	F	65+	Retired librarian
FG3F6	F	70+	Retired teacher
FG3M	M	40–49	Homemaker (previously engineer)
Focus group four			
FG4F1	F	40–49	Receptionist
FG4F2	F	40–54	Office support
FG4F3	F	50–54	Auditor
FG4F4	F	55–59	Nurse
FG4F5	F	55–59	Contract teacher
FG4F6	F	55–59	Homemaker
FG4F7	F	65–69	Retired insurance analyst
Focus group five			
FG5F1	F	30–39	Homemaker
FG5F2	F	40–49	Research MAF
FG5F3	F	40–49	Unemployed—previously admin
FG5F4	F	40–49	Tour guide
FG5F5	F	60–64	Receptionist
FG5F6	F	60–64	Administrator
FG5F7	F	65+	Retired administrator
Focus group six			
FG6F1	F	23–29	Finance
FG6F2	F	23–29	Policy analyst
FG6F3	F	31–40	Procurement specialist
FG6F4	F	40–49	Policy advisor
FG6F5	F	50–59	Communications advisor
FG6F6	F	60–64	Tutor
FG6F7	F	70+	Retired researcher
FG6M	M	23–29	Postgraduate student
Focus group seven			
FG7F1	F	20–23	Undergraduate student
FG7F2	F	20–23	Undergraduate student
FG7F3	F	20–23	Postgraduate student

Code	Gender	Age	Occupation
FG7F4	F	20–23	Undergraduate student
FG7F5	F	20–23	Undergraduate student
FG7M1	M	20–23	Undergraduate student
FG7M2	M	20–23	Postgraduate student

Appendix 2

Moderator's Guide: Broad Outline and Structure

1. Introduction
2. Warm-up/ice-breaker exercises

   - Define household products
   - Exercise #1

     - Which of these products do you *usually* purchase?
     - Provide samples of environmentally friendly (EF) and conventional (non-EF) laundry detergent and stacks of cards with brand names.

3. Discussion part one: What encourages or discourages consumers from purchasing environmentally friendly household products?

   - Why do you purchase these brands (Exercise #1)?

     - Probe: experiences, perceptions.

   - Why do you think other people use/do not use these products?
   - What would encourage you/other people to buy environmentally friendly household products?

4. Discussion part two: What are consumers' perceptions of being green? What are consumers' perceptions of the terms "green"/environmentally friendly?

   - Exercise #2

     - Hand out some samples of soaps (EF and non-EF) and answer sheets.
     - If this brand was a person, what type of person would he/she be?
     - What type of characteristics would they have?

       - Probe: What makes you think this?

   - Focus on EF products:

     - Explore current perceptions, and why. What are their experiences?
     - Explore how EF products are currently promoted/packaged?

   - What does being "environmentally friendly" mean?
   - Does it mean the same thing as "green"?
   - Being environmentally friendly/green.

     - How easy/difficult?
     - What makes it easy/difficult?

       - Probe: perceptions—how are these being shaped? Past experience?

   - Green consumers: [draw person on whiteboard]…

     - Describe characteristics, traits, consumption behaviour.

   - What would encourage people to become more environmentally friendly?

5. Discussion part three: What are the perceptions of product packaging?

   - Exercise #3

     - Pass around the table a variety of household dishwashing detergents.
     - On answer sheets: Write some key factors along each product.

   - Which ones do you consider to be environmentally friendly?

     - What factors helped you to decide this?
     - Why do you think these are more/less environmentally friendly?

       Probes: Terminology, packaging, familiarity.

   - What are your impressions of these products?

     - Probe: easy to understand, performance perceptions.

   - What factors make household products environmentally friendly?

     - Probe level of greenness.

6. Debriefing & closing

References

Ahluwalia, R. (2000). Examination of psychological processes underlying resistance to persuasion. *Journal of Consumer Research, 27*(2), 217–232.

Ajzen, I. (1985). From intentions to actions: A theory of planned behaviour. In J. Kuhl & J. Beckman (Eds.), *Action control: From cognitions to behavior* (pp. 11–39). Berlin: Springer.

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50*(2), 179–211.

Arbuthnott, K. D. (2010). Taking the long view: Environmental sustainability and delay of gratification. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy, 10*(1), 4–22.

Auger, P., & Devinney, T. M. (2007). Do what consumers say matter? The misalignment of preferences with unconstrained ethical intentions. *Journal of Business Ethics, 76*, 361–383.

Balderjahn, I. (1988). Personality variables and environmental attitudes as predictors of ecologically responsible consumption patterns. *Journal of Business Research, 17*(1), 51–56.

Bandura, A. (1991). Social cognitive theory of self-regulation. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50*(2), 248–287.

Banister, E. N., & Hogg, M. K. (2004). Negative symbolic consumption and consumers' dive for self-esteem: The case of the fashion industry. *European Journal of Marketing, 38*(7), 850–868.

Bartkus, K. R., Hartman, C. L., & Howell, R. D. (1999). The measurement of consumer environmental knowledge: Revisions and extensions. *Journal of Social Behavior & Personality, 14*(1), 129–146.

Bohlen, G., Schlegelmilch, B. B., & Diamantopoulos, A. (1993). Measuring ecological concern: A multi-construct perspective. *Journal of Marketing Management, 9*(4), 415–430.

Borin, N., Lindsey-Mullikin, J., & Krishnan, R. (2013). An analysis of consumer reactions to green strategies. *Journal of Product & Brand Management, 22*(2), 118–128.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualtitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101.

Bray, J., Johns, N., & Kilburn, D. (2011). An exploratory study in the factors impeding ethical consumption. *Journal of Business Ethics, 98*(4), 597–608.

Bredahl, L. (2001). Determinants of consumer attitudes and purchase intentions with regard to genetically modified food—Results of a cross-national survey. *Journal of Consumer Policy, 24*(1), 23–61.

Brehm, J. W., & Mann, M. (1975). Effect of importance of freedom and attraction to group members on influence produced by group pressure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 31*(5), 816–824.

Bridges, E. (1993). Service attributes: Expectation and judgments. *Psychology & Marketing, 10*(3), 185–197.

Butler, S. (2013). Ethical shopping growing in popularity, survey suggests. *The Guardian.* Accessed 21 July 2014. http://www.theguardian.com/business/2013/aug/19/ethical-shopping-growing-popularity-fairtrade.

Carlson, L., Grove, S. J., & Kangun, N. (1993). A content analysis of environmental advertising claims: A matrix method approach. *Journal of Advertising, 22*(3), 27–39.

Carrigan, M., & Attalla, A. (2001). The myth of the ethical consumer: Do ethics matter in purchase behaviour? *Journal of Consumer Marketing, 18*(7), 560–577.

Carrington, M., Neville, B., & Whitwell, G. (2010). Why ethical consumers don't walk their talk: Towards a framework for understanding the gap between the ethical purchase intentions and actual buying behaviour of ethically minded consumers. *Journal of Business Ethics, 97*(1), 139–158.

Carson, D., Gilmore, A., Perry, C., & Gronhaug, K. (2001). *Qualitative marketing research.* London: Sage Publications.

CEAP. (2007). China general public environmental awareness survey. Accessed 14 March 2012. http://www.chinaceap.org/news/viewen.asp?id=187.

Chan, R. Y. K. (1999). Environmental attitudes and behavior of consumers in China. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing, 11*(4), 25–52.

Chan, R. Y. K. (2001). Determinants of Chinese consumers' green purchase behavior. *Psychology & Marketing, 18*(4), 389–413.

Chan, R., Wong, Y., & Leung, T. (2008). Applying ethical concepts to the study of "Green" consumer behavior: An analysis of Chinese consumers' intentions to bring their own shopping bags. *Journal of Business Ethics, 79*, 469–481.

Charter, M., Peattie, K., & Polonsky, M. J. (2002). *Marketing and sustainability.* UK: Centre for Business Relationships, Accountability, Sustainability and Society (BRASS), in association with The Centre for Sustainable Design.

Chatzidakis, A., Hibbert, S., Mittusis, D., & Smith, A. (2004). Virtue in consumption? *Journal of Marketing Management, 20*(5), 526–543.

Chen, Y.-S., & Chang, C.-H. (2013a). Greenwash and green trust: The mediation effects of green consumer confusion and green perceived risk. *Journal of Business Ethics, 114*(3), 489–500.

Chen, Y.-S., & Chang, C.-H. (2013b). Towards green trust: The influences of green perceived quality, green perceived risk, and green satisfaction. *Management Decision, 51*(1), 63–82.

Clee, M. A., & Wicklund, R. A. (1980). Consumer behavior and psychological reactance. *Journal of Consumer Research, 6*(4), 389–405.

Connolly, J., & Prothero, A. (2008). Green consumption: Life-politics, risk and contradictions. *Journal of Consumer Culture, 8*(1), 117–145.

Crane, A. (2000). Facing the backlash: Green marketing and strategic reorientation in the 1990s. *Journal of Strategic Marketing, 8*(3), 277–296.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process.* NSW: Allen & Unwinm.

de Jong, M. G., Pieters, R., & Fox, J.-P. (2010). Reducing social desirability bias through item randomized response: An application to measure underreported desires. *Journal of Marketing Research, 47*(1), 14–27.

Delmas, M. A., & Burbano, V. C. (2011). The drivers of greenwashing. *California Management Review, 54*(1), 64–87.

Diamantopoulos, A., Schlegelmilch, B. B., Sinkovics, R. R., & Bohlen, G. M. (2003). Can socio-demographics still play a role in profiling green consumers? A review of the evidence and an empirical investigation. *Journal of Business Research, 56*(6), 465–480.

Dittmar, H., & Drury, J. (2000). Self-image—Is it the bag? A qualitative comparison between "ordinary" and "excessive" consumers". *Journal of Economic Psychology, 21*, 109–142.

Eggert, A. (2006). Intangibility and perceived risk in online environments. *Journal of Marketing Management, 22*(5/6), 553–572.

Eurobarometer. (2011). Attitudes of European citizens towards the environment. Accessed March 12, 2012. http://ec.europa.eu/environment/pdf/ebs_365_en.pdf.

Euromonitor International. (2012a). Green buying behaviour: Global online survey. Accessed March 24, 2012. http://www.portal.euromonitor.com.

Euromonitor International. (2012b). Home care in Australia. Accessed July 24, 2014. http://www.portal.euromonitor.com.

Euromonitor International. (2012c). Nature's Organic Pty Ltd in home care (Australia). Accessed July 24, 2014. http://www.portal.euromonitor.com.

Euromonitor International. (2013). Home Care in UK. Accessed July 22, 2014. http://www.portal.euromonitor.com.

Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitude, intention and behavior.* Reading, MA: Addison Wesley.

Gattig, A., & Hendrickx, L. (2007). Judgmental discounting and environmental risk perception: Dimensional similarities, domain differences, and implications for sustainability. *Journal of Social Issues, 63*(1), 21–39.

Gillespie, E. (2008). Stemming the tide of 'greenwash'. *Consumer Policy Review, 18*(3), 79–83.

Gleim, M. R., Smith, J. S., Andrews, D., & Cronin, J. J. (2013). Against the green: A multi-method examination of the barriers to green consumption. *Journal of Retailing, 89*(1), 44–61.

Green, L., & Myerson, J. (2004). Discounting framework for choice with delayed and probabilistic rewards. *Psychological Bulletin, 130*(5), 769–792.

Grimmer, M., & Woolley, M. (2014). Green marketing messages and consumers' purchase intentions: Promoting personal versus environmental benefits. *Journal of Marketing Communications, 20*(4), 231–250.

Gupta, S., & Ogden, D. T. (2009). To buy or not to buy? A social dilemma perspective on green buying. *Journal of Consumer Marketing, 26*(6), 376.

Hamilton, R. W., & Thompson, D. V. (2007). Is there a substitute for direct experience? Comparing consumers' preferences after direct and indirect product experiences. *Journal of Consumer Research, 34*(4), 546–555.

Hartman, J. (2004). Using focus groups to conduct business communication research. *Journal of Business Communication, 41*(4), 402–410.

Hiller, A. J. (2010). Challenges in researching consumer ethics: A methodological experiment. *Qualitative Market Research, 13*(3), 236–252.

Hines, J. M., Hungerford, H. R., & Tomera, A. N. (1987). Analysis and synthesis of research on responsible environmental behavior: A meta-analysis. *The Journal of Environmental Education, 18*(2), 1–8.

Johnson, M., Fryer, K., & Raggett, N. (2008). Household sustainability survey 2008. Research New Zealand for Ministry for the Environment.

Kals, E., Schumaker, D., & Montada, L. (1999). Emotional affinity toward nature as a motivational basis to protect nature. *Environment and Behavior, 31*(2), 178–202.

Kardes, F. R., Cronley, M. L., & Kim, J. (2006). Construal-level effects on preference stability, preference-behavior correspondence, and the suppression of competing brands. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 16*(2), 135–144.

Kellehear, A. (1993). *The unobtrusive researcher: A guide to methods*. Australia: Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd.

Kinnear, T. C., Taylor, J. R., & Ahmed, S. A. (1974). Ecologically concerned consumers: Who are they? *Journal of Marketing, 38*(2), 20–24.

Koller, M., Floh, A., & Zauner, A. (2011). Further insights into perceived value and consumer loyalty: A 'Green' perspective. *Psychology & Marketing, 28*(12), 1154–1176.

Kollmuss, A., & Agyeman, J. (2002). Mind the gap: Why do people act environmentally and what are the barriers to pro-environmental behavior? *Environmental Education Research, 8*(3), 239–260.

Krueger, R. A. (1994). *Focus groups: A practical guide to applied research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Laroche, M., Bergeron, J., & Barbaro-Forleo, G. (2001). Targeting consumers who are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products. *Journal of Consumer Marketing, 18*(6), 503–520.

Lebel, L., & Lorek, S. (2008). Enabling sustainable production–consumption systems. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources, 33*(1), 241–275.

Lederman, L. C. (1990). Assessing educational effectiveness: The focus group interview as a technique for data collection? *Communication Education, 39*(2), 117.

Lessne, G., & Venkatesan, M. (1989). Reactance theory in consumer research: The past, present and future. *Advances in Consumer Research, 16*(1), 76–78.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Lowe, B., & Alpert, F. (2010). Pricing strategy and the formation and evolution of reference price perceptions in new product categories. *Psychology & Marketing, 27*(9), 846–873.

Lowe, B., & Barnes, B. R. (2012). Consumer perceptions of monetary and non-monetary introductory promotions for new products. *Journal of Marketing Management, 28*(5/6), 629–651.

Lyon, T. P., & Montgomery, A. W. (2013). Tweetjacked: The impact of social media on corporate greenwash. *Journal of Business Ethics, 118*(4), 747–757.

Maxwell, J. A. (1992). Understanding and validity in qualitative research. *Harvard Educational Review, 62*(3), 279.

McDonald, S., Oates, C., Alevizou, P., Young, W., & Hwang, K. (2006). *Communication strategies for sustainable technologies: Identifying patterns of behaviour*. Paper presented at the conference name, conference location. Type retrieved from URL.

McDonald, S., Oates, C. J., Alevizou, P. J., Young, C. W., & Hwang, K. (2012). Individual strategies for sustainable consumption. *Journal of Marketing Management, 28*(3/4), 445–468.

McGougall, G. H. G. (1983). The green movement in Canada: Implications for marketing strategy. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing, 5*, 69–87.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Moraes, C., Carrigan, M., & Szmigin, I. (2012). The coherence of inconsistencies: Attitude–behaviour gaps and new consumption communities. *Journal of Marketing Management, 28*(1–2), 103–128.

Morgan, D. L. (1988). *Focus groups as qualitative research* (Qualitative Research Methods Series 16). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Morse, J. M. (1994). "Emerging from the data": The cognitive processes of analysis in qualitative inquiry. In J. M. Morse (Ed.), *Critical issues in qualitative research methods* (pp. 23–43). Thousand Oaks, LA: Sage Publications Ltd.

Murphy, P. E., & Enis, B. M. (1986). Classifying products strategically. *Journal of Marketing, 50*(3), 24–42.

Newholm, T., & Shaw, D. (2007). Editorial: Studying the ethical consumer: A review of research. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour, 6*(Sep–Oct), 253–270.

Nielsen. (2014). Global consumers are willing to put their money where their heart is when it comes to goods and services from companies committed to social responsibility. Accessed July 21, 2014. http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/press-room/2014/global-consumers-are-willing-to-put-their-money-where-their-heart-is.html.

Nyborg, K. (2003). The impact of public policy on social and moral norms: Some examples. *Journal of Consumer Policy, 26*(3), 259–277.

Oishi, S. (2014). Socioecological psychology. *Annual Review of Psychology, 65*(January), 581–609.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Peattie, K. (2010). Green consumption: behavior and norms. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources, 35*, 195–228.

Petty, R. E., Unnava, R. H., & Strathman, A. J. (1991). Theories of attitude change. In T. S. Roberston & H. H. Kassarjian (Eds.), *Handbook of consumer behavior* (pp. 241–280). Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Pickett-Baker, J., & Ozaki, R. (2008). Pro-environmental products: Marketing influence on consumer purchase decision. *Journal of Consumer Marketing, 25*(5), 281.

Polonsky, M. J. (2011). Transformative green marketing: Impediments and opportunities. *Journal of Business Research, 64*(12), 1311–1319.

Polonsky, M. J., Grau, S. L., & Garma, R. (2010). The new greenwash? Potential marketing problems with carbon offsets. *International Journal of Business Studies, 18*(1), 49–54.

Pura, M. (2005). Linking perceived value and loyalty in location-based mobile services. *Managing Service Quality, 15*(6), 509–538.

Ramsey, E., Ibbotson, P., & McCole, P. (2006). Application of projective techniques in an e-business research context: A response to 'Projective techniques in market research—Value-less subjectivity or insightful reality?'. *International Journal of Market Research, 48*(5), 551–573.

Randall, D. M., & Fernandes, M. F. (1991). The social desirability response bias in ethics research. *Journal of Business Ethics, 10*(11), 805–817.

Rettie, R., Burchell, K., & Barnham, C. (2014). Social normalisation: Using marketing to make green normal. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour, 13*(1), 9-17.

Rex, E., & Baumann, H. (2007). Beyond ecolabels: What green marketing can learn from conventional marketing. *Journal of Cleaner Production, 15*(6), 567–576.

Robert, D. S., & James, A. R. (1999). Environmental segmentation alternatives: A look at green consumer behavior in the new millennium. *The Journal of Consumer Marketing, 16*(6), 558.

Roberts, J. A. (1996). Green consumers in the 1990s: Profile and implications for advertising. *Journal of Business Research, 36*(3), 217–231.

Samdahl, D. M., & Robertson, R. (1989). Social determinants of environmental concern. *Environment and Behavior, 21*(1), 57–81.

Schlegelmilch, B. B., Bohlen, G. M., & Diamantopoulos, A. (1996). The link between green purchasing decisions and measures of environmental consciousness. *European Journal of Marketing, 30*(5), 35.

Schwandt, T. A. (1994). Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 118–137). USA: Sage Publications.

Shaw, D., & Shiu, E. (2002). An assessment of ethical obligation and self-identity in ethical consumer decision-making: A structural equation modelling approach. *International Journal of Consumer Studies, 26*(4), 286–293.

Shiv, B., Carmon, Z., & Ariely, D. (2005). Placebo effects of marketing actions: Consumers may get what they pay for. *Journal of Marketing Research, 42*(4), 383–393.

Shrum, L. J., McCarty, J. A., & Lowrey, T. M. (1995). Buyer characteristics of the green consumer and their implications for advertising strategy. *Journal of Advertising, 24*(2), 71.

Shukla, P. (2010). Effects of perceived sacrifice, quality, value, and satisfaction on behavioral intentions in the service environment. *Services Marketing Quarterly, 31*(4), 466–484.

Silvia, P. J. (2005). Deflecting reactance: The role of similarity in increasing compliance and reducing resistance. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 27*(3), 277–284.

Solér, C. (1996). Ecologically friendly buying—Theoretical implications of a phenomenological perspective. *Scandinavian Journal of Management, 12*(3), 275–289.

Spassova, G., & Lee, A. Y. (2013). Looking into the future: A match between self-view and temporal distance. *Journal of Consumer Research, 40*(1), 159–171.

Spiggle, S. (1994). Analysis and interpretation of qualitative data in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research, 21*(December), 491–503.

Stewart, D. W., Shamdasani, P. N., & Rook, D. W. (2007). *Focus groups: Theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Strong, C. (1996). Features contributing to the growth of ethical consumerism: A preliminary investigation. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning, 14*(5), 5–13.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Worchel & W. G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 7–24). Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers.

Tanner, C., & Wölfing Kast, S. (2003). Promoting sustainable consumption: Determinants of green purchases by Swiss consumers. *Psychology & Marketing, 20*(10), 883–902.

Thompson, C. J. (1997). Interpreting consumers: A hermeneutical framework for deriving marketing insights from texts of consumers' consumption stories. *Journal of Marketing Research, 34*(November), 438–455.

Trope, Y., Liberman, N., & Wakslak, C. (2007). Construal levels and psychological distance: Effects on representation, prediction, evaluation, and behavior. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 17*(2), 83–95.

Tukker, A., & Jansen, B. (2006). Environmental impacts of products: A detailed review of studies. *Journal of Industrial Ecology, 10*(3), 159–182.

van Liere, K. D., & Dunlap, R. E. (1981). Environmental concern: Does it make a difference how it's measured? *Environment and Behavior, 13*(6), 651–676.

Welsch, H., & Kühling, J. (2009). Determinants of pro-environmental consumption: The role of reference groups and routine behavior. *Ecological Economics, 69*(1), 166–176.

Wendlandt, M., & Schrader, U. (2007). Consumer reactance against loyalty programs. *Journal of Consumer Marketing, 24*(5), 293–304.

Wiener, J. L. (1993). What makes people sacrifice their freedom for the good of their community. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing, 12*(2), 244–251.

Wiener, J. L., & Doescher, T. A. (1994). Cooperation and expectations of cooperation. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing, 13*(2), 259–270.

Wolcott, H. F. (1990). On seeking—and rejecting—Validity in qualitative research. In E. W. Eisner & A. Peshkin (Eds.), *Qualitative inquiry in education: The continuing debate* (pp. 121–152). New York: Teachers College Press.

Wouters, K., Maesschalck, J., Peeters, C., & Roosen, M. (2014). Methodological issues in the design of online surveys for measuring unethical work behavior: Recommendations on the basis of a split-ballot experiment. *Journal of Business Ethics, 120*(2), 275–289.

Young, W., Hwang, K., McDonald, S., & Oates, C. J. (2010). Sustainable consumption: Green consumer behaviour when purchasing products. *Sustainable Development, 18*(1), 20–31.

Zabkar, V., & Hosta, M. (2013). Willingness to act and environmentally conscious consumer behaviour: Can prosocial status perceptions help overcome the gap? *International Journal of Consumer Studies, 37*(3), 257–264.

Zeithaml, V. A. (1988). Consumer perceptions of price, quality, and value: A means-end model and synthesis of evidence. *Journal of Marketing, 52*(3), 2–22.