

Understanding the Intention-Behaviour Gap in Eco-Friendly Consumption

**Why consumers' eco-friendly purchase intentions differ
from their actual purchasing behaviour?**

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Bachelor of Science HES in International Business Management**

by

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This report is submitted as part of the final examination requirements of the Haute école de gestion de Genève, for the Bachelor of Science HES-SO in International Business Management. The use of any conclusions or recommendations made in or based upon this report, with no prejudice to their value, engages the responsibility neither of the author, nor the author's mentor, nor the jury members nor the HEG or any of its employees.

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Executive Summary

Due to current global challenges, changes in consumer behaviour are required for an eco-friendly development based on responsible demand (Hirsch and Terlau, 2015). However, a difference between intentions towards eco-friendly consumption and actual behaviour has been observed (Hirsch and Terlau, 2015). For instance, 30% to 50% of consumers mentioned intend to purchase eco-friendly products, but in reality, only 3% actually purchase them (Carrington, Neville and Whitwell, 2010). Although consumers are becoming increasingly more motivated to purchase eco-friendly products, there might be specific purchasing barriers that make eco-friendly consumption difficult (Hirsch and Terlau, 2015).

No concrete answers are provided concerning the reasons explaining the intention-behaviour gap for eco-friendly products (Hirsch and Terlau, 2015). Hence, this study aims at understanding what can cause inconsistencies between intentions and behaviour in eco-friendly consumption in the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

The literature review will enable the reader to gain more knowledge regarding notions relevant to the eco-friendly consumer and products. Furthermore, existing models explaining the intention-behaviour gap phenomenon will be considered, in a manner to comprehend why intentions often fail to translate into behaviour. Additionally, factors having an influence in the decision-making process and encouraging pro-environmental behaviour will be analysed.

The methodology will include quantitative as well as qualitative data. The online survey, with 120 answers, has provided information regarding people's intentions and respective behaviour in eco-friendly consumption. Moreover, the focus group provided qualitative data in a way to obtain a broader range of information concerning individuals' personal opinions on the topic. The data collection will enable to verify the veracity of assumption made by the literature regarding eco-friendly consumption, in the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

This research will provide recommendations to firms selling eco-friendly products on how to reduce the intention-behaviour gap. These recommendations should allow for a better comprehension of the eco-friendly consumer, as well as help the consumer translate intentions into actual behaviour more effectively.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Presentation of the subject

Industrialisation can be considered to be responsible for driving economic growth as well as develop our society. However, industrial practices are also being held accountable for environmental issues such as pollution, climate change, health issues, extinction of species, large quantities of water and soil usage (Aroh, 2018). These are just some of the examples of the impacts that big corporations have on the environment.

Because of the lack of understanding on environmental issues or the steps needed to follow in order to help, many individuals, as well as businesses, fail to comprehend the need to act in an eco-friendlier manner (Patti and Phillips, 2010). This situation can be explained by the fact that some people believe eco-friendly efforts are not sufficiently convincing, thinking that acting in an environmentally favourable way may have an adverse effect on them or their business or consider eco-friendly goals to be un lucrative (Patti and Phillips, 2010).

Moreover, too many companies struggle to engage in eco-friendly objectives, unsuccessfully making progress than what is actually required (Patti and Phillips, 2010). However, several motivators could encourage businesses to adopt eco-friendly objectives. One of the major benefits for a company deciding to become eco-friendly can include the effect that the firm's decisions have on its reputation and overall public image (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000). Having a good corporate image can attract customers, and more generally stakeholders, leaving them with a good impression of the business, demonstrating that the focus of the firm is not only on making profits but also safeguarding and having an interest towards the environment (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000).

Further benefits of having an eco-friendly activity, include the possibility to save costs, gain competitive advantage and find new resources of revenue (Patti and Phillips, 2010). The advantages of adapting eco-friendly goals to the business could also include employees. As a matter of fact, an eco-friendly company could use its environmental efforts to keep their staff motivated and smartly promote their environmental initiatives in order to attract new eco-conscious employees (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000).

Therefore, making more organisational environmental conscious decisions can bring to companies multiple benefits. However, many companies still seem not to recognise the possible advantages of having an eco-friendly business. Many businesses still believe

that making eco-friendly changes to their current activity could make them instead lose capital and not necessarily attracting new customers (Bonini and Oppenheim, 2008). Firms sceptical of eco-friendly practices, consider people seeking eco-friendly products still represent simply a niche in comparison with the general and larger reachable audience (Bonini and Oppenheim, 2008).

Despite the resistance of many businesses on adapting eco-friendly practices into their activity consumers are, however, gaining and demonstrating to have more knowledge regarding environmental issues caused by industrial practices, and are now more than ever using this knowledge to change their buying decisions (Harun, 2012). Fundamentally, people are using their purchasing power to achieve the change they want to see in the world (Nielsen, 2018). Although an increased amount of consumers state that their environmental concerns influence their purchasing decision, a difference between consumer intentions and their actual actions actually exists (Nguyen, Nguyen, Hoang, 2019). Thus, people are convinced of making conscious environmental decisions, when, in reality, these convictions do not translate in purchasing efforts (Nguyen et al., 2019).

To demonstrate this phenomenon, a study conducted by McKinsey & Company illustrated that 87% of consumers are concerned about the environmental impacts of the products they buy. However, only 33% said to buy eco-friendly products (Bonini and Oppenheim, 2008). This difference between people's purchasing intentions and their actual purchasing actions is known as the intention-behaviour gap (Hassan, Shiu and Shaw, 2014).

Moreover, to better understand the intention-behaviour gap, companies need to invest their resources into getting to know their consumers (Simons, 2014). By having a better understanding of this phenomenon, firms can more easily understand their customer base's needs and wants (Vijayalakshmi, 2013). Further advantages include comprehending people's reasons for making specific purchases, determining external and internal influences faced by consumers when buying a new product (Vijayalakshmi, 2013). Additionally, analysing the intention-behaviour gap could also help to discover the feelings consumers have towards specific brands and finally, firms can use this knowledge to adapt their campaigns to attract clients (Court, Elzinga, Mulder, and Jørgen Vetvik, 2009).

1.2 Research question and aim

Several studies have been conducted in the marketing, economics and psychology field, in order to understand the intention-behaviour gap in consumption (White, Hardisty and Habib, 2019). However, the literature is still largely divided regarding the assumptions made to give an explanation to this phenomenon, especially when considering eco-friendly consumption (Hassan et al., 2014). Therefore, this research will attempt to answer the following question:

Taking into consideration the factors playing a role in the decision-making process, how do consumers' intentions differ from their actual purchasing behaviour for eco-friendly products?

The purpose of this study is to determine whether a gap between consumers' attitudes and intentions, differ from their actual purchasing actions for eco-friendly products in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. Thus, this research will determine if an intention-behaviour gap is present in the market, analysing if there are inconsistencies between the way people intent to behave and actually behave. Existing models explaining this gap will be taken into consideration.

The study focus is on the eco-friendly market, and thus, this research will not specifically address the intention-behaviour gap for a precise industry. The research will be instead focussing towards the elusive eco-friendly consumer as a fundamental part of the eco-friendly movement that several industries are experiencing (Patti and Phillips, 2010). Industries that are increasingly listening to their consumers' environmental concerns and therefore are finding new organisational opportunities while simultaneously safeguarding the environment (Patti and Phillips, 2010).

This study will proceed by considering the determinants that could influence and consequently explain these inconsistencies between intentions and behaviour. Hence, to be able to comprehend why consumers may have an intention to behave in an environmentally friendly way, but do not engage in the actual behaviour, this research will identify and recognise the key drivers playing a role in the decision-making process, as well as the factors affecting a favourable environmental behaviour.

Furthermore, the ultimate goal will be to gain greater understanding of the eco-friendly consumer. The eco-friendly consumer is often defined by the literature as an ambiguous and hard to comprehend buyer, which is tormented by contradictions, between his/her eco-friendly purchase intentions and actual purchasing behaviour (Johnstone, 2015).

Nowadays, more than ever, for businesses to get to know their customers has become fundamental. By knowing their clients, firms can more easily satisfy people's needs and desires as well as predict more accurately their purchasing behaviour (Kumar Sharma, 2014). Comprehending better the reasons for this intention-behaviour gap for eco-friendly products, will enable a better understanding of the processes with which individuals formulate their intentions and consequently affect their behaviour (Hassan et al., 2014). This understanding can subsequently enable firms and policy makers to design interventions aimed at encouraging a desired behaviour (Hassan et al., 2014).

Moreover, understanding customers is the opportunity for firms to provide people with a continually enhanced good or service, which consequently results in a strong customer relationship and increase of sales through positive word-of-mouth recommendation (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000). By studying consumer behaviour, firms could also customise their customer experience in order to create loyalty and continuously grow their business (Hyken, 2017).

Although trying to understand consumers' intentions and their subconscious can be a challenging as well as a laborious process (Statt, 1997), knowing your customers is essential and worthwhile for the reasons mentioned. Therefore, once the previous goals will be achieved and greater customer knowledge regarding eco-friendly products has been attained, the final aim will be to identify possible actions intended to reduce the intention-behaviour gap for eco-friendly products. This ultimate goal could enable organisations selling eco-friendly products to understand their clients better and therefore predict more accurately the behaviour of consumers towards their products.

2. Literature review

2.1 Industries overview

Many multinational firms are the leading cause of environmental issues that are threatening the future of humanity, and despite firms' awareness of the industry's destructive impact on the planet they are continuing to expand their operations (Taylor and Watts, 2019). As a result the world is facing environmental issues, such as climate change, large amounts of waste, air and water pollution, and the problem is that seven and a half billion people must pay the price, so that multinationals can keep boosting their profits (Taylor and Watts, 2019).

When thinking of industries that have a damaging effect on the environment, manufacturing, energy, transports and food production may come to mind (UN News, 2019). Many experts, including the UN, believe that trends such as fast fashion and fast foods are accountable for several negative environmental as well as social and economic issues (UN News, 2019).

2.1.1 Food industry

The food industry is at the centre of various environmental issues. Being accountable for two-thirds of global biodiversity loss as well as being a major contributor to climate change (*Potato Pro*, 2019). Moreover, consumers are now expecting products to be available 365 days a year, ignoring the seasonality of some products, thus encouraging the import of foods from around the world to continually meet their wants (*Potato Pro*, 2019). The increased productivity results in pollution caused not only by the travel of these products, but also by the significant use of toxic pesticides and herbicides, followed by the excessive amount of fossil fuels used to support the modern industrialised agriculture (Beaumont, 2019). Furthermore, packaging has become one of the main environmental issues caused by the food industry. Causing major problems to the wildlife, resulting for instance, by the massive amounts of plastic entering our oceans (De La Torre, 2018).

Consumers are increasingly becoming more educated and knowledgeable on the role that the food industry has on the planet, considering eco-friendly products more often in their daily lives (Baier, Weber and Willers, 2015). For this reason, some food brands are starting to answer to the increasing consumer awareness of eco-friendly products,

emphasising their commitment towards the environment in a manner to target new customers on top of safeguarding the environment (Baier, Weber and Willers, 2015).

However, in a world where environmental problems caused by the food industry are being exposed, many companies are misleading their consumers by improving their image with fake “eco-friendliness” communication. For instance, CBC News investigation revealed that at a Canadian farmers’ market, vendors stated their fruits and vegetables were all of based on organic and eco-friendly production. To test the veracity of these statement, some vendors were investigated. The inspection revealed that several vendors often tend to acquire their produce at a wholesale warehouse and sometimes they even forget to remove the tag from the foods offered (Beaumont, 2019). Representing one among multiple other examples of greenwashing practices, whose aim is to create misleading ads with the purpose to increase the company’s profits rather than having an interest in improving the environment (Admin, 2020).

Despite various occurrences of greenwashing, consumers, as well as retailers, are increasingly more aware of the importance of a company’s environmental commitment (Baier, Weber and Willers, 2015). Thus, companies are starting to make eco-friendly options available to customers, while adopting new strategies with the purpose of differentiating themselves, consequently allowing them to gain competitive advantage (Baier, Weber and Willers, 2015).

With the population set to grow to around 10 billion people over the next 30 years, some food manufacturers are starting to undertake new practices, aiming at reducing waste, cutting greenhouse gas emissions and finally ensuring that agricultural land is used efficiently without excessively damaging the environment (*Potato Pro*, 2019). Furthermore, the food industry is increasingly becoming more eco-friendly, adapting advances in transportation and technologies like air cargo, logistics such as by using containerisation¹, and food packaging modifications (Admin, 2020).

2.1.2 Clothing industry

Concerning the clothing industry, fast fashion has increasingly encouraged people to continually purchase new pieces of clothing due to the massive exposure of choices and

¹ Transportation of goods in containers interchangeable between ships, trains and trucks with standardised handling equipment and without remanding the content (Businessdictionary.com).

options available in-store and most of all, online, making shopping easier and faster. However, many resources are exploited in the clothing industry, thus making essential the understanding of the impact and consequences of the apparel industry's practices on the planet.

In the creation of clothing, toxic chemicals are being used in the making of articles of clothing fabric and prints, which consequently contain toxins. Furthermore, toxic dyes are considered to be the second cause of water pollution on top of being dangerous to humans and the ecosystem (*Blabel, 2020*). Other negative environmental impacts of fast fashion include large amounts of landfill when discarding clothes to make some room for new ones. More precisely, polyester can take up to 200 years to decompose, indicating that terrible loads of landfill are present on the planet as of now (*Blabel, 2020*). Mass-producing factories are continually producing large quantities of products, therefore giving fumes out of their factories and thus polluting the environment in considerable amounts in comparison with other industries (*Blabel, 2020*).

Greenwashing has been adopted by several fast-fashion firms in a manner to get attention from the public and fundamentally to mislead consumers into believing that the company's products are eco-friendly. Essentially professing to be environmentally friendly as a PR strategy (*Slater, 2019*). Boohoo, an online fashion retailer, for instance, declared that the company would be banning all wool in its garments and actually changed this decision within hours. Furthermore, Boohoo was then exposed that its fake fur was damaging for the environment, since the furs were made from plastic and consequently not biodegradable (*Slater, 2019*).

On the other hand, brands that are aspiring to become eco-friendly believe that the only biggest problem stopping them from their environmental goals is the consumer, due to its lack of awareness and unwillingness to pay a premium price for eco-friendly products (*The Fashion Law, 2019*). Moreover, the peoples' desire for new clothes is something that could be impossible to change. For this reason, brands could use modern technology and business models to design products that can be recycled or reused into new styles, minimising the use of new materials (*The Fashion Law, 2019*).

2.1.3 Other industries

When discussing the environmental impacts of industrial practices, the focus is more often towards the food and clothing industry. However, also other industries are

beginning to catch the attention of the eco-friendly consumer, seeking products that are not environmentally damaging also in the beauty industry and for housing products.

Moreover, one of the major issues surrounding the beauty industry is plastic packaging, implying that this industry has an important duty towards the environment (Admin, 2020). Companies are now starting to use more recyclable materials for the packaging of their products and encouraging product container reuse (Admin, 2020). The Honest Company, a beauty store that provides makeup, personal care and baby products all made with natural ingredients, is an example of a business committed to reducing its impact on the planet, by offering minimal and environmentally friendly packaging without compromising the design of its products (Admin, 2020).

The beauty industry is showing a growing interest in particular, for eco-friendly cosmetics. Over time an increased number of consumers and retailers have been demanding eco-friendly cosmetics making this market grow at a 15% annual growth rate (Acme-Hardesty, 2018).

Eco-friendly housing products are another category that is starting to become increasingly more requested by the public. Generally, those consumers interested in eco-friendly products, acknowledge that even their small gestures can add up and have an environmental impact. Moreover, choosing environmentally friendly products in our daily lives is a great method to reduce an individual's carbon footprint (Kooser, 2020). Whether by deciding to stop single-use products and instead buy reusable items (e.g. containers, cans, food huggers, bags, seeds, metal straws and makeup remover pads) or choosing recycled products (e.g. natural cleaning products, bamboo utensil sets, walnut sponges and zero waste boxes) (Kooser, 2020).

2.2 Eco-friendly products

The eco-friendly movement is becoming an important opportunity for businesses, 66% of consumers worldwide in 2015 stated to be willing to pay more for products if they are eco-friendly (Watson, 2016). Merriam-Webster (2013) defined eco-friendly products as not environmentally damaging practices that make use of natural resources (Campbell, Khachatryan, Behe, Dennis and Hall, 2015). Moreover, the American Hotel and Lodging Association (2014) described eco-friendly products as a vague term used in marketing aiming at educating consumers about an attribute of a product or service that has an

environmental benefit (Campbell et al., 2015). However, the term could be also explained as meeting the needs of the present generations, without endanger the possibility of future ones to meet their needs (Campbell et al., 2015).

Since the term eco-friendliness is a broad term and does not have a standard definition, there are a few elements that can be observed to say if a good is not excessively damaging for the environment. Manufacturers, retailers and consumers can consider the materials the product contains. Eco-friendly products avoid using toxic chemicals that harm the environment and contain instead recycled materials or materials coming from a natural source (Martes, 2019). Another element to consider is the way a product is produced. Eco-friendly products can be designed and produced, for example, to use the least amount of water possible (Martes, 2019). Finally, to test the eco-friendliness of a product, consumers can have a look the manner the good is used. For instance, reusable water bottles are products that can encourage environmentally conscious behaviours in consumers (Martes, 2019).

In Switzerland there are several labels that not specifically identify products as eco-friendly, but these labels enable consumers to understand if the product is not damaging for the environment. In the food industry, there are labels such as *Bio Suisse*, which identifies the product to come from the Geneva region and ensure an environmentally friendly production of the food (Codha, [no date]). *IP-Suisse* ensures that the food has been produced in Switzerland with respect for the environment, while *Oeko-Tex 1000* guarantees an eco-friendly production of textiles for the apparel industry (Codha, [no date]). Other measures used in the Swiss territory include the *FSC certification*, which ensures that the wood is treated with respect to ecological criteria and the *energy label*, which indicates the energy consumption of specific products (Codha, [no date]).

Summarising, the definition of eco-friendliness is still considered vague and is not precisely defined, there are no precise and specific certifications that identify eco-friendly products, unlike for organic labelling. For this reason, products associated with terms such as eco-friendly can be subject to greenwashing (Campbell et al., 2015).

2.3 Greenwashing

As already mentioned, several brands are now adapting greenwashing techniques in the various industries. Firms are feeling enabled to ambiguously talk about their environmental commitments, due to the lack of the public's education regarding words such as "eco-friendly", "ethical" and "sustainable" (Slater, 2019). Consecutively, giving a

false impression or providing misleading information about how a firm's products are environmentally friendly (Gandhi, 2020). Greenwashing can be defined as a method of using the climate crisis as a means of marketing without any actual change to the business (Gandhi, 2020).

However, greenwashing is not entirely associated with a negative trend. Greenwashing could in fact, also be a driver to change since greenwashing may influence consumers to become more aware of environmental issues (Slater, 2019). Thus, emphasising the importance of businesses that talk about environmental consciousness even in the case where their ethics are still questionable (Slater, 2019). Nevertheless, greenwashing is mostly considered a negative trend after all, since greenwashing practices are insidious and dangerous, consequently destroying any form of consumer trust, harming the credibility of eco-friendly related marketing and therefore obstructing the encouragement of progressing towards an eco-friendlier economy (Ogilvy & Mather, 2010). Although greenwashing has taken new shapes in the last decade, greenwashing practices still remain as suspicious and misleading as ever (Watson, 2016). Hence, making choices has become very difficult and confusing for consumers, when there are companies misrepresenting eco-friendliness (Winston, 2010).

2.4 The enigmatic eco-friendly consumer

So far, the eco-friendly consumer has been described as a rational individual that has an increasing awareness on the environmental issues provoked by industrial practices, causing them the need to look for eco-friendly products in a way to reduce the environmental impact of their purchasing decisions.

However, a study conducted in the UK stated that 30% of consumers have said to be concerned about the environment, but simultaneously struggle to engage in eco-friendly purchases (Hughner, McDonagh, Prothero, Shultz and Stanton, 2007). More specifically, even though 46 to 67% of people in the UK reported to have a favourable behaviour towards organic foods, yet the actual purchase for those products was equal to only 4 to 10% (Hughner et al., 2007). An online survey conducted in Canada showed an inconsistency of about 40% between the way people intentions and the actions they proceed to take aimed at improving the environment in various categories such as food, recycling, reuse, energy and green product performance (Nguyen et al., 2019).

Furthermore, consumers generally declare to want brands that embrace ethical values and eco-friendliness, yet a troubling paradox remains at the heart of ecological

businesses. In a recent survey 65% of candidates said that they want to buy from eco-friendly brands, yet only about 26% actually do so (White et al., 2019). These inconsistencies between intentions and behaviour, demonstrate that regardless of studies on how to encourage eco-friendly consumption and past research in economics, marketing and psychology, companies are still facing a great challenge on understanding how to align consumers' behaviours with their stated preferences (White et al., 2019).

2.5 The intention-behaviour gap

The growth and popularity of the eco-friendly culture has over the years attracted the interest of companies that consequently attempt to meet the needs of eco-friendly consumers (Carrington, Neville and Whitwell, 2010). Despite various marketing strategies adopted by companies, targeting eco-friendly consumers in a way to attract potentially profitable eco-friendly market segments, firms are now more than ever realising that there exists a gap between what consumers say they are going to do and what they actually do at the purchase moment (Carrington et al., 2010).

This phenomenon is identified as the intention-behaviour gap, when environmental values, attitudes and intentions frequently fail to translate into eco-friendly purchasing and other pro-environmental behaviours in practice (Nguyen et al., 2019). The intention-behaviour gap is not only present in eco-friendly consumption, but also on other aspects such as physical activity (e.g. someone decides to become more physically active but then finds him/herself to procrastinate constantly). However, for the purpose of this research, the intention-behaviour gap will consider the eco-friendly consumer exclusively.

When discussing the impacts on consumer buying behaviour, the decision process and acts of people involved in buying and using a product, the literature often refers to cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance can be described as a feeling of discomfort that occurs from having two conflicting behaviours, resulting in inconsistencies between beliefs and actions (Kumar Sharma, 2014). For instance, someone who considers being environmentally responsible just purchased a new car, that later realises that the vehicle does not get a sufficient gas mileage, this is an example of a conflicting behaviour that is necessary to a person's self-identity (Kumar Sharma, 2014).

The intention-behaviour gap is considered an important matter of discussion due to the unpredictability of people concerning their buying behaviour. Considering the eco-friendly consumer, not always their shopping predictions are correct. For instance, a

person is willing to follow an eco-friendlier consumption, but when he/she arrives at the shopping location, the eco-friendly product might be temporarily unavailable, or a substitute product harmful to the environment may be heavily discounted or promoted in a more attractive way (Carrington et al., 2010). In a way to better understand the intention-behaviour gap, models that attempt to understand this phenomenon have been developed and taken into consideration as well as identifying the factors influencing the purchase of eco-friendly products.

2.6 Intention-behaviour gap models

By taking into consideration the literature, researchers have demonstrated the existence of an intention-behaviour gap for the consumption of eco-friendly products. Past studies identified a discrepancy between what consumers think, and what they intend in comparison to what they actually do (Carrington et al. 2010 as cited in Hassan et al., 2014).

Several models have been developed to better understand the intention-behaviour gap generally as well as more specifically concerning the attitudes toward eco-friendly products. Different studies conducted on the topic have demonstrated frequent differences and opposition in research methodology, showing how challenging comparing and measuring intentions and behaviour can be. Early models dating back from the 1970s, assumed that to push people towards an environmental conscious behaviour, consumers simply needed to be educated regarding environmental issues (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002). However, these models have over the past years been proven to be wrong, since the increase in awareness and knowledge do not automatically lead to people acting pro-environmentally (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002).

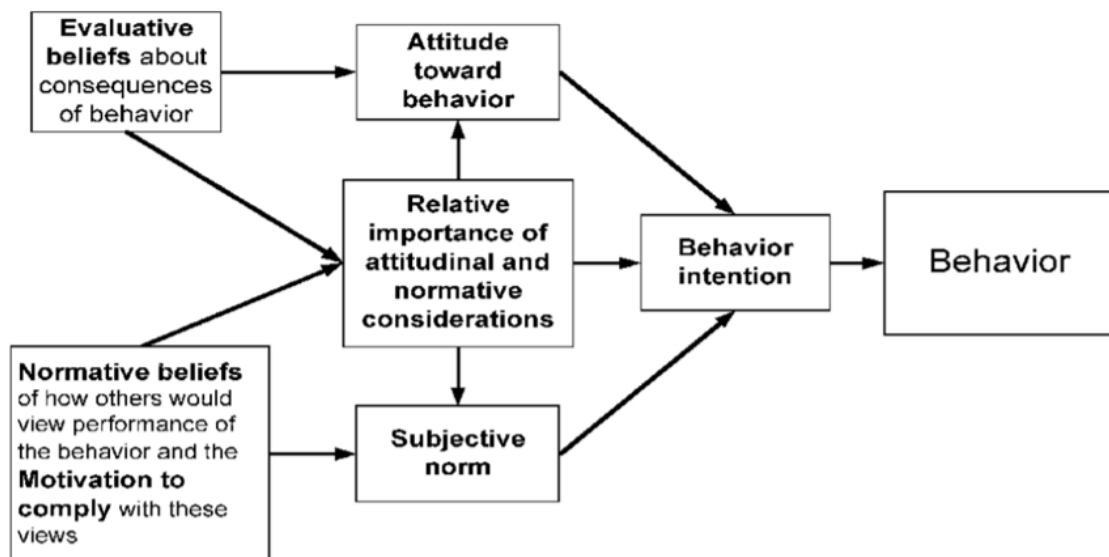
Figure 1 – Early models of pro-environmental behaviour



Source: (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002)

Ajzen and Fishbein's *Theory of Reasoned Action* and *Theory of Planned Action* have been the most influential attitude-behaviour models since 1980. The idea behind these models implies that people are rational, specifying that human beings make systematic use of information available to them and are not guided by unconscious motives or uncontrollable desires. Contrary to previous studies Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) demonstrated that attitudes do not determine behaviour directly. As a matter of fact, attitudes first influence behavioural intentions which consequently translate into actions. (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980 as cited in Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002). Moreover, not only people's attitudes have an impact on intentions, but also social pressures and other many other factors play a fundamental role in shaping intentions.

Figure 2 – Theory of reasoned action



Source: (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980 as cited in Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002)

By taking into account the models designed to understand the intention-behaviour gap, the *Theory of Reasoned Action* and *Theory of Planned Action* concluded that behaviour is fully influenced by intentions (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002). However, through the years this statement has been put into question, comprehending that despite the importance of this topic to researchers and industry, a lack of understanding of the intention-behaviour gap is still present (Hassan et al., 2014).

2.7 Gap measurement

The literature has been divided on the efficiency of theories explaining the intention-behaviour gap, considering that intentions could change over time. Thus, implying that based on the *Theory of Reasoned Action* and *Theory of Planned Action*, intentions are only casually influencing behaviour (Hassan et al., 2014). A further problem coming from past models include several measurement issues.

The marketing tools such as surveys are only efficient at determining purchasing intentions, but are weak predictors of actual behaviour. People tend to answer surveys in a way that represents them in a positive light, encouraging non-eco-friendly consumers to affirm they make environmentally conscious decisions in a manner to protect their image (*The Fashion Law*, 2019). Additionally, surveys depend on the individual knowledge about personal behaviour. However, research demonstrates that we are not as knowledgeable as we may think about the drivers of our behaviour, hence consumption often results irrational (*The Fashion Law*, 2019). For instance, the decision to purchase could be influenced by emotional desires such as fantasy, excitement, and aspiration to live a more fulfilling life. These drivers create a less rational consumption which consequently reduces rational thoughts about eco-friendliness and the environmental impacts of our purchases (*The Fashion Law*, 2019).

Moreover, the intention-behaviour gap could be caused by the use of unequal scales in survey responses for intention and behaviour. Sutton (1998) emphasised how behaviour tends to be measured with “Yes/No” variables, while on the other hand, intentions are measured with “likely/unlikely” variables (Hassan et al., 2014). Furthermore, the timing of measurement of intention and the respective behaviour is another critical factor to consider when measuring the gap. The more distantly behaviour is analysed, the less accurate the intentions will be translated into actions, considering that intentions may change over time, by being influenced by factors such as individual's needs and wants, attitudes and views of important others (Hassan et al., 2014). Additionally, when people self-report their own behaviour, an 11% greater difference in behaviour can be observed, when compared with these behaviours being observed externally (Hassan et al., 2014). Finally, results can be significantly influenced based on the manner behaviours are measured (Hassan et al., 2014). In conclusions, considering the timing of measurement of intention and behaviour, the different scale correspondence used, as well as self-reporting versus independent observations, these factors can have a significant impact on the results.

2.8 Factors affecting the eco-friendly decision-making process

To be able to close the intention-behaviour gap for eco-friendly products, analysing the behaviour of consumers can be helpful, in a way to understand the reason why people fail to translate their pro-environmental values and attitudes into actual behaviour (Nguyen et al., 2019).

2.8.1 Availability and perceived consumer effectiveness

One of the main reasons for consumers to not choose an eco-friendly alternative is due to the unavailability of eco-friendly products (Nguyen et al., 2019). This can be explained by the fact that the availability of eco-friendly products can potentially lower perceived costs of eco-friendly products (Peattie, 2010 as cited in Nguyen et al., 2019) or can be a reminder to consumers of their initial intentions (Ajzen and Fishbein, 2005 as cited in Nguyen et al., 2019). An additional factor influencing the decision-making process for eco-friendly products, includes perceived consumer effectiveness. When people recognise that their actions can make a positive environmental impact, those with the intention to purchase an eco-friendly product would be more likely to actually do it (Nguyen et al., 2019).

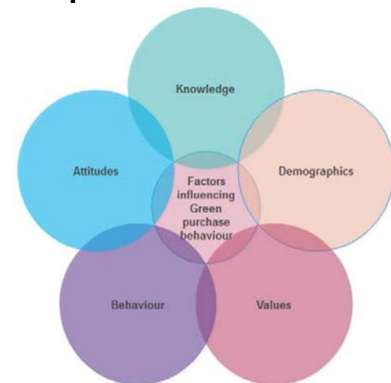
Although income does not affect behaviour directly, income has been found to influence eco-friendly consumption intention. This can be, in part, explained by the fact that there could be a lack of trust in eco-friendly offerings. Meaning that even though consumers are willing to spend more on eco-friendly products, they do not always believe that eco-friendly products are available in the market to purchase (Nguyen et al., 2019).

More generally corporate behaviour is an important factor during the decision-making process. A study suggested that 75% of consumers stated that they would switch brands to support a good cause linked to a product (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000). Furthermore, another study identified that 51% of the people would be likely to pay more for a product associated with a cause important to them (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000). However, price, quality and convenience are considered to play a major role in the decision-making process than responsible corporate behaviour. This could be a result of people having a low awareness towards companies' activities, in the case of negative as well as positive reputations (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000).

2.8.2 Demographics

More specifically, demographics would help identify consumers' willingness to pay for eco-friendly products. Researchers have found a significant difference between male and female consumers. Therefore, women being more likely to purchase eco-friendly food and health care products and consequently ready to pay an extra cost for eco-friendly products than men (Thiruchanuru and Abhavana, 2018). Students, in particular, are considered to have a negative relation towards eco-friendly behaviour (Thiruchanuru and Abhavana, 2018). Contrarily, Mun (2014) observed that age, income, occupation and qualification are independent factors when trying to analyse consumers eco-friendly buying.

Figure 3 – Factors influencing eco-friendly purchase behaviour



Source: (Thiruchanuru and Abhavana, 2018)

However, further studies proved that consumers with higher income have the ability to buy eco-friendly products compared with people earning a lower income. Therefore, concluding that high-income consumers help other consumers enhance their pro-environmental behaviour (Thiruchanuru and Abhavana, 2018). Higher educational level is considered to influence people's sensitivity towards environmental issues and consequently leading to eco-friendly buying behaviour. Nevertheless, multiple studies disagree with this statement (Thiruchanuru and Abhavana, 2018).

2.8.3 Customer characteristics

Customer characteristics such as core values, attitudes, perception, and other external factors influencing people are considered to influence the eco-friendly purchase behaviour (Thiruchanuru and Abhavana, 2018). More specifically, Narula and Sabharwal (2016) has identified three different types of attitudes:

- (a) **Altruistic attitudes:** concern towards others
- (b) **Self-centred attitudes:** concern towards oneself
- (c) **Eco-centric attitudes:** concern towards the environment

Hence, self-centred attitudes lead to consumer behaviour, demonstrating that environmental attitudes have a significant impact on eco-friendly purchases. However,

also in defining the role of attitudes, the literature review is still being divided. Several studies believe attitudes are important during the decision-making process, but this determinant is rarely analysed during the purchasing act (Thiruchanuru and Abhavana, 2018).

Even though the literature demonstrated that positive attitudes do not increase the general purchase of products, when referring to eco-friendly consumption, eco-friendly and environmental attitudes are believed to indicate positive results in eco-friendly behaviour (Villiers, 2014; Tseng and Tsai, 2011; Khoiriyah and Toro, 2018). To further understand how attitudes can have an influence on eco-friendly purchasing behaviour, analysing the factors affecting eco-friendly attitudes can be beneficial. Social influence, environmental awareness and price are the three principal factors influencing attitudes in eco-friendly consumption (Laroche et al., 2001; Han et al., 2010; Grob, 1995; Mostafa, 2007; Bush et al., 2001; Oliver et al., 2011 as cited in Villiers, 2014).

Although different studies mentioned green attitudes as significant predictors of pro-environmental behaviour, several researchers indicated that pro-environmental behaviour is not significantly related to green attitudes. (Gatersleben et al., 2002; Mainieri et al., 1997; Tan & Lau, 2011 as cited in Coşkun, 2017). Hence, gaps in the literature are still present on comprehending whether eco-friendly attitudes can have an influence on eco-friendly consumption.

There are consumers that might be low-involved in the purchasing act. Implying that consumers with low involvement, first will shape their beliefs towards a company and only later they will consider the feelings towards the product (Carvalho, 2007). Therefore, the focus should shift from trying to satisfy all consumers to investing in understanding specific interest associated with the purchasing behaviour of specific groups of consumers. For this reason, companies do not necessarily need to be the best, but aim at being adequate to the consumers' needs (Carvalho, 2007).

2.8.4 Price and quality

When Walmart launched its own green marketing campaign “The Walmart Mom”, they found out that people are willing to buy and pay more for eco-friendly products, in the case where the product is of high quality. Concluding, that to make consumers willing to pay more, benefits of the products such as safety, taste and price savings should be made clear (Thiruchanuru and Abhavana, 2018).

Due to the perception of higher prices for eco-friendly products, many consumers tend to associate to these goods with higher expectations. Moreover, consumers that recognise a specific eco-friendly product as low quality, being able to regain their trust is difficult (Gleim, Smith, Andrews and Cronim, 2013). For this reason, price competitiveness and the display of product benefits are likely to be useful in satisfying the elevated quality expectations of consumers, when exposed to higher prices of eco-friendly products (Gleim et al., 2013). By providing more product information, consumers have an improved perception of the quality of the eco-friendly product and thus, justifying the higher price (Gleim et al., 2013).

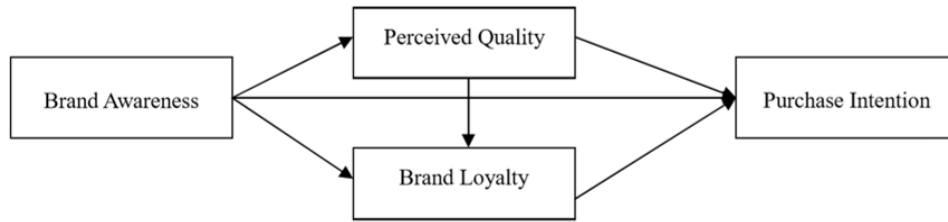
2.8.5 Customer knowledge

Laroche (2001) identifies knowledge as the most powerful determinant while making decisions. Stating that those consumers with more knowledge were prone to pay more for eco-friendly products. Further studies have evidenced that many consumers are aware that their purchase and consumption behaviour have a direct effect on the environment (Thiruchanuru and Abhavana, 2018). However, one of the major challenges faced by people is that their attitudes do not necessarily always match their purchase behaviour (Thiruchanuru and Abhavana, 2018).

2.8.6 Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty is defined as a consumer's commitment to repurchase products or reutilise services from their preferred brands (Lin, Lobo and Leckie, 2017). When competition between several brands is intense, brand loyalty can be beneficial. As a matter of fact, brand loyalty can contribute to positive word-of-mouth communication as well as an acceptance of premium price and an increase of the probability of repurchase (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Shankar et al., 2003 as cited in Lin et al., 2017). Moreover, the literature revealed that brand loyalty can positively influence purchase intentions (Chi, Yeh and Yang, 2009). Meaning that the higher the brand awareness, the more likely the purchase intention (Chi et al., 2009). As the following image demonstrates, brand awareness is significantly linked to perceived quality as well as brand loyalty. While brand loyalty and perceived quality act as a mediator between brand awareness and purchase (Chi et al., 2009).

Figure 4 – Factors influencing purchase intention



Source: (Chi, Yeh and Yang, 2009)

More specifically, researchers mentioned that the higher the brand awareness, the higher perceived quality is (Monore, 1990; Dodds and Grewal, 1991; Wall et al., 1991; Lo, 2002; Lin, 2006 as cited in Chen, 2013). Furthermore, the literature suggests that brands with high awareness and good corporate image can more effectively promote brand loyalty to consumers. Peng (2006) indicates that brand awareness is the factor having the most significant effect on brand loyalty. Chi, Yeh and Chiou (2009) when studying brand loyalty, identified customer perceived quality has a fundamental influence on brand trust and therefore, to influence brand attitudes as well as purchase behaviour. Hence, brand loyalty has been found to have a positive correlation with perceived quality, and companies will experience an increase in brand loyalty in the case where perceived quality increases (Chi et al., 2009).

Research on the role of brand loyalty towards eco-friendly consumption is limited. However, having a good brand image can be advantageous in shaping attitudes towards eco-friendly behaviours, and it strongly influences several behaviour intentions such as purchase intention and willingness to pay a premium price for eco-friendly products (Lin et al., 2017). Product functionality and quality are often linked with reactions including the willingness to repurchase and positive word-of-mouth communication (Cronin et al., 2000; Sirohi et al., 1998; Zeithaml et al., 1996 as cited in Lin et al., 2017). Therefore, by offering high-functional benefits, consumers' loyalty towards a brand can be enhanced (Yeh et al., 2016 as cited in Lin et al., 2017). Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), mentioned that in a way to lead brand loyalty as well as positive word-of-mouth communication, brands should provide self-expressive benefits and considered that:

- (a) Utilitarian benefits are positively correlated with brand loyalty;
- (b) Self-expressive benefits are positively correlated with brand loyalty;
- (c) Eco-friendly image is positively correlated with brand loyalty.

2.9 Factors influencing the intention-behaviour gap

Many models have been developed over the years trying to identify the causes explaining the intention-behaviour gap. However, the theory behind these models had not similar outcomes and opinions, still leaving plenty of room for doubts and uncertainties regarding the factors pushing consumers to act in accordance to their initial thoughts, attitudes and intentions.

Various researchers have tried to explain the intention-behaviour gap phenomenon, including Rajecki (1982) as mentioned in Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002), which identified four principal causes:

- Direct versus indirect experience: Direct experiences have a bigger impact on people's behaviour. For instance, someone is more likely to experience a behavioural change when they see a deformed turtle by a plastic ring, rather than by simply learning about an environmental problem (e.g. plastic in the ocean).
- Normative influences: People's attitudes are influenced by social norms, cultural tradition and family customs. Eco-friendly behaviour is more likely to happen when a culture encourages a eco-friendly lifestyle.
- Temporal discrepancy: People's attitudes change over time, depending on the current and redefined goals, potentially affecting the intention-behaviour gap.
- Attitude-behaviour measurement: The way attitudes are measured are less specific in scope in comparison with the measure actions (e.g. "Do you care about the environment?" Versus "Do you recycle"?), consequently leading to large inconsistencies in results.

2.10 Factors influencing pro-environmental behaviour

Hines, Hungerford and Tomera (1986) as mentioned in Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002), developed a model based on Ajzen and Fishbein's *Theory of Reasoned Action* and *Theory of Planned Action*. Their *Model of Responsible Environmental Behaviour* identified factors that influence pro-environmental behaviour, including:

- Knowledge of issues: People have to be familiar with the environmental problem and its consequent causes.

- Knowledge of action strategies: People have to know how to act in order to decrease their impact on environmental problem.
- Locus of control²: People need to have a strong internal locus of control in a way to believe that their actions can make a difference and not that change can only be made by powerful others.
- Attitudes: A person with strong pro-environmental attitudes is considered to have more chances to act in a pro-environmental manner.
- Individual sense of responsibility: Having a greater sense of personal responsibility, makes people more likely to engage in environmentally responsible behaviour.

Despite the depth and research of Ajzen and Fishbein's *Theory of Reasoned Action* and *Theory of Planned Action*, multiple factors that could have an impact on pro-environmental behaviour, have been omitted. Although Ajzen and Fishbein and several other researchers have significantly contributed to the knowledge that we have today concerning the intention-behaviour gap, including diverse theories developed on the matter are important and necessary to be comprised and taken into consideration by research. In particular, Hines (1987) defined other factors that were not taken into account by several researchers. Hines identified these factors as situational factors, including social pressures, economic constraints and finally chances to choose other actions (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002). Furthermore, other factors can be taken into account for this purpose, such as:

- **Demographic factors**
 - Gender: Women are considered to be more emotionally engaged regarding environmental issues and are more willing to make changes. (Fliegenschnee and Schelakovsky, 1998 as cited in Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002; Thiruchanuru and Abhavana, 2018).
 - Years of education: The longer the education, the more knowledge about environmental issues is learned. However, this factor does not automatically imply an increased pro-environmental behaviour.

² How strongly people believe they have control over specific situations and experiences affecting their lives (edglossary.org).

- Personality factors: Such as altruism and empathy, which can be considered necessary or at least help promoting pro-environmental actions.

- **External factors**

- Institutional factors: For instance, the lack of infrastructures provided by a country, influences the extent to which pro-environmental behaviour may happen. A country's lack of public transportation does not encourage people to engage in environmentally responsible behaviour, since they will always be using the car to go to places.
- Economic factors: Economic factors have a strong influence on people's decisions and behaviour. Furthermore, people can be influenced by economic incentives to behave pro-environmentally. For instance, different Cantons in Switzerland decided to introduce a garbage tax, with the aim to encourage people to make a separate collection of waste and consequently decrease their rubbish.
- Social and cultural factors: For example, cultures in small as well as highly populated countries (e.g. Switzerland), tend to make a more diligent use of their resources, compared with big countries and rich in resources such as the United States.

- **Internal factors**

- Motivation: Is an internal stimulus representing the reason for a specific behaviour, motivation is shaped by intensity and direction.
- Environmental knowledge: More specifically, environmental knowledge is considered to play a minor role in influencing behaviour, since being aware of environmental issues does not automatically translates into pro-environmental behaviour. Furthermore, economic incentives and cultural values can be a greater motivator for people to act pro-environmentally without necessarily having environmental concerns.
- Values: Essentially values shape people's motivation. Chawla (1999) as mentioned in Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002), in order to determine the factors shaping environmental values, analysed the life experiences that shaped the values of professional environmentalists. The results showed the following experiences influences people's environmental values:

- Childhood experiences in nature;
 - Experiences of pro-environmental destruction;
 - Pro-environmental values held by the family;
 - Pro-environmental organizations;
 - Role models;
 - Education.
- Attitudes: Attitudes are described as lasting positive or negative feeling about some person, object or issue. The literature has been divided regarding the influence of attitudes on people's actions. Several studies showed that attitudes frequently tend to have a small impact on pro-environmental behaviour (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980).

2.11 Self-regulatory problems

The intention-behaviour gap in terms of size is considered to be significant, since intentions result in actions one half of the time (Sheeran and Webb, 2016). Furthermore, when trying to achieve their intentions, people can face different self-regulatory challenges in coordinating their thoughts, feelings and actions concerning their intentions (Sheeran and Webb, 2016). These self-regulatory problems include: (a) getting started, (b) keeping ongoing goal pursuit on track, and (c) bringing goal pursuit to a successful close.

Figure 5 – Problems involved in realising intentions



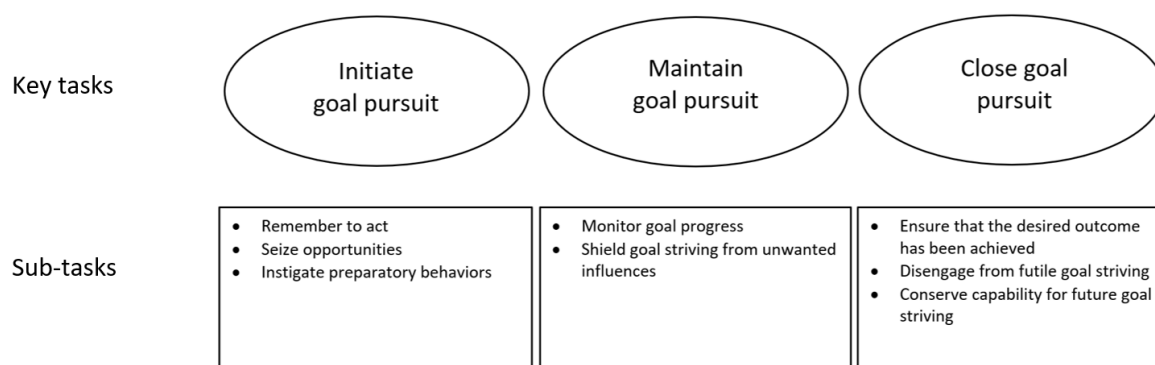
Source: (Sheeran and Webb, 2016)

The above picture shows the key problems encountered while getting a goal started: forgetting to act, missing opportunities to act and failing to engage in preparatory behaviours. Moreover, even if people recall their intentions, this does not translate into never missing good opportunities to act. People are more likely to miss an opportunity to act in a favoured manner when these opportunities are short or do not happen frequently. The person is unsure about how best to achieve their goal, experiencing second thoughts at the moment of action, ambivalent acting and procrastination (Sheeran and Webb, 2016).

Once the first step (goal pursuit) is successful, the following self-regulatory problem to consider is how to keep goal pursuit going. This second phase could encounter issues such as failing to monitor personal progress, which decrease the chances of actions to match intentions since monitoring progress can be used to identify gaps between their current and desired states as well as maintaining the focus on the goal. (Sheeran and Webb, 2016).

Interestingly, there can be a motivated avoidance of progress in which people unconsciously prefer to ignore their progress in a manner to keep a more desired and favourable image of themselves and their status with respect to the goal. Additionally, goal pursuit can also be unsuccessful due to bad habits, feelings of confusion and competing goals which result in distractions and temptations. The last problem that people could confront is failing to bring goal pursuit to a successful ending. This could be explained by three main issues: withdrawing effort before completing the goal, continuing to engage in an ineffective course of action, and goal becoming over-extended. Over-extended goals could potentially be the result of someone pursuing multiple goals, and that can consecutively compromise the achievement of another goal (Sheeran and Webb, 2016).

Figure 6 – Tasks helping realising intentions



Source: (Sheeran and Webb, 2016)

As illustrated in the image, when the problems that push people to not accomplish their goals have been identified, the tasks to be followed to make sure an effective translation of intentions into action, should be determined. Furthermore, three principal tasks need to be achieved in order to ensure the realisation of intentions: (a) people need to initiate, (c) maintain, (c) and close goal pursuit (Sheeran and Webb, 2016).

In conclusion, to understand if people are intending to maintain their eco-friendly consumption behaviour over time, the quality of their intentions should be considered. In a manner to be able to distinguish those consumers' that have a temporary interest in buying eco-friendly products (e.g. people following the "green movement" trend or unconsciously looking for have a better image of oneself) between those actively invested in eco-friendly consumption for an ethical purpose (Sheeran and Webb, 2016).

2.12 Importance of consumer buying behaviour and CSR

Nowadays, in a dynamic and constantly changing business environment, keeping acquiring new customers but more importantly be able to retain clients by meeting their needs and expectations and essentially by providing them value, is crucial (Williams and Naumann, 2011). Customer retention is closely linked with customer satisfaction and the latter not only retain clients, but also influences revenue, earning per price and stock price (Williams and Naumann, 2011). Therefore, as stated by Kumar Sharma (2014) companies need to invest time to analyse the buying behaviour of consumers to:

- (a) Better understand buyers' reactions to a firm's marketing strategy, in a way to have a positive impact on the firm's success;
- (b) Create a marketing mix by analysing what, where, when and how customers buy, so to understand better and thus satisfy the customer;
- (c) Better predict how consumers will respond to marketing strategies.

Fundamentally, being more knowledgeable of how conflicting beliefs impact the decision-making process, can be an excellent way to improve a business ability to make faster and more accurate choices, making sure to be able to meet up customers' expectations. (Kumar Sharma, 2014).

Furthermore, there has been a rising concern regarding the way businesses behave, increasing public awareness of the negative side of business activity (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000). If people perceive a company positively, the reputation will be improved,

and stakeholders will be subsequently supportive, and more importantly, this reputation will potentially influence the purchasing behaviour of the public (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000).

A survey conducted in the United States demonstrated that 85% of consumers are willing to purchase a product from a company that lives by corporate social responsibility (Thiruchanuru and Abhavana, 2018). While 75% of consumers are likely to purchase products if a company is making an effort to be eco-friendly (Thiruchanuru and Abhavana, 2018).

Therefore, corporate reputation is considered today to be fundamental to enable a firm to differentiate itself from competitors in a highly competitive market and thus ensure competitive advantage and organisational success over time (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000). Further advantages of having a good corporate reputation, include not only possible financial gains, but also deliver a superior product or service quality, attracting high quality employees and extend product offerings (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000).

2.13 How firms can reduce the intention-behaviour gap

Many studies have examined the intention-behaviour gap in order to understand if a relationship between intentions and behaviour exists. Although a correlation between intentions and behaviour is present, the correlation is not so high (Atkins, 2013). As Orbell and Sheeran (1998) mentioned intentions do not influence significantly behaviour, mainly because people's intentions tend to fail to be translated in actions (Atkins, 2013). People fail to act based on their intentions, because they forget to start or keep a specific behaviour and also because they are used to act based on a habitual and automatic behaviour (Atkins, 2013).

For this reason, to better understand the eco-friendly consumer, companies should rely on models developed to understand the intention-behaviour gap as well as further adopt strategies that increase and encourage eco-friendly consumption in the long-run, for the sake of both, their businesses and the environment (Nguyen et al., 2019).

2.13.1 Green marketing

Green marketing is defined as a business practice which advocates eco-friendly development, promoting the protection of the environment in a eco-friendly way

(Govender and Govender, 2016). Differently from traditional education methods, green marketing has been shown to be a good alternative to conventional campaigns, being very effective at bringing changes in consumer behaviour (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002). The advantage of green marketing consists in the fact that it starts with people's behaviour and works backwards in a manner to be able to develop a strategy that suits a particular behaviour (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002).

Furthermore, green marketing enables firms to satisfy consumers' needs while having a low impact on the environment (Govender and Govender, 2016). Specifically, by adopting a green marketing mix, the encouragement of the development and implementation of strategies designed to promote environmental welfare is ensured (Govender and Govender, 2016). Through green marketing, companies can more easily implement and adapt strategies like pricing for eco-friendly products as well as better analysing the needs to satisfy customers, while taking into account the factors influencing buying behaviour (Govender and Govender, 2016).

- (a) **Green product:** Consumers look for eco-friendly products because they are organic, higher quality or help safeguard the environment. There are consumers who are willing to pay a higher price for eco-friendly products, since such products provide them greater value by keeping them healthy and safe, saving costs in the long run.
- (b) **Green price:** Some consumers are unwilling to purchase eco-friendly products since they perceive such products to be expensive. However, consumers, in particular younger generations, are willing to pay extra costs for eco-friendly products.
- (c) **Green promotion:** Product aesthetics and packaging are effective tools to attract consumers' attention. Moreover, women are considered to depend more on the labelling of eco-friendly products when product quality and content are evaluated.
- (d) **Green place:** Accessibility and location of goods have a great impact on people. In fact, when eco-friendly products are easily accessible, consumers are more encouraged to purchase them (Govender and Govender, 2016).

2.13.2 Availability and product information

Eco-friendly product availability and perceived consumer effectiveness are two factors influencing people's decision-making process toward eco-friendly products, and

consequently factors that may also help close the intention-behaviour gap. An increasing availability of eco-friendly products, could be a potential strategy that would aim at helping increase awareness of eco-friendly products as well as, convince those consumers who intended to consume such products, to actually purchase them (Nguyen et al., 2019). Companies could also take advantage of previous studies in order to develop specific shelf product strategies that include comprehensive eco-friendly information on the packaging (Nguyen et al., 2019). Moreover, boosting consumers' awareness of eco-friendly product performance can be beneficial, in a way to encourage people to achieve personal goals of environmental impact. This strategy of educating people on eco-friendly consumption would not only help increase eco-friendly behaviours but also decrease the intention-behaviour gap. Thus, a strategy that helps link purchases to a particular environmental impact would be beneficial (Nguyen et al., 2019).

2.13.3 Social influence

Additional studies have demonstrated that people desire to and will adjust their behaviour similar to those around them (White et al., 2019). For this reason, social influence is considered to be an effective way to encourage pro-environmental behaviour also regarding consumption. For instance, communicating to online buyers that other consumers were purchasing eco-friendly products drove a 65% increase in eco-friendly purchases (White et al., 2019). Moreover, businesses could appoint advocates to promote their eco-friendly products and relative features. One study found out that when an advocate explained the reasons why he or she installed solar panels, 63% more people tended to follow the advocate's action (White et al., 2019).

Additionally, men associate eco-friendliness with femininity and eco-friendly products often tend to be associated with being of lower quality (White et al., 2019). In order to decrease these presumptions, highlighting the product's positive features can be advantageous. For example, focusing on the innovativeness or safety rather than simply on its eco-friendliness (White et al., 2019). A further strategy of using social influence to obtain pro-environmental behaviour could be to make public people's commitments to eco-friendly behaviour. For instance, a hotel increased towel reuse by 20% by asking their clients to hang a card on their room in case they agreed to reuse their towels (White et al., 2019).

2.13.4 Encouraging new habits

Furthermore, one of the main problems with the eco-friendly consumer is that this type of consumer is likely to fall back into old and repetitive habits (White et al., 2019). Thus, using prompts, providing feedback and incentives could be an excellent method to help consumers to shape new positive habits. Prompts which could be texts that help people remind to engage in an eco-friendly behaviour have demonstrated to be effective (White et al., 2019). More precisely, one study showed that having prompts close to recycling bins increased recycling by 54% (White et al., 2019). Feedbacks could be extremely encouraging, such as telling people how they performed as well as comparing their efforts to that of others (White et al., 2019). Lastly, incentives can be a great way to influence people consumption. However, incentives should be used carefully, since once removed the eco-friendly behaviour may stop continuing (White et al., 2019). For this reason, not only financial incentives should be used, but also encourage people to link financial incentives to personal motives and values (White et al., 2019).

2.13.5 Influencing eco-friendly attitudes

As the literature mentioned social influence, environmental awareness and price are the three principal factors influencing attitudes in eco-friendly consumption (Villiers, 2014 as cited in Han et al., 2010; Grob, 1995; Mostafa, 2007; Bush et al., 2001; Oliver et al., 2011; Laroche et al., 2001). Therefore, marketers should influence the attitudes of consumers by utilising social influence, more specifically by targeting their green marketing campaign at friends and family (Villiers, 2014). Moreover, marketers have to create greater awareness, this can be done by implementing awareness in their integrated marketing communications (IMC) plans (Villiers, 2014). Finally, marketers need to take into account the sensitivity of consumers towards high prices associated with eco-friendly products, and for this reason, implementing more affordable and competitive pricing strategies for eco-friendly products can result beneficial (Villiers, 2014).

2.13.6 Enhancing brand loyalty

Companies selling eco-friendly products can enhance their brand loyalty in three main alternative ways. Utilitarian benefits have been demonstrated to have a direct and positive effect on brand loyalty (Lin et al., 2017). Hence, firms can offer superior utilitarian

benefits, in a manner to be able to satisfy consumers' needs for eco-friendly functionality (Lin et al., 2017). Moreover, creating a positive green brand image has been demonstrated to be beneficial, since utilitarian benefits have been found to indirectly impact green brand loyalty through green brand image (Lin et al., 2017).

The third path firms selling eco-friendly products can take to enhance green brand loyalty is by offering self-expressive benefits of eco-friendly brands. Including self-expressive benefits can be considered beneficial since self-expressive benefits have an influence on green brand loyalty through green brand image (Lin et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the promotion of brand awareness is considered essential when a business promotes new products. By promoting their eco-friendly brand, firms can receive the best results, since brand awareness is positively linked to brand loyalty (Chi et al., 2009).

2.13.7 Emotional versus rational attraction

Finally, how companies decide to communicate with their consumers is considered important. The way firms decide to convey their message when launching or promoting a new product can enormously influence people's pro-environmental behaviour, eliciting an emotional and/or rational interest (White et al., 2019).

The emotional appeal refers to the likelihood of people to engage in a desired behaviour when they have positive feelings from doing so (White et al., 2019). Particularly, pride and hope are found to be valuable when encouraging eco-friendly consumption, such as weekly praising people for their energy-saving efforts. This action encourages people to save more energy than those that are given no direct attention (White et al., 2019). Using moderate amounts of guilt, sadness or even fear have been found to be also great emotional tools (White et al., 2019).

Regarding a more rational appeal, companies rather than tackling people's emotions could communicate what effects the use of their products will have on the environment, as well as communicating messages that demonstrate specific pro-environmental behaviours aiming at having specific results (White et al., 2019). Moreover, giving consumers something tangible as showing precise results could encourage them to support a brand and its products (White et al., 2019).

In conclusion, using marketing as a way to connect consumers with a brand's commitments, on top of understanding their consumer behaviour can be beneficial, in a way to be able to quickly respond to customers' needs and making businesses offerings

appealing to the public. Eco-friendly practices are becoming more than ever, at the heart of many companies' challenges, as the future of eco-friendly businesses is looking brighter than ever (White et al., 2019).

This section of the dissertation enabled the reader to gain new notions and a deeper understanding of the intention-behaviour gap in eco-friendly consumption. However, there are still remaining questions, therefore primary research will need to be conducted. The following section of this research will be dedicated to the methodology, in which new quantitative, as well as qualitative data, will be collected. The data gathered will identify the gaps found in the literature and recognise what still needs to be found and addressed. Moreover, the various assumptions made by the literature will be examined to test their veracity and accuracy in the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

3. Methodology

This section introduces the research methods used to answer the research question. The first means used to gather data from residents living in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, will be a survey which will enable obtaining quantitative data. More specifically, a survey will allow gaining answers in numeric values, such as how many people agree to a specific statement or how often they find themselves doing something. The survey will be structured and fully standardised to all receivers, in a way that answers can afterwards be analysed and compared. Once the quantitative data has been gathered and interpreted, a focus group will be prepared in order to obtain more detailed information and accumulating qualitative data. At this stage, the opinions and feelings of the participants on the topic will be observed through open discussions. The focus group should allow for a better understanding and explanation of quantitative data found in the survey.

3.1 Data collection

3.1.1 Survey

The survey has been created in four main sections: attitudes, behaviour, personality and finally, demographics. The survey did not provide a topic description nor further indications explaining the purpose of the data collection. The decision to not inform people about the aim of this research, was to avoid influencing individuals answers and not making people feel judged. The survey was designed in a way to obtain honest information, without giving the respondents the need to answer something they did not believe in the first place. In order to avoid these kinds of biased responses, the survey has been done anonymously.

During the survey analysis, the truthfulness of the answers provided will be examined. The survey will analyse if incoherent answers have been provided by reviewing people's affirmations in terms of the way they intend to act compared to their actual behaviour.

The section devoted to individual's attitudes includes questions regarding how people evaluate themselves to be eco-friendly based on their purchase decisions, and what they believe their role in the society is when discussing environmental issues. Moreover, the behavioural part of the survey focuses more directly on respondents' actions, such as what are their purchasing options. The personality section is more specific, and at this

point, the respondents could understand more precisely what the aim of this survey might be.

Finally, the demographics section will recognise the differences between the various demographic groups and examine if the determinants playing a role in the decision-making process found in the literature review actually have an influence on people's eco-friendly consumption.

3.1.2 Online focus group

Since the aim of the research is to understand consumer behaviour in eco-friendly consumption, a focus group will be conducted in order to obtain qualitative data. Focus groups are considered a useful method to investigate consumer behaviour, identify changes in behaviour, and can be valuable to acquire information regarding personal and group opinions and feelings (Evaluated, [no date]).

Due to the impossibility to meet physically due to the recent pandemic crisis, the focus group will be conducted online. The time estimated for the focus group is not expected to exceed 90 minutes and a total of 10 main questions will be asked. At the beginning of the focus group, a brief introduction of the moderator (Stefanie Teixeira) and the reason for the gathering will be made clear. However, similarly to the survey, respondents will not know precisely the aim of the focus group. Instead, participants will be told that the scope of the meeting will be to obtain general opinions and personal decisions concerning eco-friendliness. The moderator's duty is to keep the group focused and encourage an active discussion (American Statistical Association, 1998). Even though the moderator oversees the focus group, her/his role is only to support and keep conversations on track, for this reason, should not affect participants' opinions in any manner (Kitzinger, 1995).

Moreover, the respondents will be asked if they are comfortable with the focus group being registered. The objective will be to make everyone feel at ease in order to encourage an open and honest discussion. Furthermore, the moderator will specify that there are no right or wrong answers, since the responses are based on personal opinions. The participants will be reminded that their answers will be used for research reasons and thus, their answers will remain confidential as well as their names will remain anonymous.

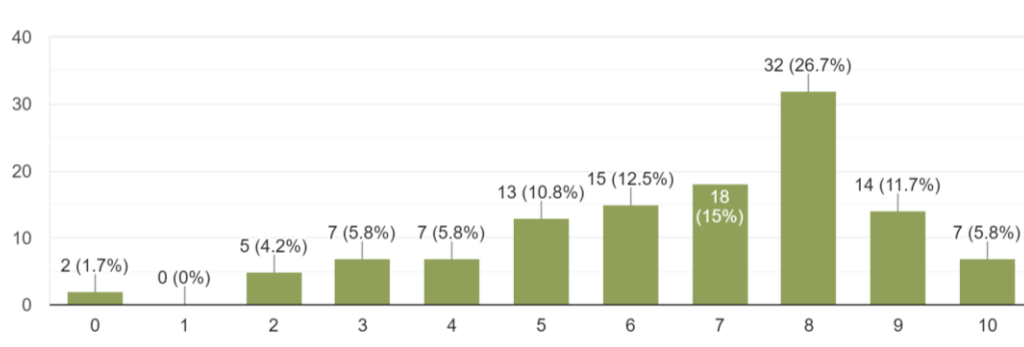
The focus group participants have been selected by the moderator and consist of 6 people equally divided between females and males. The participants are between 24 and 32 years old, and the group includes 3 students and 3 employed workers. All the respondents of the focus group are residents in the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

4. Data analysis

4.1 Survey analysis

A total of 120 answers were collected for the survey in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. The first question aimed at letting the respondents self-assess themselves on a scale from 0 to 10, regarding the impact their purchasing decisions have on the environment. 0 being never, 5 signifying occasionally and 10 equalling to always.

Figure 7 - Do you consider your effect on the environment as a consumer, before purchasing a new product?



The general responses were more than positive, with 27% of the respondents choosing number 8, signifying that they frequently consider the impact their purchases have on the planet. The scale's average represents 6.6, indicating that of the 120 answers on average people tend more than occasionally to take the environment into account when purchasing a new product. To test the veracity of these answers, those who answered 10, have been analysed and asked if they still happen to purchase products that have a negative impact. Out of the 7 people that affirmed always to be environmentally conscious when making purchasing decisions, 3 people, stated to purchase non-eco-friendly products. A section where respondents could justify their non-environmental conscious purchasing was present. Out of the 3 people, 2 justified their non-eco-friendly purchasing explaining that they resort to environmentally damaging products, due to the

unavailability of eco-friendly options. While the other person explained that the choice is caused by the fact that eco-friendly offerings can be more expensive, thus always opting for cheaper options, even if the product can be damaging to the environment.

This first analysis allowed already to identify some inconsistencies between the way people think they act and their actual behaviour towards eco-friendly products. In particular, the causes explaining this gap between intentions and behaviour can be attributed to the unavailability and higher cost of eco-friendly products.

56 people out of the 120 answers, representing 49%, have said to purchase products regardless of their negative environmental impact. Respondents followed by mentioning their reason and six main categories have been created, in order of relevance, to group similar answers. **Price** has been identified as the main reason that pushes people to not act in an eco-friendly way, followed by **availability** and **convenience**. Furthermore, non-eco-friendly consumption has been observed to occur due to a **lack of environmental concern**. Some people said to choose environmentally damaging products due to **necessity**, implying that stopping the consumption of those non-eco-friendly products is inevitable. Finally, a last category has been identified, grouping people that purchase environmentally damaging products for **personal gratification**.

When asked what factors people take into consideration when buying a product, price was unsurprisingly in the first position with 84% of responses. Followed remarkably by other environmental conscious factors: recyclability, local production, durability and waste minimisation. Convenience and availability were also elements fairly considered by the respondents.

Figure 8 - *What are the criteria you tend to look at when purchasing a new product?*

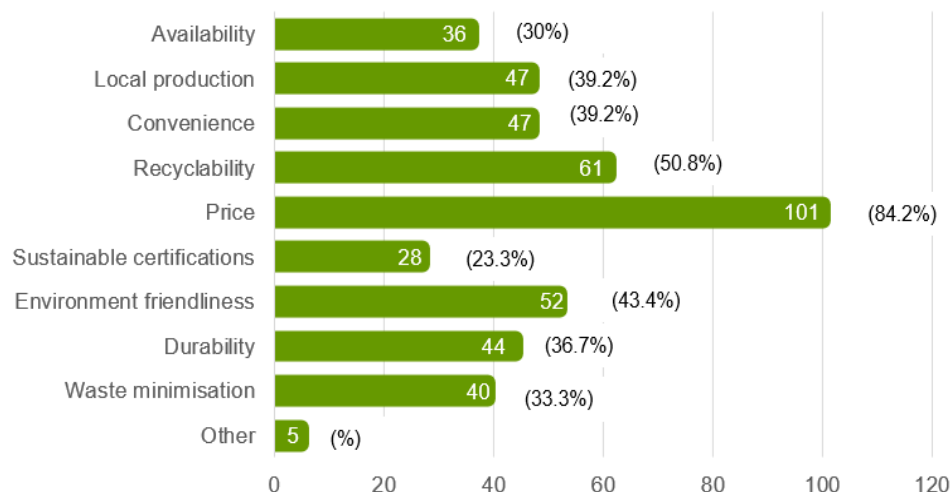
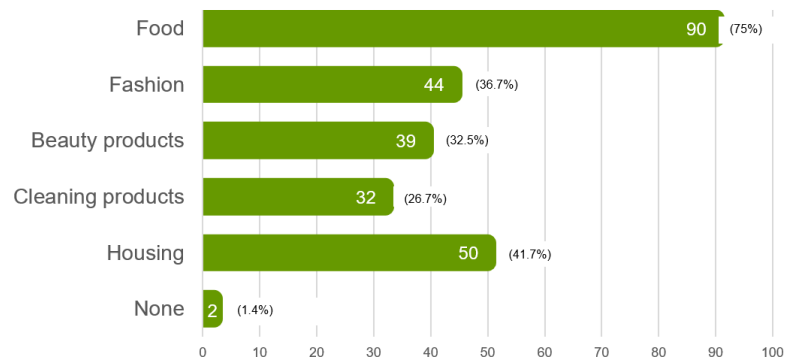


Figure 9 - *In which industry do your choices tend to be more environmentally conscious?*

The aim of this research is to focus on the eco-friendly consumer generally, rather than focussing on a specific industry. However, a question regarding in



which industry their eco-friendly decision happen was asked. The results demonstrated that people tend to be more environmentally conscious in the food industry, followed by housing and fashion products. To test the veracity of these statements, further analysis was made. Respondents were asked where they tend to buy their food, the options were:

(a) Traditional retailers (e.g Migros, Coop, Lidl)

(b) Traditional retailers sections offering certificated products (e.g FSC, BRC)

(c) Specialised stores (e.g organic stores, package-free stores)

(d) Farmers market

Moreover, out of the 90 people (75%) that stated to be environmentally conscious towards the food industry, 82 respondents indicated to purchase their food more often at traditional retailers. This test enables to recognise inconsistencies between people's intention and their actions. Concerning the fashion industry, a total of 44 people (36.7%) stated to be environmentally conscious in this industry. Furthermore, respondents have been once again asked where they purchase their clothing more often, the options provided were:

(a) In fast fashion stores (e.g. H&M, Zara)

(b) In second-hand/thrift shops

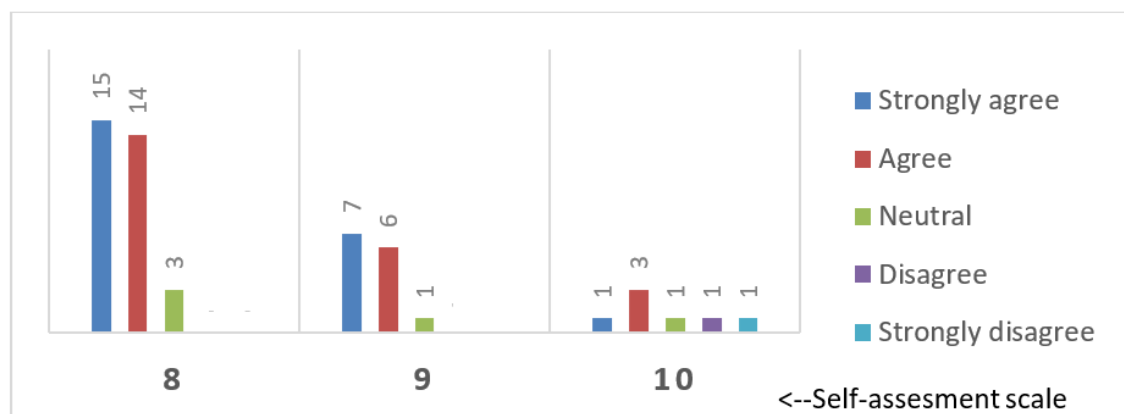
(c) In ethically produced clothing brands (e.g. H&M Conscious, eco-fashion boutiques)

The outcome was similar to that concerning the food industry. Out of the 44 people stating to be environmentally conscious in the fashion industry, 23 said to purchase their clothes in fast fashion stores often. These two examples made in the food as well as

clothing industry demonstrated that people do not behave according to their intentions, thus leading to an intention-behaviour gap for the eco-friendly consumer.

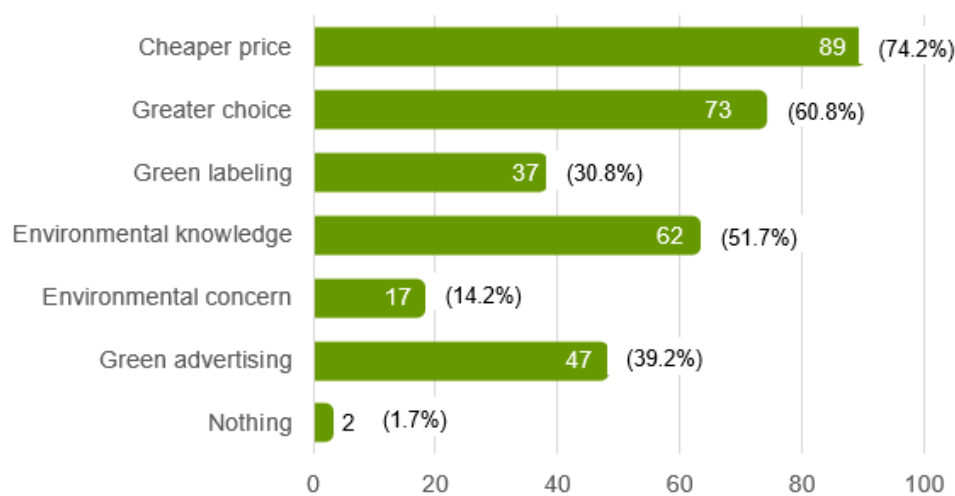
Considering that the literature already took into account the existence of an intention-behaviour gap in the eco-friendly market, respondents have been asked if they have observed differences between how they would like to act towards the environment based on their purchasing choices, and their current behaviour. A vast majority of people, representing 80% of the respondents strongly agreed (31.7%) or agreed (48.3%), recognising that they present some differences between how they would like to act and their actual behaviour in regard to eco-friendliness. More specifically, considering the initial self-assessment scale ranging from 0 to 10, those that initially stated to more than often (8) and always (10) consider their environmental impact when purchasing new products, recognised to not always act according to their desired behaviour.

Figure 10 - *Do you see differences between the way you would like to act towards the environment based on your purchasing choices, and your current behaviour?*



To be able to recognise more in detail the factors explaining these inconsistencies between people's intentions and behaviour, respondents have been able to select possible scenarios that could encourage them to purchase eco-friendly products and consequently help close the intention-behaviour gap. Unsurprisingly, cheaper prices for eco-friendly offerings was the most selected option with 74.2%, followed by greater choice and availability. Remarkably, environmental knowledge, green advertising and green labelling were also factors that respondents mentioned as elements that could help them follow an eco-friendlier consumption.

Figure 11 - *What could make you act in a more desired manner or rather become more invested in the purchase of eco-friendly products?*



Nguyen et al. (2019) mentioned that income has a significant influence on eco-friendly consumption intention. To further understand the importance of price on people's purchase decisions for eco-friendly products, an analysis between the price for eco-friendly products and employment status has been made. The results showed that it does not seem that a correlation between price and employment status exists. Students and employees have both demonstrated to be slightly willing to pay extra costs for eco-friendly products. Although students are usually believed to be less inclined to pay more for eco-friendly products, those with a job, have justified their non-eco-friendly consumption due to high prices even more often than students.

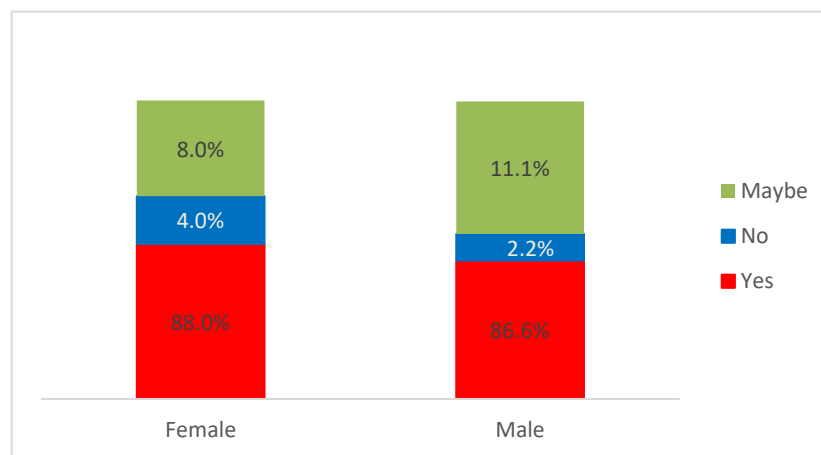
Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002), stated that the longer the education, the more knowledge about environmental issues is learned. Moreover, Laroche (2001) analysed that individuals with more environmental knowledge were prone to pay more for eco-friendly products. The survey seemed to prove these statements, since a correlation between the level of education and environmental knowledge resulted positive. However, the survey did not give a satisfactory answer since environmental knowledge can help people to become more environmentally conscious, but environmental knowledge does not ensures the adopt an eco-friendlier consumption.

Another assumption made by the literature regarding eco-friendly consumption included the fact that women are more likely to purchase eco-friendly products, and therefore are considered to be more emotionally engaged regarding environmental issues and more willing to make changes in their current purchasing habits (Thiruchanuru and Abhavana,

2018). The survey has tried to test the veracity of these statements by considering a correlation between environmental concern and gender. 17 people responded that in order to follow an eco-friendlier consumption, they would need to have some environmental concern, indicating that the environmental impact was not a priority when consuming goods. 9 out of the 17 respondents were females, demonstrating that women are not necessarily more willing to purchase eco-friendly products than men.

Furthermore, to prove Thiruchanuru and Abhavana's assumptions, the survey asked if the different scenarios chosen by the respondents were effective (e.g. lower prices, greater availability, green labelling, etc.), they would be willing to change their purchasing habits in an eco-friendlier way. The general answers to this question demonstrated that 105 respondents, representing 88%, were willing to make adjustments to their current consumption.

Figure 12 - Based on the scenarios/options from you selected, do you believe your purchasing habits would change and become more environmentally conscious?



When looking more in detail at the responses that females and respectively males provided (yes, no or maybe), a correlation between eco-friendly consumption and gender is shown to be negative. Although females are considered to be more inclined to make eco-friendly changes in their current purchasing habits, the survey results demonstrated, to a certain extent, the opposite. As a matter of fact, 2.2% of men categorically answered no to the question, while on the other hand, slightly more women (4%) gave the same answer, demonstrating in this case that women are actually slightly less willing to adapt to an eco-friendlier consumption.

4.2 Online focus group analysis

During the focus group, ten main questions have been discussed. The first question aimed at asking participants **what eco-friendliness meant to them**. People's answers demonstrated their awareness regarding eco-friendliness, taking into consideration the impact of industrial practices, the product itself and the role consumers on the planet.

"As a consumer, you consume products being aware of all the process that the specific good was subject to before being sold to the market. Eco-friendliness is responsible for non-environmentally damaging practices through the supply chain during the creation of a product."

"When talking about eco-friendliness, there should not be too much packaging. The product should also be manufactured and produced in the same country where the good will be sold, to really minimise the harmful impacts it can have on the planet."

Other participants followed by providing their answers, and all shared a specific observation, that is the impact of a product should be non-existent or at least minimal in respect to the environment.

To continue the discussion concerning eco-friendliness participants have been asked **if they consider themselves to be an eco-friendly consumer**. The answers to this question seemed to be affirmative at first. Everyone answered yes, continuing to describe their environmentally friendly consumption. However, after a while of discussing and having people sharing their thoughts, the conversation automatically shifted towards the different industries. As a matter of fact, most participants admitted to not always making eco-friendly choices and that these decisions depended significantly on the industry.

"I consider myself an eco-friendly consumer, since I tend to pay attention to everything I buy. Although I have very strong values, in terms of safeguarding the environment, I have to admit that not always I happen to buy eco-friendly products."

This reply encouraged people to follow and open up about their real consumption patterns. This can be explained by the fact that focus groups allow participants to react as well as be influenced by comments made by others (CALS Arizona, [No Date]).

"I consider myself an eco-friendly consumer, but it depends on the industry. In this last year, I have been trying to be more environmentally conscious in

the fashion industry, however, it is not easy. In Switzerland, we do not have much choice when it comes to sustainable fashion, or if there is, the price is extremely high and unaffordable.”

“I am more environmentally conscious in the food industry. I believe grocery shopping in an eco-friendly way is easier than to shop for clothes for instance. To be eco-friendly (in the food industry), you have the choice to shop in farmers’ markets or simply look for products with eco-friendly certification.”

5 out of 6 people, said to be environmentally conscious regarding the food industry, and in particular 3 of them agreed to the statement above. People felt like in the food industry, consumers are more exposed to eco-friendly options, in comparison with, for example, beauty and apparel products.

Moreover, in order to understand more deeply participants’ decisions to become more eco-friendly, the moderator asked **what pushed them (or did not) to adapt an eco-friendlier consumption.**

“It happened little by little. Growing up I realised the impact that our consumption has on the planet. I have become increasingly more aware of this, also by listening to the emotions that came with it. For instance, I felt a sense of shame when I calculated my ecological footprint. That was an example of situations that made me understand that something had to change.”

“I believe education, such as classes we have at University, like Corporate Social Responsibility and Commodity Trading, helped me understand the impact of the single individual and how making local choices can greatly reduce the environmental impact of my consumption patterns.”

4 people agreed to this last statement, explaining how education has helped them to gain more knowledge on environmental issues, and consequently becoming more encouraged to make changes in their consumption.

Since the literature describes the eco-friendly consumer to be ambiguous and extremely enigmatic, not having aligned intentions and behaviours, a question to test the veracity of participants eco-friendly consumption was asked. The participants were asked **when the last time was, they purchased an eco-friendly product.** Shockingly no one was able to answer this question on the spot. After a while, answers started to be given.

However, the eco-friendly purchases did not seem as too recent. People had to recall the last time they purchased an eco-friendly product and to understand why there was an initial hesitation, they were asked **if there was a particular reason for them not to remember vividly and rapidly their last eco-friendly purchase**. The answers were general, and all participants emphasised that there is not a specific place to purchase eco-friendly products.

“In supermarkets, for instance, there is not a specific section selling eco-friendly products. People have to go and find the product on different shelves and then search if an eco-friendly option is also available.”

Other participants expressed similar opinions concerning also clothing and beauty products. Participants have demonstrated to prefer convenience when researching and purchasing a product. 5 people out of 6 mentioned that for them, eco-friendly purchases (excluding food) occur online. They showed to favour to buy goods in an immediate and effortless manner. This could, in part, explain why the enigmatic eco-friendly consumer sometimes falls into the old purchasing habits and renounces to follow an eco-friendlier consumption in determined situations.

Furthermore, the literature review illustrated that due to the perception of higher prices for eco-friendly products, many consumers tend to associate these goods with higher expectations (Gleim et al., 2013). When participants were asked **what their expectations were concerning eco-friendly products**, most expectations were related to the packaging, a discussion concerning quality followed.

“The product, in terms of packaging, should be minimal. If there is the possibility of recyclability of the packaging, I would value the product even more highly. While concerning quality, I do not expect the eco-friendly product to have higher quality. Since eco-friendly products aim at reducing their impact on the environment, eco-friendly products do not necessarily have the purpose of offering consumers a greater quality. Concerning the price of eco-friendly products, I expect it to be higher, but it is not a problem for me.”

“I expect greater quality from eco-friendly products, especially in the fashion industry, since the price for eco-friendly apparel is extremely higher in comparison with fast fashion articles. Due to fast fashion trends, people have lost the sense of what good, and real quality is and therefore when they see

a higher price, they do not comprehend why that is the case, nor they justify it.”

3 participants mentioned quality as is an important attribute when considering purchasing an eco-friendly product. All participants concluded that they perceive the price to be higher when comparing eco to non-eco-friendly products, and 4 participants, including 3 students, said to be willing to pay more. One of them explained why that was the case:

“I do not believe eco-friendly products to be more expensive in the long-run. I purchased solid shampoo and reusable cotton swabs, even though these eco-friendly products are more costly initially, I consider them as an investment now. I take into account the price I paid in correlation to the product usage and this way eco-friendly products result cheaper.”

This last declaration left those participants unwilling to pay more for eco-friendly products, dubious. One of them replied that considering such products as an investment is not valid and therefore does not apply to every kind of eco-friendly products. Especially for non-durable goods, since these type of goods do not allow consumers to save money in the long run. One person expressed his unwillingness to pay more for non-durable goods and not justifying the increase in price.

Participants held a different opinion concerning the justification of the price increase. 5 out of 6 people, mentioned that they understand and therefore justify higher prices for eco-friendly products.

“We have to consider that the price (for eco-friendly products) is more expensive due to a local production, where economies of scale are not attainable at a level that would be possible to achieve for instance in Bangladesh for the production of clothing. There must also be the respect of producing good in an ethical way (e.g. not using pesticides on crops), in accordance with Swiss standards and legislations. Also incurred costs will be higher inevitably, for instance by paying employees at a fair Swiss wage and many other factors that should be taken into account.”

All people seemed to agree and understand the reasons why some eco-friendly products are charged at a higher price. In particular, 4 people expressed their willingness to purchase eco-friendly products that have a higher selling price compared to environmentally damaging options. Thus, at this stage of the focus group, price, accessibility and convenience of eco-friendly products, have been found to be factors

significantly affecting eco-friendly consumption. Quality has as well been demonstrated to have an influence on eco-friendly consumption, for some consumers.

Moreover, one of the participants said that some eco-friendly products, such as solid shampoos and organic cleaning products, transmit the impression that such products are going to give a lower performance. She mentioned that she never tried these products before, and at the moment is not an intention. The participant acknowledges eco-friendly products to be superior in terms of reduced environmental impact, but not in terms of performance. She continued by explaining that due to the lack of specific chemicals, usually found in regular shampoos and cleaning products, she felt as if these products could not achieve the same result and effect as non-eco-friendly products. This example demonstrates that some consumers associate eco-friendly products with lower quality and poor performance.

Furthermore, participants were asked if **there are negative consequences in environmental terms to their consumptions, and if they have tried to change these habits**. All participants said to have consumption habits that harm the environment, and 5 out of 6 people have said to have tried to change these habits, but the efforts were unsuccessful.

“This last year, I became aware of fast fashion practices and thus, decided not to support fast fashion as much as I used to. But when I was searching for eco-friendly/sustainable fashion companies in the Swiss territory, I did not find many options. Even though I am willing to pay more, for instance, CHF 80.- for a t-shirt, the eco-friendly apparel choices in Switzerland are very expensive. I saw prices going up to CHF 300.- for an eco-friendly t-shirt. So that is why I still find myself shopping in fast fashion stores and online.”

“I am trying to buy my groceries without using plastic bags. I already improved a lot on this aspect. However, I often feel obliged to purchase some products that come with plastic packaging. I actually could go to a farmers’ market or Chez Mamie (a zero-waste organic food store), to purchase goods without packaging. It’s since around 6 months that I am planning to go, but due to a lack of time I usually shop at the nearest supermarket close to where I live.”

The participants provided other examples, and 5 of them confessed to having tried to have an eco-friendlier consumption but failed to do so. They explained this situation by saying that they always end up opting for the easiest and less time-consuming option.

For instance, someone mentioned to be interested in doing laundry by using natural ingredients, months have passed, and non-eco-friendly cleaning products have been purchased. Similarly, to other participants, she justified this inaction by saying that she often forgets to try to wash her clothes differently and that she is used to purchasing standard and regular products as always. She followed by acknowledging that before trying something new, she had to learn to break old habits.

Most participants seemed to have similar feelings on the non-achievement of an eco-friendlier consumption, with respect to what prevented them from taking action. However, it was later discussed that in some cases, non-eco-friendly consumption is inevitable. People continued the discussion by saying that often it is hard to say no to products that damage the environment, due to social pressure the need to keep up with the latest trends. This argument has made it clear that eco-friendly consumption can as well be influenced by peer pressure.

At this point, participants were asked if **there is a particular way that makes them distinguish eco from non-eco-friendly products**. All answers included labels, especially concerning the food industry. 3 people mentioned that when grocery shopping, they check labels such as Migros Bio, OECO Power and Natura Plan. Moreover, one person said that seeing minimal packaging could be a sign of eco-friendliness. While another person added that recognising eco-friendly products is not easy, as he has to read information such as the country of production and material/ingredients used.

Furthermore, most participants agreed on the fact that green packaging could be the first factor that tells them, without too much investigation, that the product in question is eco-friendly. In fact, 5 people stated that, in their opinion, green packaging is the first product attribute hinting eco-friendliness. This comment has given rise to a debate on green packaging, often swapping eco-friendliness with greenwashing techniques put into place by brands.

This last discussion created a debate on greenwashing, anticipating the successive question: **do you believe eco-friendly labelling to be truthful?** When green packaging was mentioned as a way to define an eco-friendly product, someone replied by saying:

“Just because it is green, it does not mean the product is eco-friendly. Many companies know people believe this and thus, they start to add green everywhere. Think about Coca Cola when they greenwashed their bottles with a green label or Mc Donald’s changing their logo from yellow to green. These changes were pretty obvious to be made to fool the consumer, rather

was able to recall a specific green advertisement or green marketing strategy. To know more about their opinions concerning green marketing, the moderator asked if, in their personal opinion, **green marketing can affect their purchase decision**. From this last question, a discussion sprang different views.

“Yes, I think green marketing can help to change in a positive way consumer’s purchasing habits, since the goal of green marketing practices is to inform people about the consequences of bad industrial practices on the environment as well as on human beings. Green marketing also aims at remembering people that their actions count, rising more curiosity and awareness and ultimately helping them to discover new eco-friendly products.”

“Green marketing is not effective if people are used to following their old habits. For instance, if there are people that tend to buy products in large quantities, I do not believe they will change this habit due to being exposed to green marketing initiatives. Nowadays, people prefer speed and routine, instead of taking time to reflect on changing their current consumption habits.”

“Green marketing is excellent to raise awareness and educate the consumer on eco-friendly options. Although it is a great way to increase awareness, green marketing is not sufficient to change people’s consumption habits. This because it is required a significant and personal effort to change someone’s consumption. So, I believe that to encourage people to purchase eco-friendly products, incentives would be more effective than green marketing.”

4 out of 6 people believed that green marketing’s function is to increase awareness and educate people on the existence of eco-friendly products in the market and finally encourage them to try eco-friendly products. However, 2 people did not find green marketing to be more useful than increasing product awareness. For them, a much greater effort is required to start an eco-friendly consumption. Considering two groups, those that believe in green marketing practices to encourage an eco-friendlier consumption and those that do not, a main distinction was observed.

As Hines, Hungerford and Tomera (1986) mentioned in their *Model of Responsible Environmental Behaviour*, different factors influence pro-environmental behaviour:

- Knowledge of issues: Participants have demonstrated that they are familiar with environmental issues caused by industrial practices.
- Locus of control: Participants have shown to have a strong internal locus of control. They are aware that their actions can make a difference.
- Attitudes: All participants, some more than others, have demonstrated to have pro-environmental attitudes (depending on the industry), and thus are considered to have more chances to act in an environmentally friendly way.
- Individual sense of responsibility: This point, is the final factors that ultimately predicts if a person is likely to act pro-environmentally. Those with a greater sense of personal responsibility are more likely to engage in environmentally responsible behaviour.

By taking into considerations the question, **can green marketing affect people's purchase decisions?** Some participants believed green marketing was sufficient to promote eco-friendly consumption. Implying that for them, gaining awareness was a sufficient motivator to follow an eco-friendlier consumption, demonstrating a great sense of personal responsibility.

Moreover, participants that defined green marketing practices as not sufficient to change people' purchasing habits were referring to those consumers that lack individual sense of responsibility. They mentioned old habits to prevail on a new and different consumption pattern, and that to motivate this type of consumer, monetary incentives would be more effective.

Although participants have expressed different opinions, everything that has been said is considered valid. Human beings are very complex to understand and are far from being similar to one another. There are people with a strong sense of responsibility, however, they do not represent every consumer. For this reason, companies should develop strategies that can include and appeal to different types of consumer.

5. Discussion

5.1 Key findings

Previously, various topics were treated, taking into account the literature in a way to understand better the intention-behaviour gap, and a discussion on the data collection findings was provided. In this section, literature and results obtained will be discussed and compared in order to test the veracity of various assumptions and provide further data that may not have been cited until now.

Both the survey and focus group revealed that many people consider themselves to be an eco-friendly consumer. However, when carefully analysing people's responses, several discrepancies can be observed. Several people, defined their consumption as eco-friendly, following by mentioning that they purchase environmentally damaging products for several reasons. In fact, many people fail to follow an eco-friendly consumption due to higher prices for eco-friendly products, lack of availability and a precise location where eco-friendly options can be found. Moreover, people renounce to an eco-friendly attitude due to a sense of necessity, so to be able to keep up with the dynamic environment, always generating new trends to follow and mostly due to peer pressure. Convenience has been demonstrated to be another major factor affecting eco-friendly consumption, since individuals tend to look for easy, fast, and effortless solutions. Thus, as Boulstridge and Carrigan (2000) mentioned, price and convenience are considered to play a major role in the decision-making process. Nguyen et al. (2019), followed by specifying that one of the main reasons for consumers not to choose an eco-friendly alternative is due to the unavailability of eco-friendly products. The truthfulness of these statements can also be confirmed for the eco-friendly consumer living in the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

The way people behave in environmental terms can significantly depend on the industry. People have said to be more environmentally conscious and therefore make more eco-friendly choices in the food industry. The focus group revealed that individuals feel more exposed to eco-friendly products in supermarkets, and thus believing shopping for eco-friendly groceries is easier than compared with any other industry.

When discussing the eco-friendly product, people expectations were associated with different product attributes, such as packaging, recyclability, quality and performance. An eco-friendly product is generally expected to have minimal packaging, and in the case where the product offers the possibility of recyclability, a higher value to the product could be attributed. In terms of quality, no defined answer has been identified. However, some

people expect higher quality for eco-friendly products, in a way to be able to justify higher prices and give credit to an eco-friendly production process. Gleim, Smith, Andrews and Cronim (2013) mentioned that consumers may tend to associate such products with higher expectations, in comparison with non-eco-friendly products and the survey and focus group particularly, revealed this statement to be valid.

The focus group also revealed that there can be certain eco-friendly products that are immediately perceived as of low performance. Therefore, there are eco-friendly products that are not compelling nor efficient to the eyes of certain people. As Gleim et al. (2013) quoted, consumers that recognise a specific eco-friendly product as low quality, being able to regain their trust is difficult, implying that changing their mind regarding an eco-friendly product perceived as low quality and performance will be complicated.

Moreover, several characteristics that help people identify eco-friendly products were determined. As already mentioned, minimal packaging and recyclability can be ways to distinguish eco from non-eco-friendly products. Moreover, green packaging and labelling have been demonstrated to be the most significant characteristics people tend to look when searching for eco-friendly products. Furthermore, some people need to check product information, such as the country of production and materials used, before being sure a product is eco-friendly, demonstrating the importance of product information on eco-friendly products.

The literature often described education and knowledge as a determinant in influencing purchasing behaviour (Laroche, 2001; Hines, 1987; Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002; Thiruchanuru and Abhavana, 2018). The survey and focus group enabled to test the veracity of this statement. As a matter of fact, people with a higher level of education were more prone to adopt an eco-friendlier consumption. Focus group participants, often mentioned education as a mean that enabled them to obtain greater environmental knowledge and consequently help them to adapt to an eco-friendlier consumption. Although education can influence people's sensitivity towards environmental issues, education and knowledge are not considered factors that automatically influence eco-friendly behaviour, since being aware of environmental issues does not automatically translate into pro-environmental behaviour (Hines, 1987; Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002).

Another assumption made by the literature indicates that women are considered to be more emotionally engaged regarding environmental issues and thus are more likely to follow an eco-friendly consumption (Thiruchanuru and Abhavana, 2018). This claim has not been proved to be accurate, since a correlation between gender and eco-friendly consumption resulted negative.

Although Nguyen et al. (2019), identified income has a factor influencing eco-friendly consumption intention, the survey and focus group analysis enabled to disprove this statement. The correlation between the income levels, considering the employment status of respondents, and eco-friendly consumption resulted negative. Students did not appear to be less willing to pay more for an eco-friendly product than those with employment.

Finally, green marketing practices aiming at promoting eco-friendly products resulted inexistent or to be somewhat discrete in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. Although green marketing does not automatically ensure eco-friendly consumption, green marketing can still encourage some people to give eco-friendly consumption a try. Green marketing has been determined as a powerful and effective method to increase environmental awareness and educate people about eco-friendly product offerings, and, for some, this awareness has been demonstrated to be sufficient to make them change old consumption habits.

5.2 Bias and assumptions

When it comes to focus groups, bias is complicated to be avoided, since participants tend to influence one another. The number of participants has been limited to 6 people in a manner to keep the discussion clear and avoid confusion. Despite this, the influence variable is still a factor that needs to be considered when discussing focus groups.

Moreover, the research does not target a specific age range or generation, however, the focus group included mainly millennials. Additionally, considering the limited number of participants, the results should not be considered contemplative enough to reach a defined conclusion that represents the enigmatic eco-friendly consumer.

The survey presents a design of the questions that might bias respondents' answers. Direct questions such as asking people if they acknowledge having noticed inconsistencies between the way they would like to act towards the environment and their actual behaviour have been demanded. This kind of questions is more likely to have an influence on the answers. To be able to reduce bias, direct questions could have been substituted by different behavioural questions, that once analysed would have provided less influenced answers.

To prevent bias from altering research findings, further assumptions have been included in the literature review. To validate the research findings, concepts treated in the literature have been included in the survey and focus group analysis.

5.3 Recommendations

This section aims at providing recommendations to organisations selling eco-friendly products and therefore reducing the intention-behaviour gap for eco-friendly products, by encouraging the purchase of such products. In particular, green marketing has been found to be effective in raising environmental awareness and educating people regarding eco-friendliness. Surprisingly, in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, green marketing practices are not prevalent and consequently hard to recall. Businesses selling eco-friendly products should focus on their green marketing strategy and implement a green marketing mix that encourages the purchase of their eco-friendly products.

5.3.1 Generic green marketing mix

Product

There are consumers willing to spend more for eco-friendly products and that expect greater quality from such products. In order to increase quality perception, eco-friendly products should include eco-friendly information on the packaging, in a way to help consumers recognise that their actions can have a positive environmental impact. In addition to including eco-friendly information, also highlighting other products' features can be beneficial to increase the perception of a higher quality of the products and greater performance.

Moreover, minimal and recyclable packaging are elements that could help consumers value the eco-friendly product more highly. Other attributes that can have a significant influence on recognising eco-friendly products include labels and green packaging. Certified labels are considered an important characteristic when people are in search of eco-friendly products. However, this does not seem the case for the eco-friendly apparel industry, since no specific and recognised labels are used, leaving the eco-friendly consumer disoriented. Moreover, green or even traces of green in packaging, can be another factor hinting at eco-friendliness. Nevertheless, green packaging should be used carefully, since people are aware of greenwashing practices more than what some brands might believe. Hence, companies should be careful of maintaining people's trust,

because once lost, their trust is hard to gain back, and consumers will start associating negative thoughts to the brand.

Price

As mentioned, there are consumers willing to spend more for eco-friendly products. However, some consumers fail to follow eco-friendlier consumption due to a perception of higher prices for eco-friendly products. For this reason, companies offering eco-friendly products should adopt a competitive price when possible. Otherwise, firms can justify the price of their eco-friendly products by highlighting products' features as well as adding a salesperson that advocates products advantages in store, explaining the relation between price and usage for eco-friendly offerings. These tactics could help consumers understand that in the long-run, eco-friendly products can actually become inexpensive.

Place

Another reason why people fail to follow an eco-friendly consumption is due to the lack of precise locations where eco-friendly products can be purchased. Therefore, having specific sections where eco-friendly options can be purchased is essential. The focus group revealed that shopping for eco-friendly food and cleaning products is easier when compared to the fashion industry. For this reason, for any industry type offering eco-friendly goods, having a precise location created especially for eco-friendly options can be decisive.

Promotion

Certain consumers, before starting an eco-friendly consumption, need to be encouraged to do so. While for those that already follow an eco-friendlier consumption, it is important to help them to not fall into old purchasing habits. Hence, the way eco-friendly products are being promoted can be crucial in determining eco-friendly consumption.

Companies selling eco-friendly products could use cues that help people to remind to engage in eco-friendly behaviour and use feedbacks to let consumers know how they are having little impact on the environment considering their eco-friendly purchase.

Salespersons could be appointed in the point of sale, to provide live and immediate feedbacks and guide people through the different eco-friendly options.

Incentives could be a more beneficial approach, in a way to involve a broader audience in the purchase of eco-friendly products. Not only can incentives guide people environmentally conscious of behaving in an eco-friendlier manner. Incentives can also encourage people that do not have environmental concerns in the first place, to purchase eco-friendly products and as a consequence, adopt a pro-environmental behaviour.

Furthermore, availability has been identified as one of the major factors affecting eco-friendly consumption. For this reason, it would be opportune to increase the availability of eco-friendly products in a way to raise awareness concerning eco-friendly offerings and consequently encourage people to purchase them. Moreover, convenience has been recognised as another factor influencing eco-friendly consumption. Since nowadays, people tend to opt for less time consuming and effortless options, firms can promote their eco-friendly products more heavily online. Investing in green online marketing could make a business increase sales and encourage more people to consider eco-friendly products.

People

People represent the most influential element of any service or experience (Friesner, 2014). People have an essential role in service delivery, they are in charge of delivering and maintain transactional marketing, making them have a significant role in the customer relationship (Friesner, 2014). Hence, the sales advocates advertising eco-friendly offerings in-store can represent a crucial element in developing and strengthening customer relationship. Advocates promoting eco-friendly products can help improve a company's reputation and therefore helping consumers to discover the eco-friendly world. Through the advocates' knowledge and expertise, they can guide consumers towards eco-friendlier consumption. Therefore, the attitudes and charisma of the staff are decisive in building long-lasting relationships and ensuring impeccable service.

Furthermore, when discussing the people involved in the marketing mix, potential consumers and segments of people more inclined to purchase eco-friendly products need to be identified. This research enabled to discover that in the French-speaking side of Switzerland, everyone is potentially liable to adopt an eco-friendlier consumption. Concerning firms selling eco-friendly products, the customer to pursue and create value

for can include: environmentally concerned consumers with a great individual sense of responsibility, vegans and vegetarians, moms that want to improve theirs as well as their children's lifestyle, workers, students and finally men and women.

Anyone open and vulnerable independently from their gender, age, educational level and employment status can be a potential eco-friendly consumer. Moreover, as White et al. (2019) mentioned some men associate eco-friendliness with femininity, preventing them from trying eco-friendly options. For this reason, firms selling eco-friendly products should take into account all the possible eco-friendly consumers, in a way to not exclude potential consumers from adopting an eco-friendly consumption.

In conclusion, green marketing practices are techniques that can help increase people's awareness regarding environmental issues and educate people concerning eco-friendly offerings. For some consumers, this awareness might be sufficient to follow eco-friendly consumption. Furthermore, other tactics such as having product promoters in-store and incentives could encourage a larger audience to look for eco-friendly options in the different industries. As mentioned, the eco-friendly consumer does not represent a specific and exclusive target, and for this reason, companies selling eco-friendly products should not exclude potential eco-friendly consumers when developing new marketing strategies to promote their eco-friendly offerings.

Figure 16 – Generic green marketing mix

Product	Price	Place	Promotion	People
Include packaging information Green packaging Include certified labels	Highlight products' features Appoint in-store salespersons that advocate products advantages	Create in-store eco-friendly sections Make clear where eco-friendly products can be found	Use cues to help people to remind to engage in eco-friendly behaviour Use feedbacks to motivate people on their progress and positive environmental impacts Use incentives to attract a larger audience	Who can be an eco-friendly consumer? Everyone

5.3.2 Food industry green marketing mix

Product

As mentioned in the generic strategy, not all consumers are willing to spend more for eco-friendly goods. For this reason, increasing the quality perception of such products is fundamental for eco-friendly companies. Firms selling eco-friendly products can improve the quality perception of their offerings by including eco-friendly packaging information. Not only eco-friendly information should be included, but also highlighting other products' features can be advantageous in augmenting quality and performance perception of eco-friendly products. For instance, packaging information could include environmental benefits of purchasing such product and information on safety, product effectiveness and enhanced performance.

Furthermore, this research revealed that people tend to favour products that are found quickly and effortlessly. Therefore, attributes such as green packaging as well as recognised labels such as *Bio Suisse* and *IP-Suisse*, have been shown to be significant characteristics that enable consumers to find eco-friendly products immediately. Companies must focus on their product packaging extensively since packaging can be a great determinant of eco-friendliness for consumers. In fact, as mentioned in the focus group, people tend to be sceptical when there are certified eco-friendly products wrapped in plastic. In a way to have consumer trust, it is essential to focus on the product as a whole, thus having recyclable packaging can be another beneficial tactic to increase consumers' value of eco-friendly products.

Price

Since there are consumers not willing to pay a premium price when it comes to eco-friendly products, firms should make their price for eco-friendly options competitive. If adopting competitive prices is not attainable, by highlighting product information and other possible products' features, the price increase for such products, will be more justified to the consumers' eyes. Having in-store salespersons that promote eco-friendly products and their relative advantages can be valuable in educating and guiding consumers through the different eco-friendly food choices. However, having in-store salespersons can be too costly for eco-friendly food companies. For this reason, other solutions can be found through the promotion strategy, in a way to enable firms to justify the price increase of eco-friendly products more efficiently and less costly.

Place

The online focus group revealed that when people look for eco-friendly products in supermarkets, no specific sections selling eco-friendly options exist. But instead, consumers have to go to the specific section looking for the product they are searching for and afterwards, they will find out if an eco-friendly alternative is available. This explanation makes it evident that the research of eco-friendly products is not easy as typically consumers want the product research to be. The fact that the research for eco-friendly food alternatives is complicated can more than often prevent consumers from purchasing such products. Hence, creating specific eco-friendly food sections in the store is essential for firms selling eco-friendly foods, since these sections would increase the chances of purchase of their eco-friendly options.

Promotion

As specified in the generic marketing mix, cues, feedbacks, and incentives can be a great way to motivate and remind people to continue following their pro-environmental behaviour and eco-friendly consumption habits. For example, by placing *prompts/billboards* in the store, suggesting people to purchase eco-friendly products can be an excellent strategy to remind people to follow their initial intentions as well as educating consumers on the eco-friendly alternatives available.

Moreover, *feedbacks* could be provided directly in the packaging such as demonstrating the benefits of purchasing determined eco-friendly products. For consumers owning a supermarket loyalty card, points for each eco-friendly purchase could be collected, and at the end of each month, a customer ranking could be made. Comparing individual eco-friendly purchases with that of others can encourage consumers to purchase eco-friendly options more often.

Concerning *incentives*, similarly, as the current Coop Bonus Catalogue, supermarkets could create a similar concept for eco-friendly products only. Companies selling eco-friendly products could enable consumers to collect points for every eco-friendly purchase. With those bonus points collected, consumers can benefit from discounts of other eco-friendly products. Incentives can be a great way to encourage not only those consumers interested in an eco-friendly consumption, but also those consumers that were not considering eco-friendly alternatives, to start taking into account eco-friendly food consumption.

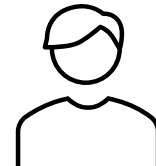
People

The general green marketing strategy mentioned that everyone can be a potential eco-friendly consumer. Meaning that independently from people's age, gender, occupation, educational level and income anyone was considered liable to start and follow an eco-friendly consumption. However, it is fundamental to take into account a more specific segment, also defined as a niche market, for the eco-friendly consumer in the food industry, in a manner to be able to develop strategies more efficiently, by focusing on a specific targeted market.

Customer Profile

Demographic characteristics

- Age: 18-26 years old
- Gender: Male/Female
- Location: French-speaking part of Switzerland
- Occupation: Student
- Relationship status: Has several friends or lives with several housemates
- Income: Low-income



Psychographic characteristics

- Personality: Open minded, curious, seeking opportunities to save money
- Interests: Enjoys interacting with peers and cares about conserving nature
- Lifestyle: Want to save money in the long run
- Attitudes and values: Has pro-environmental attitudes, sense of individual responsibility and is motivated to include ethical values into their lifestyle

Concerning the food industry, firms offering eco-friendly products can focus their efforts on consumers that are part of the early generation Z and late generation Y, so people aged between 18 to 26 years old. The reason why this age range has been selected is that students have demonstrated to be slightly more willing to purchase eco-friendly products compared with those with employment. Moreover, people in their early 20s are individuals that are trying to understand themselves better and find values that they want

to embrace. Therefore, students are more likely to be responsive to green marketing practices, for instance, aiming to increase awareness of environmental issues. Students can be a great target since their income is not typically substantial. Meaning that by educating the consumer on the correlation between price and product usage, students can be more likely than any other age range to see this correlation as an opportunity to save money in the long run.

Furthermore, no differences were observed between men and women regarding their eco-friendly consumption in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. For this reason, both genders can be considered when developing green promotions since there is not one gender more likely than the other to purchase eco-friendly food alternatives. By considering students of both genders, eco-friendly food companies can expect and encourage positive word-of-mouth from this type of consumer that typically has an active social life. As a matter of fact, students that are following an eco-friendlier consumption can recommend this consumption pattern to other peers such as friends, housemates or even family members.

Concerning some psychographic characteristics, the eco-friendly food consumer is supposed to be someone curious and open-minded, always looking for new opportunities to save money. Moreover, he/she also focus on the importance of the conservation of nature as well as the environment. The eco-friendly food consumer is considered to have a great sense of individual responsibility and therefore, is motivated to include eco-friendliness in his/her current consumption habits.

5.3.3 Clothing industry green marketing mix

Product

The online focus group revealed that shopping in an eco-friendlier manner resulted in being more complicated when referring to the apparel industry. In the French-speaking part of Switzerland, the focus group participants mentioned having a lack of trust towards the recent eco-friendly trend in fast fashion stores. As a matter of fact, participants expressed their distrust towards eco-friendly efforts made by notorious businesses such as Zara, Nike, Coca Cola and so on. In particular, H&M's eco-conscious line has raised many doubts to consumers, allowing to understand that people are aware of greenwashing practices put into place by multiple brands. Stopping greenwashing techniques is essential, since also when the efforts of an eco-friendly company are

genuine, doubts about companies' intentions can rise, making consumers lose trust in any eco-friendly initiative.

The focus group participants mentioned that one of the principal reasons for feeling disbelief towards H&M, for example, was because the company uses its own label created by the latter and therefore not using known labels. Hence, the companies selling eco-friendly clothing articles must include in their tags labels that consumers know and trust. By adding certified and recognised labels on their packaging such as the *Oeko-Tex 1000*, it is more likely that the trust towards fashion brands selling recognised eco-friendly labels will increase. Furthermore, using green clothing tags can be an effective and immediate manner to help consumers recognise eco-friendly apparel alternatives.

Price

The eco-friendly fashion industry is believed to be more expensive when compared with other eco-friendly industries, as the online focus group enabled to discover. Therefore, more than ever, eco-friendly fashion firms need to be able to justify their higher prices. Thus, if feasible, to companies selling eco-friendly apparel alternatives is recommended to adopt competitive prices as much as possible. Otherwise, similarly as the eco-friendly food industry, eco-friendly fashion companies should justify their prices and demonstrated the increase in quality of their eco-friendly alternatives, by including comprehensive information in the clothing's tag such as country of production, materials used and environmental conservation conditions.

Place

In the French-speaking part of Switzerland, there are already eco-friendly options offered in fast-fashion stores. However, consumers are not always aware of the availability of eco-friendly alternatives, since eco-friendly advertising in this geographic location is low to even being inexistent. Therefore, eco-friendly clothing firms must help the consumer to distinguish eco from non-eco clothing articles effortlessly. By using green tags and green billboards in the eco-friendly section, consumers will find eco-friendly clothing options more easily and therefore, be able to encourage the purchase of such products more effectively.

Promotion

Eco-friendly clothing companies could develop seasonal green marketing campaigns and include in-store billboards hinting at eco-friendly alternatives. Moreover, firms can use these green marketing practices in a way to trigger either positive or negative emotions and increase the chances of spreading eco-friendly product awareness as well as increasing the willingness of consumers taking into consideration an eco-friendlier consumption.

Furthermore, when a new eco-friendly line is introduced, all consumers, independently from their current eco or non-eco-friendly purchase, at the check-out can be asked if they wish to be added to the business' contact list and loyalty program. If consumers agree, they will then receive monthly newsletter and emails promoting their products and more in particular, their latest eco-friendly offers. These *cues* will increase the awareness of eco-friendly product availability and consecutively increase the chances of the purchase of such products.

Once a consumer is part of the loyalty program, after each eco-friendly purchase, he/she could immediately receive standardised eco-friendly product information, product features as well as their contribution to the planet thanks to the specific purchase made. This tactic can once again educate people on environmental issues and demonstrate how these environmental problems could be reduced through their actions to finally motivate consumers to make positive changes in their current consumption.

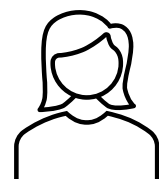
People

The following section takes into consideration the potential targeted eco-friendly consumer in the eco-friendly clothing industry, taking into consideration the demographic and psychographic characteristics of the consumer.

Customer Profile

Demographic characteristics

- Ages: 45-54 years old
- Gender: Female
- Location: French-speaking part of Switzerland
- Occupation: Employed
- Income: Mid-high income



Psychographic characteristics

- Personality: Altruist, empathetic and open-minded
- Interests: Looks for a change and is interested in ethical trends
- Lifestyle: Want to improve her quality of life
- Attitudes and values: Looks for trends and a sense of empowerment coming from her positive life choices

Clothing companies offering eco-friendly alternatives can target consumers that are more financially stable than those consumers targeted in the food industry. As the focus group revealed, the eco-friendly apparel options tend to be considerably more expensive than fast fashion articles, discouraging younger generations from considering eco-friendlier alternatives in this industry. Hence, consumers with a mid to high income are more likely to be willing to consider purchasing eco-friendly clothing.

Ideally, eco-friendly firms could focus their attention on women, since females that tend to buy more clothes over time. This can be observed by simply looking at the female clothing offerings that fast fashion stores offer compared to the fewer articles promoted for men. So, if companies focus their efforts at targeting women principally, their attempts at promoting eco-friendly products can generate higher compensations, by focusing on a larger market.

The eco-friendly consumer in the clothing industry is considered as someone that is considerably altruistic and empathetic and thanks to their knowledge and experiences, they are aware of the impact that their consumption habits have on the environment. She is open to try something new and is not afraid to make choices that are different from the crowd. On the contrary, she embraces eco-friendliness and supports pro-environmental behaviour. Moreover, she is essentially looking to improve the quality of her life and understands that by choosing eco-friendly clothing alternatives, this increase in lifestyle quality is easily achievable.

6. Conclusion

Due to the complexity of understanding human nature, the literature review section can be considered an essential component of this dissertation, providing fundamental information and insights concerning the intention-behaviour gap and the factors having an influence on this phenomenon by integrating knowledge from the psychology as well as marketing field.

Although existing researches have allowed this dissertation to gain most of the knowledge on the subject, the data collection and respective analysis enabled to test the truthfulness, reliability and validity of various assumptions made by the literature. In particular, the data collected allowed to examine assumptions made by the literature concerning eco-friendly consumption in the Swiss territory, more specifically, the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

By taking into consideration a smaller market compared to the existing literature, some of these research findings and results were not considered to be equivalent. However, several suppositions made by the literature resulted in being affirmative concerning eco-friendly consumers living in the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

The research findings revealed that price and availability were the two principal determinants affecting and thus explaining the difference between intentions and behaviour in eco-friendly consumption. Price for eco-friendly products is by most consumers considered to be higher in comparison with non-eco-friendly products, therefore discouraging people from purchasing such products. Hence, companies selling eco-friendly products could encourage the purchase of their eco-friendly options by adding comprehensive information on their products. Making consumers understand the possibility of long-term savings could also be beneficial, in a way to educate people on the correlation between price and product usage.

Moreover, the unavailability of eco-friendly options is considered to influence eco-friendly consumption significantly. Eco-friendly products are not generally available in large quantities in the different industries, and sometimes eco-friendly options are not available at all in the market. The unavailability of eco-friendly products can be a tremendous problem for organisations selling such products, since people tend to favour convenience during the purchase, resulting in the acquisition non-environmentally safe products that are immediately available and effortlessly found. Thus, increasing product availability can be a great mean to encourage eco-friendly consumption by reminding consumers to purchase such products.

Another relevant factor influencing eco-friendly consumption in the French-speaking part of Switzerland is peer pressure. Many people feel adapting an eco-friendly consumption is challenging when confronted with certain social situations. For this reason, companies selling eco-friendly goods should develop eco-friendly products that do not require difficult and laborious usage, in a way to encourage such products' usage in various situations. Furthermore, environmental knowledge has been determined as one factor that can affect eco-friendly consumption. Although environmental knowledge is not a determinant ensuring the adaptation of an eco-friendlier consumption, environmental knowledge is considered to be a great factor in sensitising people over environmental issues. Therefore, increasing the possibility of consumers following an eco-friendlier consumption, consequently helping to close the gap between intentions and behaviour in eco-friendly consumption.

Green marketing, in particular, can be advantageous for businesses in educating people concerning environmental problems as well as promoting eco-friendly products. Remarkably, green marketing practices are not ordinary in the French-part of Switzerland and consecutively eco-friendly promotions are not recalled, and for many, eco-friendly offerings still remain undiscovered. Companies could promote their eco-friendly products more heavily in a way to educate consumers concerning the availability of specific eco-friendly products and therefore encourage an eco-friendlier consumption. If increasingly more businesses included green marketing strategies, advertising eco-friendliness, eco-friendliness would potentially become a more discussed topic and thus, considered by more individuals.

Furthermore, companies can use green advertising as a way to trigger different emotions in consumers. These emotions can be either positive, for instance, making people understand that their actions can have a positive impact on the environment, or negative, for example, by educating people on the environmental issues and how they are contributing to these problems through their purchasing decisions. After triggering emotions, companies could more efficiently see the reactions desired from consumers.

As already discussed, convenience is sought by a large number of people. For this reason, the way eco-friendly products are promoted to the public is essential. To enable consumers to instantaneously and effortlessly recognise and find eco-friendly products, several elements have been found to be effective. The most significant attributes that people tend to look at when purchasing eco-friendly products are green packaging and the presence of labels.

However, brands selling eco-friendly products should be careful to not engage in greenwashing practices. Certain brands have been found to take advantage of the fact that no clear definition is assigned to the term eco-friendliness. Therefore, due to the ambiguity of this term, some companies might feel entitled to greenwash. Greenwashing practices should be avoided, since they can harm the credibility of any eco-friendly initiative, resulting in distrust towards eco-friendly offerings. Moreover, businesses that follow greenwashing practices can put their corporate image at risk. In fact, once the trust between a brand and its customer is damaged, people will tend to associate negative thoughts to the brand. For this purpose, green marketing could also be related to remediating a bad corporate reputation, by ensuring and communicating the environmental commitments of eco-friendly firms to the public.

Additionally, this research revealed that some people associate eco-friendly products with increased product quality and that for some consumers there can be the perception that such products might provide inferior performance, in comparison with non-eco-friendly products. Hence, providing comprehensive product information as well as including testimonials can be beneficial in augmenting the way people perceive quality and performance for eco-friendly goods.

Regardless of what the literature has previously found and mentioned, this research found a negative correlation between environmental engagement and gender. No distinctions were observed between males and females regarding their environmental concerns, and therefore no gender has been found to be more prone to follow an eco-friendlier consumption than the other. Moreover, also a correlation between income level and likelihood to follow an eco-friendly consumption resulted negative. The research revealed that higher levels of income do not automatically translate into eco-friendly consumption. On the contrary, students in the French-speaking part of Switzerland have demonstrated to be slightly more willing to purchase eco-friendly products than those with employment.

Finally, this research provides recommendations based on existing literature as well as on the data gathered in the French-speaking side of Switzerland. Moreover, it is fundamental to recognise the possibility of the presence of bias in the data collection and thus to consider that the results may not apply to all types of consumers. This research provides general answers based on the most common results provided by people living in this geographical area.

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Appendix 1: Survey questions

Do you consider your effect on the environment as a consumer, before purchasing a new product? *

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Never ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Always

Do you believe the environmental issues caused by the mass production of goods, needs to be addressed in today's society? *

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

If yes, by whom do you think these environmental issues should be resolved?

- ☐ Swiss Government
- ☐ Producers of goods
- ☐ Customers
- ☐ NGOs
- ☐ Other...

What are the criteria you tend to look at when purchasing a new product? *

- ☐ Availability
- ☐ Local production
- ☐ Convenience
- ☐ Recyclability
- ☐ Price
- ☐ Sustainable certifications
- ☐ Environment friendliness
- ☐ Durability
- ☐ Waste minimisation
- ☐ Other...

Are you aware of products that have a negative impact on the environment? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, do you still purchase them regardless of their impact?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

If yes again: please with a few words, explain why do you decide to buy those products.

Short-answer text

In which industry do your choices tend to be more environmentally conscious? *

- ☐ Food
- ☐ Fashion
- ☐ Beauty products
- ☐ Cleaning products
- ☐ Housing (e.g. solar panels, water powered clock, biodegradable pots, reusable napkins and bottles)
- ☐ Other...

Where do you shop more often for clothes? *

- ☐ In fast fashion stores (e.g. H&M, Zara)
- ☐ In second-hand/thrift shops
- ☐ In ethically produced clothing brands (e.g. H&M Conscious, eco-fashion boutiques)
- ☐ Other...

Where do you usually buy your food? *

- ☐ Traditional retailers (e.g Migros, Coop, Lidl)
- ☐ Traditional retailers sections offering certificated products (e.g FSC, BRC)
- ☐ Specialised stores (e.g organic stores, package-free stores)
- ☐ Farmers market
- ☐ Other...

Do you see differences between the way you would like to act towards the environment based on your purchasing choices, and your current behaviour? *

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

In your opinion what could make you act in a more desired manner or rather become more invested in the purchase of eco-friendly products? *

- ☐ Cheaper price
- ☐ Greater choice
- ☐ Green labeling
- ☐ Environmental knowledge
- ☐ Environmental concern
- ☐ Green advertising
- ☐ Nothing
- ☐ Other...

If these options above were effective, do you believe your purchasing habits would change and become more environmentally conscious? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

What is your gender? *

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to say

What is your age? *

- ☐ 16-20 years old
- ☐ 21-35 years old
- ☐ 36-50 years old
- ☐ 51-65 years old
- ☐ More than 65 years old

What is your educational level? *

- ☐ Obligatory education
- ☐ Higher education
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Postgraduate school (master's degree and Phd)

Please specify your current employment status *

- ☐ Student
- ☐ Employed
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ Unemployed

Appendix 2: Focus group organisation and questions

Respondent profile

The focus group will consist of 6 people equally divided between females and males. The participants are between 24 and 32 years old, including students and employed workers. All the respondents of the focus group are residents in the French-speaking part of Switzerland and are selected by the moderator Stefanie Teixeira.

Focus group procedure

The Focus group will be held online, with an estimated duration of 90 minutes. The focus group will start with a brief presentation of the moderator and what the general purpose of the meeting is. The purpose of the focus group will not mention that the aim is to identify whether an intention-behaviour gap for eco-friendly products exists. Instead, it will be communicated that the objective is to gather information regarding the general opinion surrounding eco-friendly products and their buying decisions. Subsequently, the respondents will be asked if they are comfortable with the focus group being registered. The goal will be to make everyone feel comfortable in order to encourage an open and honest discussion. Furthermore, the moderator will specify that there are no right or wrong answers since the responses are based on personal opinions. Finally, before starting to dig deeper into the questions, the participants will be reminded that their answers will be used for research purposes and thus, will remain confidential as well as their names will remain anonymous.

Focus group questions

About eco-friendliness

- What does eco-friendliness mean to you?
- Do you consider yourself an eco-friendly consumer?
 - What pushed you to (not) adapt an eco-friendly consumption?

About eco-friendly products

- When was the last time you purchased an eco-friendly product?
- When purchasing an eco-friendly product what would you expect from it in terms of price, quality, packaging, and other attributes?

Environmental knowledge

- Do you think there are negative consequences in environmental terms, to your consumption choices?
- Have you already tried to change some of these habits in a way to have a lower impact on the environment? Or for you is not a concern?

Labelling

- How do you distinguish eco and non-eco-friendly products?
- Do you consider eco-friendly labelling truthful?

Green marketing

- Do you pay attention to green marketing strategies put into place by eco-friendly companies (e.g. advertising, price tags, posters and promotions, locations settings)?
- Do you think green marketing can affect your purchase decisions? If so, how?

Focus group questionnaire template

Question: x?

Notes:

Remarkable and common answers: