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Attitude-behaviour Gap in Green Consumerism among Men: An Exploratory Analysis

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the
Royal Docks School of Business and Law, University of East London for the
degree of
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Attitude-behaviour Gap in Green Consumerism among Men: An Exploratory Analysis

Abstract

Purpose – Firstly, the purpose of the paper is to investigate adult male consumer's attitude towards the environment and green products. Furthermore, it aims to explore the relationship between a positive environmental attitude and green purchase behaviour. Ultimately it aims to explore the factors affecting the attitude-behaviour gap in green consumerism in the context of adult male consumers.

Design/Methodology/Approach – The research design is exploratory in nature and an interpretivist approach was followed. The primary data and qualitative approach of the study has enabled the researcher to get insight into participant's attitudes and behaviours. A total of eleven in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted to successfully answer the research questions guiding the research.

Findings – Findings show that adult male consumers show a positive attitude towards the environment and green products. Notwithstanding, the study showed that participants did not purchase green products. Factors found to impede green purchase behaviour were: lack of trust, cynicism, consumer effectiveness, price, availability/accessibility, information, time, convenience, and habit/familiarity.

Research Implications – The study has found that there is an attitude-behaviour gap in green consumerism amongst male consumers and further identified key barriers, offering a plausible explanation as to what factors influence the inconsistency.

Practical Implications – The results have practical implications for policy makers, executives and marketing professionals to frame and implement strategies to promote and encourage green purchasing among adult male consumers.

Originality/Value – The study addresses a gap in the literature. While the attitude-behaviour gap has been studied previously, this study is context-specific as it focusses on adult male consumers and contemporary.

Keywords – consumer behaviour, green consumerism, purchase behaviour, male consumers, attitude-behaviour gap, environmental attitude.

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1 – Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Over-consumption has been declared as one of the reasons for environmental deterioration (Chen and Chai, 2010). Literature is pointing towards an increased positive environmental attitude however this is not necessarily translated into green purchase behaviour. This is referred to as the attitude-behaviour gap (Vermeir and Verbeke (2006). The researcher aims to explore this attitude-behaviour gap in the context of adult male consumers as this has been found to be a gap in existing literature. This chapter is going to give the reader an overview on the background of the study, the problem statement, research objectives and questions, methodology used, significance of the study and finally, the limitations of the research.

1.2 Background of Study

“From space, we see a small and fragile ball dominated not by human activity and edifice but by a pattern of clouds, oceans, greenery and soils. Humanity’s inability to fit its activities into that pattern is changing planetary systems, fundamentally. Many such changes are accompanied by life-threatening hazards. This new reality, from which there is no escape, must be recognized – and managed” (Brundtland Commission, 1987).

The modern concept of sustainable development was first introduced by The Brundtland Commission in its report ‘Our Common Future’ in 1987 (Brundtland Commission, 1987). This report clearly identified the unsustainable nature of existing patterns of development, production and consumption (Brundtland Commission, 1987). According to the report, repercussions include environmental trends that threaten to radically alter the planet and ultimately threaten the lives of species upon it. More precisely, repercussions include global warming, environmental pollution and decline in flora and fauna (Chen and Chai, 2010; Joshi and Rahman, 2015). Evidence from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) points towards an increase in Carbon Dioxide (Figure 1), increased global

temperature (Figure 2), an acceleration of ice mass loss (Figure 3) and a rise of the sea level (Figure 4). This has a severe negative effect on the environment (Chen and Chai, 2010). The extent of the effect over time can be seen in the Graphs below.

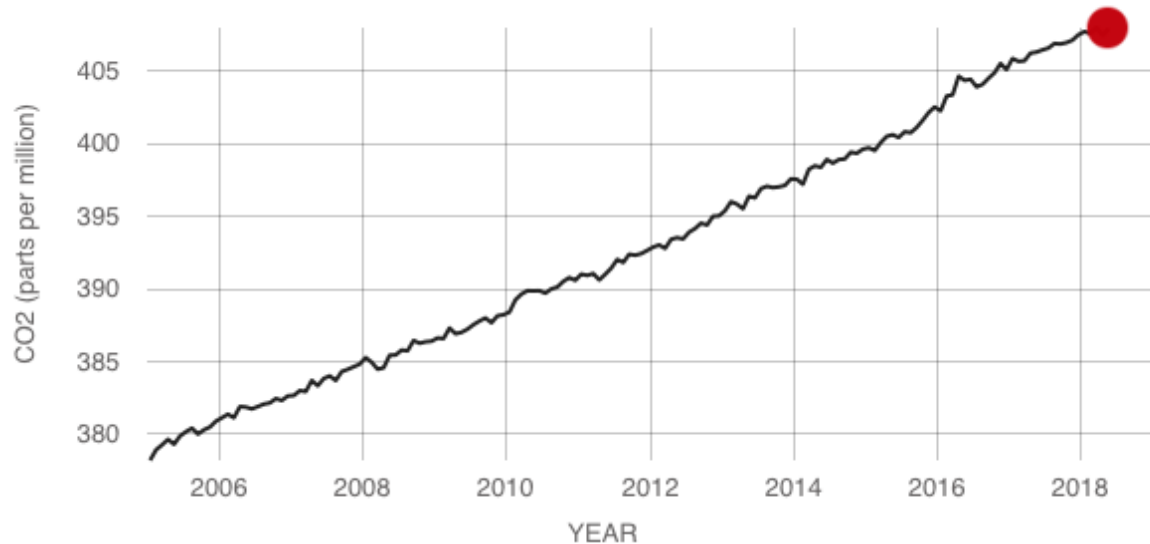


Figure 1: Atmospheric CO2 levels measured in Hawaii (NASA, 2018a)

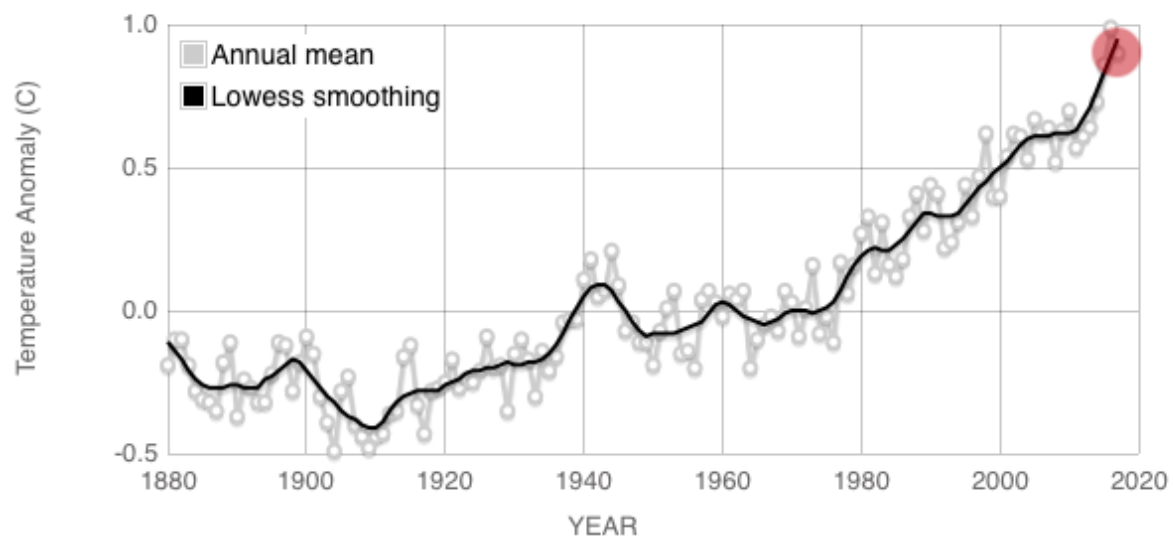


Figure 2: Global Land-Ocean Temperature Index (NASA, 2018b)

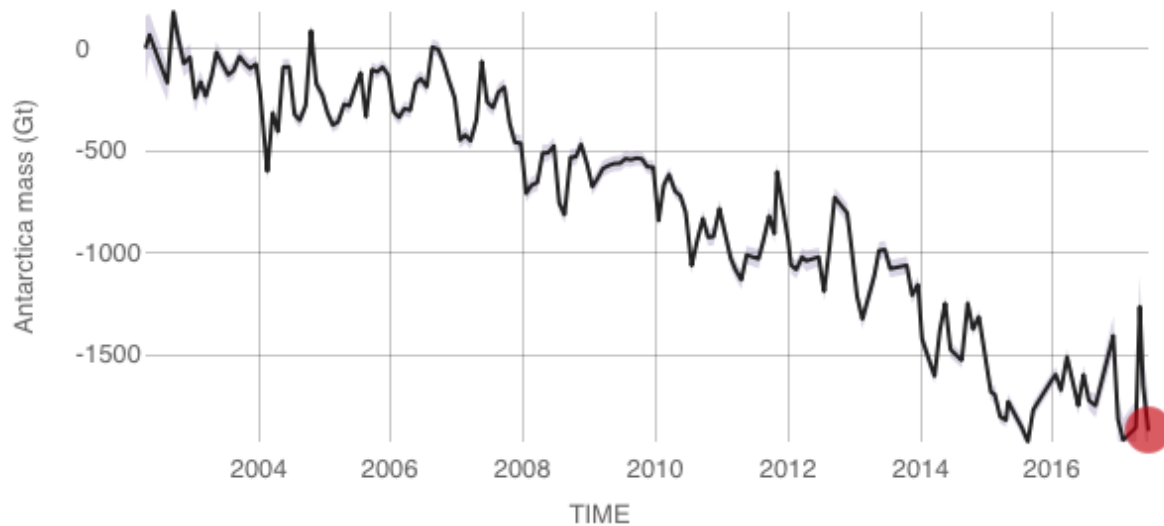


Figure 3: Antarctica Mass (NASA, 2018c)

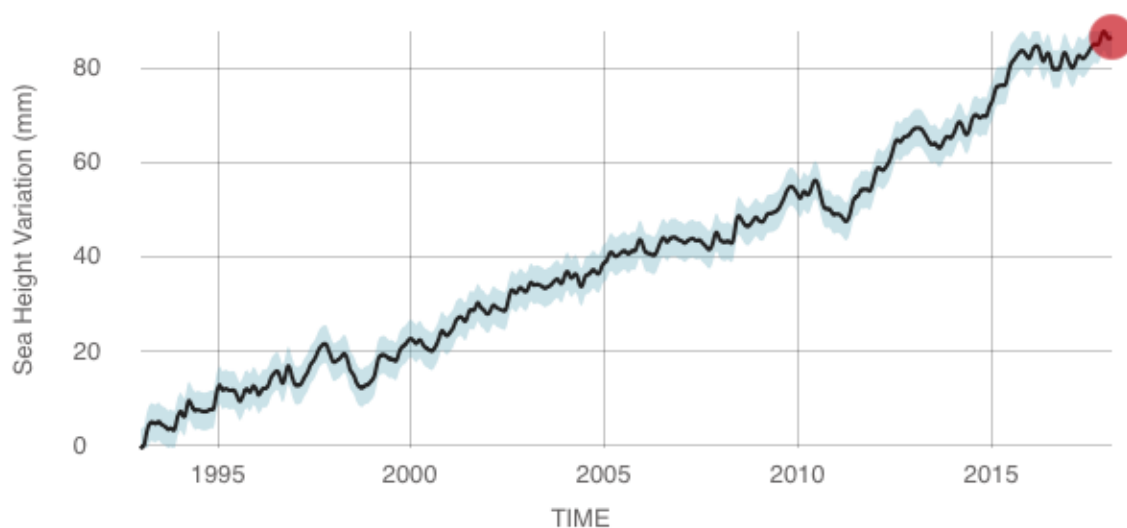


Figure 4: Satellite sea level observations (NASA, 2018d)

Chen and Chai (2010) argue that one of the main reasons for environmental deterioration is the over-consumption of goods and services across the globe. Research on the environmental impacts of individual household consumption which has been conducted by Tukker et al. (2006) concluded that 70-80 % of total impacts relate to food and drink consumption, housing and transport. It can be argued that it is inevitable that consumers' lifestyles will need to become more sustainable in order to protect natural resources and the fragile eco-system on our planet (Friends of the Earth, 2009).

The public is however starting to realise that there is a need for sustainable development to minimise the impact of environmental damage. Tanner (1999) argues that while environmental deterioration continues to grow, general awareness around the fact that human consumption is one of the key drivers has increased over the last decades. Furthermore, studies by Arvola et al. (2008), Liu et al. (2012) and Vermeir and Verbeke (2006) point towards an increased environmental concern amongst consumers.

While literature is pointing towards an increased environmental concern amongst consumers, evidence suggests that sales in green, ethical products only represent a small number of the overall consumer market (Bray et al., 2011 and Tung et al., 2012). The phenomenon of such inconsistency between consumers' positive attitude towards sustainability and actual actions is widely referred to as the "attitude-behaviour gap" in the literature (Vermeir and Verbeke, 2006).

1.3 Statement of Problem

The concept of green consumerism refers to 'consumption that simultaneously optimizes the environmental, social and economic consequences of purchase, use and disposition to meet the needs of both current and future generations' (Phipps *et al.*, 2012; Luchs *et al.*, 2011). In other words, the green consumer according to Elkington and Hailes (1988) avoids products endangering health, causing environmental damage, consuming a disproportionate amount of energy and waste and avoids the use of products involving unnecessary use of animal cruelty. According to Srivastava (2007), green products have evolved due to the 'growing concerns about pollution, global warming, diminishing natural reserves and overflowing of waste'.

Previous research (Arvola et al., 2008; Bray et al., 2011; Carrington et al., 2010) in green consumerism has been found to concentrate on investigating key drivers behind the decision-making process when purchasing green products or services. While studies have been conducted on favourable attitudes toward green consumption and behaviour, to date there have been very few studies on the factors hindering consumers to translate a positive attitude towards the environment into behaviour. Maniatis (2016) for instance has written an excellent paper on factors influencing consumer decision-making while choosing green products but failed to address the factors hindering purchasing behaviour.

While there have been previously conducted studies on the attitude-behaviour gap in the context of green consumerism, this phenomenon is far from being exhausted as a research area, due to its contemporary aspect and due to broad findings (Padel and Foster, 2005; Vermeir and Verbeke, 2006; Bray et al., 2010; Tung et al., 2012). Furthermore, previous studies have also been found to have a substantial focus on consumers in a general context, without taking differences in consumers' genders into account. This paper has investigated the attitude-behaviour gap in the context of male consumers as literature has previously been producing conflicting findings on whether there is a correlation between gender and ethical decision making.

On the one hand, authors such as Diamantopoulos *et al.* (2003) and Tsalikis and Oritz-Buonafina (1990) argue that demographics alone are not highly significant in defining the green consumer and that gender does not influence decision making. Furthermore, this is also suggested by authors who argue, that there is no such correlation between gender and ethical decision making (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Bray et al., 2011; O'Fallon and Butterfield, 2005). On the other hand, Sidani *et al.* (2009) and Ameen *et al.* (1996) argue that ethical sensitivity is reported to be greater in female consumers. It has also been suggested by Salazar et al. (2012) that there are significant differences between female and male consumers in green consumerism when it comes to social groups influencing green purchasing behaviour.

The above findings show the complexity underlying decision making in green consumption. Despite several studies addressing the inconsistencies between a positive ecological attitude and actual purchase behaviour, there is a gap in thorough contemporary understanding on the factors impeding green consumption, in particularly among male consumers.

1.4 [Research Objectives](#)

The research aims to explore the factors affecting the attitude-behaviour gap in green consumerism in the context of adult male consumers. The objectives of the study are primarily to:

- A. Examine adult male consumers' attitudes towards the environment and green products
- B. Investigate the relationship between adult male consumers' attitudes towards the environment and green purchase behaviour
- C. Explore the reasons behind the attitude-behaviour gap in green consumerism in the context of adult male consumers

1.5 [Research Questions](#)

- 1. To what extent are male adult consumers concerned with the environment?
- 2. To what extent are male adult consumers aware of green products?
- 3. How does a positive environmental attitude influence male adult consumers' purchasing behaviour?
- 4. What are the key barriers that hinder male adult consumers to purchase green products?

1.6 [Overview of Methodology](#)

The research being conducted for this paper was of exploratory nature as the attitude-behaviour gap in the context of green consumerism is far from being exhausted as it is a relatively new research area (Joshi and Rahman, 2015).

Furthermore, an interpretivist approach has been followed since the study is interested in creating a new, richer understanding of the attitude-behaviour gap in the context of adult male consumers. Additionally, the study is not seeking to create law-like generalisations but rather explore and gain an in-depth understanding (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Research has been conducted through a non-probability sampling strategy, utilising convenience sampling. The sample size consisted of eleven participants who have been randomly selected as the final sample for the research. Furthermore, face-to-face semi structured interviews have been conducted with the participants to gain rich, detailed insights.

1.7 Significance of Study

The study is of high significance as it aims to explore the factors affecting the attitude-behaviour gap in male consumers in the context of green consumerism. Findings will address an important gap in the literature due to the study being contemporary and contextualised. Furthermore, findings will help policy makers and managers to frame and implement strategies to encourage green purchasing which in turn has the potential to benefit the environment in the future.

1.8 Limitations of Study

The study has been successfully completed, however this does not mean that the study itself does not have limitations. While conducting research for this study, the researcher has identified restrictions and deficiencies. Time is an important limitation for this study as the researcher argues that the time frame was not adequate to justify appropriate in-depth exploratory research. Furthermore, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 11 male adult consumers. The sample size may not reflect attitudes and behaviours of the general population. Furthermore, it was limited to male adult consumers living in London. Findings are therefore not necessarily generalizable.

2 - Literature Review

2.1 [Overview](#)

The review of literature aims to give the reader an outline and understanding of previous research on the attitude-behaviour gap in green consumerism and the factors that have been found to influence the gap. The literature review contains five sections: the background on green consumerism and green products (2.2); attitude-behaviour gap (2.3), individual variables affecting the gap (2.4); household, societal and situational variables affecting the gap (2.5) and lastly a summary of the chapter (2.6).

2.2 [Green Consumerism](#)

Green consumerism as a concept refers to ‘consumption that simultaneously optimizes the environmental, social and economic consequences of purchase, use and disposition to meet the needs of both current and future generations’ (Phipps *et al.*, 2012; Luchs *et al.*, 2011). Moreover, according to Elkington and Hailes (1988) the green consumer avoids products causing damage to the environment, endangering health and/or consuming a disproportionate amount of energy and waste. Furthermore, the green consumer avoids the use of products relying on unnecessary use of animal cruelty. Srivastava (2007) states that green products have evolved because of the ‘growing concerns about pollution, global warming, diminishing natural reserves and overflowing of waste’.

As this study is concerned with green products, it is important to gain an understanding about the concept of green products. Green products, contrary to conventional products, contribute to sustainability by protecting and preserving natural resources (Otmann, 1992). Green products are oftentimes also referred to as sustainable, environmentally friendly or ecological products (Otmann, 1992). Furthermore, a green product can be recycled or uses less packaging such as plastic and uses less toxic materials such as pesticides

(Chen and Chai, 2010). Examples of green product characteristics can be seen in Figure 5 and examples of green products can be found in Figure 6.

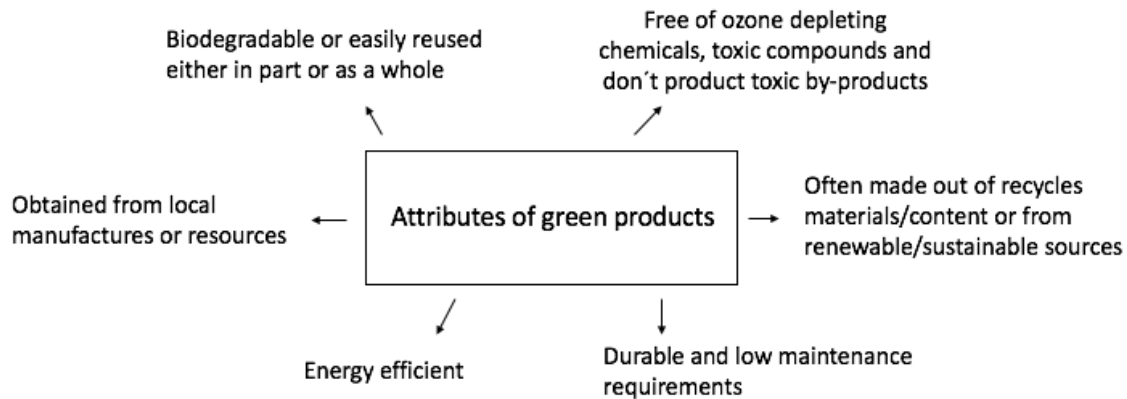


Figure 5: Attributes of green products (Air Quality Sciences, 2010)



Figure 6: Examples of green products (Speer, 2011)

Diamantopoulos *et al.* (2003) argue that demographics alone are not highly important in defining the green consumer. This is because awareness around ethical concerns have become widespread. Furthermore, Tsalikis and Oritz-Buonafina (1990) argue that gender does not influence ethical decision making. This is also suggested by several authors who argue that there is no such correlation between gender and ethical decision making (Brays *et al.*, 2011). On the other hand, literature has been producing conflicting and confusing findings as Sidani *et al.* (2009) and Ameen *et al.* (1996) argue that ethical sensitivity is reported to be greater in female consumers.

The researcher argues that previous research has failed to address the possibility that there are disparities in the ethical decision making process between male and female consumers. It can further be argued that research has not been able to identify whether there are disparities in the kind of barriers forming the attitude-behaviour gap in adult male consumers. Overall, the above shows the complexity underlying decision making in green consumption. Despite several studies addressing the discrepancies between a positive ecological attitude and actual purchase behaviour, there is a gap in thorough contemporary understanding on the factors impeding green consumption, in particularly in the context of adult male consumers.

[2.3 The Attitude-Behaviour Gap](#)

The inconsistency between a positive ecological attitude and actual purchase behaviour is oftentimes described as the attitude-behaviour gap in the literature (Terlau and Hirsch, 2015). While public interest in sustainability is increasing and consumers are becoming more and more concerned with ethical factors, Vermeir and Verbeke (2006) and Bray *et al.* (2011) argue that consumer's attitudes are not consistent with their purchase behaviour patterns. While ethical consumption is ever growing, sales of green products still represents only a less significant number of the overall consumer market (Joshi and Rahman, 2015).

Cowe and Williams (2000) argue that approximately 30% of consumers contend to be concerned with ethical factors, while only 3% of purchases reflect these standards. This phenomenon was termed the 30:3 phenomenon (Bray *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, Young *et al.* (2010) argue that consumers are aware of environmental problems such as natural resource depletion, global warming and pollution when making purchase decisions. The writers further argue that actual purchase behaviour depends on the individual's level of loyalty towards green commitment.

Previous research on the attitude-behaviour gap attempting to explain the inconsistency through various models, including the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Notwithstanding, Tanner (1999) argues that research has predominantly relied on paradigms that consider behaviour primarily as a function of personal factors and that little attention has been paid to factors that enable the individual's ability to participate in specific action. Additionally, Kraus (1995) argues that attitudes alone are often insufficient predictors of behavioural intention.

Overall, research appears to be inconclusive as to what the factors are that influence the attitude-behaviour gap. The researcher has however identified several reoccurring themes in existing literature including: lack of availability of green products, lack of trust and consumer scepticism (Bray *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, seven key factors surfaced from Bray *et al.*'s (2011) research on the impeding factors of green purchase decisions. Factors emerging included: cynicism, lack of information and availability, inertia, quality of the product, personal experiences, price sensitivity/willingness to pay more and ethical obligations. Bray *et al.* (2011) argue that price sensitivity was uncovered to be an important barrier to green product consumption. The researcher further found this to be a common theme in existing literature (Vermeir and Verbeke, 2016; Padel and Foster; 2005)

Interestingly, on one hand, Carrigan and Attalla (2001), Young et al. (2010) and Joshi and Rahman (2015) further found limited availability of green products to hinder consumers to purchase green products. On the other hand, research conducted by Bray et al. (2011) showed that limited availability of green products was not problematic to the consumer and was found not to be a noteworthy impeding factor.

2.3.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour and Theory of Reasoned Action

To explain consumer green purchase behaviour, previous research has focussed on describing underlying values, attitudes and behavioural intentions toward environmentally friendly products (Joshi and Rahman, 2015; Wheale and Hinton, 2007). In an attempt to understand the decision-making process of green consumers and their behaviours, researchers have endeavoured to explain behaviours through established theoretical frameworks from domains such as psychology, consumer behaviour and business ethics (Carrington et al., 2010). Cognitive theoretical models used by researchers such as Jackson (2005) who wrote on the altruistic behaviour of individuals are based on understanding the internal process of decision making (Carrington, 2010). Previous studies attempting to investigate the complex decision-making process in green consumerism are yet widely criticised as they are mainly based on two theoretical frameworks, namely the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) and the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Vermeir and Verbeke, 2008). These two theoretical approaches, which are the most frequently cited and followed by studies attempting to explain consumer green attitude and purchase behaviour, however have their limitations.

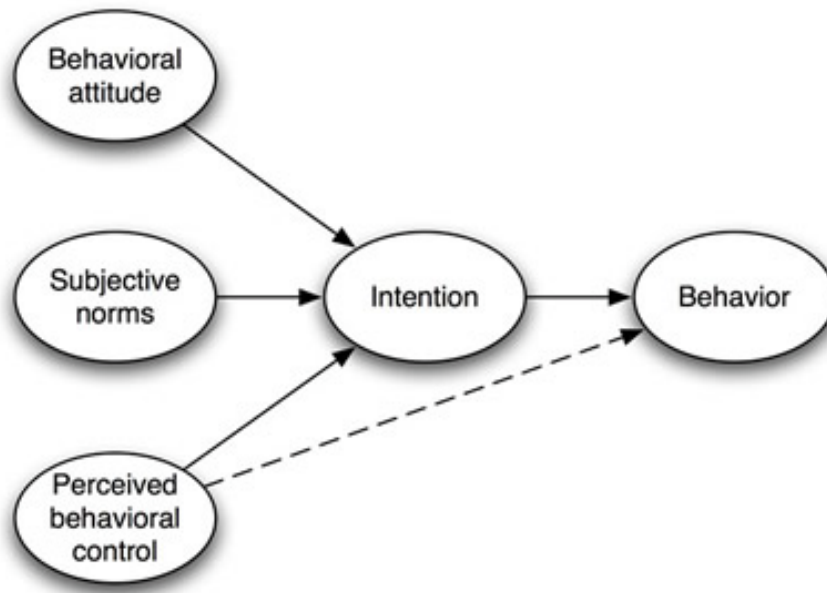


Figure 7: Theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)

The TPB is an extension to the TRA suggesting that attitudes, social norms and perceived behaviour control affect an individual's intentions to behave in certain ways which then leads to actual behaviour (Juvan and Dolnicar, 2014). In other words, cognitive theoretical models are built on the basis that 1. beliefs form attitudes, 2. attitudes lead to intentions and 3. Intentions form behaviours (Carrington et al., 2010). Notwithstanding that the TPB has some explanatory ability, critics of the TPB argue that intentions do not necessarily translate into behaviour (Chatzidakis et al., 2007; Young et al., 2010).

Literature indeed demonstrates that the link presented by the TPB is relatively weak and that a disparity between attitudes and behaviours in green consumerism exists, leading to a gap in which a positive environmental attitude does not necessary translate into purchase behaviour. This phenomenon is widely referred to as the attitude-behaviour gap in the literature (Roberts, 1996; Simon, 1995; Folkes and Kamins; 1999; Eck, 2009; Carrigan and Attalla, 2001; Chatzidakis et al., 2007).

Several studies in green consumerism have found that consumers increasingly have positive attitudes towards the environment and do not want to damage the environment (Dastous and Legendre, 2009; Schmeltz, 2012). A study by the Co-operative bank in the UK suggests that one-third of consumers are genuinely concerned with the environment (Mason, 2000; Carrigan and Attalla, 2001). Researchers such as Tanner and Kast (2003) further argue that consumers generally share a favourable attitude towards green products. If this is the case, and consumers have an increasingly positive attitude towards the environment, it is important to ask oneself why the green product market only represents a small percentage of the overall consumer market (Bray et al., 2011). According to Bray *et al.* (2011), green products only represent three percent of the market share. Furthermore, Boulstridge and Carrigan (2000) argue that while consumers have positive environmental attitudes, only 20% of those consumers had purchased green products within the last year of the study.

Carrington and colleagues (2010) argue that based on the TPB, the inconsistency can on one hand occur between the consumer's attitudes and intentions to purchase, or on the other hand between the consumer's intentions and behaviours. They argue that previous studies on the attitude-behaviour gap have mainly focussed on the relationship between the attitudes and intentions rather than the relationships and disparities between intentions and buying behaviour. Furthermore, as studies on green consumption have focussed on the above-mentioned relationship, they imply that an individual's intention will directly determine actual behaviour (Fukukawa, 2003; Carrington et al., 2010). The researcher however believes that an individual's intention will not necessarily determine actual behaviour and that the inconsistency can occur in both situations, between attitudes and intentions and between intentions and behaviours as consumers are influenced by complex personal and situational factors.

Joshi and Rahman (2015) argue that the TPB fails to explain green behaviour and is therefore not a suitable model for studies on green consumerism as it does not take the consumer effective element into consideration, which was found to influence consumer ethical behaviour.

Furthermore, it can also be argued that habitual buying behaviour and situational factors have been overlooked in previous studies. Limitations to the TPB also include ignorance of external effects of environmental and situational factors influencing purchase behaviour (Joshi and Rahman, 2015).

2.3.2 Attitude-Behaviour-Context Model and Motivation-Opportunity-Ability Model

Various models have been introduced to address limitations of the TPB such as the Attitude-Behaviour-Context (ABC) model by Guagnano *et al.* (1995) and the Motivation-Opportunity-Ability (MOA) model by Olander and Thøgersen (1995). The ABC model attempts to explain environmentally significant behaviour, specifically identifying determinants of consumer's recycling behaviour. It was however found to have general applicability in the field of environmental psychology (Guagnano *et al.*, 1995). The ABC model does not only take attitudinal variables such as personal beliefs, norms and values into consideration but also points out the importance of contextual factors influencing behaviour (Guagnano *et al.*, 1995). Contextual factors may include cost, physical capabilities and constraints, institutional and legal factors, interpersonal influences such as social norms and social contexts (Guagnano *et al.*, 1995).

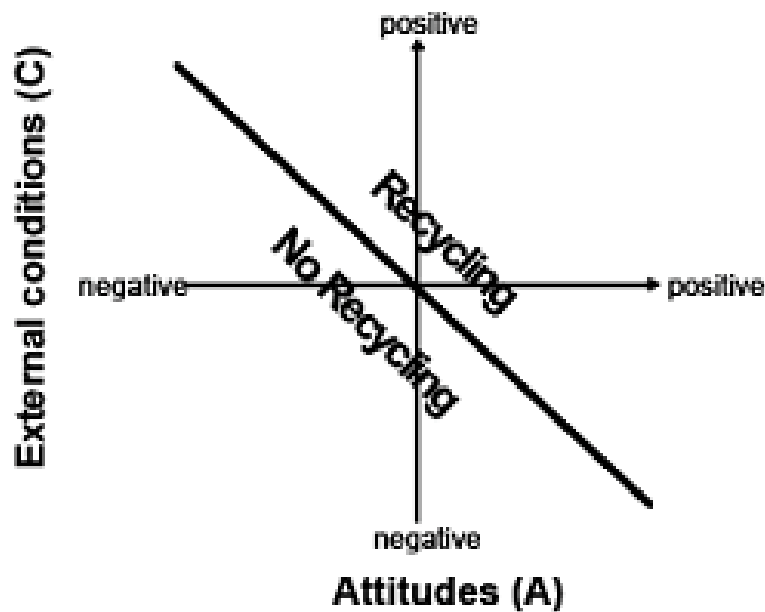


Figure 8: Attitude-Behaviour-Context Model (Guagnano et al. 1995)

Furthermore, Olander and Thøgersen's (1995) MOA integrative model for consumer action attempts to integrate motivation, habitual and contextual factors into a single model of environmentally friendly behaviour. The authors attempt to explain the attitude-behaviour gap by arguing that internal factors (motivation and ability) and external factors (opportunity) enable or prevent consumers translating a positive environmental attitude into green consumption behaviour. Olander and Thøgersen (1995) see the external influences as a critical part in forming the attitude-behaviour gap. While internal factors are to some extent controllable by the consumer, external factors are beyond the consumer's control. These external factors can therefore inhibit green consumption even though the consumer has a positive attitude (internal factor).

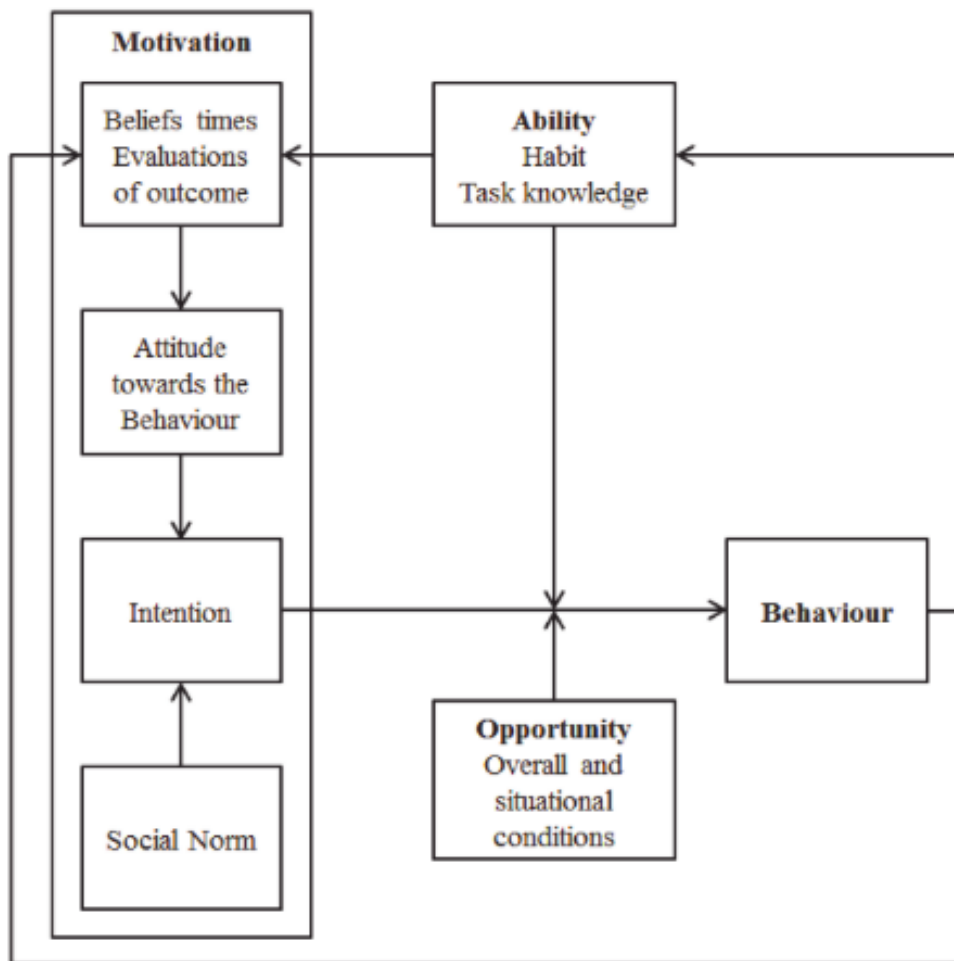


Figure 9: The Motivation-Opportunity-Ability Model (Olander and Thøgersen, 1995)

2.3.3 Attribution Theory

Furthermore, according to Juvan and Dolnicar (2014) a possible theoretical basis for explaining why consumers do or do not buy green products is the attribution theory. Attribution theory assumes that consumers have two ways of explaining the causes of their own behaviors (Juvan and Dolnicar, 2014). Firstly, when consumers use internal attribution, they see themselves as the cause. On the other hand, when consumers use external situational attribution, they do not see themselves as the cause but rather reasons that are not related to themselves. The authors (Juvan and Dolnicar, 2014) argue that one possible explanation for the attitude-behaviour gap is that consumers do not see themselves as the cause of the environmental problems we are

facing and therefore do not believe that a behavioral change will solve the problem.

2.3.4 [Value-Belief-Norm Theory](#)

The above also fits with Stern's (2000) value-belief-norm theory of environmentalism as a possible explanation for the gap. According to this theory, beliefs are formed and changed through an individual's life. Furthermore, Stern (2000) argues that beliefs affect pro-environmental behaviours. Individuals who ascribe responsibility to themselves and believe that they are responsible for protecting the environment which they value through their positive environmental attitude are likely to exhibit pro-environmental behaviour such as green purchasing (Stern, 2000). Therefore, as consumers may not feel responsibility towards the environment and they may think that their behaviour which is damaging the environment does not contribute to the problem, this interesting theory can be used to describe how beliefs affect environmental behaviour.

2.3.5 [Neutralisation](#)

Researchers such as Chatzidakis *et al.* (2007) and Chatzidakis *et al.* (2004) have further added to existing literature through theorising the attitude-behaviour gap by using Sykes and Matza's (1957) neutralisation techniques (Moares *et al.* 2010). Davies *et al.* (2002) argue that social norms play an important role in guiding ethical and green behaviour. Consumers may therefore develop coping strategies to deal with dissonance they experience when norms are not internalised to a degree that they guide their behaviour. These coping strategies or neutralisation techniques will protect the individual from blaming themselves or others for their norm-violating behaviour (Chatzidakis *et al.* 2007).

The five neutralisation techniques which were adopted to the consumer context by Strutton et al (1994) include:

1. Denial of Responsibility: the consumer argues that he or she is not personally accountable for unethical behaviour as it is out of his or her control as they had no other choice than behave unethically.
Example: "It wasn't my fault. I had no other choice"
2. Denial of Injury: the consumer denies that his or her unethical behaviour has serious consequences as no one has suffered as a result from it.
Example: "I stole but it's not a big deal as they will not miss it"
3. Denial of victim: the consumer argues that the other party deserved what happened because of their unethical behaviour.
Example: "It's their fault, if they had treated me better I would not have done it"
4. Condemning the condemners: the consumer shifts the blame off themselves.
Example: "You were just as bad when you were young"
5. Appeal to higher loyalties: the consumer argues that his or her offence was for the greater good and that consequences justify their actions.
Example: "I did it for my family"

Chatzidakis *et al.* (2007) argue that while the above-mentioned techniques 'may be viewed as following unethical behaviour, ultimately they can precede it, and make unethical behaviour possible' explaining the attitude-behaviour gap.

2.3.6 Flawed Research and Social Desirability Bias

Literature attempting to explain the attitude-behaviour gap in green consumerism is divided into two contrasting research perspectives. On the one hand, a stream of authors take a modelling approach, identifying factors directly and indirectly influencing the attitude-behaviour gap (Carrington et al. 2010; Newholm and Shaw 2007). Researchers within this stream include Shaw and Shui (2002), De Pelsmacker and Janssen (2007), Areni and Black (2008) and Vermeir and Verbeke (2008).

On the other hand, the second research stream focusses on the limitations of the commonly used self-reported survey methodology employed to assess consumers' environmental attitudes, green purchase intentions and green purchase behaviours. Researchers within this stream including Carrigan and Attalla (2001) and Auger and Devinney (2007), argue that consumers when asked about their environmental concerns and attitudes provide answers that they believe to be socially acceptable. This has also been picked up by Carrington *et al* (2010) who argue that respondents answer to comply with accepted social norms while this is not reflected in their purchase and consumption behaviour. Overall, Auger and Devinney (2007) claim that current research is flawed by methodological limitations as it is under the influence of social desirability bias which is caused by social pressures the respondents feel. Terlau and Hirsch (2015) also argue that consumers tend to overstate when answering questions about their green consumption attitude and that there oftentimes is an absence of implementation intention.

Furthermore, Carrington *et al* (2010) argue that research is not only flawed by social desirability bias but also the fact that consumers will make errors in predicting their future shopping context. While social desirability bias and flawed errors have been mentioned in several research articles (Attalla, 2001; Auger and Devinney, 2007), the researcher contends that these factors only partially explain the attitude-behaviour gap and aims to explore the factors directly and indirectly influencing the gap.

Additionally, Higgins and Tagajewski (2002) accuse consumers declaring that they are concerned with the environment of hypocrisy and a lack of self-reflexivity due to their inconsistent behaviours. Auger and Devinney (2007) add that consumers are in fact not as concerned with the environment as they claim and that the attitude-behaviour gap has been exaggerated due to inflated measured and intentions (Carrington et al. 2010).

2.4 [Individual Variables Influencing the Attitude-Behaviour Gap](#)

2.4.1 [Basic Values](#)

Basic values have been widely discussed in literature concerned with green consumerism (Stern et al., 1995). While the theory that basic values form a basis of specific beliefs and behaviour exists, Kennedy et al. (2009) argue that contrary to these theories and models (Stern et al. 1995, Mc Farlane and Boxall 2003) claiming that basic values determine behaviour, values never perfectly correlate with behaviour. The authors (Stern et al. 1995, Mc Farlane and Boxall 2003) who wrote on the Value-Behaviour gap in Canada mention that while consumers tend to have several fundamental values that guide their behaviour, one value can be violated while another is acted upon. For instance, an individual may see the benefits of purchasing and consuming a green product, however when the same person also values frugality, the individual may feel conflicted when the green product is more expensive than the conventional counterpart. In fact, the conflict between basic values as explained by Kennedy *et al.* (2009) has the potential to explain why consumers have a positive attitude towards the environment but do not translate this positive attitude into purchase behaviour.

2.4.2 Perceived Consumer Effectiveness and Perceived Personal Importance

According to Vermeir and Verbeke (2006) perceived consumer effectiveness is “the extent to which the consumer believes that his or her personal efforts can contribute to the solution of a problem”. The authors argue that a high level of perceived consumer effectiveness is crucial for a consumer in order to translate his or her positive environmental attitude into green purchase behaviour. If a consumer does not believe that they can make a change and overall be part of the solution, this negatively affects the likelihood of them translating attitude into behaviour. Perceived consumer effectiveness can be of high importance when considering the attitude-behaviour gap as it can influence the gap and discourage behaviour (Vermeir and Verbeke, 2006). This also fits with the perceived personal importance which was mentioned by Laroche *et al.* (2001).

Laroche *et al.* (2001) argue that whether the consumer sees the environmental problems as important to themselves or as an issue of the society as a whole, determines its readiness to make green purchases. The authors argue that consumers may have a positive attitude towards the environment but do not see themselves as responsible because they do not directly experience the consequences of their behaviour such as decline in flora and fauna. Moreover, consumers may see the government or certain industries as responsible. It can therefore be argued that an important factor that needs to be considered when looking at the factors influencing the attitude-behaviour gap is whether the consumer has a high level of self-involvement towards the environment.

2.4.3 Habit

The factor of habit in the context of the attitude-behaviour gap has been mentioned by several researchers including Kolluss and Agyeman (2006), Aarts *et al.* (1998), Ramayah *et al.* (2010), Barnett (2007) and Verplanken and Wood (2006). According to Ji and Wood (2007), purchase and consumption activities tend to be repeated at particular times and places. Furthermore,

habits are behavioural routines that consumers repeat regularly and tend to develop subconsciously. According to Ajzen *et al.* (2009), when a behaviour is frequently performed, it can bring subsequent behaviour under the control of habitual processes. Sutton (2006) also argues that a degree of a consumers' behaviour is determined by past frequent behaviours rather than by cognitions. Studies have shown that consumers who frequently performed a certain behaviour, were less likely to consider alternative choices when confronted with an alternative (Aarts *et al.*, 1998). Furthermore, Ajzen *et al.* (2009) argue that because repeated behaviour or habits are imprinted in an individual's pathway, it is more difficult to break an established habit than it is to form a new one. While the previously discussed theoretical models such as the theory of planned behaviour see cognitive processes as key drivers of behaviours, Jackson (2005) and Verplanken and Wood (2006) argue that in reality, behaviour occurs with little cognitive deliberation which helps the consumer to cope with information-dense environments (Moares *et al.* 2010). Jackson (2005) further argues that for a behavioural change to occur, consumers must unfreeze habits.

Indeed, evidence points towards the fact that habits strongly and negatively affect green purchase behaviour (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2006). Kollmuss and Agyeman (2006) argue that when consumers do not purchase green products out of habit, it is difficult for them to break out of it and start purchasing green products, although they might be environmentally concerned. This also fits with Ramayah *et al.*'s (2010) research, suggesting that consumers tend to purchase products out of habit and do not tend to change these habits as this would mean putting in extra effort. Verplanken and Wood (2006) argue that as consumers repeat behaviours, their decision-making withdraws, meaning that those behaviours become mechanically driven by contextual and environmental factors (Moares *et al.* 2007). Verplanken and Wood (2006) further argue that habitual purchasing is triggered directly by contexts and circumstances without the influence of consumers' intentions.

While the fact that consumers can be locked into habitual buying behaviours can partly be responsible for the inconsistency between a positive attitude toward the environment and buying behaviour, it can also be argued that this tends to happen when consumers make low-involvement decisions. While consumers do engage in routine response behaviour when making automatic purchase decisions, consumers engaging in high-involvement decisions do not engage in routine or habitual response behaviour (Kotler et al 2013). This is due to the high-risk consumers carry when making high-involvement decisions and the overall complexity of these decisions (Kotler et al 2013). It can therefore be argued that habit as an influencing factor can only partly explain the attitude-behaviour gap.

2.5 [Household, Societal and Situational Variables](#)

2.5.1 [Situational Context](#)

While individual factors are important to be considered, one must also consider situational factors possibly influencing the attitude-behaviour gap in green consumerism. Carrington *et al.* (2010) argue that it is imperative to consider situational factors as the consumer encounters an environment outside their minds and interacts with a physical shopping environment which has an influence on their behaviour. Furthermore, Bagozzi (2000) argues that while factors which the consumer has control over are important in determining why consumers do or do not purchase green products, it is crucial to consider factors which are beyond the consumer's control, influencing their behaviour. Belk (1975) has written on 'situations' in the context of consumer behaviour in his vital research paper titled 'Situational Variables and Consumer Behaviour'. He defined situations as 'momentary encounters with those elements of the total environment which are available to the individual at a particular time' (Belk, 1975). Moreover, Carrington et al (2010) argue that encounters with elements of the shopping environment positively or negatively influence green purchase behaviour. As said by Belk (1975), there are two types of environmental elements or stimuli that influence the

consumer's behaviour. Firstly, situational characteristics which occur at a single point of time and space, for instance a price promotion.

Secondly, the object factor refers to characteristics of a specific product which is lasting, such as the packaging. While some situational factors noticeably influence consumer behaviour, many situational stimuli also have an unconscious influence on how the consumer behaves such as subtle lighting effects and subtle fragrances (Carrington et al 2010). The fact that situational factors influence consumer behaviour has also been mentioned by Zeltman (2003) and Pullman and Gross (2004). It can therefore be argued that situational factors consciously and unconsciously influence consumers' green purchase behaviour and should be considered as a possibly important factor influencing the attitude-behaviour gap.

2.5.2 Support from Household Members and Social Groups

According to Kennedy *et al* (2009), lack of support from other household members can negatively affect consumers' green purchase behaviour. The authors argue that if another household member has strong values that clash with pro-environmental values and actions, this can influence others in a way that he or she may assert his position in a way that other household members have no other option but subvert their own values regarding the environment and discourage them to behave in such a way. According to Kennedy *et al* (2007), particularly individuals sharing a household must compromise their green behaviour to satisfy other members of the household. Furthermore, Vermeir and Verbeke (2006), who studied the green purchase behaviour of young consumers, found that oftentimes there is a lack of support from the individuals' family and friends as they are not convinced that the individual should purchase green products. Social pressure has the potential to explain why consumers do not purchase green products as the perception of what others might think of oneself has been found to be crucial for an individual and its behaviour (Paladino and Ng, 2012).

2.5.3 [Lack of Information, Transparency and Trust](#)

According to Terlau and Hirsch (2015), consumers have a special need for information. The authors argue that consumers feel insufficiently informed about green products and the benefits of purchasing and consuming green products. Furthermore, when confronted with a conventional product and the green counterpart while both being equally attractive, the consumer tends to experience mental stress (Koths and Holl, 2012). Koths and Holl (2012) further argue that a lack of information and transparency leads to a trust issue due to asymmetrically distributed information between the producers, sellers and consumer. The authors (Koths and Holl, 2012) argue that consumers oftentimes are not familiar with labels and certificates on packaging. Furthermore, Honkanen et al. (2006) argue that a lack of knowledge of the consumer prevents it to purchase green products as it is not generally aware of the benefits of purchasing and consuming green products over conventional products. Literature also points towards a lack of trust and scepticism of consumers towards organisations engaging in green products, negatively influencing green purchase behaviour (Drumwright, 1996). It was further found that consumers are sceptical around how sincere the company's efforts with respect to helping the environment are. Consumers show low levels of trust towards the motivations of organisations (Fein, Hilton and Miller, 1990). Overall, a lack of information, trust and a high level of scepticism are expected to negatively influence green purchase behaviour.

2.5.4 [Price](#)

Much of existing literature on green products agree that the price, specifically the price of organic products, tend to be higher than their conventional counterparts (Padel and Foster, 2005; Hassan et al., 2009; Hughner et al., 2007). Among literature on the reasons behind the attitude-behaviour gap, this factor of price plays an important role. Terlau and Hirsch (2015) for instance argue that consumers tend to be cost sensitive and that they do not have the tendency to be willing to pay a surcharge for green product. Furthermore, Kennedy *et al.* (2009) argue that a lack of money can prevent environmentally conscious consumers from purchasing green products.

Furthermore, Borgstede et al. (2013) argue that willingness to pay and acceptance to pay more in order to protect the environment is important in pro-environmental purchase behaviour. A high level of price sensitivity among consumers is expected to be a key barrier in green purchase behaviour.

2.5.5 Time

A key barrier identified in literature is time. Kennedy *et al.* (2009) argue that although consumers may benefit from purchasing and consuming green products by saving time, they oftentimes consumers seem to feel that they cannot afford to invest time. Furthermore, Tindall et al. (2003) argue that additional time that the consumer would have to invest in the green product purchase process for instance having to read labels may limit consumer's ability to engage in green purchases.

2.5.6 Availability

According to Vermeir and Verbeke (2006) consumers are oftentimes interested in purchasing green products but perceive low availability as a barrier. The authors further argue that there is a scarcity of shops offering green products and farmers markets offering organic products, which leads to inconvenience for the consumers. De Pelsmacker *et al.* (2003) further argue that the consumer perceives a lack of availability since sustainable products oftentimes have low visibility in supermarkets. Additionally, the authors argue that green products are inadequately promoted by shops and supermarkets.

2.6 [Summary](#)

The chapter began by exploring green consumerism, the green consumer and green products. In particular, it identified a gap in the existing literature that looks at male consumers in the context of green consumerism. Furthermore, inconsistency between a positive ecological attitude and actual purchase behaviour, oftentimes referred to as the attitude-behaviour gap has been introduced to the reader. While previous research has been concerned with this topic it is not clear what factors influence this inconsistency between a positive environmental attitude and green purchase behaviour. While several studies have attempted to explain consumer's behaviours through established frameworks, they are widely criticised for being based on the TPB and the TRA. The chapter further explored key themes found in the literature influencing the attitude-behaviour gap. The factors have been divided into individual variables and household, societal and situational variables. While several variables have been mentioned in previous literature, it is not clear how important each of the variable identified is in terms of its influence on the consumer.

3 – Methodology

3.1 Overview

Having established the theoretical framework, this chapter will now introduce the methodological process undertaken to explore the research topic and reach the research objectives. Methodology is considered a crucial part of a research paper as choosing and using the right and most suitable method leads to a more accurate outcome of the study (Silverman, 1993). In the Methodology chapter, the researcher will be describing the method that will be used for carrying out the research and will further justify her choice. The chapter is divided in the following subsections: research objectives, research questions, research philosophy, research design, research strategy, data collection, sampling strategy, data analysis and interpretation, reliability and validity and finally, limitations.

3.2 Research Objectives

The study aims to explore the factors affecting the attitude-behaviour gap in green consumerism in the context of adult male consumers. Research objectives are deemed important as they can be used by the researcher as a baseline map which guides the project (Cameron and Price, 2009). In order to achieve the research aim, the research is divided into three objectives. According to Cameron and Price (2009) two to five objectives are sufficient.

The objectives of the study are primarily to:

- D. Examine adult male consumers' attitudes towards the environment and green products
- E. Investigate the relationship between adult male consumers' attitudes towards the environment and green purchase behaviour
- F. Explore the reasons behind the attitude-behaviour gap in green consumerism in the context of adult male consumers

3.3 Research Questions

Blumberg *et al.* (2008) emphasise the importance of clear research questions to ensure a good research process. The researcher will answer the following research questions to a satisfactory level in order to reach the research aim:

5. To what extent are male adult consumers concerned with the environment?
6. To what extent are male adult consumers aware of green products?
7. How does a positive environmental attitude influence male adult consumers' purchasing behaviour?
8. What are the key barriers that hinder male adult consumers to purchase green products?

3.4 Research Philosophy

According to Blumberg *et al.* (2014) research should be conducted and is embedded in the broader philosophies of science. It is based on reasoning (theory) and observations (data). The research philosophy refers to the way the researcher sees the world and the nature of knowledge. Furthermore, the research philosophy influences the entire research design hence it is important to discuss it. Saunders *et al.* (2012) argue that the researcher makes assumptions about human knowledge and the nature of realities they encounter during their research. The research philosophy adopted by the researcher can be seen as the way in which he or she sees the world (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Literature points out that the two predominant research philosophies are positivism and Interpretivism (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Positivism is regarded as a position that adopts the viewpoints of a natural scientist (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Positivism implies that the reality is an independent entity. It further implies that the researcher is independent, meaning that he or she is not influenced by the subject nor does he influence it. In the view of positivism, research is conducted in an objective and value-free way (Blumberg *et al.*, 2014). This would however mean that the researcher would exclude his or her values from the research which is implausible

(Blumberg et al., 2014). Furthermore, positivist research aims to pin down the world to the simple element and aims to test theories and provide the development of law-like assumptions (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Interpretivism on the other hand holds the view that the social world is constructed and given meaning by people as well as their intentions and actions (Blumberg et al., 2014). Interpretivism is not value-free, meaning that the researcher is part of what is being observed (Saunders et al., 2012). Interpretivists argue that fundamental laws are not sufficient to understand the complexity of the social phenomena (Blumberg et al., 2014). They attempt to understand the behaviour of people and discover reasons, and motivations behind behaviour rather than predicting it (Polonsky and Waller, 2015).

According to Collis and Hussey (2014) these two philosophies are at the extreme ends of the continuum and most researchers stand anywhere in-between the two. The researcher in this case has a clear tendency to the interpretivist philosophy given the nature of the research as it is not seeking to create law-like generalisations but rather explore and gain an in-depth understanding of consumer behaviour (Saunders et al., 2012). Furthermore, the study of human behaviour is different from natural sciences, therefore positivism is not deemed a suitable research philosophy. Notwithstanding, while the Interpretivism allows the researcher to gain an in-depth insight, results cannot necessarily be generalised (Saunders et al., 2012).

3.5 Research Design

The research design will outline how the researcher seeks to approach answering the research question. It is based on the research question. According to Malhotra et al. (2006) the research design is a framework or blueprint for collecting information needed for the study in the best possible way. Choosing the correct research design will be essential for the researcher as it will allow them to undertake valid and reliable research (Polonsky et al., 2005). Generally speaking, there are three main research designs: exploratory, descriptive and causal. The research in this study will be of exploratory nature.

While previous research has been conducted on the attitude-behaviour gap, limited research has been done in the context of adult male consumers. While exploratory research has been accused of biases when linked to qualitative research due to accusations of subjectiveness, it is especially useful when the researcher lacks a clear idea of the problems they will encounter during the study (Blumberg et al., 2008). Furthermore, exploration has been deemed suitable by the researcher as it provides the researcher with a high degree of flexibility. It further allows adaptability to change due to a lack of formal structure. It does not intend to offer a conclusive solution to a problem but moreover explores the research question (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Furthermore, the research will be cross-sectional, meaning that research will be conducted at one specific point of time as this project is time constrained, thus not allowing a longitudinal approach.

3.6 [Research Strategy](#)

Having established that the study does not seek to create law-like generalisations but rather explore consumer attitudes and behaviour, this can be referred to as the inductive approach of the study, which is a commonly used approach in Interpretivism (Bryman and Bell, 2011). It involves the search for patterns from observations. The researcher, by using an inductive approach, seeks to generate meaning from the data collected in order to find key patterns (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Having previously considered the research philosophy and research design enables the researcher to make an easier decision as to whether a qualitative or quantitative approach is more appropriate for the study. Two main research strategies exist, namely quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative research emphasises quantification in the collection and analysis of data whereas qualitative research emphasises words rather than quantification (Saunders et al., 2012). According to Saunders *et al.* (2012), qualitative research studies participants' feelings and the relationships between them. As mentioned above, the research has a positivist and inductive approach, therefore a qualitative approach is the most appropriate.

The interpretivist philosophy emphasises qualitative analysis over quantitative analysis. Literature points towards a connection between Interpretivism and qualitative research (Bryman and Bell (2011)). A qualitative research will allow the researcher to gain insights on the attitudes of respondents and will allow interpretations of emotions and behaviours in a specific context. While LeCompte and Goetz (1982) argue that internal validity is a strength of qualitative research, they further argue that external validity, the ability to generalise findings, represents a weakness of qualitative research due to the tendency of small sample sizes (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

3.7 Data Collection

The next step for the researcher is to choose the most appropriate approach to collecting the qualitative data. Firstly, the researcher perceived primary data collection to be most appropriate as this ensures greater level of depths, ensuring that the researcher can adequately answer the research questions (Cameron and Price, 2009). Furthermore, as this study seeks to gain an understanding of consumer's attitudes, human participants were deemed important. Secondly, the research consists of in-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with adult male consumers.

According to Polonsky and Waller (2015), in-depth interviews are effective in uncovering underlying motivations, prejudices and attitudes that might not be uncovered in other primary data collection techniques such as focus groups. Additionally, Lucas (2014) argues that in-depth interviews can assist in understanding complex human behaviour, perceptions and attitudes. The researcher found that in-depth interviews are compatible with the research aim. Furthermore, the interview structure chosen was semi-structured as the researcher perceived flexibility important for the research process. Semi-structured interviews allow the interview process to be flexible meaning that the researcher has a great degree of leeway (Blumberg et al., 2014). The researcher perceived this as very important as this will enable her to steer the conversation and probe when points said are important.

As the interviews conducted were face-to-face, the researcher could build trust. Interpersonal skills were crucial when conducting the interviews (Cameron and Price, 2009). The researcher further found that conducting an informal interview made the participants feel more comfortable so they could express their views freely. The direct face-to-face communication method further helped in understanding respondent's facial emotions and body language. Furthermore, the researcher made use of an interview guide, ensuring that all areas intended were covered according to the developed research questions.

3.8 [Sampling Strategy](#)

According to Blumberg *et al.* (2014) to conduct research, the researcher does not need to ask the whole world but can limit oneself to a selection of people. The group of people participating in the data collection is also referred to as a sample. It is a segment of people that is selected for investigation (Bryman and Bell, 2011) whereas a population describes 'the universe of units from which the sample is to be selected' (Bryman and Bell, 2011). In this study, the population consists of all adult males worldwide. As it is not possible for the researcher to interview the entire population, a sample is necessary. Advantages of sampling includes lower cost, greater accuracy of results and greater speed of data collection (Blumberg et al., 2014). It is however crucial that the sample is related to the research topic (Blumberg et al., 2014).

The researcher found convenience sampling to be an effective sampling strategy as it is cost effective and convenient for the researcher as the researcher relied on the population members accessible to it (Saunders et al., 2012). The researcher however acknowledges that the sampling strategy is vulnerable to selection bias and sampling error (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The researcher however ensured that there was a mixed sample size with participants from various ethnic backgrounds and ages. Furthermore, the geographic distance was limited to male consumers living in London, as it might have been difficult for consumers outside of London to attend the face-to-face interviews.

The sample consisted of eleven adult male consumers living in London. Initially, a sample size of fifteen was estimated however the number of participants was limited to eleven as the research process reached a theoretical saturation point where similar data was not perceived to add value to the results of the study (Saunders et al., 2012). The saturation point therefore determined that the researcher had collected sufficient data for the data analysis.

3.9 Data Analysis and interpretation

According to Polonsky and Waller (2015), data analysis and interpretation are oftentimes used interchangeably but have different meanings. Data analysis encompasses assembling, clearing and examining the data whereas data interpretation means making sense of the data that the researcher has gathered. One challenge that is associated with qualitative data is that it generates a large dataset. In fact, Miles (1979) described qualitative data as 'attractive nuisance' due to its richness. There is no standardised approach to analyse qualitative data but the researcher acknowledges that the approach must be consistent with the research philosophy, strategy and the nature of data collection (Saunders et al., 2012). The approach that was used by the researcher to analyse and interpret the data was content analysis. According to Blumberg *et al.* (2014) content analysis is suitable to analyse transcripts of interviews. Its primary objective is to reduce the amount of data to a manageable amount (Blumberg et al., 2014). Firstly, the researcher transcribed the interviews. The interview was audio recorded, which helped the researcher to focus on the conversation with the participant. In the transcripts, the interviewer emphasised not only what the participants said but also how they said it. This was then reflected in the transcripts. Saunders et al. (2012) mention that without the contextual information, the data will be impoverished to some extent. Furthermore, the researcher made use of aids such as a research notebook and a reflective diary. Secondly, the researcher identified key themes and categories that emerged from the interviews. The researcher used open analysis as a coding technique (Blumberg et al., 2014).

This process was repeated for all the interviews in order to identify overlapping themes through using a colour coding system. The researcher then organised the data and key themes under the topics that will help her to answer the research questions. While the main advantage of content analysis is that it adds to the transparency, meaning that the reader can easily understand what the researcher has done, the overall quality depends on the input. Furthermore, the coding procedures are subject to interpretation bias (Blumberg et al., 2014).

3.10 Reliability and Validity

To ensure good quality research, the researcher must consider the reliability and validity of its methodology (Polonsky and Waller, 2015). According to Saunders et al. (2012) reliability refers to 'whether the data collection techniques and analytic procedures would produce consistent findings if they were repeated on another occasion'. It is however difficult in qualitative data to ensure the consistency due to the nature of the research. According to Schutt (2012) the reliability in qualitative research depends on the research tool and whether it could reproduce the same findings. However, in this case, the research tool is the researcher so the findings and answers will be difficult to replicate. Overall, threats to reliability include: participant error, participant bias, researcher error and researcher bias (Saunders et al., 2012). Notwithstanding, the researcher ensured that her research process is clearly thought through. Furthermore, the researcher also needs to consider the validity. According to Saunders et al. (2012) validity refers to 'the extent to which the data collection method accurately measure what they were intended to measure'. The researcher perceives the research to have face validity. Cameron and Price (2009) argue that face validity is important for the researcher's satisfaction and credibility. As previously mentioned, due to the nature of research, it is not necessarily generalizable. Furthermore, Cameron and Prince (2009) mention that using interviews consist of interpretation which can bias the conclusion. The researcher therefore tested constructs and conclusions in subsequent interviews.

3.11 Limitations and Challenges

Firstly, the researcher acknowledges that the findings are not necessarily generalizable as the sample does not inevitably reflect attitudes and behaviours of the entire population. Furthermore, the researcher argues that the time frame was not adequate. The inadequate time frame did not allow a longitudinal approach and further does not justify appropriate in-depth exploratory research. The researcher further acknowledges that the convenience sampling strategy is vulnerable to selection bias and sampling error (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Furthermore, the chosen data collection method being in-depth interviews, it took the researcher a long time to conduct the research. Most of the interviews conducted produced around one hour of audio recording each. Considering that most research suggests that it takes a researcher between six and ten hours to transcribe one hour of audio recording, the researcher found the process of transcribing eleven interviews to be very challenging (Saunders et al., 2012). Additionally, it is also possibility that the participants were influenced by a social desirability bias as they feel social pressure to answer a certain way (Carrington et al., 2010).

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter provided the reader with an idea on the methodological process adopted by the researcher to reach the desired aim of the study. The researcher has adopted an Interpretivist stance in his research as she attempted to gain in-depth understanding in consumer attitudes and behaviour. Furthermore, the exploratory nature of the study provided the researcher with a high degree of flexibility. The research included collection of qualitative data as human participants were deemed important to answer the research questions. Furthermore, the chapter explained the use of in-depth semi-structured interview and gave the reader an understanding of the process of analysing and interpreting the data. While the research has been completed successfully, the researcher acknowledges that limitations and challenges were involved.

4 - Data analysis

4.1 [Introduction](#)

This chapter will present an analysis of the data that the researcher has gathered from a total of 11 in-depth, semi structured interviews with male adult consumers. The researcher examined the participant's attitude towards the environment, their awareness of environmental issues, their awareness of green products, how their attitude towards the environment influences their green purchasing behaviour and finally discovered key barriers that hinder male adult consumers from purchasing green products. Therefore, based on the interviews, the analysis is divided in five main sections namely: 1) attitude towards the environment, 2) awareness of environmental consequences of consumerism, 3) awareness of green products, 4) influence of positive environmental attitude on green purchase behaviour and finally 5) factors influencing the attitude-behaviour gap. Lastly, findings will be summarised.

4.2 [Attitude towards the Environment](#)

Results based on the interviews indicate that, overall, participants were concerned with the environment and showed a positive attitude towards the environment. Each of the 11 participants stated that they were concerned with the environment when asked about their attitude towards it. This is not surprising, as a general positive environmental attitude has been found among consumers in the literature (Terlau and Hirsch, 2015). While it is important to note that the participants showed a positive attitude towards the environment, the researcher takes into consideration that a possible social desirability bias exists, where the consumer tends to overstate when answering questions about his or her environmental attitude caused by social pressures the respondent feels (Auger and Devinney, 2007).

Notwithstanding, the researcher finds that the extent to which participants were concerned with the environment varied from participant to participant. Some participants stated that they were generally concerned with the environment but were not overly-concerned.

I am concerned with the environment to some degree. I wouldn't say I am an environmentalist but I am concerned with what happens to the planet (Simon, 35, black African).

However, others stated that caring about the environment is something close to their heart and that they were passionate about the environment.

This is very close to my heart. We are obliged to make sure that as long as we are living on this planet it is in order (Peter, 52, black African).

It can be argued that while the participants generally are concerned with the environment, the degree of concern varies heavily. This is an interesting factor which will be considered later, when discussing how the consumer's positive environmental attitude influences their green purchase behaviour.

There was further evidence that contrasting motivations exist as to why participants were concerned with the environment.

For instance, two of the participants stated that they care about the environment due to their love for animals and the nature.

The environment is obviously important to me, being a nature-lover. I care about it because I love it (Ant, 26, Indian).

Furthermore, four participants stated that their concern is due to their duty to preserve the environment for future generations.

Because as human beings, if we damage the environment it will affect future generations. This is the most important to me personally. It is not thinking about ourselves but about our children and their children. So, it is our responsibility to them to keep the environment neat and clean (Marc, 29, Bangladeshi).

Interestingly, on the other hand, when asked about their motivations, three of the participants showed self-interest as the main reason behind their concern.

I mean this summer has been going on for so long and it's very painful to me. I can't stand the heat, I don't like it. And this is due to global warming (John, 30, white British).

Others mentioned that their concern is due to the repercussions they see daily.

It's important to me because I can see it in my relatives. They have health issues because of the damages we do to the environment. One of my relatives, she can't breathe properly because of the pollution (Mark, 29, Bangladeshi).

Overall, based on the statements made by participants during the interviews, we may conclude that male adult consumers are generally concerned with the environment. There were differences in terms of how strong their concern with the environment was and a variety of motivations behind their concerns, but overall, a positive environmental attitude is clear.

4.3 Awareness of Environmental Consequences of Consumerism

Results indicate that all the participants apart from one were aware of environmental issues and environmental consequences of consumerism. Some participants were more knowledgeable regarding environmental issues than others. For instance, one of the study participants argued that he knows that consumers do things that are not good for the environment but he was not able to give an example of environmental issues.

I couldn't be able to talk about it, like, give you casual information (Daniel, 28, white British).

Furthermore, the researcher found that some of the study participants felt very strongly about the fact that action needs to be taken to preserve the environment. This is illustrated by the quote below:

If we don't take care properly, it will have repercussions. For example, the global temperature is increasing and even now it is already very high. I came to the UK in 2008. If I compare the weather back then and now, the temperature is getting higher and higher every year. We as human beings and consumers are radically responsible for that. If we continue like that, one day the temperature of this country will be so high that it will be impossible to live here. Therefore, we should do something to take care of the environment and stop damaging it (Mark, 29, Bangladeshi).

There was one exception however as one participant argued that nothing drastic needs to be done in order to protect the environment.

I think that humanity had a big impact on the environment but I also think that the environment is a lot bigger than us, and it is going to overcome anything we throw at it (Leo, 27, Indian).

Interestingly, the same respondent stated that he does not purchase green products. In his case, it could be argued that the reason as to why he does not purchase green products although he showed a positive attitude towards the environment is because he does not see the need to buy them. The respondent clearly believes that damaging the environment will not have drastic repercussions and that the environment is able to handle the damages done to it.

Study participants demonstrated general awareness around environmental issues caused by consumerism. Environmental problems identified by participants included: over-use of plastic and littering of plastic, global warming, greenhouse effect, deforestation and over-use of water.

Global warming is just very shocking (Ant, 26, Indian)

The increase of greenhouse gases depletes the ozone layer. That's not good (Leo, 27, Indian)

Interestingly, many of the interviews revolved around the use of plastic and littering of plastic packaging. This has been mentioned by six of the participants.

The use of plastic by us, the consumers, is why rules and regulations have been pushed forward like the ban of plastic straws because people throw them in the oceans and the sea life suffers from it. It leads to endangerment of species like sea turtles, sharks and dolphins (Julian, 27, white British).

While it becomes clear that participants showed acute awareness around environmental issues, most of the study participants were not able to explain why plastic is problematic for the environment when the researcher confronted them with the question. Only one respondent could touch upon the question why plastic is bad for the environment.

Based on my studies, it takes almost 100 years for plastic to be dissolved if it is thrown to landfill (Tim, 35, black African).

This is an interesting finding as Tim mentioned that if it was not for his studies at University he would have not been aware of the damages that plastic does to the environment. In fact, the other respondents who were not able to give an explanation oftentimes mentioned that they have heard about environmental issues only from friends and the news. It could be argued that

a lack of education and a lack of knowledge leads to this inability to understand how certain things we do as consumers do damage to the environment. Interestingly, environmental knowledge has been a much-studied variable in papers on the attitude-behaviour gap (Joshi and Rahman, 2015). While some studies suggest that knowledge of environmental issues positively influences purchase of green products (Chan, 2001; Eze and Ndubisi, 2013), others suggest that there is no correlation between environmental knowledge and purchase of green products (Wolsink, 2007; Chan and Lau, 2000).

The researcher further found differences when it comes to the question whether the male adult study participants feel responsible for damages done to the environment. Some participants do not attribute responsibility to themselves while some fully attribute responsibility to themselves directly, as illustrated in the quote below:

Am I contributing to the harm? Oh yes. I am sitting in front of you wearing shoes and clothes and things that contain so much plastic. Some of the things that I consume are terribly bad for the environment (Ant, 26, Indian).

Others however, feel that the society as a whole is responsible for environmental problems.

It's a joint responsibility. Everyone is responsible (Mark, 29, Bangladeshi).

Interestingly, responsibility has also been attributed to industries and businesses by several respondents.

It is the industries fault. The pollution from oil and gas is one of my greatest concern. In Nigeria, where I come from, the oil and gas companies pollute the environment by extracting oil and they create oil spillages.

Overall, findings show that while respondents express acute awareness around environmental issues, it is not clear among consumers who ultimately is responsible for damaging the environment and that there is a high complexity surrounding this issue. The fact that some consumers do not see themselves as the cause of environmental problems as an influencing factor for the attitude-behaviour gap has been mentioned by Juvan and Dolnicar (2014) and could be a possible explanation as to why consumers do not purchase green products.

4.4 Awareness of Green Products

Literature points towards consumers becoming increasingly knowledgeable about green products and the benefits associated with green products (Darnall et al, 2012). Rivera (2002) argue that consumers reflect their knowledge on green products in their green purchase behaviour. Furthermore, Suki (2013) argues that there is a significant relationship between consumer's green product awareness and green product decision. The author argues that the higher the awareness of green products, the more likely it is that the consumer purchases green products.

Results of this study indicate that adult male consumers are acutely aware of green products. Every single participant claimed that they knew what so-called green products were and could give relevant examples. Surprisingly, participants came up with a variety of green product categories and examples. One green product that was often mentioned was organic food. It can be argued that participants were aware of organic products, in particularly fruits and vegetables, as they are common in supermarkets and the participants came across them at one point or another.

I know that supermarkets offer organic products like fruits and vegetables. Like, they don't use pesticides or GM ingredients. For example, organic eggs are free range (Hamid, 32, British Asian).

Several participants mentioned green technologies and vehicles such as electric and hybrid cars. Furthermore, the participants mentioned Fairtrade products. While one participant in particular recognised that Fairtrade products help the farmers involved and the overall environment, there was uncertainty as to how purchasing Fairtrade could contribute to better standards. This is illustrated in the quote below:

I know products with the Fairtrade labels exist. I can't do much to control the people and the farmers that product the products in third world countries, like I don't know how me buying that product would help but I am sure that purchasing a Fairtrade product could help them (Hamid, 32, British Asian).

Participants also recognised that locally sourced goods and products using less packaging are green products. Furthermore, recycled paper, renewable energy, reusable coffee cups, reusable bags and reusable bottles were identified as green products by consumers. One study participant, 32-year old Hamid seemed to be very passionate about green technology products.

I think they are very interesting. I try to keep up-to-date with green technology products. Being from a generation that is active on social media, I see a lot of the new trends and innovations that are coming out such as electric vehicles, solar power and so on (Hamid, 32, British Asian).

When confronted with the question as to why green products are better for the environment, the researcher found that the male participants had a clear idea and understanding of the benefits of green products and the importance of them. This is illustrated below:

Green products have a more ethical approach to consumerism. Purchasing these products, I suppose contributes to a bigger agenda (Hamid, 32, British Asian).

Green products are produced in an ethical manner (Kai, 27, Bangladeshi).

Green products are made with the environment in mind so this means that they are less damaging or threatening to the environment (Peter, 52, black African).

Participants further associated organic products such as vegetables and fruits with health and well-being. Consumers overall seem to have the opinion that organic products are healthier than the conventional counterpart.

I know that green products are better for you, health wise (Daniel, 28, white British).

This is interesting, in particular as the participant mentioned that he suffers from stomach problems. Daniel seems to be convinced that organic products are better for his body however, later he mentioned that he does not purchase or consume organic products. This shows the complexity in the decision-making process and the importance of understanding how various factors influence that attitude-behaviour gap.

Overall, it becomes apparent that the study participants had a wide knowledge on green products and were very much aware of the benefits of green products. Interestingly, when asked by the researcher to give examples of green products, participants came up with a wide array of products that are environmentally friendly, ranging from locally sourced goods to reusable items. Furthermore, participants showed a positive attitude towards green products and the benefit of purchasing them.

4.5 Influence of Positive Environmental Attitude towards the Environment on Green Purchase Behaviour

Results of the study on the influence of the adult male consumer's positive attitude towards the environment on green purchase behaviour have shown interesting findings. The researcher found that a positive environmental attitude did translate into purchase intention in some of the participants.

Purchase intention is defined as the consumer's willingness to buy a certain product or service (Younus et al., 2015). While purchase intention is very complex, Madahi and Sukati (2012) stress its significance.

The below quotes are examples of the purchase intentions of two of the male consumers when asked whether they would be interested in purchasing green products:

Yes. I think that green products are great. I really want to buy them (Simon, 35, black African).

I've always wanted to buy an electric car (Bob, 27, Bangladeshi).

While Gosh (1990) argues that purchase intention is an effective tool to predict buying processes, surprisingly the researcher in this study has found that none of the adult male consumers showing willingness to purchase green products actually purchased green products. The researcher however acknowledges that the purchase intention may be under the influence of complex internal and external factors (Gogoi, 2013). However, it can be argued that in this study, intention to purchase green products does not have a strong predicting value to green purchasing behaviour. Furthermore, findings previously showed that the participants all exhibited a positive attitude towards the environment and towards green products. The researcher therefore concludes that while a positive attitude may translate into purchase intention, neither a positive environmental attitude nor a positive attitude towards green products has a strong predicting value to green purchase behaviour as participants stated that they did not purchased green products. Out of all the participants, none of the adult male consumers stated that they purchased green products when confronted with the question.

No, I must be candid. I don't go into the supermarket or the shopping centre to get green products but of course I know that they are the best products in terms of the environment. I do consider them as very important (Peter, 52, black African).

No I don't really buy them. Although I do care about the environment (Tim, 35, black African).

Numerous researcher claim that the attitude-behaviour gap clearly exists (Basu and Hicks, 2008; Anon, 2009; Ferguson, 2011). According to Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002) the attitude-behaviour gap occurs when the attitude has no predicting value in behaviour. Attitude can be very broad, however in this study the researcher has considered three types of attitudes: 1) the attitude towards the environment and protecting it, 2) the attitude towards green products and finally 3) the attitude towards the importance of green products. Through in-depth interviews, the researcher indeed found that the consumers showed positivity in all three studied attitude types. The findings of this study therefore confirm that an attitude-behaviour gap exists among adult male consumers in green consumerism. Interestingly, this confirms that there is indeed a weak link presented by the TPB in relation to this research topic as attitude does not necessarily translate into behaviour.

As attitudes have not been found to translate into behaviour and therefore confirming the attitude-behaviour gap and the fact that purchase intention has no valuable explanatory value in addressing the attitude-behaviour gap, the following section will explore influencing factors and key themes that emerged from the in-depth interviews.

4.6 Factors influencing the Attitude-Behaviour Gap

The researcher found key themes emerging from the data collected on factors influencing the attitude-behaviour gap in adult male consumers. Most frequently, participants mentioned lack of trust and cynicism as a barrier, followed by perceived consumer effectiveness. Emerging themes further included: price, availability/accessibility, information, time, convenience, and habit/familiarity. The contributions and importance of each of those factors in understanding the attitude-behaviour gap are discussed below. Furthermore,

the researcher will also touch upon social groups as this has produced interesting findings.

4.6.1 Lack of Trust and Cynicism

Firstly, the study found that male consumers generally do not trust green products. While they seemed to show a positive attitude towards green products, when asked whether they trust green products, respondents showed that they do not necessarily trust green products and that cynicism is a barrier as to why they did not purchase green products.

See, this is a very funny topic. So, I'll go into the shop and see organic vegetables and normal vegetables, they look exactly the same to me. Anything that is kind of organic or so, I'm very sceptical (Daniel, 28, white British).

Furthermore, participants expressed cynicism towards the motivation behind retailers and businesses engaging in ethical products. Participants claimed that businesses are not ethically concerned but moreover are looking to make profit from green products.

I don't trust these big organisations because all they want is to make profits so obviously, they are going to sell you stuff that you want to buy. It's all about a quick buck (Hamid, 32, British Asian).

Furthermore, several participants also mentioned the marketing efforts by companies claiming to be ethical. The consumers generally expressed that businesses are attempting to take advantage of consumers through ethical claims. Hence, the researcher perceives that participants feel tricked by businesses and their marketing efforts.

Marketing for example is all about playing with people's minds. And if organisations want to sell their product at triple the price, I mean they can do this, no one stops them. They know if they take this element of "green" in their adverts they will be successful and make a lot of money. Consumers are clearly being played (Ant, 26, Indian).

Interestingly, one consumer added that he does not trust labels such as the Fairtrade label which is a regulated and registered certified label.

Because a logo with Fairtrade for example on a product doesn't 100% tell me that you have done everything ethical (Simon, 35, black African).

Cynicism is believed by the researcher to result from a lack of transparency and lack of information. Findings are in line with previous research. Nash (1990) mentioned that consumers generally feel an inherent moral conflict in the ethical practice of commerce. This has also been picked up by Bray et al. (2011).

4.6.2 [Perceived Consumer Effectiveness](#)

The researcher found that participants showed low levels of perceived consumer effectiveness, meaning that they did not believe that their efforts can positively contribute to the problem. This is illustrated by the quote below:

I don't know if I can make a difference, probably not. I don't think that an individual can make a big change on their own (Hamid, 32, British Asian).

This is of high significance as previous research has hinted towards a link between levels of perceived consumer effectiveness and purchase behaviour (Vermeir and Verbeke, 2006). The findings confirm that low levels of perceived consumer effectiveness hinder male consumers to purchase green products as they do not see themselves as part of the solution.

4.6.3 [Price](#)

Price has also been found to be a key theme when discussing barriers with participants. Participants have expressed high price sensitivity and showed low willingness to pay a surcharge for green products.

We also must consider that most green products are more expensive. I wouldn't want to pay more for green product (Tim, 35, black African).

Furthermore, the interviews showed that consumers prioritised financial values over ethical values. This is not surprising to the researcher as previous research showed that consumers tend to have several fundamental values and that the individual may feel conflicted when one value is violated while another one is acted upon (Mc Farlane and Boxall 2003).

I can't really afford it. Just because it's green, it's really difficult to wire the moral aspect to the financial aspect (John, 30, white British).

The findings reveal that price plays a key role in the attitude-behaviour gap.

4.6.4 [Availability and Accessibility](#)

Another key barrier emerging from the research was availability of and accessibility to green products. Participants generally felt that there is lack of availability of green products, low product diversification of green products and low accessibility to green products. The researcher perceived that while some participants showed willingness to purchase green products, it was not possible due to perceived low availability. This is related to scarcity of green shops, farmer's markets and availability of green products in supermarkets. This is illustrated by the quotes below:

Not all conventional products have a green counterpart. There are so many products that we cannot get as a green product. There is definitely a lack of availability (Tim, 35, black African).

They aren't accessible. For example, Holland and Barrett, they sell green products but they are mainly in the central parts of London and not around where I live (Bob, 27, Bangladeshi).

Findings confirm a correlation with previous studies that found that lack of availability and accessibility hinder consumers from purchasing green products (Vermeir and Verbeke, 2006; Maniatis, 2015). Robinson and Smith (2002) found that 52% of consumers intended to purchase ethical products but were not able due to lack of availability. While it is possible that the participants perceive low availability as present, the researcher perceived that the consumers were not necessarily aware that certain shops and supermarkets offer green products and felt that there was no availability. A possible reason could be low visibility in supermarkets. In fact, this was mentioned by De Pelsmacker *et al.* (2003) arguing that supermarkets oftentimes fail to promote green products.

4.6.5 [Information](#)

According to Sproles *et al.* (1978) consumers need to be fully informed to make effective purchase decisions. In fact, the study has found that lack of information heavily influences consumer's green purchase behaviour. Most of the participants mentioned that they did not have enough knowledge and information on products in order to decide. This is in particular in regards to information provided on products in shopping outlets.

There are some products that I stay away from because I don't know much about them. The information available to me affects my decision making towards purchasing them. So, if I don't know much about the product I will definitely not purchase it if it claims to be green (Simon, 35, black African).

While some previous studies on the attitude-behaviour gap see lack of information as a key barrier (Bray *et al.*, 2011), others (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000) argue that lack of information does not play a role.

4.6.6 [Time and Convenience](#)

Participants have been found not to be willing to invest the time in green products. The researcher perceived that lack of time and the inconvenience of purchasing green products were major barriers amongst the participants.

Firstly, participants argued that it takes too much time to read labels and that having to look for specific green products in the supermarket is very inconvenient. Secondly, consumers seemed to prefer picking up items from the shelves out of convenience. Furthermore, one participant mentioned laziness as a factor. The above is illustrated in the below quotes:

If I had more time then maybe I would purchase more green products (Tim, 35, black African).

As men, we are kind of lazy when it comes to shopping. We would get the easiest thing to cook or pick up and just quickly buy and get out (Daniel, 28, white British).

4.6.7 Habit

Interestingly, the researcher found habitual buying behaviour to play a role in some of the participants. While some participants seemed to be very open to new products, others seemed not to be willing to try new products. The researcher perceived that this was due to habitual buying.

I tend to buy the same products and brands every time I go shopping. For twelve years now, I have only been buying one specific brand of apples. I know that if I don't find that brand, I won't buy any other apples. I would also say that I am stuck in my habit but it's because I like it. I like the things that I buy on a regular basis (Peter, 52, black African).

In fact, previous studies have shown that consumers who frequently performed a certain behaviour, were less likely to consider alternative choices when confronted with an alternative (Aarts et al., 1998). The researcher believes this to be the case in some of the participants, therefore hindering them from purchasing green alternatives.

4.6.8 [Social Groups](#)

Contrary to previous research on the attitude-behaviour gap, the study has found that social groups do not influence adult male consumer's purchase decision in most cases. Researchers such as Kennedy *et al.* (2009) and Vermeir and Verbeke (2006) argued that lack of support from household members can negatively affect consumer's green purchase behaviour. Furthermore, social pressure is further believed to hinder consumers from purchasing green products. When confronted, participants mentioned that support from their social groups does not play a role. This is illustrated by the quote below:

I don't think that my social group plays a role in me purchasing or nor purchasing green products because nobody chooses for me what I buy (Simon, 35, black African).

4.7 [Summary](#)

In conclusion, the researcher gathered data from eleven adult male consumers and analysed it with the research questions in mind. The findings suggest that consumers are concerned with the environment. While some participants showed general concern, others showed that the environment is very important to them. Furthermore, participants seemed aware of green products. They could give various examples from different product categories. The researcher further found that a positive environmental attitude does not translate into green purchase behaviour. While consumers showed a positive environmental attitude and some even showed purchase intention, none of the participants purchased green products. The researcher has concluded that the attitude-behaviour gap in adult male consumer exists and further explored factors influencing this gap, hindering participants from purchasing green products. The study found the following barriers hindering adult male consumers from purchasing green products: lack of trust/cynicism, low level of perceived consumer effectiveness, price, lack of availability/accessibility, lack of information, time/convenience and habitual buying behaviour.

Interestingly, contrary to previous research, the study has not found a link between social groups and the attitude- behaviour gap.

5 – Conclusion

The significance of this study lies in gaining a more in-depth and contemporary understanding on the attitude-behaviour gap in green consumerism. As previously stated, while the attitude-behaviour gap is not a new research area, it is however far from being exhausted. Furthermore, the study has significant theoretical and managerial implications. To the knowledge of the researcher, this study is the first that looks at the attitude-behaviour gap in green consumerism in the context of adult male consumers. The study has not only found that an attitude-behaviour gap in green consumerism amongst male consumers exists but further identified key barriers, offering a plausible explanation as to which factors influence the inconsistency. Its managerial implications can help policymakers, executives and marketing professionals to frame and implement strategies to promote and encourage green purchasing among adult male consumers. As this study has identified key barriers of consumer's green purchase behaviour, understanding those could enable marketers to tailor their product offerings. Findings could help policy makers to promote green purchase through implementing environmental education. This would enable consumers to better identify green products in stores.

The research was of explanatory nature so the researcher aims to reflect the exploration of the research by providing the reader with answers to the research questions.

1. To what extent are male adult consumers concerned with the environment?

The research unveiled that adult male consumers are concerned with the environment. Out of all eleven participants, none expressed unethical views. However, the extent to which the participants varied. While some participants seemed to be highly concerned with the environment, others were not as

concerned. Furthermore, the researcher found that various motivations are behind the participant's ethical concern.

2. To what extent are male adult consumers aware of green products?

The researcher found that adult male consumers are very much of green products. Participants showed wide knowledge on green products and were very much aware of the benefits of green products. They further showed a positive attitude towards green products and the benefit of purchasing them.

3. How does a positive environmental attitude influence male adult consumers' purchasing behaviour?

Although consumers expressed a positive environmental attitude, their actual purchase behaviour is unaffected by their environmental concern. This leads the researcher to believe that an attitude-behaviour gap exists in green consumerism in male consumers.

4. What are the key barriers that hinder male adult consumers to purchase green products?

The researcher found a pattern emerging in terms of key barriers influencing the attitude-behaviour gap in adult male consumers. Most frequently, cynicism seemed to be the influencing factor. Findings imply that companies need to find ways to convince consumers that they are ethical and do not only want to make money out of green products. Furthermore, the findings showed that a key barrier is a low perceived consumer effectiveness. Findings imply that consumers need to be convinced that their purchase can make a difference in conserving the environment to purchase green products. Further factors negatively influencing consumer's green purchase behaviour have been found

to include: price, availability/accessibility, information, time, convenience, and habit/familiarity. Findings suggest that the above factors outweigh the ethical criteria and the concern for the environment in adult male consumer's purchase behaviour.

Overall, findings of the study show that consumer attitudes and behaviours are unpredictable. The study showed that the attitude-behaviour gap in green consumerism is a very complex phenomenon and there is not one single barrier among all consumers. It must be understood that consumers have various motivations and therefore barriers that are personal to them. While the researcher found similarities in terms of key barriers with existing literature, various key barriers that have been mentioned have not come up in this study. Notwithstanding, the researcher perceived that this is due to the exploratory nature of the study.

6 – Recommendations

Having previously concluded that the research findings contribute to the breadth of the current literature on the attitude-behaviour gap and addresses a research gap in the literature, this chapter aims to give recommendations for management practice and future research projects based on the findings.

The findings of this study mostly agreed with assumptions made by previous research as findings were similar. However, it uncovered dissimilarities in terms that certain themes such as the influence of social groups on green purchase behaviour, which came up in previous research, did not appear to have any validity or meanings in this study. Notwithstanding, the researcher argues that the research has provided great insights and has overall answered the research questions. The data and its contribution has the potential to enable researcher to further investigate the attitude-behaviour gap in green consumerism.

6.1 Managerial Recommendations

Considering the findings, the researcher will now suggest measures recommended to close the attitude-behaviour gap in adult male consumers. Firstly, findings of this study will enable policy makers and managers to understand what hinders consumer to purchase green products. Understanding these barriers is of high importance as this will enable marketers to tailor their offering and marketing strategies to promote a more sustainable consumption amongst consumers which can have a positive effect on the environment. Saunders et al. (2012) highlight the importance of recommendations when doing exploratory research. This will help the reader to understand how the study results will assist in future business activities (Polonsky and Waller, 2015). The researcher perceives this section as helpful

to show her ability not only to undertake research but interpret the results in a meaningful and practical way.

Firstly, findings suggest that lack of trust and cynicism is one of the main drivers behind adult male consumers not purchasing green products. Marketers and managers need to find ways to make consumers trust them. They need to find ways to convince consumers about their ethical integrity in order to reduce the cynicism the male consumer feels. This can be done through creating more transparency. In fact, it was oftentimes mentioned that consumers do not trust labels on green products. Marketers should create reliable and unified certificates which the consumer understands. If the consumer sees one certified label on all green products, this would create more transparency. Furthermore, adult male consumers have been found to have a low level of perceived consumer effectiveness. Therefore, it is recommended to managers to find ways to convince the male consumer that their green purchases can make a difference to the environment and persuade him to purchase the products. This could be done through an effective marketing strategy.

Furthermore, providing the consumer with information will enable them to make informed decisions. The researcher however points out that participants oftentimes felt confusion when it came to green products. Therefore, it is recommended to convey information so that it does not further confuse or alienate the consumer. As price is a key barrier, the researcher recommends two ways to convince the male consumers to purchase green products. Firstly, a lower price would enable those who argue that they cannot afford green products. While this might be difficult, marketers should also communicate a clear message to the consumer regarding the price. For instance, marketers could argue that the price of a certain is higher but at the same time communicate that it has benefits for the environment.

Lastly, a key barrier has been found to be lack of availability. It is obvious that a recommendation would be to increase the availability of green products but

it is also recommended to increase the visibility of existing green products in store. It is recommended for managers to make green products stand out from conventional products and use price promotion to encourage male consumers to try out the product. Furthermore, recommendations can also be made to policy makers. For instance, policy makers should raise awareness of the benefits of green products to further encourage purchases. Policy makers could further offer incentives to organisations as well as political agenda-setting around promoting green products.

6.2 Recommendations for Future Research

As previously mentioned, due to the exploratory nature of the study and the fact that the research area is far from being exhausted, researcher should aim to create further understanding on the attitude-behaviour gap. Firstly, the researcher would recommend for future research to analyse both genders and to explore how or whether the factors influencing the attitude-behaviour gap vary. Furthermore, future research could consider the specific barrier variables that have been discussed in this study and how a specific factor such as price influences the attitude-behaviour gap. As this research was cross-sectional, a longitudinal approach could be considered for future research in the attitude-behaviour gap in green consumerism in the context of adult male consumers as this could enable the researcher to developmental trends in this research area.

Word Count: 15370

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8 – Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Interviewee to introduce themselves: Name, Age, Occupation and income, Ethnicity, Gender

The research will be totally anonymous and your name will not be mentioned in the paper. The research will make of synonyms.

RQ1: To what extent are male adult consumers concerned with the environment

- Generally speaking, are you aware of damages that consumers do to the environment such as global warming, environmental pollution and decline of flora and fauna?
- If so, what kind of examples could you tell me where consumers do damage to the environment?
- Would you consider yourself to be concerned with the environment?
- Why do you care about the environment? Or Why do you not care about the environment?
- Is that something that is close to your heart or how would you describe your green attitude?

RQ2: To what extent are male consumers aware of green products?

- Are you aware of so-called green products?
- Could you give me some examples of green products you know of?
- What do green products mean to you?

RQ3: How does a positive environmental attitude influence male adult consumer's purchase behaviour?

- Do you purchase and/or consumer green products?
- If so, how frequently do you purchase/consume green products?
- Or: Why do you not purchase green products?
- Do you think your green purchase/consumption has or will have a positive impact?
- What would you think the impact would be?

RQ4: What are the key barriers that hinder male adult consumers to purchase green products?

- Are there any barriers that hinder you to purchase green products?
- What are your current habits in terms of purchasing and consuming products?

- Would you consider yourself to be comfortable with your habits so you do not want to change those?
- Do you see any benefits to purchasing green products?
- Do you think your social group has an influence?
- Do you think that lack of availability is a barrier?
- Do you trust green products?
- Do you think you have enough information or knowledge on green products?
- What do you think about the price of green products?
- What are other barriers to you not purchasing green products?

Thank participant for their time. If they have any questions or concerns regarding the research, they should feel free to contact me.

Appendix 2: [Sample Interview Transcript](#)

(J) Thank you for participating in this interview. As I previously mentioned, it is anonymous so I won't be using your name in the paper but will make use of a synonym. Please introduce yourself with your name, age, ethnicity, gender and occupation.

(K) (Kai), age is 27, ethnicity is Bangladeshi, I am male and I work part time at a coffee shop and part time student.

(J) Are you aware of damages that consumers do to the environment?

(K) Yes. I am quite aware of this.

(J) Could you give me some examples?

(K) For example, when I but a bottle of water or any kind of drink that comes in a plastic bottle I will throw it into the bin. And you can see in the news that these bottles are going into the rivers, seas and ocean and it is harming the environment. Also, all the packaged things that we consume we just throw it away and it goes to landfill.

(J) Are you concerned with the environment?

(K) Yes, actually because if we damage the environment, we are the ones who are going to suffer from it. If we don't look after the environment, issues such the greenhouse effect arise and it's not good for the people nor the planet. We are doing things that are heavily damaging the environment and damaging ourselves. We should focus more on whatever we are using and whatever we are doing we should look after the environment. For example, we should stop cutting so many trees. Instead we should make use of recycling the paper or furniture or any product so we avoid not having these resources anymore.

(J) Do you think that you as an individual could have a positive impact on the environment? Or would you say that you don't feel personally responsible for preserving our environment?

(K) I think everyone is responsible for the environment because we are all using and living on this planet. We should try our best not to damage it. But if me as an individual can have an impact, I don't think so, but I wish, I really wish.

(J) Are you aware of so-called "green products"?

(K) Yes, I know what green products are. I know of electric and hybrid cars and foods and other things. (Pause) Green products are produced in an ethical manner.

(J) Do you purchase and consume green products?

(K) Most of the time I don't buy these products because they are expensive. That's the one point that stop me from buying these things. If it was affordable to buy those products then I would buy them. Also as a part-time student and part-time worker I have a limited budget and green products are more expensive so I have no choice than buying normal products because they are cheaper.

(J) Do you generally think that purchasing green products has a positive effect on the environment?

(K) Yes definitely because for example ethically sourced food products they don't use any fertilizers. Normal products they use fertilizers and that's very bad for the environment because when it rains the fertilizers are washed into the water bodies and other places. I think all people should look after the environment. One person can't really make a difference but if more people would buy green products than that would encourage more people so it would have a bigger effect.

(J) Would you consider purchasing green products?

(K) If it was affordable I would. But the reality is different.

(J) So, what are the barriers for you not to purchase green products?

(K) Firstly, I already said it's the financial issue. Secondly, I would say that I am more used to normal product than the green products. I have used normal products all my life so I am used to them. I am not used to buying organic food or sustainable clothing, you know?

(J) Do you think there is a habit when you buy things?

(K) Yes. I buy the same things so I tend to overlook other maybe new products.

(J) In terms of your social group, how would they react if you would start purchasing green products?

(K) They will also support me. They wouldn't discourage me because they know themselves the impact that us consumers have on the environment. Even if they would not encourage me, I wouldn't care because I am my own person I make my own decisions.

(J) Do you think there is a lack of availability of green products?

(K) Yes. When there is high competition in the market, the price goes down. But there are not many supermarkets offering green products or not many companies producing them so the price is high so they don't offer those products. If you go to an off-license show you would never find an ethical product because it's not easy to sell. If my local corner shop would offer a green product at a reasonable price then I might buy it. Especially it would be important for me to have a consistent supply of these products, reliability to get it everywhere. It would be important for me to get the same green product in every shop rather than it only being available in one specific shop.

(J) Do you trust green products?

(K) Sometimes it says on the package that it is organic or that it has been sourced ethically but how do I know that that's the truth? Because I don't know if they really are. Many companies claim they are selling sustainable products but I feel like they are all the same products with different packaging. Just money-making somehow.

(J) Is there a lack of information regarding green products?

(K) The government should do more advertising saying what the benefits are of green products and recycling and so on because lots of people don't care because they simply don't know. Even I don't know a lot about how to find green products and where. I know it's better for the environment but how am I supposed to buy them if I don't know how? And what are the reasons why I should buy green products even though they are more expensive? If people, including me, would get a proper knowledge about green products then there would also be an increase in people buying them.

(J) Do you think time hinders you to buy green products?

(K) It is not easy to read all the labels all the time and with organic products you would have to read the label first to know that it is organic for example. With normal products, I don't have to read the label so it takes more time to buy organic products. It is a factor that puts me off. I want to buy whatever takes less time.

(J) You already mentioned price. Is this your main reason why you don't buy green products?

(K) Yes, if a green product is more expensive then I will choose the normal product because I have a budget. Value for money is very important for me.

(J) Thank you so much for your time. If there is anything you want to know about the research, or you have any concerns, please feel free to contact me.

END

Appendix 3: [Ethics Approval Letter](#)



Date: 23/7/18

Dear Jessica,

Student Names:	Jessica Gajewski
Student ID Number	U1413379
Project Title:	Attitude-Behaviour Gap in Green Consumerism among Men: An Exploratory Analysis
Project/Dissertation Module Code:	MK7227
Supervisor Name:	Ayantunji Gbadamosi

I am writing to confirm the outcome of your application to the School Research Ethics Committee (UREC), which was considered at the meeting on **11/07/2018**.

The decision made by members of the Committee is **Approve**. The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation. Your study has received ethical approval from the date of this letter.



Approval will be given on the understanding that the [UEL Code of Good Practice in Research](#) is adhered to.

Please ensure you retain this letter for your records.

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of this project. Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Kelly', written over a horizontal line.

**Dr Aidan Kelly Senior Lecturer in Marketing
Chair of School Research Ethics Committee (Business) Royal Docks School of Business and Law
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