

**Are Ethical Toiletries And Cosmetics Important In The Irish Market? –
Understanding Consumer's Behaviour**

Research dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
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MSc in International Business Management

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I certify that the dissertation entitled: Are Ethical Toiletries And Cosmetics Important in the Irish Market? – Understanding Consumer's Behaviour

submitted for the degree of: MSc in Global Brand Management is the result of the my own work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgment is given.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Sara Somohano. The person who made me the woman I am today and who has supported me throughout all the processes of my life, always encouraging me to be a better person and to improve myself day by day.

Thank you for the words of motivation, for being there for me regardless of the time or the problem.

Thank you for being the person you are with me. The world is a more beautiful place because you are in it.

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Abstract

Are Ethical Toiletries and Cosmetics Important in the Irish Market? – Understanding Consumer’s Behaviour

Renata Pérez Somohano

This dissertation examines whether Irish consumers have an ethical approach while buying toiletries and cosmetics. There were 6 main objectives that helped to assess how large and consistent the sustainability awareness on the Irish market is and if this knowledge is put into practice when consuming toiletries and cosmetics.

With 2 different focus group with semi-structured interviews that offered a less strict formalized questions allowing the participants to have a conversation and to listen each other’s opinions it was discovered that there is a massive lack of information regarding the ethical issues in the cosmetics and toiletries industry. Consumers have basic knowledge about what happens within it.

It was also discovered that the biggest problems for the consumers to change from a non-ethical product to an ethical one is not that they do not want but, that the products are more expensive, making them not sustainable for the consumer, they cannot find them in regular supermarkets and also that they believe that the big leader brands are doing a good job at being ethical.

People in Ireland believe they are doing good to some level and they are trying to reduce their plastic consumption and start being aware if a product is cruelty free but, without good sources of information that bring all the relevant issues to the Irish consumers, they will not be aware of the whole picture to decide in an informed way what type of cosmetic or toiletry they are going to buy and how this decision affects their country and the whole world.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The topic that will be explored is the behaviour of consumers in Ireland when choosing and purchasing toiletries and cosmetics. Toiletries and cosmetics are categorized as FMCG, which stands for Fast Moving Consumer Goods; FMCG are inexpensive products that does not stay long in the shelves as they have a high demand, and are purchased and consumed frequently, at least once per month.

The range of FMCG product is vast; cleaning products and processed food and beverages, to mention some (Kenton, n.d.). However, this research will be mainly focused on toiletries and cosmetics and whether people care about buying products that are ethical and sustainable or not.

This paper focuses on cosmetics and toiletries as it is particularly relevant to know the importance that consumers in Ireland give to this industry, which by its size and the broad variety of products that contains, we could infer that most of the population use them in one way or another, as they cover from oral hygiene, skin / hair / body care, perfumes to decorative cosmetics. It is worth mentioning that depending on the person, the frequency of use or the use of the products could change and it normally does not require much involvement to buy them. Suggesting that these purchases are not very well analysed by the consumers beforehand.

The term sustainability appeared for the first time in the *Oxford English Dictionary* during the second half of the 20th century, however synonyms were used for centuries before it appeared in the aforementioned dictionary. (Van Zon, cited in Du Pisani, 2006).

The meaning of the word according to the same dictionary is “the use of natural products and energy in a way that does not harm the environment” (Oxford, n.d.) but currently people around the world seem to use it more like a buzz word without having a clear understanding of the real meaning of it (Du Pisani, 2006), Without

having a clear understanding of the concepts and consequences and issues that are involved within the manufacture, distribution and purchase of FMCG products, all the efforts that organizations, governments, companies and the public in general try to make to be more sustainable and ethical day by day may be in vain by not having the scope that they could have if they were better grounded or they could become concepts that go out of style making them disposable.

1.1 Research Purpose

The aim of this dissertation is to understand the consumption behaviour in Ireland towards cosmetics and toiletries. Exploring the knowledge of the consumers regarding the implications of the products that they purchase in a frequent manner and how they affect the ecosystem they live in and others when the products are not made locally.

One of the focal points to be scouted is what are the motivators of the Irish consumers when deciding which product, they want to buy. For example, if their approach while buying toiletries and cosmetics is hedonistic, like keeping up with trends and see new products or enjoy shopping for bargains and sales Hong, (Kim and Hong, 2011), or utilitarian. Knowing how the consumers decide or think during their path to purchase can be important for the FMCG industry in case they want to move towards a more sustainable/ethical approach from manufacturing their products to advertise them in a way that appeals consumers motivation.

There are different reports and indicators like the one done in 2020 by The Environmental Performance Index, which provides a quantitative basis for comparing, analysing, and understanding the environmental performance of 180 countries in the world (EPI, 2020). In this index Ireland scored 72.8, placing the country in number 16 out of 180. The country with the highest score is Denmark with 82.5.

This index shows that the Irish government is doing things properly or going in the right direction to ensure that the country and its habitants have good present and

future. One of the indexes where Ireland scored high, with 81.7/100 (EPI, 2020), is waste management.

However, these indexes show that the government is doing their job, but it does not show the relationship with individuals and how they handle their waste, both when they are at home and on public roads. This point should be examined as it speaks to the importance that consumers in Ireland attach to the disposal of the products they bought. This means that we must know if they care and/or know where their waste goes regardless of whether they have recycled correctly, or if they consider that only buying products that say they do not damage, or damage ecosystems less, is more than enough.

It is the same situation for the origin of the ingredients of cosmetics and toiletries, such is the case of the use of, the controversial, palm oil in the EU, which ranks second, after India, in importing it from Indonesia and Malaysia (Oosterveer, 2020)

1.2 Significance of the Study

In the past years the terms ethical and sustainable and eco-friendly concepts have become more popular around the world and people in Ireland seem to have become increasingly more aware of how problematic the use of certain material, such as plastic can be for the environment (The Nielsen Company, 2018).

To give a current example, a report suggests that 52% of Irish consumers seek to avoid the use of plastic packaging whenever they can (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2019) to buy items with less packaging compared to 37% globally. Although the topic is on the rise, I have not found any information that determines how broad this knowledge is and how it affects the decisions that they make in their path to purchase in this category.

With the information collected we will not only be going to know if people in Ireland possess relevant information about sustainability and ethical problems related to cosmetics and toiletries, such as the use of Mica and child exploitation and other social

problems in India (Schipper and Kiezebrink, 2016) or the use of the palm oil and animal testing, among other issues related to industry

but also, what are the real motivators that consumers have when choosing one product over the other and what needs to be done to persuade them to act in a more sustainable way while buying toiletries and cosmetics while acknowledging the implications that their purchases can have.

Last but not least, we will be able to know if their purchasing decisions would change in case of knowing all the issues within the industry that put the integrity of many individuals and ecosystems at various a different type of risk that at the end, not only affects a group of individuals but all of the world.

1.3 Research Objective

For this study I have chosen main objectives that can be answered with the following questions that will help us assess how large and consistent the sustainability awareness on the Irish market is and if this knowledge is put into practice when consuming toiletries and cosmetics.

1. What are the factors that affect the decision purchase when buying toiletries and cosmetics?
2. How do they decide what they want to purchase and from whom?
3. From which sources do consumers get information about the product that they are planning on buying?
4. How well informed are consumers in Ireland about environmental and societal issues related to FMCG?
5. Do the origin and where the product ends matters?
6. How willing are the Irish consumers to change from their favourite cosmetic brands to more ethical and sustainable ones?

1. What are the factors that affect the decision purchase when buying toiletries and cosmetics?

The first objective seeks to know the different stages of the consumer in which the product considers the product, acquires information about it and decides whether to buy it or not. (Hendrix, n.d.)

There are different stages that need to be considered in this path of purchase and the factors affecting it, 1 is the need of recognition, 2 the information search, 3 evaluation of alternatives, 5 post purchase (Hoyer et al., 2012 cited in Willems *et al.*, 2017).

2. How do they decide what they want to purchase and from whom?

When the consumer evaluates their alternatives before deciding which product or products are going to be part of their daily cosmetic routine, there are several factors that can interfere with the decision and, depending on how strong is the loyalty towards a brand or another specific cosmetic requirement, the whole process can start again if the first evaluation was not convincing over and over again, until all the needs are fulfilled.

3. From which sources do consumers get information about the product that they are planning on buying?

With this particular objective we will enquire and gather insight from which are the sources in from which the people in Ireland gather their information before starting their evaluation process. Gather information is important as it will show what type of information they look for and if some, all or none is related to the sustainability of the products they use.

4. How well informed are consumers in Ireland about environmental and societal issues related to FMCG?

After knowing which type and from where the consumers in Ireland gather information and if some of this information is related to sustainability. The fourth objective wonders what are the issues that they acknowledge and how important they are for them and their purchase intentions and actions.

5. Does the origin matter?

The 4th and 5th question are correlated as a lot of the problematics that the cosmetics and toiletries issues face start in the origin of the ingredients and how they are sourced.

6. How willing are the Irish consumers to change from their favourite cosmetic brands to more ethical and sustainable ones?

The last objective seeks to inquire about intention vs action at the time of purchase. Especially when talking about products that may have been used for many years and that have become people's favorites for one or more different reasons such as price, ingredients, recommendation, trends, etc.

1.4 Structure of the Study

The dissertation is divided into 5 chapters that will make up the complete dissertation. Each of the chapters has relevant information to understand the need of this research. The first chapter comprises the introduction of the subject, the purpose of the study and its aims and objectives. In the second chapter the reader will find a review of important peered review literature of sustainability and consumer behaviour and

toiletries and cosmetics in a European context and more specific, in an Irish context. In the second chapter the framework developed for this research will be found.

The third chapter evaluates the research methods and approach used for this dissertation, followed by an explanation of the decision-making process. The conclusions from the qualitative data obtained by the primary research are presented in the fourth chapter where they will be presented, analysed and discussed.

The fifth and last chapter of this dissertation contains the study's conclusion and suggestions. It also discusses the restrictions that the researcher encountered while doing the investigation. It also includes additional suggestions that would provide greater depth to future research.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Overview

In chapter 2; Literature Review it can be find relevant literature that the author explored according to the study that was being undertaken and with the solely purpose of get a great understanding of a vast majority of topics and subtopics that were related to the study like; toiletries and cosmetics, consumer behaviour, ethical consumerism, trends in Ireland and traceability or origin of the product.

The analysis of these topics and subtopics is of greater importance for the study, since, without knowing them, we could be repeating a study that has been done on several occasions. Resulting in minimal or no contribution to the investigation.

In addition, having great knowledge of the topics will help us to be able to guide the methodology and formulate the appropriate questions for the study subjects and thus, answer our 6 objectives

2.2 Toiletries and Cosmetics

In order to understand what is happening in an industry, it is necessary to acknowledge all the areas of it, including the ones that could be obvious, like the definition of something. Sometimes words can even have different meanings depending on the country or other contextual situations. On this research, the focus is cosmetics and toiletries, that in most cases, the two categories seem to be positioned with the same definition, as is the case of the definition given by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (2016) that says:

"A cosmetic product means any substance or mixture intended to be placed in contact with the external parts of the human body (epidermis, hair system, nails, teeth mucous membranes or oral cavity) to exclusively or mainly to cleaning them, perfuming them, changing their appearance, protecting them, keeping them in good condition or correcting body odours".

But cosmetics and toiletries go beyond a simple definition. They have significant importance in the socio-economics of Europe. For its economic contribution, we could divide it into three main kinds; direct impact, indirect impact and induce impact. In the social aspect, cosmetics and toiletries have emotional repercussions on the consumers' lives by boosting people's self-esteem (Cosmetics Europe and Risk & Policy Analysts Ltd, 2019). Cosmetics are so important to people's lives that studies suggest that makeup is as good an enhancer as music for enhancing positive mood resulting in improved cognitive performance (Palumbo et al., 2017). This phenomenon can be placed in the lipstick effect and can cause overconsumption of cosmetics or toiletries. There are thousands of different brands within the industry; however, statistics show the main competitors in Europe.

L'Oréal Paris is at the top of the list with 11.7 billion dollars in revenue, followed by Nivea with 7.4 billion dollars, and after by Chanel Garnier, whose parent company is L'Oréal and in fifth place Dove (Unilever) (Statista, 2020).

This trend can also be seen in Ireland, our country of interest with L'Oréal S.A., Procter & Gamble (this is the only brand that does not appear in the previous statistic). Unilever is in the top three companies in the Irish cosmetics & toiletries industry (Report Linker, 2020). In 2018, the European cosmetics market was valued at €78.6 billion, establishing Europe as the world's largest cosmetics market. (Cosmetics Europe and Risk & Policy Analysts Ltd, 2019).

Being the largest cosmetic market in the world, Europe presents fantastic opportunities for exporting natural ingredients for cosmetics, and the demand for them keeps growing at the same time that people are more and more concerned

about the synthetic and chemicals in the cosmetics and toiletries that they use every day. This change on consumers mind is starting to make companies think or replace their chemicals for more natural ingredients or at least some of them.

Although the growth of this particular product is undeniable, the European natural cosmetics market is valued at €3.6 billion in 2018; less than 5% of all the market share (CBI and Ecovia intelligence, 2020).

2.3 Companies and Trends in Ireland

In terms of value, in 2019 the Irish cosmetics and toiletry business was topped by the skincare segment (Report Linker, 2020). However, in 2020, this category was its impact on the market decreased, especially in luxurious products, due to the consequences, such as lack of employment that COVID brought not only to Ireland, but to the whole world (Euromonitor, 2021b).

Clarains and Olay lost market share for diverse reason like pricey products, but specially as people in Ireland started support local business even more than before (Euromonitor, 2021b) by a goal to directly benefit the society and secure public goods such as good jobs and safe neighbourhoods not only as a form of ethical consumption. As sometimes buying local is seen like buying green (Schoolman, 2020).

The personal hygiene category was forecasted to be the leading volume from 2019 to 2024, We can infer that this is true, and that it has also exceeded the percentages they had since, for example, after the covid outbreak, people tend to clean our hands much more frequently than we did previously.

In Ireland, the most common packing material is rigid plastic, and it makes perfect sense when comparing it to the 61 kg of plastic that each person in Ireland uses annually. The difference between other European countries and Ireland is a little more than double; with an average of 30kg per person. Making the country the biggest offender. (Sandra O'Connell, 2020)

With the lockdowns, the social distancing and not having to see people in a long time, men decided to stop invested in their grooming ritual which resulted in a decline for the men's fragrances and men's shaving industries. (Euromonitor, 2021)

There are thousands of companies that sell cosmetics and toiletries in Ireland, but L'Oréal S.A., Procter & Gamble, Unilever are the top three companies in the Irish market. (Report Linker, 2020) without considering the people that start buying from local shops.

2.4 Sustainable Consumption

Before starting to talk about the implications of ethical consumerism, we must delve into the definition one of the most important concepts for this research, Sustainable Consumption:

Sustainable consumption

“Is the use of services and related products, which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or product so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations”. (UNEP, 2022)

There are many actors in the attempt to achieve a global sustainable consumption which have different ways to attack, or make it worse, the problematics that the mass consumption has.

The first actor is the consumer, who nowadays are adopting a much more slower lifestyle. Specially foodwise. Global communications also aids in the spread of these lifestyle changes in the societies by showing and making the individuals for the society

acknowledge the harmful nature of their consuming patterns (Schor, 1998 cited in Fuchs and Lorek, 2004)

The second actor are the businesses which are perceived to be the ones least interested in changing the consumption patterns due to the mass production, or cheap products, that in most cases, they are in charge of (Fuchs and Lorek, 2004).

The only way for a strong consumption sustainability to happen is internalized the costs. Internalization would imply greater production costs as well of pricing for customers, who would then be unable to purchase as much as they are currently doing. As a result, the company would experience a decrease in sales without a rise in profit margins.

The next, and third actor are the governments as they play a great role with respect to sustainable development and consumption as they are normally needed for provision of public good and play a significant part influencing the socio-economic constraining consumption. (Fuchs and Lorek, 2004)

The last actor, but the one, apart from governments, that has more impact in the sustainable consumption are the IGOs but they have to be sensible to governmental interests, that a lot of times are not directed towards sustainability and can change depending on the development of the country but, if the interest of a government, business and the IGOs need to be “political correct”, what is the best way towards sustainability? Who is the actor to blame?

2.5 Consumer Behaviour

After having a broad understanding of the cosmetics industry and the role they play in consumer life, we need to uncover how consumers in Ireland decide what, why, when and where they will buy personal care products and thus meet the objectives of the dissertation. Specially, to get to know which are the factors that affect their purchase decision when buying toiletries and cosmetics, which information is relevant to them and if they will be open to change their products of choice for more ethical ones.

A significant element of interest is consumer behaviour which can be categorised into five stages. These stages are; problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase and post-purchase evaluation, better known as the EKB model, named after the model's developers Engell, Kollatt and Blackwell (1974). The stages can be defined as follows:

Problem recognition is the stage where the stimulus happens; this stimulus can come from social media, tv, radio, advertising, family friends. One of the aspects that knowing from where Irish consumers are getting their stimulus will help us understand is if they have considered different aspects that were not in their minds in the past after someone showed that to them. Knowing the "new" aspects to consider does not necessarily mean that they change their products.

The second stage is information search, in this stage is where the consumer goes in search of finding available options in the market After identifying a need, new or existent, the consumer will search for information that will show them what is available in the market (Palmer 2000, cited in Ashman et al., 2015).

The third stage of the EKB model is the evaluation of alternatives. As its name suggests, this is where the consumers evaluate and categorise their options. While they categorise their product options, we can categorise the evaluative tools that they use; these tools can be passive such as product reviews and blogs or active (Breugelmans et al., cited in Ashman *et al.*, 2015)

The second and third stages, Information search and evaluation of alternatives, are of particular interest as they relate to two of the research objectives; knowing where Irish consumers get their information and the factors that make them decide. The previous stages show if consumers only focus on a small number of products, even when they have a vast selection to choose from as Hauser and Wernerfelt suggested (1990) or if their evaluation of products has broadened, or become shorter, with the amount of stimulus received every day.

According to Google (2020), In the past 15 years, the search "cheap" declined; meanwhile, the search for "best" increased. There are two interesting factors in this finding. The first one is that the modifier that decreases, "cheap", is quantifiable and precise and "best" resembles the emotional part of the product and is less precise as it can refer to many things such as value or quality. Brands no longer just sell products; they know that selling emotions linked to a physical product will be more successful than only a product by itself. That is one of the reasons why consumers are willing to spend more money on branded products even if they have similar alternatives for a lower price. (Bronnenber,2012)

The next stage is the purchase; this stage is highly important as it needs to be as pleasant as possible. Otherwise, brands have the risk that the consumer decides at the last minute that the product they selected was not what they were expecting, and then, the whole process would start again.

Finally is the Post Purchase experience, where the products are analysed one more time, according to the consumer's expectations created in the model's first stages. Variables that might be considered are performance, and if they are interested in the environment, they might also like to know how it can be disposed of and its environmental consequences. This is the stage where the consumers analyse if the product performed its intended function if it was pleasant to have or use and if they are interested in the environment; they might also like to know how it was disposed and its environmental consequences.

One of the models to uncover the behaviour of people in 2021, as both of them are no longer linear, which allows capturing all the touchpoints and key buying factors, is the Mckinsey's Model. This model is a four-phased circular journey: initial consideration; active evaluation,; closure; and post purchase. (Court et al., n.d.)

This model contradicts what Hauser and Wernerfelt (1990) when they declared that consumers only have 2 or 3 options in mind when making a purchase decision. On the other hand, Mckinsey's model mentions that although in the initial phase the consumer has a preference for certain brands, in the active search for the purchase

other brands may enter the buyer's consideration, which would lead to the interruption of the decision.

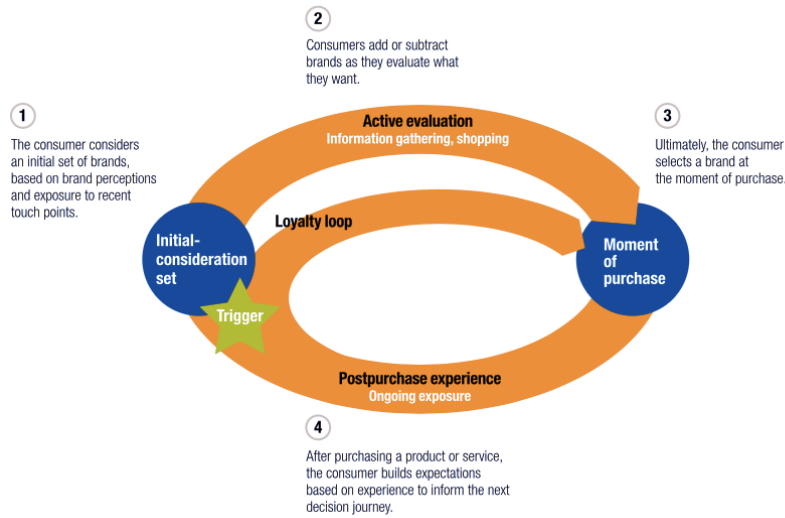


Figure 1: McKinsey Circular Consumer Journey Model (Court et al., n.d.)

2.6 Ethical Consumer

In the perfect world, all consumers will be seeking ethical products and boycotting the ones that are not. However, this is not necessarily the case for every individual. Even though consumers nowadays are more "sophisticated", we cannot be sure that they are participants in ethical and thoughtful practices (Titus and Bradford, 1996 Carrigan and Attalla, 2001).

Consumers are of great importance to achieve sustainable consumption, the market only produces what the consumers around the world demand. However, as Ropke points out, they are not the ones to blame because their choices of products are not made in order to damage the ecosystems but based on their socioeconomic situation, time, and human resources. (Ropke, 1999 cited in Fuchs and Lorek, 2004)

Consumers have sparse knowledge about a company's ethics and it might be unlikely that they will change to another brand or product if they discover that their brand preference is unethical. This assumption is based on previous studies like the one done by (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001), that where was done almost 21 years ago. Meaning that the action and intention of the consumers might have changed in those years, being more likely to change from one product to another if they were informed of unethical practiced made by certain companies.

Nowadays not all consumers are sophisticated or well informed but they are more aware of ethical issues. This awareness makes them more willing to stop buying products when they find out they are surrounded by unethical practices rather than select ethical ones from the beginning of their purchase journey (Trudel and Cotte (2008) cited in Sudbury-Riley and Kohlbacher, 2016) in contrary to what the previous studies suggested the consumers that are sophisticated, have a responsibility with the world they live in showing how they feel about the industries and their products by accepting their products (purchasing) or boycotting the companies (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Shaw and Shui, 2002; Carrington *et al.*, 2010).

When consumers stop buying products from a company for their unethical practices, they become part of the boycott. The importance of boycotters use their "purchase votes" to promote brands/companies with finer societal impacts (Dickinson and Hollander 1991; Smith 1990 cited in Klein *et al.*, 2018). The important part of the boycotts is that are done collectively. They usually start with an NGO, targeting both consumers and affecting the image of the corporations by releasing information through mass media (John and Klein, 2003).

Boycotts have been proved effective by making their shares fall but to make companies change their behaviour and practices (Davidson, Worrell, and El-Jelly 1995 cited in John and Klein, 2003), pushing both companies and governments to take positive actions or suffer from the consequences of not doing so. Boycotts also give information and highlight the problems to the regular consumers. This has been an important factor in the Irish market, where more than half of shoppers believe that companies need to do more than just be good. For example, supporting communities

in developing countries. (Irish Congress of Trade Unions, 2009). There are multiple names for this phenomenon of consumers taking responsibility of their purchase decision: "ethical consumerism", "ethical consumption", "ethical shopping" and "green consumerism".

Sadly, not everything has positive effects. With the amount of impacts (information) the consumers receive, they feel like they are being bombarded, leaving them confused and not knowing what to do. Being bombarded with information can make consumers forget what they have read or seen about a product and take them back to the start, where few options of products are considered.

After having done the literature review and having found trends towards sustainability in the cosmetics and toiletries market I will focus my dissertation on trying to identify insights from the Irish consumers. I will seek to know how do they feel about the ethics of the cosmetics and toiletries industry, if they are looking for relevant information about the ethical problems that the companies that produce toiletries and cosmetics are involved and, if so, which are the ones that are most repulsive to them or, if they do not care about ethical issues and for that reason they do not do any research to find information about the topic or, the a different scenario where the relevant information comes from common sources and do not search for any more than that.

Pointing out the inequalities between employees, animals, and the lack of environmental respect is one of the most important parts to start changing the consumers' perception of the brands they use and start demanding better practices. To do so, the public needs to be aware of the products' origins, transformation, and end. This can be done if government and companies start tracing their supply chain.

To get to know this information, my collection of primary data will be based on the Integrated model of purchasing behavior done by Angus-Leppan and Owen (2005).

This model expands from previous models and shows how the with exception of social norms, personal norms and their modifiers have a context-dependent impact while clarifying the trade-off between other demands and personal norms, as well as introducing a new concept called Personal Consumer Effectiveness (PCE).

In the model Social norms refers at the impact over the intentions directly through social sanctions, that are most prone to be significant for public behaviours where someone might censure the actor and harm the actor's social status (Schwartz (1977) and Davies et al (2002) cited in Angus-Leppan and Owen, 2005).

According to Ajzen and Fishbein, personal norms and buying intentions are identical (1988) and in the case of the study will be test mainly at the end, after having gone through all the questions by testing the intention vs action of their purchasing behaviour.

The awareness of consequence is the disposition to be conscious about the consequences of the potential harms to the welfare of others (Schwartz, 1968). This will be reviewed when asking participants about the information that they possess about ethical issues in which the cosmetics and toilet industry is involved.

In the case of Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) we will check the beliefs of the individual on how easy or complicated an action can be. For example, the price of ethical products and the availability of them and if these beliefs are factors affecting their purchase intention or decision.

PCE is where the view of a person them can a make a huge difference in the solution to this issue" (Angus-Leppan and Owen, 2005), sometimes if the person beliefs that they are not going to make any difference by changing a behaviour, they would not do it, and perhaps blame someone else, for example government and big companies.

Ascription of Responsibility is viewed as a precursor to behaviour rather than a result of intentions, and it is mediated by feelings of pride and remorse. All other things being equal, the greater the emotions connected with adhering to personal rules, the more likely people will regard themselves to be accountable for the outcome.

Figure 2: A contextual model of ethical purchasing

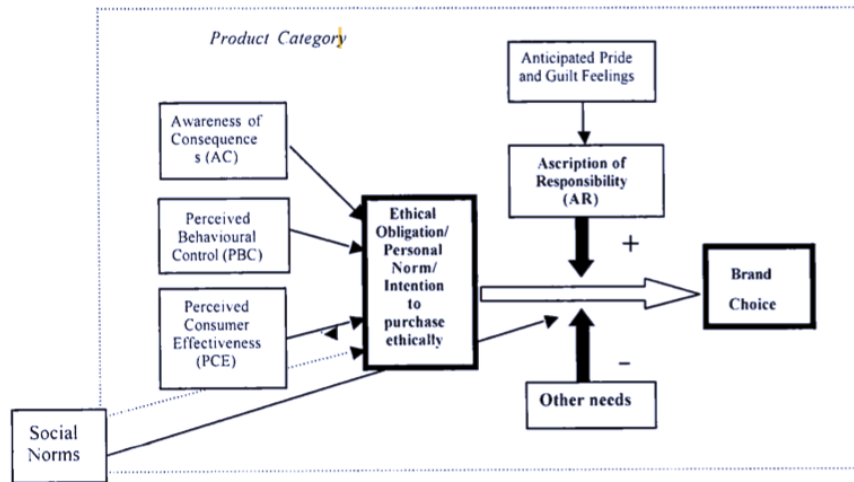


Figure 2: A Contextual Model Of Ethical Purchasing (Angus-Leppan and Owen, 2005)

With this model we will be able to recognize where the consumer is in terms of knowledge and desire and inclusive action in terms of changing their favorite products for more friendly alternatives for the planet.

2.7 Product Origin

Consumers tend to have their minds made up of a product's quality and reliability because of where it comes from.(Abraham and Patro, 2014). This phenomenon is called the COE, which stand for Country Origin Effect and it happens when people infer certain characteristics that a product or service has to have that certain characteristic (Andéhn *et al.*, 2016).

But what happens when consumers are not aware of where the products come form or what are and the circumstances in which the raw material or the manufacture of a product has been elaborated or processed? And the companies are not disclosing the information?

2.7.1 *Fair trade*

Fair trade is described by Low & Davenport as; “The act of selling goods as an opportunity to educate consumers about the need to change an unjust international trading system, and as a vehicle for demonstrating a practical alternative for trade that better serves the needs of people” (Low & Davenport, 2006 cited in Goff, 2018).

To educate consumers, they must be informed of the beneficial or bad consequences that choosing a fair trade product and one that is not, can have for thousands of people in different parts of the world.

One way of doing so is what Trade unions, and civil organizations do by highlighting the profits that business are making in developing countries and point out the ways to tackle inequalities to ensure good working conditions, and that products and/or services are ethical with humans, animals and environment. (Irish Congress of Trade Unions, 2009)

Fair trading has a well renowned mark in products that inform the consumer that workers' rights are protected throughout the supply chain. This mark also focuses on assisting underprivileged labourers in developing countries but because there is no recognized "ethically traded" label, it does not rely on customer awareness and it only applies on items, not businesses. (Ethical Trading Initiative, n.d.)

2.7.2 *Traceability*

A good description of traceability is: *Traceability is the ability to identify and trace the history, distribution, location and application of products, parts and materials, to ensure the reliability of sustainability claims, in the areas of human rights, labour (including health and safety), the environment and anti-corruption (UN Global Compact, 2014).*

To be able to trace a product it is necessary the use of a system that allows the companies to record and follow the product during all the supply chain. This system will also give information of the materials and all the transformation that occurred in the chain.

When put in the context of sustainability, traceability becomes a tool that checks and verifies all the sustainability claims associated with commodities and products. It reviews and ensures the good practices for people and the environment in the supply chain.

Traceability is more common for food, than for cosmetics due to different food problem that have occurred, like the mad cow disease. In this case, if the companies and suppliers have been tracing its products, they can know when, where and what happened that became a health hazard.

The problem here is that the health hazard is only being a problem when it is affecting the end user, not the manufacturers or collectors of raw materials.

Traceability should help to know and improve the precarious situations in which people and animals work, health problems, the environment, as well as protect the consumer. As I mentioned earlier, most of the time it only protects the person who is buying.

Nowadays people, suppliers and buyers, are even more interested and demand more information regarding the products, and condition under which they were produced not only to prevent illnesses but to understand the process and be part of it.

This public demands can be harder for bigger companies as they have complex supply chains that have opaque. This does not mean that a company does not know if they have good practices or no. It means that if something goes wrong it would be more challenging to find the source of the problem.

Nowadays there are very few traceable products and most of them, if not all, are in food. If the companies and the government wanted to attack this problem, they would have to get together, invest and develop new technology.

One of the easiest way for consumers to know that the products have been followed from the start is the certifications that validate the sustainability of a company has brought great outcomes for different sectors. For example; farmers with certifications have had bigger levels of production comparing them to other farmers that not have the same certifications.

Another easy way to gather information on the process is to go online where there are various consumer guides and websites, such as Ethical Consumer.

2.7.3 *Certifications*

While a lot of cosmetic products claim to be ethical, they sometimes are not that transparent by not disclosing information about their supply chain, ingredients, test, etc. That is why a third-verification party is necessary for costumers to build a trust with this so called sustainable and ethical brands.

The most common certifications in the industry are:

- Certified B Corporation
- EWG Verified
- Fairtrade International
- Forest Stewardship Council
- Global Organic Textile Standard
- Leaping Bunny Program
- PETA

2.8 Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework will provide an orientation to the study by showing how all of the elements align with each other. As Maxwell (2013) defines it, a conceptual framework is a tentative theory about a phenomena being study that informs the entire study's design.

This particular conceptual framework was made accordingly to the step that the author had to take to get to their findings.

After having read different literature, she realized that there was a model and authors that explained perfectly the way the consumers ethical mind works and is the watershed for the definition and creation of the questions that will be created in chapter 3, the methodology of the study. The model is A Conceptual Model of Ethical Purchasing by Anguss-Lepann and Ownes (2005)

The author consider all the secondary data that was read and reviewed in chapter 2, which was related to the topics: Toiletries And Cosmetics, Brands And Trends In Ireland, Consumer Behaviour, Ethical Consumer Behaviour and Traceability. Which help her find a model that that helped her to find a model that had all the definitions and stages of an ethical consumer for the realization of the questions in methodology. The model explained in chapter two can be found in ethical consumer. Which lead to the collection of primary data will be done by the methodology of qualitative approach in which insights data will be collected through focus groups with semi-structured interviews for a better conversation between participants and a survey to measure the action vs the intention. This will be all wrapped by the context of the Irish market where the study is taken place of, and of course the matter of the study, which is the cosmetic and toiletry industry and how important are the ethics for the Irish consumer.

All these steps will lead us to answer our 6 initial objectives, and perhaps to find more unanswered questions for future research.

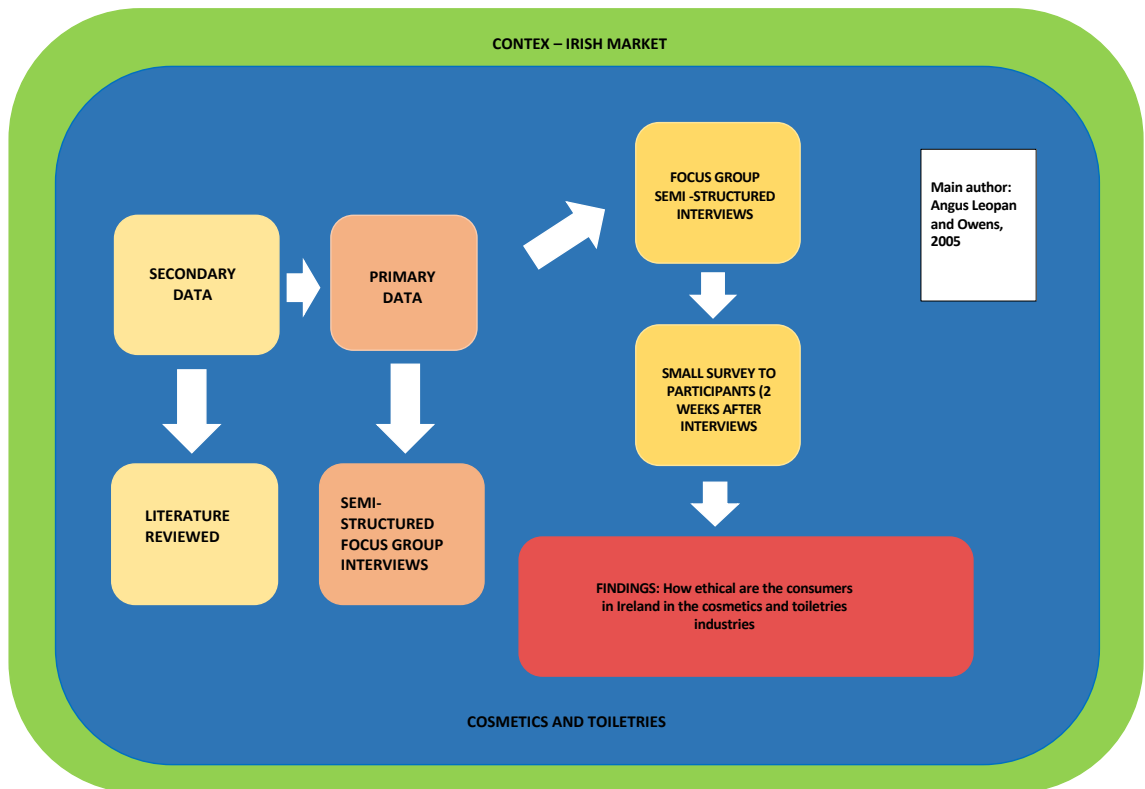


Figure 3: Conceptual Framework

2.9 Conclusion

The research topic of this paper has not been highly explored, much less in the Irish context and the studies that they have been made form ethical consumer behaviour in a European context can be They may be no longer valid as they were made more than 10 years ago, and consumer behavior is very changeable.

There are many more subtopics that could be used to learn even more about the context of the country and the cosmetic industry but due to time, there was a general approach to specific with the idea that the most specific will be the insights recollected by the methodology and discussed in the finding later in the study.

3 Methodology and Research Design

3.1 What is Research?

Research is more than just obtaining information. Rather, it's about finding answers to unresolved questions or building something that doesn't exist yet being a method of pushing the limits of our knowledge. (Goddard and Melville, 2004). Another way to explain what research is can be the art of searching for a theory, for testing it and/or solving problems that already exist, have been identified and need a solution. (Sevilla *et al.*, 1992)

3.2 Research Philosophy

Paradigm as “a way of thinking about and making sense of the complexities of the real world”. (Patton, 2002 cited in Kaushik and Walsh, 2019) but in social research, this term is used to show the philosophical views and presumptions of the researcher called “Worldview as a synonym of paradigm. (Kuhn 1970 cited in Kaushik and Walsh, 2019)

Every paradigm has a perspective on the epistemology, axiology, ontology of the research. The understanding of this terms is highly valuable

Epistemology

Epistemology comes from the Greek *epistêmê*, which essentially means "knowing." And is the philosophy of knowledge (Trochim, 2000 cited in Krauss, 2005) and it help to understand what is the relation between the knower and what is being recognized, as well as the possessed information and what constitutes the knowledge that we have about what is recognized. (Krauss, 2005)

Axiology

From the Greek word axios; Axiology studies the nature, type and criteria of values and value judgements specially in ethics. (The Merriam-Webster 2013 cited in Killam, 2013). What is important about axiology in research is that it relates to what the researcher finds ethic and valuable (Killam, 2013) which could possible change between researchers, even if they are exploring the same subject.

Ontology

From the Latin word ontología; Ontology refers to the researcher's beliefs about the nature of reality. Philosophically speaking it studies the existence of reality. (Killam, 2013) and it is often used by philosophers as a synonym of "metaphysics" studying which of the various alternative possible ontologies is in fact true of reality (Ingarden, 1964 cited in Floridi, 2003)

There are many approaches that a researches could take while undergoing on their journey. However, there are 4 that tend to be more dominant when they are applied in educational research (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017)

Positivism

First to consider is Positivism. This paradigm believes that the theory is universal and law-like generalisations can be made across contexts (context is irrelevant) and is normally used by researches that try to interpret observations as fact or measurable bodies (Fadhel, 2002 cited in Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017), by deducting logically, formulating hypothesis, and testing them afterwards, making equations and doing everything that can be measured to help them obtain conclusions.

The Positivist paradigm is stated to have objectivist epistemology, naive realism ontology, experimental methodology, and beneficence axiology. (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017)

Constructivism

The purpose of this paradigm is to comprehend the subjective realm of human experience by acknowledging that there are no universal laws but individual truths according to each's context (Guba & Lincoln, 1989 cited in Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). This paradigm attempts to 'get into the heads of the subjects being analysed,' in order to comprehend and interpret what are their thoughts and views regarding the matter of the research.

This paradigm gives emphasis to the viewpoint of the observed rather than what the observer thinks.

Its central principle is that reality is socially constructed. (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998 cited in Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017) and accepts the interaction between researcher and their participants.

This paradigm assumes a subjectivist epistemology, a relativist ontology, a naturalist methodology, and a balanced axiology.

Critical

If a researcher wanted to understand social, political or economic issues, they would have to use the Critical since it tries to reform politics in order to combat social injustice and enhance social justice in the circumstance. For this reason, this paradigm sometimes is called the Transformative paradigm. This paradigm assumes a transactional epistemology, an ontology of historical realism, a methodology that is dialogic, and an axiology that respects cultural norms. (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017)

Therefore the research philosophy that best suits my research is constructivism as I aim to understand the behaviour of the community in Ireland and constructivism emphasizes knowledge generation by "situating itself within the subject" (Delval, 1997, p.80 cited in Araya *et al.*, 2007). The research understands the subject based on the information that they possess and have available. Meaning that the responses can and

might be different from subject to subject depending on their own realities. (Araya *et al.*, 2007)

3.3 Research Approach.

For the purpose of this research and with the philosophy that will be undertaken for this particular study that investigates the behaviour of the Irish consumers in the cosmetic and toiletries industry the approach that will be used for the data collection is the qualitative method.

The qualitative method focuses on the human experience which will allow the author to understand the consumers in Ireland and their interaction between toiletries and cosmetics with the goal of facilitating the meaning-making process. (Krauss, 2005)

There are 2 subcategories of meaning: common meaning and unique meaning. (Erikson, 1963 cited in Krauss, 2005). Common meaning refers to the relation that some idea may have for a group of people whilst unique meaning is related to the personal meaning, that the common meaning, could have for an individual that is part of the group.

For that reason, it needs to be reminded that by choosing this method we cannot forget that there are no single nor objective reality but multiple realities based on subjective experience and circumstance.

The advantages of using this method are various, it incorporates the human experience and as it is an open-ended process there are no right or wrong answers from the participants, who perceive the identical event in 2 distinct ways. It is feasible to include the intricacy of this type of data into the findings drawn from the collected study by conducting qualitative research.

It is also a much more flexible approach seeking authentic responses from the participants unlike other approaches, that accept zero deviation.

But not everything is positive with this approach, one of its biggest disadvantages is that it relies upon the researchers experience but to ensure the quality of the data, researchers must have solid interviewing skills, the bravery to ask follow-up questions, and the ability to build professional ties with respondents.

Also findings can be lost if investigators are unable to view the data when they encounter they will lose it, reducing the accuracy of the qualitative research findings. This could potentially lead to erroneous results in some research projects.

Lastly, it may need multiple sessions to gather sufficient data meaning that it sometimes require more time to gather information that is authentic and good.

Besides being qualitative, the research approach that we are taking in this study is inductive, as we are starting with observations, the one that the author had previously to her research which lead her to choose the ethics of cosmetics and toiletries and the consumer behaviour in Ireland as a research topic for her dissertation and after to review the specific literature of the relevant topics with the aim of having a generalisation about the phenomenon that is being investigated (Hyde, 2000).

Regardless of the observations done previously, the author has an open mind to the possibilities that qualitative data might arise and the perspectives of the subjects that will take part on the study (Strauss and Corbin, 1994 cited Hyde, 2000).

3.4 Qualitative – Focus Group Sessions

For this particular study, interviews in form of focus groups will be done for the purpose of obtaining relevant information from the interviewees that will help the author (researcher) to answer the question from her objective by describing, predicting or explaining a phenomenon. (Cohen & Manion, 2007 cited in Muhammad

Dilshad and Ijaz Latif, 2013). Interviews are highly recommended for gathering information based on:

- Emotions, sentiments, and experiences
- Sensitive issues
- Insider knowledge, privileged insights, and experiences

Which in the case of this study they will help us assess how large and consistent the sustainability awareness on the Irish market and if this knowledge is put into practice when consuming toiletries and cosmetics.

The insights that the author gather for the data collection in the focus group are related to the aims and objectives seen in chapter 1, and that are the following:

1. What are the factors that affect the decision purchase when buying toiletries and cosmetics?
2. How do they decide what they want to purchase and from whom?
3. From which sources do consumers get information about the product that they are planning on buying?
4. How well informed are consumers in Ireland about environmental and societal issues related to FMCG?
5. Do the origin and where the product ends matters?
6. How willing are the Irish consumers to change from their favourite cosmetic brands to more ethical and sustainable ones?

Focus group

A focus group, often known as a focus group interview, is a qualitative data collection approach. "A focus group is a small group of people, usually six to nine in number, who are brought together by a trained moderator (the researcher) to explore attitudes and

perceptions, feelings, and thoughts about a topic.”(Muhammad Dilshad and Ijaz Latif, 2013).

As I am seeking to understand people’s behaviour in the toiletries and cosmetics industry in Ireland, the best way to carry out the focus groups are with semi-structured interviews as they are the best tool to get more insights on the topic of matter.

A semi-structured interview offers a less strict formalized question, allowing both parts to have a discussion rather than straightforward questions and answers

As the interview is more conversational, the interviewee will feel more comfortable sharing their opinions with the interviewer. The interviewer will be able to ask more detail information of their path to purchase, specifically about their motivators and how they feel about the ethical issues that surround the cosmetic industry.

The questions that will be asked in the focus group are represented in this flow chart that follows:

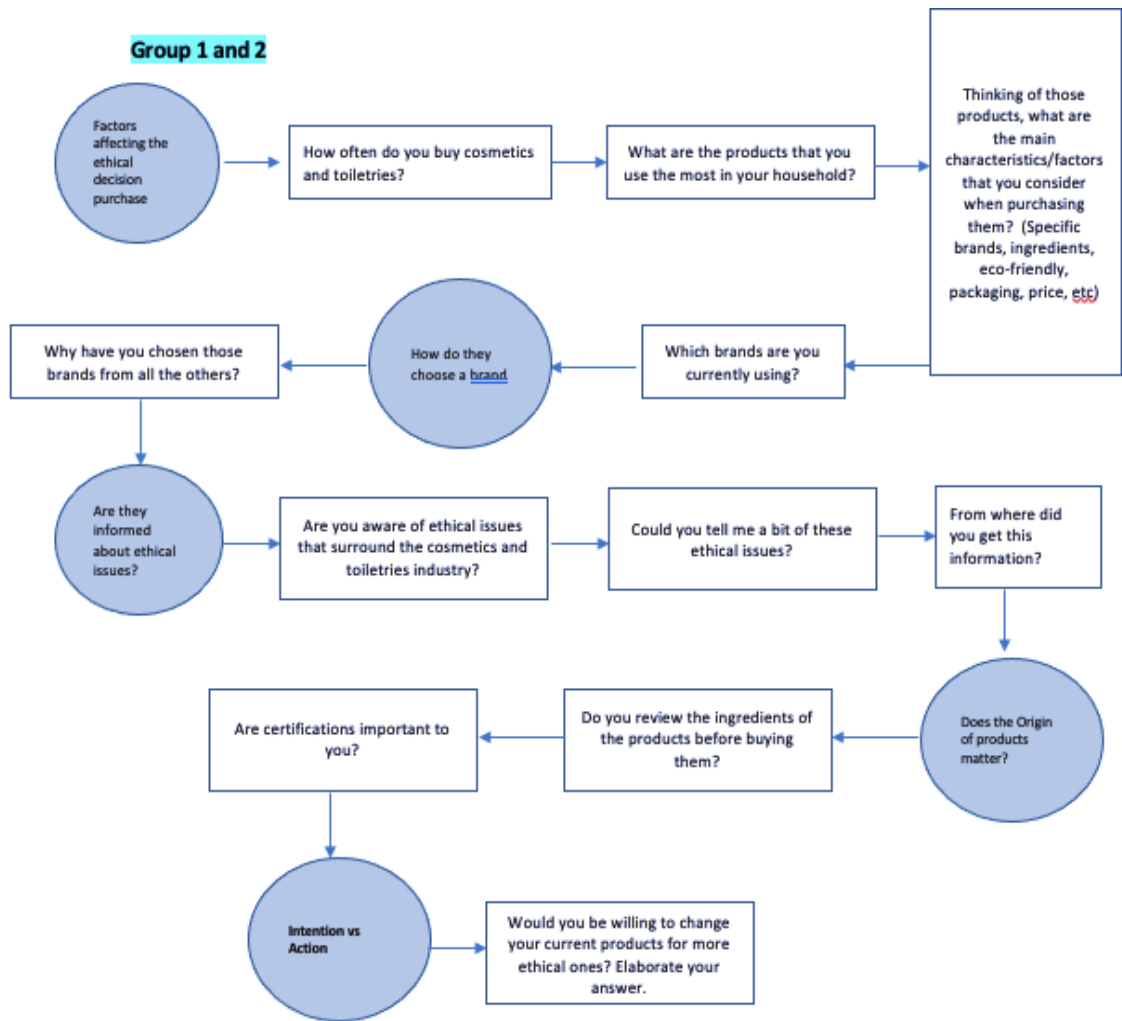


Figure 4: Focus Group Questions

After the last question, I will show different ethical problems that come with the choices that people regularly make while buying toiletries and cosmetics and after that I will ask what they think of that, what does that information makes them feel and if they were aware of that specific issue.

The interviews will be recorded so that, after all of the interviews have been completed, I can compare the outcomes and responses to see which patterns of behaviour are similar.

Slides with Ethical Issue

The two focus groups will be different, even though the questions are the same. One of the reasons is that people are different, and their responses can lead us to different paths at different times during the interviews. But, in addition to that, in group 2 there will be a change in dynamics, in which the participants will be presented with a case of lack of ethics in the cosmetic industry. This to know if having more information, their opinions change or their desire to make changes in their purchases expands.


The case that will be presented will be MICA in cosmetics and how its extraction implies on many occasions, since there are illegal mines, the labour exploitation of children.

To review the action vs the intention a small survey will be carry out in Monkey Survey 2 weeks after the focus groups. This small survey will allow me to have insights after the focus group to compare answers between subjects and check if perhaps a habit changed in their next shopping, while buying any type of toiletries or cosmetics or if they decisions where not influenced by anything that was discussed in the focus group.

For this the survey will be multiple choice so the subjects can answer in a very short time amount as the question are very straight forward and directed towards their next purchase.


The questions will be the following:

Toiletries and Cosmetics Ethics

1. Have you bought cosmetics or toiletries in previous weeks? 

Yes

No

2. If so, what did you buy? 

Hair products

Makeup

Body products

Dental care products

Other

3. What did you consider while buying the products? (If you did not purchase anything, write N/A) 

Price

Certification

Packaging

Trends


Ingredients (sourcing)

Ingredients (Active ingredients)

Other

4. Did any of your considerations change based on our focus group? 

- Yes
- No

5. Was your purchase more ethical? 

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- None at all

3.5 Collection Primary Data

Primary data is gathered for the specific research problem at hand, utilizing methodologies that are most suited to the study problem. Every time primary data is acquired, new information is added to the existing bank of social knowledge which later becomes secondary data.

Interviews are the most used source of data collection in qualitative studies (Blumberg et al., 2005 cited in Silva, 2020) which is not surprise when they are highly important to comprehend human experience. Qualitative research allows you to ask various questions that cannot be simply quantified.

The design of the study design participatory action research with a convenience sampling, which constitutes non-probability sampling (Sedgwick, 2013), but will be perfectly useful as the research does not have many limitations with respect to requirements to participate in the focus groups, since these requirements are very easy to fulfill.

3.5.1 Sources

Initially, I posted some posts on fb groups to find people who would like to participate in my focus group. The only requirements were to live in Ireland, and to use cosmetics or toiletries. Unfortunately, I did not have any response from people, so I decided to do the study with people I know but do not know each other.

Being convenience sampling and non-random sampling as people were target because of their availability and desire of participation apart from fulfilling all the requirements needed for the study. (Dörnyei, Z, 2007 cited in Etikan *et al.*, 2015)

I contacted all the participants via WhatsApp to ask for their support during my dissertation process for the collection of primary data and explain what my dissertation on cosmetics and toiletries in the Irish market is about and the ethics that goes hand in hand with these products and how it was going to be explored in the focus group. After confirming their interest, I sent them by mail the plain statement and a document requesting their participation in a formal manner for them to read and to sign.

With the intention of having two focus groups of 3 people, each one of the people I contacted has different ages and occupations, and, as mentioned previously, they do not know each other, to avoid that their answers were bias, or that they made the other person that does not belong to the group and resulting in a limitation of their participation.

3.5.2 *Access and Ethical Issues*

The researcher minimized all the possible risks that the subjects and the researcher could have faced by firstly, asking them for their written and verbal consent of their participation both verbal and written. In addition to asking them before recording the focus groups, if they agreed to it and reminding them that their participation was voluntary and that, if they wanted to disengage at any time, they could do so without any kind of reprisal and without having to give explanations to the researcher or the other participants. It was also clarified that if any question made them feel uncomfortable, they could decide not to answer it and there was no problem either.

Another way in which study subjects are being protected is by not revealing their names in the discoveries. They will all be known as P1, P2 and P3 depending on who is speaking and deleting all gather information as soon as the investigation is over.

3.6 Conclusion

To sum the methodology, we have to be aware that when dealing with human interactions, the qualitative approach with focus groups will give us much more enriching insights than just sending closed-ended questionnaires and, will allow us to take the questions in a way that the flow of the conversation is more fluid. The participants can think a little more about their answers and reflect them according to what the other participants mentioned with the same questions. That is why constructivism was the philosophy chosen for this study of consumer behavior in relation to cosmetics and toiletries in the Irish market.

4 Presentation and Discussion of the Findings

4.1 Findings

4.1.1 Consumer Behaviour

To begin to understand the type of products they were going to be referring to during the focus group; I asked them ***how often do they buy toiletries and cosmetics*** and ***what type of products do they buy most frequently?***

5 of the 6 participants divided into the two focus groups agreed on the same purchase frequency of 3 to 4 weeks on average, but there was one person, who noted that he had more information related to sustainability and commented that he buys their products every 3 or 4 months. Leaving me the doubtful if this participant buys very little or the others use more product than necessary in their day to day.

The most mentioned products were; toothpaste, deodorant, soap, shampoo, moisturizer, after shower and 3 in 1. Nobody mentioned any cosmetic, they were all basing their answers in toiletries.

After having set the tone for the focus groups I asked: ***What are the main characteristics/factors that you consider when purchasing them?***

3 out of 6 participants mentioned price as one of the factors to consider when buying a product. However only one of them mentioned price as the main factor.

P5= I'll filter by brand and then go for the cheapest option I do not take ingredients or plastic into consideration

Of the other 3 there was a particular participant who was the complete opposite of participant number 5, they were in the same group, and it was possible to notice the polarity in opinions between the two of them.

The answer was the following:

P6= I tend to go to Nourish and buy products with as little ingredients as possible and ones that I can understand and are organic. I do not care about brands really.

Even with these two polarities most of them want good quality products at a good price. Also, we could start seeing that people want to reduce their plastic consumption by buying products with less or zero packaging, caring about the products not being animal tested.

P2= My driver is price and reputation of brands. Also friends recommendation and lastly packaging. As I have been trying to cut out plastic. I buy refillable soap in the bulk shop but its more expensive.

P3= Price as well and knowing it has good quality and also, I would care if its cruelty free, but I don't check it all the time.

I would buy the for soap Dove with no plastic.

With so many brands in the supermarket, online, and in other independent stores, it was of great interest how participants select one brand or product over the others. The question was: ***Why have you chosen those brands from all the others?*** helping us to discover the characteristics, circumstances or factors that make them prefer one brand or product over another.

3 out of 6 mentioned price as the first factor when choosing products.

One of the most straightforward responses was the one from participant 5 who doesn't care about any ingredient or special feature that a product may have to offer.

If the product is doing what they are supposed to be doing and are cheap they will buy it.

P5= What is closer to 1 euro, I have a benchmark of price. I don't really care about sub brands and if they are whitening or for the family, I only care that they are within my price benchmark. A generic commercial good product that has a huge holding company behind it. It's a very old-fashioned way to reason, I admit that.

He also mentioned that having big companies behind the brands is a good thing. Demonstrating how consumers might blindly trust a brand for the only reason that they are market leaders.

Same situation happened with participant #1 who said two answers that might be controversial.

P1= The encouragement would be price and that I have been using them for so long. If the price on the shelves is the same I would go for Nivea because I have been using it for so long.

They commented that price is their encouragement but they emphasized how long they have been using the same products or brands. In this case Nivea, the controversial thing about his answers is that, after having heard other answers, he added that is important that every product that he uses is plant based.

P1= for me it's important that everything is completely plant based. After some research I'm fairly certain that they are well executed with that respect. Most definitely they will be vegan.

However, Nivea is not 100% vegan, they have options but as a main company, they are not vegan certified. Either Beiersdorf, their German parent company (Cruelty Free Only, 2021). We do have to remind that from 2013 animal testing has been banned from the EU (European Commission, n.d.), but this does not mean that the same companies keep testing outside the EU making them not cruelty free.

This answer shows and endorses our previous point about the trust that consumers place in leading brands in the market, such as Nivea, and how consumers do not necessarily think beyond what large companies or the context they live in, tell them.

Participant #6 shows us a more ethical approach with his answer:

P6= After ingredients, I'll probably go for packaging. If there is a shower gel that has really nice ingredients, I probably would pick bar soap over that, just to reduce plastic. Then price, and after I guess buying local, from an Irish company.

This reply shows us what it seems to be a very conscious buyer, who would change products in case they find something more sustainable now.

4.1.2 *Ethical Consumerism*

In this section we will show the findings related to ethical consumerism and the knowledge of the issues of the toiletries and cosmetics industry.

The first question asked from these topics was to know how broad was their understanding and knowledge of the ethical issues in the industry. The question was; ***Are you aware of ethical issues that surround the cosmetics and toiletries industry?***

The demonstration of the general knowledge of the problems was very basic for the majority of the participants. The main answers were related towards veganism, waste reduction, and animal testing in China specifically

P3= I don't know about the Irish standards but yes, in China is mandatory to test on animals for them to sell it, and yes with plastic, there are products with like three layers of plastic that are not needed.

P6 = you want to reduce waste, make sure the ingredients are on the best source, the most natural possible I do it for environmental reasons and for my own skin. But don't know anything about the sourcing of the materials.

P4= They are manufactured in different countries and probably have different standards.

We can only be so sure. We can never be positive when choosing a product.

I do not have enough lot of issue with recyclable plastic. I can use it without conscience but most of my products come in a metal tin.

For some plastic is not a problem as long as it can be recycled, and they will be willing to keep using it without problems. Even when most of the participants didn't show a vast amount of knowledge in the topic, they started to show awareness of the problems that might be occurring not in Ireland but in other countries in the world.

P2= There is the plastic issue, but there's a big issue particularly on the cosmetic industry, of the manufacture in China because for them to sell in China they must test on animals.

Another in the makeup industry would be the production of mica, its toxic and in the extraction there's child labour.

Although they have not shown great knowledge in the problems that surround the industry of cosmetics and toiletries, we were interested to know, of what they know where did they read it, heard it or who told them? And if you wanted to know more, what would be your source of information? To know this, we asked: ***From where did you get this information?***

The answers were mainly online media. From Facebook to documentaries on Netflix. They mentioned that as soon as you start getting interested on the topic, things are easier, as the algorithm makes sure that you get more and more products from what you are interested about. So, we could infer that if people started following more

environmental accounts or more sustainable products the multiple impressions provided by the media might change their buying decision or intention.

P4= reading different vegan articles in speaking groups on FB, or just googling vegan products. I think I'm quite ignorant into how things are made. just because animals are not being harmed doesn't mean that people are not being harmed.

P6= Once you start following someone on Ig, or a product you get it more and more often. Whether is the algorithm, or they are paying the advertisement. So a lot of time I don't have to look and it makes easier to find other products that look cool and catch my attention.

P3= I follow a few environmental accounts on Instagram.

One participant did not provide a direct source, however made a very valid point. They mentioned that the consumers need to be very careful from where we are getting our information and try to search for peer reviewed or fact checked one as the current media tend to read RT from others.

P1= It's gotta be fact checked. It needs to be fact checked before we can rely on it. I suppose sites, tv shows, radio shows sometimes are not fact checked as sometimes they are just commenting on somebody else tweet. I would do my research in more than just one source.

4.1.3 Product Origin

In this section we will review the insights obtained from the questions focused on product origin. With them we will know how relevant it is to know where the products they use come from.

First asked question was: ***Do you review the ingredients of the products before buying them?***

P5= Now I'm doing it with my girlfriend. We are going to stay in Ireland for a while before it was just a temporary location. So I never looked into these small details, that are becoming details of relevance.

We started very recently to check what would be best in general there are drawbacks in buying cheap stuff.

P4= I wouldn't check the ingredients, just see the vegan sign. I do take it for granted.

P6= I'm looking to see if there are minimal amount or they are coming from a leaf or whatever not some scientific word that I do not understand.

P3= yes, there are two ingredients that I would never buy if I saw them on the products, palm oil and collagen.

Most of the participants would not check the ingredients thoroughly but they do check certain characteristics of it, maybe not all the ingredients like participant number 6 does, but some throw away products if they don't have a certification or if they contain palm oil or collagen. Others are starting their journey for better products because they consider that when they stay in the country, they should look for products that are good for them, and that sometimes cheap is expensive. This last point has nothing to do with being sustainable but to make sure that the product works on them.

One interesting point was:

P1= There are a lot of products in the ingredients list that are completely obscure that I wouldn't have a clue because they are using technical names. I suppose there is too much information. We have got to take the word so much for that.

This participant says that they are being bombarded with obscure information that they cannot understand, and they just have to trust the brands that they are doing a good job in general.

The certification of a product can be a good way to know how ethical their supply chain is but, are consumers aware of them? Do they know which ones can they found on their products? The answer is: at some extent. Apart from participant #5 all of them knew what a certification was and commented on them but do not necessarily talk about them much.

The subjects are familiarized with the common certifications for the problems that they know, and they try to buy the products that contain the bunny leap certification, fair trade and has a recyclable sign on them.

Also, it was commented that they are important as some brands claim to be cruelty free, without the certifications, and people believe them until they find that these products are not what they were expecting.

It's a big problem in companies that they are not disclosing enough or any information to their customers.

The certification that was mentioned the most was the cruelty free without specifying if it was PETA's beauty without bunnies program, or any of the leaping bunny certifications.

The answers to the question ***Are certifications important to you?*** were:

P6= They definitely catch my eye, but I probably look beyond the logos.

P5= I would not have a clue

P4 = I would not know. Just not tested on animals.

P2= I try to buy the ones that have the bunny, the cruelty free bunny and, the recycle sign.

P3= Also the fair trade at the back, probably those two for me.

P1= I'm aware of the symbols and they are important to me. I believe they are getting their act together, the reputable brands.

P3= there is a brand that I follow on Instagram that says they are cruelty free, but a hand cream contained collagen. It doesn't make sense that they say they are cruelty free with this type of substances.

In the last part of the focus group we discussed intention versus action in their purchasing.

The question asked was: ***Would you be willing to change your current products for more ethical ones? Elaborate your answer***

5 out of 6 would be willing to change their cosmetic and toiletries for more sustainable ones yet would find it difficult if the prices are high or if that did not have time to go buy certain products to an specific shop as they cannot find the same variety in big supermarkets. So sometimes it is not sustainable or convenient for them.

The most opposite responses to each other were the following:

P6 = I would, I would not have any care about the brand that I'm using now. Dump any of that if you offered me a product that you made in your house and was the most perfectly ethical product. I'd pay for that one

P5= I would not necessarily change at all costs. I will try to bake in a value of an ethical choice and a potentially ingredients to the factor. If it costs 3 times more maybe I wouldn't be that keen, because it wouldn't be sustainable for my shopping.

4.1.4 Intention vs Action

As a small experiment within the qualitative approach the author showed to a group of participants 5 slides with an ethical problem that the cosmetics industry has: Mica mining in India. This experiment aimed to see if any of their previous opinions changed or if there was something they wanted to add that was on their minds but wasn't said before.

They already had a little knowledge of this problem since one of the participants briefly introduced it in one of the questions asked in the focus group. The intention of this experiment, and by only putting a group under these slides, was so that in the next step of the investigation, the questionnaire, could see reflected if the people who have more information are more susceptible to making changes in their purchases and not just leave them as intentions.

What was found from the slides that presented briefly the problem of mining and child labour in India was the following:

First of all the researcher explained the issue by the following statement

Mica is a mineral that is used as paint coating in cosmetics for the main purpose of creating a sparkling effect. It can be found in almost all cosmetics that have any type of shimmer. Like blush or eyeshadows.

It is also used in plastics, ink, cement, oil and shampoo and conditioner.

The problem is not the mineral by itself, but the way it is mined. 220 thousand kids in India in 2016 were involved in parts of the mining process. Even though child labour is illegal in India, the government tolerates this practice.

The mining process is hazardous so not only they are working at a very young age, less than 10 years, but are working in precarious conditions that are affecting their well-being.

The researcher asked what do they thought of that and what do they thought of the fact that companies should know and carry out human right due diligence and that a company should know the data of their supply chain and address the issue.

To what they responded:

P1= We are reliant in a fairly, fairly large way with these companies to take the mouth of words.

You mentioned child labour, in this side of the world we would have very low indication that that's happening in India apart from what we get in the news. And what we would regard as child labour would be to sustain a family. I'm not saying is right but every country is different.

P2 = It's a terrible issue. If there are suppliers is because there is demand. We should be more conscious buyers and try to look for those issues. After I finish I'm going to look it up, which are the companies that use mica, that I hope its disclosed and I would avoid them. The most important thing in any industry is your purchase, is like a vote.

P3= I did not know what Mica was, I do not buy that many cosmetics but now I'm thinking if all this time I have been buying products that contain that and you know, I have been blindly supporting.

I feel that there are so many people that don't know because it's just easier not to really think about it. Because, again, the easy part is like you walk into the shop, you pay for it, and you don't really think what's behind it. It's sad the lack of information.

The researcher asked how would they rate the responsibilities of every part involved (the government, the manufacturer and the consumer)

To what they replied that the first responsible was the government as they are the one that put the regulations, then the manufacturer because they should know what is happening in the countries and then the consumer.

The 3 of them agreed showing that they want the authorities to take more showing that they want the authorities and companies to take more responsibility for their actions and that they be informed to the general public since most do not have the necessary information to be able to use, as one of the participants said, their purchase as a vote .

Survey

After having finished with the focus groups, I asked the participants if I could send them a simple questionnaire in two weeks' time to find out if something had changed in the way of shopping after the discussion we had had. 5 de 6 participants answered the survey. This are the results:

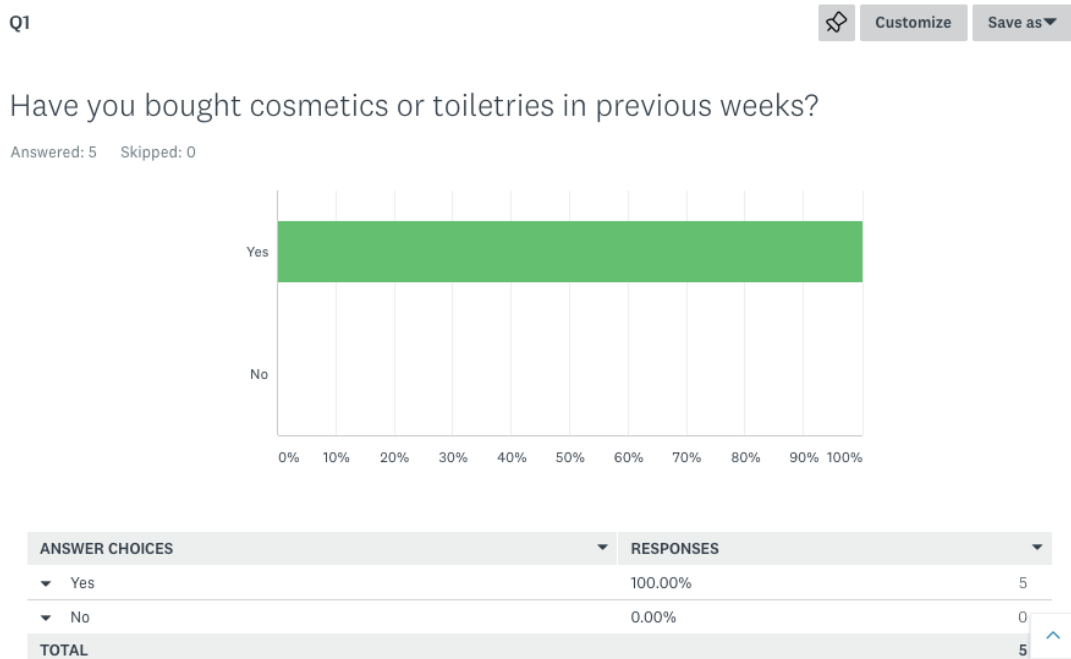


Figure 5: Question 1 (Survey)

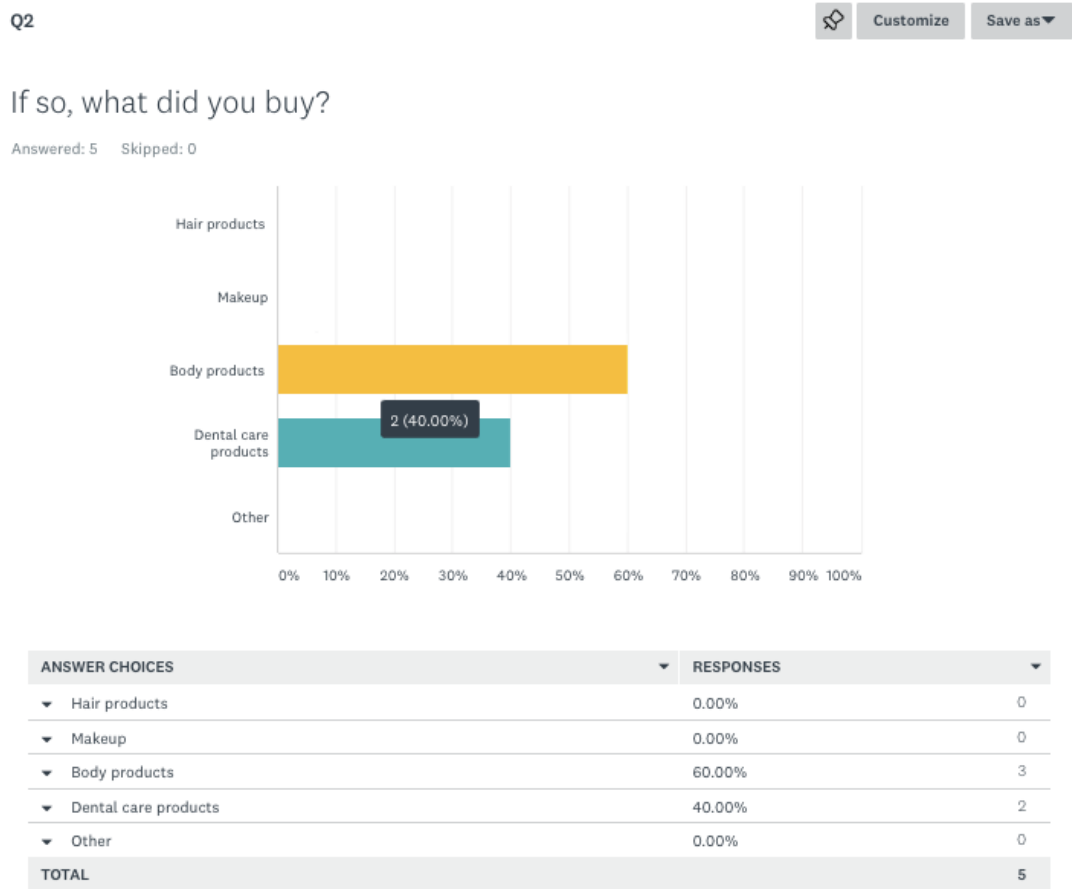
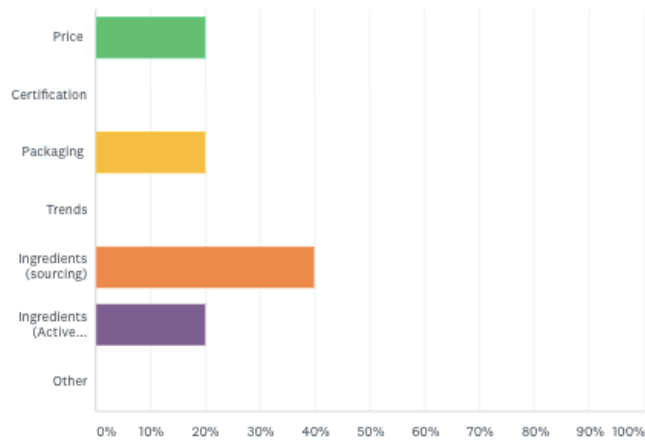


Figure 6: Question 2 (Survey)

What did you consider while buying the products? (If you did not purchase anything, write N/A)

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Price	20.00% 1
Certification	0.00% 0
Packaging	20.00% 1
Trends	0.00% 0
Ingredients (sourcing)	40.00% 2
Ingredients (Active ingredients)	20.00% 1
Other	0.00% 0
TOTAL	5

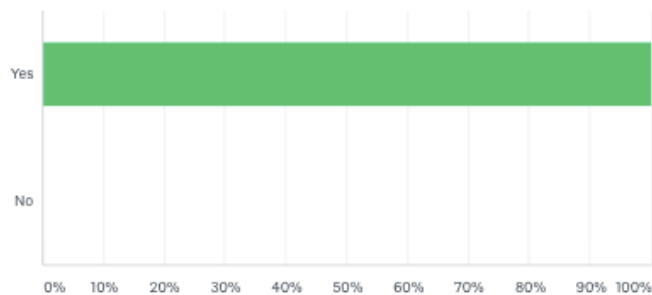
Figure 7: Question 3 (Survey)

Q4

Customize Save as

Did any of your considerations change based on our focus group?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	100.00% 5
No	0.00% 0
TOTAL	5

Figure 8: Question 4 (Survey)

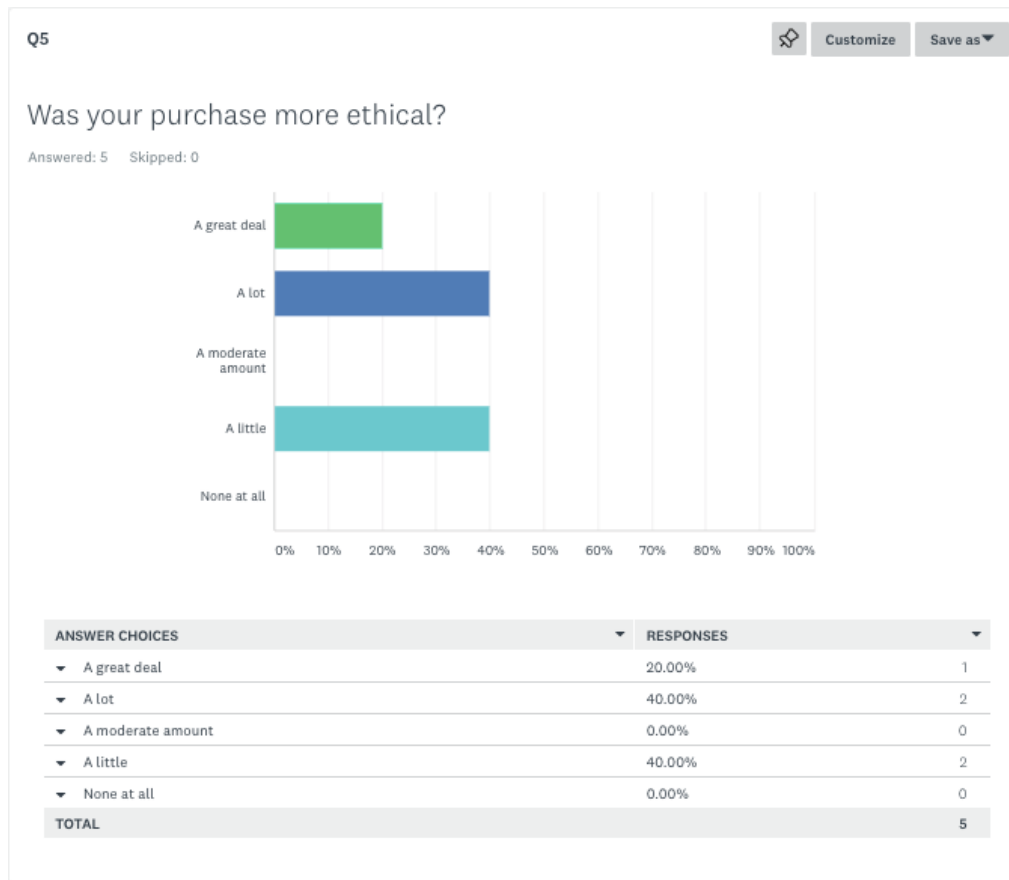


Figure 9: Question 5 (Survey)

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Consumer behaviour

Toiletries are very important in every household way more than cosmetics, we could see that in the study. When the author tried to ask them about cosmetics they kept returning to talk only about toiletries. This could be due to the fact that toiletries run out much faster than cosmetics, which was something that a participant mentioned when saying that he buys his toiletries every 3 or 4 weeks but for product such as perfumes the time could change and vary depending of the situation that was living. With the COVID, most of the people stopped grooming themselves, since they were doing home office, but they began to wash their hands more to avoid the spread of the virus.

Consumers want a product that is cheap, that has a good quality, does not have nasty ingredients and that is amicable with the environment. This can be a little complicated, however there were participants that thought they were doing it.

Their perceived Behaviour Effectiveness was high, they thought that what they were doing was good, that the products that they have been using for a long time, were from reputable brands that were not harming anyone. Showing how important a and the how big of an impact a brand can have for the person that uses it.

The Perceived Behavior Control in this case shows that people feel that it is difficult to find products and believe that they are the ones they need. In addition to the availability of them in supermarkets, which as the participants mentioned, they have to go to other stores if they want to get products more ethical and these are more expensive, making it much more difficult to change from an unethical product to one than it is.

One of the thing that I would change if I could is that I would had reviewed literature of brand loyalty to understand the phenomenon better so I could have asked the participants questions about their brand loyalty.

4.2.2 *Ethical Consumerism*

Trudel and Cotte (2008) suggested that even though not all consumers are sophisticated they are more aware of ethical issue. After having done these study we could suggest that Trudel and Cotte said is still valid in 2021 but their awareness of consequence is still very low, since, from what we could see with their answers, they give a lot of credit to the leading companies in the market and have more information on the topics that are on the rise, for example; the excessive consumption of plastic, but they do not have relevant information about worker rights, for example.

Another situation to be discussed is the factors that affect the participants purchase decision.

It is very interesting to see how 5 out of 6 people in the study mentioned price as a the main factor on their decision but they are also trying to reduce their plastic consumption or start checking if a product is cruelty free or not.

Although it may seem that these participants mention small changes like replacing the body wash for a bar of soap, that it was the way to go a few years ago, could become a constant and consistent change that leads them to purchases much more conscious and educated and perhaps even leading to a boycott to massive leader brands. Which will make these brands take even more responsibility for their manufacturing and supply chain.

The third stage of the EKB model suggest that researchers should evaluate the consumers tools of evaluation like blogs or interviews (Breugelmans et al., cited in Ashman *et al.*, 2015).

In this case we are using it to evaluate the information that the consumers have that might influence their decision as an ethical consumer and is From where do they get information regarding ethical issues. When the author asked the question the participants They did not mention any specific medium or person but everyone mentioned the Internet as the main source of information. They also mentioned two very important things, one that the information had to be verified and the other that the social network algorithms sent you the information you required according to your tastes. The problem is that if the social networks algorithm sends you information cleaned to suit your tastes, and you have no other source of information, or the attempt is not made to exit the normal searches that lead you to the same destination, be it ethical or no, you are not having information about everything that happens around the industry and the world in general. You only have information and products relevant to you. Making it even more difficult to reach people who are not familiar with unethical situations in the cosmetics and toiletries industry.

4.2.3 *Product Origin*

Only 1 of the 6 participants was more consistent with their responses throughout the focus group. This person from the beginning commented that their purchases were based on the ingredients of the products, not on the price or the brand. Which everyone else mentioned. But, when asked if they reviewed the ingredients and said that he did, he commented that he did it for his own skin, he did not want chemical ingredients and also, for the environment but that the truth is that he did not know where the ingredients and products he uses came from.

Another person commented that he was plant based and that his products had to be the same but, he uses products from global brands that are not vegan, and he said that we only had to trust what the companies say to us regarding the matter, that we could never be 100% sure it was true.

This shows the lack of information that the media and the government provide to people and that people themselves do not look beyond what they have in front of them. For example, with the presentation that I showed to group two about the mica industry, one person commented that they did not know that this was happening but that they had surely been blindly supporting these practices. The same and another participant, when asked about the ethical problems they knew, did not know that for selling in China the products have to be tested on animals.

These responses show how people tend to keep the information that is provided to us and not look for more.

Although three of the interviewees in the focus mentioned on several occasions that they felt bad not knowing and that by ending the focus group they were going to review the ethical problems of the cosmetics and toiletries industry.

4.2.4 *Intention vs Action*

5 of the 6 participants answered the survey that was sent two weeks after the focus group. To which they all responded that their purchases had changed to different degrees but all towards a more ethical future.

I would have liked to have carried out this experiment of intention vs action in a bigger way and have asked them to keep a shopping diary for one or two months in which they wrote down the factors of their purchases and each week, send them relevant information about ethical problems to know if with more information the better action.

4.3 Conclusion

Toiletries and cosmetics are products for daily use and the six research questions: **What are the factors that affect the decision purchase when buying toiletries and cosmetics?, How do they decide what they want to purchase and from whom?, From which sources do consumers get information about the product that they are planning on buying?, How well informed are consumers in Ireland about environmental and societal issues related to FMCG?, Do the origin and where the product ends matters? , How willing are the Irish consumers to change from their favourite cosmetic brands to more ethical and sustainable ones?** gave the author a great framework to work with to understand the consumer behaviour towards them.

As discovered in this study the lack of information, the price, and the availability of products in supermarkets are the strongest problems that consumers have when it comes to wanting to change from one product to another, even when thinking about it, these three barriers prevent it from being done.

People believe that they are doing good until some extent but without good sources of information that start presenting the issues to the population in Ireland, they are not

going to know what is happening around the world or to pay attention to the supply chain of their favorite and leading brands in the market.

To know if the lack of information is really a problem, in the future more information about the ethical issues should be provided to the participants to see if their anticipated guilt elevates and changes their purchase actions.

5 Concluding Thoughts on the Contribution of this Research, its Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Following the presentation and discussion of the findings in the previous chapter, the importance of the findings for the research topic is summarized.

In this chapter we can see the contribution that this dissertation has to offer to the research topic for present and future and what kind of practice recommendations and for future research can be made.

5.1 Implications of Findings for the Research Questions

The implications and results of this dissertation will help businesses, marketers, media, and others in the area of sustainability in cosmetics and toiletries in Ireland to provide in the future the information that the consumer needs to change from a non-ethical purchase towards a more ethical one.

The dissertation will help to understand how the consumers think that to be able to provide a solution to the problems of the industry and thus advance in question of other needs such as price, availability of products in supermarkets and natural ingredients minding the supply chain.

With the results of the sample that was generated and having asked all the research questions, we could deduce that people in general are not well informed but want to make a change in their purchases. Sometimes they stop doing it or do it slower because products are not that accessible for them. They are too pricey, or you cannot find them in regular supermarkets.

Another important discovery for the industry is that people want to believe the companies they buy from, and most of the times they blindly believe in them, however this is mostly because they do not disclose information, so they feel that there is no other option but believe in them. The companies should disclose all the information in

a user-friendly manner for their consumers to have the proper information a build a stronger relationship between consumers, brands and ecosystem.

5.2 Contributions and Limitations of the Research

As mentioned before, this dissertation and its findings contribute to the understanding of the consumer of cosmetic products and toiletries in Ireland and contribute to the literature on ethical consumer behavior in the country, which there is not much. Due to its demographics, it can be found more related to Great Britain than Ireland and how sustainable Ireland can be. The only papers that you can find about consumer behaviour in Ireland are reports and statistics.

It is highly important to review the way consumers In Ireland are consuming cosmetics and toiletries as they are products that have a lot of ethical implications. For example the way Irish people use plastic, 61 kg against 31 kg in other parts of Europe or the lack of information about other issues that occur in other parts of the world.

One of the biggest limitations is its methodology since having done a qualitative study with only 6 people, it does not give you a context of an entire country. Especially if all the people in the study reside in the capital of the study.

This limitation can be modified with a little more time for the realization of the dissertation and the search for people. In addition to doing a mixed methodology study in which interviews and questionnaires can be had to compare the data obtained from the qualitative with the quantitative and thus know if the results are the same. In addition to separating, it by county.

The other limitation is that the dissertation was aiming to talk about both cosmetics and toiletries, but in the focus group, people were mainly focusing on toiletries. This could have happened as the focus groups were mixed and the men of this 2 focus group were not using any type of cosmetic. Which could have made everyone else find the middle ground in the toiletries

5.3 Recommendations for Practice

It is of utmost importance that if a more sustainable future is sought, governments, companies and consumers themselves begin to inform themselves about the products consumers buy. For Cosmetics and toiletries not all their problems are trendy or recognized by the society. Now we hear a lot about testing on animals and people may think that that is the only problem occurring and, as in the EU it is prohibited, that all their purchases are sustainable or that at least they are not doing any major harm.

But this is not the case, a greater focus must be put on the supply chain of all the beauty and personal hygiene products that are bought so that all purchases are directed towards an ethical future and are transparent to the consumer.

For this to happen firstly, the Irish government must put regulations in place. Like the one where they prohibit microplastics in cosmetics. After having these regulations, the consumer must be informed of them. Not only saying that the regulation was approved but making visible campaigns, so people know what was happening and how the government stopped it.

For the problems that still occur, and the government does not want to regulate, non-governmental organizations must do the same. Visible campaigns, around the counties where everyone in the country can see the ethical issues that are occurring with the products that they are buying. The campaigns should not only show the problems but how they can be solved from the simple product that is chosen every day to wash the hair.

Also, the brands that are the big retail should partner to put their product visible in the racks for the consumers to have them available much more easier so that does not become an excuse for not buying them.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

The limitations of this dissertation are key points for future studies.

First, not only use a qualitative approach which, will give deeper insights but will not show the thinking of most of the people of a country, in this case Ireland. So, using a mixed approach would be more appropriate to gather more information and be able to understand and hear as much population as possible. It would be better if they are divided by counties to check if their thinking and factors while buying a cosmetic or a product from toiletries is different from the ones in the capital, Dublin.

In addition, my recommendation is not only to send a questionnaire to the participants of the focus groups to know their intention vs action, but to ask them to fill a diary for two months of the purchases they make in cosmetics and toiletries and, only to one group, send them relevant information week after week of ethical problems of the industry in the world. Then compare if the participants the purchases from the participants that received the information were more ethical than the ones that did not get any type of information.

5.5 Final Conclusion and Reflections

Consumers are aware that there are problems in the world, however we but we have a long way to go in terms of a fully sustainable future.

This discussion began with the idea of finding more negative than positive responses, and for good, we found that people in Ireland are willing to change, at least they think about it, and they know that they could be making more conscious purchases. But we have to remember that this is a joint effort, between consumers, governments, companies and organizations. Each one must put in their own effort.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Survey

Q1

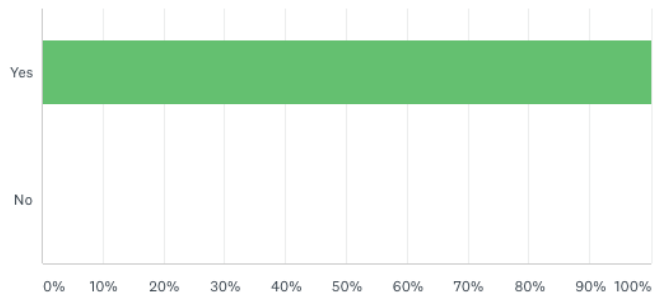


Customize

Save as ▾

Have you bought cosmetics or toiletries in previous weeks?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Yes	100.00%	5
▼ No	0.00%	0
TOTAL		5

Q2

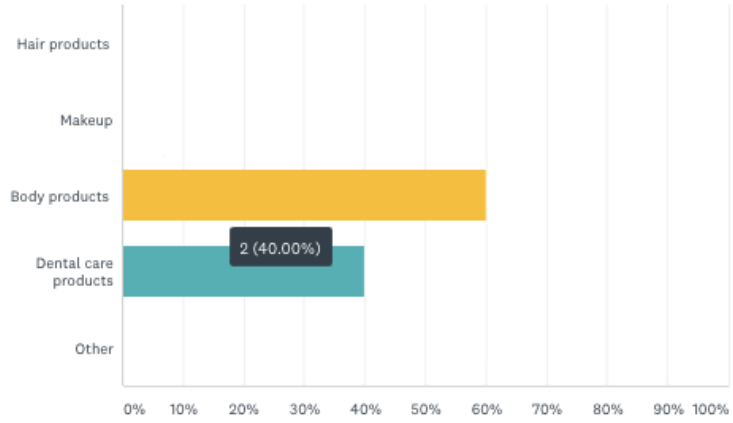


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If so, what did you buy?

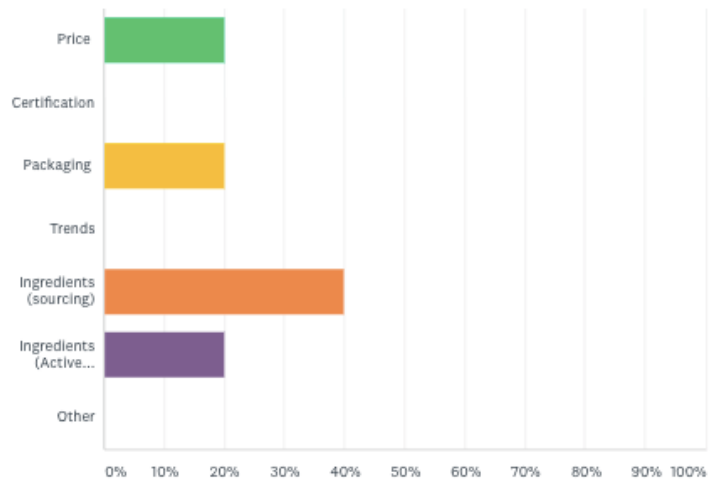
Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Hair products	0.00% 0
▼ Makeup	0.00% 0
▼ Body products	60.00% 3
▼ Dental care products	40.00% 2
▼ Other	0.00% 0
TOTAL	5

What did you consider while buying the products? (If you did not purchase anything, write N/A)

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Price	20.00% 1
▼ Certification	0.00% 0
▼ Packaging	20.00% 1
▼ Trends	0.00% 0
▼ Ingredients (sourcing)	40.00% 2
▼ Ingredients (Active ingredients)	20.00% 1
▼ Other	0.00% 0
TOTAL	5

Q4

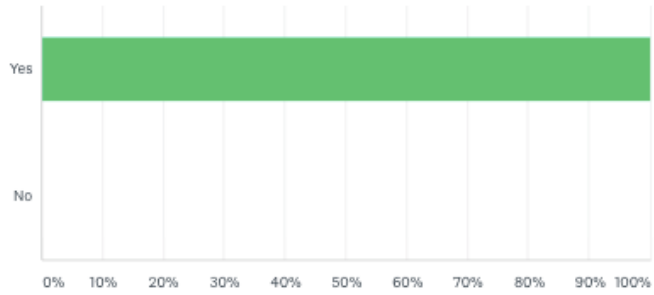


Customize

Save as

Did any of your considerations change based on our focus group?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Yes	100.00%	5
▼ No	0.00%	0
TOTAL		5

Q5

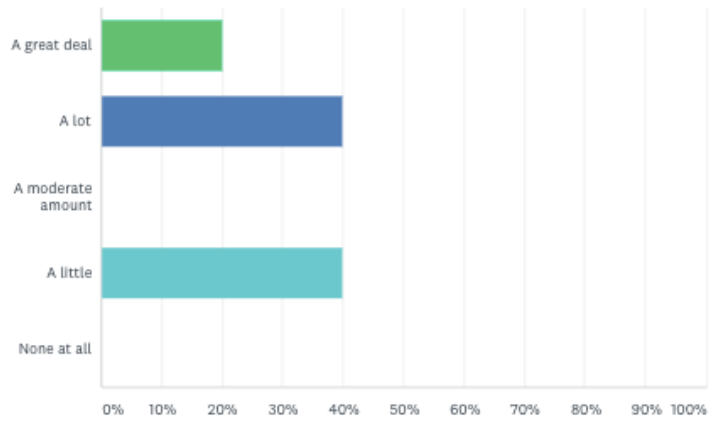


Customize

Save as

Was your purchase more ethical?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ A great deal	20.00%	1
▼ A lot	40.00%	2
▼ A moderate amount	0.00%	0
▼ A little	40.00%	2
▼ None at all	0.00%	0
TOTAL		5

ETHICAL ISSUES IN THE COSMETIC AND TOILETRIES INDUSTRY

A stylized, light blue leaf graphic is positioned on the right side of the slide, partially overlapping the text.

DO YOU KNOW?

CHILD LABOUR AND MICA

USES OF MICA

Paint/coatings, cosmetics, plastics and ink with the main purpose of creating a sparkling effect.

Mica is used in plasterboard, fibre cement, oil-well drilling fluids, plastics, shampoos and conditioners.

Mica is used in hair dryers and toasters, and for electrical insulation of cables, capacitors

(Schipper and Kiezebrink, 2016)



- Mica mining/processing in India is hazardous and its consider one of the worst forms of child labour.
- Almost all mica mining in Jharkhand/Bihar is illegal, but still tolerated by the government
- The number of child labourers involved in mica mining in just in Jharkhand/Bihar is estimated to be up to 20,000. (2016)

(Schipper and Kiezebrink, 2016)

The OECD stipulates that companies should carry out human rights due diligence. Carrying out due diligence means that a company should identify, prevent and mitigate any actual or potential adverse human rights impacts related to their own activities and in their supply chains. Moreover, a company needs to account for and be transparent about how it addresses the issues.

(Schipper and Kiezebrink, 2016)

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Appendix C – Transcriptions Focus Group

FOCUS GROUP 1

Researcher:

Hello did you all read the plain statement?

So it's all good to go to go and. Okay, so I'm going to record now.

Perfect. So, hello, as I was telling you the questions are going to be very straightforward. You can answer at any time you want.

If you don't want to answer any question you can also tell me that you just don't want that one for any reason, like, you don't need to explain.

I am not going to be involved in the conversation. I am not going to say my opinion to you.

So it's not biased. But, if any of you have an opinion and the other one does not agree with it or wants to add something to the conversation you can do it.

And basically that's it there's no wrong or right answers.

And at the end of my questions. I'm just going to show you.

I think there's like five slides with an issue, and you can comment it afterwards

And if you're okay. In like a week, I'm going to send you a survey that is like literally five questions yes or no.

And if you can answer it for me it will be perfect.

P 1= Yep, absolutely fine.

p 2 AND 3= Yeah. Yep.

R= Perfect. So, as you could read in the plain statement.

We're going to be talking about toiletries and cosmetics in the Irish market.

We are going to be focus on consumer behaviour. So what you guys do and buy and use

And the ethics surrounding them.

So my first question for you is, well, this might be obvious but do you use toiletries and cosmetics.

P2 = Yeah.

P1 and 3 = Yeah.

R= And how often would you buy them.

P1 = That's for everyone's it

R = Yeah, yeah, like if you want, you can start and then we can go on.

P1= Yeah, I probably wouldn't buy it off as, as you ladies nice, I would record my public at something, at least once a month.

R = Okay.

P1 = So every, every three four weeks, I like to get something more than one is and maybe just one item.

R = Okay. I'm going maybe like mix of the questions, so how often, and what are the products that you buy

P3 = As in the products we buy the most or literally every single

R = no, the ones that you buy the most for your household, the ones are use more often.

R = So you were saying that you buy them like once a month. And what would you buy?

P1= Yeah.

Yeah, and I would you talking about products we talked about brands, no just a product is the product itself, but mostly from b2b.

must be moisturizers facial and heavy duty one for the body.

After showers and, and that type of thing.

Generally stick to two brands

R = Okay.

P2= I think would be the same so like let's say soap

And also deodorant, I think,

P1= of course, um, yeah.

P2= And I don't know tomorrow toothbrush comes as well.

And yeah, I'd say probably those things that come to mind.

R= Okay and how often would you buy them.

P2 = I'd say probably once a month, once a month.

R= And now you?

P3= probably yeah monthly and I will buy something whenever it runs out.

Um, I don't know, I'd say monthly as well sometimes it will even take longer because I've waited for something to be finished so I can get it again.

But like soap, Yeah, mostly so toothpaste.

R = Okay. Perfect.

R =Okay, so when you're thinking of those products, what are the main characteristics that you consider when purchasing them.

you can choose one or two and tell me why would you buy them which are the characteristics are factors.

And anyone can talk.

P1=

Basically, I would generally stick to the same products, it's, it's quite boring but and I've generally stick with the same brands, because that they are in my case at least try to trust these suits my particular the.

The only way I could possibly change or maybe be encouraged to change was maybe have something different. That was, you know, a good standard was being offered on special or something I thought I would try it as possibly a one off, it was, it was successful

I would possibly continue. Okay,

R = and which ones are those brands?

P1 = And again, they would be the ladies were saying the deodorants,

R= no, the brands

P1= I would generally use but the L'Oréal men. Obviously, and Nivea I've been using a Nivea since I've been a teenager.

R= Okay.

P1= As I say if I was encouraged to use another brand it would have to come with some form of encouragement

R= which sort of incentive?

P1= Yeah, it sounded like toothpaste and so on to be pretty similar. That was the usual brand, you know, the Colgate that type of thing and it would generally be pretty much the same scenario for, for those also the same with the deodorant

So pretty much across the board if something of a similar quality is offered. And, you know, maybe a better price. I would certainly buy it.

R= Okay

P2= me to be really similar I think usually what drives me to buy something I'd say it's like price.

Also like if it's a reputable brand.

Like, also like friends, indication so like if they say oh, It's really good. You should try this recommendation sorry.

And I would say lastly its packaging. Because lately I've been trying to really cut plastic out of my habits. So even for soap now like I buy a refillable one and those are the main factors

R= And which will be the brands that you are currently using?

P2= At the moment I'm trying to buy everything at the bulk store. Because there is a bulk store right next to me in Rathmines. So like for example for toothpaste, I've tried those toothpaste tablets, which are like you just go in with your jar and you pay by the gram.

So, so I don't know the brand but I think is like their, their own Irish.

I think they probably produce themselves.

So locally produced is a bit more expensive so price gets like not as big of a factor but I think it's more like eco friendly so about where we started.

So that's neat.

R = May I asked you like what were you like buying before?

Yeah, definitely like oral B for toothpaste or like Nivea as well.

Just like those big brands like so I think toiletry probably Unilever would be the biggest company.

R=Okay.
Thank you.

R= P3, and you?

P3=
Yeah, thanks for me would be price as well, and knowing that it's a good quality, like the product is a good quality.

And like sometimes not always like I would look at the back of the. I don't know the box or whatever to see, it's like cruelty free, because I've, like I would care about that.

But not all the time. And I think the brands that I will buy the most for soap for example would be Dove.

And because I tried to go, I tried to buy a bar soap, because it was tough no plastic container.

And for toothpaste would be how you say got to compete I think Colgate.

I will buy that.

How would you say, how would you say it.

R = Okay.
So, We were talking about brands.

And even though like Anna was saying that now she's choosing from a store, specifically that she doesn't really know the brand like if it's their own brand, or if it's just like a random brand because she hasn't been paying attention to that.

Previously, well or or even though you, we can talk about that a little bit.
Well, or even though you, we can talk about that a little bit. How would you choose one from the other. Like if you have different brands as you Tony were saying that you stick to, like, two or three brands.

Question 3

Why like why did you choose one from the other. Or you know, while you're like oh I want Colgate instead of Oral B, why?

P1=

Okay, again, I would, I would say right now that the, the, I suppose the encouragement from the would be price.

If those particular brands. If one is more, you know, more acceptable price to do to get to market more acceptable price.

R= And if its cents Like, if it's one euro and one euro

Is there anything else that will make you choose one from the other.

Or Not really,

P1= no. Not particularly no it was surely What does as I say I've used them for so long. Does it would basically come down to price when we go to similar prices.

If they're on the shelf at the normal price, without offers, they simply price so bad, I would generally go for Nivea because I have been using it for so long.

R=

Okay.

P1= Yeah.

P2=

Yeah. For me Let's save two projects are the same price, and I have to pick between one, I think, like, if it's something, if it's like a regular purchase like toiletries, I think I would just take two or more reputable brand that like I know, as well.

So here, if price wouldn't be a factor that would be why I'd choose one overdue up

R= you said like just in toiletries force What about cosmetics. would it change?

P2= I think if, let's say if they were the same price, I would definitely look up reviews and see which reviews are better

R= for makeup for example or you can also go for a prize before anything else?

P2 = Um, no, like a go for both So, like, it's it is really cheap but it's not good, that I'm not gonna buy it but.

Usually I try to stick with brands like essence which are really cheap really good and cruelty free and easy access as well so.

R= Okay.

P1 = Can I just mentioned something maybe.

R= Yeah

P1= sorry, sorry, but it would be really important for me because of my, I suppose lifestyle choice it's like, I believe, I'm completely plant based.

And it would be important to me. After some research I believe I have done the research on the brands I do things.

And I'm fairly certain that they will be executed that respect.

So that will be very important for me.

Okay sorry I didn't mean to interrupt.

R= Don't worry, it's fine.

P1= Okay, thank.

R = Okay, perfect.

So do just do buy like brands that are vegan or cruelty free,

P1= most definitely would have to be vegan. Yeah.
they have to be plant based.

R= Okay,

P3= Um, I guess like the reason I, I still buy the same brand is because this is the same brand that I always use, like when I was in I live with my parents.

That's the brand, that's around they will buy, and I just got used to it. So I think, you know, it's like, I keep buying it because I'm used to it I guess there's some stuff I wouldn't buy anymore because of the ethical part.

But even though like I still. For example, I was trying to buy soap, shampoo, sorry bar shampoo for a while. From lush, and it's way more expensive but it lasts longer but then like some I run out of it and I really needed to buy shampoo so I had to go

and buy it just like I went to Tesco and bought a bottle of a bottle of shampoo. And that was not vegan that was the head I can take a plastic container.

So sometimes it's mostly about the price or because I really need it so I can really think of other. I can think of like, is this is not vegan I can buy it because I really needed it so that would be a reason why wouldn't stick to what I used to do before

because I immediately need it, you know.

R = Okay.
Okay, perfect.

QUESTION 4

R = we're talking about the information that I that you get from your products and that takes us to like our next question, which is, if you guys are aware of the ethical issues that exist around the cosmetic and toiletries industry. Do you know anything like do and if so, could you just like Tell me what you know from them.

P1=
Okay.
Okay, will I go?,

R= anyone really like if you if someone doesn't know anything that's also completely fine. As I said at the beginning, there's no Right or wrong answers.

P1= I have certain views okay that would suppose colour my, my choices.
But I also have some doubts because I've been around now for quite a while, you do become a little bit sceptical.
You know, and the more here like a lot of these products would be

manufactured, maybe in different countries and different countries but probably have different standards, as, as beyond those so I think that we can only be so Sure.
You know, we can never be positive, when it comes to choosing a product.

No, we can't be absolutely certain, this is you know exactly what I bought I should be getting, you know without getting into the, you know, every nitty gritty of the of the of the manufacturing process.

And so, so, with regard to the plastic and so on. To be honest, I don't have enough lot of issue with recyclable plastic.

I can, I can use that, you know, without conscience.

R= Okay, so I would, like, which ones would you if you had to like just like bullet them, which one would you which one will be the issues that you know that are in the cosmetic industry like plastic, even if you don't have no problem with the recyclable ones.

P1= I should have, I suppose, indicated that most of my products will come in metal tin, they might have some plastic, like a cat or that sort of plastic

R = Okay.

P1= So, yeah, it's in there, it's always, it's in there somewhere. It's not, it's not the top of the agenda.

I can be persuaded to go for another one but if the plastic is fully recycled as a general says on the, on the container down. Yes, I will be probably go for that.

Okay. No, buy, you know, you know, it wouldn't be my first choice.

Okay perfect.

P2= For me Like, of course there's the plastic issue, but also there is in the cosmetic industry particularly I think there is a big issues surrounding

like manufacturing in China, because for them to be sold in China all of them have to test it on animals.

So that would be the cruelty free aspect of it, I think. So that would be something that I try, like to look at when I'm buying another product. Another problem would be like, like actually did my thesis, actually did one of my final projects though in

the makeup industry. and there's like the production of mica, so it's like the type of powder. That is used makeup to like make the powder and makeup it's really toxic and the extraction construction is really bad and there's like child labour

involved. So, a lot of projects now come with like, mica free, or whatever, because then even know they're not stimulating that type of issue.

What else can. Oh, yeah, I can really think of anything right now but like let's say cotton buds like. They're one of the main issues as well in ocean so I guess like yeah just plastic in general in like the way we don't recycle things.

And we don't give the proper treatment to them sometimes. Yeah, I think that's it.

R= Okay, yes, perfect.

P3= Um, I wouldn't really about standards that like, because if I'm sure it varies from country and like, like honestly, the only thing I knew, it's like in China is kind of mandatory that has to be animal tested in order for them to sell it.

Like I knew this from MAC, like I know Mac outside China, they don't test animals but in China they do.

I don't know I mean like, yeah, with plastic which is the kind of the most obvious example of. It's kind of crazy how, like you see a product, and it has like three layers of plastic that are not needed, and it's, it makes you think like, what's the whole purpose of it.

But I don't really know anything about the Irish standards for like, like this has nothing to do with toiletries, but for example if you go to a supermarket, and you see an avocado wrapped in plastic, what's the point for that, you know, there has to be. I don't know if it's a, they have to do it for like sanitary or something, you know.

Question 5

R=Ok. where do you all have you get this information from?

P2=

Going to the internet.

R= And do you have any like particular page to go.

P2=

Usually myself like it's YouTube, mostly like watching stuff on YouTube or like documentaries about like sustainability on Netflix as well or watch a couple, but mostly YouTube.

Cuz. Yeah.

R= Okay.

P1= Important where we get our information. Yeah, it's got to be fact checks, from my point like lecturing do.

I suppose you know do those folks.

It has to be fact check the facts fact checked before we can rely on it under so many. I suppose bogus.

I suppose sites, TV shows radio shows that are.

They're not fact checked basically they're coming from somebody else be tweeting something or something similar yes so we just got to be careful from where our information comes from.

Mostly I would do my own research but not from just the one source.

I would generally check it against something and share something that's been tried and trusted Yeah.

R= Okay. Perfect.

R3= probably mostly from, I follow, like a few environmental accounts on Instagram, and usually in the, they have like the geography of the last slide kind of knowing that it's like the facts were checked, most likes scrolling through social media.

Question 6

R= So here, we're going to something that was P2 was talking about, but it's the origin of the product.

review, like the ingredients and would you be aware of where the ingredients are in your products come from

P3 = the ingredients, where the ingredients of the products come from.

R= Yeah.

P2=Like manufacture, particularly, but not really as a first like buying factor, not really.

R = Supply Chain like where does it start certain at say like palm oil, for example or Mica, like would you be aware, from where do the ingredients come from.

P3= Oh yes. Well, for me, for example, if I think there's only two ingredients I would like if I saw it at the back I wouldn't like palm oil or the, what's the one that has like face cream and Collagen, is it.

Yeah, I think yeah it's basically like made out of bones, so I wouldn't buy stuff that contains stuff.

Palm oil and I think that's the only two ingredients that will be aware of that are not ethically.

P1=Okay, yeah welcome to be a lot of items list de ingredients list.

That would be completely obscure.

I wouldn't have a clue at someone's event for example you know i mean they're using technical names, and you can research, some of them okay but you're not coming over to them.

I suppose too much information on. So, you know, basically I I think that we have to kind of take something at face value. If they're saying it's ethical, and you know we've, we've got to take the word so much for that, you know,

I, it's kind of news to me what the ladies were saying about the manufacturing in China.

I can't I can't recall too many takes that I am that I wasn't aware of just for people to use their own their body so to speak to face their skin that they actually had to be tested on animals.

Yeah, that's news to me today.

P2= And there's like this discussion of like, is this company is cruelty free for sometimes the company itself is. But then the umbrella company, it's not. So let's say I don't know Unilever it's not an actual example but let's say, I don't know, brands like coca they sell in China, so that means no sorry, they don't sell in China but then Unilever has another company that does so it's hard to, like, make sure you're, you're doing a good job, you know cuz sometimes it's just hidden information.

Question 7

R =And that can take us to another like very, like, important question here and it's certifications.

R= Do you all guys are like aware of the certifications that you could find in the products.

And are they important to you is, are they like in is important for you to see them in your products or certifications

P2= I try to buy the ones that have the bunny.
so the cruelty free bunny.
Also the recycle recycle sign.
I think that's it for my said,

Okay.

P3= say I think I would, I would say the same there's also like the some of the fair trade out at the back. Yeah, probably that. Yeah, those two, as well, mainly for me.

P1= Yeah, they kind of saved from the old So yeah, I would, I would be aware of symbols and so on, and they would be important to me. And I believe.
the industry's involves are basically, it is taking a while and what they are getting their act together. Perhaps not the most, a lot of reputable ones are, but as I say, do, do, do we know for sure.
We can never be certain yeah I was looking at this.

P3= It was an account on Instagram and they do cosmetics and I think it's I think they're cruelty free. But I think one of them was like this, I think it was hand cream or something like that or for the face I'm not sure, but it contained that one is it called collagen.

Yeah, that's the one I was, I was thinking about it that's made of bone so it doesn't kind of make sense that they see their cruelty free with the products contain this type of substances.

P1= So, you will get the impression from from some of these manufacturers that they buy product of the, the meat, the meat industry for example. Yeah.

is it is okay. It's not, it's not okay.

P3= Yeah, cuz then they shouldn't sell themselves as a cruelty free

P1 =course, not. Yeah.

Just googled to China in just a mandatory animal testing Greenport IT projects so I don't know if we're national project that's not so just so you know

R= I'm just gonna like this My last question before the PowerPoint. So, this is about intention versus action.

And would you be willing to to change what you're currently using or what you're currently using for something that it's more ethical.

Or no, and in both answers. Could you elaborate a little bit, Please?

So we go like now again like P1, P2 AND P3

P1= OK, so the two questions again.

would I be willing to change, for more ethical product. The second one?

If so, If your answer is yes or no it doesn't matter if you could elaborate like why would you or why would you not

P1= I was to discover the brand so I am currently using were not cruelty free.

I would, I would certainly change.

And I was having no no qualms about doing so.

R= Okay. And would there be something that would stop you from changing them for another brand.

Would you give them like a second opportunity or would you let that pass, or would it be like a no , I will change them right away

P1= maturity being a benefit of the Doubt, or...

R= more like, because you were like you were talking about price. So, my question goes more like if other options are more expensive would you be, would you let that pass would you be like okay.

P1= Yes, absolutely. If, if I was to discover that something was using some form of animal, as if it was. That was not cruelty free. Certainly change, even, even if the price was much more expensive.

R= Thank you.

P2= And so for me, I think, I'm already trying to do this by going to the bulkstore So yeah, so basically I've tried to not have prices the main factor in like tend to the ethical side of things a bit more, and also to to sustainable side of things.

So yes, I'd say I'm willing to because after seeing everything that's happening with climate change and all of that I feel a bit not hopeful with Earth and I don't know why. There's this guilty feeling that we have to do something now. So yeah, definitely would.

R= Okay. Perfect up that same same question as P1= would it be something that stop you from changing?

Or no,

P1= I'd say the biggest factor. It's like habit commodity, I think, and like participation of like just going to your local grocery store, like, walk into aldi which is like closer. And so those are the factor I think that are on the way of the change, you know, of changing those habits, but yeah.

R=

Okay, perfect. And you P3

P3= Um, yeah, I would say yes I would say that I would like to think that I've been slowly trying to go towards that way. But then again, as I said, if I don't have the time, as honestly just can't.

It's not wouldn't be because I don't want to, or because I would say, No, I want to continue buying from this unethical brands, or maybe, for example, I feel for some people, again it will be more expensive where they wouldn't have the luxury to afford

an ethical lifestyle.

Like for example, me I haven't been working or. I'm on holidays as well but like I think back when I was doing both and I feel like I could still do it because I was still trying to do it back then, but it would become it sometimes it just, it gets more

difficult to do it, but I would still be willing to.

And I would like to do.

Question 8

R= Okay, perfect. And just like, could you guys give me in general not just talking about yourselves, but if you see like the bigger picture. What would you think that is like the limitations that society, Irish society has to change from one thing to the other to like the non-ethically products to the ones are little bit more or completely more ethical.
what will be the barriers?

P2= Convenience habit.

Just in like sticking to what you know and like be resistant to change I think but that's where everyone that's where the human being.

R= Okay P1

P1= Yeah, I think I slowly but surely by watching TV, and listening to, like today. For example, my, my old phone be got pretty good still be gone, that they are going to their job local sustainable shop I suppose, bring their, their container together their

and their detergent. They're getting shampoos they're getting rice that is not pre packed.

So that is happening quite a lot. And that's that that's the way I went.

When I was a child. That's the way. Everything was, that was that has changed so much. And I can see that reverting back to them to the way.

And I suppose the sooner the better. And I would like to hear as i would i would be inclined to look at packaging.

It would, it was waiting for example, The avocados if they're . It doesn't make sense. When you can buy these loops.

The bottom in paper, which is, which is fully recyclable.

R= Would you say that there's like certain barriers for, maybe not for you, but for the rest of Ireland in, like, like what I P2 to was saying.

I'm sorry I forgot the word like habit. I think have it or convenience, or can you think like of any other thing that we could add to the list of barriers that why one would choose non sustainable to sustainable.

P1=

I think for a lot of people will come down to price.

R= Okay, price will be live. In fact,

P1=I suppose the majority of people.

R= So we have price, we have habit, and convenience. I think also will not just lecture, mostly in the Irish community. I was actually talking with my friend here and I was like always started going to the bookstore and they can we're trying to do more sustainable

P2= things. And he's like, Oh, I love to do that, but I'm not the one that does the shopping my house so I can't really go to my mom and be like, Can you go to that shop that's like, No, you know?

So, I think sometimes it's not people's choices. It's like one person making the choices for like a group of people. And, yeah, so I think that's issue as well.

R= Okay.

P3= And I think for like Irish is, I think, yeah, it will be important to know how much they're paying for something,

R= just like not Irish society, not just thinking about the Irish, but like everyone that lives in Ireland currently just okay because I was It's basically like in general, like Irish, and also we are not Irish but we are currently leaving the country and we also are part of this of the market.

P3= thinking about like Irish people.

It was I felt like it up for for an average person that works here and earns like even if it's the minimum wage, I don't think the problem would be not able to afford this product, but as honestly will be commodity and maybe like I would think some people

might not even know that or not that they don't care, they wouldn't be particularly interested, you know, because it's just easier A P2 so just walking or whatever he as well so I'm

P1= that's a good point. Girl with your friends and so on.

Not doing your own show. For example, that's very. That's a big factor there's no question.

P2= Yeah, definitely. And sometimes, like, like I have a lot of friends my age, that they stay with their home.

So like, yeah, it's just more complicated for them all here I have to do all the shop, I have to do everything, so it's easier.

P1= Cuz Yeah, you're aware. Yeah.

P1= live at home we basically became, we went into the bathroom. The shampoo busy with their Bible the same at the dinner table session.

P3= I think it also has to do with age is like I used to like your friends parents wouldn't be willing to go to this shops because it's just more ethically and then it's it's I mean it's good to hear the older people are all of course more interested but like, if I were living with my parents I feel like especially with my dad before I'd say let's buy this product instead of this one. He'll say that's pricier.

And, you know, so that I don't know if he doesn't care but it wouldn't be as inclined to do it. If I were if I didn't say to him, if you if I were in there with him, you wouldn't even he might be thinking about it, but he wouldn't actually do it.

I think it has to do with the age as well.

P1= And of course, the family.

Being if you've got two people in the family. Basically, supplying everything it's it's difficult for younger children especially, it is more difficult to, because the products that you would like.

In the bathroom in the fridge in the freezer and so when you're when you're catering for so many that can be very expensive running, running a house for mortgages, electricity .

Yes, so there is there is that aspect to that and people are mostly governed by what they haven't. in their pocket.

SLIDES.

R= here I'm going to share my screen here with you.

And this is going to be very quick. I'm going to go ahead and take much longer time.

we actually already talked about this a little bit about the issues Anna talked about it and this might give a perspective to you about the topic.

We are going to bullet point a bit of what mica is So, basically mica is a mineral.

And it has to be mine

And its use as paint coating in cosmetic, plastics and ink for the main purpose of creating a sparkling effect. It can be found in almost all cosmetics that have any type of shimmer.

Like blush. Like eyeshadow, etc.

it's also using plastic or fibbers. Fibre cement oil and other things shampoo and conditioner for like filler hair dryers and toasters. So basically everything that has that shimmer has Mica

The problem here is not the mineral by itself is.

It's mostly mined by kids.

There's a lot of illegal mining places where kids under 10 years old, are in this mines, doing what is like. As you can see these girls doing.

And as I said is very toxic like it's very hazardous, and is something that is hazardous is one of the most terrible forms of like child labour.

So it's not only that the kids are working, is where they're working what they are. they're like,

R2= yeah, basically, killing themselves well done.

R= And this like this is like mining. These were like child labour is illegal, however, corruption, as we all know, it's very common everywhere, and it is tolerated by the Indian government in this specific case.

In 2016, there were around a 220 thousand kids doing like involving a certain part of the whole clinic process, which is a lot, if you're saying that it's, it's illegal.

And this is just something that I found as well this stipulates that a company should carry out human rights due diligence. Carry due diligence means that a company should identify prevent mitigate any actual or potential adverse human writing factual

data to their own activities, and in their supply chain. Moreover, a company needs to account for and be transparent about how it addresses the issue.

So, what do you think? About the mines, the kids, the mineral where it's used to we're just going to focus in like the cosmetics and the government, and especially this what do you think about like the company should carry out human rights due diligence.

What do you think about it,

Did you know before P2 said something about it.

P3= I didn't let me I'm just want to read the last letter again can I?. Yeah.

R= So basically these like these last slides has that the company should know what's happening.

Yeah, they should prevent these things from happening.

P1= isn't just the, the situation of ladies.

We are reliant, you know in a fairly, fairly large way with these companies to take the mouth of words.

No.

Yes.

You mentioned child labour there to on this side the word we would have very low indication the what's happening in India apart from what we get in the news and so on, and what we would regard as child labour. we've got quite normal to sustain a family.

P1=

I'm not saying that's right. But it's every country is different. And we, we have very little knowledge of what happens there.

R= Okay, I'm going to go back to this part

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And while you were saying that it can be to sustain a family. However, if we like, well, like here is hazardous So, as you were saying p1, one of the things like you didn't know, so is there lack of information

P1= I'm thinking about, in my case, at least that I have a job could be reliant on on the information coming from a source that wouldn't be that fact based on the outside that I would know apart from doing research I was not very knowledge of what actually happens in these places something different is happening.

I wouldn't be as aware of.

R=

Okay.

And for example like this. Now I'm going to let the other two like we know that they're hazardous that there's, we're relying on the information that we get from the sources that we trust

P1= If I would use them if I knew that it was hazardous?

R= No, what you were saying is that you rely on the information from the sources and like what you hear from, from them.

P1=

Yes. Yeah, right.

R= So if you haven't heard of this, you literally have no information about the topic before.

P1=

This is good. Yes, okay.

R= He's gone.

R=

Okay, maybe it's going to come back soon.

But what do you get girls think so,

P2= yes like it's a terrible issue, but I think one of, like, if, if there is, supplies, is because there is a demand so I think we should be more should be CONSCIOUS BUYERS

like try to look for those things and those issues and like I didn't know I think after I finish here I'm going to look it up, which are the companies they use mica I hope it is disclosed

And then, yeah would avoid buying from that brand because they think, like the most important thing in this any industry is like you, your purchase is like a vote.

So, if I can support.

Actually, brands that fight against that that's even better.

So yeah.

R= Okay, perfect. P1 Can you hear us you froze for a bit.

P1= Yeah, I can hear you now, something happened there just for a second just so that's fine.

R=

Okay, so what do you think p3?

P3= Yeah, I didn't know I didn't even know what Mica was so probably, I don't really buy that many cosmetics but now I'm thinking, have with like all this time have been buying products that contain that and you know I've been, I've been blindly supporting

it.

And like the way I didn't know I feel like there's so many people so the people that don't know, because it's just easier not to like stuff that you don't really think about, because again it's the easy part is like you walk into the, into a shop, you

pay for it, and you don't really think what's behind it. So, and it's sad lack of information that obviously they're not going to tell you, oh we had this product contains Mica and we you know we endorse child labouring.

R= The problem with mica. You say it and put it there but the problem is like, not everyone would use illegal mining, like illegal Micah, what assets.

As this happens as the government tolerates it.

It's very difficult to know.

Like if a company started paying attention in their supply chain, which is this about the diligence like the due diligence

if they're not paying attention, because they don't. Let's say they don't want to or they think everything's fine, then this happens, is tolerated. and then the kids continue working in hazardous conditions.

So, yeah, that's like basically what's happening it's very difficult, because they don't disclose it. Where does the mica come from

P2= just so hard because like, how, how can you prove itself, like it ethically sourced. Okay, I'm going to.

P3= They're not, it is their responsibility to know who their suppliers are because it's just it's easy to kind of, I'm going to pretend I'm not seeing, you know, it's like something that's not something important especially for a big company.

And maybe that's why, because it's just like it's probably cheaper for them. Right.

Or will it was the reason I honestly I don't, I don't know.

R=

I don't know if it's cheaper, or if it's just,

P3= I don't think it's just because they enjoy having a chill, children, working for them but I mean it has to be a reason.

But will you say, how would you like rate their responsibility of every part, thinking about like government, thinking about also consumers, producers, like everything, how would you put like number one number two number three In terms of responsibility.

P2= Now, I would say, first should be the company that's producing whatever product.

But then like it like for example it's a. There's this product of the Irish are buying from India. And I'm not saying I get sounds bad but why I mean they probably do care but like why would our the Irish company would care of Indian kids are being mistreated,

like maybe if they were Irish kids they would care but like you know they're not even from their country. So I think that's it's just easier to kind of pretend it doesn't happen.

But then it will start in India like why would you have kids working, you know, career, you're producing a product.

I would say like, it starts there.

P2=

So government.

P3=I would say government, first as well.

R=What about you, p1?

P1=

I would say exactly the same thing goes first.

P2

and to us, we could we could,

if we do find it that

it should be explained to us, we can we can put pressure on the manufacturer.

The change, and it has it has happened before and it has worked.

So, white boy Catania brands but so you will put a government and consumers, the number one, consumers and number one. Yeah, because what I was like trying to maybe like put it like

the rank. Be like so the governments are the ones that should be carrying the most are like the most like.

customers. Now, this one says the responsible ones like the first one.

So like government, and then, and Carter were saying that they are the first ones like government any, it doesn't matter from which country but in this case will be like India Indian government.

And then, who's next, would you put like the consumers, alongside the government or would the consumers be number two or number three. And where does the company.

Go like should be government company consumer or company government consumer.

Number two, who set the standards, I know that these things to happen, but certainly be number one.

The manufacturer, because the retailing the product has to be number two, and if they understand there is, There is something happening.

And don't explain it to them we find out about us, we are in a position to, to let it know we are unhappy.

But we with the consumer would be at the bottom of the chain, but we still have power, we can still change things. Okay.

R= And would you guys agree, not.

All=
Yeah.

FOCUS GROUP 2

R= Okay, so thank you very much the three of you for your participation, it really means a lot in the forms that I send you, there's an explanation of what the dissertation is about basically is toiletries and cosmetics and the consumer behaviour towards the ethics of it in the Irish market. So like, that was there, there was no requirement for this focus group besides living in Ireland because everyone uses toiletries, or cosmetics in different ways as to taste shampoo, and etc. So, the questions that I'm going to ask to you are pretty straightforward. There are no wrong or right answers basically is what do you do and how do you use these products? And what do you know and what you don't know? So I don't know if you have any questions about it.

And also Feel free to say, anything if you have any comment at any moment, it's fine you can say whatever you want in semi structure, so it's not just yes or no if you want to, add something that I'm not saying or something that someone else said and you want to comment on that. That's also perfect.

R= Okay, first of all, I like all of you like know what like cosmetics and toiletries are.

How often would you use them? Like in general nothing like a specific.

P4 every day?

P5 confirming everyday

R= And how often would you buy them? What you use the most, How often would you go to the to the shop to buy it?

P6= Like, I'd say three, four months? I think I'm sure I take quite quite long. Every three four months. Yeah, I don't I'm trying to think like even toothpaste that I use it every day. I still think I get a fair amount of time out of it.

R= Okay, what about the rest?

P4 Maybe two to two to three weeks and you P6 two to three four months

P5=I was saying like two three weeks as well but it depends on the type of toiletry like say perfume is like longer and longer time but stuff like toothpaste its going to be two weeks

R=right? And so for you will be like the perfume will be the one that it's that would last longer they'll be like

P5 yeah, yeah, I mean, like put like, like a sort of depending on what you use on a daily basis especially with pandemic like you don't necessarily put on perfume to stay at home like depends on that depends on the costs as well what is considered a you know, more and more necessary or more as a sort of like passion towards you know, being more presentable the occasions and stuff like that

R= right. So in general would say like I'm on to no sorry a 3 to 4 month. P6, p4 a couple of weeks like two three weeks depending? Yeah. And same with your p5 depending on the product will be months if it's something that lasts longer or depending on the circumstances or two to three weeks.

R= Okay, perfect. So with that we go to the next question that it's a little bit more specific. Having those products in mind like what are the main characteristics that you look for when buying them? I don't know like brands, ingredients...

P6= I can go first. I tend to shop in your nourish into the shop I tend to go there and I kind of go by just yeah I tried to buy stuff but I suppose as little ingredients as possible try to buy ones that I understand what ingredients are a source of those natural

ingredients and I probably I probably spend more because of that because of what they're selling with Yeah, because they will be my main things I'm looking for is are they are they are the ingredients good for you I guess is what I'm looking for natural or the organic whatever word you want to use.

R= Okay is there like a specific brands that you have like preference

P6= I'm trying to think I don't know I don't really care about the brand I kind of I think the toothpaste of it is called Kingfisher and I probably have gone back and bought that a few times since but then a lot of the time I just ask the lady behind the counter I tell her what I'm looking for. she recommends a few different brands I would go with I probably wouldn't be loyal to the brands now. I think it's like I have the characteristics I want and you know I'll take I'll take the people's recommendation.

R= Ok perfect, for the perfect and what about you guys? P4 if you want to go next

P4=like for toothpaste they all have Sensodyne and it's good for whitening I'm fearful. I always go for brands for bodywash I just use a bar soap. So I tried to minimize the plastic use an upper shampoo conditioner, I try stick with the same ones all the time. brands like the brands that I know

R= okay. And so will go for something that is good for you the whitening of your teeth like yeah,

P4= yeah and then my skin will be quite sensitive so I'll use dove

R= Okay, perfect. And like that and the plastic like trying to reduce the plastic And you p5?

P5= Yeah, for me it's like sort of process of filtering by brand. So by non brand potentially the cheapest I do not take a lot into consideration like the plastic consumption or ingredients to be honest. But this is like more related to the fact that I moved from you know, London to Dublin to different brands and I would not know what they can never spend time to you know Sort of like, informed myself in Italy where I lived for like 26 years, I did have my brands, but to get them in Ireland would be like super expensive. And so at that point, there's always been like a temporary, you know, situation and always like a push back on the decision on which brands is best in terms of another language or characteristics. So, at the minute still like filtering by

brand, and then what is on sale, you know, what is on discount? And what goes for the cheapest.

R= Okay, perfect. I guess you already like kind of like, answered the next question, but I'm still going to ask it in case you'd like have another things to say. And to add to that is like Okay, yeah, from the ones that you have in mind? How do you do that selection? Especially, you, P5 as p6 already said that he goes more for the ingredients and ask like the information the person that it's there. And p4 us take, like, the same brands, once you know them. It's like a stick to those ones. But you p6 how do you choose from the one to the o other?

P5= It really depends. Like if you're if you go with toothpaste, you know, like for me in my mind is like aquafresh Colgate. And at that point, what is closer to one euro, you go for that. And that's that's the sort of like, idea, you have a benchmark of price, you know that there are different sort of brands, and also like a lot of sub brands, you know, like the whitening the triple actions, stuff like that, and never actually had like, the care to understand what so I don't really, I don't really care whether if like whitening, or the family, the you know, like a lot of these sort of like sub brands, and I don't really care. But what I do care in that process is like basically having a benchmark price safer to based and see that like the brand is sort of like guarantee of, you know, like a generic commercial good product, when it comes down to say, shower gel, shampoo, hand soap, maybe hand soap, I don't really care a lot about the brand itself. For the shampoo again, like same concept like should be around that benchmark price. Potentially, I would go for a for a shower gel, or something that maybe is a shampoo and a shower gel. But mostly because like I used to do a lot of gym. So I shower every day. And I don't want to have like multiple, multiple things, let's say. And but yeah, the concept is pretty much the same, like price benchmark. And then like a brand that sort of like give you trust. Because you know that he is like, huge holding company behind it. It's a very old fashioned way to reason I admit that. Yeah, pretty much like that.

R= Okay, perfect. sorry, if I don't make many comments, but I don't want to like p bias in anything. Just that that's why I'm about I don't know if like you p4 or P6 have like another comment and like, on how do you choose one from another brand?

P6 = I probably think,

R= yeah, like ingredients, if the lady at the counter said they have the same ingredients, what would be next..

P6= I probably then go for packaging. So let's say instead of buying, even if there's a shower gel or something that has really nice ingredients, I probably would pick bar soap over that just again, reduce the plastic consumption. So that probably comes into

it as well. An environmental choice. So probably my next Yeah, they will probably my next protocol and then obviously price comes into it eventually. If two things do the same thing, then sure you go to price. Yeah, I would say that's probably that will probably be it and then maybe then you know, if it's an Irish company, I'll probably buy a more intend to buy it then because you know, I guess support a local company. So I suppose you have Yeah, there's a range of reasons but they're probably I have a priority and price does was it goes down and priority.

R= Perfect. And you P4?

P4= And I just picked the products that I know that work for me. Yeah, I've gone through many products and what's the wait? They don't make my hair frizzy they make my skin soft my teeth glowing?

R= You check the boxes like this? Okay. Okay like talking about right now we're going to the ethics part of like the industry and I want you I want to ask you like if you are aware of the ethical issues that that's around this industry? And if so if you could tell me like a bit of what you know about them

P4= I honestly don't know too much about the outcome. Like when I find stuff I try to be, like vegan or, or less plastic, but that's really uh, I don't I don't look, I haven't looked on what's behind it.

R= Okay,

P4= I Know I should.

P6= Yeah, I probably I probably say the same. I'd have I'd be looking for those. Yeah, you want to reduce the waste? You want to make sure the ingredients are on the best source as possible, the most natural sources possible. But probably I'm just doing those things for overall environmental reasons. And for my own skin, I guess. But no, I don't actually know if you mean, ethical reasons in terms of where they sourcing the materials. What happens to the people sourcing materials don't actually know much about what goes on in the cosmetic world.

R= Okay.

P6= Yeah, same here, but share exactly the same position like the guys

R=Okay, so it will be mainly just like environment and animals. Go be like what's known?

All= Yeah, yeah.

R= And also like you for what you have said, like, both of you p4, and p6 will be also like, plastic. Kind of like maybe like waste manage, perhaps.

P6= Yeah, you want to reduce that if you can.

R= Yeah. Okay. And from for what , you know, like these, like, I prefer, like vegan products, or I go for like, the less plastic or environmental. Where Did you get, like the information that you have? Even if it's like, a little bit like, Where have you heard? Where have you read it? Or who told you about these issues? Even if it's just even if you don't have a lot of information.

P6= I'd say just documentaries, I suppose the if you Yeah, I suppose documentaries, I would have got a lot of stuff on. Yeah, like plastic, I suppose would be the one that's really in your face! And then I suppose not so much with cosmetics. I don't know if I've seen in terms of like, using animal products to make cosmetics. I don't actually think I've seen a lot on that. I suppose that more just comes from being vegan, you just for you know, in terms of not eating meat, you then would try to avoid animal products in cosmetics, or animal anything. And you just avoid that. But I actually must say I haven't necessarily read that information and obviously try to avoid animal testing. It sounds terrible. So I probably be looking to avoid that. Like even that was that shop while near Grafton Street. That has all like against Yeah, lush. So that's fairly in your face against animal testing. So maybe Yeah, they're probably the places

R= so that we would run into like the ethical issue of the animal testing.

P6= Yeah, yeah, you want to avoid that if you can. Okay, sounds rough.

R= P5?

P5= Still, like, like, again, like, potentially, I'm the one with the least consideration of the group about like, impact on plastic and animal testing, you know, all these things. I've been seeing like a lot of say proposition about going with your own plastic to be sort of like big dispensers. In my my own town. I didn't see that in Dublin. But I didn't look for them to be honest also. So I don't know if they're, if they're out there. And I feel is amazing and amazing idea. But again, it takes a lot of effort. Still like something

that doesn't really get my attention and it's not like I like from an ethical perspective, we should all pens, you know, that that action. Currently not going for that. Because of that there, you know, other concerns and insight and support. So Again, in that sense, same potential, like they'll be close to these factors in the group.

R= Okay, so like you'd say that you haven't like really heard information here in Ireland?

P5= No, I mean, obviously, as a general knowledge, you know, that like they would test on on animals before going to market, you know, that there is like all plastic consumption kind of subject as it goes on and on, and not only any ways in internet theories, and, you know, these sort of products, but not I don't know.

R= Okay. Thank you. And p5

P5= Oh, those were the information like, yeah, like, like, I don't know, from you to like, say, like,

R= what do you know? What do you know from the the ethical issues? And where woul you go if you want to know a little bit more about it,

P4= I guess, reading different vegan article, or like reading groups that have written articles and stuff. As well, as p6 said,

R= Where are those vegan groups?

P4= There's like different speaking groups on Facebook, on Facebook, and then I don't know, I get some newsletters sometimes. Or I'm just googling vegan products. But I think I'm quite ignorant into, like, how things are made as well. Like, just because the animals aren't harmed doesn't mean that there's people not harmed declined, like doing this now. I feel bad Not knowing. Waiting articles from Facebook groups or different documentaries.

R= Okay

P6= I have another one for you, as well, Renata actually wants you, I kind of find once you like even on Instagram, once you start following particular, what influences let's just say or even start following certain products. Personally, I find that I just get more and more, you know, whether the algorithm is sending it to me or just the people I'm

following, you know, they're getting paid to advertise the next product. So I'm always getting more. Whether it's a, let's say, natural deodorant, or whatever, yeah, natural anything, because I follow those other pages and then get more information. So recommendation about Yeah, exactly. So a lot of them I don't have to I don't even have to look, it's just I've got another one sent to me, because I'm following those type of people. So you kind of go more and more, you know, again, that's just I guess how social media works. Yeah, you got pulled more into your own bubble.

Yeah. A bit scary sometimes.

But yeah, so would you say that it makes it easier for you to find like other products. Once you follow Him, then you receive more information without having to ask for it.

Pretty much. I would say so. Like a lot of guys saw that the deodorant I have now I think I saw someone advertisers. I can which one but some influencer and then I just saw another one recently that looked cool and caught my attention. And I went onto the website and bought it. Yeah, but you know, that's Yeah, I would say it's in my face rather than me looking for it.

R= Perfect. And I guess it will be like, I don't know the same for you P4 and P5? . And here you get like just more information about like what you're already buying or you're interested.

P4= Yeah.

R= Like you may be key or getting more like vegan stuff in your Instagram and p5 again, more like I don't know. Like, maybe you would say like regular Common brands from supermarket that you get.

P5= Yeah. Yeah.

R= Okay. These I guess we already we already talked about it. So I'm going to kind of like skip it. I'm going to tell them like the questions in case you have another comment of it. From this one is like if you review the ingredients before buying and I think like what p6 said is like, it's very important for you. It's like you're there. Which ingredients are in the products that you use. And p5 said that Not really. Right. Yep.

P5= Yes. I thought I was waiting for someone to speak. No, it's it's becoming now like something we were talking about. With my girlfriend. It's it's like first element of, you

know, concern now that basically, we think we're gonna stay in Ireland for a while, as I mentioned, like before, I always, live in Ireland as a temporary location temporary solution because of jobs and stuff like that. So I never really looked into into these small details. Now this obviously, by staying here for more than two years, you know, becomes like, details of relevance. So, we started like, very recently to kind of check, what is what would be best in general, but like, for a lot of like problems in general, you have like a shampoo that doesn't, that it's not like, a good one, you might have, like, you know, your hair loss, you can have like, a lot of like, contour effects and drawbacks in buying, like cheap stuff. And so we want to make sure that, that we look after everything, but not just like for the shampoo, but also like, in general for the older and or for our elders, you know, like a better toothpaste and so on and so forth. So I think that is going to be like a big team going forward, in my household.

R= And p4. Like, do you have any, like, comment about ingredients? in general?

P4= I wouldn't generally check the ingredient It would, I suppose I probably just see the vegan sign on us. I do take it for granted. And then, like stuff that I know that has little ingredients in it, like the dove bar soap, but no, I wouldn't, I wouldn't really look for ingredients. Okay. But I will Well, from tomorrow.

R = Do you have like any comment about like ingredients? If you want to say that you are the one that so far I heard that you have concern.

P6= Yeah, I don't know if I have. It's not necessarily that I have ingredients. And I'm like, Oh, I want that I'm looking for that. It's more that just I'm looking to see is there minimal amounts And do I understand them? So like, are they coming from whatever, leaf or something and I mean, that they're not some crazy scientific word that I don't understand. That's I'm just I'm it's more than I'm trying to avoid the weird shit that I understand. And I'm looking for minimal ingredients. And I'm looking that I understand all of them that they come from a natural source, pretty much.

R= Okay.

R= Perfect. And I go into the next one, like here, p4 just said she goes for like the vegan certification would you like care about certifications in general?

P6

Yeah, I probably don't take the they definitely catch my first but then I don't really take I wouldn't say I take them. I don't just take that at face value. Because I just find a lot of those. Generally, those two are probably pretty good. Yeah. If it's if it's assigned, it's not tested on animals, you can probably take it that it's not. If it's a vegan sign, you

would trust it. It's not, but then I probably still look at the back and just be like, Okay, is there? Is it still full of other shit, though? That's probably what I look. So I definitely am attracted to those, but then I probably look beyond those logos.

R= Okay. I don't know.

Like you guys have a comment on certifications. Would they be important for you? Do you know certifications in the industry

P5= I wouldn't have a clue

P4= I wouldn't know. Just not tested on animals.

R= Okay, perfect. And we're going to to our last question. And this is like, again, this is like not wrong or right answer like any of the previous ones. But would you be willing to change the products that you are currently using? For some that are even more like, ethical in any way that you want to find the ethical part? would you change it or would it be like No, I'm fine. With what I'm using now and which is okay. Or, like, why would you change? Or why would you not change them? If you can tell me

P6= I would. Yeah, I would be dictated by that pretty much I would, I wouldn't really have any, I wouldn't be care about the brand, or what I'm using now. Dump any of that. And I was, if you offered me a product that you made in your house, and you agree with all outside, and it was the most perfectly ethical product, I'd pay for that one, and I changed for that. So that would be my Yeah, that would be the main thing that would dictate my mind that it's good for me and exactly good for the environment that it came from, and it wasn't damaging any animals or people that were growing the thing. So yeah, that would be my main reason.

R= Would there be something that stopped you from changing like or it doesn't matter?

P6= as long as it wasn't an astronomical price then I would buy it if I would, I would consider paying more for let's just say no crazy amount more but I would I would consider paying more for Yeah, a better product in that sense.

R= Okay. Yeah.

P4= I i was i would be open to changing but it would depend on price as well. But if I knew that it was a lot better than what I was buying already, like absolutely wise. Yes. Most definitely.

R= Okay. And you P5?

P5= Yeah, I think I wouldn't necessarily change at all costs. In that sense, I will try to bake in a value of an ethical choice and potentially like ingredients as well into whatever factor depending on on the product and so you know, that there are like specific like if it cost like three times what I'm already paying, maybe I would not that like be that Keen because it would be unsustainable in terms of like, you know, like my my grocery shop my my food shopping or any other shopping that I do, but if it's like within a specific benchmark that would justify say unethical choice or bad ingredient or both of them, then I would be open to consider that for sure.

R= If you hear of an ethical product would you boycott a brand?

P5= instead of like a proactive choice of changing because of this and that, having this news like reactively and being passive about like, these new facts that comes into, into the picture, I will definitely move no matter what, like, there is still like a lot of like, a lot of preposition, I guess for any, any product any ways to find someone who's less impactful in that sense.

R= Okay.

P5= And convenience is a big one. Really, , not everyone wants to go to a particular store. You know, most people probably want to just buy the cosmetics in whatever the large supermarket that they buy their food and maybe so probably, that's another barrier to moving to a nicer product is does your does the place you usually shop stuff? This is definitely a definitely a thing stopping people from changing products, I guess.

R= Okay, yeah. So if you, I don't know that just to finish this. You have another comment? Would you tell me like? Maybe what are the three like barriers that you will find? for like, changing? Like what you said, like your like, convenience, perhaps? Maybe doesn't apply to you, but what do you say like in general, not just to yourself, but in general? What do you have seen? He would like be a barrier to change?

P6=Yeah, probably. Well, convenience, I guess would be one is like, is it available? Like, I suppose I'm lucky that I'm in Dublin City Centre. So pretty convenient. But I mean, if I was, if I had a very busy at a certain point in my life, then maybe you're not going to go to the store. So that is kind of convenience is still a barrier. So you might change you might just stay in the same shop you're in and buy the same product. You might even go and and go to the new place and buy the new product that your hopes good. And then price is probably the only other barrier. They're probably the two bars I can think of really, okay.

P4=They're the same things I can think of a third one, but definitely convenience. Christ. I can't think of something Oh, no, I think part of your process a little bit. today

P6= Or another as well. One Actually, I kind of thought of another one. That's not really myself. But I suppose for people and for people in general, like, information, I guess. And marketing is probably a barrier, like a few. Like, I don't know, you know, if you're maybe more susceptible to marketing in general, and there's some crappy brand that's shouting in your face that they are organic and fantastic and wonderful. You know what I mean? If you are more susceptible to that, that is a big barrier, because there's gonna be like, yeah, this one's perfect. So it's like, do people have you know, do people have access to the information all the time? Maybe not, you know, that that could be a barrier. For a lot of people to switch, really, they might if they have a lot of trust in brands without really digging into the information, then that's a big barrier, then they won't even consider moving.

Appendix D – Participant Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I. Research Study Title: *Are ethical toiletries and cosmetics important in the Irish market? – Understanding consumer's behaviour*

University: Griffith College, Graduate Business School.

Principal Investigator: Dr Garrett Ryan.

Researcher Name: Renata Perez Somohano

Email: renata.perez@student.griffith.ie

II. Clarification of the purpose of the research

The aim of this research is to complete my MSc in Global Brand Management. Furthermore, through a combination of your participation and the latest research into ethical toiletries and cosmetics, this research will add to body of academic understanding of Consumer Behaviour in Ireland.

III. Confirmation of particular requirements as highlighted in the Plain Language Statement

Participant – please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each question)

- Have you read or had read to you the Plain Language Statement Yes No
- Do you understand the information provided? Yes No
- Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study? Yes No
- Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions? Yes No
- Are you aware that interviews will be audiotaped? Yes No

IV. Confirmation that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary

Involvement in this Research Study is voluntary. Participants who decide to take part may withdraw from the Research Study at any point. There will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the Research Study are complete..

V. Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations

Every effort is made to ensure the confidentiality of the participant. Participant names will not be recorded, as all participants will be assigned a code. Where used, recorded interviews/survey data will be downloaded to a password-controlled computer, typed transcripts/survey results are held within password-controlled documents. Participant biographical details and or mention of other persons will be omitted in the final report. Confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

VI. Participant Signature:

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researcher, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project

Participants Signature:

Digitally signed by
Ciara Dwyer
DN: cn=Ciara Dwyer

Name in Block Capitals:

CIARA DWYER

Witness:

Date:

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Participants Signature:



Name in Block Capitals:

CARLO ENRICO LOMBARDO

Witness:

Date:

03-08-2021

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Participants Signature:  _____

Name in Block Capitals: ANNA LUIZA DE MUYLDER _____

Witness: _____

Date: 20/08/21 _____