MAKING PLANET-EARTH A LIVABLE PLACE: EXPLORING ASUSTAINABLEDEVELOPMENT THROUGH ETHICAL CONSUMERISM

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Abstract

The world we live in, the quality of lives among humans is declining rapidly. To suit our greediness, the human kind is destroying the world. The harvesting and consumption of more natural resources create inevitable more pollution resulting in the destruction of the Earth's ecosystems. Consumption engages people every day, andliterature suggests that consumers seek out products that satisfy their needs, at the lowest possible cost. However some consumers appear to be selecting products, sometimes at higher costs, because they are not causing harm to their body or the environment, or because producers are receiving fair price for their goods, or because they are grown or made locally. However, despite embracing the values of ethical consumers' choices upon the environment, animals and the society, literature proves that, this does not necessarily translate into consumer buying behaviour. This is a big concern for companies because they are increasingly finding that there exists a gap between what ethical consumer's say they are going to do and what they actually do at the point of purchase. A holistic understanding of the interrelation of ethical consumerism and sustainable development at the market place serves as a way to close this gap and is milestone to making Planet- Earth a Livable Place. This paper reviews literature on sustainable development and Ethical consumerism, particularly on ethical buying behaviour and proposes keys to becoming ethically minded consumers as a way to bridge towards Sustainable development which is a key to making Planet- Earth a Livable Place. It is believed by the companies that if they will offer ethical products it will give them a competitive advantage over their competitors as people these days have a positive attitude for ethical products; and Ethical Consumerism can be a profitable endeavour for sustainable development. It offers insight and strategic direction for entrepreneurs who plan to invest in ethical products, businesses managers and marketing managers. It is an eye

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opener to academicians interested in ethical consumerism, as well as various stakeholders in this field, including government, environmental NGOs and other economic operators with keen interest in sustainable development and making Planet- Earth a livable place.

Keywords: Ethical consumerism; Liveable place,Sustainable Consumption; Sustainable development

Introduction

Sustainable Development is recognized as a goal of Human kind; and this a reaction against the pressure from deteriorating environmental conditions in many parts of the world. The success will depend on promoting both sustainable consumption and production (OECD, 2007, Han, H. (2020)), and the backbone of this endeavour is achieving long-term economic growth that is unfailing with environmental and social needs. However, consumers' ethical buying behaviour is very complicated. There is an apparent gap between what ethical consumers say they are going to do and what they actually do at the point of purchase (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001; Follows and Jobber, 2000; Shaw et al., 2007, Han, H. 2021). However, people are becoming increasingly concerned about environmental, social and economic problems and more willing to overcome them by adopting more responsible lifestyles and new models of consumption   (Silvana S.& Francesca F.2016;Hussain, I., Mu, S., Mohiuddin, M., Danish, R. Q., &Sair, S. A. 2020). According to a recent survey by Eurobarometro, consumers' awareness of environmental and social matters is entering the mainstream. European Commission (2011) reports that as many as 95% of Europeans believed that it was important to safeguard the environment. Policymakers, too, are calling for reduced levels of consumption as a step forward towards sustainability (Peattie and Peattie, 2009) and are becoming more and more involved in promoting activities that help to teach that we are in an era where we have systems which are not sustainable; and the current model of development, based on a continuous consumption of limited resources, is no longer sustainable (United Nation Sustainable Development, 1992;Lavuri, R. 2021).

The U.N. conference on the environment and development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, emphasized the sustainable development of the planet. It clarified, for example, that changing consumption and production models is at the centre of a form of development directed towards sustainability (United Nation Sustainable Development, 1992). In this endeavour, methods of

food provisioning are being highlighted as one of the main issues regarding climate change, as well as biodiversity and health hazards (Bellarby et al., 2008, Han, H. 2021). Consequently, as it is now rare to find a scientist who disagrees with the notion that humans are severely degrading many of the Earth's ecosystems, consumers are considered increasingly as both a cause and a possible solution to sustainability related problems. This is the reason why the growth of ethical consumerism has generated considerable interest in recent years from different perspectives and has sparked a lively academic debate involving several disciplines (Papaoikonomou et al., 2012, Han, H., Moon, H., & Hyun, S. S.2019).

As it is often highlighted, there is hope that an increase in the number of responsible consumers would play an important role in encouraging a change in production processes (SignoriaS.andFornob F.2016; Hussain, I., Mu, S., Mohiuddin, M., Danish, R. Q., &Sair, S. A. (2020).). In fact, Ethical consumers choose goods and services that respect the human beings, animals, and the environment; paying attention to the impact made by the whole PLC (production, selection, transportation, purchase, use, maintenance, handling and finally disposal) in order to implement consumption models that aim to modify practices as well as economic and environmental patterns in the long term Indeed, ethical consumerism might serve as a form of social control of business providing incentives for companies to be socially and environmentally responsible, and punishes them if it goes other way (Smith, 2007;1990Konuk, F. A. 2019). Consumers could, therefore, become promoters of a more sustainable society both through their act of buycotting and boycotting which implies choosing and buying (or avoiding) goods and services, and by the pressure they can place on other actors (producers, peers, local governments, etc.). In addition, by their voluntary simplicity (downshifting) where they choose to cut down on their consumption levels and to adopt a simpler lifestyle (Shaw&Newholm, 2002 Liu, C. R., Chiu, T. H., Wang, Y. C., & Huang, W. S. 2020) and by Slow Food Movement which focuses on supporting alternatives that intend to save local food traditions, protect biodiversity and counteract fast food expansion (Friedmann& McNair,2008; Pakins& Craig, 2006), ethical consumers testify that their motives are not altruistic as far as our habits "save yourself" can worsen irreversibly the ecosystems that we pretend to inherit to future generations.

Despite the significant changes in the levels of awareness, anxiety and general sensitivity towards environmental and social questions, many people have not altered their general

behaviour, life style or purchasing decisions. This is the problem known as "Attitude -Intention - Behaviour gap", in other words the gap occurs when a person's positive or negative feelings about performing a specific behaviour and his/her perceived likelihood of performing a behaviour are not put into practice to fulfil the targeted behaviour (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000; Bray et al., 2011; Carrigan and Attalla, 2001; Carrington et al., 2010; Cowe and Williams, 2000; De Pelsmacker et al., 2005,Konuk, F. A. 2019). Narrowing this gap represents a challenge of great practical and theoretical importance in different fields of sustainability practices. Research on this subject has pinpointed a series of factors and/or conditions influencing the actual transformation of intentions into consumer behaviour, but at our knowledge there is no study or very few if any, which tried to link ethical consumerism and sustainable development. Although closing the gap between Attitude-Intention-Behaviour is certainly important, to understand the forces that sustain this gap and to explore options to eradicate it is not enough. There must be a shared motive behind the possibility to transform intentions into actions (Mukandoli D. &Bhagat, Deepak. (2018). In this regard, the marketplace where powerful retailers, producers, and brands, to name but a few take their identity, has to be a facilitating factor for ethical buying decision making (Konuk, F. A. 2019). The business sector is often viewed as one of the largest contributors to environmental, social, and economic destruction. Thus, taking into account Sustainable development as a shared motive of consumers and businesses is the context in which these practices are shaped (Jiang, Y., & Hong, F. 2021). This study attempts to relate ethical consumerism and sustainable development as a way to hasten responsible practices and serve the earth and proposed keys to becoming ethically minded consumers for Sustainable Development and therefore a way to save the Earth.

Plane Earth as a livable place

As we all know, there are some main factors that make this planet earth habitable: **temperature** that influences how quickly atoms & molecules move**, water** which dissolves & transports chemicals within and to and from a cell, traps heat, shields the surface from harmful radiation, and provides chemicals needed for life, such as nitrogen and carbon dioxide; **energy** as organisms use light or chemical energy to run their life processes; and **nutrients** used to build and maintain an organism's body. A due care must be given in this endeavour to protect our planet (Han, H., Moon, H., & Hyun, S. S. (2019).If not, the earth's climate, forests, rivers,

oceans, and ecosystems are going to be destroyed without restoration. So, profit-driven businesses will not save the earth. Only ethical businesses with their ethical products will do (Han, H., Moon, H., & Hyun, S. S. (2019).

The Ethical Products

 Ethical products can be categorised into three broad overlapping categories that address the concerns of consumers. These are Human Ethical Concerns (HEC), Animal Ethical Concerns (AEC), and Environmental Ethical Concerns (EEC). HEC is often characterized by issues such as fair-trade, child labour, employee welfare, and supporting local communities. Although they appear very different, HEC issues share common ground in that they concern the welfare of human beings and human communities. AEC is often characterized by issues such as the testing of products on animals, anti-hunting campaigns, and concerns about the welfare of animals grown for food. EEC is based on a wide range of issues such as deforestation, food miles, carbon emissions and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) (Wheale and Hinton, 2007,Yadav, R., & Pathak, G. S. 2017)). We can say that these three ethical concerns are the pillar of an endeavor to maintain harmony between man and the nature, a situation that calls upon sustainable practices (Park, H. J., & Lin, L. M. 2020).

The concept of Sustainability practices

Due to the current state of the environment, businesses and industries have begun to incorporate sustainability practices to meet consumers' environmental issue concerns, current industry standards, and to create an environment of sustainable development for future generations (Lauren Doherty, 2013, Moon, S. J. 2021). Environmental ethical concern refers to the development and distribution of ecologically-safe products. It refers to products and packages that have one or more of the following characteristics: (1) are less toxic, (2) are more durable, (3) contain reusable materials, or (4) are made of recyclable material. In short, these are products considered "environmentally responsible" (Park, H. J., & Lin, L. M. 2020). Besides Human and Animal concerns, this is an important area the marketer need to know about what is the relevance of ethical Marketing in order to protect the environment and to improve the quality of life and are concerned with issues that include conservation of natural resources, reducing environmental pollution, protecting endangered species, and control of land use; of course without leaving

behind the three Rs of environmentalism: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle (Sreen, N., Purbey, S., &Sadarangani, P. 2018).

Many companies are finding that consumers are willing to pay more for a green product. So, we must fulfil our social responsibility by denying the unethical, hazardous and anti-social marketing of the business in any form. Business companies should make their marketing in such a way that both consumer and society does not feel reluctant and ashamed about this rather there should be a frank and free environmental and social relationship among marketers and companies. As we can guess from above, ethical buying is not an automated activity. It is hardly surprising that an intention behavior gap has been reported in terms of a weak relationship between what consumers say, and what they do (Newholm 2005,Yadav, R., & Pathak, G. S. 2017)).It's an activity done after a tough scrutiny which may result in positive buying, negative buying or boycott, looking both at the company and at the product and evaluate which is the most ethical, the motive behind the ethical consumer purchasing decision is to feel good and do good. Beyond quality and price, the ethical consumer considers if the product is fair on People, fair on Planet, made fairly, done fairly, or produced locally. Thus s/ he seeks social and moral values as witnessed in the remarkable growth of the global market for Fair Trade, organic and environmentally friendly products (Teng, C. C., Lu, A. C. C., & Huang, T. T. 2018).

The concept of Ethical consumerism

The concept of Ethical consumerism refers to consumer choices based on the social, non-traditional components of products (Auger et al., 2003) as well as personal and moral beliefs (Carrigan et al., 2004; Park, H. J., & Lin, L. M. 2020).In this respect, ethical purchasing refers to purchasing services or goods that are produced /offered ethically by companies that follow ethical principles. 'Ethical' brings together both companies and consumers, but in its truest sense it refers to a practice of producing goods and services with a prime aim to minimise social and/or environmental harm and the avoidance of products with negative impact on the environment and the society at large (IGD Services Ltd 2007,Sreen, N., Purbey, S., &Sadarangani, P. 2018). In the field of ethical consumerism, two terms are quite frequently used in the context of ethically conscious behaviour i.e. sustainable consumption and ethical consumption. Sustainable consumption is more inclined towards environmental and ecological dimensions, while ethical

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consumption deals more with social issues; however these terms overlap which cause that they are often interchangeably used (Young,W. et al. 2009; Park, H. J., & Lin, L. M. 2020).

The concept of Sustainable consumption

The concept of Sustainable consumption reflects the use of goods and services which act in response to basic needs and bring a better quality of life by minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of the good or service so as not to endanger the needs of future generations" (Oslo Roundtable on Sustainable Production and Consumption, 1994). This implies that humans are accountable for environmental sustainability; minimum use of existing ecological resources and their protection is a good behaviour that does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs. At individual level, SD suggests a decision-making process whereby a consumer, besides personal needs and wants, takes his environmental and social responsibility into account (Vermeir&Verbeke, 2006).

Companies need to make drastic changes in their research-and-development, production, financial, and marketing practices if sustainability has to be achieved (Philip Kotler (2011; de Toni, D., Eberle, L., Larentis, F., & Milan, G. S. (2018)). The several environmental challenges to be considered in the sustainability are change in the composition of the atmosphere, depletion of the ozone layer, soil degradation & increased desertification, increased air and water pollution (Newholm and Shaw, 2007).

Due to challenges of global warming, nations and people these days have all time high concern for environmental protection and a new format of business has emerged as Green Business (Shaw and Shiu, 2002). The industries who claim that they are environment friendly and have concern for society are known as green industries, and if they go farther to take a broader agenda of issues to include additional issues of a more societal welfare nature such as Fairtrade, social injustice, human rights, self-interested health concerns (Newholm and Shaw, 2007) they become ethical industries; their marketing philosophy is termed as ethical marketing and their products are called as ethical products.

Generally put, Sustainable or responsible consumption implies the satisfaction of personal needs without an adverse impact on the lives and consumption potentials of present and future

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generations and complies therefore with the principles of sustainability (Belz and Peattie, 2009 Riva, F., Magrizos, S., &Rubel, M. R. B. (2021).The responsible consumer tries to consider equally economic (in terms of personal welfare), ecological (including animal welfare) as well as social aspects across the entire consumption chain such as type and number of products, their use and disposal. His decisions are dependent on underlying strategies (WiltrudTerlau and Darya Hirsch, 2015). *The consistency strategy* refers to products where the production process is in line with nature, such as renewable energies and organic products; the focus is on qualitative rather than quantitative aspects of resource use by adapting man-made material flows arising from economic activity. *The sufficiency strategy* is based on consumer involvement in boycotting certain food companies or a reduced consumption behaviour. Instead of promoting economic growth, this strategy uses the principle of modesty and self-limitation to achieve sustainability. *The efficiency strategy* is based on the efficient use of energy and products and selection of low environmental impact equipment or services (WiltrudTerlau and Darya Hirsch, 2015; Voth, J. 2015). It aims at increasing resource efficiency through the use of technology and technical innovation in the area of product design and product use in order to decrease the use of material and energy needed per production unit. The idea here is to increase wealth while decreasing the use of resources which should facilitate a decoupling of economic growth and environmental degradation (Riva, F., Magrizos, S., &Rubel, M. R. B. 2021).

The concept of Sustainable development

Sustainable Development is recognized as a goal of Human kind; and this a reaction against the pressure from deteriorating environmental conditions in many parts of the world. The success will depend on promoting both sustainable consumption and production (OECD, 2007), and the backbone of this endeavour is achieving a long-term economic growth that is unfailing with environmental and social needs. It refers to the notion of ensuring that economic growth and environmental protection work together in a long-term "win-win" situation, rather than operating in competition with each other (Schaper, 2002); and that pinpoints the inclusion of social and environmental concerns in business operations and shifts accountability for shareholders to social responsibility for stakeholders In a plain language, something described as sustainable is that which is causing little or no damage to the environment and therefore able to continue for a long time. Sustainable development is perceived as "a combination of three dimensions or

'pillars', namely, the environmental (ecological), economic, and social dimensions (Coenen, 2005; de Toni, D., Eberle, L., Larentis, F., & Milan, G. S. 2018)). According to him, the concept of sustainable development tries to comprise environmental, economic and social interests. It advocates a well-balanced equilibrium between the environmental, economic and social dimension (Coenen, 2005). One of the most common definitions of sustainability is that put forward by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission, 1987cited by Schaper (2002)) which described the idea of sustainable development as "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". In the same view, sustainable development is co-evolution of human and natural systems, and provides 6 sustainable development indicators subdivided- into three subsystems as follows: Human system (individual development, social system, and government system), Support system (Infrastructure, Economic system) and Natural system (Resource and environment) (Bossel1999); and a core set of state indicators for sustainable development emerges in terms of economic, social, and environmental categories (Manis, 2002; Han, H., Moon, H., & Hyun, S. S. 2019)).

If we look at it in a new globalised order, sustainable development is the integration ofeconomic, social and environmental developmentconsidered as the inter-dependent and mutually reinforcing pillars which operate at the local, national, regional and global levels. This sets out two fundamental principles of intergenerational and intragenerational equity. The principle of Intergenerational equity means need to preserve natural resource for the benefit of future generations. The principle of Intragenerational equity means equitable use of natural resources which implies that use by one state must take into account of the needs of other states (Kulkarni A., 2012). We have to recognise our own limits in claiming the fruits of the earth and in managing and manipulating nature.

Taken literally, sustainable development would simply mean "development that can be continued, either indefinitely or for the implicit time period of concern". Theorists and practitioners have both been grappling with the word and the concept for at least the past four decades (Arndt, 1981, and Bartelmus, 1986; Han, H., Moon, H., & Hyun, S. S. 2019)), for semantic and conceptual histories of economic development. The point to be noted is that

development is a process of directed change. An understanding of sustainable development has to consider not only the objectives of this process, but also the means of achieving these objectives (Sharachchandra M. Lélé, (1991)). Unfortunately, a distinction between objectives and means is often not made in the development rhetoric; nevertheless development is conceptualised as simply a process of socio-economic change.

Interrelation of ethical consumerism and sustainable Development

Sustainable development needs sustainable production and sustainable consumption (WiltrudTerlau and Darya Hirsch, 2015). Ethical customers, in their purchase decisions, think not only on themselves, but also on the external world around them (Harrison et al., 2005) even though what they say is not what their shopping basket reflects. It is believed that reasons for failure are not an excuse, but the difficulty for customers to find suitable outlets, modes and contexts is a barrier to expressing their intentions (Nicholls, Lee, 2006; Carrington, 2010) to buy and consume ethical products and services. Studies done in ethical consumerism field report the ethical consumption gap as simply a personal failure; they viewthat though ethical consumers hold strong ethical and moral beliefs in favor of environmental and social justice, their purchasing decisions fail to justify what they believe in (Carrington et al., 2016 ; Moon, S. J. 2021). Furthermore, there exist different rationalities into play in the various spheres of life, reason why it can't be fair concluding that consumers overstate their ethical consumption intentions in the first place (Carrington et al.2016). Thus, the marketplace with values of price, convenience, quality, prestige, among others; serves as an inhibiting factor of ethical intentions (Carrington et al., 2010).

In this regard, studies by Shaw and Shui (2003) and Vermeir and Verbeke (2008) build upon the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985) to suggest that in addition to a positive attitude, factors such as a sense of ethical obligation and self-identity, perceived personal effectiveness, and perceived social consequences play important roles in the development of ethical consumption intentions, where intentions are taken as proxy for behavior. In this scenario of prioritization, some ethical concerns are deemed more important and are acted upon, while other concerns are not; and ethical identity is constructed through interactions between the individual and respective socialities (Cherrier, 2007;Park, H. J., & Lin, L. M. 2020). Thus, the blame

towards ethical consumers in form of individualization subverts the realization that destructive, capitalist-driven consumption is immanent to the system (Gilbert, 2014; Mukandoli D. &Bhagat, Deepak. (2017).); and showcases capitalism as having the ability, in principle, to save the world from the environmental, social, and economic destruction, that capitalism is bringing about in the first place, and the problem is that ethical consumers do not help them because they do not "walk their talk" (Carrington, 2016;Moon, S. J. 2021).

As a matter of fact, with value co-creation in mind, the ethical consumer can be a focal point in the development of the corporate social responsibility ethics that we want from companies to cement the partnership. Companies, with business formulas both at production and distribution level at their disposal; have to provide a room for ethical consumers to pursue ethical value (Moon, S. J. (2021). We have to mention that CSR goes beyond charity and requires that a responsible company take into full account of the impact on all stakeholders and on the environment when making decisions. This requires them to balance the needs of all stakeholders with their need to make a profit and reward their shareholders adequately. For the new generation of corporate leaders, optimization of profits is the key, rather than the maximization of profit (Riva, F., Magrizos, S., &Rubel, M. R. B. 2021)). Hence, there is a shift from accountability to shareholders to social responsibility to stakeholders, customers included (Gray, S. G., Raimi, K. T., Wilson, R., &Arvai, J. 2019).

A shift from accountability to shareholders towards social responsibility to stakeholders

From the view expressed above and various debates on CSR emerges an assumption that businesses have the responsibility to fulfil goals other than solely profit maximization. Whereas another concern puts it that the CSR Community expects too much from businesses because its main objective is profit maximization (William B. W., Jr. & David C., 2010, Riva, F., Magrizos, S., &Rubel, M. R. B. 2021).In addition to doing 'the right thing,' both consumers and companies are often informed that direct financial benefits flow from adopting ethical practices. In part, these financial benefits are seen as flowing from consumers' decision to choose ethical products. Even though researchers continue to search and learn about consumers' motivation to choose ethical products, there is some light evidencing that ethical consumers are motivated not by the consequences of their actions, but primarily by a sense of personal integrity (Shaw and Shiu,

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2002; Riva, F., Magrizos, S., &Rubel, M. R. B. 2021). In other words, they consume products that they perceive to be ethical, in order to feel good about themselves and do good to other people as well as the planet. It is important to say that there is a degree of scepticism that exists in respect to the effectiveness of ethical consumerism as a mechanism of change.

In this way, the needs and wants of ethical consumers: the consumer buying power to incentivize ethical behaviours from business that made the strongest commitment by buying its products on one specific day and downgrades the penalties that post-hoc punish behaviours not environmentally or socially responsible (RobertaSebastiani et, al 2011;Gray, S. G., Raimi, K. T., Wilson, R., &Arvai, J. 2019). The business keeps the promises and realizes the expected improvements. However, as Peter Drucker put it "if we want to know what business is, we must first start with its purpose...There is only one valid definition of business purpose: to create a customer. What business thinks it produces is not of first importance, especially not to the future of the business or to its success. What the customer thinks he/she is buying, what he/she considers, and values is decisive; it determines what a business is, what it produces, and whether it will prosper" (Peter Drucker, 1954:37). This is the beauty of businesses and their marketing strategies. In this spirit, Companies do not have to consider a sale complete until goods are worn out and the customer still satisfied(Han, H. 2020).

In this endeavour to shape the market, businesses must be ready and accountable to consumers who boycott goods and services that are not ethical. As for winning companies core mission is to create value for customers and to capture value in return, above all things they must avoid having a dissatisfied customer (Kotler P. and Armstrong G., 2008). This profitable customer relationship management makes it that, customer satisfaction results in customer loyalty and loyal customers spend more money to purchase the productions or services of the organization while encouraging others to purchase from this same organization and tend to pay more to purchase its products; and the increase in repurchases reduces customers' complaints (Johnson et al, 2001). On another hand, Corporate Social Responsibility must be respected and communicated clearly to customer (Singh, S., &Alok, S. 2021). Thus, the harm done to the planet is an opportunity for far-thinking corporations to develop enterprises that are both sustainable and profitable. Many companies need no urging to respond to this challenge, because it is the ethical choice, and because there is a profit in doing so. However, we believe that, where the environment and sustainability are

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concerned, the public must monitor corporations, ask tough questions, and hold companies accountable for their activities. As Smith argued in his case research of consumer boycotts, a clearly identifiable form of ethical purchase behaviour, consumers can use their purchasing power to influence corporate policies and practices (Al-Swidi, A., & Saleh, R. M. 2021). A typical example is the California grape boycott; consumers could readily connect grapes with their feelings of moral outrage over the treatment of farm workers (Smith 1990). Consumers must use their purchasing power. They have to feel and be concerned, willing and able to act for a boycott to work in case of unethical product. As Smith put it,"Connection with the grievance means the consumer is able to connect a purchase decision to a concern about business practices and a more fundamental ethical concern" (Smith 1990; Dash, G., Kiefer, K., & Paul, J. 2021).

Without outside pressure, corporations have to take meaningful action on sustainability. Moreover, in their willingness to consume ethically, consumers need reliable information related to ethical products since they remain uninformed about ethical behaviour by firms and have limited knowledge about unethical behaviour. Five core virtues integrity, fairness, trust, respect and empathy are relevant for marketing especially in a multi-cultural and multinational context (Murphy (1999). While difficult to operationalise, the focus on virtue/character is viewed as a theory that can inform marketing since individual judgement is important in making proper ethical decisions. There is a hope that very soon ethical behaviour will become an imperative rather than a gesture. This partnership will close the gap between consumers' willingness to buy ethical products and businesses' Corporate Social Responsibility. Each party will have to " walk the talk" because it has been found that it is more celebrated than practiced (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Freestone, McGoldrick, 2008). As it is said "the path to hell is paved with good intentions". Thus, good intentions are better when translated into behaviour (Alamsyah, D., Othman, N., Bakri, M., Udjaja, Y., &Aryanto, R. 2021).

In total, ethical consumerism is life insurance for sustainable development, as it recognizes ethical consumer choices when purchasing goods and services, like Fair trade products, which concerns paying guaranteed commodity price to a small group of producers where the producers agree to pay fair labour price and conserve the environment- a fair deal for everyone; water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity as the basic necessity for life.; organic products (no use of artificial chemicals), Eco-friendly products(energy, water efficient, forest sustainable,

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natural materials); people friendly products (sweatshop free, union made); animal friendly products (no animal testing, vegan products); and locally produced. This pinpoints that Ethical Consumerism can be a profitable endeavour for sustainable development (Alamsyah, D., Othman, N., Bakri, M., Udjaja, Y., &Aryanto, R. 2021).

Businesses have embarked on more appealing to consumers, by using ethical consumerism as their trade secret as they are aware that this can be a competitive advantage. However, to really benefit from being a good corporate citizen, companies need to change their ethical behaviour by developing their brand strategy at a much earlier phase of the product lifecycle. Claiming and demonstrating ethical company behaviour throughout the product lifecycle and ensuring that brands reflect this stance might just provide companies with the desired competitive edge(Alamsyah, D., Othman, N., Bakri, M., Udjaja, Y., &Aryanto, R. 2021). Only then will these brands be viewed as responsible brands and remain relevant in society in the long run. So, to close the gap existing between intentions and behaviour of ethical consumers and businesses, we argue that both consumers and businesses have to step forward, away from the habit "save yourselves"; and the following variables strongly influence these new consumers-ethical consumers' intentions at the level to be translated into buying behaviour: Accountability to the nation, Urgency towards humans, animals, and environment; Responsible citizenship; Integrity against any harm; and Pursuit of Excellence

Keys to Becoming Ethically Minded Consumers for Sustainable Development

Despite the role of businesses to behave ethically through Corporate Social Responsibility, the www.ethical.org.au proposed a number of principles to help consumers to become Ethically Minded Consumers as an input to Sustainable Development (Dash, G., Kiefer, K., & Paul, J. 2021).

❖ **Every purchase makes an impact; therefore your choice makes a difference**

You make a difference. To shop with a conscience is to start to see the connections we have with the environment around us. Whatever the product, it will have or has had, some impact on the environment somewhere. Often you can feel that your small purchase doesn't really matter. Let's say you are 1 person in a world of 6 billion. In fact, it is because each small purchase does have

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an impact and there are 6 billion people plus one that it all adds up to one big difference. It is actually because each of our purchases do count, that we are in the environmental crisis of today. With each conscious choice we can minimise this impact(Alamsyah, D., Othman, N., Bakri, M., Udjaja, Y., &Aryanto, R. 2021).

For most people, most of the time, 'cost ' and 'convenience' are the main reasons we buy what we do. These aren't bad reasons, but don't reflect the true cost to the environment and people of the things we purchase. It's worth asking, "How much extra am I prepared to pay today to minimise my impact?" Will it be 5%, 10% or more? Keep in mind too that each dollar spent on more sustainable products and services increases the demand for them (Chaudhary, R., &Bisai, S. (2018).

> ❖ **Avoid unnecessary consumption; rather ask 'Do I need it?'**

About 80% of all saleable products end up as waste, on average, within just 6 months; for this It is our duty to avoid unnecessary consumption. How we buy will influence directly what we buy so it is important to think about the way we spend money. Is the purchase based on need, importance, urgency, or impulse? We have to ask ourselves if really we need it, if yes we have to think about the quantity we need, if it cannot be borrowed or sourced from a retailer with environmental credentials? In this endeavour, it is advisable to make a preferred shopping list and keep to it (Teng, C. C., Lu, A. C. C., & Huang, T. T. 2018). By planning ahead and anticipating the goods and services we will need, rather than making impulse buys, we give ourselves more time to find the most socially and environmentally responsible alternatives (Chaudhary, R., &Bisai, S. 2018).

> ❖ **Learn about the issues, but take on one issue at a time.**

There are many issues connected to the products on our shelves, some of which are specific to particular product types. For example, labour and fair wage issues are specifically relevant to coffee, tea, chocolate, clothing and sports equipment. Learn about the issues relevant to the products that you buy (Teng, C. C., Lu, A. C. C., & Huang, T. T. 2018). It's easy to be overwhelmed by the multitude of issues. So it is important to remember to take on just one issue at a time. This week start with one item, say milk, and find out the issues and best alternatives. When you've found a 'best buy' for milk, move on to another product or practice; such as

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bringing your own shopping bag to the shop, to reduce waste. It's easy to see how you can transform your shopping list over time to one that reflects the things you value (Alamsyah, D., Othman, N., Bakri, M., Udjaja, Y., &Aryanto, R. 2021).

❖ **Seek out a Best Buy, according to what you value and the options available.**

There are no right or wrong purchasing decisions. Instead there are 'better' or 'worse' purchases according to what you value. A 'best buy' for you will depend on what you're looking for in that particular purchase. (ie. coffee that is fairtrade, or perhaps coffee that is organic, or coffee that is Rain forest alliance or perhaps coffee that's roasted locally). Mostly it is not possible to find a product that meets all the criteria that we could choose, so it's important to prioritise our values (Al-Swidi, A., & Saleh, R. M. 2021). You might decide to buy local over organic, or choose to buy with minimal packaging over local. In this way you can determine the criteria you see as most important, knowing that you'll have to make tradeoffs. Often you may find you have worked out what you value most (what you're looking for in this particular purchase) but then you get to the store and find there's nothing that remotely meets the criteria. Frustrating! A 'best buy' will be choosing a product that best meets your criteria from amongst the items available. Of course you could seek out a better option from another retailer, however this usually happens next time you shop. (ie. you discover over time the best places to get the items that reflect your values) (Yoo, S. R., Lee, S. W., &Jeon, H. M. 2020).

❖ **Make lasting change, celebrate good choices, create good habits, give feedback.**

You have to celebrate good choices. Each good choice makes a world of difference. It's not about 'saving the world' but rather 'taking responsibility' where possible for our own impact. How do you see things? Glass half empty or glass half full? It's sometimes easy to view our good choices as 'just a drop in the ocean'. Although we have changed our coffee to fairtrade, we can see all the other issues we're yet to tackle, and feel guilty for what we're not doing. Guilt is not a useful emotion; and all change takes time. Remember that each positive difference is just that – a positive difference. It means your shopping list is 'more ethical' than before (Yoo, S. R., Lee, S. W., &Jeon, H. M. 2020).

Don't be selfish; share your discoveries. It's all difficult by ourselves, but when we share what we learn and get excited by our discoveries everyone benefits. Change starts with you but it

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doesn't end there. If you find a 'best buy', get excited and tell your friends. Perhaps you can encourage those around you to review their approach to shopping?

Be consistent; create good habits. It looks like a huge task to change your shopping patterns, but once you've found a best buy, remember it and move onto the next product type on your list or issue to address. Remember you're on a journey.

Give feedback. Let those companies know, via letter or email, of the choices you have made. Real change can only come with communication and encouragement. By doing so, you are not only supporting and encouraging sustainable practice, but also you are exercising your consumer power (www.ethical.org.au).

Conclusion

There is claim that ethical consumerism brings forward citizenship whereas the ethical consumer is self-interested (Gray, S. G., Raimi, K. T., Wilson, R., &Arvai, J. 2019).The fact is that consumption and citizenship are neither synonyms nor opposites which implies that the construction of citizen and consumer as opposites is too simplistic; the ethical consumer's motive is to feel good and do good, the last carrying a sense of citizenship and therefore public-minded. More significantly, it assumes that practices from the public realm (e.g., activism, engagement, and demand for environmental accountability) cannot be effectively brought into the marketplace. Research has shown, to the contrary, that bringing practices typically associated with one site (e.g., the public realm) into a different site (e.g., the marketplace) is highly effective in creating change (Juliet B. Schor and Margaret Willis, 2008; Al-Swidi, A., & Saleh, R. M. 2021).

Moreover, we have entered a period in which businesses are being forced to live a twin life, one that encompasses the globally competitive, but equally integral and moral (Dhir, A., Talwar, S., Sadiq, M., Sakashita, M., & Kaur, P. 2021). The ethical consumer must no longer be treated as an exceptional or abnormal specific sub-type of consumers because he shows his concern about business ethics as he seeks ethical benefits. As far as the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) agenda requires companies to manage relationships with their many stakeholders in a way that meets and balances their various, and sometimes conflicting expectations and interests (Dash, G.,

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Kiefer, K., & Paul, J. 2021). It is worth noting that besides their responsibility to meet their own needs and wants from companies, ethical consumers are also responsible of their moral behaviorvis-a-vis companies. This interrelationship cements a partnership that is regarded to increase the level of ethical consumption and bridge towards sustainable development (Chaudhary, R., &Bisai, S. (2018).Each party will have to walk the talk because it has been found that it is more celebrated than practiced; as it's said "the path to hell is paved with good intentions". Good intentions are better when translated into behavior. The study provides both theoretical and practical contributions to the understanding of the ethical practices of both consumers and companies which is expected to be the major factors that might affect consumer ethical obligation adopting ethical buying behaviour, and companies ethical behaviour including CSR activities, thus filling a critical gap in the literature of ethical consumerism (Hussain, I., Mu, S., Mohiuddin, M., Danish, R. Q., &Sair, S. A. 2020). Moreover, it is also hoped that the study can contribute to policy makers and business leaders to better promote the idea of ethical consumption as a way of sustainable development.

Limitation and future research directions

This conceptual paper has been developed with inputs drawn from referred journals and reports. It took a qualitative approach with the aim of theoretical contribution. A big limitation is that due to time and other constraints, primary study could not be carried out, that could have helped to have a holistic understanding of Sustainable Development through Ethical consumerism. Future research could take the direction of combining a primary data along with literature review to get a bigger picture of the interrelation of ethical consumerism and sustainable Development at the market place.

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