National College of
Ireland

A study of the main drivers for coffee purchasing behaviour in Ireland - with a focus on the Theory of Buyer Behaviour by Howard and Sheth

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Abstract

Consumer behaviour is important for managers and business owners to understand their markets to make decisions about the products they offer their customers. On the other hand, the increasing environmental awareness has become an important aspect for companies to incorporate in their products, as this awareness has been on the rise. The Theory of Buyer Behaviour by Howard and Sheth (1969), has been used for years to understand the consumption process consumers go through when making decisions. This study aims at identifying the main drivers for coffee consumption in the Irish context, considering habit, price, convenience and the environment and fair-traded precedence as potential drivers. Moreover, its objective is to contribute to a better understanding in consumer behaviour in Ireland for businesses in the coffee industry.

For this research, a survey was administered through Google Forms to test the presented hypothesis, in order to identify the main drivers for coffee consumption in Ireland. A total of 154 responses were received, out of which 139 respondents were actual coffee purchasers, therefore, only these respondents were considered. The respondents have answered 22 questions including demographics, patterns in motives for coffee consumption, and environmental and fair-trade awareness. Excel and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28 were used to test the hypothesis and analyze the data obtained in this research.

The results obtained in the study suggest that there is a strong relationship between the drivers, habit and convenience, and consumer behaviour for purchasing coffee in Ireland. Price, although related to coffee consumption, was not a driving factor. Additionally, the environmental awareness and fair-traded precedence of coffee were not found to be drivers for coffee consumption in the Irish context.

Keywords: Consumer Behaviour, Theory of Buyer Behaviour, Environmental Awareness, Fair Trade, Habit, Convenience, Price, Coffee Consumption

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland
Research Students Declaration Form
(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

Name: Ana Lee De La Torre

Student Number: 20254512

Degree for which thesis is submitted: MSc in International Business

Title of Thesis: A study of the main drivers for coffee purchasing behaviour in Ireland - with a focus on the Theory of Buyer Behaviour by Howard and Sheth

Date: 17th August 2022

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all the special people who have supported me in any way throughout this journey. Despite all the efforts, without their support, this would have not been possible.

I would like to express my appreciation to my colleagues, lecturers, and staff at the National College of Ireland, especially Maurice Fitzgerald, and my supervisor, Rachel Ramirez, for their guidance and insight throughout the entire process in this dissertation.

I am extremely grateful to my boyfriend, friends, and family in Ireland, Pablo, Ana, Erika, Carlos, Yazmin, Jio, Burcu, and Pawan. For the shared laughs, cries, and talks over these months.

I would also like to thank my sister, for her unconditional support and advice, and to my parents, for their help and encouragement throughout this process.

Lastly, this dissertation would not have been possible without the participants and the library staff at NCI. I would like to thank them for their time and support during this process.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide an introduction to this research study. It will discuss the research topic, providing a background of the main concepts. This chapter will also include the research aims and objectives and will finally provide an outline of the overview and content of this research study.

1.2 Background

Consumer behaviour has been studied for years by managers and marketers to create strategies for the consumer. By understanding the motives behind a sale, managers can identify the products that are needed, and which products are obsolete (Radu, 2022). Additionally, marketers can also decide how to present their products depending on the characteristics most valued by its consumers, which changes with time. One of the theories used by companies throughout the years, to understand consumer behaviour, is the Theory of Buyer Behaviour by Howard and Sheth created in 1969.

The Theory of Buyer Behaviour views purchasing behaviour as a system, including stimulus variables as inputs influencing purchasing decisions, response variables as outputs, hypothetical constructs, and exogenous variables present in each individual, which shape their final decision when consuming. This theory suggests that consumers, in general, establish a repetitive pattern when it comes to their purchasing decisions (Ohio University, 2022). Therefore, some of the main factors include habit in consumption, convenience, and price. Additionally, the commercial stimulus are activities in which companies engage to communicate their product's characteristics to their market. The Theory of Buyer Behaviour, created a few years ago, does not include the current environmental awareness in its model. Despite this, it is undeniably important to be considered in consumer behaviour.

As environmental issues and awareness has been on the rise, it is now one of the characteristics consumers search for in their products nowadays. Issues in climate change, the increasing water and air pollution and loss of biodiversity, as well as people becoming more conscious about what they put in their bodies, have been key in people becoming more conscious about their purchasing decisions.

Although there has been much research, and marketing for green consumption has been on the rise, there is still a long way to go in actually changing people's behaviour towards their purchasing decisions. Companies offering sustainable options are facing challenges. Most consumers acknowledge a positive attitude towards eco-friendly products and services, but often times they are reluctant to actually following through (White & Hardisty, 2019). Additionally, when thinking about the environment, consumers might think about other industries such as the fashion industry, but a commodity such as coffee, is not popularly thought of by consumers in relation to the environment, however, it has an impact.

Coffee is one of the most consumed beverages and traded commodities globally. It is a rapidly growing culture, with the European Union being one of the largest consuming and importing markets globally (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2022). Ireland is not the exception. In fact, coffee consumption in Ireland has been increasingly growing in the last years, moving from the traditional tea to coffee. A survey conducted in 2017 found that one third of Irish consumers buy coffee outside of home at least once a day, and that Irish consumers are enthusiastically embracing the cafe culture (Quann, 2019). Hence, resulting in an increasing coffee consumer nation.

Therefore, it is worthy to investigate the following research question "What are the main drivers for purchasing coffee in Ireland?" since the answer might help managers and marketers in their business decisions. Consequently, this research's findings may fill the gap in literature within consumer behaviour, the environmental awareness, and coffee in the Irish context. Additionally, the Theory of Buyer Behaviour and its relevance to date, will be discussed.

1.3 Dissertation outline

Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief overview of the research. It explains the importance of the study along with key terms discussed in the study. Additionally, it presents the research aims and objectives planned to be achieved by the researcher.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter provides a better understanding on consumer behaviour as a background to the present research. It is divided into four main parts. The first part discusses consumer behaviour as a general concept. The second part analyses the Theory of Buyer Behaviour by Howard and Sheth, including its relevance and limitations. The third part focuses on analyzing the environmental issues, green marketing, and fair trade. Finally, the fourth part of this chapter examines coffee as a commodity and its consumption patterns in Ireland.

Chapter 3: Research Question

This chapter includes the research aim, question, and hypothesis developed based on the theoretical framework. It presents the variables that will be verified along this research study; consumer behaviour as a dependent variable on the independent variables of habit, commercial and social factors, price and convenience.

Chapter 4: Methodology

The methodology chapter presents the approaches and philosophies selected by the researcher and a justification about the methodology utilized throughout the study. It also provides the research instrument adopted to answer the research question and the tool (SPSS) utilized to analyze the data findings.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Findings

This chapter provides the findings on the data collected through the survey and an analysis on the results. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28 was used for testing internal consistency, value distribution, and to obtain the Pearson value to test each hypothesis presented.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This chapter's objective is to provide an analysis and evaluation on the hypothesis findings, allowing to further explain the acceptance or rejection on them.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter provides the three main conclusions found throughout this study, as well as the limitations encountered through it. Furthermore, it includes recommendations to further researchers interested in the topics presented in this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an examination on the existing literature regarding consumer behaviour, the environmental awareness and coffee in the Irish context. This research will attempt at answering the question: What are the main drivers for coffee purchasing behaviour in Ireland? To do so, the existing literature is analyzed in order to identify the existing gap.

2.2 Consumer behaviour

Consumer behaviour has been studied for years by marketers and managers to make business decisions. It is a complex topic that involves an entire process of understanding how consumers make decisions on a service or product considering various aspects. Consumer buying behaviour is defined as what it is that consumers buy, why they buy the product, when, for what reason, and how often the purchase occurs (Clootrack, 2022). It refers to the practices corresponding to the planning, purchasing, using and disposing of goods, and how the emotions and attitudes result in buying decisions. Furthermore, purchase behaviour will occur once the customer is exposed to a marketing message, and therefore develops an interest, which turns into a desire to acquire the product (Pearson, et al., 2013).

The five stages in the consumer buying process were established by John Dewey in 1910, and the entire process continues to be the same nowadays (Mehrguth, 2022). The first step is to recognize there is a problem or a need. The second step is to search for information. The third step is to evaluate the alternatives. The fourth stage is to make a purchase decision. Finally, the last step is the post-purchase evaluation.

Problem recognition can be produced internally or externally, which then results in a need. After the consumer recognizes a specific need, they will gather information to fulfill that need. When exploring their options, customers can rely on internal or external factors. Internal factors include

their past experiences with certain brands or products, as well as from their families and close groups. The external factors can be advertisement or the internet. After having gathered the necessary information, a consumer has developed a criteria for what they want in their product, and can now weigh their different characteristics, until finally a purchase decision is made. After a purchase is made, customers can experience satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their selection, which leads to their post-purchase evaluation and behaviour towards the product afterwards.

Having looked into the general concept of consumer behaviour and its different stages, now we will explore the Theory of Buyer Behaviour proposed by Howard and Sheth in 1969.

2.3 Theory of Buyer Behaviour by Howard and Sheth

One of the theories used to understand the sometimes-complex consumer behavior is the theory of buyer behavior by Howard and Sheth. This theory assumes that consumers make decisions based on somewhat repetitive behavior and continue to acquire already known products for convenient reasons. It is assumed that the choices we make are systematic and not random, and therefore, brand choices are seen as a system (Sheth & Howard, 1969). In other words, the decisions we make are based on a set of principles and ideas about a certain product to arrive at a final decision. The two authors have identified a decision process and have formulated a structure, allowing us to view it as a system.

The Theory of Buyer Behaviour by Howard and Sheth assumes that buyer behaviour is rational. It stays within the limits of acquired information and learning capacities. Additionally, as stated above, purchase behaviour is assumed to be systematic, motivated by an internal or external stimulus described as the input, resulting in a purchase decision, the output. Therefore, the variables present in between the input and output are analyzed to understand purchase behaviour.

The theory proposed by Howard and Sheth (1969), assumes that purchase behaviour tends to be repetitive, with established purchase cycles within certain products. Consequently, the consumer

stores relevant information and establishes a routine in his process. Furthermore, it identifies elements of the decision process and commercial and social environmental elements which aids the consumer in their process.

The elements for a buyer's decision making are a set of motives that drives the buyer to get a specific product category in relation to their needs; alternatives that might potentially satisfy the buyer's needs; and decision mediators through which the motives match the alternatives available (Sheth & Howard, 1969). The alternatives to a product do not have to belong to the same category to be considered an alternative. These alternatives are small in number and different consumers will have different alternatives considered for their products.

Decision mediators are influenced by the consumer's environment and the actual experience of purchasing and consuming the product. When there is a new consumer to a product, a similar process happens. Even though there is no experience on buying a certain product, and there are no decision mediators, the consumer will look for information on the product based on its environment. Along with this active search for information, the buyer will relate to similar past experiences. So, he can relate the purchase of a new product class to a similar or alternative product he has gotten in the past. After developing sufficient decision mediators, the buyer makes the decision to purchase and if the decision is satisfactory, the motives for this brand increases and the repeated behaviour for this product or brand will increase as well. With repeated satisfactory purchases, a structure is created, and a routine decision process is created. When a purchasing routine is created, decision mediators are well established, and the buyer has strong brand preferences (Sheth & Howard, 1969).

Figure 1 below, taken from Howard and Sheth (1969), illustrates the four major components in their theory of buyer behaviour model. They are the stimulus variables, hypothetical constructs, response variables or outputs, and exogenous variables.
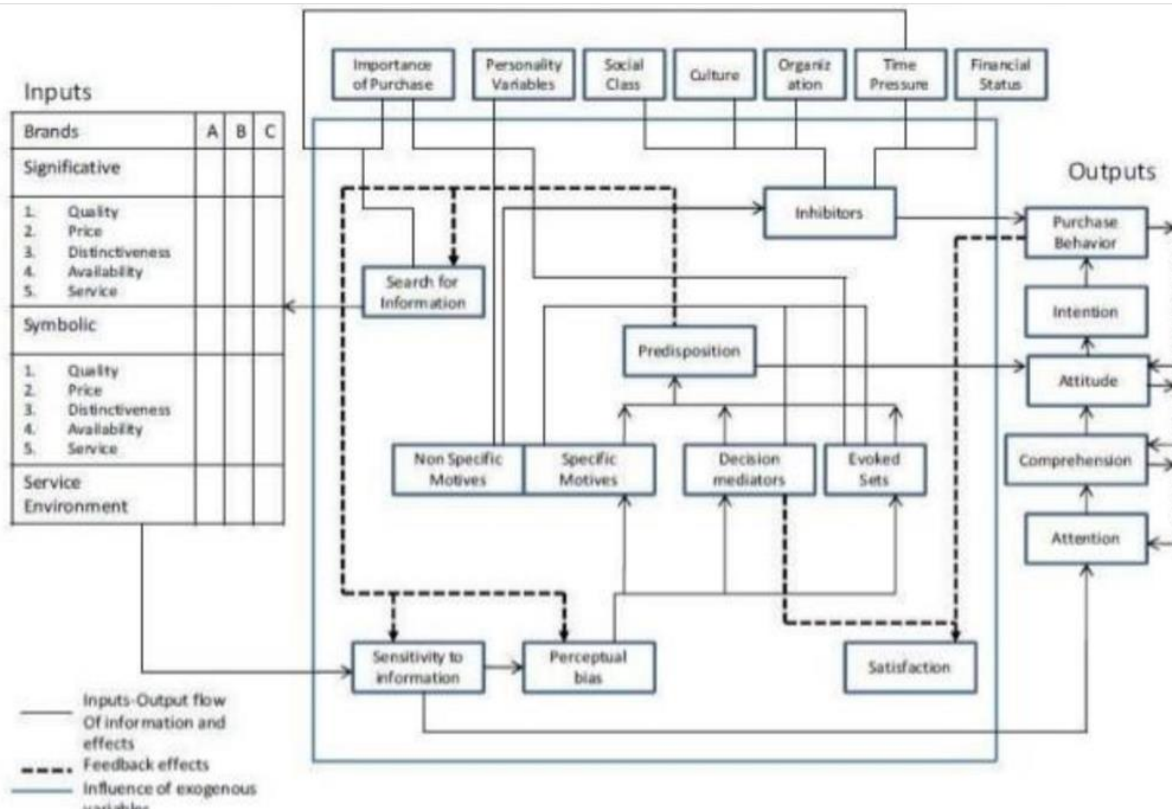
Figure 1: Theory of Buyer Behaviour Model (Howard and Sheth, 1969)

A stimulus refers to any object or event received by humans through the senses, evoking a response (Lestrud, 2013). Broadly speaking, the stimulus input variables refer to sources of information. These stimuli come from the outside environment as well as from internal factors. They then generate a reaction, which creates an output in decision making. These stimulus input variables can be classified as commercial and social, due to the nature of its origins.

As shown in the model, the authors identified five major dimensions in a brand: quality, price, distinctiveness, availability, and service. These attributes are included in a commercial environment, and can be presented through significative and symbolic communication, which becomes an input stimuli for the consumer.

The commercial environment refers to the activities in which firms engage to transmit and stimulate their market in the purchase of their goods and services (Career Experts, 2015). In other words, commercial stimulus input refers to the marketing activities through which companies communicate to the consumer. Companies have the need to communicate their product's characteristics such as their quality, price, availability, distinctiveness, and service (Sheth & Howard, 1969). They do this through significative and/or symbolic stimuli.

A firm has the need to inform their market about their product's characteristics through different forms of advertisement. Significant stimuli refer to "the physical, tangible characteristics of a product" (Wisdom IT Services India Pvt. Ltd, 2020). As seen in figure 1, they come from the products themselves. They refer to the price, quality, distinctiveness, service, and availability actually paid and physically seen by the consumer. For example, the size of a product will be best communicated through significative stimuli, in which the physical product may be necessary to fully understand its dimensions.

Symbolic stimuli also refer to the quality, price, availability, distinctiveness, and service in a product, but these stimuli also include the consumer's perception (Wisdom IT Services India Pvt. Ltd, 2020). Symbolic stimuli accounts for the consumer's inevitable comparative process of the product with its alternative options, for example, in its price or quality. Furthermore, it can be represented through advertisement through words and pictures, communicated via billboards, salesman and mass media.

In addition to the need for companies to communicate their product's attributes, there is a need for businesses to be knowledgeable about the current market's needs and trends to be able to stay up to date with their customer's necessities. Consequently, businesses can target these needs through their advertising.

The third stimulus identified by Howard and Sheth, is the consumer's social environment. Consumers are driven to make decisions based on different stimuli, through gathering different sources of information. The social environment refers to the "immediate physical surroundings, social relationships, and cultural milieus within which the affected groups of people function and

interact" (Law Insider Inc., 2022). As stated by Repetti (1986), social stimulus input is influenced by a person's particular social surroundings and responses to local interactions. It refers to the consumer's family, friends and reference groups that influence the buyer's behaviour to purchase a certain product or brand.

The second component in the theory of buyer behaviour is the hypothetical constructs a consumer has about a product. As defined by Oxford (2022), it is the "process, or event that is not observed directly but is assumed to explain an observable phenomenon". Furthermore, a hypothetical construct has no single referent, but they are made of related behaviours, attitudes, and experiences (Psychology Wiki, 2022). Hypothetical constructs are the psychological variables in a consumer such as its motives and perception of a specific product. After the consumer receives the stimuli, regardless of where it is coming from, they interpret this information. The authors divide these hypothetical constructs into two categories, perception, and learning constructs, depending on how they are acquired. Perception constructs means acquiring knowledge and ideas through processing information. This includes sensitivity to information, perceptual bias, and search for information. On the other hand, learning constructs mean acquiring information through concepts from actual consumer experience. Through this process, ambiguity may occur if the buyer does not understand the meaning gathered through its stimuli, and the information can be distorted. Either way, if the product has reached a high evaluation in the consumer's mind, he will purchase it.

The third component identified by Howard and Sheth are the buyer's response variables, or outputs. The variety of consumer responses are relevant in the creation of a marketing strategy for businesses. As seen in figure 1, these are the buyer's attention, comprehension, attitude towards the product, the intention to buy, and its purchase behaviour. Attention refers to the sensitivity a buyer has towards the information given, and the amount of information intake. Comprehension is the knowledge processed and stored about a product or brand. The attitude towards a brand is the evaluation of the brand's potential to satisfy the buyer's motives. The buyer's intention to buy, refers to the predisposition towards a product, and the response to the

actual purchase behaviour. Finally, purchase behaviour refers to the actual behaviour which was forecasted in his intention to buy.

The last component in Howard and Sheth's theory of buyer behaviour are the exogenous variables. As shown in figure 1, they are located at the top of the model. These variables come from the buyer's social environment and influence their decisions. The authors believe these variables provide control to obtaining predictive relations between the inputs and outputs in the model. In other words, the exogenous variables provide insight between the consumer's stimuli and their purchase decisions. They identified seven exogenous variables: importance of purchase, personality variables, social class, culture, organization, time pressure, and financial status.

One of the exogenous variables is financial status. This attribute refers to the buying power of an individual. As stated by Solomon (2004), the products that a customer can afford and their expectations on them are significantly impacted by their salary rate. If a buyer lacks financial resources, they will be limited by the options available to them and to purchasing the most preferred brand. Generally, individuals with lower incomes are more likely to be interested in acquiring products based on their durability, instead of focusing on expensive or extravagant brands. So consumers might be drawn by the product's price to make their final decision, as opposed to selecting their most desired option. Hence, making financial status a main driver for some people in their consumption process.

Another exogenous variable mentioned by Howard and Sheth in their Theory of Buyer Behaviour is time pressure. As mentioned by the authors (1969), when a consumer feels pressed for time, a reallocation of the time available unfavourable to its purchasing behaviour can happen since it affects the search for information and available options and creates inhibition in its behaviour. As consumers, we have all experienced making decisions under time constraints. Research carried by Wu, Schulz, Pleskac, and Speekenbrink (2022), showed that people who have limited time to make a purchase decision have less opportunity to perform costly computations, shifting the cost-benefit relation in their decisions. Additionally, it has shown that time pressure leads to more repetitive buying behaviour and interestingly, some buyers become more risk-seeking

while others prefer already known options. Either way, time pressure is an exogenous variable which affects the consumer's buying process and final decision making, and businesses have a need to also account for this variable.

The theory of Buyer Behaviour proposed by Howard and Sheth identifies the consumer behaviour process, their inputs, hypothetical constructs, outputs and exogenous variables to which a buyer encounters. As it is a theory proposed several years ago, it is viable to examine if this process is still applicable to current processes, accounting for present events and movements in society.

2.3.1 Relevance of the theory

There are several models used by marketers to analyze consumer behaviour. Most scholars agree that consumer behaviour is complex and have highlighted the Theory of Buyer Behaviour by Howard and Sheth, recognizing its strength and precision in its variables to describe consumer's purchasing behaviour, and its effective use in behavioural sciences (MBA Knowledge Base, 2021). The Theory of Buyer Behaviour by Howard and Sheth (1969), was created by the authors several years ago, and it is one of the most well known models, having relevance to this date due to its integrated coverage. As stated by Pafitis (2020), despite the model being created in 1969, the model has a "highly acclaimed approach", and businesses today can still learn from Howard and Sheth's model and utilize it in their marketing strategies to reach customers and grow their businesses.

The Theory of Buyer Behaviour by Howard and Sheth (1969), sophistically integrates several variables on consumer behaviour including conscious and subconscious perceptions as well as social and marketing components which play a role in the rational sequence of information process (MBA Knowledge Base, 2021). Additionally, the model has been built with the most objectivity (Prakash, 2016), and has been extensively applied and tested to ensure its effectiveness (Anjali, 2019).

The Theory of Buyer Behaviour created by Howard and Sheth has been applied to various current research, attesting for its relevance to date. Sivakumar Sneha examines the model in her 2021

essay: "Application of Howard Sheth Model of Consumer Decision Making for Buying a Television", where she discusses the consumer behaviour process for durable products such as a TV, describing the factors, included in Howard and Sheth's model, contributing to the final purchase. Other research on the model includes Reddipalli's (2020), investigation on various consumption models including Howard and Sheth's, applying the theory to a smartphone purchase. In his research, he finds the author's model to be the most valuable, based on its comprehensive aspects. Furthermore, research found by Sangarathas and Shanmugathas (2017), states that the model is accurate in linking perception and learning constructs, according to their research in technology as a creator for stimuli in consumers, leading to consumer attention and a connection between the purchaser's age and stage in life.

Howard and Sheth's (1969) model has provided a framework as a basis still useful today about consumer behaviour, bringing variables to include isolated facts together (Prakash, 2016). However, even though there are current relevant applications and findings on the authors' model, there are some limitations found as well, and will be discussed in the next section.

2.3.2 Theories that have pointed out its limitations

The Theory of Buyer Behaviour has been highlighted for its extensive coverage (Pafitis, 2020). However, several limitations have been pointed out by different authors. According to Commerce Mates (2022), one of the limitations this model presents is the lack of reliability due to depending on hypothetical constructs. The model relies on empirical data and cannot be measured at the time of occurrence. Neostrom (2022) identifies that the theory only suggests an existing correlation between the variables but does not explicitly determine a cause-and-effect relationship. Additionally, price and quality are emphasized in both commercial and social stimuli but argues that these factors are not applicable to every society and are not fit for most marketing methods (Neostrom, 2022).

Other limitations on the Theory of Buyer Behaviour by Howard and Sheth (1969), suggests that the model only accounts for systematic behaviour, meaning it only considers organized and

methodological actions, but not impulsive buying or one-time purchasing behaviours (Prakash, 2016). Furthermore, MBA Knowledge Base (2021) points out that there is a lack of variables in the model, since it does not account for religion in the decision-making process, making the model weak.

2.4 Environmental issues and awareness

As mentioned before, commercial stimulus are the activities businesses use to encourage their customers to purchase their products through several characteristics such as their distinctiveness and quality. In order to communicate these characteristics and relate to their customers, businesses have to meet their current society's needs. Consequently, the increasing environmental concerns, awareness and marketing have become a fundamental characteristic consumers look for in their products, therefore being important for business managers.

Current environmental issues involve climate change, deforestation, land contamination, loss of biodiversity and pollution, among others. As stated by Johnson et al (1997), it is defined as any undesirable or detrimental disturbance to the environment. These include the biological and physical attributes in the environment, such as the soil, air and water, habitat destruction, extinction of fauna, and pollution. Furthermore, environmental degradation refers to the reduction of the capacity of the environment the needs of the population and the social and ecological objectives (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2004).

Environmental concerns emerged between 1960 and 1970, when the increasing pollution and energy conservation were a rising issue (Hakl Pickova, 2020). Since then, environmental issues have grown, in part, due to the increasing advances in technology, and the unsustainable consumption habits supported by capitalism (Uddin, 2018). As Daley and Kent (2013) say, our policymakers, organizations, and society must find creative responses to change our current consumption patterns, including a policy framework promoting a strong version of sustainable development.

Although environmental issues have increased over the years, so has society's environmental awareness. According to GlobeScan's Healthy and Sustainable Living study (2020), globally, younger generations are more prone to having healthy lifestyles and are more driven towards environmentally friendly products and practices, compared to older generations. Additionally, this study also revealed that seven out of ten Gen Z and Millennial consumers say they would change their lifestyle to acquire more sustainable and altruistic practices.

Big companies such as Ford, Disney, and Johnson and Johnson have also changed their practices towards more environmentally friendly ones (Lawson, 2017). Ford Company has incorporated sustainable fabrics in its vehicles, while also focusing on fuel efficiency, offering clean diesel, and recycling its paint fumes as fuel. Disney Company has implemented initiatives to have zero waste ending up in landfills and uses zero greenhouse gas emission policies in all of their facilities. Furthermore, Johnson and Johnson has taken the lead in manufacturing products that are environmentally responsible in reducing waste and utilizing sustainable products and packaging methods.

Although environmental issues and its awareness emerged several years ago, it has increasingly become a major concern for consumers. Therefore, it is important for businesses to consider their society's current environmental needs to provide alternatives in their products. As stated by Neumann et al. (2020), it is important for corporations and governments to raise awareness on the ongoing environmental issues, and for consumers to react in accordance.

2.4.1 Green consumption and its paradox

Green consumption is influenced by people's values and habits, and it is a complex topic (White & Hardisty, 2019). It has been on the rise worldwide due to the increasing awareness in the environment. Currently, the unsustainable amount and types of consumption are the main reason behind a sustainable development challenge (Peattie, 2010). Green consumption refers to people choosing products and services that protect the planet's resources, including its labour, in its production and trading processes. As stated by the Conserve Energy Future (2022), green

consumerism involves the production and promotion of the use of goods and services based on their pro-environment benefits.

Although the environmental awareness and green marketing has increased over the years, the production of coffee has not been greatly associated with it. Furthermore, it is argued that although consumers report having a positive attitude towards eco-friendly products, few of them actually follow through with their wallets (White, Hardisty and Habib, 2019).

As mentioned above, the coffee industry is rarely thought about when it comes to the environment. Industries such as the fast fashion industry can be commonly associated with being one of the most polluting industries in the world (Neumann et al, 2020). However, even if at different degrees, coffee production also has its impact on the environment and labour exploitation. As stated by Lee (1997), this $10 billion industry is not harmless, as there are many environmental and ecological problems resulting from its production. Mass production of coffee produces chemical accumulation in soil, leading to the pollution of rivers and aquatic life reduction, as well as soil erosion and land degradation (Varcho, 2022). Moreover, coffee plants that grow in the sun produce more beans, leading to deforestation. Deforestation, in turn, decreases biodiversity, as the deforested habitats are unsuitable, and increases soil erosion as well.

On the other hand, coffee farmers can have labour intensive shifts and low remuneration. According to the financial times (2022), most of the estimated 25 million small farmers who produce 80% of the world's coffee, struggle to make a decent living, and nearly half of them live below the international poverty line, while one-fifth live in extreme poverty (Rushton, 2019). The working conditions for these farmers can also be extreme, having to endure long, hot days working with chemicals and sharp instruments (Perkins, 2022). Moreover, the US Department of Labour lists several countries where child labour is used. An investigation carried out by Dispatches (2020), found children as young as eight years old working 40 hours picking coffee beans for Starbucks and Nespresso in Guatemala.

Besides the little-known relationship between coffee, its labour and the environment, another paradox in green consumption is the seemingly unwillingness of consumers to actually purchase environmentally friendly products, even when showing a positive attitude towards it. A survey showed 65% of consumers said they want to buy brands who are sustainably advocates, but only 26% of them actually do so (White et al., 2019).

Even though green consumption is on the rise among consumers, research shows there is much to do to close the gap between the purchaser's intention and action, as well as increasing the awareness in coffee consumption, its labour and the environment.

2.4.2 Fair trade

One of the actions taken in relationship to labour intensive shifts and low remuneration in the coffee industry is the fair trade certification. As stated by McCabe Coffee (n.d.), it is one of the most important aspects about sustainable coffee.

Fair trade guarantees that the standards for producing and/or supplying of a product are met. As stated by the Fairtrade Foundation (2022), for its farmers and workers it means working under safe conditions and fair pay, and for consumers it means having high quality and ethical products. Additionally, from setting standards, fair trade certifies products and ingredients by ensuring standards have been met by the farmers and companies, including the entire supply chain, and working with farmers to support issues such as plant diseases and climate change.

When farmers get a fair price for their coffee production, they can invest more into their production processes and implement higher quality methods and products that are good for the environment and the people. Other fair-trade activities include investing in techniques that contribute to the climate change rather than aggravate it and allowing women to have leadership roles. Some certifications supporting the fairtrade movement in coffee include the Rainforest Alliance and UTZ, and the Bird Friendly certification.

The UTZ is a certification program for sustainable farming, present in well traded products, and that is now part of the Rainforest Alliance. The Rainforest Alliance is an organization that aims at stopping deforestation and climate change as well as creating better working conditions. On the other hand, the Bird Friendly certification has stricter regulations to ensure that production is 100% organic and to reduce the environmental impact of coffee production.

2.5 Coffee

Besides water, tea and coffee are the most consumed beverages in the world. Coffee has become a staple in today's society. Every major city in the world has an abundance of coffee businesses, and this can only be due to the increasing consumption in the market. It is important to understand coffee, its proceedings, harvesting, production and trading processes to fully understand its consumption drivers, buying behaviour for businesses and the gaps that might exist between this commodity and the previously mentioned motives behind it.

The most important element in having high quality beans is the topography of the land, and it can be found mostly in high altitudes, resulting in many farms being located on steep areas. Careful harvesting of coffee beans is the most important in having high quality coffee. Experts see the harvest as the point at which coffee peaks, and every step after that must preserve that quality rather than improve it (Hoffmann, 2018).

There are different types of harvesting, which results in some methods of harvesting being more expensive than others. Some of them include machine harvesting, strip picking, and hand-picking. Since high quality coffee comes from harvesting ripe coffee beans, hand-picking is the most effective way of harvesting. The problem with this is that it is the most expensive, as it involves human labour.

The process for coffee starts with harvesting the cherries from the coffee tree, processing them, which includes sorting the beans, taking them to a wet mill to separate the beans from the flesh, hulling the beans, grading them, and finally bagged to export them.

When processing the beans, most producers have in mind to have the least defects to maintain the quality and its monetary value rather than having taste in its mind. The oldest method of processing is the natural process, which adds certain flavours to the coffee, sometimes positive but most of the times unpleasant. This method is used in parts of the world where there is not much water available such as in Ethiopia and some parts of Brazil. It generally creates low quality and unripe coffee, and this coffee generally stays in the domestic market and is not exported since it has little value. However, some high-quality producers choose this method due to its added value due to additional attention and labour involved in the drying process. The washed process is another, more expensive method, as it requires more equipment and trained labour due to its complexity, which results in the absence of negative flavours (Hoffmann, 2018). Finally, there is the hybrid process, including the pulped natural process, the honey process and the semi-washed process.

After the beans have been dried by either method, they are stored for 30-60 days for better aging hence better taste, then they are hulled so shipment is less bulky and expensive, and sorted by size and colour. Any defective beans are rejected and finally they are graded by hand. This is a time consuming and difficult process done mostly by women rather than men, and as with the entire process being slow and meticulous, fair pay should be imperative.

It is important to mention that there is commodity and specialty coffee. Commodity coffee is not traded based on its quality and where they are grown, when they were harvested or how they were processed does not matter much. On the contrary, specialty coffee is defined by its quality and good taste, and its origin and process is important.

Regarding the price for trading coffee globally, it is set in USD per pound, and there is a global minimum price set called C-price. This price is for commodity coffee rather than specialty coffee. Although there are countries where the lots of coffee have an added value to the C-value, such as Costa Rica and Colombia, this is a very volatile price and it does not reflect the cost of production, resulting in producers losing money and workers being underpaid.

Since coffee consumption has been on the rise, and becoming a daily commodity for society, it is important to understand its process, its value in today's market and the main motives behind its consumption for business decisions. Additionally, it is important to understand its process and to ensure it is fair paid. As mentioned before, one of the most effective movements created to combat the volatile cost of production is the Fair-Trade movement, along with the Rainforest Alliance.

2.5.1 Coffee buying behaviour in Ireland

As this research aims at assessing the main drivers for coffee consumption in Ireland, it is important to analyze its current context and trends in the Irish market.

The coffee retail sector in Ireland is extremely popular. It is a day-to-day consumption among the Irish population (Chima, 2020). A survey conducted by Brew Smartly showed that Dublin was the second most "coffee-obsessed" city in the world, with 181 coffee shops per 100,000 people (Holcomb, 2020). It is understood that Irish people are moving from the traditional favored tea and moving towards a coffee consuming nation. To support this statement, a survey conducted by Bewley's (2021), a hot beverage provider to Irish consumers since 1840, has shown that 78% of adults drink coffee every day, showing a 4% increase compared to 2020. Additionally, 41% of consumers say coffee is an essential part of their day (Hotel & Restaurant Times, 2021). Furthermore, the survey has found that Irish adults drink an average of three cups of coffee per day, with the Americano being Ireland's top choice with 41%, followed by Cappuccino with 40% and Latte 34% of Irish consumers' preferences. The major players in the industry are Insomnia, Costa Coffee, and Starbucks, as they have been the major drivers for growth in the sector.

In regards to the motives for drinking coffee, 72% of Irish coffee consumers stated that the main factor for choosing their favourite coffee was taste. On the other hand, young coffee drinkers aged 18-24 years of age stated that 49% need their coffee to look good to share on social media, with 68% of them saying social media influences the coffee they drink (Hotel & Restaurant Times, 2021).

Although younger generations account for social media as being an important motive for their consumer decisions, it is also noted that environmental awareness and fair trade is also an increasing motive among these younger generations. For instance, 78% of young coffee drinkers acknowledged that they actively seek for sustainable coffee, as opposed to 42% of people over 25 years of age doing the same (Hotel & Restaurant Times, 2021).

Based on the increasing consumption and changing trends towards coffee in the Irish population, it is important to analyze the underpinning motives for consumer decisions, including their degree of awareness in fair traded coffee, to obtain valuable information for managers in their business decisions.

2.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to understand relevant literature to serve as background to the present research study. It included a deeper understanding on the main concepts, the Theory of Buyer Behaviour by Howard and Sheth, the current environmental awareness and coffee as an increasingly consumed beverage, which are relevant to this study.

This section analyzed consumer behaviour, specifically the Theory of Buyer Behaviour proposed by Howard and Sheth in 1969. Since it is an old theory, the relevance and limitations have also been discussed. The literature review has shown that although the model has its limitations and space for improvement, it can serve as a basis for purchasing behaviour since it is a comprehensive model and other theories are based on this one in particular.

The increasing environmental awareness is a current topic that has been discussed in this chapter. Although it is not a new topic, it has recently gained attention from society, and companies and individuals are slowly starting to incorporate actions into their daily life to support this movement. The literature review has also highlighted the green consumption paradox, which implies that even though consumers recognize the importance in supporting the environment, the majority does not follow through with their actions.

Finally, this chapter discussed coffee as a commodity in the Irish society and its processes. Based on the literature review, coffee is becoming increasingly popular in Ireland. Additionally, the process for producing coffee from farming to trading, is complex and can be labour intensive.

Although there is research done and applications on the Theory of Buyer Behaviour created by Howard and Sheth, there is no research applied to coffee. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge for the increasing environmental awareness, which is a factor not included in the model. Therefore, the present research will attempt at filling the gap between these three concepts, to have a further understanding of these in the current Irish context.

Chapter 3: Research Question and Objectives

3.1 Research aim

The aim of this research study is to evaluate the relationship between the independent variable, driving factors in coffee consumption (habit, environmental awareness, price and convenience), and the dependent variable, consumer behaviour. The theory of buyer behaviour by Howard and Sheth will be applied as a theoretical framework. The researcher will be able to analyze the study's findings in order to accept or reject the hypothesis presented.

3.2 Research Question

The study research question is as follows:

What are the main drivers for coffee purchasing behaviour in Ireland?

3.3 Hypothesis

H1: Consumer's decision to buy coffee in Ireland is driven by habits

H2: Consumer's decision to buy coffee in Ireland is driven by commercial and social factors such as the environmental awareness and fair trade

H3: Consumer's decision to buy coffee in Ireland is driven by price

H4: Consumer's decision to buy coffee in Ireland is driven by convenience

3.4 Research objectives

The research objectives are as follows:

a. To determine the main drivers for coffee consumption in the Irish context

b. To learn whether coffee consumers in Ireland consider the environmental factor when purchasing their coffee

c. To test the Theory of Buyer Behaviour by Howard and Sheth and its relevance to coffee consumers in Ireland in the present date

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Research methodology refers to the specific procedures used to identify, select, and analyze information about a particular topic (University of the Witwatersrand Johannessburg, 2022). This chapter will describe the approaches and methodology in which the researcher will collect information to perform this research. As described by Saunders et al. (2019), how we collect data corresponds to the center of the "research onion", and this research will describe the techniques used in it proposed by these authors. As we can see in figure 2 below, this procedure starts with the research philosophy, which is located in the outer layer of the model, following the approach to theory development, methodological choice, strategies, time horizon, and finally getting to the core of the onion, the techniques and procedures of the research. Each layer will be described below.
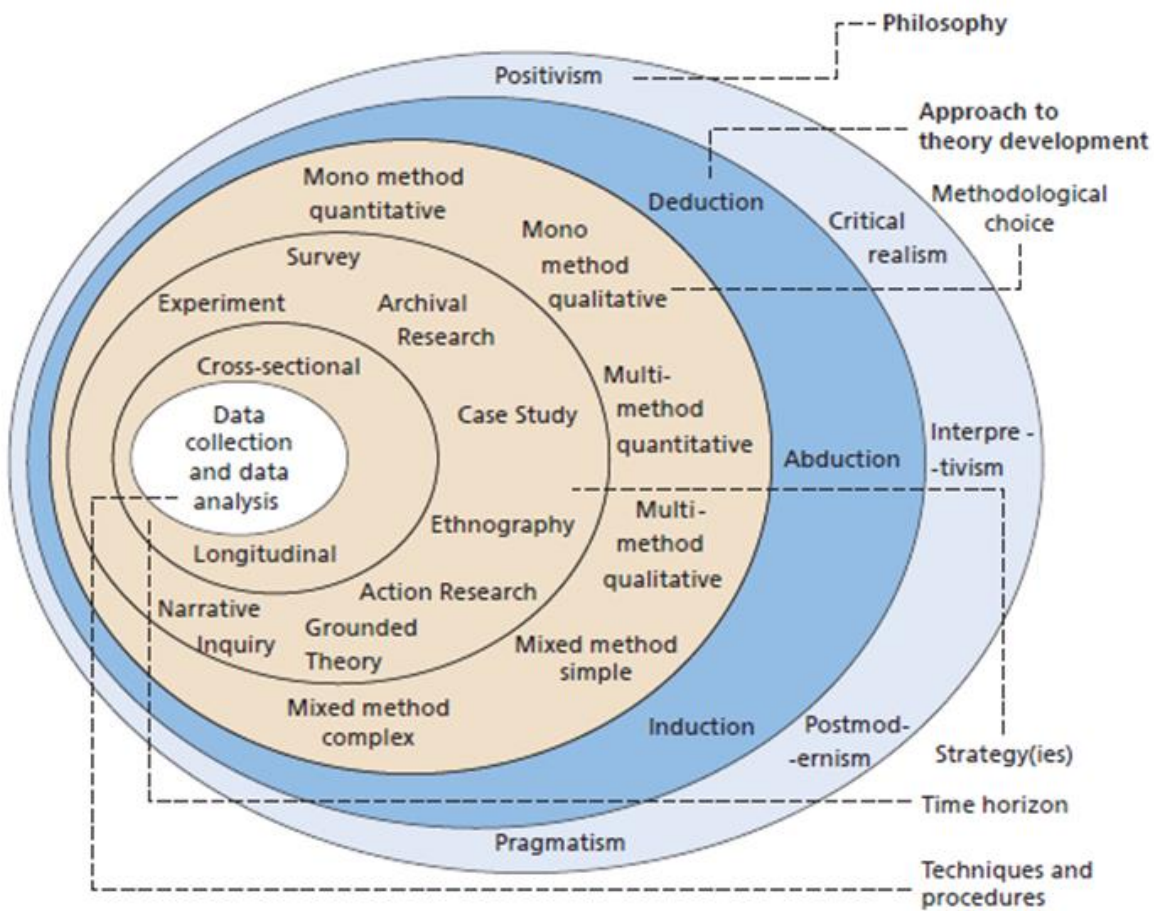
Figure 2: The "research onion" (Saunders et al., 2019)

4.2 Research philosophy

The first layer in the research onion proposed by Saunders et al. (2019) is the research philosophy. Research philosophy is the framework guiding how research should be conducted based on the ideas and assumptions about reality and the nature of knowledge (Collis, 2014). These philosophies represent different ways in which we define and interpret the world around us. There are five major philosophies in which research can be done. They are the positivism

philosophy, critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism and pragmatism, and they will be briefly described below:

Positivism: This philosophy's position is to deliver data and information that is not influenced by human assumptions. It focuses on an objective reality. As described by the Business Research Methodology (2022), positivism supports knowledge arising from facts acquired through observation and measurement, making it trustworthy. Additionally, positivism is often related to a deductive and objective approach in methodology (Crowther, 2008).

Critical realism: This approach parts from the positivism approach, stating that evidence comes close to reality but is always subject to the reality we live in. As stated by Sturgiss and Clark (2019), this approach believes that reality is independent from the mind. Meaning that it does not matter what the individual believes, the facts happening remain true. It differs from positivism because critical realism accounts for the need for interpretive understanding in behaviour.

Interpretivism: This approach differs from positivism arguing that there cannot be universal laws that apply to everybody, and that each human has its unique circumstances and characteristics, having experiences in different ways. As explained by Saunders et al. (2019), interpretivism focuses on narratives, stories, perceptions and interpretations about experiences and data. This approach is typically inductive.

Postmodernism: The postmodernism approach avoids absolute meanings, and focuses on embracing randomness, disorder, and playfulness. Literature with this type of approach reminds readers that the author is not an authority, and it approaches the readers through subjects previously considered inappropriate (Masterclass, 2021).

Pragmatism: As stated by the Business research Methodology (2022), this approach can combine the positivism and interpretivism approaches depending on the nature of its research question within the same study. Furthermore, since it recognizes that reality can be interpreted in many ways, so can the research approach to the study. This approach can also combine the qualitative, quantitative and action research methods.

This research aims at analyzing the motives behind consumer decision for coffee in Ireland, accounting for environmental awareness and the theory of buyer behaviour by Howard and Sheth (1969). The researcher will stay independent from personal beliefs in conducting the study, and the data will be objective and quantifiable. The information presented will come from facts acquired through the measured, obtained data, without including the researcher's or the respondent's perceptions and interpretations about it. Therefore, this research will use the positivism philosophy approach, as it will utilize observable and measurable facts. To support this statement, Saunders et al. (2019), states that positivism philosophy is typically related to quantitative methods of analysis, which strengthens the researcher's decision on this philosophy.

4.3 Research approach and method

Following figure 2, the next step in determining our methodology is the research approach to theory development. The degree to which the research is centered on testing a theory or building a theory is portrayed by the two different approaches, deductive or inductive reasoning (Saunders, 2019). As seen above, there is a third approach to research, the abductive approach, but we will focus on the first two as they are the main approaches.

The inductive approach is generally performed when there is no existing or sufficient information about a topic and there is no theory to test. Inductive reasoning has no hypothesis at the beginning of the research, and it is based on learning from experience and patterns in order to reach conclusions (Business Research Methodology, 2022). Therefore, this approach uses observation to then develop a theory.

On the other hand, a deductive approach moves from a general level to a more specific one. Researchers taking a deductive approach start with a theory and then work to test its implications through data (Sheppard, 2020). Therefore, the researcher collects data from a group of people to then test the hypothesis in question.

The research's aim is to evaluate the relationship between consumer buyer behaviour and the main drivers for coffee consumption in Ireland. As described above, previous related research studies have applied a quantitative methodology. In a deductive approach, data collection is used to evaluate a phenomenon, to accept or reject a theory. Therefore, a deductive approach will be adopted for this study. Additionally, quantitative approach is generally linked to the positivism philosophy and the deductive approach (Saunders, 2019). Hence, supporting the researcher's philosophy and approach to research.

4.4 Research design and strategy

Following the research onion, the next step is to determine the nature of the research study. The research design is a general plan on how the researcher answers the research questions (Saunders, 2019). It contains the methodological choice, the purpose of the research, and the strategy chosen in the research.

In general, quantitative research focuses on numerical data, while qualitative research focuses on non-numerical data such as words and images. Quantitative research studies relationships between variables, which are then measured and analyzed through statistical techniques and may be also presented in graphics. Additionally, the researcher is independent from the respondents, and the results are derived from gathered numbers. Since the purpose of this research is to find the relationship between consumer behaviour and its main drivers, a quantitative research is the most appropriate. Moreover, a mono method quantitative study will be adopted since the research will use a single data collection technique.

The way in which the researcher asks the research question will be either exploratory, descriptive, explanatory or evaluative (Saunders, 2019). The explanatory research focuses on understanding a specific phenomenon. It is designed to explore and learn about a target market, and to test the hypothesis in a study (Formplus Blog, 2022). The aim of this study is to understand how habits, commercial and social factors, price and convenience influence consumer behaviour for coffee in Ireland. Therefore, making this research an explanatory study in nature.

A research strategy refers to the plan that the researcher will follow to answer his or her research question (Saunders, 2019). An experiment and a survey are the main strategies used in quantitative research. The survey strategy allows the researcher to collect data that can be used to indicate reasons for a relationship between variables. Surveys allow collecting data from a large number of respondents, since it is inexpensive and easy to explain and understand. Since the purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between consumer behaviour and its main drivers, a survey strategy is needed for gathering information on a large number of people in the Irish context.

4.5 Research instrument

As mentioned above, the survey strategy was applied in this study. Surveys are one of the most effective instruments to collect unbiased and objective information. They can provide large amounts of data for low costs, the information gathered allows for statistical analysis, and the questions are standardized (McLeod, 2018).

For this study, the sample population targets were male and female individuals living in Ireland, ages 18 or older. The age limit is set due to considering ages 18+ to be responsible for their purchasing decisions, therefore, for the accuracy needed in this study. Aside from the age limit, there will be no other restrictions in this study.

As stated by Cleave (2021), the higher the volume of responses in a survey, the more reliable the results are in a particular research. Therefore, the number of people the survey was distributed to was 200 individuals. The sample size, or actual number of respondents was 154, and the number of actual coffee buyers was 139 out of the total participants.

For these reasons, the data collection was made by using a survey distributed online. This allowed the researcher to reach as many respondents in Ireland who drink coffee. Additionally, a survey complies with the quantitative, deductive and positivism approach (Saunders, 2019), reinforcing the researcher's selection for the research approach methods.

Furthermore, the survey will be administered through Google Forms, and distributed through online applications such as WhatsApp, Instagram and LinkedIn.

4.5.1 Research instrument format

As stated above, the research instrument utilized by the researcher was a survey. The survey contained three parts, consisting of a total of 22 questions. The first part consisted of 5 questions gathering demographic information about the participants, the second part included 3 questions accounting for respondents who do not purchase coffee and respondents who purchase coffee and the frequency in which they do so. The third part consisted of 14 questions regarding the main drivers for choosing their daily coffee, accounting for habit, environmental awareness and fair trade factors, price and convenience.

Furthermore, aside from the demographic questions and an open-ended question, the questions were answered through a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The complete survey can be found at the end of the research, in appendix 1.

The survey questions were designed in such a way that the researcher could determine the main drivers for coffee consumption in Ireland. The questions' outline also assess whether there is a link between the increasing environmental awareness and coffee consumption in Ireland, and the relevance between the Theory of Buyer Behaviour by Howard and Sheth and coffee consumers in the Irish context in the present date.

Ultimately, the survey questions were developed to achieve the research's objectives. By including the five-point Likert scale to rate the different drivers, and the environmental awareness in coffee in the Irish context, the researcher will be able to determine which factors are actual drivers in coffee consumption, whether coffee consumers consider the environmental factors, and test the Theory of Buyer Behaviour's relevance to coffee consumers in Ireland in the present date.

4.6 Time horizon

Time horizon is the second-to-last layer in the research onion. It refers to the length of the research, and how data will be gathered in terms of time. This layer refers to the time frame for research, involving the collection of data at a specific point in time or repeatedly over a period of time to compare the data (Melnikovas, 2018).

There are two main time horizons to collect data, cross-sectional and longitudinal. Cross-sectional studies can be performed relatively faster and inexpensive. They involve analyzing data across a population collected over a set period of time (Question Pro, 2022). Additionally, cross-sectional studies often use a survey to collect data. On the other hand, a longitudinal time horizon is used when there is a need to collect data over time to acknowledge a development an evolution on the research variables.

Considering the time limitation in this study, a cross-sectional time horizon is the most appropriate. Data will be gathered at one point in time to be interpreted and presented for this research. Furthermore, a longitudinal study would not be suitable since it would have required more time to be well founded and valid. Hence, having a cross-sectional time horizon is more suitable for this research.

4.7 Data collection procedures

Primary and secondary data have been used as sources for this research study. Primary data has been collected from 154 individuals through an online survey. The survey was issued through Google Forms, revised and approved by the researcher's supervisor, and an invitation link was sent through online applications such as WhatsApp, Instagram and LinkedIn. The online free platform allows the researcher to adapt the questions to gather the information needed. The survey was created through said platform for time and convenience purposes. This recollection method allows the researcher to have more responses in a shorter period of time, as well as allowing the respondent to have easy access through their own mobile phones and answer at

their own pace and convenience. The main objective of this questionnaire was to get the target market's demographics and their behaviour towards purchasing coffee.

Additionally, secondary data collection was made from journals, books, and internet sources.

4.8 Data analysis

According to Calzon (2022), data analysis is the process of collecting and analyzing data to obtain insights that support decision-making and evaluation. In the quantitative approach, it is essential to gather numerical input to be interpreted into meaningful information. For this study, the data collected through the survey was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) version 28. The mean and standard deviation are presented. Furthermore, SPSS was utilized to obtain the internal consistency test through Cronbach's alpha, the skewness and kurtosis values, and the Pearson correlation value to test the hypothesis presented.

4.9 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations in research have grown substantially over the recent past (Saunders, 2019). Therefore, every researcher should consider this when collecting data throughout their study and when concluding the research, to avoid any ethical issues related.

In agreement with every ethical guideline provided by the National College of Ireland, every specification was followed in conducting this research. The respondents were informed of voluntary consent to participate in the survey, as well as their anonymity. Furthermore, in order to guarantee their anonymity, their names were not requested, as well as any other data that could identify them throughout the survey. Lastly, the information acquired from this questionnaire, as well as the results, were only accessed by the researcher and carefully secured.

4.10 Conclusion

This study was conducted applying a quantitative and deductive approach with a positivist philosophy. The approaches adopted were discussed above, as it is an important decision due to its specific data collection method. Moreover, a survey was utilized to gather information about the drivers for coffee purchase behaviour in Ireland.

The researcher is certain that the approaches and philosophies employed are the most suitable for carrying out this research.

The following chapter will present the data gathered during this investigation, as well as an analysis on the data and the findings resulting from this study.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Findings

5.1 Introduction

This study is driven by the need to recognize the existing link between consumer behaviour and the different motives behind it in the Irish context.

This chapter will present the analysis and findings on the data collected through the survey. The researcher used an excel spreadsheet to gather the answers from Google Forms, then exported the data to SPSS version 28, which was utilized for the statistical analysis. Finally, the previously established hypotheses were put to test to be accepted or rejected.

The main findings obtained through primary research were that the main drivers for purchasing coffee in Ireland are habit and convenience. Additionally, although price and consumer behaviour are related, it does not represent a driver in this context. Finally, the environmental impact and fair trade are not main drivers for purchasing coffee in Ireland. These findings will be further explained below.

5.2 Data Analysis

As mentioned before, the data analysis is made through first collecting the data from the survey in Google Forms into an Excel spreadsheet. Then the data was exported to SPSS version 28 to be analyzed. The survey was responded by 154 participants, however, only 139 respondents are actual coffee purchasers. These research findings and analysis will be made based on these 139 individuals.

5.2.1 Demographic findings

Figure 3 below shows the demographic characteristics for 139 coffee purchasers in Ireland.
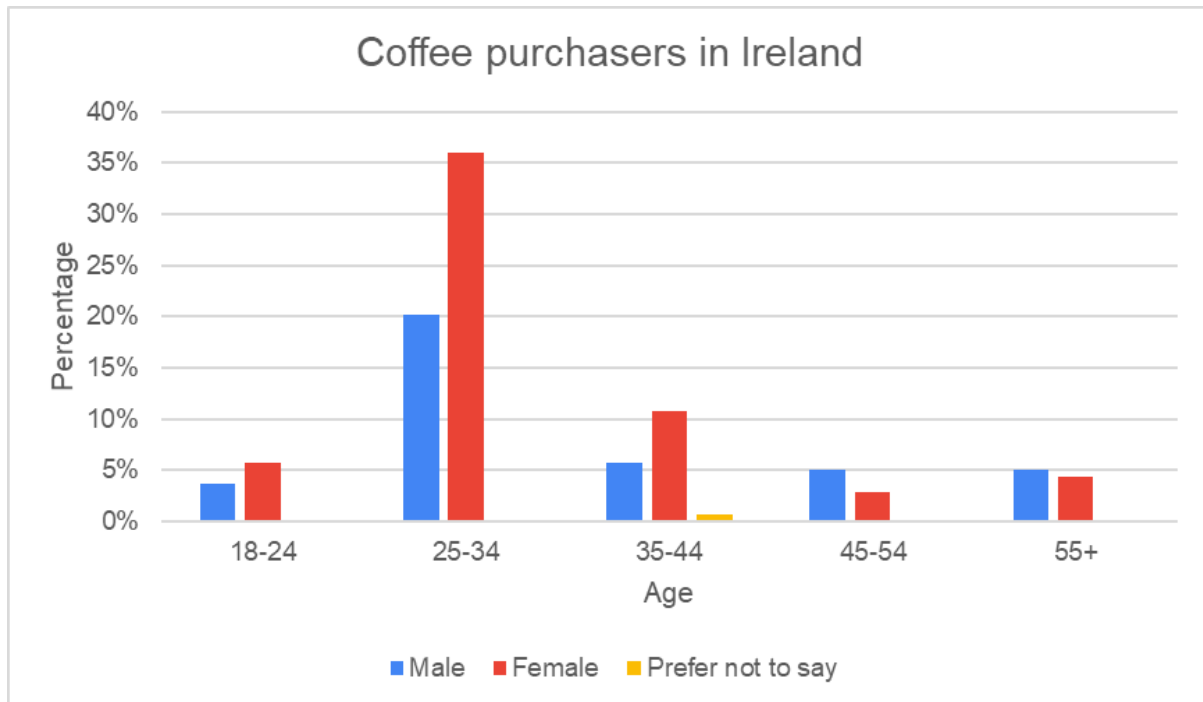
Figure 3: Coffee Purchasers by Age and Gender

Out of the 139 actual coffee purchasers, 83 were female, 55 were male, and 1 of them prefer not to say. The largest number of respondents were between ages 25 to 34 years of age, with 78 respondents. Followed by ages 35 to 44 with 24 respondents, then ages 18 to 24 and over 55 years of age with 13 respondents, and lastly, ages 45 to 54 with 11 respondents. Figure 3 above shows that the largest age group for actual coffee purchasers in this study was between 25 to 34 years of age. This can be acknowledged as a limitation to the study, as it can be misrepresenting on coffee purchasers in Ireland.
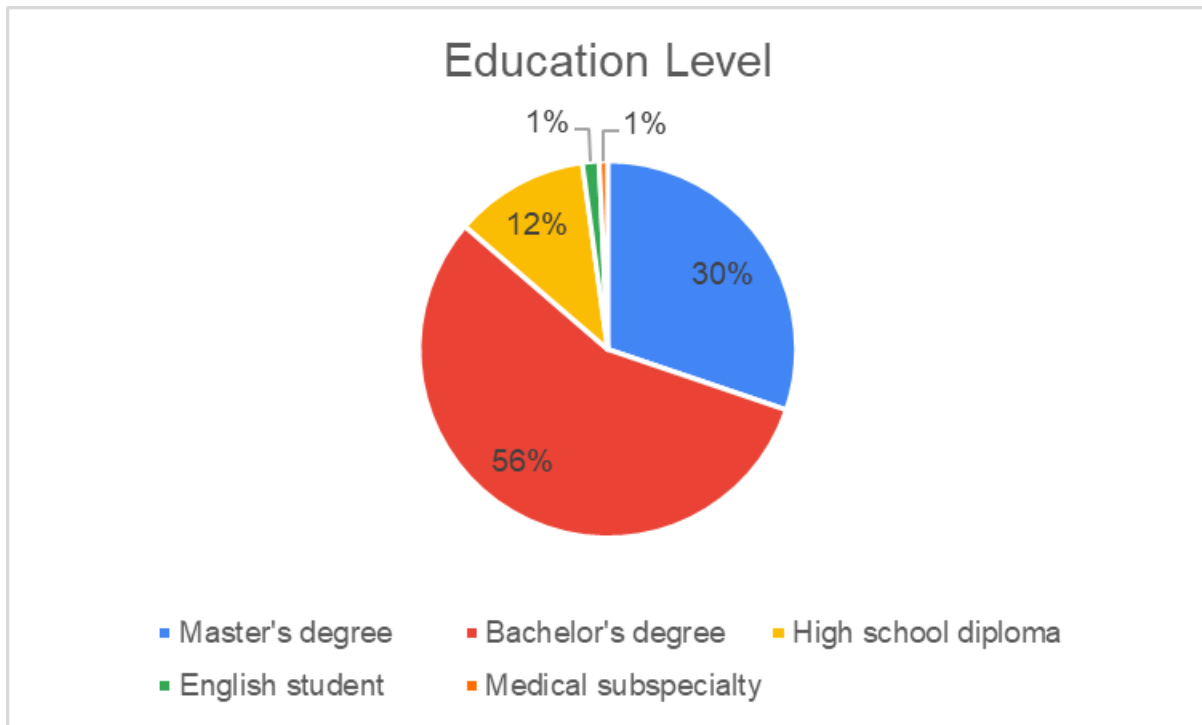
Figure 4: Highest Level of Education I have Received (Or am pursuing now)

Regarding the education level on the 139 coffee purchasers surveyed, 78 respondents have or are pursuing a bachelor's degree, 42 of them have or are pursuing a master's degree, 16 respondents have a high school diploma, 2 respondents are English students, and 1 respondent is pursuing a medical subspecialty. As figure - shows, the largest portion of respondents have acquired or are pursuing a high-level education (Master's, Bachelor's, and Medical subspecialty) with 87% of the respondents. This could potentially drive the results towards a higher environmental awareness.
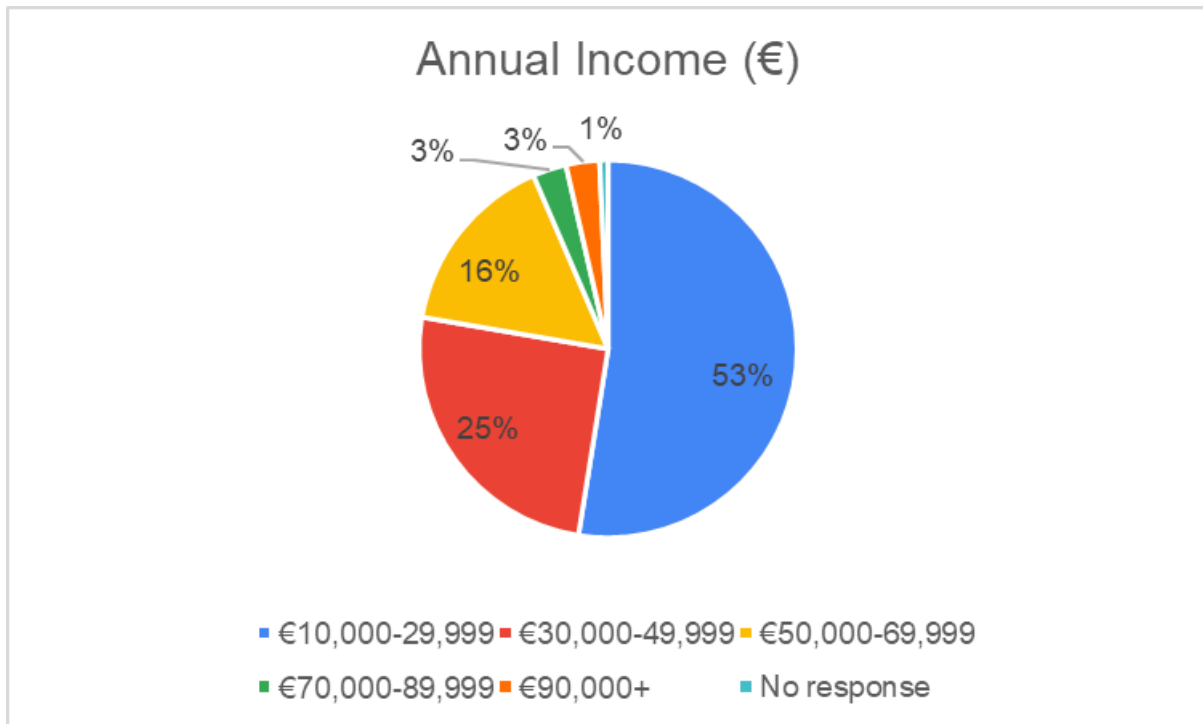
Figure 5: What is your annual income?

Regarding the annual income on coffee purchasers surveyed, 73 respondents out of the 139 coffee purchasers earn between €10,000 to €29,000 annually, followed by 35 of them who earn €30,000 to €49,000 per year, 22 respondents earning €50,000 to €59,000 per year, 4 respondents earning €70,000 to €89,000 annually and another 4 respondents earning €90,000+ annually. There was 1 respondent who did not respond to this question.
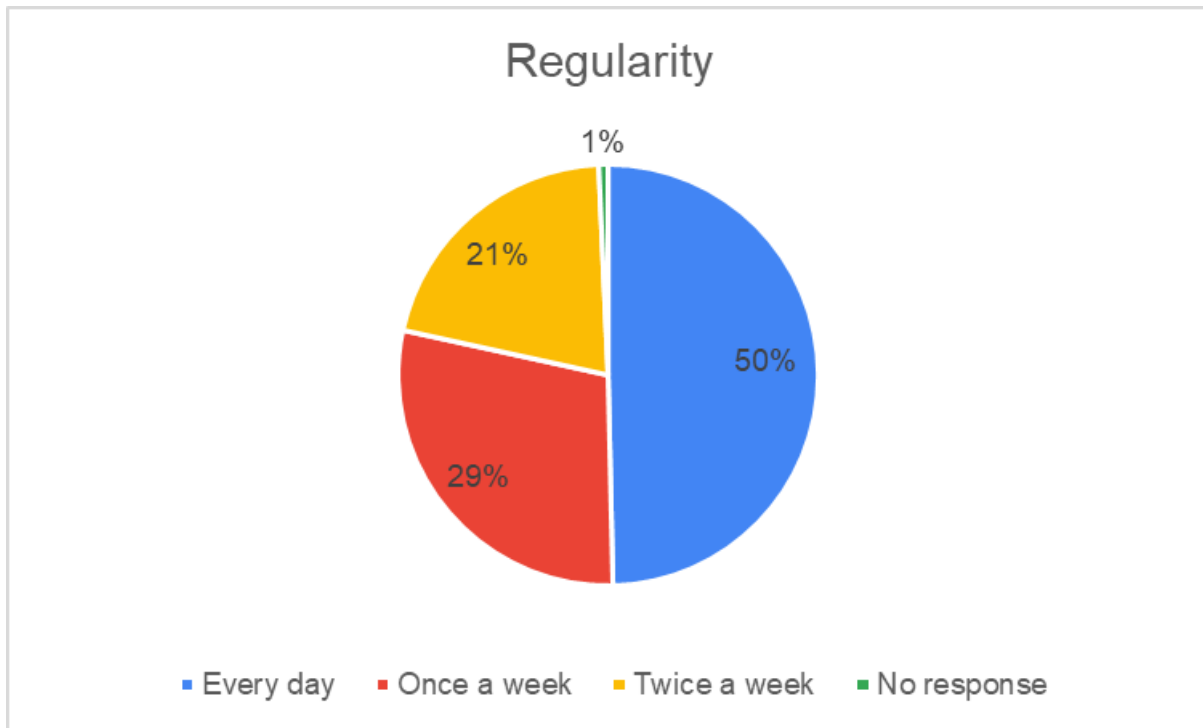
Figure 6: How regularly do you purchase coffee?

In relation to how regularly the participants purchased coffee, 69 respondents out of the 139 coffee purchasers said they do this every day, accounting for 50% of the respondents. Followed by 40 respondents saying they purchase coffee once a week, and 29 respondents acknowledging purchasing coffee twice a week. There was one coffee purchaser who did not answer this question.
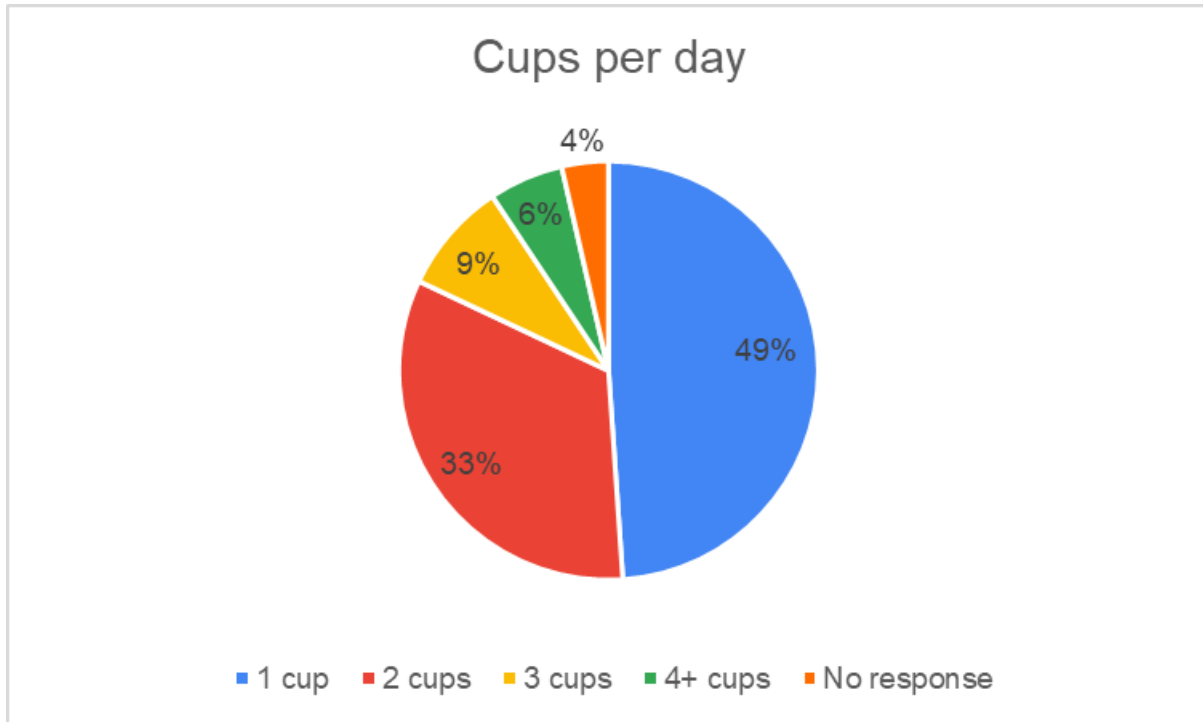
Figure 7: How many cups do you drink in a day?

Regarding the amount of coffee cups taken per day, 68 respondents acknowledged drinking 1 cup each day, followed by 46 respondents having 2 cups per day, 12 respondents having 3 cups per day and finally 8 respondents having more than 4 cups per day. It is important to note that 5 respondents did not respond to this specific question.

5.2.2 Internal consistency

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.752	.760	12

Table 1: Internal consistency test

Cronbach's alpha measures reliability and consistency in multiple question surveys using the Likert scale (Glen, 2022). This measurement gives insight into how closely related are a specific set of questions as a group. A coefficient equal to or higher than 0.7 indicates an acceptable internal consistency and therefore a reliable instrument of measurement.

For this research, 12 items out of the 22 total items were accounted for Cronbach's calculation, since these were ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The other 10 items consisted on demographic data as well as one open ended question, which should not be included in this measurement. Cronbach's alpha was calculated using SPSS version 28 for this research and as table 1 shows, it had a value of 0.752. Therefore, it can be concluded that the items utilized in the survey are reliable and consistent.

5.2.3 Value distribution

It is important to indicate the distribution of values for numerical variables (Saunders et al., 2019). As stated by Gawali (2021), skewness indicates the symmetry of the distribution, which indicates the direction of outliers, while kurtosis measures the heaviness of those distribution

tails. Standard deviation is commonly used to predict values, but this measure assumes a normal distribution, therefore skewness and kurtosis are a better measure of performance (Chen, 2022).

As seen in table 2 below, the skewness results for the five variables (habit, environment, fair trade, price and convenience) show a positive value, which means that the tail of the distribution curve is longer on the right side and the outliers are further to the right and closer to the mean on the left side. The higher values in skewness in the two variables environment and fair trade indicate a longer right-sided tail. Additionally, the kurtosis values for all five variables are less than 3, which means that there is a platykurtic distribution. The two variables environment and fair trade show a slightly higher value compared to habit, price and convenience, showing a higher probability of having outliers in its distribution. Furthermore, these two values (environment and fair trade) indicate a lower number of coffee purchasers who strongly agree to being their driver for coffee consumption in Ireland.

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Habit	3.37	1.417	.208	-1.479
Environmental impact	3.45	1.230	.893	.330
Fair trade	3.44	1.108	.795	.828
Price	3.08	1.250	.692	-.628
Convenience	3.39	1.389	.085	-1.682

Table 2: Distribution of Values

5.2.4 Descriptive statistics

5.2.4.1 Consumption drivers

Consumption Drivers		Percentage
I choose my daily coffee based on habit	Strongly Disagree	4%
	Disagree	7%
	Neutral	18%
	Agree	43%
	Strongly Agree	27%
I choose my daily coffee based on its environmental impact	Strongly Disagree	14%
	Disagree	52%
	Neutral	19%
	Agree	14%
	Strongly Agree	1%
I choose my daily coffee based on its fair-traded precedence	Strongly Disagree	10%
	Disagree	49%
	Neutral	28%
	Agree	12%
	Strongly Agree	1%
I choose my daily coffee based on price	Strongly Disagree	4%
	Disagree	24%
	Neutral	14%
	Agree	43%
	Strongly Agree	15%
I choose my daily coffee based on convenience	Strongly Disagree	1%
	Disagree	11%
	Neutral	12%
	Agree	41%
	Strongly Agree	36%

Table 3: Respondent's Consumption Drivers in Ireland

Table 3 above shows the 139 responses of coffee purchasers in Ireland and their driver to purchase their daily coffee. The results indicate that 98 respondents, accounting for 71% out of total coffee drinkers, agree and strongly agree to choosing their coffee based on habit. 20 respondents, accounting for 14%, agree to choosing their coffee based on the impact its production has on the environment. 18 coffee drinkers, or 13% agree and strongly agree to purchasing coffee based on its fair-traded precedence; 58% agree and strongly agree to choosing their coffee based on price, and 77% agree to purchasing their daily coffee based on the nearest available shop to them.

As shown in table 3 above, the highest percentages were allocated to the convenience and habit drivers. Conversely, the lowest percentages were attributed to the environmental impact and fair trade drivers, with an approximate 60% difference between the highest and lowest drivers.

5.2.4.2 Environment and Fair Trade

Environment and Fair Trade		Percentage
I am aware about the environmental impact of coffee production	Strongly Disagree	11%
	Disagree	45%
	Neutral	22%
	Agree	20%
	Strongly Agree	2%
I have learned about the environmental awareness through the increasing green marketing in advertisement	Strongly Disagree	6%
	Disagree	15%
	Neutral	22%
	Agree	53%
	Strongly Agree	4%
I have learned about the environmental awareness through family, friends, and close groups	Strongly Disagree	5%
	Disagree	23%
	Neutral	26%
	Agree	43%
	Strongly Agree	2%
I know that the term "fair trade" refers to fairly produced and fairly traded products, which are fully traceable from farm to shelf	Strongly Disagree	4%
	Disagree	12%
	Neutral	19%
	Agree	51%
	Strongly Agree	14%
I recognize the fair trade mark in products	Strongly Disagree	12%
	Disagree	50%
	Neutral	7%
	Agree	20%
	Strongly Agree	12%
I consider fair trade as a positive trait for the coffee industry	Strongly Disagree	1%
	Disagree	5%
	Neutral	12%
	Agree	53%
	Strongly Agree	29%
I would be willing to pay more for a cup of coffee that was environmentally friendly and fair traded	Strongly Disagree	1%
	Disagree	9%
	Neutral	37%
	Agree	44%
	Strongly Agree	9%

Table 4: Respondent's Environmental and Fair Trade Awareness in Ireland

Regarding the awareness coffee production has in the environment, 31 respondents, accounting for 22% of total coffee purchasers agreed and strongly agreed to have a knowledge about its impact. 78 respondents, or 56% acknowledged to have learned about environmental awareness through marketing advertisements. 63 respondents, or 45% agreed and strongly agreed to have learned about the environmental awareness through close groups, 90 respondents, accounting for 65%, agreed to having knowledge about the term "fair trade", 44 respondents, corresponding to 32%, agreed to recognize the fair trade mark in products, 114 respondents, or 82% agreed to consider fair trade to be a positive trait for the coffee industry, and 73 respondents, accounting for 53% of coffee purchasers, agreed to be willing to pay more for a coffee that was environmentally friendly and fair-traded.

5.2.4.3 Other drivers
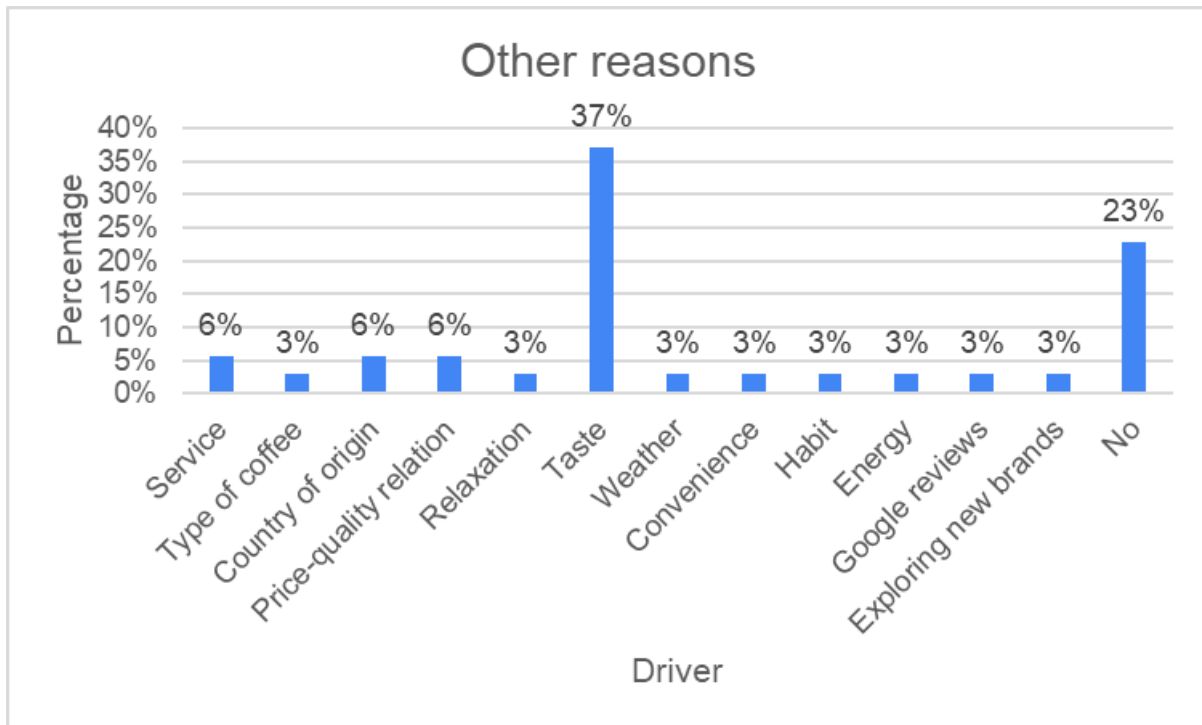
Figure 8: Respondent's "other drivers" for choosing coffee

Regarding the open question for respondents to state alternative reasons for choosing their coffee, out of a total of 35 responses, the main reason for "other drivers", was taste with 37%. After the "no" response on other reasons, service, country of origin and the price-quality relation were the next drivers with 6%.

Although few responses were obtained as "other drivers", there might be a need to highlight "taste" as a potential driver, as it was the highest mentioned motive, not included in the survey administered.

5.2.5 Inferential statistics

5.2.5.1 Hypothesis testing

In order to accept or reject the hypothesis presented in this research, the correlation between the dependent and independent variable will be tested. According to Saunders et al. (2019), a correlation coefficient enables the researcher to assess the strength of the relationship between two variables. Therefore, the hypothesis will be analyzed below using the correlation Pearson value (p-value).

Hypothesis 1: Consumer's decision to buy coffee in Ireland is driven by habits

Correlations

		ConsumerBehaviour	Habit
ConsumerBehaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	695	139
Habit	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	139	139

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5: Pearson Correlation between Consumer Behaviour and Habit

Based on Pearson correlation results presented in table 5 above, the p-value of 1.000 resulted significant due to Sig. 2-tailed being 0.000. Therefore, considering that the p-value is less than the accepted significance level of 0.05, hypothesis 1 is accepted. It then can be concluded that consumer's decision to purchase coffee in Ireland is driven by habits.

Hypothesis 2: Consumer's decision to buy coffee in Ireland is driven by commercial and social factors such as the environmental awareness and fair trade

Correlations

		ConsumerBehaviour	EnvImpact	FT
ConsumerBehaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	-.003	-.123
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.974	.149
	N	695	139	139
EnvImpact	Pearson Correlation	-.003	1	.634**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.974		<.001
	N	139	139	139
FT	Pearson Correlation	-.123	.634**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.149	<.001	
	N	139	139	139

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6: Pearson Correlation between Consumer Behaviour and Environmental
Impact/Fair Trade

Based on Pearson correlation results presented in table 6 above, the p-value for environmental impact was -0.003, which showed a negative effect, with a Sig. 2-tailed of 0.974 that is not significant. Similarly, the p-value for the variable fair trade showed to be -0.123, with a Sig. 2-tailed of 0.149 that is also not significant. With a significant level (2-tailed) above 0.05, hypothesis 2 is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that consumer's decision to purchase coffee in Ireland is not driven by its environmental impact or fair trade.

Hypothesis 3: Consumer's decision to buy coffee in Ireland is driven by price

Correlations

		ConsumerBehaviour	Price
ConsumerBehaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	.084
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.325
	N	695	139
Price	Pearson Correlation	.084	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.325	
	N	139	139

Table 7: Pearson Correlation between Consumer Behaviour and Price

Based on Pearson correlation results presented in table 7 above, the p-value was 0.084, with a Sig. 2-tailed of 0.325 that is not significant. With a significant level above 0.05, hypothesis 3 is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that consumer's decision to purchase coffee in Ireland is not driven by price.

Hypothesis 4: Consumer's decision to buy coffee in Ireland is driven by convenience

Correlations

		ConsumerBehaviour	Convenience
ConsumerBehaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	.238[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	695	139
Convenience	Pearson Correlation	.238[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	139	139

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 8: Pearson Correlation between Consumer Behaviour and Convenience

Based on Pearson correlation results presented in table 8 above, the p-value of 0.238 resulted significant, due to Sig. 2-tailed being 0.005. Therefore, considering that the p-value is less than the accepted significance level of 0.05, hypothesis 4 is accepted. It then can be concluded that the consumer's decision to purchase coffee in Ireland is driven by convenience.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the findings through the data obtained through the carried primary research to then be compared to the literature review presented at the beginning of the research. Furthermore, an analysis on the hypothesis previously rejected or accepted will be discussed.

6.2 Habit as a driver to coffee purchasing in Ireland

The results in this research propose that habit is greatly related to consumer behaviour for coffee in Ireland, which suggests that habit is one of the drivers for purchasing coffee for people living in Ireland at the moment. This is consistent with the Theory of Buyer Behaviour proposed by Howard and Sheth (1969), which suggests repetitive behaviour as the basis for their consumption model. Furthermore, it is consistent with the theory as it sees the consumers' process as a system, where individuals make decisions based on ideas about a product and continue to purchase already known products for convenient and habitual reasons.

6.3 Environmental impact and fair trade as a driver to coffee purchasing in Ireland

According to the findings, the environmental impact and fair trade have no relationship with consumer purchasing behaviour for coffee in Ireland. As stated by Pickova (2020), environmental concerns emerged around 1960, and its awareness has been increasing ever since. Similarly, based on the findings in this study, we can agree with the authors about the increasing awareness in society, more specifically within this study's context for coffee in Ireland. However, even though the awareness towards the environment is clearly important to the respondents, and the

results show they would be willing to pay more for coffee that was environmentally friendly, the study indicates they do not actually follow through when purchasing coffee in the Irish context. These findings are consistent with White et al., (2019), who have identified the gap between the consumer's positive attitude towards environmentally friendly products and actually following through within their wallets.

Likewise, this research's findings also suggest fair trade has no relationship with consumer purchasing behaviour for coffee in the Irish context. Based on the Fairtrade Foundation (2022), it is important to guarantee working under safe conditions and ensuring fair pay for its farmers as well as ethical products, which is what the fair trade certification ensures. This goes in accordance with the findings, as this study suggests that individuals are aware of the term "fair trade" and consider it to be a positive trade for the coffee industry. However, similarly to the environmental awareness trait, even though the findings suggest individuals are aware of the importance in fair-traded products, they do not follow through. In accordance with White et al. (2019) findings saying most consumers are sustainable and fair-trade advocates, less than half actually purchase those types of products. Similarly, the study's findings show individuals would be willing to pay more for fair-traded coffee, but few of them actually follow through.

Moreover, the Theory of Buyer Behaviour by Howard and Sheth (1969) proposes the basis for the consumer behaviour process. Regardless of the amount of people actually following through within their actions, it cannot be denied that the environmental issues and awareness have been on the rise. As stated by Lawson (2017), companies such as Disney, Johnson and Johnson and Ford have changed their practices to become environmentally friendly and to adapt to this rising need. As the Theory of Buyer Behaviour was created a few years ago, including this aspect could make the theory become more relevant and updated to society's current needs.

As stated above, we can see from primary research that there can be improvements to create awareness in coffee consumers in Ireland. This is imperative for managers to make better business decisions, to stay relevant with society's current needs and to have an impact in society through their business.

6.4 Price as a driver to coffee purchasing in Ireland

According to the findings, price, and consumer behaviour for coffee in Ireland are related but it is not considered a main driver. According to Solomon (2004), a consumer's decision is significantly impacted by their salary rate. Additionally, if a consumer lacks financial resources, they have limited options available and will most likely not choose their most preferred brand. However, as this study's findings show, price is not a driving factor for purchasing coffee in Ireland. This might be due to coffee being a low-investment product. Therefore, even though the majority of respondent's earn in the lowest wage ranges, price has not been defined as a driver for purchasing coffee in Ireland.

6.5 Convenience as a driver to coffee purchasing in Ireland

The results in this research propose that convenience is related to consumer behaviour for coffee in the Irish context. This is consistent with the model proposed in the Theory of Buyer Behaviour by Howard and Sheth (1969), suggesting that when consumers do not have enough time to make decisions, they reallocate it unfavourably to its purchasing behaviour, which affects the search for information, available options and therefore, its outcome. Furthermore, in accordance with the study by Wu et al. (2022), individuals who have limited time to make purchasing decisions, shift their cost-benefit relation, abiding to convenience in their decision-making processes.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher made a contrast between the findings through the primary data obtained, and past investigations. The main conclusion at which the researcher arrived being that the main drivers for coffee consumption in Ireland are habit and convenience. Additionally, another main conclusion found by the researcher was that even though price and consumer behaviour for coffee in Ireland are related, it is not a main driver in this context. The

environmental impact and fair trade, even though increasingly considered by individuals, are not main drivers for coffee consumption in Ireland. Furthermore, the Theory of Buyer Behaviour by Howard and Sheth (1969), although still relevant to this day, could include the environmental awareness for appropriate business decisions.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the main drivers for coffee purchasers in Ireland. The three main objectives were to determine the main drivers for coffee consumption in Ireland, to learn whether coffee consumers in Ireland consider the environmental factor and Fair Trade when purchasing their coffee, and to test the Theory of Buyer Behaviour proposed by Howard and Sheth (1969), and its relevance to coffee consumers in Ireland. Based on the research findings, three main conclusions can be made.

The first conclusion suggests that the main drivers for purchasing coffee in Ireland are habit and convenience. Price, although it is related to coffee consumption in Ireland, it is not a main driver. Finally, the environmental impact and fair trade awareness are not a main driver for purchasing coffee in Ireland.

The second conclusion is that even though coffee consumers in Ireland are becoming more aware of the environment, and they have learned about it through the increasing green marketing advertisement, they ultimately do not consider the environmental impact and its fair-traded precedence when purchasing coffee. It can be concluded that there is still a gap between what people know about the environment and consumers actually making a decision in their daily purchase for coffee.

The third conclusion that can be made based on the findings is that the Theory of Buyer Behaviour proposed by Howard and Sheth in 1969 is still relevant to today's consumption processes, specifically for coffee. However, there could be improvements made in the theory to stay more relevant.

Based on the findings, managers and business owners could create more awareness and encourage consumers on making more ethical choices in regards to the products they consume,

specifically in the coffee they purchase. They could do this by including fair-traded coffee and environmentally friendly products and practices in their coffee shops. Additionally, managers and business owners can work together with marketers to promote a more ethical lifestyle, and to include their daily coffee choice in these decisions.

7.2 Limitations and Recommendations for future research

Even though the present research has provided an understanding on consumer behaviour specifically within the Theory of Buyer Behaviour by Howard and Sheth (1969), coffee consumption in the Irish context, and the environmental awareness, it also had several limitations.

The major limitation was the sample size. Even though the largest number of respondents were aimed through the survey, not every respondent purchase coffee. Therefore, those respondents were not accounted for in this study. Furthermore, the majority of respondents were between the ages 25 to 35 years of age, and the online distribution of the survey might have limited participation from older age groups. Hence, do not representing the overall coffee purchasing population in Ireland.

Moreover, a recommendation for future researchers interested in analyzing coffee consumption could be to ensure that the sample size includes only coffee purchasers, so they have a larger sample size. Additionally, researchers interested in the Theory of Buyer Behaviour by Howard and Sheth (1969), could test this theory and create or build upon the theory, in order to make it more contemporary relevant.

Appendix

Appendix 1

Assessing the main drivers for coffee purchasing behaviour in Ireland

Dear Sir/Madam,

This survey is being carried out to collect data on the research topic: Assessing the main drivers for coffee purchasing behaviour in Ireland.

Please answer the questions freely and note that you will not be identified from the information you provide throughout this survey. All information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence. The decision to participate in this research is entirely voluntarily.

The questions should take about five minutes to complete. Please write your answers in the given spaces and select the option that best answers the question(s).

alee10221@gmail.com (no se comparten) Cambiar cuenta

I identify myself as:

○ Male

○ Female

○ Non-binary

○ Prefer not to say

My age category is:

○ 18-24

○ 25-34

○ 35-44

○ 45-54

○ 55+

Category which describes my professional status (mark all that apply)

- [·] Employed
- [·] Self-employed
- [·] Unemployed, looking for a job
- [·] Unemployed, not looking for a job
- [·] Student
- [·] Otros: _____

The highest level of education I have received (Or am pursuing now)

- ( ) High school diploma or equivalent
- ( ) Bachelor's degree
- ( ) Master's degree
- ( ) PhD
- ( ) Otros: _____

What is your annual income?

- ( ) 10,000-29,999
- ( ) 30,000-49,999
- ( ) 50,000-69,999
- ( ) 70,000-89,999
- ( ) 90,000+

I typically find out about the brands I purchase through:

- [ ] Social media
- [ ] Local shops
- [ ] TV and online commercials
- [ ] Word of mouth (family and close groups)
- [ ] Searching on the internet

Do you purchase coffee? If your answer is "yes", please continue answering questions 8 through 22

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

How regularly do you purchase coffee?

- ( ) Every day
- ( ) Twice a week
- ( ) Once a week

If you drink coffee every day, how many cups do you drink in a day?

- ( ) 1 cup
- ( ) 2 cups
- ( ) 3 cups
- ( ) 4+ cups

I choose my daily coffee based on habit

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

I am aware about the environmental impact of coffee production

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

I have learned about the environmental awareness through the increasing green marketing in advertisement

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

I have learned about the environmental awareness through family, friends, and close groups

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

I choose my coffee based on its environmental impact

○ Strongly disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly agree

I know that the term "fair trade" refers to fairly produced and fairly traded products, which are fully traceable from farm to shelf

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

I recognize the fair trade mark in products

○ Strongly disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly agree

I consider fair trade as a positive trait for the coffee industry

○ Strongly disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly agree

I choose my coffee based on its fair-traded precedence

○ Strongly disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly agree

I choose my coffee based on price

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

I would be willing to pay more for a cup of coffee that was environmentally friendly and fair traded

- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Agree
- ○ Strongly agree

I choose my coffee based on convenience (the nearest available shop)

- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Agree
- ○ Strongly agree

Is there another reason why you choose your daily coffee?

Tu respuesta

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