

LAPPEENRANTA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

LUT School of Business and Management

Master's Degree Programme in International Marketing Management

MASTER'S THESIS

**ETHICS ROLE IN CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS AND BEHAVIOR IN
CHILDREN'S CLOTHING BRANDS**

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study is to examine whether ethics have a role in consumers' perceptions and behavior in their buying behavior. More precisely the aim is to understand the role of ethical beliefs in consumer behavior in children's clothing industry. The research is executed from customer's perspective in a business-to-consumer context.

The thesis consists of two theoretical parts. The first part presents the ethical consumerism, different ethical approaches and attributes, whereas the second part discusses the buying behavior, the process, influencing factors as well as ethical beliefs. The empirical part of the study is based on the conducted qualitative research. The research was conducted as a qualitative study where the primary data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with parents of children under the age of eight years.

The results of the research revealed that ethical beliefs do impact one's buying behavior and perceptions. However the meaning of belief may differ between each and every interviewee as well as the level of importance. Even though no radical theory or results were discovered in this study, it does show that ethics are becoming a more important part of the buying behavior and process.

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Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoitus on tutkia mikäli etiikalla on osaa kuluttajien havainnoissa ja käyttäytymisessä ostokäyttäytymisessä. Tutkimus pyrkii ymmärtämään eettisten vakaumusten ja uskomusten roolin kuluttajan käytöksessä, erityisesti lastenvaatealalla. Tutkimus on toteutettu asiakkaan näkökulmasta B2C kontekstissa.

Tämä tutkielma koostuu kahdesta teoreettisesti osasta. Ensimmäinen osa esittelee eettisen kulutuksen, sen erilaiset eettiset asenteet ja piirteet, kun taas toinen osa käsittelee ostokäyttäytymistä, sen prosessia, vaikuttavia tekijöitä sekä eettisiä uskomuksia. Empiirinen osa tutkimuksesta perustuu kvalitatiivisiin tutkimustuloksiin. Tutkimus toteutettiin kvalitatiivisena missä primääridata kerättiin teemahaastattelemalla alle kahdeksan-vuotiaiden lasten vanhempia.

Tutkimuksen tulokset paljastavat kuinka eettisillä uskomuksilla on vaikutus ostokäyttäytymiseen ja havaintoihin. Siltikin eettisten uskomusten merkitys ja tärkeys vaihteli haastateltavien välillä. Vaikkakin tutkimus ei osoittanut mitään radikaaleja teorioita tai tuloksia, näytti se kuinka etiikasta on tulossa tärkeä osa ostokäyttäytymistä ja sitä käsittelevää prosessia.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Ethics as a study has been relevant and present in the business field for quite a while. It became the subject of growing social and political debate in the late 1980's. (Macfarlane 1995) The significance of ethics has growth remarkably on the 21st century and some say that only companies that follow ethical foundation can develop their businesses in long run. O'Fallon and Butterfield (2005) state in their article that in the late nineties and early 2000's researchers provided more empirical articles on ethical decision making than in the prior four decades combined. Alongside with business ethics, sustainability and ethical conduct have begun to matter as companies have realized that affordable fashion raises ethical issues and questions. (Moisander & Pesonen 2002) (Aspers & Skov 2006) (Annamma et al 2012)

Ethical consumerism and consumer buying behavior and perception in ethically produced clothing has been interest of mine for a while. After studying and reading a lot of business ethics and corporate side of the ethics it was obvious to study more the consumer side of it as well. Consumer perspective and perception is something, which has been fairly little investigated compared to organizational perspective. The research done on consumer ethics has focused on three different categories, empirically examined behavior such as shoplifting, providing normative guidelines for business and consumers in ethics and developing a conceptual and empirical basis for understanding ethical decision making (Vitell & Muncy 1992). The lack of research on consumer perspective had a huge impact on me wanting to do my research on the customer side and so these are the topics, which will be investigated and more thoroughly presented in this research.

Since the main focus of the thesis is the children's clothing industry, where the product costs stays relatively low and the buying cycle is rather constant, it is interesting to detect how much time and research is spend on the purchasing progress. Whether there are several other attributes influencing on the decision and whether they are more internal or external.

1.1 Literature Review

As the theoretical framework of this study comprises ethical consumerism and buying behavior, the origins of the concepts are presented in the literature review. To begin with ethics, ethics became the subject of growing social and political debate in the late 1980's (Macfarlane 1995). Ethics (or moral philosophy) deals with individual character and the moral rules, principles and values that govern and limit our conduct. (Sherwin 1983) It investigates questions of right and wrong, duty and obligation, and moral responsibility. Business ethics is the study of what constitutes right and wrong, good or bad, human conduct in a business context. (Shaw & Barry 2010, 7-8)

Nowadays business ethics and social responsibility have become hot topics for almost every business, yet the majority of the existing literature relates to CSR and business ethics focuses on decision-making processes in companies making the consumer's perspective on ethics less studied area (Kotler 2008) (Uusitalo & Oksanen 2004) (Brunk 2010). In many cases business ethics are misinterpreted or looked down on. Marketing ethics being a subset of business ethics makes the whole subject of ethics more complex (Martin 1985). In many cases companies lack an understanding of their costumers' ethical beliefs, as the consumer's perspective may vary from companies' definition (Brunk 2010). This is one of the reasons why the consumer perspective and consumer side has been rather little investigated.

There is an emerging research field of "consumer ethics", which seeks to describe, understand and praise or criticize consumers, for their behavior as moral behavior (Brinkmann & Peattie 2008). Green movement emerged in the early 1990's in Europe and USA and has since altered consumer's basic habits (D'Souza 2004). In recent years, ethical consumerism has emerged as an important influence on business (Jatinder et al. 2011). Due to this, there are more brands that claim to be ethical, varying from brands that use ethical practices in their supply chain (American Apparel), brands that offer ethical or environmentally friendly products

in their portfolio (Toyota Prius), and brands that invest in social causes (Jatinder et al. 2011). According to Fan (2005) on her article on ethical branding and corporate reputation, she states that ethics has been studied in almost all business topics except branding. By the year 2005 there had not been written a single academic study on branding ethics in online databases such as Infotrac neither in journals such as Journal of Business Ethics, Journal of Brand Management or Journal of Product and brand Management. Luckily this has changed since 2005 and Fan's article, by a quick search, several articles on ethical branding is shown in the online databases, yet the oldest being by Fan.

Buying behavior and especially ethical behavior is another relevant concept to this thesis. The consumer is the focus of all retail decisions (Cox & Brittain 1996:58). Thus it is very important to respect how consumers build buying decisions and examine how consumers come to the decision on which product to purchase. What are the factors influencing on the selection? Does ethical brand factors influence on one's buying behavior etc. According to Attalla & Carrigan (2001) research, ethical purchase behavior may be influenced by various demographical characteristics, age being one of them.

1.2 Research questions

The purpose of this study is to identify the potential role of ethics in consumer buying behavior. More specifically, the aim is to construct an understanding of how companies' ethics affect parents buying behavior and perception of children's clothing. Ethics as well as consumer behavior are quite researched subjects and lot of information is available thus studies that empirically examine the relationship between consumer ethical beliefs and green buying are worth investigating and remain rare (Vitell 2003). The main objective is to find the most relevant of the already existing information and identify the dilemma. Considering the purpose and the objective of the study, the research question is stated as follows:

The role of ethical beliefs in consumer behavior in children's clothing industry?

In order to answer and fully understand the main research question there might be a need for explaining ethical consumerism as well as ethical consumer behavior. Thus the sub-questions are:

- What is ethical consumerism?
- Consumer behavior in children's clothing industry?
- How does the ethical image of the company affect on ones buying decision?

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is illustrated in the figure 1, it consists of the literature and theories which are analyzed in this research. It is a mixture of ethical consumerism and consumer behavior theories and how they together impact and have an effect on consumer perception, the buying behavior as well as the buyer decision process.

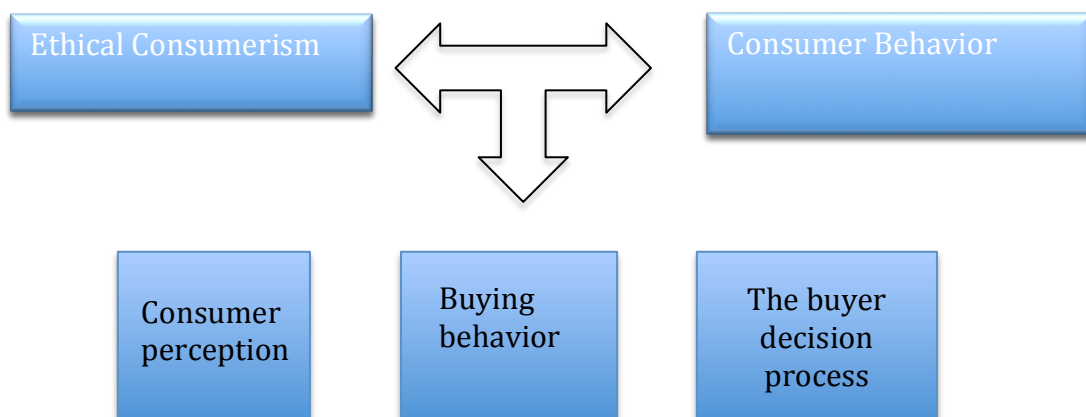


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

1.4 Delimitations

The scope of the research sets the main delimitation for the study. Although the research mainly focuses on ethical aspects of buying behavior of children's

clothing are there other factors that need to be kept in mind in order to recognize the whole picture, both in theoretical and empirical part. This includes setting the scope for interviews and interviewees. Another delimitation relates to the collect of primary data, what if there are not enough respondents or what if there really is participant error or the quality of their answers is not what was expected. Other possible issue relates to semi-structured interviews and the possible difficulty to compare the empirical materials, since the participants respond to their own and somewhat varying interpretations of the same question. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 82) Another possible limitation is the misuse of secondary data in a way that the research topic expands too much and the focus of the study disappears and becomes irrelevant. To avoid such problem, research question is important to keep in mind at all times.

1.5 Key Concepts and Definitions

Ethics deals with individual character and the moral rules that rule and limit our conduct. It investigates questions of right and wrong, duty and obligation, and moral responsibility. (Shaw & Barry 2010, 7) In terms of clothing in this thesis, it will be referred as companies 'doing the right thing' in consumer's perception.

Ethical consumerism refers to buyer behavior that imitates a concern with the problems of the Third World, where manufacturers are paid low wages and live in poor conditions only to produce cheap products for western consumers and revenues for global companies. (Strong 1996)

Eco-Fashion The term arose most likely in the early 1990's and can be related in the field of fashion, marketing, merchandising or journalism. In the fashion world it refers especially to the fabric and fiber content of a garment with a little or no impact on the environment. This is rather difficult to accomplish since it does not describe the item but the whole supply chain. (Thomas 2008) (Beard 2008)

Consumer behavior concerns mental and physical activities of individuals or groups regarding the acquiring and consuming products to fulfill their needs and wants. (Mittal et al. 2008, 9)

1.6 Methodology

This research consists theoretical and empirical part. The empirical part of the thesis is conducted by using qualitative research method. The consideration of consumer's evaluation of ethics or morality is an inherently personal, subjective, and sensitive topic and thus disposed to social desirability effects, thus the plan is to create semi-structured interviews, which are either collected face-to-face or via email. (Brunk 2010) The purpose is to carry out as many interviews until the data converts saturated.

1.7 Structure of the Study

This thesis consists of six chapters (table 1), beginning with an introduction to the study. The second and third chapter creates the theoretical foundation of the study. The second chapter introduces the ethical consumerism and its different dimensions from sweatshops to child labor as well as the ethical fashion and eco-labels used in ethical clothing business. The second chapter of theoretical foundation, chapter three is about buying behavior and how the process is made and who influence on it.

The fourth chapter moves on describing the research design and data collection. Reliability and validity of the study are presented here. Chapter five presents the research data, analysis as well as research results. Finally, the chapter six describes the conclusions of the thesis, managerial and theoretical implications as well as limitations and suggestions for further studies.

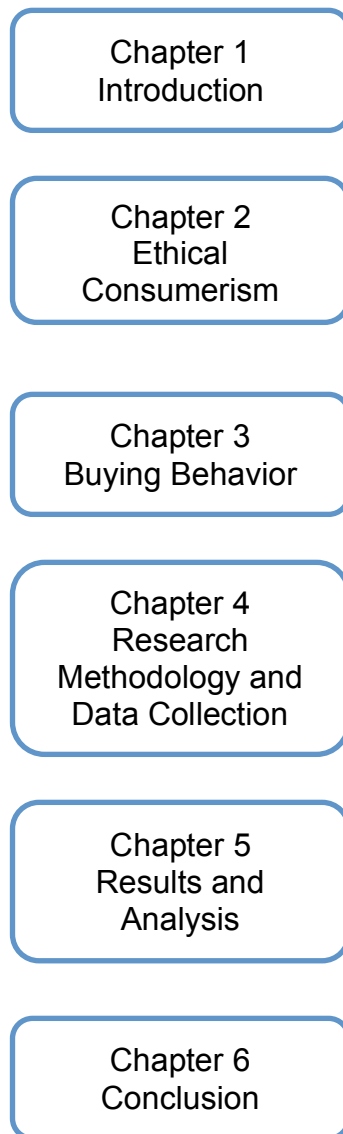


Figure 2. Structure of the thesis

2 ETHICAL CONSUMERISM

Ethical consumerism generally manifests itself in two forms of purchasing behavior: buying products for positive reasons (environmentally-friendly products) or boycotting products for negative reasons (not buying shoes made using child labor) (De Pelsmacker et al. 2005). Ethical consumption includes all kinds of personal consumption choices in which a concern for a particular ethical issue coexists with traditional decision-making criteria such as quality and price. (Langen, 2013, 75) Ethical shopping and consumerism in general is about taking responsibility for your day-to-day impact upon the world, in short, it is a 'traditional consumption' plus a concern. (Clark, 2004, 7) (Langen, 2013, 75) According to Stradvik et al (2013) ethical consumption generally focuses on three main concerns: the well being of humans, animals and the environment. This is something that Carrington et al (2010) consider as well, they state in their article that ethically minded consumers feel a responsibility towards the environment and/or to society, and seek to express their values through ethical consumption and purchasing (or boycotting) behavior. Shaw et al (2006) reminds us how the ethical consumers usually believe that by making ethical choices they have the power to encourage and support businesses which avoid exploiting or harming humans (Ethical consumer 2016). According to Carolyn Strong (1996) ethical consumerism refers to buyer behavior that reflects a concern with the problems of the Third World, where manufacturers are paid low wages and live in poor conditions only to produce cheap products for western consumers and profits for global companies. An ethical consumer would purchase products produced in Third world country only if the people who made them would be paid fairly, people who would be working in good conditions and from people who would actually benefit from the made profits.

There are numerous views of ethical shopping and consumerism. Nowadays more than ever, the materials we purchase and consumer links us to wide range of social, economic, political and environmental matters. A lot of people say that the current ethical and fair-trade labels and certificates are buyer motivated (Clark

2004, 4-5). Although consumers are key stakeholders in the marketing exchange process, there has been little research attention focused on understanding the ethics of consumers, and the buyer behavior attached to them (Uusitalo & Oksanen 2004). Consumer ethics has been recognized to be antecedents of green buying, yet the existing literature suffers from many shortages (Lu et al 2013). It is also a fact that within the field of ethical consumerism theory development is on its early stages and there is not yet an accepted theory framework for decision making of ethical consumers (Carrington et al 2010).

2.1 Where should we buy?

One of the biggest issues disputed in ethical shopping is whether it is good or bad for the people living in Third world countries to buy merchandises from Third world countries (Clark 2004). Many of us are familiar with sweatshop labor in Far Eastern apparel factories or the misuse of water and land for growing cash crops in Africa, these have even become a norm in the global apparel industry. (International Labor Rights Forum, 2016) The issue is mainly whether purchasing merchandises manufactured in poor countries adds to the abuse of poverty or provides an opportunity out of poverty. (Clark 2004, 52)

Most probably there is very little amount of people who would deny that labor settings in poor countries are generally very little criticized by our western standards. Some of these issues are widely discussed and acknowledged. Such factors are working hours and the expected salaries in sweatshop designed factories aimed to export garments and farms in Asia, Latin America and Africa (Clark 2004, 52) (Hobbes 2015). According to some explored reports, manufacturers in Asia and Latin America have demanded unbelievable working hours, up to 120 hours per week or even more. The salary paid for hour can be as little as 13 US cents and in many situations up to half of the worked hours are unpaid overtime (Clark 2004, 52) (Global Exchange, 2016) (Gaille 2014). Also in many cases workers are paid by piece, the number of for example shirts or socks are made, this way the costs stay as little as possible (Global Exchange 2016). The problems in sweatshops are extensive, there are problems with salary

deductions from made mistakes, and there is very little if any job security not to forget the health and safety features. According to Clark (2004), as much as two million workers die every year due to occupational accidents or illnesses. Between 2012 and 2015 some of the largest garment industry disasters have occurred, such as Ali Enterprises fire in Pakistan in September 2012, the Rana Plaza building collapse in Bangladesh in April 2013 and the Kentex factory fires in Philippines in May 2015 (International Labor rights forum, 2016). In the clothing industry countless are injured by machinery and fire. In some cases the employer even locks the doors and windows to prevent stealing and so create a fire hazard (Global Exchange, 2016). Toxic glues are yet another problem workers in clothing and shoe factories are exposed to. Furthermore verbal and physical abuse is largely reported among sweatshop workers. Yet the most significant of all, is the fact that collective bargain for better working conditions and terms through unions is rather impossible (Clark 2004). A good example is the H&M factories in Bangladesh where the company became the first signatory to the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh and promised to create a safer working environment, yet still three years later only little has been done (International Labor Rights Forum, 2016) Another big issue in the improvement of sweatshops is that they are often not make to take better care of the employees but to make the factories look like they are (Hobbes 2015). Another issue is in the type the inspections are done, according to Nike their working conditions in almost every supplier had increased, yet when the same inspection was done by a third party the results showed that approximately 80 per cent of them had not improved or had even gotten worse (Hobbes, 2015).

For a long time sweatshops were something that you could have read from history books, however this has changed in the last few decades. Today, sweatshops have returned and the problem of it can be read from newspapers. For a long time sweatshops have been with clothing factories. There are several reasons why clothing manufacturing is been connected with labor abuse. One of these reasons is the low infrastructure cost of starting a clothing factory and the training being as minimal as possible. Due to this middleman are able to afford to start up new plants and thus take part in the competitive industry. In the era of globalization,

garment sector and clothing factories were one of the firsts to move to third world countries. The reason to this is simple, clothes being a huge business and the major production cost being labor. For many people the biggest problem is child labor, even if it is somewhat overstated claims Clark (2004). However an estimated of 250 million children between 5 and 14 years are being forced to work in sweatshops in developing countries (Gaille 2014). The child workers are more common in less-discussed areas, such as silk production (Clark 2004, 190-202).

Clark (2004) states that in case of a bigger, more noticeable and the stronger brand image a company has the more it is dodged by the people who describe them as ethical shopper or consumer activists. Naomi Klein (2000) stated in her bestseller *No Logo* how big companies are getting bigger and how their focus is shifting away from issues, which are happening in real world. She has intensely criticized big companies such as Nike and Gap. However this is only one opinion and many other sources state how bigger brands and retailers do usually have more ethically developed strategies than the ones manufacturing no-name goods. Unfortunately these strategies can do only so much. Debatably the aggressive buying practices, lobbying and political donations substitute the good the companies have done with their moral ethics. (Clark 2004, 71)

There is also a question whether to trade or not with oppressive regimes. As will be described in the five approaches, boycotting a specific country has occurred since apartheid in South Africa. A part of the discussion of from where to buy ethically includes avoiding products and services coming from oppressive governments. It is well known how governments benefit from their exports, and by buying products from these governments and regimes we may be endorsing their questionable practices.

Boycotting a certain country or region has its positive and negative sides. It can be rather difficult to determine which country to boycott, as there is no one specific measure. Boycotting a certain region may end up being harmful for the specific country and in many cases when boycotting and possible damage done to a government the population will be harmed as well. Generally speaking oppressive

regimes are poor and have uneven distribution of wealth. By boycotting products from these areas the main impact would be for the agricultural workers as well as factories. However as global trade is transparent and encourages to open communication, the negative short-term effect of boycotting could in the end shift to be a positive thing. In the end it all depends of the specific regime and the circumstances in it (Clark 2004). However, boycotting only works if everyone does it, and in many cases it is not the case. One thing to remember when buying locally is the political donor. For example in the US campaigns contributions are massive and these donations have more influence on the world than anything else (Clark 2004: 79) (Hobbes, 2015).

2.2 Five ethical approaches

There are numerous common themes to ethical shopping, such as fair-trade, boycotts and simply buying less. In this chapter the five most common and well-known approaches are being presented. Fair trade is the first approach. There are several different expressions to describe fair trade, such as alternative trade, responsible or ethical trade. Brinkmann and Pettie define fair trade as a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, which seeks greater equity in international trade, which contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers. Some refer fair trade as community trade in order to emphasize how the suggestion aims to support local communities. All of these different descriptions share the same basic insight, to advance the livelihoods of poor and marginalized workers in the developing countries by assuring them a proper salary and conditions in work.

Fair-trade pursues to authorize producers and inspire forming democratically run co-operations (Clark 2004, 16). It is important to remember that fair trade concept is different from the trademark and certification system Fairtrade, the concept has been around for a lot longer period of time. The Fairtrade was born in 1980's in the Netherlands in reaction to collapsed international coffee prices. Fairtrade has globally settled principles and the supply chain have been evaluated in order to be

sure that the regulations are being followed. These set regulations are devised to address the instability of power in trading relationships, unstable markets and the inequalities of conventional trade (Fairtrade 2016). However it is essential to remember that Fairtrade is not a company or brand but a certification system (Clark 2004, 19).

The second approach is the already mentioned boycotts. The possibility to decline to do business with a specific person, company or country has existed for a long time. Boycotts truly emerged in the 70's and 80's as consumers wanted to avoid companies doing business in apartheid South Africa and Nestlé for its reckless baby milk promotions in the third world countries (Clark 2004, 27-28). Currently boycotts are perhaps the most widely understood approach of ethical consumerism. Boycotts are not created only for a specific company or even country but also to specific products. It is relatively hard to precisely measure the goods boycotted on solely on ethical basis, yet only for the UK shoppers it is somewhere between two to three billion pounds per year in the year 1999 44 per cent of British public boycotted a product for its ethical reasons (Clark 2004, 28) (Attalla & Carrigan 2001)

Boycotts happen and are actually rather powerful tool to make a change, if only sufficient amount of people would boycott a certain product or company. (Hobbes, 2015) Consumers tend to impose a sanction on an unethical firm by refusing to buy its products, but will not reward an ethical firm by buying its products (Uusitalo & Oksanen 2004). According to Attalla and Carrigan 2001 there is evidence that companies do suffer commercially from boycotts; Shell is said to have lost from 20 to 50 per cent of their sales during the Brent Spar boycott and Nestle up to \$40 million in their boycott. Even though Attalla and Carrigan insure the power of boycotts Clark (2004) has less compliant approach, as he states that it is all in theory, and in practise it is quite difficult to measure their effectiveness (Clark 2004). For example there have been effective campaigns to avoid Exxon petrol or Nestlé and their milk formulas, without no effect on their sales. Even the Church of England started supporting boycotting Nestlé, yet nothing remarkable happened. Even though Clark (2004) may not be certain of the economic power of boycotts,

there are still some boycotts that work, such as in Burma in 2002 a boycott campaign against Swiss-based Lingerie retailer Triumph pulled out of Burma after a yearlong campaign (Clean Clothes Campaign, 2016). It is important to remember that boycotting is typically part of a larger movement. However, boycotts are excellent to bring the specific problems to public's awareness and knowledge. Though the effect they make could always be bigger and more influential (Clark 2004, 28-34).

The third approach is selective shopping. Selective shopping is shopping in a specific store and choosing the certain brands. The vast majority of our purchasing is done in mainstream shops and brands. The question rises, whether we should make ethical refinements between typical names, such as Nike and Adidas or Lindex and Kappahl? As it is made almost impossible to avoid mainstream shops, why not try to choose the most ethical option among them. Unfortunately it is rather difficult to measure whether this picking of a certain brand or store really makes a difference. It is also true when said that selective shopping would be make a preferable change if a store manager would be confronted instead of boycotting the store itself. (Clark 2004: 36-39)

The fourth approach buy less, is the one that will eventually save the earth, at least when generalizing it. Even though it is highly recommended to sustain ethical brands and products, we do face an essential problem on how we wests consume way too much. Firstly there is limited amount of resources and certain goods in the world and us buying so much will impact the availability of the same resource or good somewhere else. Secondly our consumption habits are unsustainable. To support the argument of buying less is to see what our consumption customs have done to the world. Climate change and rainforest clearance are just few examples. (Clark 2004:40-46)

The last and final approach is to buy local. Buying locally has frequently been the core standard of ethical shopping. Buying locally is for sure more environmentally and ecologically friendlier than buying globally. There are many reasons, rather simple one's. One of the main reasons is the transportation, there is a lot less

transportation fuels needed as well as spend when buying locally. Food industry is a particular industry which benefits from buying locally produced products. People are guaranteed to get their food fresh and from local farmers. (Clark 2004, 46-50) Another important factor in buying locally is the employment it creates in the local regions. Especially when buying ethical clothing, buying local and domestic, more jobs are being created with less impact in the supply chain. According to Sinivalkoinen jalanjälki if every Finnish person would buy every month with 10€ more of domestic goods and services, we would create 10 000 new jobs.

2.3 Ethical clothing and fashion

Defining ethical fashion is quite hard, due to the lack of existing industry standard. (Joergens 2006) Ethical fashion emerged after criticism of sweatshops used by Nike, Levi Strauss and Gap in 1980's. (Shen et al. 2012) Ethical fashion shares many common characteristics with fair trade, ecology and green fashion. The term ethical fashion can be defined as fashionable clothes that incorporate fair trade principles with sweatshop-free labor conditions while not harming the environment or workers by using biodegradable and organic cotton (Joergens 2006, 361). Ethical fashion can also signify a new approach of fashion with the sense of right and wrong or conscience. Ethical fashion is a growing market in western countries, only in Finland the growth of ethical and environmental fashion stores has more than doubled since 2008 (Lappalainen 2011). Even though the sector of ethical fashion is growing this niche ethical retailers in this area are still facing difficulties, for example, keeping up-to-date with fashion trends while supporting fair trade producers (Shaw et al 2006). Unfortunately even though the awareness and people's knowledge on the ethical fashion has increased in Finland, it has not increased so much that people would be buying ethical or locally produced clothes. (Haaksluoto 2015)

There is also the fact that how the fashion industry is categorized by fast changes in styles, novelty and mass consumption which is rather conflicting to the philosophies of ethical consumption (Shaw et al 2006). Shaw et al describe it clearly how clothing is an important consumption context, however, there is a lack

of readily available ethical alternatives and in many cases product information leaves consumers with an inability to communicate their ethical concerns effectively through 'purchase votes'. Shaw et al conclude their research by stating how consumers want to find ethical products on High Street in order to have easier accessibility but also being in fashion as well. This is something that we have been seeing with some of the lines in H&M as well as Lindex and KappAhl (Organic cotton, recycled materials and GOTS labels)(H&M 2016, Lindex 2016, KappAhl 2016).

2.4 Eco-labels and Certificates

In order to be sure that a piece of clothing is truly ethical and ecological it is worthy to have a certificate given by a third party. Progressively, consumers and businesses are being notified to fair trade concerns related to the clothing and fashion sector (Shaw et al 2006). Since the globalization of clothing industry has grown significantly the importance of certifications has also increased. While we cannot follow the production closely, with the help of certification organizations we are able to trust that the production process truly is ethical and ecological, wherever the product is produced. (Vihreät vaatteen) De Pelsmacker and Janssens (2007) point out a key issue on how ethical issues frequently suffer from low levels of credibility, confusion in the mind of consumers and a lack of information available to consumers. Sometimes the information may be wrong and not sufficient high-quality information regarding ethical products. It is also important to remember that there are differences among certificates and there is not yet a certificate for the entire production chain. In many cases a certain certificate only covers a certain part of the chain. (Vihreät Vaatteen)

Here are described some of the well known certificates and labels to recognize ecological and/ or ethical product according to Made By and Vihreät Vaatteen:



GOTS

GOTS is the world's leading processing standard for textiles made from organic fibres (GOTS 2016). This certificate defines high-level environmental criteria beside the whole organic textiles supply chain and obliges compliance with social criteria as well (GOTS 2016). Only naturally grown natural fibres (minimum 70%) and certified to one of the following farming and production standards; EC-Regulation 834/2007, NOP regulations or any (other) standard approved in the IFOAM Family of Standards can receive the GOTS-certification. All the used chemicals must meet certain environmental and toxicological criteria. (Made by 2016) (GOTS 2016)



Nordic Swan

The Nordic swan label, also known as Nordic Ecolabel is voluntary ecolabelling system, which evaluates product's impact on the environment through the total life cycle. Nordic Swan label guarantees that the entire production process achieves the requirements of environmentally friendliness, health effects, ethicality and quality. To receive the swan label, the product has to have a range of fibre criteria,

including cotton, wool, flax or leather, however if and when recycled fibres are used they do not need to fulfill the criteria. (Made by 2016)



Tested for harmful substances

according to Oeko-Tex Standard 100

STANDARD 100 by Oeko-Tex

According to Oeko-Tex the STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX® is a global dependable, independent testing and certification system for raw, semi-finished, and finished textile products at all processing levels, as well as accessory materials used (Oeko-Tex 2016). The STANDARD 100 by oeko-tex was introduced in 1992 as a label that guarantees numerous aspects of textile ecology. (Made by 2016) (Oeko-tex 2016) Oeko-Tex has other certificates as well, such as STeP by OEKO-TEX which covers the sustainable textile production and OEKO-TEX Standard 100plus which combines the OEKO-TEX Standard 100 and STeP by OEKO-TEX. (Made by 2016)



Global Recycle Standard

The Global Recycling Standards states us how much recycled materials were utilized in the product. It certifies that the production process in the entire supply chain has passed the appropriate steps to guarantee the integrity of the final product. In addition the label tackles issues affecting to environmental and social criteria. Global Recycling Standard is admin by Textile Exchange. (Made by 2016)



Fair Wear Foundation

Fair Wear Foundation is an international organization, which works in collaboration with companies and factories in order to improve the working conditions in clothing industry (Fairwear 2016). In order to make sure these better conditions are being followed, Fair Wear Foundation oversees production conditions through the entire production process on a yearly basis. Fair Wear Foundation has 80 member companies, which represent over 120 brands sold in more than 80 countries worldwide. (Fairwear 2016)



Bluesign Standard

Bluesign Standard is an independent industry initiative that was released in 2000 in the reaction to the demand for environmentally friendly textile products. (Made-by 2016) Bluesign Standard is built around five principles: resource productivity, consumer safety, air emission, water emission and occupational health and safety. What separates Bluesign Standard from many others is that it only certifies products and product ranges, not companies. It basically addresses three groups

along the textile supply chain: chemical suppliers, manufacturers and brands and retailers. (Made-by 2016)

Even though the labeling system and the different eco-labels are here to provide information and ensure consumers of the true ethicality of the product and its supply chain, sometimes the complexity and number of these different competing labeling programs, certifications and organization may in fact confuse consumers. It may weaken the credibility and even reduce consumer assurance. However, this also depends on consumers own knowledge and interest in ethicality in decision making, some find the labeling informative and useful, whereas others find it more confusing and would require more specific information and more controllable information in order to make them interested in fair trade and ethically produced products. (De Pelsmacker & Janssens 2007) However, it is said that as organic food products have become popular among people it is expected that consumers will extend the scope of their organic purchases to organic textiles as well (Shaw et al 2006).

3 BUYING BEHAVIOR

The consumer is the focus of all retail decisions thus it is essential to respect how buying decisions are being created (Cox & Brittain 1996:58). How consumers come to the decision on a purchased product, the brand, and from where to purchase it? What are the factors influencing these choices?

3.1 Types of buying decision behavior

The consumer decision process depends of the type of buying decision. (Kotler et al 2008, 261) Consumer buying behavior differs a lot whether you are purchasing spices, a piece of clothing or a new car. Generally the more multilateral the decision is, the more it needs buyer discussion (Kotler et al 2008, 261). However, nowadays that we have so much information on different products it can make it more difficult instead of helping to come up with a decision. Sometimes the burden of having too much information on the ethicality, quality and other factors seems too large to handle (Attalla & Carrigan, 2001). The figure below shows the different buying behavior types based on the level of involvement and extent of the brand differences.

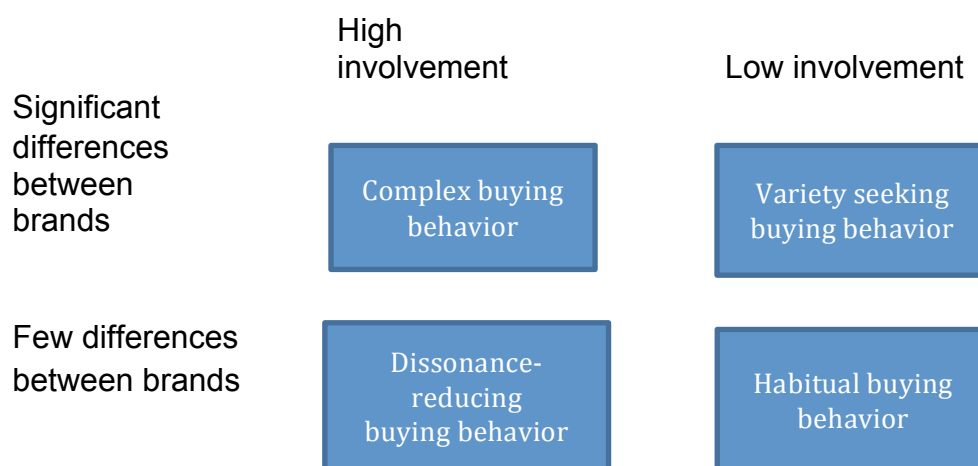


Figure 3. Four types of buying behavior (Kotler et al 2008: 262)

There are these four types of buying behavior which all vary from each other. The first type is complex buying behavior. As shown in the figure 3, complex buying behavior emerges in circumstances where there is high consumer involvement and significant differences between brands. For example a car buyer may not know the different attributes between SUV and four-wheel drive. In the buying decision process the buyer will go through learning process, which consists of product beliefs, attitudes as well as making a decisions. (Kotler 2008: 263)

Dissonance-reducing buying behavior occurs in situations typical of high involvement but with few observed differences between brands (Kotler 2008: 263). This happens when the buyer is involved with a costly, rare or uncertain purchase, but experiences only little or no dissimilarity between brands. For example, a buyer purchasing kitchen furniture could face a high involvement decision, due to the expensiveness and self-expressiveness of the product. Most probably buyers experience that most kitchen furniture in a given price range share similar attributes and qualities. In such cases the brand differences are not enormous and consumers could see around to learn what other options there exists, but still purchase rather quickly. (Kotler et al 2008: 263) In many cases customers primarily take measures towards reasonable pricing or handiness of a purchase. Post purchase distress is something that may occur after the purchase, especially if problems or disadvantages rise of the bought product. When such occurs, buyer's post-sales communications should provide customers with the needed support and ensure that they feel that they chose the best product and brand, in the future as well.

Habitual buying behavior occurs in conditions of low consumer involvement and few significant brand differences. This is the buying behavior type that appears relatively often on regularly purchased every day products. Such products are for example phone accessories and spices. This is the buying behavior type where customers have very little involvement, usually they just go to the store and reach for a brand. In case the chosen product is the same brand as previous, it is usually more of a habit rather than being a true brand loyal. (Kotler et al 2008: 263)

The fourth and last buying behavior type is variety-seeking buying behavior. This type occurs when there is low consumer involvement yet significant perceived brand differences occur (Kotler et al 2008: 264). In this buying behavior type brand changing happens a lot as the cost of switching is relatively low. The reason for brand switching often happens due to brand boredom or the willingness to try something new and different. It is typically not related to dissatisfaction with a certain brand, but rather of seeing and trying the other existing possibilities. Good examples of variety-seeking types of product are for example shoes and even clothes especially children's clothes. Customers tend to try different brands in these products, as they want to check the variety of products and whether another brand fits and pleases them better. (Kotler et al 2008)

Where in this particular study the main focus would be on the habitual and variety-seeking buying behavior, are the other buying behavior types possible as well. Clothes are never as expensive as houses or cars, but when talked about luxury items, higher involvement and significant differences among brands do exist and matter. When thinking of ethical clothes, there is more of a difference in brands yet it requires low involvement and thus variety-seeking buying behavior would be the most suitable method, theoretically thought at least.

3.2 The buying process

The buying process is essentially a decision process designed to provide solutions to problems (Cox & Brittain 1996, 58). Usually the buying process is divided into four to six different stages depending of the source, these stages are: felt of need/want, pre-purchase activity, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, user behavior and post-purchase feelings. (Kotler et al 2008) (Davis 2011) In this thesis the focus is on the stages before actual decisions, and thus the first three stages will be discussed more thoroughly.

As mentioned in the chapter three, searching information brings a lot of benefits but it may also cause confusion and costs for the consumers. The possible costs comprise of time, money, effort and the process itself delays the decision making. The benefits of the information search include satisfaction with the choice, cost savings and the feeling of making a upright decision. As there are numerous information sources available, consumers will get the best and most accurate information needed in order to make the best possible decision. Consumers need up-to-date and accurate information in order to make ethical choices. (Uusitalo & Oksanen 2004) Some consumers look for comprehensive information while others make their choices on the basis of rather light information. (Uusitalo & Oksanen 2004) Yet, as mentioned some find the existing information too scattered and hard to find where as others find ethical information easy to access and understand (De Pelsmacker & Janssens 2007)

The buying process begins with the recognition of the need, which is rather logical first step (Martin & Morich 2011). In this first stage the consumer becomes aware of a need, and then starts looking around for ways to fulfill that need (Martin & Morich 2011). The buyer recognizes the need or a problem (I am hungry, I need shoes) or reacts to market stimulus (for example passing by Starbucks and attracting by the aroma of coffee) (Riley 2012). Such a feeling or need can be defined as a problem and solutions are there to solve such problems. Kotler et al (2008) states the need can be activated by either an internal or an external stimulus. The internal stimuli is defined as one of the basic needs, such as hunger or thirst whereas the external stimuli is related to advertising, word of mouth or other external methods (Kotler et al 2008). Kotler et al (2008) has named these two stimuli as internal and external, whereas there are also other names by different sources. People are most attentive of visual stimulus, however the smell stimulus increases its importance according to some psychologist. (Kotler et al, 266)(Kotler & Keller 2012) Shaw et al describe it well how for many individuals in Western society the role of clothing is not only limited to functional needs; rather, it is suggested that needs for belongingness and self-esteem motivate individuals to seek fashionable clothing as a ways of gaining acceptance from peers and as a demonstration of social status (Easey, 2002).

The second stage, pre-purchase activity, is a phase where the information research and processing is done. This permits the consumer to move towards a purchase decision. (Cox & Brittain 1996, 59) Kotler et al (2008) assigns the second phase to information search and adds an additional phase to the process, evaluation of alternatives where as Cox & Brittain (1996) divides pre-purchase activity into four different sections. Firstly the consumers become conscious of products or services that fulfill their demand. Secondly the interest towards the product or service has risen and intensifies as more information is gathered. This all results in desiring to attain the product and ends with action, deciding the purchase. (Cox & Brittain 1996, 59) When the determination is resilient and a pleasing product is easy to get, the customer is expected to purchase it, whereas if it is strong not, a consumer may store the need into memory or begin information search again (Kotler et al 2008, 266). Such information could be searched from different sources such as family, friends and neighbors who are personal sources or commercial sources such as advertising, salespeople or the Internet. (Kotler et al 2008)

Evaluation of alternatives is the stage where consumer uses the existing information and knowledge to assess other brands in the set of choices. (Kotler et al 2008, 267) Kotler et al (2008) have divided the evaluation process into five different themes. Firstly not all of the consumers are trying to fulfill a need or are looking for specific benefits, which could be gained by buying a certain product or service (Kotler et al 2008, 269). Secondly customers have their own significant attributes and levels of importance. Different products have different attributes, while different consumers will be keen to different qualities and features. Thirdly all customers have created their own beliefs and images. Some brand attributes attract some consumers more than other. The fourth theme is that all buyers are expected to have useful function to all of the different attributes of the product. The fifth and final model is a belief that a consumer approaches different brands through an evaluation procedure. Generally one or more evaluation procedures have been used in a buying decision process, of course depending of the type of a decision. (Kotler et al 2008, 269)

Purchase decision is the third stage, it consists of not only one decision but a collection of them, and any one of them could result in a change of mind. (Cox & Brittain 1996, 60) Consumer may have come to decision of the product, brand and company, but by the time of purchase the opinion might have altered. Kotler et al (2008) affirm that attitudes of others may highly affect consumers purchase decision. Unexpected situational factors may be influence the purchase decision as well, such as expected family income, expected price or anticipated benefits of the product (Kotler et al 2008). Such factors arise more in the case of purchasing more expensive and riskier items. Generally the purchase transaction is the most important step, as it provides the last impression of the purchase. Whether you got good service, purchase was easy to make or there were no queuing etc. All of the mentioned factors effect the purchase decision, and lack of them could be a loss of sale or even cause a permanent loss of customer ship. (Cox & Brittain 1996, 60) The most important is the satisfaction of customers' needs. There is no faster way to spread a bad word of a company or service than word of mouth. (Cox & Brittain 1996, 60)

The last stages of buying process are called either user behavior and the post-purchase feelings or post purchase behavior as Kotler et al (2008) describes it. Usually disappointing performance or psychological factors are the ones that can create dissatisfactions to a product (Cox & Brittain 1996, 61). Psychological factors are for example the worry of wondering whether the bought product was the right one among all the other noteworthy items. In some cases there might not even be anything wrong with the product but due to the conflicting information by family and friends buyer might return the product and require a refund (Cox & Brittain 1996, 61). Nowadays majority of the companies have voluntary return policies for their products in order to satisfy their customers. When known there exists an opportunity of return and refund it often makes it easier for consumers to come up with a purchase decision. It is also common to provide customers with an extended guarantee times in order to give them more certainty. Martin and Morich 2011 summarise it well when they state that achieving customer satisfaction is believed to be important to getting repeat purchase and loyalty and this is what

these refund and return policies are trying to do for customers. Providing information of other satisfied customers or the popularity of the product usually reassures the customer, for example having markings such as 'Best Seller', 'Brand leader' or 'Award winner 2016' usually gives reassurance. As mentioned, the negative word of mouth travels much faster than positive word of mouth. It is also essential to remember that post-purchase feelings are not only relevant to post-purchase satisfaction (Cox & Brittain 1996: 61). The post-purchase feelings are additionally important due to the potential loss of sale, in case the customer is in fear of making bad decision.

3.3 Factors influencing behavior

There is a wide range of different factors, which influence our buying behavior. According to Egan 2007 and Cox & Brittain 1996, the factors are internal and external, whereas Kotler divides the factors a bit differently. He divides the factors into cultural, social, personal, psychological and the buyer categories. Another way of looking at factors influencing one's buying behavior could be with the use of Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) of Icek Ajzen (2006). His theory could be modified to tell us about the factors influencing behavior. With the help of TPB model, the factors would be one's own beliefs, beliefs of the closed ones and outside norms and barriers. TPB model will be more thoroughly discussed in the chapter 3.5.

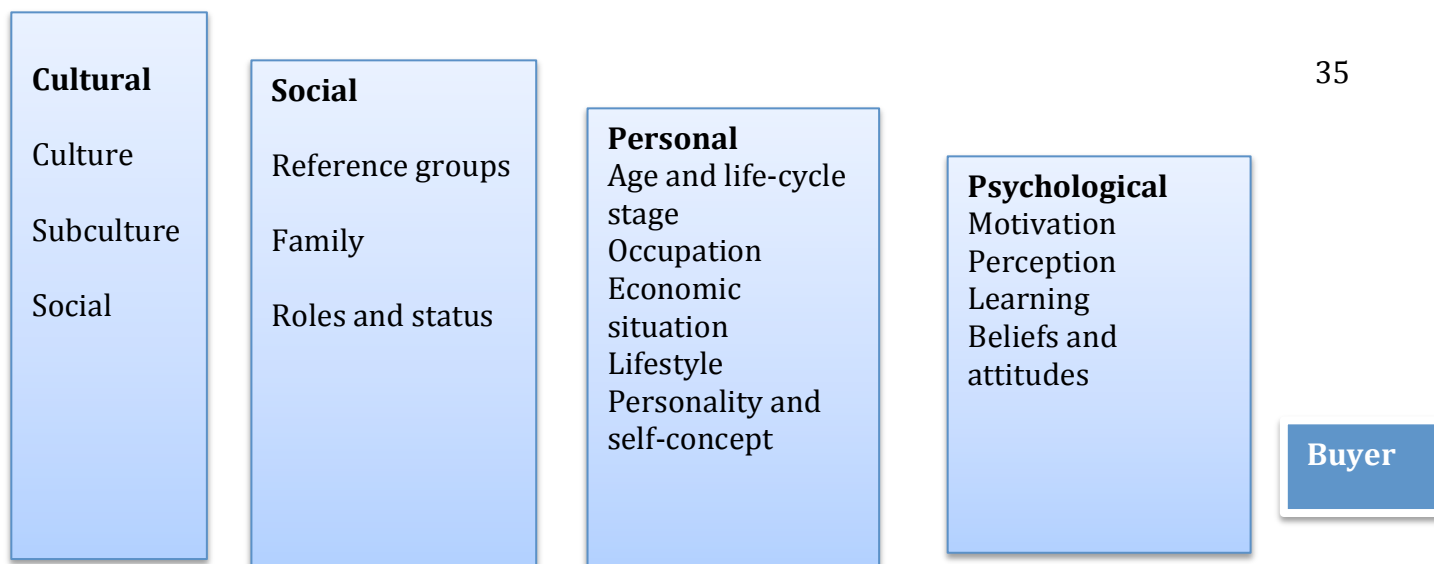


Figure 4. Factors influencing consumer behavior (Kotler et al 2008: 240)

Egan (2007) and Cox & Brittain (1998) define internal factors to be attitudes, perceptions, learning and motivation, the same time Kotler et al (2008) locates these factors under a category called psychological factors. As Kotler et al (2008) describe cultural, social and personal factors, Egan (2007) and Cox & Brittain (1998), simply place all of these three themse under the same theme, external factors.

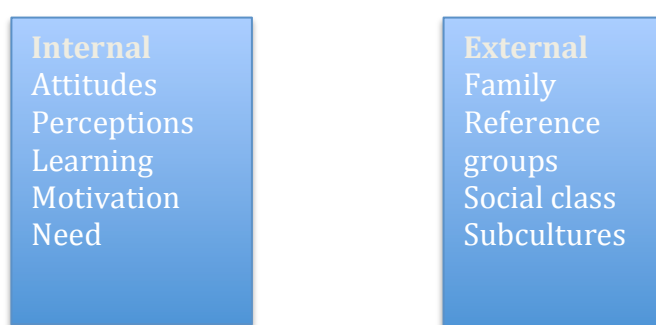


Figure 5. Internal and External factors influencing consumer behavior (Kotler et al 2008)

3.3.1 Internal

The internal or psychological category, depending how we want to call it comprises of five different factors. The first factor, attitude, describes ones rather

constant evaluations, feelings and tendencies towards an object or idea (Kotler et al 2008: 260) Whereas Cox & Brittain (1996) think an attitude is a learned proclivity to answer in a constantly favourable or unfavourable way with regard to a specific object or idea. Attitudes can make people like or dislike them, as well as move towards or away from them whereas perceptions vary from one to another. For example two people in the same situation with the same motivation could behave totally differently, due to their different perceptions of the situation. Kotler et al (2008) and Egan (2007) state that people can create varied perceptions of the same stimulus as a result of three perceptual processes: selective attention, selective distortion and selective retention (also known selective exposure). Selective attention is defined as the propensity to screen out most of the knowledge to which we are exposed, whereas the selective distortion is the tendency to adapt the material for personal matters. Selective retention is the tendency where people retain only partially the information given to them, the info retained typically endorses their existing attitudes or beliefs. (Kotler et al 2008:259)

Learning can be thought of as modification of behavior based on a prior experience (Cox & Brittain 1996: 64). Majority of the knowledge of certain products or services known by consumers is gathered through studying. According to some studies there are two principal types of learning, behavioral (or experiential) and cognitive. In behavioral learning, the learning is seen mostly as unconscious whereas in cognitive as a conscious mental activity. Motivation is seen as the factor what moves people (Egan 2007: 70)

3.3.2 External

As previously discussed, both Egan (2007) and Cox & Brittain (1998) have divided the factors influencing consumer behavior into these two categories, internal and external. Kotler et al (2008) have divided the external into more detailed groups such as cultural, social and personal. Even though the categories are named differently they consist of the same factors. According to Kotler et al 2008, culture is the most fundamental factor due to one's wants and beliefs and as ones behavior is mostly studied or learned. Culture is also said to be the set of essential

values, thoughts, wants and actions, which are learned from family and other important influencers. Culture consists of multiple subcultures. Subculture could be described as a separate cultural group, which occurs as a specific section within a larger and more compound society (Cox & Brittain 1998). Social class is something relatively permanent and ordered set of concepts in a society, whose members share similar values, interests and behavior. The most usual social classes are upper middle and lower social class. Social class is not determined by just one factor it is the combination factors such as income, occupation, education etc. Even though the cultures and societies are different everywhere, some type of social class structure exists universally.

Reference groups are groups of people, which can strongly influence on person's attitudes or behavior, directly or indirectly (Kotler et al 2008). These reference groups consist of primary and secondary groups. Some of the groups are primary groups, which include family, friends and neighbours. The rest of the groups are secondary, these groups are more reserved and the ones one has less interaction with. These groups could be such as religious groups, professional associations or trade unions. According to Cox & Brittain (1998) family is the most powerful influencer, depending whether it is talked about husband/wife, children or parents. For example in this particular thesis, husband/wife might be the strongest influencer or in the case where there is an older child, the child may have a say.

3.4 Ethical Beliefs

In the majority of the consumer behavior models the focus is on one's decision process with the respect to the purchase, usage and disposition of the product, lacking entirely the ethical component (Vitell et al 1991). Even though the models have evolved in the last few decades, there are still many studies trying to test how consumer ethics affects green buying intention, yet these studies do not actually test ethical perceptions of consumers' questionable practices (i.e., consumer ethical beliefs) (Lu et al 2013). Consumer ethical beliefs are described as ethical attitudes toward questionable consumer practices these beliefs vary

based on different attributes such as age, gender, and country of origin (Vitell 2003). Lu et al (2013) have created a simple model in order to examine the effects of these different attributes on consumer ethical beliefs and which later on impact on green buying intention.

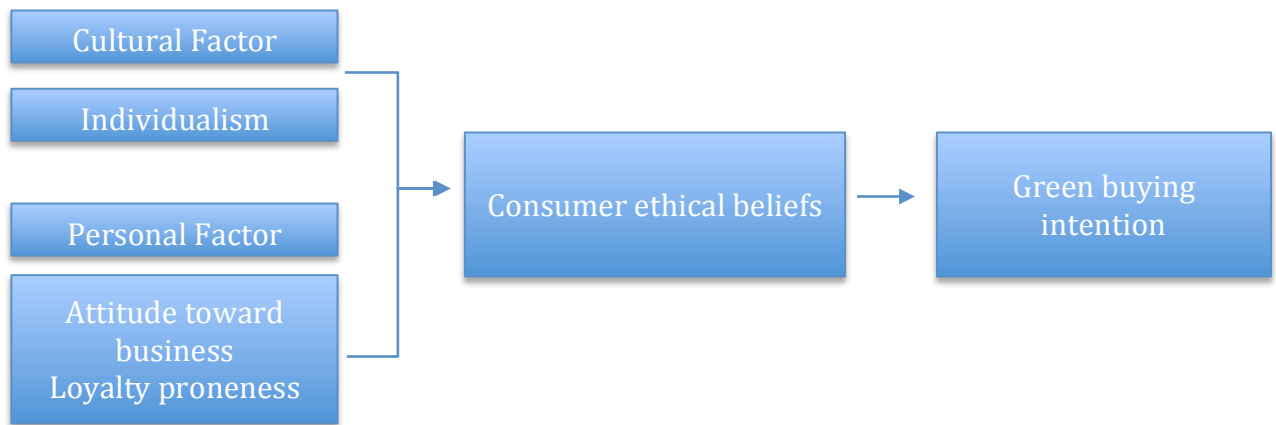


Figure 6. Effects of individualism and personality on consumer ethical beliefs (Lu et al 2013)

Vitell (2003) highlights in his research that cultural and personal characteristics are a significant influence in consumer ethical beliefs and decision-making at the individual level. Besides these above-mentioned attributes, there are others which may influence one's beliefs as well. According to Vitell and Muncy (2005), consumer attitudes toward business are connected to their ethical beliefs regarding consumer circumstances. All in all, there are both internal and external factors influencing on one's ethical beliefs and action.

3.5 Conscious Consumer

There is a huge gap in consumer's intention and actual behavior in the field of ethics (Carrington et al 2010). Even though the intention of a purchase is ethical the actual purchase rarely ends up being the most ethical choice. A strong ethical belief is said to influence positively the ethical intention and so the actual ethical behavior (Vitell 2003). Attalla and Carrigan (2001) affirm that the statements where only occasionally firm's ethical behavior will encourage a consumer to buy their

product. According to Carrington et al (2010), this group of intentions-behavior is important to the researchers and industry yet it is far poorly understood. It is also important to remember the fact that the market for ethical clothing, is limited and thus an individual's desire to deliver their personal values and beliefs through ethical choices may be rather difficult (Shaw et al 2006). This leads to the fact that although consumers may state that they want and intend to avoid sweatshop clothing, in reality their words and actions inconsistency may arise when they attempt to actually purchase such items (Shaw et al 2006).

As the theoretical framework of the decision making of ethical consumers is in its early stages an alternative option to investigate the behavior of conscious consumer could be the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Carrington et al 2010). As an alternative of relying on the overall valuation or usefulness of a product or service, this concept focuses on the specific consumer behavior of interest (Ajzen 2015). In this theory three main themes are being investigated in order to understand consumers' intention and even behavior. These three topics are behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs.

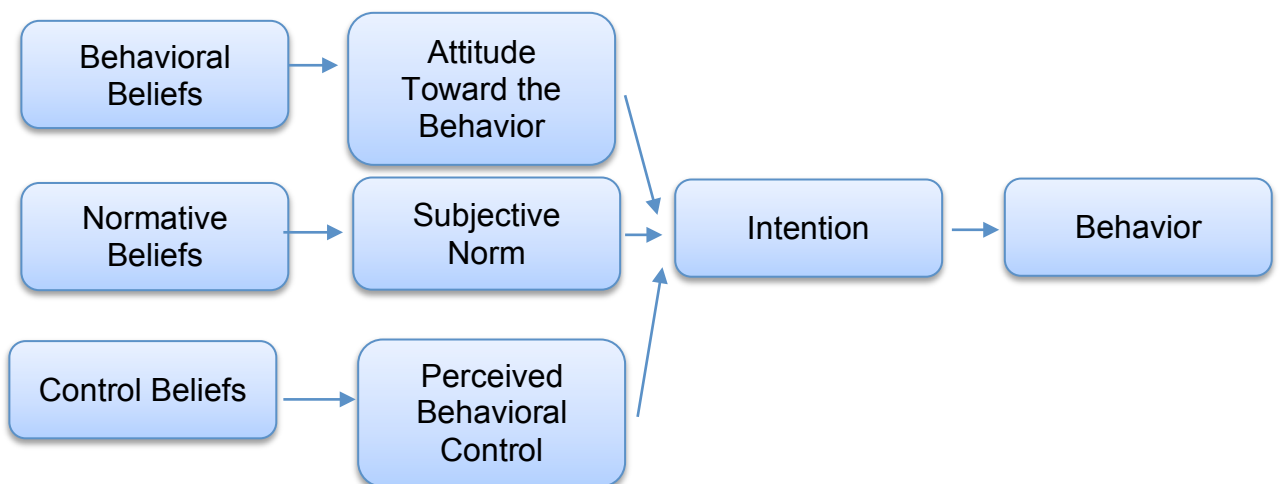


Figure 7. Icek Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (2006)

Like many others, TPB is built on a core cognitive progression where belief determine attitudes, attitudes lead to intentions and intentions inform behavior

(Carrington et al 2010). The first belief or consideration is behavioral beliefs and it refers to a seeming positive or negative concerns of performing a behavior and the subjective value of evaluation of the consequences (Ajzen 2015). In their combination the behavioral beliefs that are already accessible in the memory lead to the development of a positive or negative attitude toward behavior (Ajzen 2006). Attitudes are created by individual's beliefs about the costs and benefits of behavioral performance (White & Hyde 2013).

The second consideration, normative beliefs is the perceived expectations and behaviors of important individuals or groups, combined with the person's motivation to comply with the referents in question (Ajzen 2006, 2015) In other words the beliefs and perception of individuals spouse, friends, family as well as supervisor and colleagues. These considerations are called normative beliefs and the normative beliefs that are readily accessible in memory combine to produce a perceived social pressure or subjective norm with respect to performing the behavior. And the combination of the persons beliefs whether the important others beliefs would or would not support their behavior (Ajzen 2006, 2015) (White & Hyde 2013).

The third type of consideration, control beliefs, is concerned with the perceived presence of factors that may influence a person's ability to perform a behavior. Together with the perceived power of these factors to facilitate or interfere with behavioral performance, readily accessible control beliefs produce a certain level of perceived behavioral (Ajzen 2006, 2015) In other words whether the perceived behavioral control is based on a person's beliefs about specific barriers that might occur to stop them performing a certain behavior (Ajzen 1991) (White & Hyde 2013). In this case, whether there is an outside barrier to buy ethically or green.

The TPB model shows us how someone's beliefs or the beliefs of their closed ones affect your intentions and behavior. In ethical context we especially want to learn how ones ethical beliefs and the ethical beliefs of others impact intentions and behavior. How do the barriers influence on one's intention and whether or not the possible behavior is sum of different beliefs. Yet even though the theory is

informative and widely used tool in investigating ethical consumer, there is a gap in between consumer's sayings and actions (Carrington et al 2010), Since the TPB model only investigates the possible intention, and it does not always give the truth. As mentioned, in many cases people say one thing and act the other.

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

In this chapter methods of the research, data collection and how the study was conducted is introduced. The first chapter describes the research approach and design as well as the case itself. The second part of chapters defines data collection methods and data analysis methods. Conclusively reliability and validity of the study are measured.

4.1 Research Approach and Design

Qualitative research method was chosen for this research. According to Hirsjärvi et al (2009) the purpose of the qualitative research is to have a complete approach and data is collected in real-life circumstances. The criterion for qualitative research is describing real- life phenomena, which are complex in nature. Other typical criteria's for qualitative research are the specific target group selection and using people as the instrument of information. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 161) Saunders et al (2009) state that studies can be described in three different ways: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. The nature of this research is exploratory, since the main focus is on discovering new ideas. The three main principles of conducting exploratory research is the search on the literature, interviewing experts on the subjects and conducting focus group interviews (Saunders et al 2009).

4.2 Target population and Data Collection Methods

The data for this research is collected by using both primary and secondary data collection methods. According to Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008, 77) secondary data is already existing empirical data that exists somewhere, this includes both textual and visual materials. The sources of secondary data consists of, business journals, scholarly articles as well as theoretical literature publications and books, collected from reliable sources such as Emerald or EBSCO. Interviews or surveys perform as primary data, as it is a practical way of collecting information, which

cannot be found in a published form. (Eriksson & Kovanen 2008, 80-81) As the empirical part of the research is qualitative and aims to give answers whether ethics have a role in the buying behavior of children's clothing.

4.3 Data Analysis Methods

As the popularity of interviews in qualitative interview is overwhelming, Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) have listed three main interview methods to collect primary data in qualitative research as structured and standardized, guided and semi-structured and unstructured. Other possible methods are, for example, participant observation or focus groups. (Eriksson and Kovalainen 2008)

The plan is to create semi-structured interviews, which are collected face-to-face and through emails. According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008,) guided and semi-structured interview has prepared outline of topics, issues or themes, but variation in wording or order of questions is possible as well as open form of dialog and stimulated discussion. Many qualitative interviews fall into this guided and semi-structured interviews as it can study both, 'what and 'how' questions. (Eriksson and Kovalainen 2008, 82) (Brunk 2010) The interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed in order to get a thorough analysis of the held interviews.

4.4 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity must be considered in order to assess how well the research was conducted. Reliability is fundamentally concerned with issues of consistency of measures. (Bryman 2007, 162) Whether the study is reliable, repeatability of the results will be evaluated as well as the risk of participant error, one changing their mind. (Bryman 2007) Validity meaning whether or not a measure of concept really surveys that measured concept. (Bryman 2007, 164) Validity is achieved by purposefully well-chosen respondent and non-forcing interviews (Stenbacka, 2001).

Semi-structured interviews are part of assuring the validity of this research, as the questions in the interviews will be open-ended and thus respondents are given the freedom to give any type of answers. Also every participant is given the freedom to decline answering to the interview or questions in it.

5 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In this part of the study the results of the interviews are being discussed. The data analysis based on these qualitative interview results. As mentioned, the face-to-face interviews will be firstly transcribed in order to get reliable and effective analysis. The results are divided into main thoughts based on the themes of the interviews and topics presented in the theoretical part of the study. The semi-structured interview questions can be found in the appendix 1.

5.1 Overview of the semi-structure interviews

The sample consists of mothers and fathers living in Finland with kids under the age of 8. The interviewees were aged between 26-34, with children the age of 5 months to 7 years. The reason for choosing parents with kids under 8 years is the effect and impact that kids older than 8 have on their clothing choices and their parents buying behavior. In total there were 10 interviews held, eight of them were held face to face, where six of them were mothers and two of them were fathers. Nine of the ten interviewees were Finnish and one was American, this also meant that nine of the ten interviews were held in Finnish and one in English. The remaining two interviews were conducted via email. The number of interviews remained at ten as the data became saturated. The duration of the face-to-face interviews varied between 10 to 25 minutes. The interviewees are presented and briefly described in the table 1. The table consists of their Id in this study, age, age of children, education as well as the gender of the interviewee and time of the interview.

Table 1 Summary of the interviewees

Id	Age	Age of children	Education	Gender	Date
A	28	1 and 4 year old	BBA	Female	18.10.2016
B	29	1 and 4 year old	Comprehensive school, Student	Male	18.10.2016
C	31	1 and 3 year old	MSc, on nursing leave	Female	24.10.2016
D	30	6 months old	MSc, on maternity leave	Female	28.10.2016
E	26	6,5 months old	Bachelor of Social Services, on maternity leave	Female	2.11.2016
F	30	7 years	Student	Female	2.11.2016
G	34	10 months old and 3 years old	Physiotherapist, on nursing leave	Female	2.11.2016
H	32	5 months old and 3 years old	Nurse, on maternity leave	Female	5.11.2016
I	27	3, 5 and 6 year old	BBA	Female	6.11.2016
J	30	3, 5 and 6 year old	Mechanical engineer	Male	6.11.2016

The purpose of the interviews was to examine how parents perceive and behave in ethical terms when buying children's clothing. How ethics and ethicality is part of their lives and buying habits. In order to find out how these topics matter and have influence on one's behavior the interviews were held in three different cities among parents from different educational backgrounds.

In order to find out the actual and current behavior interviewees were asked not to get familiar with the topic, so that their answers would not be influenced by what they had read and studied. The purpose was to find out their real behavior instead of their intentions. The interviews were held in each interviewee's home, in order to make them as comfortable as possible. Few of them were done through email since there was no suitable time to meet the interviewees. The interviews were divided in to three main categories, buying behavior, ethics and ethical consumerism and ethical fashion and eco-labels. The main challenge in the interviews was the occasional disturbances of interviewee's children, yet that was expected when setting the interview at interviewees' homes.

5.2 Ethics and Ethical Consumerism

Since the interviewees were not presented with any introductory to the topic, the goal was to find out their general thoughts on ethics and buying behavior and then move on to children's clothing and ethics what comes to buying behavior in that segment.

5.2.1 Ethical consumption and ethical way of thinking

This segment of the interview started with the question how does the interviewee experience or see the ethical consumption. For majority of the interviewees ethical consumption is important or has become important in the recent years.

I try to avoid unethical consumption. I do not buy clothes that are made with child labor. I buy almost everything from domestic companies, products that are produced in Finland. I have really fallen I love with online stores and flea markets. (Interviewee I)

To be honest, I have not thought about this earlier. Just in the resent years, maybe it has become more visible. I think it is important, and if I could I would buy clothes produced and manufactured in Finland by Finnish companies for my child and me. Or stuff in general. (Interviewee E)

Two of the interviewees said that they do not think about ethical consumption in their own actions at least when it comes to its ethicality, however when discussed more about the topic, they realized that they do act ethically even though they did not think of it initially.

I do not really think about it. However I would not buy any products with rabbits fur. I think more of animal rights than child labor. But I do know that if there is news about some company acting really unethically, I do pay attention. (Interviewee D)

Personally I do not really think where a certain cloth came from or who made it. However, I only buy for need, not just because it is nice. (Interviewee F)

Two of the interviewees found ethical consumption really important, however hard at sometimes to follow.

I find ethical consumption important, my wallet just does not like it. (Interviewee H)

When asked examples of ethical consumption, for many they were labor rights, including sweatshops and child labor. Material choices, environmental impact and durability were also mentioned multiple times. Such factors were mentioned which were also discussed in the chapter 2.

For me ethical consumption is consumption where human rights and labor rights are respected, where environmental impact is low, recyclability is high and the use of non-toxic materials is shown. (Interviewee G)

Child labor is the first that comes to my mind. It would be hypocritical to buy clothes for my kids that are made by other kids. What would their working conditions be? (Interviewee B)

When asked about ethical consumption in general, the interview moved more towards to the ethical thinking. When asked how the ethical way of thinking affects ones buying decision, majority replied that it does affect, however the level of impact varied. For many the ethical way of thinking emerged from companies' actions, that if a business was in public due to their unethical actions, they would not support the company.

I would say that right now the ethical way of thinking shows in my decisions if a bigger company has made mistakes what comes to acting ethically, I would boycott them. (Interviewee B)

If there were a bigger unethicallity scandal of a company, like Nike faced few years ago, I would boycott it, like I boycotted Nike back then. (Interviewee C)

Many saw the ethical way of thinking related to recycling and reusing of clothes or products as well as also supporting domestic companies and manufacturers.

Ethical way of thinking affects my behavior, I recycle clothes and other products, and I also buy them as used. (Interviewee E)

I do recycle clothes. I rarely buy used clothes since I have three girls. I usually buy new for the eldest and the younger ones reuse them. (Interviewee I)

I think buying locally produced is way of thinking ethically. (Interviewee C)

One of the interviewees also stated that in case of having to choose from two products where one is purely unethical and the other is ethical, she would go with the ethical choice. However, it was also stated by two interviewees that in many cases the prices are higher, and when buying children's clothing the price is unfortunately usually the one factor that matters.

As one of the interviewees had a relatively different background, being American, it was interesting to see whether this interviewee experiences ethical way of thinking and ethics in general differently. In general there were not any differences, only this question showed some differences compared to other interviewees answers.

Since I have lived in Haiti and seen when you do not have money or food, I buy what is needed, I do not spend for things that are not necessary. (Interviewee J)

5.2.2 Ethical beliefs

When interviewees were asked about their ethical beliefs and views, the most common initial response was no, I do not have any beliefs. However, after discussing more about how people see it and how it could be described, majority of the interviewees realized that they do actually have an ethical belief or beliefs,

or at least certain views of the topic. The most common ethical beliefs were related to recycling and animal testing.

I would say that I have no ethical beliefs, except that you have to recycle, for example food waste, paper etc. (Interviewee C)

Recycling, besides the basic household waste, also clothes. (Interviewee A)

I do recycle household waste and clothes. I always recycle old clothes, I take them to Kontti of UFF, but never sell them. I also never use animal tested products, nor neither does my child. (Interviewee F)

I do believe in recycling, and nowadays technology has made it really easy to recycle pretty much everything. (Interviewee J)

Some of the interviewees had general beliefs in their lives, however not particularly ones concerning ethics, or that at least they thought.

I am a Christian, but that really does not have much to do with ethics? (Interviewee E)

I am not sure, I think I have but they are not necessary ethical? Hmm, in general let the kids be kids and treat other with the same respect you would like to be treated. (Interviewee H)

5.2.3 Companies' ethicality

As known, the ethicality of a company does often effect consumers perception and the image of the company, it was important to ask how a certain company's ethicality impact on interviewees buying decision. For approximately half of the interviewees felt that companies' ethicality does impact and the second half said that it really does not have an effect unless there is a bigger unethicity scandal where the company is related to.

I have not really thought about it, however if I know there is something really wrong with company's ethics I do not buy from that company. (Interviewee B)

Company's ethics do not really impact my decision, unless there is blatant unethical case happening, and then I have for example boycotted the company. (Interviewee G)

I have not really look into this so I cannot say that it does effect, it could be nice to say that it does effect. (Interviewee D)

It was also mentioned that interviewees do not necessarily search for information whether a certain company is ethical or not. But in case they come a cross with something it does have an effect.

It does effect a lot if I just no about it. For example few years ago I watched a documentary of Lidl's actions and how they are exploiting child labor and sweatshops. I have not bought clothes or other products from there since. Occasionally food, but nothing else. (Interviewee H)

In case I am looking for something new, for example I was looking for new sneakers online and I did read about the company and their operations as well. How does it promote and market them. (Interviewee C)

When asked how consumer may affect companies' ethicality, majority of the interviewees started to think whether consumers might actually be able to effect on it. Majority thought that consumers may affect companies' ethicality and the way they are able to do it, boycott was almost unanimously mentioned.

If consumers would not buy the products produces unethically, the production would stop in the end. (Interviewee D)

Of course consumers can affect, there is one word for it, boycott. (Interviewee J)

Even though boycott was the way majority thought of, there was also some disbelief to its affectivity as well.

This of course depends of the company's size, but in general the size of boycott should be rather large that it would really show and make a difference. (Interviewee F)

Also feedback was considered to be a way for consumers to have an affect on companies' ethicality

Now a days it is so easy to give feedback through for example internet or Facebook, I would like to think that if and when enough feedback is given it would actually make changes to company's activities. (Interviewee C)

The affectivity of consumers' actions was asked from the interviewees, and the majority thought that in order to consumers to have a real say, it requires more than just one person to boycott or give the feedback to the company. However the social media has made it a lot easier to make your voice heard and at least try to impact. Unless talked about small companies, then even feedback of an individual might make a difference.

The power of word of mouth is huge on social media, and if it is constantly not taken into consideration, there will be consequences. (Interviewee B)

The boycott will affect a lot, if enough of people boycott. (Interviewee J)

I believe it can be very effective if enough people are joining the force. Monosodium glutamate is a good example of when there are enough people protesting, it has disappeared or shown properly on products. (Interviewee H)

All in all, interviewees felt that they do have a say and as long as there are enough people with the same thought things could actually change. They may not always happen quickly and getting the message through to a multinational company is a

lot harder than to a small local entrepreneur, yet the power of social media is strong and getting even stronger. The power of consumers is better not to underestimate.

5.3 Buying Behavior

The interview moved to finding out interviewees buying behavior and habits. The most common among all of the interviewees was the reason to buy clothes. When asked about describing their buying behavior when purchasing children's clothing, nine out of the ten interviewees said to buy clothes when needed. For some of the interviewees impulse buying was more common than for others. Other interviewees tend to buy more clothes, which are on sale for the future purposes as well.

Sometimes when I am already shopping and I see cute and nice looking clothes I tend to buy them, even if they were not really necessary. (Interviewee D)

I sometimes fall into impulse buying, but mostly when something, which really is needed, is on sale. (Interviewee B)

Two of the interviewees said that they are deliberative when buying clothes and usually proactive. For some interviewees reused and recycled clothes were more important part of their buying behavior than for others.

My buying behavior is deliberative and proactive. I only buy clothes for need and especially when buying something new I consider the functionality of the clothing and its features. I also tend to buy lasting and higher-class clothes that I am able to reuse them from firstborn to lastborn. (Interviewee G)

I would say that I am considerable I am not buying constantly. And before I buy, I ask from my friends who have kids whether they have something that could be reused, especially outdoor clothing or clothes that are more expensive. And if no one has, then I head to stores. (Interviewee E)

Domestic and localness was also mentioned by two of the interviewees.

I favor domestic and ecological clothes. (Interviewee I)

I buy quite a lot from domestic small dressmakers, who promote their products on Facebook pages. As a stay at home mom I like to support small entrepreneurs as much as finances allows. (Interviewee C)

The second question on interviewees buying behavior was about where they purchase the clothes and why. Approximately half of the interviewees said to buy mostly from chain stores such as H&M and Lindex and supermarkets like Prisma.

I buy quite a lot from these basic chain stores such as Lindex, Kappahl and some from H&M. These are the ones where I can buy clothes for relatively cheap prices. (Interviewee E)

Basic clothes I buy usually from Prisma. So called more fashionable clothes I buy from 'real' clothing stores like H&M and Lindex. Normally the clothes that are used in daycare are from Prisma and more special and party clothes are from H&M. (Interviewee A)

Few of the interviewees said they tend to buy from flea markets as much as possible. Especially for the smaller children, for toddlers and older children finding clothes, which are in good condition, may be difficult.

I buy indoor clothes from flea markets in case they are in good condition and reasonably priced. However, since it can be difficult to find clothes in good condition for my first born I utilize sales from chain stores. (Interviewee G)

I buy from flea markets, it's cheaper and more ecological. (Interviewee H)

When asking why the interviewees do their buying in certain stores or brands, one of the most common response was related to the fit of the clothing.

The reason why, is mainly due to design, the style and how it fits my children. Also good prices and quality affects. (Interviewee C)

The reason I buy from for example H&M is that the sizes and models were really good for our baby when he was just born. This is also the reason why I now buy from Kappahl and Lindex, the models and sizing is perfect for our child. (Interviewee B)

Another factor that was mentioned by interviewees was the price. The reason for their chosen stores was not only the fit of the clothing but also the price. Also for many of the interviewees the basic indoor clothing was bought from chain-stores and outdoor and other special occasion clothing was bought perhaps from more expensive stores and with more quality

Why we buy from Prisma is the staff discount and bonus system. I buy from H&M more when there are sales, such as buy three for the price of two. (Interviewee A)

The basic clothes I buy from chain-stores and then occasionally something more expensive from different brands. (Interviewee D)

I buy from the basic chain stores, these are the ones that are cheap. And then sometimes I buy something, an individual clothing for example from Nosh, this Finnish company. (Interviewee E)

One of the interviewees has specific brands where she buys clothes.

I buy from Gugguu, Vimma and Papu. I would buy everything there, but since they do not sell for example underwear and socks, I have to buy them somewhere else. (Interviewee I)

All in all when discussing with interviewees about their buying behavior, the thoughts that majority of them shared was that clothes are bought when needed, some buy it from the chain store which can be found in each city where as others prefer to buy online from domestic companies or local sewers. For many the basic

everyday clothes are from flea markets or chain stores such as H&M, Kappahl and Lindex, whereas the more special occasion and outdoor clothing are given more thought and money. What comes to age or income level it did not seem to have much of an effect.

5.4 Ethical buying behavior in children's clothing

After talking about general thoughts of ethics, ethical consumerism and buying behavior with the interviewees, it was time to shift the focus back to buying of children's clothing and the ethics of it. The first question in this part of the interview was about how would the interviewees describe the ethicality when purchasing children's clothing. This question brought different thoughts to the interviewees, thoughts from child labor to chemically free products.

It is important that children are not the ones who have made the clothes and working conditions should be good. I also find the origin of the materials important. (Interviewee H)

It would be bizarre to buy from companies' that have used child labor for making clothes for children. Eradicating child labor would be important. (Interviewee B)

For me buying ethical children's clothing means buying products which are chemically safe, durable and good quality which can be reused by other kids. (Interviewee G)

Few of the interviewees also pointed out that as kids are growing rather fast and since new clothes needs to be bought somewhat often, it would be important to buy clothes that really are needed and which are less harmful for the environment.

Since for a growing child it is necessary to buy clothes rather often, it would be important to remember to buy really the ones which are needed and from ethically conscious companies. (Interviewee E)

For me it is important to buy as ecologically friendly as possible and domestically produces clothes. (Interviewee I)

Few of the interviewees said that they do not define it any differently when buying children clothes versus anything else. They want the companies to act the same whether they are selling frying pans or clothes for kids. Companies' actions should always be ethical, no matter what they are selling. And vice versa, the actions of the consumer should also be as ethically important when buying children's clothes or cosmetics.

I would say that the ethicality of purchasing children's clothing should be and is the same as buying anything else. The same things matter when buying children's clothing as for any other product. (Interviewee C)

For me the ethicality when buying children's clothing is measured the same way as how I purchase my own clothes for example. Buy what is really needed and recycle it. (Interviewee F)

I also feel that companies should have some responsibility what come to for example their supply chain that could have to environmental friendliness, even if it would mean more costs. (Interviewee C)

The second question concerned about how important it is to buy ethically produced clothing and whether it has an impact on interviewees' own buying behavior. For all of the interviewees it was important to buy ethically produced clothing, yet it is not always that simple. Many of the interviewees found the ethically produced clothing more expensive than non-ethically.

I found it very important, an especially in food we buy ethically produced items. The problem with children's clothing and clothing in general is the high price. I would love to buy locally produced clothes made by small entrepreneurs from eco cotton, however with the same amount of money you would get six pieces from H&M etc. (Interviewee H)

How it shows in my buying behavior really quite depends of my financial situation. If finances would allow purchasing everything for example from small local entrepreneurs, I would, but right now it is not possible. I buy as much as possible.
(Interviewee C)

I have thought it that way that I rather buy one with better quality than many cheaper and not so good quality clothes, which may not be that ethical either.
(Interviewee E)

One of the interviewees pointed out that it can be rather tricky to really know whether one is buying ethical products, since there has even been cases where companies are not really aware of what type of supplier their partners are using.

I would not buy clothes from child labor factories, yet it is rather wide picture since not all the steps are shown and you might end up buying anything since you do not know all the steps. (Interviewee J)

One of the interviewees was also wondering whether there is actually difference for the companies' and their employees when producing ethically.

I find ethically produced clothing important and would buy it a lot more if the pricing would not be that much higher compared to the 'non ethical' clothes. I have been just wondering is someone getting more money somewhere in the supply chain or somewhere else. Just to make sure that the business and creed do not beat the real reason behind ethical clothing. (Interviewee B)

As in other questions so in this the reuse and recycling was mentioned. Whether the clothing is reused by other children or recycled correctly, there are steps that should be thought of. There is a way to recycle clothes like there is a way to recycle bottles.

For me unethical is buying children's clothing more than is needed and that they are not correctly recycled. Also buying everything new is unethical for me. (Interviewee G)

All in all, ethical buying behavior in children's clothes brought many aspects and views from the interviewees. Child labor was one of the most common terms mentioned when talking of ethicality of children's clothing as well as the material choices and the quantity of clothes. Even though kids need new clothes rather often, some sense can be given to the material and choices of the origin. In this section of the interview the pricing of ethically produced clothing arose. It is widely seen among the interviewees that ethically produced clothes are more expensive than not so ethically.

5.5 Ethical Fashion and Eco-labels

The last section of the interview handled ethical fashion and eco-labeling. As we had discussed with the interviewees about their general thoughts of ethics, ethical buying behavior and ethical buying behavior, it was time to move towards ethical and eco-friendly fashion and labeling systems.

5.5.1 Ethical Discussion

This section began by asking the interviewees how much they are aware of current ethical fashion trends and is it something that they follow. Nine out of ten interviewees said that they do not follow ethical discussion concerning clothing business, however majority of them said that they do in case they come across with some ethical discussion.

I do not follow ethical discussion in clothing, however if I come across with an interesting headline or topic, I do read and follow it. (Interviewee C)

I do not follow it, or perhaps better say, I do not search for it, but if I come across, then I read. (Interviewee A)

One of the interviewees says that they do not follow the discussion in clothing industry but in food industry.

I do not follow the discussion in clothing industry, however I do in the food industry, partly due to my job. In case there are news that are well titled, I tend to read them. (Interviewee B)

Only one of the interviewees admits to following ethical discussions, at least try's to do so. Altogether the interviewees are not following ethical clothing discussions, some of them follow conversation occasionally some of them do not. For many it depended of the topic and how the topic is presented.

5.5.2 Ethical brands and eco-labeling

The second part of ethical fashion and eco-labels was to find out how much interviewees know about these brands, eco-labels and certificates. Which are they familiar with and how they describe them, both in clothing and other products. It was also asked whether interviewees purchase these ethically labeled clothing for their children.

The first question in this section was about which ethical labels, brands and certificates the interviewees are familiar with. For majority at least one label, certificate or brand was familiar, the one most commonly mentioned was Fairtrade or Swan label. Quite many of the interviewees struggled with thinking in general, most of the interviewees started to think certificates and labels in children's clothing rather than thinking in general of ethical labels.

I know Fairtrade and Swan label brands. (Interviewee G)

I'm not really familiar with these labels, but I know the Swan label, Fairtrade and Avainlippu the design from Finland label. (Interviewee I)

I know Fairtrade, Swan label and the one with white flower and green curve (Standard 100 by Oeko-Tex). I bet there are others, but these are the ones I remember at the moment. (Interviewee H)

I do not know any, has Fairtrade something to do with clothing? (Interviewee B)

When the next question was to define specific certificates in children's clothing, only one of the interviewees was able to name something new beyond the already mentioned labels.

In clothing, what comes to my mind is the GOTS labeling system that for example Lindex has and does it count as a label or certificate that Kappahl has the Organic cotton line? (Interviewee D)

The other labels that were mentioned which are used in clothing and specially in children's clothing were Standard100 by Oeko-tex, Swan label as well as Fairtrade, the same as that were mentioned in the previous question as well. It seemed that the interviewees are still more familiar with ethical labels which are more related to food items rather than clothing. Organic cotton as a specific product type was most often mentioned.

After asking the interviewees about ethical labels, brands and certificates, it was natural to ask the interviewees whether they were able to state domestic or foreign ethical children's clothing companies. This was one of the questions where majority of the interviewees felt in the beginning that they do not know any ethical companies, however after further conversation, almost all of the interviewees were able to list companies. Majority of the listed companies were Finnish, with few exceptions. The ones mentioned multiple times were, Hilla, Gugguu, Papu, Punainen Norsu, Nosh, and Vimma. The only foreign companies mentioned were Polarn o Pyret, ME&I and Milk Copenhagen.

I do not buy from all of these, but I know at least Gugguu, Vimma, Papu, Mainio, Nosh and Milk Copenhagen. (Interviewee I)

Nosh, Hilla, which is sold at least in Prisma and the two Finnish, companies Vimma and Gugguu, these I know at least. Is ME&I as well? (Interviewee E)

Even though the interviewees mentioned many companies, many of the interviewees were questioning whether they really and truly are ethical, and how they are being measured. Not all of the companies advertise widely how ethically they operate and which part of the processes is truly ethical. For example ME&I has on their web-page that majority of their products are Oeko-Tex standardized, however to find that information a lot of clicking and searching needs to be done. (ME&I 2016)

The last question in the chapter of ethical brands and eco-labeling was whether the interviewee buys ethically labeled clothes for their children, and if yes, why and how often. For the majority of interviewees buying ethically labeled clothes is more of a bonus. For many it is not necessary to have these labels, but it is always a bonus if there are some ethical certificates included.

I buy occasionally or more to say accidentally, if there is a certificate it is more of a bonus than truly affecting criteria. (Interviewee A)

I do not necessarily look for certified clothing, however if there is, it is always an advantage and this will impact my buying behavior in the future. (Interviewee G)

Few of the interviewees say that they try to buy as much ethically certified clothes as possible, but it may not be always possible.

I tend to buy in all of my purchases ethically certified products, whether it is clothes or furniture. This is also why I try to buy less, once a month or less. (Interviewee H)

Well for example all the Gugguu clothes have GOTS and Standard 100 by Oeko-tex certificates, but the ones that I have to buy for example from H&M I do not think there is any certificates. (Interviewee I)

For many of the interviewees the most important is still the fit of the clothing and durability, it is pointless to buy more ethical choice and ethically labeled clothing if it does not fit the child or does not last for very long.

I might buy 'accidentally' ethically labeled products however the most important factor is the durability and fit. (Interviewee F)

I buy these GOTS labeled clothes from Lindex, since they are good quality and great fit for my sons nevertheless I would not buy them if they would fit, in my boys' case be short and wide, even with the ethical label. That is not ethical to buy clothes that do not fit even though they have ethical label on them. (Interviewee C)

The general response to how often ethically labeled clothes was, as for any other clothing, when needed and necessary. Some say once a month for others it's a few times a month. Also depends on number of kids and their growth spurts.

I used to buy more of clothes for the kids, but I have tried to cut it off, and nowadays buy only a few times per month. But I would like to think that since they are more ethical that it is not that bad, at least that's how I convince myself (Interviewee I)

Altogether for the majority of the interviewees' ethical labels are not the ones that guide their shopping, the factors which have more influence are the durability and fit. Ethicality is always a plus, but in many cases not necessary in the end.

5.5.3 Ethical information

The last section of ethical fashion and eco-labels is ethical information. I wanted to know whether the interviewees are satisfied with the amount of available

information on ethical clothing, would they want to get more or it and if yes, from where would they like to get the information. Seven out of the ten interviewees would like to get more information on ethical clothing. It was widely said that they would like to know more and that there should definitively be more information available.

For sure I would like to get more information, if there is a proof of ethical productions, materials etc, it should show. If it would show more and people would know more, I bet people would be buying more ethically produced and labeled. (Interviewee B)

It would not be bad to get and have more information. It is something that I am not currently really seeking for, but my child is also very young and this has recently become an important matter to me. (Interviewee E)

Two of the interviewees who said that no more information is needed, explained it well.

I do not need more information at this time, since I only buy from few stores and I know how they act. They act ethically and environmentally friendly. (Interviewee I)

The reason I cannot really say that I need more is that I have not really looked into this. I bet there is a ton of information on the Internet. It is 2016 so there is a lot on Internet and as many companies are required to follow all these ISO steps etc. This makes me believe there is plenty of information if people would just look for it. (Interviewee J)

Only one of the interviewees felt that there really is no need for more information. As majority of the interviewees felt that they would like to get more information, the next question or the interviewees was where would they like to get the information. There were some different views on where the information should be presented and found, some of the mentioned places were Internet, family discussion websites, magazines, in the stores, in the clothing itself etc. Many of the

interviewees wished that the clothes themselves would have bigger and better information.

At the time of purchase the information should be on the item itself, I do not think I would find the information only in Internet, if the product would for example say that find information from our website. (Interviewee D)

The information should be on the item itself or at least very near by. (Interviewee A)

I would like to find the information from the store, like restaurants have certificated on their door, why not clothing stores as well. (Interviewee H)

I read these family oriented websites and online forums, so this is where I would like to find the information. (Interviewee E)

I would like to get the information on the product for sure, but also webpages are a must. (Interviewee C)

As few of the interviewees would prefer the information to be on the product itself, they do realize that there can only be limited amount of information there so alternative and especially additional information should be available. They would like the information to be either found from the store or the company webpages. However, there should be enough information on the product that it would positively affect purchase decision.

There should be more thorough information available near by the product, for example special charts etc. However I think ethical clothing should have their own sections, since I believe many would skip them automatically due to higher prices. (Interviewee B)

As not all of the information can be found on the clothing, they should have good and informative webpages, if I for example get excited of a certain product I want to read more about it. (Interviewee C)

There was also a point made, that if there is not adequate information existing, the ethical choice could not be made.

If the information would not be on the product, I doubt that I would go and find it on the Internet. At the moment I do not have the time or interest to go search for it. This might even lead me to not buying a certain product. (Interviewee D)

All in all, whether the information would be on the clothing itself or the store in general, majority of the interviewees would like to get more of it. Majority felt that the information should be in their access immediately when making the buying decision. Interviewees felt that if there would be more information in accurate places it might effect their buying decisions and behavior.

The last question and part of the questionnaire was to find out interviewees general thoughts on the topic and whether they have any other comments on the subject. Many of the interviewees felt that the pricing of an ethical product is too high, and it should be specified more. Is it truly due to the material choices, why the pricing is higher compared to not ethically advertised product? These were some of the questions the interviewees were thinking.

Some felt rather content with the existing information and the situation how they feel about ethicality, others felt that they could be more ethical and act more ethicality. Few felt that in case they would have more money, they could be more ethical. Some also said that at this time of their lives this was not the most important matter in their lives, yet this might become one. Few also said that they have become more aware of ethicality and environmental clothing in the last few years. It was also mentioned by three of the interviewees that they still find it easier to follow and understand ethical certificates and ethical brands, which operate in the food industry.

Maybe one day when if I have a lot of money I can be more ethical and have more ethical beliefs than right now. (Interviewee I)

Right now I have not really thought about the ethicality of a certain product, or I have not yet learned how to look for it. Maybe one day. (Interviewee D)

All in all, if the ethical clothes would be priced like 'non ethical' clothes, for sure I would buy them. (Interviewee B)

I would like to be more ethical, but the fact is that the money is limited there is not always room for ethicality. But I have tried to solve this by not buying too much, rather buy one ethical option than three non-ethical items with the same price.

When freely discussing with the interviewees, there were the few themes that the interviewees talked about. Many felt in the beginning that they are not acting very ethically, or that they do not know much about it. It turned out to be false, many of the interviewees are actually acting somewhat ethically, they just have not thought about how buying locally or less is actually ethical. For some this interview and talking about ethics and acting ethically brought the topic to a new level in their awareness. In the end the general vision of the interviewees was that due to the pricing and knowledge their ethical behavior is what it is.

6 CONCLUSIONS

This study set out to discover the role of ethical beliefs in consumer behavior while purchasing children's clothing. In order to fully understand this were the research questions divided into three sub questions. The following parts will present the theoretical and managerial implications. The theoretical implications part will compare the theoretical and empirical part of the research questions. Later on in the chapter the managerial implications will be discussed and the chapter will conclude with limitations and suggestions for further studies.

6.1 Theoretical Implications

The purpose of the study was to find out whether ethical beliefs have a role in people's perceptions and buying behavior when purchasing children's clothing. The foundation of the theoretical framework was built by briefly presenting the business side of ethics as well as ethical consumerism. The theoretical framework moved on to describing how these two impact and affect consumer behavior, consumer perceptions, buying behavior as well as the buying decision process. Among the main research question the introductory chapter presented three sub questions. All these research questions will be analyzed both theoretically and empirically. In order to answer the main research question the three sub questions will be answered first, this will lead to the answer of the main research question in this study.

The first sub-question studied the ethical consumerism and what does it truly mean.

What is ethical consumerism?

Even though the topic of ethics has been around for several decades, has the consumer perspective of it been investigated for rather little. Even when there are only limited approaches to the topic at the moment, were the interviewees able to name few of them. Many on the interviewees said that they would not buy clothes

made by children, people in bad working conditions in all together questionable locations. These are the same ethical problems named by Hobbes (2015) and Clark (2004). Some of the interviewees avoid or at least tries to avoid buying clothes produced in oppressive regimes and support locally, domestically produced clothes. This is also supports the theory where not supporting oppressive regions should not be supported, since there is never a true knowledge where the money ends up.

Even though the interviewees did not directly mention the sweatshops, as Clark (2004) mentions them being part of where products should not be bought, they were discussing working conditions and low wages and dangerous conditions. Boycotting is something, which is highlighted a lot when talked about ethical consumption, and buying, boycotts were also mentioned multiple times by multiple interviewees. Boycotts have also been mentioned in several chapters by several authors. Boycotting is something that the interviewees understand that many people needs to participate into in order to make a difference, as Hobbes (2015) also stated; boycotting only works if everyone does it, and in many cases it is not the case. What comes to other ethical approaches of ethical consumerism, the interviewees really knew how the act ethically. Not all of them but at least few of them tends to buy locally, buy less and support fair trade. And at least one of the interviewees admits to shop rather selectively, only from few shops where she knows the companies act ethically. These approaches are straight in line with the approaches listed in the theory. All in all, it can be said that these interviewees are aware of ethical approaches and where to buy in order to get ethically produces products.

The second sub-question in the research focused on consumer behavior.

Consumer behavior in children's clothing industry?

The consumer behavior and buying behavior in children's clothing industry was described mainly as habitual and variety-seeking buying behavior by Kotler et al 2008. The interviewees mentioned in their answers how majority of them tend to

buy clothes from same places and from same brands. It is some way loyalty but mostly they do so because they are familiar with the product and even used to buy certain clothes from certain places. Among the interviewees it was easy to see how almost every one of them has a loyalty proneness to a few companies or brands.

As according to the theoretical framework, the customer behavior contains of different themes and topics. Consumer perception, models of buying behavior and the buying process. The buying process according to the interviewees follows pretty much the steps describe by Kotler et al (2008) and Cox and Brittain (1996). For many of the interviewees their buying process begins with recognition of a need, in this case child's need for more, bigger or better clothes. Depending of the interviewee, there is some sort of evaluation of alternatives. As mentioned, some interviewees research more, others just go to the same store or brand and purchase from there. After evaluating the alternative the interviewees faced a decision making step, where the actual purchase transaction occurs. All of these steps are the same as described in the theoretical part of the thesis.

One of the main factor influencing interviewees consumer behavior was the household economics, there were only few occasions where cultural or social factors where mentioned. For some of the interviewees Ajzen's (2006) theory of planned behavior mattered and influenced more the beliefs of their own or their closed one's. All in all, the interviewees views on consumer and buying behavior, were rather in line with the ones mentioned in the theory.

The third and final sub-question concerned the ethical image and its affect on one's buying decision.

How does the ethical image of the company affect on ones buying decision?

Ethical image of a company affects in different ways to the interviewees, for some it was more important than to others. Generally said, interviewees stated that in

case a company's ethical image is facing bad publicity and some sort of scandals are surrounding the company, it does affect their buying decisions. Majority of the interviewees said that they would and have boycotted companies whose image has not been good and ethical. Many of the interviewees said that a good ethical image of a company would affect positively, and a negative image as boycotting. However, many of the interviewees said that it would affect if they would knew about bad behavior and unethical actions, the intention does not always end up to become an actual behavior as stated Carrington et al (2010) as well. As Carrington et al and Shaw et al state, in many cases when consumer say they would avoid unethical products and companies, the actual behavior may not follow the initial thoughts. This was also with some of the interviewees, only few had actually boycotted in the past, while the majority said that they would, but have not done it yet.

By answering to all sub-questions, we are able to answer the main research question, which deals with the role of ethical beliefs in consumer behavior.

The role of ethical beliefs in consumer behavior in children's clothing industry?

In order to answer the main research question these three sub-question needed to be answered, as these questions created the base for the principal research question. According to the theoretical and empirical part, when asked about the role of ethical beliefs in consumer behavior in children's clothing industry, the answer is not that straight forward. As Lu et al (2013) described in their model of effects of individualism and personality on consumer ethical beliefs, there are several attributes that may impact. In this research there were interviewees from two different cultural backgrounds, and in this study there was only little difference among these different cultures. However, the personal factors and attitude toward business and loyalty proneness were showing a bigger role. One of the interviewee has a positive attitude toward small Finnish clothing companies, mainly run by a single person where other interviewee has strong loyalty proneness towards few Finnish clothing companies, where she buys everything. At

the same time other interviewees say ethical beliefs have very little role in their consumer behavior.

This leads to a conclusion that ethical beliefs do have a role in consumer behavior in children's clothing industry, for some they are just clearer than for others. The meaning of the belief or beliefs may also differ between each and every interviewee. It is as well something that is not that simple to describe or define in ones own behavior. Even though the interviewees share different levels of commitment what comes to ethical beliefs, they did share one belief. Recycling in some level mentioned by the interviewees. This was no matter what was the interviewees' sex, cultural background or age.

In the end, it can be said that even though no radical theory or results were discovered in this study, it does show that people are different and experience situations differently. For some the role of not having animal tested products is more important than knowing about working conditions, where as for others it may be more important to support locally made, environmentally friendly produced clothes.

6.2 Managerial Implications

The empirical part of the study showed that people are becoming more aware of ethically produced and ethical clothing. Many of the interviewees had become more aware of the topic in recent years and it had become more important in their lives. These are positive news, since we will be running out of resources if we continue to consume the way we have been for the last few decades. Even during the interviews some of the interviewees felt the need to research and learn more about the topic and study how they could change their behavior. This shows that the attitudes and beliefs are changing, and hopefully eventually the intentions will become behavior.

In order to close the gap between consumers' intentions and actions, ethicality and ethical productions needs to become a norm in peoples live. It is important that the

percentage of ethically produced clothes grows and that the importance of the topic increases. As some of the interviewees told they are more aware of fair trade food than clothes, and that they mainly choose organic food products but not necessarily clothes. This behavior should shift to clothes as well. With the answers given by the interviewees there is a large possibility for people to become more ethical and change their existing behavior. However, in order to do so, more information is needed.

Interviewees felt that they did not have the best and adequate information possible in order to be as ethical as possible in the given frames. Many felt that it is easier to be ethical in certain ways, as recycling the existing, buying less and buying used, however buying only ethically produced clothes seemed rather difficult. This was also because not always does the supply meet the demand or the required needs. But as always, some factors are more important and desired than others, so is the case in ethically produced clothes.

In order to ethically produced clothes to succeed and become bigger part of peoples buying behavior the pricing has to change. As mentioned, many of the interviewees felt that the pricing is still too high and does not always meet their existing budget or need. When talked about kids, whose cycle of new clothes is rather short, the pricing is a key factor. All in all, people felt that the topic of ethics and ethics in children's clothing business to be important and would like to get more information in order it to impact their decisions and eventually buying behavior.

6.3 Limitations and suggestions for further research

The research was conducted only in Finland, even though there were people from two different cultural backgrounds there were barely any cultural differences showing. The meaning of ethics and its importance for people vary depending of their beliefs, which are influenced by country of origin, culture and other such attributes (Vitell 2003). Based on this, it can be said that the results would most likely be different if the interviewees were for example from Africa or Asia. This

signifies that the results cannot be directly transferred to another country and culture.

Another limitation in the study also relates to the people interviewed. The interviewees were all married or in domestic partnership with the father or mother of the children. No single parents were interviewed for this research, and this might have given more diverse perceptions and views on the topic. However, this was only a minor concern in this research since even due to different educational and geographical location there were barely any dissimilarities in the answers. Yet another possible limitation could have been the chosen data collection method, as the open-ended interviewing may create difficulties when coded. As the open-ended questions often give the opportunity for participants to answer as they wish and thus create difficulties for researcher to identify similar themes in the answers given by other interviewees (Creswell 2007). Luckily, this did not create problems or difficulties in this research.

Ethical consumerism and especially ethical consumerism in consumer perspective is rather new and very little investigated topic in many areas. The existing literature is mainly articles and journals, lacking a traditional literature point of view, while buying behavior has a well-established literature. Further studies could focus more on to a specific buying process in depth, instead of the entire broad process. As this research investigates the complete consumer perception and behavior, instead of a certain step or process, thus results are more generalized rather than specified.

In this research it was discovered how ethicality is defined and experienced by different people, how different attributes mean different things to different people and how some factors are more important than others. This research suggested that such attributes would be price, durability as well as fit. Further studies should be formed so that these more meaningful attributes would be investigated and studied more in the ethical perspective. This would give more specified answers and involve interviewees to discuss more. In further studies the gap between

intentions and actual behavior would be something worth of studying, why does the gap exists and how could it be closed.

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APPENDIX 1.

Semi-structured interview questions

Ikä
Lapsien lukumäärä
Koulutustausta
Siviilisääty
Talouden keskimääräinen vuosiansio

Ostokäyttäytyminen

Miten kuvailisit ostokäyttäytymistäsi lasten vaatteiden suhteen?

Mistä ostat lapsellesi/lapsillesi vaatteet? Miksi?

Etiikka ja eettinen kulutus

Kuinka koet eettisen kulutuksen? Entäpä epäeettisen?

Miten eettinen ajattelutapa vaikuttaa ostopäätökseesi?

Eettiset vakaumukset ja onko niitä?

Kuinka yrityksen eettisyys vaikuttaa ostopäätökseesi?

Miten kuluttaja voi vaikuttaa yritysten eettisyyteen?

- Kuinka vahvasti kuluttaja voi mielestäsi vaikuttaa?

Eettinen ostokäyttäytyminen lastenvaatteiden hankinnassa

Mitä eettisyys mielestäsi tarkoittaa lasten vaatteiden ostamisen yhteydessä?

Kuinka tärkeää se mielestäsi on? / Millaisessa roolissa se on kun itse ostat lasten vaatteita?

Eettinen muoti ja ekologiset merkit

Seuraatko eettistä keskustelua vaate businessissä?

Mitkä eettisyyteen liittyvät merkit (brändit vai sertifikaatit) ovat sinulle tuttuja?

- Entä lastenvaatteissa?
- Ostatko ympäristömerkittyjä vaatteita lapsellesi/lapsillesi? Miksi? Kuinka usein?

Pystytkö nimeämään kotimaisia tai ulkomaisia eettisiä lastenvaatevalmistajia?

Kaipaako lisätietoa etiikasta lastenvaatteiden ostossa?

Mistä toivoisit tiedon löytyvän?

Muita kommentteja