A study of the U.K. Cycling consumer and their pre-purchase concerns within the Cycling Industry.

Author: James Smith

Initials: JJS

Student number: 306199

Course: Master of Strategic Business Management:

University of Law

October 2018

Submission date: 7th October 2019

Tutor: Elaine Garcia

Word Count excluding References 9632

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Cormac Austin, my dissertation supervisor, for assisting me with this dissertation, particularly for providing me with some feedback. Additionally, many thanks to Primal Europe Limited, for supporting me to the pursuit of master degree in Strategic Business Management and allowing me to gain access to the information for the survey and for providing the £50 gift Voucher. Finally, the respondents of the survey and the interviewees who provided me with such rich data. Thank you.

Contents

Table of Figures

Table of Tables

Chapter 1.

Introduction

The environment and ethical responsibilities of organisations and the general concerns surrounding climate change are in the media every day. Brands across the world are considering their positions, reducing their packaging, ensuring that consumers are aware of their green credentials. The brands that are doing this understand that there is a market gain to be had by improving their environmental and or ethical credentials.

However, the current research is based around the environmental and or ethical concerns of individuals rather than the concerns of the consumer as they consider their purchase.

The U.K. Cycling consumer is widely thought of as a having generic green credentials by their choice of transport. Cycling is, of course, a green way to travel with fewer emissions than many other forms of transportation, it is also better for the health of the nation. This research will look closely at the details surrounding these claims.

This research paper will examine the pre-purchase concerns of the U.K. cycling consumer within the Cycling industry. This research will involve a literature review, a survey of cycling consumers and semi-structured interviews with senior individuals within the U.K. cycling industry.

This research paper will discuss the findings of the data in the conclusion of the paper, examine the significance of the research paper and offer advice on future research.

Finally, the author will offer a statement on self-reflection, where can the author improve the study, create more detailed research questions and improve the conclusions within the study.

Chapter 2.

Abstract

Purpose – This research aims to investigate whether Cycling consumers are considering the environmental and ethical impacts of the purchases before they make those purchases, furthermore the research attempted to discover whether the cycling industry is or has been responding to these consumer's needs. The research paper may encourage brands, manufacturers and retailers to consider the environmental and or ethical impacts of their products.

Literature review – The paper will review the scale of the cycling industry, demographics of the average cycling consumer the geographical locations of the most active areas for cycling in the U.K. This research paper will also examine the legislation surrounding environmental and ethical implications of consumption.

Methodology – The paper used qualitative and quantitative mixed methods of research using data collection techniques and analytical procedures. These methods can be further broken down as described by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill into the use of concurrent embedded design (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). The concurrent embedded design was used in conjunction with a primary research method in the form of an online survey. At the same time, two semi-structured interviews were carried out with senior managers within the Cycling industry.

Contribution – This paper has attempted to discover whether the cycling consumer is considering his or her environmental impact before purchasing and whether industry players are considering this tranche of the customer. The research has attempted to discover whether the industry is ready to respond to this changing consumer behaviour. The study may play an essential role in encouraging the industry to make changes to the supply chain and or product.

Findings – The research found that 76% of those that responded to the survey were male and were mainly aged between 35-54. Consumers still feel that pricing and brand quality are more relevant to them than environmental and or the ethical impact that their purchases may make. However, there was still 25% of those consumers who responded that they usually considered the environmental impact of their investment. These considerations were repeated with a 28% response from respondents who often consider their ethical implications. These results indicate that over a quarter of the cycling industry customer base now considers the environmental and or ethical consequences of their purchases. The research shows that consumers are now considering their purchases in significant numbers, therefore allowing the cycling industry to respond to the changing needs of their consumers. However, the industry respondents do not consider the environmental and or ethical issues as the top of their list. Instead, they focus on brand quality. In summary, the industry will change slowly; this slow change will continue until the consumer does not just think about the environment but makes changes to their purchasing habits to reflect their pre-purchase considerations.

Keywords – Environmental impact, ethical impact, cycling, the cycling industry, consumer, supply chain, product design, environmental legislation

Chapter 3.

Literature Review

This chapter will attempt to review relevant literature to provide a critical analysis of the ethical and environmental considerations of the average consumer through online and physical retail stores. Then furthermore, the research focuses on the consumers of the cycling industry. A 2010 report attempted to define the ethical and environmental consumer as 'ethical' will encapsulate different expressions, concerns and issues for each individual. Examples of ethical concerns for the ethically minded include environmental/green issues, sustainability concerns, workers' rights, country of origin, arms trade, fair trade and animal welfare. 'Green' consumerism, it should be noted, is subsumed within the wider category of ethical consumerism" (Carrington, A Neville and J. Whitwell, 2010). The literature review will examine the breadth and width of the cycling industry and why it is so vital to the U.K. economy. At the same time, the literature review will identify the demographics surrounding the average adult cycling consumer in the U.K. Most importantly, a report on the environmental and or ethical impact of the cycling industry in the U.K

3.1. Environmental Legislation

For the last thirty years, continuous environmental legislation has made manufacturers, distributors and retailers change their production, delivery and retail cycle. However, it was not until 1987 that the environment received its own chapter in any European single market treaty. Towards the end of the 1980s, environmentalism became more popular with the growth of environmental organisations and political parties within the European Union. In 1997 the Amsterdam treaty began the process of environmental policy integration called the Cardiff Process. (Hey, 2013). Today the European Union has over 130 separate environmental targets and objectives to be met between 2010 and 2050, these range from air quality improvement, proper waste management, to reductions in plastic (European Environment Agency, 2019). This legislation has come from within the European Union, this research is written during the Brexit crisis and the question of whether the U.K. will continue to apply European Union environmental, ethical legislation has not been answered

3.1.1. Labelling

Apart from standardised ingredients and country of manufacture, the laws around labelling do not require companies to publish their ethical or environmental credentials. However, organisations do recognise the marketing value of ethical labelling. Hoek, Roling et al. identified three types of claim and label.

1. *Type I claims use labels developed by external organisations such as "fair trade" these are used to enhance a market position.*

2. *Type 2 claims are created by organisations themselves where they believe that they can gain market share. These can be anything from a label coloured green to claiming recycled or nutritional value.*

3. *Type 3 claims are sourced from independent science and technical information that can be positive or negative.*

This information helps us understand that organisations are recognising the market value of ethical and or environmental positioning.

3.1. The changing values of British consumers

The UK fashion scene has been dominated by quick purchase clothing with companies like Primark offering cheap and disposable clothing, however recently retailers have been offering fair trade clothing lines or organically sourced fabrics. However, there is very little research to show whether consumers are interested in this or if these lines have any effect on consumer behaviour, this research will attempt to discover whether there is a consumer trend towards ethically and or environmentally sourced products. This research could lead to a discovery of consumer trends that is yet to be capitalised across consumer markets in the U.K. A 2010 report in Challenges in researching consumer ethics discovered that "an objective and universal ethics exists is misguided. Consumer decision-making processes and ethical choices are complex, and consumers are ambivalent and possess multiple value systems" (Hiller, 2010). However, in the nine years since this report was written ethics and environmental consumerism has reached a much higher public profile not least with the BBC documentary "Blue Planet". This groundbreaking BBC documentary was the no1. most-watched programme on the BBC in 2017. The programme itself had many upsetting scenes highlighting the issues around single-use plastics which created a groundswell of opinion against plastic waste. (Loughley, 2018).

3.2 Brands that are positioning themselves are green Champions

There are dozens of brands that are moving towards a more ethical and or environmental position. This section will look at some of those brands, and how they are marketing, positioning themselves in the green sector.

3.2.1

Zara Clothing Brand

A report in the Guardian newspaper July 2019 reported that significant Fashion Chain Zara would produce all its clothing from one hundred per cent recycles sources by 2025. This ambitious target includes the target of eighty per cent of all energy consumed will come from renewable sources (Conlon, 2019).

3.2.2

Bio Beans

The Bio-Bean energy company recycles waste coffee grounds into carbon-neutral logs. This repurposing of the coffee ben generates eighty per cent fewer emissions with zero waste to landfill (Jones, 2019).

3.2.3

Lush Cosmetics

Lush Cosmetics use only mineral oil, and they are committed to supporting the environment, supporting the environmental groups. For example, Lush is one of a few brands that offer its products in either one hundred per cent compostable packaging or even naked products if the customer makes that choice (Lush Fresh Handmade Cosmetics UK, 2019).

3.3. Online Retailers and their ethical, environmental position

The movement from physical retailers to online stores has been dramatic, a report in the Telegraph newspaper found that over half online purchases will move online over the next decade (Wallace, 2019). This dramatic change then means that this theatre of consumerism will become increasingly under the spotlight by consumers for their ethical and or environmental positions. Ethical values include online policies on privacy, sustainability, workers' rights, and manufacturing. Environmental policies for online retailers can include everything from materials, outputs and waste. Online retailers are required by U.K., E.U. and international law to exhibit this information on their websites allowing a much easier method of audit for the consumer. Concerns around online security have led some consumers to question the ethical values of online retailers before making purchases, and this has led to an increase in trust in reviews, social feedback and brand trust. A 2012 report in the perceived ethics of online retailers and consumer behavioral intentions found that the "perceptions of the ethics of an online retailer's web site generally refers to the integrity and responsibility of the company behind the web site in its attempt to deal with consumers in a secure, confidential, fair, and honest manner that ultimately protects consumers' interests" (Limbu, Wolf and Lunsford, 2012). Consumer trust is especially important in distance selling when the consumer is relying on a smooth transaction with a successful outcome. Consumers have come to trust various assurance marks such as "Verisign" and "Trustpilot", these assurances allow the consumer to make decisions based on best evidence on security, ethics and environmental choices. The research carried out in this report does not explicitly focus on the online sphere, but the internet is now the fastest-growing sector of the consumer experience.

3.4. Physical retailers and their relationship with the consumer

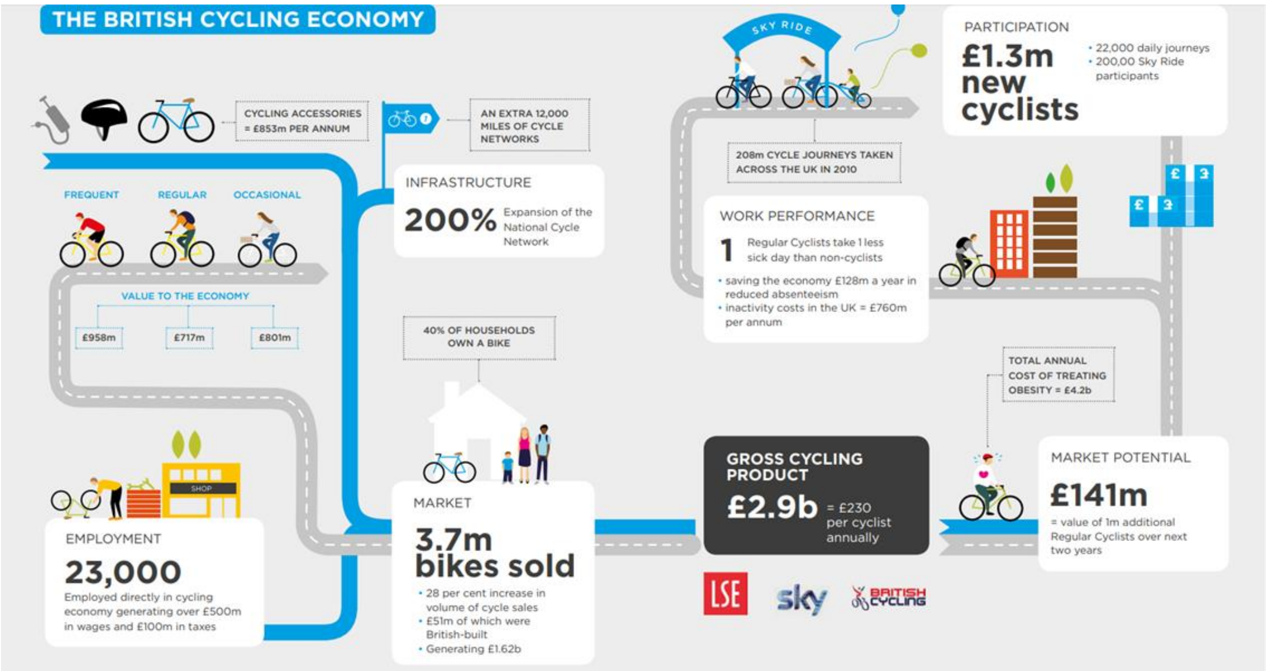
Current volatility within the physical retail sphere requires that stores operate in a multichannel environment; this still requires physical floor space. These physical store spaces require maintenance, rent and other ongoing costs that are much higher in general than the online sphere. However, there is still space for the physical store in the multi-channel environment. This space still requires a relationship between the consumer and the retailer. A 2012 report found that "Physical stores were preferred by older consumers, decreasing in popularity as consumers decreased in age. However, all consumers visited them for social reasons. Finally, the study found that catalogues are seen as outdated, inconvenient and not environmentally friendly, and as a result have been replaced by online as a transactional channel" (Boardman and McCormick, 2018). Physical stores have less opportunity to prove their green or ethical credentials and rely on their online space policies to do so.

3.5. The Cycling Industry in the U.K. and abroad.

Bicycle sales across the developed have seen significant growth, a 2016 study in the International Journal of Sports Management and Marketing found that of the 100 million bicycles sold a year over 20 million were sold in Europe (Thibaut et al., 2016).

The U.K. Cycling industry is a large and growing part of the British economy, this was reviewed in the 2018 paper on the Value of the Cycling Sector to the British Economy, in it they estimate that cycling contributes around £5.4 billion a year to the economy, with £4.1b, coming from reductions in loss of life, reduced pollution and congestion. There is also a smaller sector of accessory purchasing at a value of £0.7b. Cycling also creates jobs with some 64,000 full-time employees across the U.K. These are bike shops, mechanics, tour guides, manufacturers (Newson and Sloman,2018). Surprisingly or not, this makes the Cycling industry more significant than the Steel industry here in the U.K. with the value of the steel industry at £1.6b employing around 32,000 people. The businesses involved in the steel industry employed 32,000 (Rhodes, 2019). This should, in itself, be enough to give value to this research once the size of the Cycling industry is considered.

Figure 1 The British Cycling Economy (Grous, 2011).



3.6. The Cyclist Consumer

Cyclists are a powerful purchasing group, and the claim can be viewed in the 2018 Department for Transport Walking and Cycling statistics which show that 7% of the population cycle at least once a week (GOV.UK, 2019). The can be extrapolated into numbers when looking at UK population figures. Following the Office of National Statistics, 66 Million people are living in the U.K (Coates and Tanna, 2019). This means that there are at least 4.62 Million regular cycling consumers in the U.K. A Transport Scotland survey found that household income and bike ownership had an equal effect; 60% of households with an income of £40,000 or more have access to one or more bikes, compared to 16% of households with an income up to £10,000 (Transport.gov.scot, 2017). This evidence can be observed that cyclists have high purchasing power.

This demographic and purchasing power can be seen more acutely when looking geographically. A 2012 study by the Journal of Preventative Medicine showed that London's public bicycle sharing scheme was being well used by usage in more deprived areas dropped off compared to relatively wealthy areas (Ogilvie and Goodman, 2012) This could be because of cultural and religious reasons, but does provide more evidence that cyclists are in general from a more affluent background than previously thought.

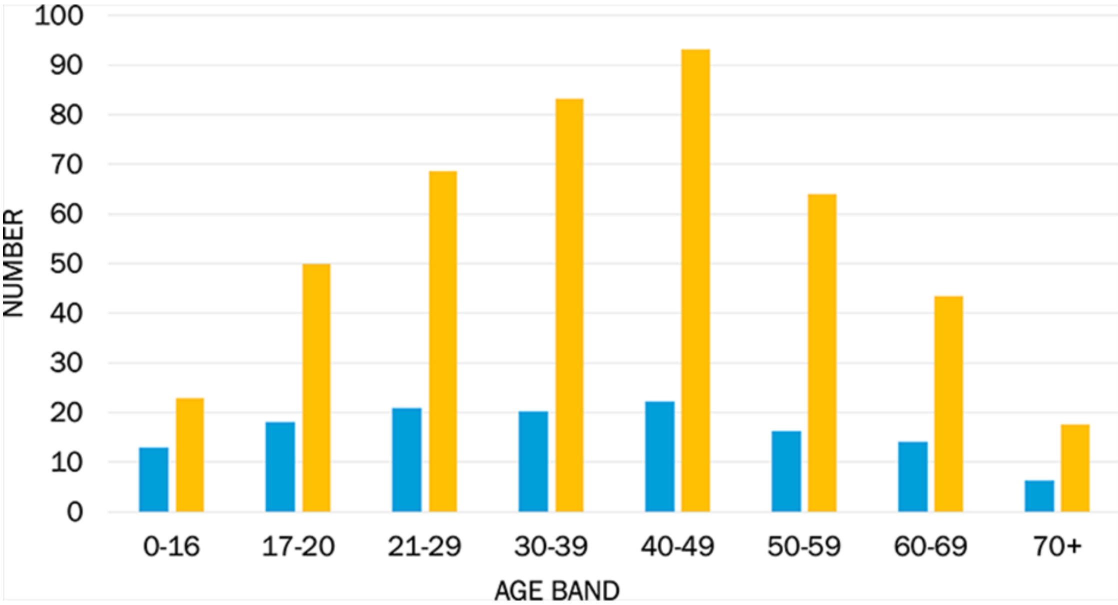
Table 1. How much consumers spend on bicycles and accessories a week (Gov.uk, 2019).

Type of Purchase		Cars/vans	Bicycles (approx.)
Purchase (outright or loan/hire purchase; new or second hand)		£28.50	£0.20
Spares/accessories/repairs/servicing		£8.30	£0.30
Fuel		£20.70	£0.00
Other motoring costs		£2.80	£0.00
Total		£57.50	£0.50

3.6. The Demographics of U.K. Cyclists

If looking at average miles per age then according to the Office for National Statistics the age range with most miles would be 30-39 and 40-49 with males cycling far more miles than females (GOV.UK, 2019). This population of high mileage individuals, reflects the findings of the 2011 census which found that getting to work by bicycles was much more common in those in professional occupations this indicates the results of Thibaut et al. A 2015 Survey of British Attitudes to Transport found that the “proportion of cyclists increases with household income and decreases in older age: those aged 55” (Assets.publishing.service.gov.uk, 2015). In summary, the UK Cyclists is more likely to be male from 30-49 and is more likely to be from a professional background than from a deprived background.

Figure 2. Ager Versus Miles (Assets.publishing.service.gov.uk, 2015).



3.7. What is the environmental impact of cycling in the U.K?

It is well known and understood that cycling regularly is far less damaging to the environment than using other forms of transport, in fact a 2015 U.S. 2015 report concluded that a dramatic increase in world cycling from 6% of all urban miles to 11% in 2030 and 14% in 2050, would reduce emissions by a surprising 7% in 2030 and almost 11% in 2050 (Mason, Fulton and Mcdonald, 2015). UK Cycling, a UK based cycling charity, states this change in England alone would see a reduction in carbon emissions by around 1500 tonnes (Cyclinguk.org, 2017). It can be presumed then at there will be a significant number of Cycling consumers will be conscious about the environmental impacts of their purchases.

3.8. Research into Ethical Environmental Consumer research

There is very little research into the ethical concerns of consumers when making purchases, although there are several new websites and journals that are beginning to consider the effects of the moral and environmental concerns of consumers. These websites are useful tools for consumers who are considering their ethical and or environmental impacts. The Ethical consumer website allows visitors to filter the site to their choice of product. This link then opens a page scoring particular brands based on their ethical and environmental decisions. This type of website will become a tool for those consumers that wish to make conscious ethical and ecological choices. If the consumer filters for bikes, a list of bicycle manufacturers appears but only one Pashley reaches the "Best Buy" score. The best buy score is based on the "ethical score" system, and this consists of over 300 topics in 19 areas in 5 main categories these range from animals to transport.

The website gives an example “some products might be considered 'ethical', but the company that owns the brand might not be. Isn't it better to buy a cruelty-free product from a company that does not test its other items on animals, or recycled toilet paper from a firm that is not cutting down virgin forests for its different ranges” (Ethical Consumer, 2019)?

The Journal of Consumer ethics has released a report on the size and quality of the consumer market, “the Ethical Consumer Markets Report (ECMR) is a measurement of the size of the UK market for ‘ethical’ products which has been published annually for 17 years. However, the researchers making choices about what to include and what not to include in the report have commonly faced some challenges and dilemmas” (Measuring Ethical Market Size: Challenges and Dilemmas, 2018). These dilemmas are reported in the journal with the example of the banking industry, “The latest Ethical Consumer Market report published in 2017 values the ‘Ethical Money’ sector at £21.4 billion. This “ethical money” value ranks it as the highest value sector in the report beating ethical favourites like Fairtrade products by a considerable margin. The significance of its monetary size has resulted in the need for some careful reflection regarding what can and should be included as ‘Ethical Money’. It is challenging to record annual sales of ‘banking’ products in quite the same way as bars of chocolate or bicycles” (Ethical Consumer, 2019). These difficulties are complicated in every industry, not least within the cycling industry, buying a bike and using the bike instead of a car is a more ethically and environmentally sound consumer choice. However, if the manufacturer has poor workers rights or a poor environmental record or even if the brand is owned a by a group that is not ethically or environmentally sound, then the choice becomes more difficult. The research shows, however, that cycling consumers at least are considering their ethical or environmental decisions before purchasing. The information is not easy to come by, and the choices are not simple when dealing with distributors instead of manufacturers.

This difficulty in measuring ethical targets and or the size of the ethical consumer market is recognised in this research, and it can be assumed that the answers in the survey can be replicated across other industries. Replicating this research across other industries may reveal different results.

Chapter 4.

Research Aim

4.1 The Aim of the Research Paper

This paper aims to identify whether Cycling consumers are considering the environmental and or ethical implications of their purchases. To further investigate this aim, the research is broken down into three areas.

1. Literature Review, an examination of the broader evidence around the consumer industry and specifically of the Cycling consumer. An analysis of the demographics of the average cyclist.
2. To determine and examine the response from an online survey on how a cyclist thinks about his/her environmental and or ethical pre-purchase impacts.
3. To consider and examine the responses from senior cycling industry members during a semi-structured interview.
4. To develop a conclusion and recommendations for further research based on the points from 1, 2 and 3 above.

Table 2. A review of the aims of this research paper.

Literature Review	A study and examination of the literature surrounding environmental and ethical considerations, specifically around the Cycling Consumer.
Primary Data Online Survey	An examination of responses from an online survey.
Semi-Structured Interviews	An examination of responses from senior Cycling industry members when discussing the environmental and ethical footprints of their brands.

4.2. Significance of the Study

This research will examine the pre-purchase considerations of a specific consumer, namely the Cyclist. However, the study can be extrapolated and replicated against other consumer groups. Many brands outside the Cycling sphere are starting to see the appeal and opportunity in these changes. UK sandwich chain Pret A Manger has three all-vegetarian outlets, while L'Oréal has unveiled its first vegan hair colour range (Young, 2019). However, there has been very little research on whether consumers consider the environment and or ethical impacts of their purchase before doing so. The current research papers are usually based around the individual responsibility of the environment or whether individuals are concerned about the environment, not about their pre-purchase thoughts.

4.3 Outline of Study

Chapter 1 Introduction: This chapter provides an introduction to the research topic. It gives the background and the purpose of this research.

Chapter 2 Abstract: A short overview of this research paper.

Chapter 3. Aims of this research paper.

Chapter 4.. Methodology, an examination of the methods surrounding this research paper.

Chapter 5. Data analysis, an examination and review of the data from the primary survey data and semi-structured interview.

Chapter 6. Conclusion, a summary of this research paper examining the results in more detail.

References

Self Reflection, the author will consider the improvement that could be made to this research paper.

Chapter 5.

Methodology

5.1. Methodology Introduction

This research paper examines whether cycling consumers are considering the ethical and or environmental impacts of their purchases. This research is a fundamental question that as mentioned previously, may affect the actions of manufacturers, distributors and retailers with regards to their own environmental and ethical considerations based on the responses from consumers. The research questions can be answered by conducting a research survey that aims to discover the pre-purchase thoughts of cycling consumers and the thoughts of senior members of the Cycling Industry. The research will seek to find out whether the media coverage of the environment and the growing concern by consumers for the ethical and environmental impacts will affect the cycling industry. This research can be reflected in wider industries, especially those that specialise in the outdoor sectors. However, there are good reasons for all sectors to replicate this research.

5.2. Research Design

The exploratory style of research used for this study will use qualitative and quantitative mixed-methods analysis. Saunders, Lewis et al. describe the mixed methods style of research as a "branch of multiple methods research that combines quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analytical procedures" (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). These methods of research will be used concurrently, Saunders et al. describe this as concurrent triangulation design (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Therefore, neither datasets will affect the other, and the researcher will not be able to influence the semi-structured interviews. This data will provide two independent areas of data allowing the researcher to interpret the data independently.

Furthermore, the exploratory style of this research will allow further study by allowing the researcher to change direction as the data presents itself. As said previously mentioned, the research is aiming to discover whether, at this point, cycling consumers are considering their environmental or ethical impact. Therefore, this research will need to be repeated over time as consumer attitudes to the environmental and or ethical impacts change. Repeating this or similar surveys will ensure the data remains accurate.

5.3. Research Approach

There are fundamentally two styles of academic research, and those are the deductive approach and the inductive approach. The deductive approach uses theory development which utilises the testing of a theoretical position by applying research strategies that are specifically aimed to test the theory in question(Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). The inductive approach aims to create results from a data set that has been collected to identify patterns and relationships to build a theory (Dudovskiy, 2011).

This research uses the deductive method, following on from the literature review, the research project has brought into clarity the critical areas within this research. The initial efforts of the study involved collecting primary data through an online questionnaire. Once completed, the research moved to Semi-structured interviews with senior members of the Cycling industry.

5.4. Research Data Collection

Mcdonald, Gan, Fraser et al. describe the two data collection methods, “primary methods are those used by researchers to generate data directly from the field, whereas secondary methods are those that use data collected by others” (McDonald et al., 2015). This research project used the primary method for collecting data through a multiple question online survey. This primary data collection method can be described as qualitative. Further primary data was collected through a semi-structured interview with senior members of the cycling industry. A 2014 report assessing secondary data, described it as providing opportunities for furthering “research through replication, re-analysis and re-interpretation of existing research. It provides researchers with opportunities to engage in work to test new ideas, theories, frameworks, and models of research design” (P. Johnston, PhD, 2014). In this research project, further secondary data was collected through the literature review. The literature review focused on the size of the cycling industry, the typical consumer and whether in other sectors, the continued coverage of the environment and or ethical value of industries are affecting the behaviour of businesses. Secondary data can be general and vague and may not help companies with decision making.

Furthermore, secondary data may not always be accurate or the data out of date. Finally Saunders et al. point out that when using the internet to collect data especially from government sources this data can disappear as government departments either change their data set or stop collecting data altogether (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Based on this information the secondary data used was kept to a minimum and was used only to provide evidence on size and scope of the cycling industry, the average cycling consumer and general retail data relating to ethical or environmental information.

5.5. Research Data Method

The research uses the mixed method research method, described by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie in their 2004 paper, titled Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come…. “as the natural complement to traditional qualitative and quantitative research, to present pragmatism as offering an attractive philosophical partner for mixed methods research, and to provide a framework for designing and conducting mixed methods research” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The mixed method of research allows the researcher to validate and triangulate data from various sources. This data integrations from multiple sources will enable the researcher to seek a more comprehensive view of the data. An example of a use of mixed method was given in a 2017 article for the British Medical Journal in it Shorter, and Smith used the case of a “randomised controlled trial (RCT) evaluating a decision aid for women making choices about birth after caesarean, quantitative data were collected to assess knowledge change, levels of decisional conflict, birth choices and outcomes and qualitative narrative data was collected to gain insight into women’s decision-making experiences and factors that influenced their choices for mode of birth”

(Shorten and Smith, 2017). Another advantage of using multiple data collection methods is that usually provides a more comprehensive set of evidence for assessment, often raising the possibility that questions introduced by the use of one method can be answered by data collected with another technique (Axinn and Pearce, 2006). The semi-structured interviews, the survey and the data in the literature review provide a rounded stable dataset.

5.6. Research gathering equipment

The research methods in this survey contained semi-structured interviews and secondary data contained in the literature review. The methods were chosen to provide different types of information from different groups.

Table 3 Research design Method

Type	Numbers	Primary or Secondary	Comments
Survey	271	Primary	The questionnaire was hosted on the Survey Monkey Website.
Semi-Structured Interviews	2	Primary	Two senior members of the Cycling industry.
Literature Review		Secondary	Reviewing the literature around green issues, consumers, and explicitly Cycling consumers.

The survey itself allows direct cycling consumers attracted through a £50 gift voucher to provide anonymous responses to a simple set of questions. The semi-structured interviews will enable the researcher to hear data and insights from those senior individuals within the industry.

5.7. Survey Data collection

This research project used a simple survey hosted online via a website called Survey Monkey, online surveys have long been popular in research projects. Benfield and Szlemko describe the advantages of Internet-based data collection, "internet data collection can reduce costs and make unfunded projects feasible, yield more extensive and more representative samples, therefore obviate hundreds of hours of data entry" (A. Benfield and J. Szlemko, 2006). Furthermore, specialised audiences can be identified via mailing lists and research through the internet where traditional data collection would not be able to identify or contact these groups. This type of data collection is especially useful in this research project when dealing with specific groups (Wright, 2017). Online data collection is especially useful when costs and time are a consideration. Furthermore, online surveys can reduce error from respondents (C. Schmidt, 1997). The questionnaire was held on a survey monkey online website. Respondents were selected and contacted through a mailing list hosted on a file used by Primal Europe Ltd, a cycling clothing distributor. The researcher was permitted to contact the subscribers, via a mailshot. Two hundred and seventy-one subscribers responded based on the offer of a £50 prize draw offered by Primal Europe Ltd. This mailing list hosted by Primal Europe Ltd was particularly useful, the subscribers were already on a European Union General Data Protected list and have registered on the mailing list either by attending and signing up at a cycling event or had purchased through the Primal Europe Ltd. Website. The data collection lasted one month.

5.8. Non Probability Sampling

Non-probability sampling methods aim to generate useful insights that the researcher can use to create data based on a particular focus. This research project used a non-probability sampling frame specifically because it is not possible to identify the entire population of those that consider themselves a cycling consumer. A core characteristic of non-probability sampling techniques is that samples are selected based on the subjective judgement of the researcher (Dissertation.laerd.com, 2012). With this information in mind, the survey was based on the premise that there is an ongoing debate around the environment and ethical concerns of consumers, the research took that premise and used cyclists as the model for consumers.

Figure 3 Research Design Plan

Hypotheses

↓

Survey Design

↓

Ethical Approval

↓

Primary Data Collection (Survey Operational)

↓

Primary Data Collection (Interviews)

↓

Secondary Data Collection (Literature Review)

↓

Research Conclusion

5.9. Primary Data Collection (Semi-Structured Interviews)

The semi-structured interview provides a reliable method of obtaining primary data when using a list of open-ended questions and observations. The semi-structured interview allows the interviewer to move and flex his questions during the interview when interesting topics arise. The Robert Wood-Johnson Foundation in their report on qualitative data describes the semi-structured interview as “a clear set of instructions for interviewers that can provide reliable, comparable qualitative data” (Cohen and B, 2006). There are essentially two types of Semi-Structured interviews these are formal and informal. A formal interview will contain a structured process with pre-set questions. These questions may or may not be pre-delivered to the interviewee. An informal interview may have pre-set questions but will allow for open-ended questions with a conversational style (Gillham, 2002).

5.10. Disadvantages of a Semi-Structured Interview

Semi-Structured interviews are beneficial for gaining massive amounts of data from a primary source. However, there are disadvantages associated with semi-structured interviews, these range from reliability, interviewer bias, cultural differences, generalisability and credibility (Saunder, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Due to the small number of semi-structured interviews, some of these issues are not relevant here. Interviewee bias, Interviewers, are potentially liable to fall to conscious or unconscious bias due to a lack of preparation, insufficient preparation and of having an affinity to potential interviewees.

5.11. Interviewees

It was essential for the research that when using respondents who form a specific group from a consumer base on this occasion “cycling consumers” that the researcher also gained knowledge from the cycling industry itself. These semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to investigate if there are any current plans or general movement from within the industry to maximise any ethical or environmental credentials. The interviewees were not made aware of the survey responses but were mindful of the general subject matter and the general theme of the interviews. There were two interviewees from the Cycling industry, both senior in their companies, and both were required to read and sign the consent form. The interviews were recorded with permission, and the transcripts are contained in the appendices.

5.12. Validity and Reliability

Saunders et al. state that semi-structured interviews can achieve a high level of validity and credibility when conducted using carefully planned and executed interviews (Saunder, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016).

Golafshani defines validity as to whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how accurate the research results are (Golafshani, 2003). This research uses a sizeable primary data collection method, with over 270 respondents plus two semi-structured interviews where the interviewees were not aware of the responses from the survey but were made aware of the title of the dissertation and the general themes of the interviews.

Reliability depends on the ability to repeat the results consistently over some time. The participants of the survey were sourced through a mailing list from Primal Europe Ltd. A Cycling clothing brand ensures that the respondents completing the survey were identifying themselves as cycling consumers. The interviews were carried out with senior members of the cycling industry, with an informal interview approach. These interviews are intended to reflect the period that the interviews take place; the responses may change over time as environmental and or ethical issue become more important to members of the Cycling industry.

Table 4 Interviewees

Name	Title	Company
Craig Middleton	Sales Manager	Pinpoint Ce. Representing Limar Helmets
Russell Harrison	Sales Director	Velotech Services (Rotor)

5.13. Research Ethics

The research will attempt to discover whether customers of the cycling industry have ethical or environmental concerns when making a purchase. This research will be of value to brands and manufacturers within the cycling industry when going to market. The study will be based around an online questionnaire; A mailing list will select the customers that will be interviewed from Primal Europe Ltd. Those that respond will be entered into a £50 draw supported by Primal Europe Ltd, all of the respondents will sign an informed consent form. All data from respondents will be deleted on January 01st, 2020. The semi-structured interviewees will be aware that they will be named in the research and again will sign an informed consent form.

5.13.1 Ethics Surrounding Semi-Structured Interviews

There are four main areas of ethical concern when considering Semi-Structured interviews. DicCicco and Bloom describe the ethical concerns surrounding semi-structured interviews as the following. (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006)

1. “***Reducing the risk of unanticipated harm”***;

This subject is not sensitive to these individuals or their brands, the brands themselves are making conscious efforts to reduce their environmental impact and to ensure they as ethically transparent as possible.

2. “***Protecting the interviewee’s information”;***

The interviewees do not give out any personal addresses or contact details, the researcher ensured that the interviewees were made fully aware of the parameters of the research.

3. “***Effectively informing interviewees about the nature of the study”;***

The questions in the semi-structured interviews themselves were open-ended and allowed a free-flowing answer. The interviewees were able to consider their positions in a neutral non-threatening environment.

5. “***Reducing the risk of exploitation”;***

There are no known areas within semi-structured interviews or in this research as a whole where any pressure can be applied to any of the interviewees for any gain by any third party.

The Semi-Structured interviews in this research paper are not anonymous; the interviewees were made aware of the subject matter and that they were under no obligation to continue. Both of the interviewees read and signed informed consent forms. However, there are always ongoing ethical concerns surrounding non-anonymous semi-structured interviews.

Chapter 6

Data Collection Data Analysis/Results

6.1. Data Collection

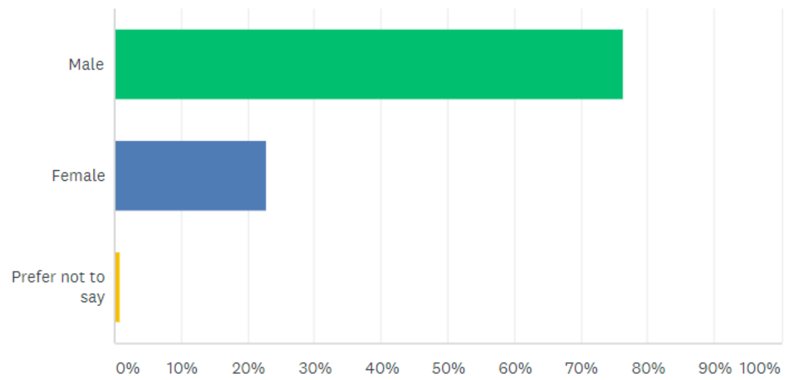
Two hundred seventy-one consumers responded to the survey, and all respondents completed all questions. Questions 1-3 were used to explore the gender, age and annual earnings. Questions 4 to 9 were used to discover the preferences of the consumers when considering pricing, branding, ethical and environmental concerns.

6.2. Analysis of results

Figure 4 What is your Gender?

What is your Gender?

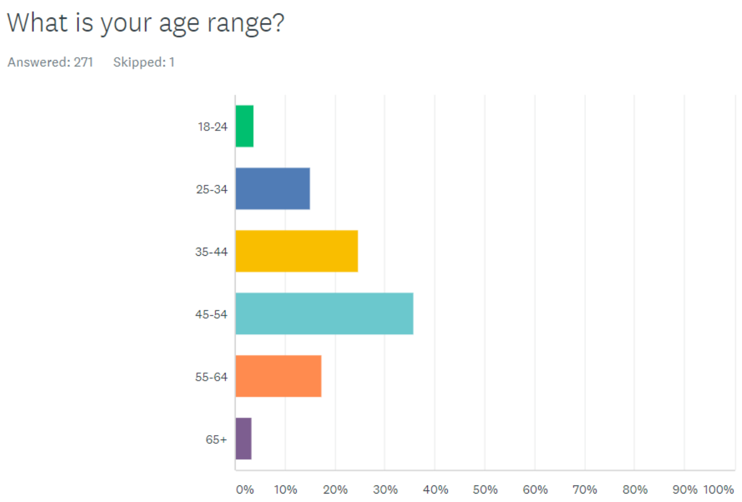
Answered: 271   Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	76.38%	207
Female	22.88%	62
Prefer not to say	0.74%	2
Total Respondents: 271		

As with earlier evidence in the literature review, the vast majority of those that responded were male with over 76% stating that they were male. However, there is still a significant number of females that responded to the survey.

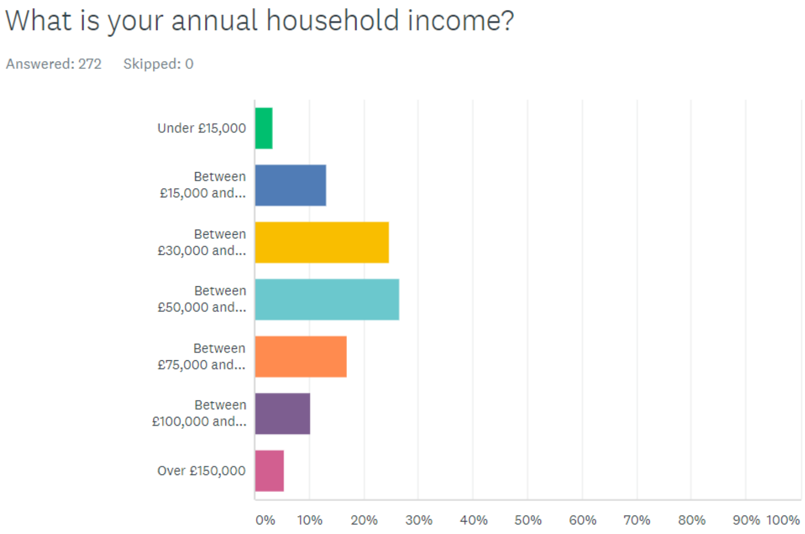
Figure 5 What is your Age Range?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
18-24	3.69%	10
25-34	15.13%	41
35-44	24.72%	67
45-54	35.79%	97
55-64	17.34%	47
65+	3.32%	9

35% of respondents were aged 45-54; the 35-44 age range followed this at 24%.

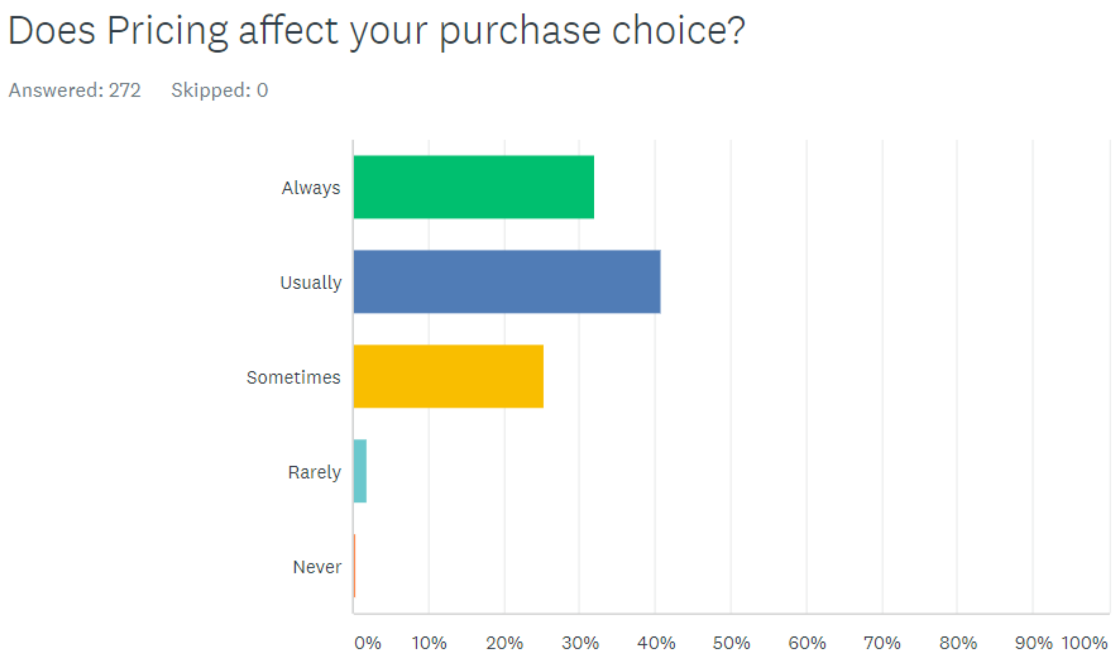
Figure 6. What is your annual household income?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under £15,000	3.31%	9
Between £15,000 and £29,999	13.24%	36
Between £30,000 and £49,999	24.63%	67
Between £50,000 and £74,999	26.47%	72
Between £75,000 and £99,999	16.91%	46
Between £100,000 and £150,000	10.29%	28
Over £150,000	5.51%	15

The most popular wage range was between £50,000 and £74,999, with over 26% of respondents falling into this category, and the £30,000 and £49,999 respondents were next with 24%. These answers follow on from question 1 and 2, backing up previous research that the highest-earning ranges are from 40 to 50. A report on the This Money website stated that "most professionals should expect their pay peak between the ages of 40 and 49" (This is Money, 2018). Therefore, it can be stated that the respondents in the majority were male, earning between £30,000 to £75,000.

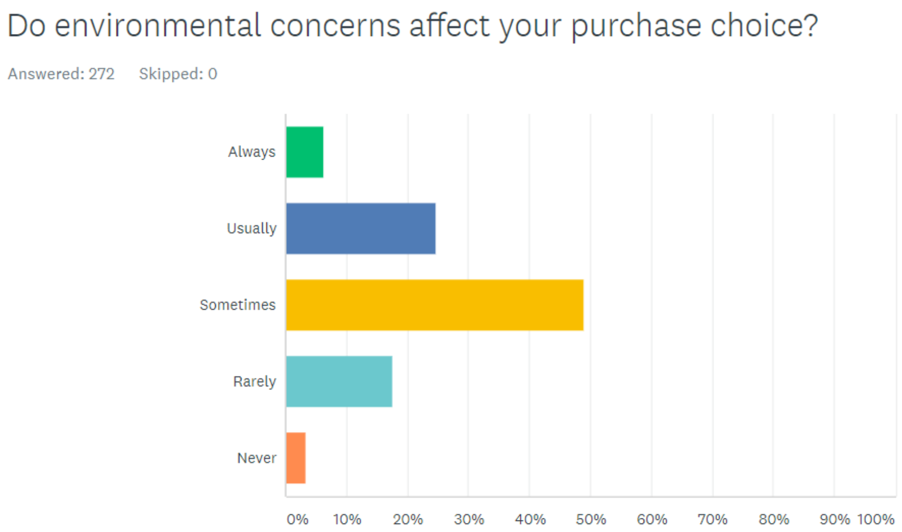
Figure 7. Does Pricing affect your choice?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Always	31.99%	87
Usually	40.81%	111
Sometimes	25.37%	69
Rarely	1.84%	5
Never	0.37%	1
Total Respondents: 272		

In Question 4 respondents were asked whether pricing affects their purchase choice, it is interesting to see that pricing is always a critical factor with over 31% of respondents stating that they still consider pricing and over 40% saying that they usually consider pricing. These considerations do not necessarily reflect the previous questions when considering the annual earning income of these respondents. It is important to note that while it might be correct to consider that the majority of respondents may have disposable income for things like Cycling. This survey has taken place in the middle of the Brexit crisis. A 2017 report for Leibniz Information Centre for Economics showed "that the economic costs of the Brexit vote are already visible and quite large. In the third quarter of 2017, the output loss due to the Brexit vote amounted to approximately 1.3 per cent, and the cumulative loss in GDP was close to 20 billion" (Born et al., 2017). The slow down in the British economy may skew these figures as the slow down may lead to a lack of consumer confidence. The report goes on to say that "it is clear the Brexit will amount to a bundle of policy measures which will result in economic disintegration of the UK and the European Union. Whether this is because of higher tariffs, non-tariff barriers or both, it is likely to bring about a reduction of living standards which, in turn, may rationalise reduced investment and consumption expenditures: not only in the future but—because of anticipation effects—already today" (Born et al., 2017). Therefore, considering this unknown future data that the research is repeated post Brexit.

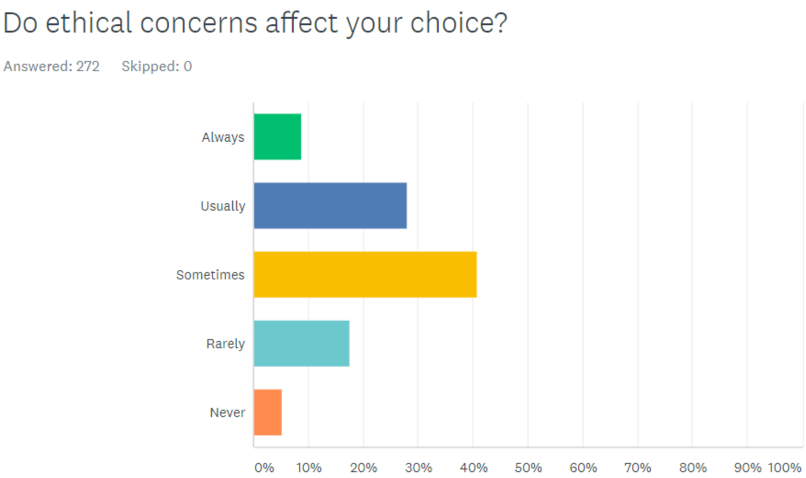
Figure 8. Do Environmental concerns affect your purchase choice?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Always	6.25%	17
Usually	24.63%	67
Sometimes	48.90%	133
Rarely	17.65%	48
Never	3.31%	9
Total Respondents: 272		

In question 4, the research tried to identify how high up in the mind of consumers is the environmental impact of their purchase. The importance of the environment might be getting overstated in the media, while 48% mentioned that they sometimes consider the environment only 6% always consider the environment. The literature review identifies some reasoning for that due to difficulties in finding environmental and ethical credentials instore or online. Consumers are in a time-pressured environment and may feel that researching environmental impacts, or ethical considerations are too tricky when either searching online or when in physical stores.

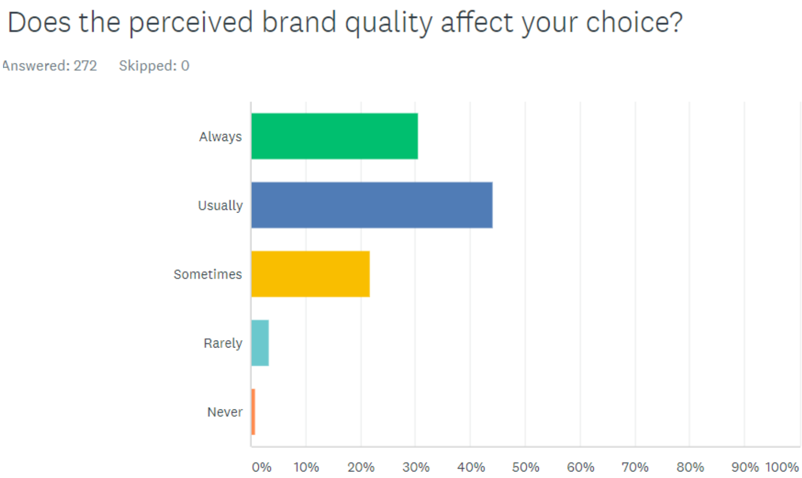
Figure 9. Do ethical Concerns affect your choice?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Always	8.82%	24
Usually	27.94%	76
Sometimes	40.81%	111
Rarely	17.65%	48
Never	5.15%	14
Total Respondents: 272		

Question Six shows similar results to Question 5, while 40% of the respondents sometimes consider the ethical impacts of their purchase choices; only 8% always consider the ethical implications of their purchases. The small number of respondents who still consider the environment and or ethical implications of their purchases can be a powerful purchasing group if these numbers are broadened across the U.K. consumer population.

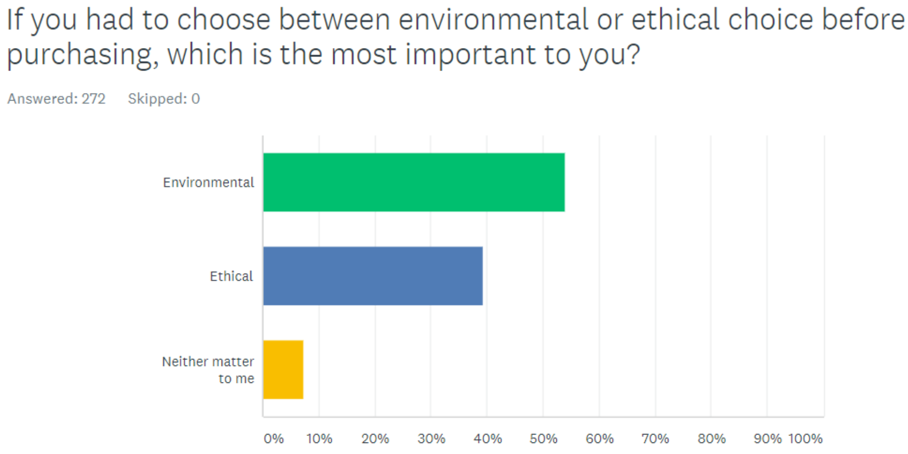
Figure 10. Does the perceived brand quality affect your choice?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Always	30.51%	83
Usually	44.12%	120
Sometimes	21.69%	59
Rarely	3.31%	9
Never	0.74%	2
Total Respondents: 272		

The literature review shows that brand and pricing are far more critical to the consumer than ethical or environmental considerations. Over 30% of respondents always consider the brand quality to choose their purchase with 44% usually considering the brand quality. When viewed as a whole over 70% either often or always consider the brand quality when purchasing.

Figure 11. If you had to choose between environmental or ethical choice before purchasing, which is most important to you?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Environmental	54.04%	147
Ethical	39.34%	107
Neither matter to me	7.35%	20
Total Respondents: 272		

The current media coverage of the climate crisis and the general public perception of the environment may go some way to explain why environmental concerns come before ethical concerns; however, the literature review raises the point that it is easier to find environmental credentials online than ethical considerations.

6.3. Free Text Comments

Respondents were able to respond with free text comments, and some are listed below, these provided the respondents with the opportunity to enhance their answers in the free text form.

"It is difficult to make the ethical links. This makes decision making harder as the information is not so readily available".

"I believe that retailers should be more open and transparent about their ethical and environmental methods and considerations in the manufacture and sale of their products. Even if the purchaser wants to know this before purchasing a product, it is not always easy to find out".

"Quality and price matter most to me".

"Design is a big factor provided it is a responsible company".

"Appreciate the ethical approach, but I find it difficult (from sellers info) to judge the properly the ethical side".

6.4. Semi-Structured Interview with Craig from Pinpoint CE.

A semi-structured interview was carried out with Craig Middleton, Craig is the sales manager for Pinpoint CE and is directly responsible for Limar Helmets an Italian helmet brand. Craig consented to have his name and company information being made public.

6.4.1. Tell me about your history within the industry

Craig has been working in the Cycling industry since 2010, Craig launched his cycling brand called "Onix bikes" he sold this in 2012 before beginning to work for a distributor and representing Limar. Craig was also the international sales manager for Limar from 2016 through to 2018. Limar is thirty-two years old and based in Milan. Limar is pioneers in the Cycling industry, coming from a period when there were not many helmet brands. Now, however, are hundreds of helmet manufacturers from all over the world with varying price, brand and quality positions.

6.4.2. What efforts are Limar making in considerations of their environmental impact?

Limar owns a factory in Italy and China, but the helmets are manufactured in China, Limar places Italian staff in China to ensure that production, ethical and environmental standards are met, but Craig has not at this point seen any audits from the factory. Limar has begun looking at their environmental impacts and have recently removed plastic bags from their cardboard boxes and no longer offer plastic bags at direct to consumer shows. Although Limar has made efforts to reduce their impact, the "EPS" plastic moulding used to make their helmets along with most other manufacturers is not easily recyclable.

6.4.3. Do you think customers care?

In five years working with Limar, Craig has only ever been approached by a consumer asking about the environmental impacts of the Limar helmets. This lack of environmental consideration is similarly replicated in the trade arena, furthermore as an International sales manager, only in the U.K. is the environment ever queried.

6.4.4. What evidence do you think the industry will need to make changes?

The industry will respond as other manufacturers begin to release environmentally friendly products, but this, according to Craig, will not change within the next five years. However, the industry can respond quickly when this does happen.

5.5. Semi-Structured Interview with Russell from Velotech Services Ltd.

A semi-structured interview was carried out with Russel, Russell is the sales manager for Velotech Services Ltd and is directly responsible for Rotor a large Spanish component brand based outside Madrid in Spain. Russell consented to have his name, and company information made public.

6.5.1. Tell me about your history within the industry

Russell has been working with Velotech since 2011 as a sale manager, Russell joined Velotech after a meeting with the owner on a bicycle ride. Velotech is a large distributor here in the U.K. dealing with various brands including C-Bear a bearings company and Rotor a Madrid based brand and one of the largest brands in Cycling.

5.5.2. What efforts are Rotor making in considerations of their environmental impact?

Until Eurobike in 2019, there have been no conscious efforts by either Velotech or Rotor regards their ethical or environmental impact. At Eurobike, Rotor mentioned that they would be reducing the plastic in their packaging.

6.5.3. Do you think customers care?

Russell has not been approached by any customers that are concerned with the ethical or environmental impacts of their purchases. However, he does get asked where the products are manufactured. This is in the opinion of Russell that customers believe European manufactured products are of a higher quality than their Chinese counterparts.

6..5.4. What evidence do you think the industry will need to make changes?

The industry will not respond until legislation forces changes on them or if customers use their wallets to demand change, and at the moment, there is no sign of that happening.

6.6. Discussions on Findings

Throughout the research, it has become clear that notwithstanding the media coverage on the environment and corporate ethical responsibilities. Until customers demand change by ensuring they are purchasing from environmentally aware organisations, these corporations will not make any serious efforts to improve their environmental and or ethical credentials.

Chapter 7.

Conclusion

This chapter reviews the findings and positions the research outcomes against the objectives of the research. On completion of this chapter, the study will examine the research limitations and future research suggestions. The chapter concludes with a chapter of self-reflection from the author reviewing lessons learned in the process of writing a dissertation.

7.1 Review

This research considered the U.K. Cycling Consumer and their pre-purchase concerns within the Cycling Industry. The Researcher attempted to discover whether Cyclists in the U.K. are environmentally and ethically aware when purchasing their products within the Cycling Industry. The research began with reviewing the consumer industry as a whole and the movements within the consumer sphere to take advantage of the popularity of ethically and environmental purchasing from consumers. The research broke down the multi-channel environment discovering that retailers are taking advantage of the multi-channel environment but that consumers find it easier to discover green credentials at online retailers rather than “bricks and mortar” retailers. There are, however, several brands that are attempting to improve their environmental and or ethical impacts; these were discussed in the literature review.

The research also attempted to identify the U.K. cyclist, who they are, where are they from, how far do these cycling consumer cycle, and how much does the cycling consumer spend? The research emphasised the size of the cycling market noting that in some study it is compared to the size of the U.K. steel industry, that being that the Cycling industry is three times bigger than the steel industry.

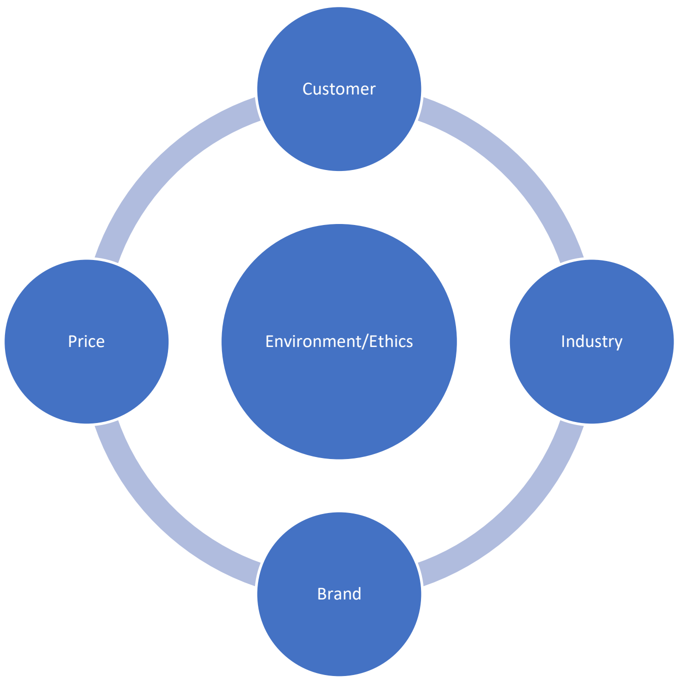
7.2. The conclusion from the perspective of the Cycling consumer.

The cycling consumer, although thought to be environmentally aware because of the transport method they use, cycling has been proven in this research to be environmentally friendly compared to the car, the train, the bus and air travel. However, the cycling consumer themselves is not consciously considering their purchases before making those purchases. This surprising fact is backed up in the research as the survey shows only six per cent of the survey respondents always consider the environment before making a purchase and only eight per cent still consider the ethical impacts of their investments within the cycling sphere. However, on the flip side, over thirty per cent still consider the perceived brand quality of a product before purchasing. These responses in the survey are reflected in the industry responses below. The cycling consumer is much more concerned about quality, brand and price than they are about protecting the environment.

7.2. The conclusion from the perspective of the Cycling industry.

The research discovered that although the environment is very high on the agenda in the broadcasting, print and radio media. It is not high on the agenda within the cycling industry. This is precisely because the cycling consumer is not showing any purchasing concerns, whether that be through buying habits or through conscious questioning of the retailer before making a purchase. As Craig Middleton from Pinpoint representing Limar helmets pointed out, in the five years that he has been working with Limar, only one customer has ever asked about the environmental or ethical credentials of Limar Helmets. This comment was backed up Russell Harrison from Velotech Services representing Rotor Components from Spain. In the eight years that Russell has worked within the Cycling industry, he has never been asked about the environmental or ethical credentials of Rotor. However, he has been asked about manufacturing location, and this again reflects on the importance of the perceived brand quality.

Figure 12. The Environmental and or ethical impacts remain outside of the purchasing cycle.



7.3 Research Contribution

This paper has attempted to discover if the Cycling industry and the broader consumer sector of the market are missing an opportunity to maximise their share of the market. It is clear from the literature review that the environment is high on the media agenda. However, there is a gap in research in this area with many brands assuming that the environment and or ethical credentials are much higher than they appear in the survey.

7.4. Industry Implications

The findings of this research will enable cycling and broader consumer brands to consider their ethical and environmental positions. Even though the numbers of those always considering the ethical or environmental impacts are low the number of those that sometimes consider the environment is much higher, with those sometimes considering the ecological and ethical implications at over forty per cent in both responses. The cycling industry may consider these responses as a potential area where to maximise their market share by improving their environmental and or ethical credentials. The cycling industry and the broader consumer industry may examine these results and consider the future designs, marketing and PR actions of their brands.

7.5. Research Limitations

This research, like all other research, has its limitations. In this research, the author focused on the U.K. cycling consumer market. However, the responses in this questionnaire may change if the survey is extrapolated to a broader geographical field. The two semi-structured interviews were both from brands exclusively importing their products from the European market. The research may show more environmental or ethical concerns if the products are coming from outside the European Union. The survey questions separating the environment and ethical areas might have been more useful or less confusing to the reader if the ethical or environmental impacts remained under one question. However, with this in mind, the separation did allow the author to indicate which is more important to the consumer. The research did not have a budget; this lack of budget restricted the ability to gain access to secondary data.

7.6. Future Research recommendations

For further research in this area, it is recommended that not only that this survey is repeated in the future but that the consumer base is broadened to include a larger sample of the cycling consumer. It is also recommended that a more significant number of semi-structured interviews take place with organisations who are importing from outside the European Union. It is also worth noting that this research is taking place during the Brexit crisis, the anxiety amongst consumers surrounding the issues of Brexit may skew the results.

References

A. Benfield, J. and J. Szlemko, W. (2006). Internet-Based Data Collection: Promises and Realities. [online] Files.eric.ed.gov. Available at: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ805689.pdf [Accessed 3 Oct. 2019].

Axinn, W. and Pearce, L. (2006). Fitting Data Collection Methods to Research Aims. Mixed-Method Data Collection Strategies, [online] pp.28-53. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511617898.003 [Accessed 3 Oct. 2019].

Boardman, R. and McCormick, H. (2018). Shopping channel preference and usage motivations. Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal, [online] 22(2), pp.270-284. Available at: http://Shopping channel preference and usage motivations: Exploring differences amongst a 50-year age span.

Born, B., Müller, G., Schularick, M. and Sedláček, P. (2017). The Economic Consequences of the Brexit Vote. [online] Hdl.handle.net. Available at: http://hdl.handle.net/10419/173056 [Accessed 1 Oct. 2019].

Carrington, M., A Neville, B. and J. Whitwell, G. (2010). Why Ethical Consumers Do not Walk Their Talk. Journal of Business Ethics, [online] 97(1), pp.139-158. Available at: https://link.springer.com/journal/10551 [Accessed 30 Sep. 2019].

Cohen, D. and B, C. (2006). RWJF - Qualitative Research Guidelines Project | Semi-structured Interviews | Semi-structured Interviews. [online] Qualres.org. Available at: http://www.qualres.org/HomeSemi-3629.html [Accessed 4 Oct. 2019].

Cohen, D. and B, C. (2006). RWJF - Qualitative Research Guidelines Project | Semi-structured Interviews | Semi-structured Interviews. [online] Qualres.org. Available at: http://www.qualres.org/HomeSemi-3629.html [Accessed 4 Oct. 2019].

Conlon, S. (2019). Zara clothes to be made from 100% sustainable fabrics by 2025. [online] the Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2019/jul/17/zara-collections-to-be-made-from-100-sustainable-fabrics [Accessed 5 Oct. 2019].

DiCicco-Bloom, B. and Crabtree, B. (2006). The qualitative research interview. Medical Education, [online] 40(4), pp.314-321. Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1365-2929.2006.02418.x [Accessed 6 Oct. 2019].

Dissertation.laerd.com. (2012). Non-probability sampling | Lærd Dissertation. [online] Available at: http://dissertation.laerd.com/non-probability-sampling.php [Accessed 3 Oct. 2019].

Dudovskiy, J. (2011). Inductive Approach (Inductive Reasoning) - Research-Methodology. [online] Research-Methodology. Available at: https://research-methodology.net/research-methodology/research-approach/inductive-approach-2/ [Accessed 2 Oct. 2019].

Ethical Consumer. (2019). Our Ethical Ratings | Ethical Consumer. [online] Available at: https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/about-us/our-ethical-ratings [Accessed 30 Sep. 2019].

European Environment Agency. (2019). An overview of EU environment policy targets and objectives. [online] Available at: https://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/an-overview-of-eu-environment [Accessed 6 Oct. 2019].

Gillham, B. (2002). Developing a Questionnaire. [online] Google Books. Available at: https://books.google.com/books/about/Developing_a_Questionnaire.html?id=ACsRmvaJ9J4C [Accessed 4 Oct. 2019].

Hiller, A. (2010). Challenges in researching consumer ethics: a methodological experiment. Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal, [online] 13(3), pp.236-252. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/13522751011053617 [Accessed 30 Sep. 2019].

Hoek, J., Roling, N. and Holdsworth, D. (2013). Ethical claims and labelling: An analysis of consumers' beliefs and choice behaviours. Journal of Marketing Management, [online] 29(7-8), pp.772-792. Available at: https://members.md.cmi.org.uk/Content/Display/82323.

Jones, J. (2019). 25 sustainable UK companies that are out to save the planet | Business Leader News. [online] Business Leader. Available at: https://www.businessleader.co.uk/25-sustainable-uk-companies-that-are-out-to-save-the-planet/66208/ [Accessed 5 Oct. 2019].

Limbu, Y., Wolf, M. and Lunsford, D. (2012). Perceived ethics of online retailers and consumer behavioural intentions. Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing, [online] 6(2), pp.133-154. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/17505931211265435 [Accessed 30 Sep. 2019].

Loughley, C. (2018). The most-watched TV shows of 2017 have been revealed. [online] The Independent. Available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/news/blue-planet-ii-most-watched-2017-tv-top-10-strictly-come-dancing-broadchurch-a8153456.html [Accessed 6 Oct. 2019].

Lush Fresh Handmade Cosmetics UK. (2019). Our environmental policy. [online] Available at: https://uk.lush.com/article/our-environmental-policy [Accessed 5 Oct. 2019].

McDonald, S., Gan, B., Fraser, S., Oke, A. and R. Anderson, A. (2015). A review of research methods in entrepreneurship 1985-2013 | Emerald Insight. [online] Emerald.com. Available at: https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/IJEBR-02-2014-0021/full/pdf [Accessed 2 Oct. 2019].

Measuring Ethical Market Size: Challenges and Dilemmas. (2018). Journal of Ethical Consumer, [online] 1(2), p.21. Available at: https://journal.ethicalconsumer.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Journal-for-Consumer-Ethics-Volume-2-Issue-1-June-2018.pdf [Accessed 30 Sep. 2019].

P. Johnston, PhD, M. (2014). Secondary Data Analysis: A Method of which the Time Has Come. [online] Qqml.net. Available at: http://www.qqml.net/papers/September_2014_Issue/336QQML_Journal_2014_Johnston_Sept_619-626.pdf [Accessed 2 Oct. 2019].

Saunder, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2016). Pearson - Research Methods for Business Students, 7/E - Mark N.K. Saunders, Philip Lewis & Adrian Thornhill. [online] Catalogue.pearsoned.co.uk. Available at: http://catalogue.pearsoned.co.uk/educator/product/Research-Methods-for-Business-Students/9781292016627.page [Accessed 22 Sep. 2019].

Schmidt, W. (1997). Behaviour Research Methods - Springer. [online] Link.springer.com. Available at: https://link.springer.com/journal/13428 [Accessed 3 Oct. 2019].

Shorten, A. and Smith, J. (2017). Mixed methods research: expanding the evidence base. [online] British Medical Journal. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/eb-2017-102699 [Accessed 3 Oct. 2019].

This is Money. (2018). Workers reach earning peak 'during 40s'. [online] Available at: https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/news/article-2714966/Youll-reach-earning-peak-40s-make-sure-starting-saving-early-able-enjoy-retirement.html [Accessed 1 Oct. 2019].

Wallace, T. (2019). Half of all shopping to move online in the next decade. [online] The Telegraph. Available at: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2019/07/09/online-shopping-devour-half-retail-pie-within-decade/ [Accessed 30 Sep. 2019].

Wright, K. (2017). Researching Internet-Based Populations: Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Survey Research, Online Questionnaire Authoring Software Packages, and Web Survey Services. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, [online] 10(3). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2005.tb00259.x [Accessed 3 Oct. 2019].

Young, K. (2019). Consumers Going Green: Everything You Need to Know. [online] GlobalWebIndex Blog. Available at: https://blog.globalwebindex.com/chart-of-the-week/green-consumerism/ [Accessed 5 Oct. 2019].

Appendix 1

A personal reflection on the study of the U.K. Cycling consumer and their pre-purchase concerns within the Cycling Industry.

Abstract

This is a short account of the research undertaken on the research paper, " A study of the U.K. Cycling consumer and their pre-purchase concerns within the Cycling Industry. This research took place over the summer of 2019 within the University of Law. The dissertation attempted to add to the general discussions around the environmental and ethical issues that have come to the forefront of contemporary debates over the last few years. The research considered all media types especially those from Google Scholar. It became clear very quickly in the planning phase that there is a shortage of data surrounding the pre-purchase concerns of consumers in any industry let alone that of cyclists. Therefore, it is hoped that this research can be improved upon and repeated to ensure that the market is aware of the thoughts of the consumer, whether that be in the Cycling or broader consumer industry.

Introduction

This research was carried out on a distance learning Masters degree, the course was titled "MSc Strategic Business Management." This research took place in the summer of 2019, along with the rest of the course. Once I had chosen my topic, I immediately began to have doubts about its veracity it was very niche.

I decided to continue under the impression that this paper could be used within and outside of the cycling industry. I did a lot of research on the subject but could not find anything that was exactly as I had in mind. Many research projects focused on the worries of consumers around the environment but none that weighted that against brand and or price and of course very few research projects at all concentrate on cyclists despite the size of the industry.

Once I decided to continue, I decided to maximise the usefulness of the information gathered during the research. Despite my renewed determination, I was not confident in harvesting the correct data. Luckily I was able to use the mailing list of Primal Europe Ltd. To contact cyclists. I needed to piggyback on one of their standard mailshots to ensure that we were within GDPR guidelines.

Literature Review

I found the literature particularly tricky, simply because there is a shortage of data on this subject. However, I needed to identify the consumer and more specifically, the cycling consumer. A report on the green credentials by Carrington Neville et al. written in 2010 gave me a good starting point when considering the green consumer (Carrington, A Neville and J. Whitwell, 2010). I then focused on the environmental legislative history and the facts around labelling. This information was readily available but Hoek, Roling et al. identified three types of claim and label. This information put the focus firmly on the consumer, legislative action has taken place, but the consumer industry still is not moving towards greener products in large numbers. I took this as a queue to focus on the consumer and then focus specifically on the cycling consumer. To prove that there are brands out in the consumer sphere that is explicitly trying to attract the green consumer, I highlighted three. Finally, during the Literature review, I examined the demographics of cyclists, who are they and how much do they spend. This gave the research some depth when looking at the Cycling industry.

Aims

In the paper I aimed to identify the cycling consumer and feel that I successfully did that, the research uncovered the pre-purchase concerns of the Cycling consumer here in the U.K. The Semi-Structured interviews allowed the paper to discover the thoughts of two industry members. Furthermore, the aims of the research paper are repeated below.

1. Literature Review, an examination of the broader evidence around the consumer industry and specifically of the Cycling consumer. An examination of the demographics of the average cyclist.

2. To determine and examine the response from an online survey on how a cyclist thinks about his/her environmental and or ethical pre-purchase impacts.

3. To consider and examine the responses from senior cycling industry members during a semi-structured interview.

4. To develop a conclusion and recommendations for further research based on the points from 1, 2 and 3 above.

Method

On starting this research paper I knew nothing of Method or methodology, my tutor advised that I purchase the book Research methods for business students written Saunders et al. I used this book multiple times, and I became a bible for me when working on this research. Thanks to this book, I discovered the differences between inductive and deductive research, I felt that my study was inductive, although there is an argument that this research has a bit of both. The research took on three central facets, the literature review, the survey and the semi-structured interviews.

1. The Literature Review – I felt that this section was short, but the low word count in this research paper was always on my mind.

2. Primary Data– Survey – I was pleasantly surprised in receiving so many responses with so many useful comments. However, I did not appreciate the work that goes into ensuring that all respondents have given their explicit permission by getting them all to sign the informed consent forms. It was on considering the data that I decided that until the consumer decides to move his/her money to explicitly environmentally/ethically friendly companies, then there will be no sudden change to become more environmentally or ethically friendly.

3. Semi-Structured Interviews

Initially, I felt that the semi-structured interviews would be the most natural part of the research, however, once I learnt about author bias, I had to change my questions and style dramatically. The responses themselves were not a surprise to me. I felt that organisations are making small attempts to become greener, but they do not feel under pressure to do so legislatively or through consumer demands. This explains the comments regards changing package without making any explicit comments on the green consumer market.

Findings, Conclusions

If I were to repeat the survey, I would possibly ensure the questions were more in-depth. However, with a limited budget, it is not possible to ask more than nine items on a free monkey survey plan. The research results were a surprise me to I was expecting after working through the data in the literature review that these consumers would be much more explicit in their support for the environment and ethical impacts. However, the small numbers that always consider the environmental and or ethical effects could still be a large market if extrapolated across the entire consumer industry.

Research Significance

I felt more confident as the research went on that it would be useful outside the cycling consumer market, firstly that the green consumer really is not yet at a point in large numbers to consider the environment before brand or pricing. However, on the flip side, there are now consumers in small quantities that are always considering the environment.

Personal Development

I have vast experience in the military, in management, leadership and of course, team building. However, it has been many years since I have done any formal education and had never attempted a dissertation previously. I have used my tutor, reference books and of course, the internet to pull together this research. If I were to repeat a dissertation on this subject, I would move away from any niche areas. The survey itself and the semi-structured interviews provided me with lots of personal educations, development and gave rise to some useful data that I hope can be used in a large format. The conclusions were a surprise and a disappointment, but I did everything to ensure that my bias was not evident in any of the question style either type of interviews.

Conclusion

I have gained lots of experience in research data, writing, debating and of course, arguing a point. This dissertation has provided me with an opportunity to address my own bias, learn more about consumers and their buying preferences. In the end, they care more about the brand, then pricing than they do about the environmental impacts of those purchases.

Appendix 2

Transcriptions from Semi Structured interviews

Craig Middleton – James Smith 02 October 2019

James: Hello Craig, welcome to Craig from Pinpoint, Craig, can you tell me about your history in the cycling industry please?

Craig: Yep, well I started in the Cycling industry by launching my own bike brand back in 2010, that was just to get out of a job I really didn't enjoy doing. I was finding it hard to get in the cycling industry, so I decided to open the doors myself. I did that for three years but and sold it in 2013 as it required investment. Then I went into cycling distribution, and that's when I started working with the Limar brand, and for the last five years, I have been working with the Limar brand. Mainly in the U.K. but I was also worked internationally for a year and now my day to day job is managing the brand in the U.K.

James: Ok, so Limar is a cycling brand helmet? And where is Limar based?

Craig: Yeh, Limar is based in just outside Milan, yes got an amazing history thirty-two years of making bicycle helmet. They were real pioneers, back in the late 80's early 90's, back then there weren't many helmet brands, unlike today. They were the first to make an in-mould helmet, now everyone makes in-mould helmets. Limar were the first do it and basically invented that style of helmet.

James: Ok, Limar is part of a wider group to distribution that you work for, you work for pinpoint, right?

Craig: Yes, so within Pinpoint we represent other brands and that kind of changes, with Pinpoint not too much but with other distribution companies brands change quite a lot which can be a problem, but within Pinpoint yep, we have pretty steady brands that we represent which are 4iii power meters, aftershock bone conduction headphones and Limar, we do have a couple of other smaller brands too, but those three are our main brands.

James: Ok, so if we focus on Limar, that's your main day to day work. What kind of considerations are Limar making in respect to their environmental and or ethical impacts?

Craig: Yeh, well Limar do. Actually, they do own their own factory in Italy, which is an EPS moulding factory, which is essentially what helmet are made out of. And within that factory they also make all manner of products, last time I went there, they were making ice cream tubs, such an array of random products but not their own cycling helmets strangely enough. They have their own factory in China, that's purely down to the market, or the cost that it needs to be too competitive. So yes they do own their own factory.

James: ahh, ok so what kind of things have they done over the last few years, well we know about the rise of the ethical consumer. So what have Limar done in respect to their environmental and or ethical impacts, or are they just getting to the point of thinking about it?

Craig: Yeah, I think, I think they are just getting to the point. So yes, well, the problem with EPS material is that it is not easily recyclable.

James: So yes, EPS is plastic is it?

Craig: yes, well, it's like polystyrene and each helmet has an outer shell made of polycarbonate. So to become a real green sort of product, it's not going to be easy. I am sure there are a lot of people trying to come up with an alternative for protecting the environment. However, no one's really done it yet. Yes, just small things at the moment, I know that every helmet is wrapped in plastic inside its cardboard box, in the near future they will be removing that. Lots of little things that bags that we offer at shows will now be made of recycled fabric rather than standard plastic bags. It's something they do think about, but they are kind of limited on the impact they can make because of their products.

James: In the factory itself what assurances do you have that the helmets are ethically produced?

Craig: Well I have never actually been there (china) but just that Limar have some of their own staff permanently based there, not Chinese but Italian. So I just like to think, they wouldn't allow that to happen.

James: Yes, so you are not aware of any audits or anything like that?

Craig: No not aware of anything like that.

James: Do you think Customers care though?

Craig: I can't remember the last time a customer came up to the stand, hmm think I remember one in the previous three years who came on the stand and asked me those kinds of environmental questions. The conversations always about sort of features, price.

James: They come and talk to you and why do they talk to you and not other brands, do they shop around?

Craig: Yes, they shop around, we won't be the only brand they speak too. The bike shows are the only time we really come into contact with consumers. We usually sell to the shops, I also don't get feedback from the shops kind of saying that customers are asking about this kind of thing. So that's not making an impact on their decision making, of course, that could happen. I suppose, as soon as it does, then, all the brands will have to start looking at what is possible.

James: What evidence do you think you will need to start making those changes?

Craig: I can only think that when another brand comes out with a strong package or whatever that is and the other products see a loss in market share until that happens I don't see a lot changing in the next five or ten years.

James: Ok, so have you seen any changes in any other industries or do you think helmets already have a great environmental product.

Craig: Yes, well look at the way companies produce chemicals and how they dispose of that, more obvious things like this spring to mind, obviously plastic in the oceans things like that.

James: Do you think this attitude is a U.K. thing or is it a global issue?

Craig: Again, when I worked for Limar internationally, South America, Africa, Australia, this was never brought up as an issue.

James: Ok, thank you so much for your time, Craig. Really appreciated.

Craig: No problem at all.

James: Bye then

Craig: Bye.

Appendix 3

Transcriptions from Semi Structured interviews

Russell Harrison – James Smith 02 October 2019

James: Hello Russell thank you for being involved in this interview can you tell me a little bit about yourself and how you became involved in the cycling industry place of opportunity and time to help him with his business and the business but not as involved with the 2011 ok and can you tell me a little bit about your role is and what your responsibilities are within the company?

Russell: That's not easy to answer; basically, I go from field sales account customers like national accounts and in the office deal with the day to day issues.

James: and which brand do you specifically work?

Russell: I work mainly with Rotor a Spanish component brand. Its around 80% of the turnover of our business and it has quite a range of products. High end, top-level componentry.

James: Ok, can you tell me a little bit about what Rotor do?

Russell: Yes sure, Rotor was started by an engineer who wanted to work out the way of everything is made as well-engineered and manufactured in Spain.

James: Have you noticed any changes in environmental or ethical responsibilities or anything?

Russell: At the last Eurobike show, a large trade show in Germany, Rotor mentioned that it was reviewing its packaging. However Velotech we have had no thought process at all about the environmental impact we are having.

James: So Rotor are at least at a starting point?

James: ok so the point with this think about what do you think will make velotech change what will make rota change what would be the turning Point

Russell: legislation generalising but most businesses are doing things for profit, if they were think, I know it's cynical but if they an angle then will change quickly. Outside of that only legislation will make things change.

James: Interestingly, you said that about consumer demand have you seen consumer demand for environmental products? Does anyone ever come up to you at the show and say how are these produced or where they are produced?

Rusell: Yes they are not asking because of the environment, in my opinion, the only cynicism the public have is that they ask if they are made in China, they are thinking that the product is not as good as quality. They quite like the fact that its made in Europe. No one has ever come up to me and asked about the environment.

James: Ok, that's pretty much it. Thanks very much.

Russell: Oh ok thank you

James: Bye, thank you again.

Russell Bye.