ARE CONSUMERS WILLING TO BUY ETHICAL GOODS?:
EVIDENCES OF AN ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOR GAP IN THE FASHION MARKET

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Rio de Janeiro, 2017
Ferreira, Aline Tassar de Moraes  
Are consumers willing to buy ethical goods?: evidences of an attitude-behavior gap in the fashion market / Aline Tassar de Moraes Ferreira. – 2017.  
33 f.

Dissertação (mestrado) - Escola Brasileira de Administração Pública e de Empresas, Centro de Formação Acadêmica e Pesquisa.  
Orientador: Eduardo Andrade.  
Inclui bibliografia.


CDD – 658.8342
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"ARE CONSUMERS WILLING TO BUY ETHICAL GOODS? EVIDENCES OF AN ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOR GAP IN THE FASHION MARKET”.

Dissertação apresentado(a) ao Curso de Mestrado Profissional Executivo em Gestão Empresarial do(a) Escola Brasileira de Administração Pública e de Empresas para obtenção do grau de Mestre(a) em Administração.

Data da defesa: 24/11/2017

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank everyone who was part of this journey inspiring me and supporting me through so many challenges and achievements.

Firstly, I want to thank my parents who are a great safe haven, always present in my life and my biggest fans. To my in-laws who encouraged me throughout the journey, especially Marieta for the support and inspiration.

My eternal recognition to Jorge Jacob for having been involved in a unique way, offering dedication, commitment and availability in the development of this study. I want to thank him for sharing his knowledge and experience in a very kind and generous way.

I also want to record my gratitude for the accompaniment and guidance of Dr. Eduardo Andrade, who, in this two-year process, pointed out to me so many rich paths of learning always in a quiet and wise way. Paths that were not only useful for the realization of my thesis, but which will lead to life.

Finally, the most important of the gratefulness I dedicate to my husband, Vicente Ferreira. I want to thank him, from the beginning for being with me, supporting me relentlessly, actively participating in the most challenging moments of that period and celebrating all my achievements. Vicente is my great reference of dedication and commitment, who inspires me every day. I could not have a more amazing partner, not only over these two years, but in life.

I finalize this study with the happiness of the learning that I have accumulated and even more certain with a path of balance, respect and ethics in relationships is not only possible, as desired and real in the world today.
ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study intends to deepen the knowledge about consumer behavior around ethical practices. An increasing body of research has analyzed whether and how consumers’ ethical concerns regarding business practices translates into actual behavior. Despite this burgeoning interest, consensus is far from granted. Whereas one strand of research claims that consumers are more willing to buy products embedded in an ethical environment, another strand asserts that consumers’ words and deeds do not match. Precisely, although consumers report having high ethical concerns and valuing brands whose practices follow ethical standards; they are not willing to purchase more products or services from these same brands.

Design/Methodology: We conducted one experimental study manipulating three different ethics-related marketing appeals (donation, fair trade, control) to test these conflicting findings.

Findings: In this study, consumers were more willing to purchase products associated with donations, but this difference vanished when we introduced a more realistic dependent variable (i.e., willingness to receive additional information via e-mail). Furthermore, fair trade appeals did not influence neither consumers’ purchase intentions nor their willingness to receive additional information. Practical implications are also discussed.

Research limitations: The main limitation of this study is related to does not involve a totally realistic scenario and thus does not capture the real intentions of buying. A more realistic assessment of purchase intentions would avoid potential pitfalls of social desirability, creating a more accurate evaluation of the principal dependent variable.
Practical and Social implications: By deepening the understanding of consumer ethical behavior, companies can evolve their offers delivering benefits to the consumer, to the business and to the collective well-being.

Originality: Few studies related to Consumer Ethical Behavior were done using the experiment method and using also some specificities of the fashion Market.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Fair Trade, Conscious Consumption, Donation, Social Business, Marketing, Ethics, Social Responsibility.

Category: Research paper
RESUMO

Objetivo: Este estudo pretende aprofundar o conhecimento sobre o comportamento do consumidor em torno de práticas éticas. Um crescente grupo de pesquisadores vem analisando como as preocupações éticas dos consumidores em relação às práticas comerciais vem se traduzindo em comportamento real no momento da decisão de compra. Apesar desse crescente interesse, o consenso está longe de ser definido. Enquanto uma linha de pesquisa afirma que os consumidores estão mais dispostos a comprar produtos inseridos em um ambiente ético, outra vertente afirma que o discurso e ações dos consumidores não necessariamente se mostram coerentes.

Embora os consumidores relatem ter preocupações éticas e valorizem marcas cujas práticas seguem padrões éticos, eles não estão dispostos a comprar mais produtos ou serviços dessas mesmas marcas.

Metodologia: Realizamos um estudo experimental manipulando três diferentes apelos de marketing relacionados à ética (doação, comércio justo, controle) para testar esses achados conflitantes.

Resultado: Neste estudo, os consumidores estavam mais dispostos a comprar produtos associados a doações, mas essa diferença desapareceu quando introduzimos uma variável dependente mais realista (ou seja, a vontade de receber informações adicionais via e-mail). Além disso, os recursos de comércio justo não influenciaram nem as intenções de compra dos consumidores nem sua disposição em receber informações adicionais. Implicações práticas também são discutidas.
**Limitações:** Uma das principais limitações desse estudo se deve ao fato de não envolver um cenário totalmente realista e assim não captar as reais intenções de compra. Uma avaliação mais realista das intenções de compra evitaria armadilhas potenciais de desejabilidade social, criando uma avaliação mais precisa da variável dependente principal.

**Contribuições Sociais e Práticas:** Ao se aprofundar no entendimento do comportamento ético do consumidor, as empresas podem evoluir em suas ofertas que entreguem benefícios para o consumidor, para o negócio e o bem estar coletivo.

**Originalidade:** Poucos estudos relacionados ao Comportamento Ético do consumidor foram feitos usando o método do experimento e também com algumas especificidades do mercado da moda.

**Palavras Chave:** Comportamento do Consumidor, Comércio Justo, Consumo Consciente, Doação, Negócios Sociais, Marketing, Ética, Responsabilidade Social.

**Categoria do Artigo:** Artigo de Pesquisa
SUMMARY

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1 INTRODUCTION

Concerns regarding ethical consumption and behavior have existed for hundreds of years, but it was in the early 1990s that it attracted the attention of academics, business leaders, and policymakers (Low, W., & Davenport, E. 2007). The popularization of this subject has also drawn the attention of companies to the need of better understanding and adapting their operations and relationship with customers. In fact, the numbers are staggering. For instance, the size of the ethical market in the United Kingdom represented £38 billion in 2015 (Consumer Market Report, 2016).

However, issues regarding marketing ethics, social responsibility, and their consequences to the business world seems controversial. Researchers and practitioners have often presented conflicting perspectives on the economic value of sustaining an ethical posture to business (Laczniak and Murphy, 1993; Smith and Quelch, 1996). One may well believe that being an ethical company will bring more consumers and sales, while being unethical will call customers to boycott and react against the company (Carrigan & Attala, 2001). Nonetheless, this is not necessarily the case. If on the one hand, a strand of the literature suggests that consumers recognize and pay more for ethical products (Trudel, and Cotte, 2009; Gwendolyn, and Bernard, 2008, 2010), on the other hand it another strand of research advocates the existence of a gap between consumers’ reported intentions and their actual behaviors (Aaker, Vohs and Mogilner, 2010; Carrington, Neville and Whitwell, 2010; Auger and Devinney 2007).

The conclusions drawn from most of these studies, however, were based on non-consequential surveys in which respondents were asked about their behavior. By construction, such questions do not impose a real-world trade-off involving ethical and traditional attributes of . In the other words, responses to these types of survey questions tend to overestimate the importance of ethical characteristics simply because these responses are the most socially
acceptable ones. Although some researchers suggest the growth in the number of consumers concerned with ethical values while making purchase decisions, the actual change is much less apparent. The ethical consumption is not widely documented in consequential studies, where the money is actually spent (Carrington, Neville and Whitewll, 2010).

Due to a certain skepticism regarding how self-reported attitudes translate into actual behaviors, Roberts (1996) and Simon (1995) developed the concept of Attitude-Beahvior Gap. This work and other subsequent studies (e.g., Carrigan and Attala, 2001) confirmed the proposed concept: despite of consumers’ positive attitudes towards ethical standards in organizations, only 20 per cent of them had actually purchased something in the last year due to ethical conduct of the company.

However, most of the studies that explore the Attitude-Behavior Gap used qualitative methods (see Table 1). Thus, we adopt a quantitavie approach to collect further evidence on the proposed gap and to devise new ways of mitigating it. To that end, we conducted an experiment using two types of ethical characteristics in the fashion industry: Fair Trade and Donation.

As abovementioned, research analyzing the Attitude-Behavior Gap has been mostly restricted to self-reported studies. Thus, because words do not necessarily match deeds, we test whether these results would also hold in a more consequential study. To do so, we conducted an experiment analyzing consumers attitudes and behaviors in the aftermath of a marketing appeal either bearing ethical concerns (fair trade and donation) or not mentioning such concerns (control). We chose Fair Trade and Donation to analyze the Attitude-Behavior Gap, because (1) consumers’ interest regarding Fair Trade has increased in recent years (Harrison, Newholm, and Shaw 2005) and (2) Donation has gained momentum over the last decade. This is because since 2006some
companies started to use donations as a business model, having achieved satisfactory results since then (Marquis, and Park, 2014).

We could also observe that whenever business ethics were explored in the fashion industry, the products under scrutiny carried little aesthetic value, such as socks and white t-shirts (Hustvedt adn Bernard, 2008). Since aesthetic value is a fundamental attribute for consumers, it can influence consumer preferences by redefining their priorities at the moment of purchase decision. To analyze whether previous results hold true when consumers are making decisions about highly valued items with greater aesthetic features, we used a female blouse as the product of interest.

2 BACKGROUND THEORY

THE INCREASED ETHICAL CONCERNS

The increased coverage by the media and the organized activist groups are progressively enhancing consumers’ ethical concerns about the impact of their purchase decisions on society and on the environment (Forte and Lamont, 1998). This increased concern has already been noticed by companies, who in turn have increased the supply of ethical products in an effort to meet these new demands. In fact, recent studies on ethical consumption show that consumers are increasingly concerned about the production process of goods and these concerns can ultimately impact businesses (CAFOD, 1998; Elliot and Freeman, 2000; Marymount University, 1999; Auger et al., 2003).

As a consequence of the increased ethical concerns held by consumers, several studies have investigated the theme and suggest that consumers’ purchase decisions are indeed increasingly influenced by the companies’ ethical attitudes and behaviors (Forte and Lamont, 1998). Verschoor
(1997) shows that 75% of consumers reported purchasing products of brands and retailers to support a cause linked to the product. The Cone and Roper study (1995) found that 85% of respondents had a more positive image of a company that supported a cause they cared about.

The ethical consumer feels the responsibility of changing not only their own behavior but also of expressing their ideas to others in an attempt to influence the society as a whole towards a new approach to consumption (Carrington, Neville and Whitwell, 2010). Roberts (1996) also identified the existence of a "socially responsible consumer", while Carrington, Neville and Whitwel (2010) talk about the “Ethical Consumer”:

“Ethically minded consumers feel the responsibility towards the environment and/or to society, and seek to express their values through ethical consumption and purchasing (or boycotting) behavior.”

It is also possible to find studies in literature showing that consumers are willing to recognize an ethical posture held by companies by paying more for their products and services (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000). However, how this other-regarding perspective conciliates with the common proposition that individuals are mainly motivated by selfishness? According to Trudel and Cotte (2009), there are two main reasons for this: reward seeking and punishment avoidance. Whereas reward-seeking refers to the search of individuals for social approval, punishment avoidance relates to the need of individuals not to feel guilty when causing negative feelings in others. Thus, it would be natural to assume that people reward companies with ethical behaviors and punish the ones with unethical practices. However, in this study we will demonstrate that
despite such beliefs, there are also important alternative explanations that might shift consumer preferences.

COMPANIES’ ETHICAL CONCERNS

The popularization of ethical concerns in consumption contexts led companies to allocate more resources to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and has attracted the attention of executives, politicians, and academia as a whole (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2001). This popularization is also due to the increased media coverage, who has repeatedly exposed cases of unethical behavior featuring some of the largest companies in the world. Some examples are the case of Nike, that in 1996 was denounced by Life Magazine for using child labor in its factories in Asia (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001), and the case of Apple, that was denounced by the New York Times for practicing slave labor.

The question that intrigues both practitioners and the academia is about the extent to which holding ethical (or unethical) behaviors influence the firms’ economic results (Webb and Harris, 2001). Put differently, how much consumers are willing to recognize or boycott brands or companies due to their behavior. Although consumers generally report that an ethical posture is very important (Rogers, 1998), some studies found that the magnitude of the ethical behaviors held by companies are not fully captured by consumers. Thus, holding completely ethical concerns throughout the production process does not necessarily represents an advantage, since consumers are not able to capture it in the form of subjective ethical perceptions. Furthermore, according to Cotte and Trudel (2009), the impact of an ethical behavior is easily eliminated by a new information about an unethical behavior, while the opposite is not true. The impact of an unethical behavior is not eliminated by new information regarding an ethical behavior.
ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOR GAP

The attitude-behavior gap hinges upon the premise that what consumers say differ from what they actually do. To support this suggestion, Roberts (1996) and Cone and Roper (Simon, 1995) identified an attitude-behavior gap. They found that while consumers reported holding socially responsible attitudes, only 20% of them purchase a product due to ethical reasons during the previous year. According to Carrington, Neville and Whitwell (2010), although consumers indeed hold ethical concerns and these concerns bear important consequences, its influence has been overestimated due to the reliance on self-reported measures. This occurs because other product characteristics, such as price, quality, and convenience, may outweigh the benefits stemming from ethical consumption (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2007). Reinforcing this idea, Futerra (2005) showed that although 30% of consumers reported that they would buy eco-friendly goods, only 3% actually did so.

FAIR TRADE

The globalization effect and the cheap price of labor in developing countries led companies to outsource their production around the globe. Companies in the developed world in general outsource their production in poor countries of the third world, which charge lower costs and offer important fiscal incentives. Nonetheless, companies often neglect the fact that a substantial part of the workers in these regions is heavily exploited, with terrible work conditions (Levy, 2008). Fair trade is a social movement created to mitigate the problem of unfair production process. It has increased over the last years (Doherty, Davies and Tranchell, 2013) in a response to the concerns of society about the relationship of exploitation between companies and their employees.
“Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers – especially in the South.” (World Fair Trade Organization Definition, 2017).

DONATION AS A BUSINESS MODEL

Several social business models emerged as a response to the increased ethical concerns held by consumers (Yunus, 2007; Mackey and Sisodia, 2014). One of them is Buy 1 Give 1 Business Model, which came up in 2006 through the brand Toms Shoes that announced that for each shoe sold, another shoe would be donated to people in need. Since then, other companies adopted the same business model. One example is Warby Parker, which donates a pair of glasses for each sale.

The Buy one Give One model presents many advantages when compared to other models. From a social perspective, it increases the donation culture and actually supports people with basic needs. Furthermore, according to Marquis and Park (2014), “consumers are engaged to buy because of the simplicity and tangibility of the offer. The social impact is clearer, easier to understand, and more personal than that of a traditional cause marketing company.” Being tangible is a key advantage of this model because it gives the consumer the idea that s/he is an active part of the donation process (Heath and Heath, 2007). Table 1 presents a summary of the research on ethical studies and their main findings.
Table 1 The Relationship Between Business Ethics and Consumer Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Main Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carrigan, M. and Attalla, A.</td>
<td>The myth of the ethical consumer - do ethics matter in purchase behavior?</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Ethical in general</td>
<td>Attitude Behavior Gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webb L. and Harris K.</td>
<td>Do consumers expect companies to be socially responsible? The impact of corporate social responsibility on buying behavior</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Interviews with consumers about corporate responsibility</td>
<td>Ethics influence the decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auger P.; Burke P; Devinney T &amp;</td>
<td>What Will consumers pay for social product features?</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Social features involved in athletic shoes and soap</td>
<td>Attitude Behavior Gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelsmacker P; Driesen Land and Rayp G.</td>
<td>Do consumers care about ethics? Willingness to pay for fair trade coffee</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Types of ethical features influencing more or less purchase behavior. Coffee was used as product.</td>
<td>Ethics influence the decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low W. and Davenport E.</td>
<td>To bodily go... Exploring ethical spaces to re-politicise ethical consumption and fair trade</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>An analysis of literature, geography and politics to suggest the creation of ethical spaces</td>
<td>Ethics influence the decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hustvedt G. and Bernard J.</td>
<td>Consumer Willinges to pay for sustainable apparel; the influence of labelling for fibre, origin and production methods.</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Studying the composition and origin of the raw material of socks as important characteristic in the consumer decision making.</td>
<td>Ethics in general on consumer behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bray J.</td>
<td>Ethical Dimensions in Clothing Purchase</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>The impact of ethical concerns on decision making of clothing</td>
<td>Ethics influence the decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trudel R and Cottee</td>
<td>Does it pay to be good?</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Willingness to pay for fair trade coffee.</td>
<td>Ethics influence the decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrington M; Neville B and Whitwell G.</td>
<td>Why ethical consumers don’t walk their talk: Towards a Framework for undersaing the gap between the ethical purchase intentions and actual Buying behavior of thically minded consumers</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>An analysis of attitude behavior gap from the social psychology and consumer behavior literature.</td>
<td>Attitude Behavior Gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hustvedt G. and Bernard J.</td>
<td>Effect of Social Responsibility Labelling and brand on willingness to pay for apparel</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>WTP for apparel products as labour related information and brand</td>
<td>Ethics influence the decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White K; MacDonnell R &amp; Ellard J.</td>
<td>Belief in a just world: Consumer Intentions and Behavior Toward Ethical Products</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Types of ethical features influencing more or less purchase behavior. Coffee was used as product.</td>
<td>Ethics influence the decision making.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 HYPOTHESES

Influenced by the theoretical framework that tends to reinforce the idea that an ethical culture is a great movement and positively impacts society and all its actors, we predict that consumers will be more likely to buy and recognize more responsible and ethical offers. This hypothesis is supported by the idea that consumers not only feel that donating is an ethical behavior, but they can also understand the benefits of their actions in a more tangible way.
Furthermore, it is widely known that the fashion industry is one of the sectors that most affects the environment and exploits labor in the developing world. By offering consumers the option to buy clothes that promote respect to workers in the production process, we also believe that consumers will be more willing to make a more ethical purchase decision. Formally:

**H1:** Respondents exposed to the advertising presenting a potential donation will report a higher intention to purchase a product of the store.

**H2:** Respondents exposed to the advertising presenting a potential fair trade will not report a higher intention to purchase a product of the store compared to control group.

**H3:** Respondents exposed to the advertising presenting a potential fair trade will not report a higher intention to purchase a product of the store compare to donation.

Nevertheless, consistent with the ‘behavior-attitude gap’:

**H4:** Respondents will not be willing to receive more information (‘real-world’ outcome) about the brand in the ethical conditions (either donation or fair trade) when compared to the control condition.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Experiment

We conducted our research using an experimental design. We conducted an online questionnaire using Qualtrics. The questionnaire was distributed among people who did not know or knew little about the brand used for the research (i.e., Bossa Social).
4.1.1 Participants and Design

This study employed a one factor (brand ethical commitment: donation vs. fair trade vs. control) between-subjects design. Two conditions presented ethics-related concerns (i.e., fair trade and donation) and the remaining condition presented a situation in which the consumer analyzed only the functional attribute of the product was.

Three hundred and sixty-three individuals took part in this study. They were not offered any monetary incentive in return for their participation in the study. The typical age of the sample resembles the characteristics of the target group of the studied brand with most of the sample (54%) within the range of 30-45 years old. Overall, the high average income per capita of the sample (Mincome_per_capita = R$6,872,57, SD: R$14,386.25) also resembles the wealthy composition of the brand target group.

We had participants responding to a purported advertisement that composed our cover story. This advertisement showed a model wearing a black and white striped T-shirt and featured t-shirt attributes and was signed by Bossa Social, the company used to carry out the research.

4.1.2 Treatments

Each of the treatments had in the description of the attributes one of the three situations tested. We call the control group treatment, fair trade treatment 2 and donation treatment 3.

Treatment 1: Control Group

In treatment 1 the text describing the advertisement offered the following information: “Versatile clothes, timeless and full of bossa. Our clothes are versatile, the ones that we use a lot. It goes well with everything and it is worth a lot. Get to know Bossa Social. T-shirt 100% cotton.” Follow by the trademark signature.
Treatment 2: Fair Trade

In treatment 2 the text describing the advertisement provided the following information: “Versatile clothes, cool for those who make, cool for the buyer and cool for the world. Our clothes are produced through the principles of fair trade. A relationship of dialogue and respect with the people behind the production process. At Bossa, we encourage and value those who make. Get to know Bossa Social! T-shirt 100% cotton.” Follow by the trademark signature.

Treatment 3: Donation

In treatment 3 the text describing the advertisement provided the following information: “Versatile, cool clothes for the buyer and the world. At Bossa Social, for every piece sold, a T-shirt is donated to needy communities. Buy 1, Donate 1. Get to know Bossa Social! T-shirt 100% cotton.” Follow by the trademark signature.

4.1.3 Procedure

After viewing one of the three ads, participants answered four questions regarding the advertisement they had just seen. The questions asked the respondent about the intention to purchase a branded product in a future purchase situation on a 5-point Likert scale anchored by 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree). Following the first question, we asked participants whether they would like to receive more information about the brand via e-mail. In affirmative case, we also asked participants to indicate their e-mail address in the questionnaire. This was our second Dependent Variable. Finally, participants filled a demographic questionnaire (gender, age, family income, and neighborhood) and a manipulation check, were thanked and properly debriefed.
4.2 Results

4.2.1 Randomization check

There were no significant differences between participants assigned to treatments and control groups relative to participants’ age ($M_{\text{fair}}=35$, $M_{\text{donation}}=35$, $M_{\text{control}}=37$; $F(4, 363) = 1.92; p = .148$) and city of residence (same city of the brand: fair=52.03%; donation=52.03%; control=52.25%; $\chi^2(1, 357)= .587, p = .964$). More importantly, there were also non-significant differences between their gender composition (female: fair=74.60%; donation=76.98%; control=81.25%; $\chi^2(1, 364)= 1.52, p = .466$) and participants income (per capita income: $M_{\text{fair}}= R$5972.12, $SE = R$1346.41; $M_{\text{donation}}=R$8694.57, $SE = R$1396.29; $M_{\text{control}}= R$6092.56, $SE = R$1334.75; $F(1, 336) = 1.25; p = .289$) across conditions.

Participants were also asked to indicate whether they knew any employee of the brand used in the experiment (knows: fair=12.30%; donation=11.57%; control=12.61%; $\chi^2(2, 354)= .063, p = .969$) and whether they knew the brand or had had any contact with it before (fair=18.03%; donation=16.53%; control=10.81%; $\chi^2(2, 354)= 2.576, p = .276$). Again, participants did not differ in terms of these characteristics across conditions.

4.2.2 Manipulation and Attention checks

Most of the participants (98.31%) answered correctly to the item that assessed attention to the procedure. Most participants in the donation condition (88.43%) also correctly responded to the item used for this manipulation check. They reported seeing the message displayed in the donation condition significantly more than those in the fair trade and control conditions (fair=6.31%; donation=88.43%; control=9.02%; $\chi^2(2, 354)= 227.27, p < .001$). Although the
subsequent analyses include all 354 participants, results remain largely unaltered when we exclude those who failed in the manipulation and attention checks.\footnote{This is also true for all the following analyses. We, therefore, do not comment on the robustness of the results due to participant exclusions in the next studies.}

**4.2.3 Consumers’ demographics and purchase intentions**

Not surprisingly, since the advertised product and the itself brand have a female target, women (vs. men) were significantly more willing to buy a product of this brand in the future, irrespective of the experimental condition ($\beta = .42$, $SE=.13$; $t(362) = 3.19$, $p =.002$; $F(1,362)=10.20$, $p =.001$). They also had a marginally significant higher likelihood of asking for more information about the brand, as revealed by a logistic regression ($b = .48$, $SE=.26$; $z=1.83$, $p =.067$; $\text{pseudo}R^2(1,364) = .007$, $p = .063$). Between participants that saw which treatment, 40% of treatment 3 asked for more information, while 32% asked it of treatment 1 and 27% on Treatment 2. Although income has a positive impact on consumers’ intention to buy fashion products, participants’ wage did not impact their intention to buy a product of the brand under analysis in the future ($\beta = 1.52$, $SE=4.05$; $t(336) = 4.05$, $p =.708$; $F(1,334)=0.14$, $p =.708$).

**4.2.4 Previous exposure to the brand and purchase intentions**

Overall, participants that knew any employee of the brand reported a significantly higher willingness to buy a product of this brand in the future ($\beta = .46$, $SE=.17$; $t(354) = 2.74$, $p =.006$; $F(1,354)=7.53$, $p =.006$). The same pattern occurred for participants that knew the brand before the procedure. They were more interest in buying a product than those with no previous exposure to the brand ($\beta = .38$, $SE=.15$; $t(354) = 2.50$, $p =.013$; $F(1,354)=6.24$, $p =.013$). Possibly because they already have information of the brand and its products, they were not more willing to receive
additional information about them, compared to those with no such previous contact with an employee (contact with employee \( b = .31, SE = .32; z = .95, p = .340; \text{pseudoR}^2(1, 354) = .002, p = .341 \)). The same pattern occurred for participants that know the brand before \( b = .46, SE = .29; z = 1.57, p = .116; \text{pseudoR}^2(1, 354) = .005, p = .116 \)).

4.2.5 Ethical purpose and purchasing intentions.

As female participants and those with previous contact with the brand reported being significantly more inclined to buy a product in the future, independently of the assigned experimental condition, as we reported, we used these two important variables as covariates in the following analyses.

4.2.6 Results partially confirmed our hypotheses

1) Ethical purpose and purchase intentions

Consumers exposed to the donation ad (\( M_{\text{intention\_buy}} = 4.85, SE: .09 \)) reported significantly more intention to buy a product of the advertised brand than those in the control condition (\( M_{\text{intention\_buy}} = 4.58, SE: .10 \); \( F(1,354)=3.82, p = .054 \)), but not significantly more than those in the fair trade condition (\( M_{\text{intention\_buy}} = 4.72, SE: .09 \); \( F(1,354)=.82, p = .365 \)). Moreover, consumers exposed to the fair trade condition (\( M_{\text{intention\_buy}} = 4.72, SE: .09 \)) reported no significantly higher intention to buy a product of the brand than those in the control condition (\( M_{\text{intention\_buy}} = 4.58, SE: .10 \); \( F(1,354)=1.11, p = .294 \)).
2) Ethical purpose and interest for more information

A logistic regression revealed that there were no significant differences among the three experimental conditions with respect to participants’ interest in receiving additional information about the brand. Consumers likelihood of requesting more information was not significantly different in the control (b = .37, SE: .045) when compared to the donation (b = .46, SE: .045; z= 10.27, p = .200) and to the fair-trade condition (b = .42, SE: .044; z= 9.41, p = .542). More precisely, participants in both treatment conditions were not more inclined to ask for more information of the brand than those in the control condition which did not see any information about ethics or fair trade.
5 CONCLUSION

Over the last years, it has been possible to observe a considerable growth in society's interest in ethical issues. This increased can be observed in different domains, such as the individual consumer, small and large companies, and even academia. Thus, it is natural to believe that consumers are changing their behavior by choosing more ethical products and also demanding that companies play a more responsible role in their operations. However, by further investigating this perspective, we conclude that consumers’ discourse does not necessarily translate into actual behaviors at the moment of purchase. This mismatch between attitudes and behaviors raises a series of questions about the real return on ethical investment and also about the factors that drive these differences between words and deeds.

The results of our experimental study give us initial evidence in favor of our hypothesis that consumers exposed to the advertising presenting a potential donation would present a higher intention to buy a product than those not exposed to any ethical appeal. According to data from this experiment, in the fashion industry, ethical arguments using Buy1 Give 1 as a business model can influence consumers more positively than just functional and aesthetic characteristics. This answer give us initial evidence that the consumer can be more able to transform their speech in an action if s/he perceives the benefit of their action in a more tangible way. This belief can also be confirmed following the idea that the consumer will be more willing to pay for an ethical offer if s/he believes that s/het can change something directly. In other words, if the capacity of restoring justice is higher (White, MacDonnell and Ellard, 2012). However, the second hypothesis of this study was also supported. Even though reporting more intention to buy the product on the donation
condition. However, these consumers were not more inclined to receive additional information about the brand and/or product, which provides initial evidence for the attitude-behavior gap.

6 FUTURE RESEARCH AND LIMITATIONS

This work has many limitations in the light of the preliminary stage of the research process. Hence, preliminary findings from this stage of our work must be treated with care. On a critical note it could be argued that survey experiments have many limitations (Gaines et al., 2007), such as a lack of external validity (e.g., due to the influence of pre-existing attitudes (Barabas and Jerit, 2010). To addressing this limitation, further study should involve a more realistic scenario and outcomes assessing real purchase intentions. A more realistic assessment of purchase intentions would avoid potential pitfalls of social desirability, creating a more accurate evaluation of the principal dependent variable. Secondly, more studies are necessary to provide more validity and robustness for the present initial evidence. Thirdly, the initial literature review conducted in the present study is also not powerful enough to confirm the existence of opposing findings relative to the effect of an ethical marketing on consumers intention to buy. A further version of the present study should transform the current literature review into a more compelling meta-analysis of the existent studies in the field, to bring more robustness to this assumption. It would also help to bring a more comprehensive explanation of the findings of the extant literature, especially in the donation field. However, we were able to conduct a randomized study and that the number of patients with a relatively large sample. Along with that, results obtained thus far allow for developing some reflections.
Additionally, in this study, we collected evidence about the difference between discourse and practice in ethical consumption, also called the Attitude-Behavior Gap. However, our study and other research in the area generally analyze the dependent variables on the spot, which requires immediate and short-term action. Thus, we would also suggest the study of ethical consumption during longer time periods, mainly in the long run. This might be important because for a brand to be perceived as ethical, it demands time and effort from the company. Thus, it could be the case that consumers only capture these real efforts in a more realistic scenario where they are able to build their own perception of a brand by being constantly exposed to news about it.
APPENDIX A – RESEARCH

7.1 Questionnaire

Introduction

Convidamos você a participar de uma pesquisa para entender o comportamento de compra do consumidor. A pesquisa será bem rápida, levará apenas 3 minutos. Você pode abandonar a pesquisa a qualquer momento. Durante a pesquisa você responderá algumas informações básicas sobre você e perguntas sobre a situação pesquisada. Suas respostas serão mantidas anônimas e confidenciais e juntas farão parte de publicações acadêmicas. Caso concorde em participar, siga para a próxima tela.

Cover Story

Uma agência de publicidade desenvolveu o seguinte anúncio de revista para um de seus clientes que é uma marca de roupa focada em peças clássicas do armário feminino. Antes de apresentar para o cliente, a agência quer saber mais sobre a opinião dos consumidores após verem o anúncio. Para isso ela sorteará entre os participantes um prêmio para usar na loja anunciada. Por favor, leia o anúncio com atenção.
PEÇAS CURINGAS, ATEMPORAIS E CHEIAS DE BOSSA

Na Bossa, nossas roupas são versáteis, aquelas que usamos muito, que combinam com tudo, que valem por várias.

CONHEÇA A BOSSA SOCIAL!

T-SHIRT 100% ALGODÃO

BossaSocial
Treatment 2: Fair Trade

PEÇAS CURINGAS, BACANAS PARA QUEM COMpra E PARA QUEM FAZ.

Produzida nos princípios do Comércio Justo. Comércio Justo é uma relação com os produtores baseada no diálogo, transparência e respeito. Na Bossa, incentivamos e valorizamos quem faz.

CONHEÇA A BOSSA SOCIAL!

T-SHIRT 100% ALGODÃO

BossaSocial
Treatment 3: Donation

PEÇAS CURINGAS, BACANAS PARA QUEM COMPRA E PARA O MUNDO.

Na Bossa Social, a cada peça vendida, uma camiseta é doada a comunidades carentes.

Compre 1, Doe 1.

CONHEÇA A BOSSA SOCIAL!

T-SHIRT 100% ALGODÃO

Bossa Social

Questions:

1. Agora, por favor, julgue os itens abaixo em relação ao anúncio que você acabou de ver:
   a. Eu vou comprar produtos Bossa Social na próxima vez que eu precisar de uma blusa.
   b. Eu consideraria comprar produtos da Bossa Social.
c. Eu não tenho intenção de comprar produtos da Bossa Social.

d. Estou curioso (a) em saber mais sobre essa marca (Bossa Social) e seus produtos.

Discordo Fortemente, Discordo, Discordo um pouco, Nem concordo, nem discordo, Concordo um pouco, Concordo, Concordo Fortemente.

2. Você gostaria de receber informações adicionais sobre essa marca (Bossa Social)? Em caso afirmativo, adicione o seu e-mail no espaço abaixo. Em caso negativo, por favor, escreva no espaço abaixo: “não gostaria de informações adicionais”.

3. Demographics

  o Qual o seu sexo?
  o Qual a sua idade?
  o Qual a sua renda?
  o Quantas pessoas dependem da sua renda?
  o Qual cidade e bairro você mora?

Manipulation and Attention Checks

  o Was the person who wear the t-shirt a woman?
  o Did you see the phrase Buy 1 Give 1?
  o Did you see the phrase “Get to know Bossa Social”?
  o Have you ever heard about Bossa Social?
  o Do you know any employees or people related to Bossa Social?
4. Debriefing

This research is being carried out in order to understand how much the consumer values products produced in an ethical and social purpose. Their responses were important to evolve the understanding of the behavior and perception of consumers facing this type of offer. Thank you for your participation.


